

# Phuket Gazette

October 10 - 16, 2015

Now inside **THE NATION** every Saturday

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‘HE’S LIVED HERE A LONG TIME, BUT HE’S NOT THAI’

## Double dealings

**American citizen born and raised in Phuket rekindles double-pricing debate over park fee**

By Chutharat Plerin

THE discussion on double pricing at parks went viral this week after an American citizen born and raised in Phuket denounced officials at the well-known Emerald Pool attraction in Krabi for being asked to cough up the extra cash for being a foreigner.

“I am still upset about what happened. I do not have Thai citizenship, but I was born and raised here. I am a Thai. I pay taxes like everyone else,” said 26-year-old Grittapohn Chattraesagoon, who started the social media firestorm on October 3.

“My friends and I from Phuket went to the Emerald Pool in Krabi. The staff asked for 200 baht... I told them I pay 20 baht every time I come here. I told them I am from Phuket like my other friends, but all they wanted was money. So we left,” a Facebook message posted by Mr Grittapohn read. As the *Gazette* went to print, the message had garnered 39,350 likes and 3,998 shares. It was also quoted by numerous Thai-language and English-language publications.

Vuttipong Chusangrat, the chief of Khao Pra-Bang Kram Wildlife Sanctuary, which is home to the Emerald Pool, confirmed Mr Grittapohn’s account of what happened and defended his employees’ action...

Continued on Page 5



Thai nationals pay a different park fee than foreigners at Bang Pae in Phuket.

### Chinese pair can't bribe way out of police trouble

POLICE ensnared two illegal Chinese tour guides operating at Chalong Pier with additional charges after the pair attempted to bribe the officers 100,000 baht to secure their release.

Full story Page 3

### BUSINESS



Explore what to do with a pile of cash in the current economic environment.

### PROPERTY



Robert Collins explains why Phuket is dodging the Bangkok market slide.

### LIFE&STYLE



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## Bus fire leaves one dead, a dozen injured

LOCALS were able to save the lives of all but one person trapped inside a flaming Phuket-Satun bus on October 7.

A total of 21 passengers were on the parked bus while the driver, Prathueng Sakkaew, used a borrowed welding torch to attempt to fix his seat, which quickly caught fire.

Nearby locals broke the windows of the bus, allowing the trapped passengers to escape the smoke filled vehicle.

Daeng Thaharat, 76, was pronounced dead at the scene, while 12 other passengers were taken to Phang Nga Hospital.

—Kritsada Mueanhawong

## Officers arrest sunglass sellers

THREE escaped Cambodian fishermen were arrested on Kata Beach for peddling fake name brand sunglasses to tourists on October 1.

The men claimed that they used to work as fishing laborers. However, they escaped from their employer to sell fake sunglasses to tourists, confirmed Muang District Chief Administrative Officer (Palad) Samran Yukunthorn.

All three men were charged with working illegally in Thailand, leaving the limited zone

## Indonesian haze prompts island mask distribution



Government hospitals and offices were handing out free air pollution masks this week due to the steadily thickening Indonesian haze that settled over Phuket. Though the haze has yet to garner an increase in hospital admittances for respiratory problems, it did cause more than a dozen incoming flights to Phuket International Airport to be either rerouted or delayed. For the most current news on the Indonesian haze, visit [PhuketGazette.net](http://PhuketGazette.net). Photo: Rawai Municipality

of fishing migrant laborers without permission [Immigration Act, BE 2522] and selling fake copyrighted goods.

—Kritsada Mueanhawong

## NATIONAL NEWS Briefly

### Funds become available in time for festival

A COLLECTIVE sigh was let out on October 2 by those in charge of the Vegetarian Festival, as well as local hospital employees, teachers and many more who were waiting for the deadlock over the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (OrBorJor) 2016 budget to be broken.

The central issue causing delays was a proposal to renovate the Lucky Complex building (the abandoned building at the entrance of Saphan Hin).

"We simply had to put off some projects, such as the Lucky Complex, to next year. There were more urgent matters that had priority," former Vice Governor Somkiet Sangkaosuttirak said.

—Kritsada Mueanhawong

### Beach business sues OrBorTor president

AN EVICTED beach business owner has filed a law suit against Cherg Talay Local Administration Organization (OrBorTor) President Ma-ann Samran for dereliction of duty (Section 157).

Kanokpon 'Tony' Somrak, owner of Tony Restaurant, which was saved from demolition after the Ministry of Interior stepped in at the last minute, brought legal action against Mr Ma-ann last month.

An officer at the National Anti-Corruption Commission confirmed that the case was currently being worked on. However, he was unable to provide any further details.

—Nattha Thepbamrung

### Officers hunt Phuket arsonist

POLICE are hunting an arsonist who set a motorbike ablaze in Thalung on October 4.

The bike owner, Natee Manabut, and his wife woke up

to find their Honda Wave 100 parked in front of their house engulfed in flames.

Police found a five-liter oil container left at the scene and are hopeful that they will be able to recover fingerprints from it or unburnt parts of the motorbike.

—Winai Sarot

### American man dies on yacht

POLICE have yet to confirm the cause of death of the American owner of the 25 million baht *Angel Langkawi* yacht on October 6.

James Edward Cross, 66, died while emergency medical technicians transferred him from his yacht to Phuket International Hospital.

Mr Cross's housekeeper alerted rescue workers after Mr Cross complained of chest pain.

—Winai Sarot

### Chinese tourist dies snorkelling

EMPLOYEES of a speedboat tour company were unable to save the life of a snorkelling client at Koh Kai on October 6.

Despite their efforts, the 32-year-old Chinese tourist, Daliang Wang, was declared dead by medical staff on arrival at Rassada Pier.

Employees explained that Mr Daliang was snorkelling when he was spotted struggling in the water and appeared to be choking, confirmed Lt Col Somchai Nuboon of the Phuket City Police.

Police are still awaiting confirmation from hospital staff for the cause of death.

—Winai Sarot

### Region 8 police commander to support tourism

THE new Region 8 police commander arrived on the island on October 1 and has vowed to tackle crime, as well as support the region's tourism.

Lt Gen Tesa Siriawato declined to go into details, saying that he needed more time to acquaint himself with his new position.

Before taking over as Region 8's police commander, Gen Tesa was a liaison officer for the National Security Council.

—Chutharat Plerin

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# Illegal Chinese tour touts busted for bribing officers

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

POLICE ensnared two illegal Chinese tour touts operating at Chalong Pier with additional charges after the pair attempted to bribe the officers 100,000 baht to secure their release on October 6.

Locals informed police that Wenheng Wu, 24, and Boran Chen, 25, were displaying Chinese language tour fliers to potential clients on the pier for several days prior to the arrest.

"When the joint arresting team arrived in the morning, we saw the two with the fliers. When a tourist was interested in the package, they were told to just scan the QR code with WeChat and that other details, such as how to pay, could be discussed later," explained Tourist Police Division 5 Deputy Superintendent Bundit Khaosutham.

"The two were in possession of many types of tour package fliers. However, they did not have work permits."

At the Tourist Police Station the pair allegedly offered to give officers 100,000 baht to be released.

"We had the team go along with it and pretend to receive the money. The transaction was



Wenheng Wu (right) and Boran Chen were additionally charged for bribing police for their release.

clearly captured by CCTV," Col Bundit said.

Mr Wenheng and Ms Boran were charged for working illegally in Thailand, illegally operating a tour business and bribing officers.

The two were taken to

Chalong Police Station for further processing.

Last week, Phuket Immigration Police, together with the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MOTS) Phuket Office officials, also apprehended an illegal tour guide at Chalong

Pier.

Byoung Wook Lim, 43 confessed that he had been working as a tour guide for two years.

Mr Lim has since had his work permit revoked and now faces deportation.

## Shelter beefs up security after escape

ARMED night guards have been placed at the Phang Nga Shelter for Children and Families after 14 Rohingya women and children fled the facility by climbing out a window using a rope made out of their clothes on October 5.

"The increased security is to prevent human smugglers from targeting the women and attempting to help them escape the facility," said Anan Dontri, director of the Phang Nga office of Social Development and Human Security. "We are sure that someone out there is trying to get to these refugees."

Takuapa District Chief Manit Pianthong confirmed to the *Gazette* that civil defence volunteers would be stationed at the facility.

All 14 Rohingya refugees who had escaped from the shelter were found – nine, including the two children, were spotted at a nearby jungle location. The rest, thought to have been given a ride by an unmarked van that had waited for them outside the shelter, were hiding in a palm oil plantation.

The 12 women were all taken to Phang Nga Immigration to prevent further escapes. The two children – aged 5 and 7 – remain at the shelter.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

## Mammoth python caught

IT TOOK rescue workers more than 20 minutes to remove a feasting five-meter-long python from a Phuket Town hen house on October 1.

The homeowner found the snake after investigating strange noises emanating from his hen house.

– Kongleaphy Keam



The python was released at Khao Phra Thaeo Wildlife Sanctuary. Photo: Kusoldharm Foundation


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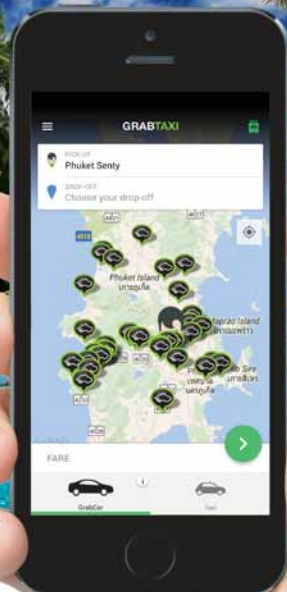
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# Defunct sea gypsy museum gets B20mn

By Kongleaphy Keam

A BUDGET of 20 million baht has been injected into the stumbling, soon-to-be animatronic Sea Gypsy Cultural Center, which saw costs of the facility balloon from 2mn baht to 5.4mn baht before it started to deteriorate into a derelict shell of a building that has become a shelter for the homeless.

Located in a small, non-descript soi at Laem Tukkae, out of sight from the beach, where Koh Sireh tourists board speedboats for day trips to islands, the unoccupied multi-million baht center has descended into disrepair: roof panels have fallen off, a mattress lies under a supporting structure and another floats in a pond nearby.

The center, originally slated for completion in 2012, never opened because it was not finished when it was transferred to the Rassada Municipality in May of that year.

In 2013, Rassada Municipality Chief Administrative Officer (*palad*) Dechakanee Leelanont said a budget of two or three million baht was necessary to finish the landscaping. At that point, the municipality said its job was only to watch the building while the Department of Public Works had agreed to budget for the extra millions.

"The Public Works ended up not allocating any further funds toward the building, so we have had to take it on 'as is' and do our very best to develop an attraction that will be a great benefit to both academics and tourists," Mr Dechakanee told the *Gazette*.

Though the municipality did not have the funds to finish the building, they have allocated 20mn baht over the next three years to develop the museum itself.

"We have nothing now but an empty building given to us



Originally no budget was set aside to build the exhibits for the Sea Gypsy Cultural Center. Photo: Gazette file

by the Phuket Cultural Office," Mr Dechakanee said.

"Therefore, earlier this year, we hired Phuket Rajabhat University to study the history of the sea gypsies; develop and

design exhibits; and also plan out a management system."

The study is expected to be finished by the end of the year.

"Once the study is finished, we expect it to take about three

years for us to open."

Although the university has yet to complete its study, Mr Dechakanee confirmed that '4D' animatronics were already part of the plan.

"However, if they decide that is not the best way forward, we will make the necessary adjustments."

In May 2012, the center was described by Mr Dachakanee as one attraction among many that would contribute to the development of Koh Sireh.

"Koh Sireh has been neglected for so long, but Mayor Phudit Raksaraj has a plan to bring this part of town back to life. He wants to develop Koh Sireh into an important tourist attraction," he said at the time.

The proposal for the center – said to be the first of its kind in Asia – was first announced in 2009 as part of a plan to preserve and exhibit the life and culture of Urak Lawoi sea gypsies.

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# Promthep Cape paragliders fly into trouble

RAWAI municipality is looking into complaints about paragliders blocking public land on Phuket's iconic Promthep Cape.

"[A recent] complaint stated that visitors were being told to get out of paragliders' way while they were taking off," said Rawai Mayor Aron Solos.

The municipality is now moving to solve the problem by calling members of the paragliding club to a meeting next week.

Laem Promthep is one of Phuket's top tourist attractions, especially at dusk when people gather to view sunsets over the western horizon.

Mr Aron explained that there is only one takeoff strip in the area and that paragliders would either land on the beach or the nearby football field. He also confirmed that the business of paragliding is prohibited in his jurisdiction.

"Paragliding is an activity, just as surfing or diving. I can



Paragliders are known to play in Rawai. Photo: Gazette file

see why it attracts tourists because some visitors enjoy seeing them and taking photos of the paragliders," Mr Aron said.

"We are open to paragliders as long as they make sure safety comes first. They must have a proper licence and make sure that they escort people without experience."

Mr Aron also noted that the general public have just as much right to be where they like on public land.

– Chutharat Plerin



# Park price sparks social media storm

From page 1

...“The two Thais were each asked to pay a 20-baht fee while the other man was asked to pay 200 baht,” Mr Vuttipong said. “According to the rules, the fee for foreigners is 200 baht.”

“The reason our staff stood by the fee, even though the man said that he was Thai, was because he could not show a Thai ID card.

“He was able to show a driving licence. However, it did not contain a 13-digit Thai ID number, which all Thai citizens have. Even though he has been living in Thailand for a long time, he is still a foreigner, not a Thai citizen. I assure you that our staff were just following the rules.”

The law being enforced is Royal Forest Department regulation B.E. 2545, which applies nationally.

Even though Mr Grittapohn pointed out in his original post that he can speak and read Thai, as well as sing the Thai national

anthem and the Royal anthem, Mr Vuttipong is correct in asserting that it doesn't make him a Thai in the eyes of the national park system or the Royal Forestry Department.

However, the American citizen's strikingly western appearance very likely prevented him from sliding into the park as a 'Thai'.

Mr Vuttipong and Sarayuth

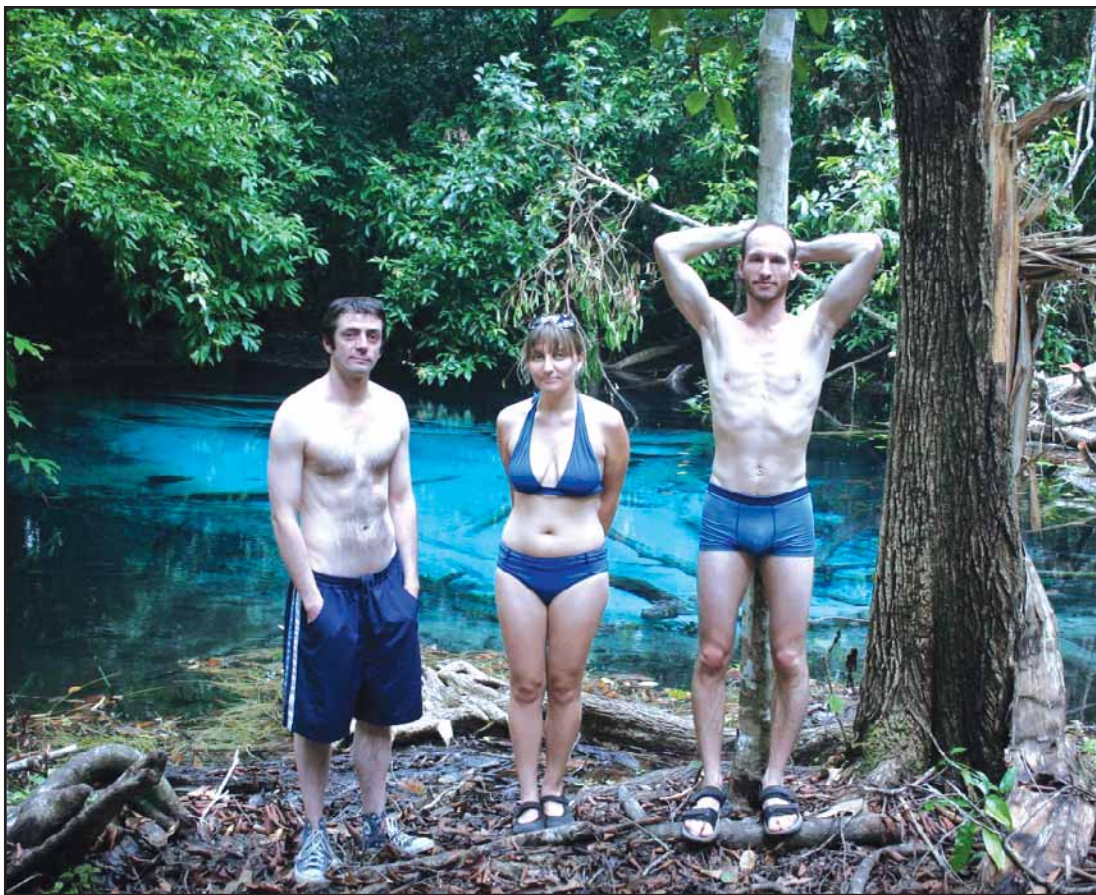
Tanthien, chief of Hat Noppa Rattara-Mu Ko Phi Phi National Park, both confirmed that it was standard for officials to not immediately check for Thai ID cards when allowing people into their parks.

“Normally, officials just ask how many Thais and how many foreigners are part of the group. They can mostly sense who is Thai and who isn't by speaking in Thai to them,” Mr Sarayuth said. “If there is any further doubt, they will ask them to present their ID card.”

It is the responsibility of officials to maintain a positive relationship with foreigners



Mr Grittapohn posted his complaint on Facebook in Thai and English. Image: Facebook



Three foreigners strip down to play at the Khao Pra-Bang Kram Wildlife Sanctuary. Photo: Tina Basgen

and ensure that they have a good experience when visiting attractions in Thailand, explained Santi Pawai, director of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports Phuket Office.

“The root of the problem is the double pricing. However, officials must clearly explain to tourists why prices differ and

how the fees help preserve the attraction,” Mr Santi said.

In addition to receiving annual budgets, parks and wildlife sanctuaries are given back 20 per cent of the profits from ticket sales at the entrance.

However, the crux of the matter for Mr Grittapohn, who is in the process of becoming a Thai

citizen, is not the money.

“I don't mind paying 200 baht, as long as it is the same price for everyone,” he said. “Everybody has a different opinion, but my opinion is that double pricing is not right. All of my friends also believe that double-pricing is not right. They believe it is unfair.”



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# Gambling Vegetarian Fe focus on faith

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### VEGETARIAN FESTIVAL BEGINS

PHUKET: Phuket's Vegetarian Festival began on October 2 with the installation of *go teng* poles at each participating temple. Gods were then invited down the poles to join in the celebrations. Shrines around the island performed the ceremony at exactly 5:09 pm.

Minister of Energy Viset Jupibal chaired the opening ceremony at Phuket City's Jui Tui Shrine, with more than 1,000 white-clad devotees in attendance. Before raising the *go teng* poles, devotees affixed gold leaf to them. At midnight, nine lanterns were hung from the poles to signal the festival's opening.

Ceremonies during the October 3-11 festival include the invocation of the gods Lam Tao (god of the living) and Pal Tao (god of the dead), processions with the gods' images, and mediums bathing in hot oil, climbing sword ladders and walking on glowing coals.

The festival ends with merit-making ceremonies at each temple and a farewell ceremony for the gods.



Foreign forensic experts check a container full of tsunami victims at Mai Khao. Photo: Stephen.

### Security boosted after Bali bombs

By Sangkhae Leelanapaporn &amp; Anongnat Sarpisut

PHUKET: Police have boosted security across the island following the three October 1 suicide bomb blasts in Bali that claimed an estimated 22 lives and injured more than 100 people.

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra was reported October 4 as saying the government was prepared to take any necessary measures to ensure the security of the island.

main concern is security," he said. "We have to be prepared for the worst."

Police said they expected the bombings to have long-term effects on the island's tourism industry. "We have to be prepared for the worst," he said.

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### TTVI center to close before December 26

By Anongnat Sarpisut

PHUKET: The Thai Tsunami Victim Identification (TTVI) center will close before December 26, according to officials.

The center, which has been operating since the tsunami, will close on December 26, officials said.

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CONGRATULATIONS to new mother Jaree "Nok" Makchan, Phuket Gazette Classifieds Assistant Manager, and proud father Sunran Thongsawang for the birth of their daughter Arthaya Thongsawang on September 19.

### Queer News

### Monkey man says he's there to stay

A: A man living alone in the Kamala area has managed to survive on wild fruit. When news of a "monkey man" appeared in the Thai press, however, so many people tried to find him that he was eventually found. The man, who has been living in the hills, where he has somehow managed to survive on wild fruit, is now being kept in a cage.

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### Patong-Kamala work under way

Finest R VEGETARIAN FESTIVAL

### Phi Phi cleanup continues

### Tsunami victims ID center to close before anniversary

THOSE new to the island – relatively speaking – might not have the visceral churning in their guts when they hear the name 'TTVI center'. However, island residents who were here at least a decade ago know that TTVI stands for Thai Tsunami Victim Identification.

The center was tasked with identifying 3,777 of the bodies recovered from the six tsunami-affected provinces. As of October 8, 2005, a total of 2,363 of the bodies were identified (619 Thais and 1,744 foreigners), which left no postmortem resolution for 1,414 people who had families and lived somewhere in the world before that day. (This of course doesn't even take into account those whose bodies were never recovered.)

The TTVI center took the front page of the issue because the center

was to be closed before the 1-year anniversary of the disaster, and the unclaimed bodies were to be turned over to the Justice Ministry's Central Institute of Forensic Science. Such news is yet another way of helping those of us who came after the tsunami to attempt to understand the impact – emotional, mental, physical, logistical and bureaucratic – of the waves.

The *Gazette's* inside story that issue, however, looked at the tsunami from a less stark and logistical perspective and more of an artisan one. It was that week that the *Gazette* explored a 25-piece modern art installation entitled 'Post-Tsunami

### The gift of hindsight

Solidarity through Eyes of Artists', which had popped up on the once-again-pristine Patong Beach.

The Office of Contemporary Art and Culture felt that the exhibition would be a healing force that would boost locals' self-esteem... Was it successful or not? If you remember it – write to us and let us know.

It really was a tsunami packed issue as the *Gazette* covered Andrew Hewett's work in spearheading the cleanup of the waters around Phi Phi following the nearly complete destruction of all man-made structures on the island on Boxing Day.

The Phi Phi Dive Camp completed the first stage of its project on August

14 with nearly 9,000 people helping to remove 250 tonnes of debris from the water and beaches. In total, 2,500 divers made about 7,500 dives as part of the cleanup.

Although the first Go Eco Phuket cleanup smashed records in 2012 for the amount of rubbish they picked up on a single day – it would have only been drop in the bucket when compared to the sustained efforts of the Phi Phi Dive Camp. Ten years later, Mr Hewett and The Adventure Club continue to work with local officials on marine conservation projects in the area.

To read the entire October 1-7, 2005 issue, check out the Phuket Gazette archives online – or, for those who have been around a while, start cleaning out the attic.

– Isaac Stone Simonelli



## BKK suspect tells lawyer he planted bomb

THE prime suspect in the Erawan Shrine bombing went back on his previous denials and admitted to his lawyer on September 30 that he planted the deadly bomb, which killed 20 people and injured more than 100 on August 17.

"But he [Bilal Mohammed] says he was not paid for it. So, I personally believe he might have done it to repay a personal favour," said Chuchart Kanphai, the suspect's lawyer.

## Photographic evidence can't debunk thirsty spirit theory

THE strawberry drinks set out by locals to score winning lottery ticket numbers from an unlucky section of road, which was once home to a very lucky tree, are either being drunk by a 'daytime' spirit or just a bum, depending on who you speak to.

The drink offerings, normally consisting of *nam daeng* or strawberry drink, are usually left by people seeking winning lottery numbers, Dailynews.com reported.

"There used to be a 100-year-old tree there that local people worshiped," said Preecha Pipatpol, of the Sawang Rojjana Thamsatan Rescue Foundation. "They tied colorful fabric around it to worship the tree spirit. Many times people won the lottery when they picked numbers from the tree."

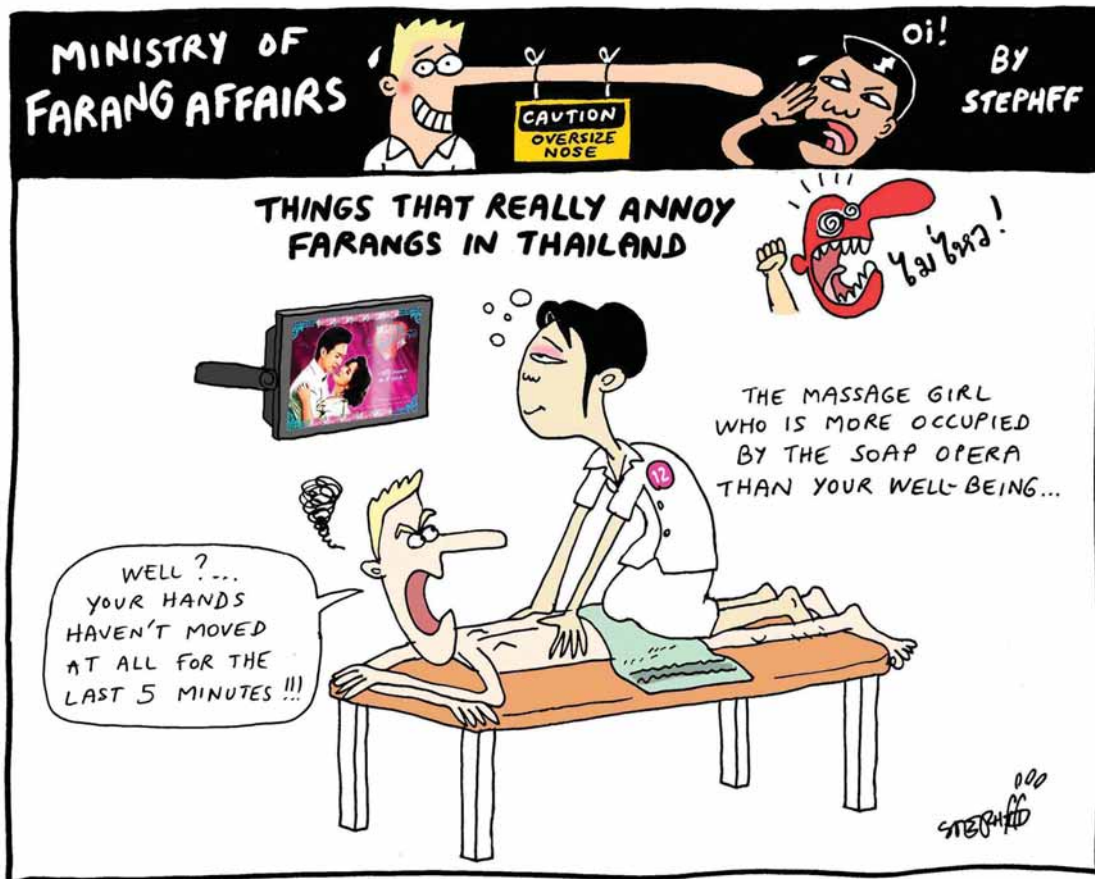
"But then the illegal lottery sellers were angry and set the tree on fire."

After the tree was burned down a road was built, but locals believed the spot was unlucky.

"A lot of accidents happened on the road near where the tree used to be. So people believe that the spirits are still around," said Mr Preecha.

After the story circulated in social media sites, the mystery was solved when photos of what appeared to be a homeless man drinking the beverages were shared.

Although the photos show where the missing drinks have gone, some people believe that the man is merely a spirit who comes out during the day.



## Man wanted for BKK blasts 'still in Thailand'

POLICE believe that the man wanted for several explosions in Bangkok over the last few years is still in Thailand, but deny reports that the suspect is being protected by an influential figure in Kanchanaburi Province.

Yongyut Pobkaew, who is also known as Aod Payungwong, is not just implicated in the August bombing in Bangkok, but also in two other blasts that hit the capital in 2014 and 2010.

## US elevates Kingdom to best child-labor category

THE United States has recognized Thailand's solid progress in fighting child labor.

In the 'Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor 2014', a new report compiled by the US Department of Labor, Thailand has been put in the "significant advancement" category – the highest category.

Only 13 countries performed well enough to get into this category.

The department's Bureau of International Labour Affairs evaluated 140 countries and territories based on their efforts to reduce child labour and re-

## NATIONAL NEWS Briefly

ported on whether they had made significant, moderate, minimal or no advancement.

## DSI goes after firm for alleged pyramid fund

THE Department of Special Investigation (DSI) on October 1 delivered a blow to a firm suspected of running a pyramid-fund scheme and causing damages of over 800 million baht.

A DSI team searched the offices of DCHL, which has allegedly been running the scam while using the essential oil business as a front. More than 600mn baht of the firm's assets were seized.

More than 8,000 alleged victims have already come forward.

## Groups ask for Government housing help

TWO GROUPS representing the interests of the poor have demanded the government support their right to secure adequate habitat, solve land ownership problems and restructure a problem-solving committee.

Four Regions Slum Network

leader Jamnong Nupan urged the government to respond positively to the issues as the housing problem would become more severe.

Mr Jamnong said 86 urban communities were now under threat of being relocated because of government infrastructure projects and developments.

The poor in rural areas also faced the negative consequence of state policies, such as the Forestry Master Plan, mining concessions and power plant projects.

## Victims of trafficking unable to get access to aid

HUMAN-TRAFFICKING victims still lack systematic access to aid from state agencies, the Thai Researchers in Community Happiness Association (TRICHA) said on September 30, adding that despite having many related laws, lack of coherence was preventing the efficient tackling of this problem.

Noppadol Kannika, TRICHA's strategic research chief, urged the Social Development and Human Security Ministry's Office of Anti-Trafficking in Persons Committee to be established as a permanent agency so as to find actual information about the situation to formulate strategies and concrete and effective action plans.

## Farmers to be told to skip dry-season crop

SEVERE WATER shortages seem inevitable as the level in both the Chao Phraya and Mae Klong river basins were well below average and farmers were instructed not to plant the dry-season rice crop to ensure availability of water for domestic consumption.



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## Action against smog

THE unprecedented expanse of smog blanketing Phuket in recent months has quite rightly trained the spotlight on Indonesia, where out-of-control forest fires continue to belch smoke into the atmosphere at a dangerous rate.

Although illegal in Indonesia, slash-and-burn land clearing techniques that set off these annual conflagrations have long been a source of friction between Indonesia and its neighbors, especially Singapore and Malaysia.

The past several weeks have given us here in Phuket yet another bitter taste of what they have suffered for decades: respiratory problems, burning eyes and skies so opaque that not even the sun can be clearly seen.

It strikes the *Gazette* as darkly ironic that this immense pall befalls us in the run-up to the highly-touted advent of the Asean Economic Community (AEC), the terms of which will take effect at year's end.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), the well-funded but ineffectual regional bloc leading all the fanfare, has as its motto: 'One Vision, One Identity, One Community'.

The sad reality is that the regional smog problem is probably the single greatest tangible factor uniting all member states. Perhaps Asean should consider issuing surgical masks bearing its proud emblem as a sign of unity as the big day approaches.

The truth is that Asean functions as more of a rich boys' club than any real instrument of integrated, regional development. Its self-stated *raison d'être* is that no member state shall interfere in the internal affairs of its neighbors. In this regard the bloc has been a success – much to the delight of human traffickers, illegal fishermen, fuel smugglers, arms traders and the many others who thrive in the margins of lawlessness that the AEC seems designed to prolong, not straighten out.

Popular Indonesian leader Joko Widodo was recently quoted as saying it would take "at least three years" before regulatory changes could be put in place to end the current dynamic. This is not good enough. These fires have already sent up in smoke – for all of us to breathe – thousands of square kilometers of forest.

As Asean has been powerless to affect change on the issue, it is time for leaders in Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia and other affected nations to act independently to protect their own people. They should consider economic sanctions, such as trade bans on pulp and paper products, in order to force the Indonesians to end these disastrous fires and protect what remains of the virgin rainforests of Sumatra and Borneo.



## If governors don't have power, then who?

*Re: Jet-skis to rule roost for high season, September 29*

It is glaringly obvious that governors can't do anything about ridding the island of jet-skis as the huge majority of people want to see happen.

Who does have the power to rid the island of jet-skis?

There should be a referendum at the next elections and there should be instant eradication of jet-skis should the majority vote against them.

Thai people deserve a democratic solution to an ongoing blight against tourism.

*Skip  
Gazette forum*

## Not Land of Smiles at Immigration

*Re: Opinion: Big smiles in the Land of ?, October 4*

One of the things I notice here is the lack of consistency, especially at Immigration.

They seem to make up things as they go along and no two visits are the same. 'Jai-yen-yen' wears itself out sometimes.

It is definitely not the Land of Smiles in the Phuket Town office. Patong Immigration's new staff are far more polite.

I dread my next visit to Phuket Town.

*Mister Ree  
Gazette forum*

## Paragliders take charge of upkeep

*Re: Promthep Cape paragliders sail into trouble, October 2*

It was and still is the

## Letters to the Editor

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

paragliders who cut the grass, keep the place clean and tell others to be careful because it is slippery and not safe to walk.

Other visitors drop their cans, papers, plastic and other items there, and if they get asked to please keep the place clean and to be careful because it is steeply sloping and possibly dangerous, they react abusively.

*Stephan Hinterberger  
Gazette forum*

## Trying to avoid skin tax with family

*Re: Wildlife sanctuary chief defends staff's double pricing discrimination against Phuket man, October 5*

This has been going on for years in Thailand.

My own son and daughter, who are 100 per cent Thai with Thai IDs, often get treated like tourists because of their light skin.

I've often had to let my wife or children go into a place alone, or go shopping alone, to avoid the skin tax.

*Tony  
Gazette forum*

## Bang Khu kudos

I just want to say that the re-route made at the Bang Khu

intersection to relieve traffic has really worked wonders.

*Jackie Simpson  
Thalang*

## China's untapped wedding market

*Re: Phuket celebrates 'Golden Week' to promote Chinese tourism, October 2*

There's a huge market waiting to be tapped in China for wedding packages.

But unfortunately for Thailand, couples are discouraged by not being allowed to marry on the beach, or even have their own photographers.

Same as the ridiculous ban on foreign tourist guides. Something needs to change if Thailand is to move on.

*Agogohome  
Gazette forum*

## Earn more cash, collect, recycle trash

*Re: There's money in trash, October 7*

Great Article. Let's hope this will also be posted in the Thai media, schools and elsewhere in the community for the understanding of people with low education so that they will understand that polluting is bad for the environment.

But collecting trash instead of drowning in it will pay and bring prosperity to Phuket.

Protecting nature is the source of our future generations' well being.

*Mother Nature  
Gazette forum*

## Phuket Gazette

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# Funding national parks

## FIRST PERSON

THE reality is that money is the first thing that we need to resolve this problem. Limiting tourist numbers would help curtail negative effects on the environment, but at this stage it would also reduce our income. So, how do we earn money in an appropriate manner?

It is true many problems have arisen from tourists coming to national parks with bad effects on coral and other marine life. However, as I see it, numbers are not the problem.

If the masses visiting the parks do not destroy marine life, there would not be a problem.

For example, there is no law on how many people can visit Phi Phi, so now the total number of tourists has increased to more than one million a year. If we limit the total to, for example, 300,000 people, where would the rest go?

If only 100 people are allowed to enter per day and they destroy the coral by dropping anchors on them, would it not be better for 1,000 or 10,000 people to come in and not destroy anything? That is the key idea.

Therefore working on changing tourists' attitudes and officers' ability to enforce the law are the two key points and in order to tackle them we have to get much needed funds.

National parks, particularly Phi Phi, have very little to work with. They do not have enough



**Assistant Professor Thon Thamrongnawasawat**, 49, is a member of the National Reform Council and a professor at Kasetsart University's Faculty of Fisheries. He has a doctorate in Marine Science from James Cook University, Australia and is currently a

writer, ichthyologist and an environmental activist.

Here he talks about finding a balance between tourism and preserving the environment at national parks along the Andaman Sea.

officials, boats, or equipment to enforce the law.

Just like any other career, if officials receive enough money to support themselves, then they will love and better focus on their job. However, if they don't have enough money, they will focus on ways to find the money to support their families rather than their responsibilities.

National parks have laws in place to protect the environment, but they don't have enough officials or transportation to enforce the law.

For example, Phi Phi National Park's entrance fee should add up to more than 400 million baht a year. If it receives this amount, Phi Phi would have enough money to more effectively protect the environment and stringently enforce the law.

We brought the issue to Cabinet and the Prime Minis-

ter to approve a change in how park fees are collected.

We suggested that fees are paid directly to the central DNP office in Bangkok, similar to the system established by Thai Ticket Major.

By doing this, we can ensure that all fees are being collected properly. Also, the DNP can better regulate the number of tourists visiting certain fragile ecosystems in national parks.

Local national park officers will still be sent out to check that tourists have bought tickets, but will not be permitted to sell tickets.

When we have money, we can add more officials and patrol boats. So sea patrol would be more effective. No tourist boats would be able to drop anchor on coral reefs, discharge waste and get away with many other illegal, detrimental activities, if officials are there waiting to charge them.

It's only after these measures are implemented that we could look for long-term solutions.

## 4D-1 Signaling

Always signal when:

- ◆ Changing lanes.
- ◆ Pulling in or out of a parking space.
- ◆ Pulling into traffic from a parking area or alley.
- ◆ Signal at least 100 feet before turning, or moving right or left.



All it takes is the twitch of a finger. Photo: 2009 Nebraska Driver's Manual

## For your inconsideration

### Island View

By Alexander Maycock

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

A FEW weeks back, driving from Heroines Monument to Phuket Town, I was nearly run off the road half a dozen times by drivers who – other than not paying attention to their wing mirrors – failed to indicate while changing lanes.

By the time I made it home, I was pretty much a nervous wreck. And, since then, I have been compiling some personal stats on the incidence of indication – or the lack thereof.

Around 45 per cent of Phuket drivers (those in front of me, at least) do not indicate when changing lanes. This is not just motorbikes, but cars, SUVs, minivans, taxis, coaches and trucks. Interestingly, minivans – despite their bad boy driver reps – were, with coaches and trucks, more likely to indicate before changing lanes or turning a corner. At the other end of my scale are taxis and SUVs.

Motorbikes were in a class of their own, either barely ever indicating or indicating continuously, which is equally dangerous and frustrating.

Obviously, counting blinking indicators can make for some fairly boring driving, so while I was at it, I attempted to work out what was going through the drivers' minds that led them to chose not to indicate.

Airport limo: "I'm an airport limo. I don't need to indicate; everybody knows I'm going to

the airport."

Brand new SUV: "These new cars are awesome, it does everything for me!" (Except indicate).

Motorbike: "Hey, I'm indicating!" (And have been for the last 12km).

Pick-up truck: "Ooh, I need to turn left here... is left up?... or down?... or?... Oops, too late. Already turned."

New compact hybrid: "I am telepathically linked to every driver on the road."

Concrete truck: "Banzai!"

After one particularly harrowing drive, I ran into a friend of mine (not literally) who had just retaken his Thai driving test. I asked if using the indicator had been covered during the test. He claimed that the instructors had not even mentioned it, but had spent quite a bit of time advocating mob violence.

It only takes the twitch of a finger to tell every vehicle behind and ahead of you what you intend to do. Or are you really so inconsiderate you cannot even be bothered to move one finger to give your fellow drivers peace of mind?

## Words from the Wise

**"I hope everyone that is reading this is having a really good day. And if you are not, just know that in every new minute that passes you have an opportunity to change that."**

– Gillian Anderson

**"I know of no time in human history where ignorance was better than knowledge."**

– Neil deGrasse Tyson

## Issues & Answers

### Who is in charge of the overgrown shrubs?

I OFTEN jog on the walking path along the road from Jor Soo Kong Naka Shrine to Dowroong Wittaya School.

However, there are currently so many overgrown flowers and bushes on the sidewalk that it's difficult to run. It's very dangerous.

Who is in charge of maintaining the shrubbery and can they be removed?

**Preecha Tayib, officer at the Engineering Division of Wichit Municipality, replies:**

That road is under the care of Wichit Municipality. We un-

derstand the dangerous conditions of the sidewalks on this road, as we have already received many complaints.

As a short-term solution, we will trim the flowers and bushes regularly. However, as a long-term solution, we have requested a budget to broaden and reorganize the walkway.

During this time, I would like to apologize for the inconvenience and encourage you to please be careful while walking or jogging on the road.

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

Submit your issue at:

[www.PhuketGazette.net/IssuesAnswers](http://www.PhuketGazette.net/IssuesAnswers)



# What to do with that pile of cash



## Finance

By Don Freeman

CONSIDER the following investing dilemma: You have recently received a large sum of money (from a pension payout, inheritance, the sale of property or a business) and you want to put this money to work for you. However, interest rates and returns on what are considered to be the safest investments (for example US and European bank deposits and government bonds) remain extremely low while the stock market is well into a bull market with many investments having already seen large gains. What should your investing strategy with this lump sum be?

Obviously, you would be afraid of investing all of the money into the stock market just before a 2008 style market meltdown or bear market. However, there are ways to manage both your fears and your money.

To begin with, you need to consider how big this lump sum is compared to the amount of money you have in the form of cash or other investments. A good rule of thumb is if the lump sum is less than 20 per cent of the value of your total cash and investment portfolio, you should likely invest the entire amount into your existing asset allocation as it won't impact it that much.

If the lump sum is more than

20 per cent of this value, you will need to consider one of the following investing strategies:

1) Pick a long-term asset allocation and put the entire lump sum to work immediately. This makes the most sense from a historical and statistical prospective as over time, stock markets eventually recover from bear runs and move higher. However, you may not sleep well at night if you are an overly conservative investor. Likewise, this strategy may be better suited if you are a younger investor who plans to continue working for a number of years, than if you are an investor who is already retired and living on a fixed income.

2) Dollar cost average (DCA) a small amount periodically over a set period of time. The benefit of taking a DCA approach is that it can be easily automated. For example, you have received \$250,000 and you invest \$10,000 a month spread over the next 25 months. The DCA approach does tend to be more effective than a lump sum approach in a volatile market where prices are moving up and down. On the other hand, the slow and steady DCA approach in a raging bull market will have you missing out on large stock market returns.

3) Value averaging (VA). A variation on the DCA approach, a VA strategy involves investing more money when the stock market is down and



In the current environment, if you were served up a pile of cash, what would you do? Photo: Pictures of Money

less when it's up. Studies have shown the VA approach to be more effective than the DCA approach over time. The big problem with this strategy is that you will need to be very disciplined and hands-on as it's difficult to automate and it won't work in a strong bull market where the market keeps heading higher.

4) Staggered lump sum investing. This would be another variation on the DCA approach, but only with a much larger sum. For example: Let's say you have received \$400,000. For the next four years, you decide to invest 25% of the original lump sum into the stock market at the end of every year with the next tranche

being in CDs or bonds that come due right before its time to invest in the stock market again. Had you done this at the end of 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010, the first tranche would have gotten hit hard by the financial meltdown, but the next two tranches would have been invested at very good prices.

Investing a lump sum may appear to be a daunting task, but it can be done with peace of mind that will help you sleep at night. The global markets are currently experiencing a correction or transition to a bear (down-trending) market. This is normal after the strong advance from the 2008 lows in the US market and six years of gains. Corrections and bear markets

eventually run their course and turn into bull (up-trending) markets giving great buying opportunities. Now is the time to prepare a watch-list of leading stocks and sectors to buy once the new uptrend begins.

Don Freeman, BSME is president of Freeman Capital Management, a Registered Investment Advisor with the US Securities Exchange Commission (SEC), based in Phuket. He has over 15 years' experience working with expatriates, specializing in portfolio management, US tax preparation, financial planning and UK pension transfers. Call for a free portfolio review. Don can be reached at 089-970-5795 or email: freemancapital@gmail.com.

## Toyota predicts Thai car sales to be low

TOYOTA Motor Thailand expects the auto industry's sales this year to be low, between 760,000 to 770,000 units, because of the sluggish economy, said company president Kyoichi Tanada.

The company also trimmed its own sales target for this year

to about 265,000 units from the previous estimate of 280,000.

However, Mr Tanada expects overall annual car sales to rebound to around a million units within three years.

The Japanese carmaker started R&D activities in Thailand in 2003. — *The Nation*

## New Zealand moves to tap into Thai tourism market

NEW ZEALAND has launched a new campaign in Southeast Asia as it looks to better tap the region.

The 'Every Day A Different Journey' campaign was introduced to travel agents in Thailand and New Zealand citizens living and working here, explained Steven Dixon, Tourism New Zealand's regional manager for South and Southeast Asia.

The campaign is part of the 16-year master campaign '100% Pure New Zealand', which was created to attract international visitors to the country.

Mr Dixon said that the new campaign would be launched in Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Singapore and Indonesia early this month.



Thais asked to dive into 100% Pure New Zealand. Photo: Lawrence Murray

"In Thailand, we have invited 76 travel agents to learn about the new campaign which is set to promote outer areas of major [tourism] hubs in New Zealand," he said.

In 2014, Mr Dixon said that New Zealand welcomed some 3 million international tourists. Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia are major

sources of arrivals from Asean.

"Sixty-five per cent of Thai tourists visiting New Zealand love to visit places outside big cities so we are promoting these outer areas to them," he said.

Thai tourists spend on average 80,000 baht per person per trip, with the number of incentive tourists from Thailand increasing.

"Thailand is one of the strong markets for New Zealand as they [Thai tourists] still travel in New Zealand whatever the concerns in [their home] country," Mr Dixon said.

The tourism body aims to increase the number of Thai visitors to the country by 5 per cent this year.

— *The Nation*



# Laguna Tri-Fest draws Chinese

RISING Chinese numbers at the Challenge Laguna Phuket Tri-Fest bodes well for years ahead, as the classic Phuket event looks to generate more than 90 million baht this year.

"In the past two years, we've seen more than 50 per cent growth [in the number] of athletes from China, both at the Laguna Phuket International Marathon in June and now the Tri-Fest. Last year, we had a combined total of 33 athletes from China for the Laguna Phuket Triathlon and Challenge Laguna Phuket. This year, we already have around 50 Chinese athletes registered for the Tri-Fest, and expect to see that number grow to at least the point that it doubles the number of athletes from China last year," says Prapa Hemmin, Laguna Phuket director of sales-MICE and corporate events.

The noticeable growth of the Chinese market coincides with Dalian Wanda, owned by Wang Jianlin, a property and entertainment industry tycoon, signing for 100 per cent of the World Triathlon Corporation (WTC).

Mr Wang said the WTC deal represented a further transition away from being "a traditional property company", reported The Financial Times. It is the third major investment in the sports industry Mr Wang has made following Infront Sports & Media and football club



The Tri-Fest is still dominated by participants living in the Asia Pacific region, with the number of Chinese athletes from the region rapidly growing. The first race of the event will be underway on November 22.

Atlético Madrid.

Despite the increase in Chinese interest in the Tri-Fest, other countries in the Asia Pacific region remains the main source of participants, with the top ten

countries of origin including Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Japan and Australia. From Europe, the United Kingdom provides the highest number of participants, followed by Swit-

zerland, Germany and Spain.

The iconic, multi-sports week-long event 'Challenge Laguna Phuket Tri-Fest' starts on November 22 with the 22nd Laguna Phuket

Triathlon and will culminate on November 29 with the 3rd Challenge Laguna Phuket.

The destination's signature distance of the Laguna Phuket Triathlon, comprising a 1.8km swim, 55km bike, and 12km run, and the Challenge Laguna Phuket featuring a 1.9km swim, 90km bike and 21km run, is attracting entries from leading international professional athletes as well as age groupers worldwide.

To date, more than 1,300 athletes have signed up for the two main races. An estimated 1,500 athletes are expected to join the race this year.

"The enduring appeal of the Laguna Phuket Triathlon and the unique challenges of Challenge Laguna Phuket continue to draw endurance sports enthusiasts to Phuket each year," says Ms Prapa.

"With thousands of athletes, each with three to five followers, family members, friends, partners, media, sponsors and/or supporters travelling together to Phuket from around the world and spending four to five nights during the week-long Tri-Fest, the event is projected to generate over 90 million baht in spending in the tourism segment on the island."

For more information and race registration, please visit [www.challengelagunaphuket.com](http://www.challengelagunaphuket.com)

- *Phuket Gazette*

## Is your business really 'different'?



### Business Buzz

Simon Wetherell

ONE of the most common objections people have about using social media is that, while they understand it works for other people, they think their business is different and it will not work for them.

So I have put together a quick test to see if social media would benefit you:

Do you have a website?

Do you need more customers?

Do you want people to know more information about your business?

Do you have a limited marketing budget?

If you answered 'yes' to even one of the above, then the good news is that social media marketing will work for you.

Now, it is true that one solution will not fit all, so when choosing a strategy you will

need to be creative and consistent with your business image and target market, but that is not hard. I have yet to find a business that has not been able to come up with a great strategy that has either increased awareness or customers, and in most cases both.

Saving the best for last, anyone can do this, and there's a wealth of information available on the internet about all of the available platforms, so it doesn't matter what your industry or target market is, there's something for everyone.

*Simon Wetherell is a social media expert, lawyer, best-selling author and international speaker. He now resides in Phuket where he trains businesses and individuals on how to profit from the social media industry. For more information, go to <http://PhuketOnlineMarketing.com> or call him on 095 085 3355.*



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## AIS holds foam party

Advance Info Service (AIS) held a 'Fun Beyond the Frontier' foam party to promote its traveler sim card, priced at 299 baht, at Centra Ashlee hotel earlier this week.



Having fun with Nong Aunjai, who is dressed up as an AIS mascot, are (from L-R) Luksamee Chumjan, AIS marketing manager for Upper South; Phakapol Yawaluck, Centra Ashlee Hotel GM; Mahannop Aphinanthanaphong, AIS vice president for regional operations in the South; and Porntip Prombut, AIS marketing and sales manager for Upper South. Photo: Southern Life Style

## SapoGame.asia unveiled

SapoGame.asia, a hugely popular game in South America, held its pre-launch event at the Bistro Bangtao recently.



Seen at this well-attended event are (from L-R) Patrik Johansson, owner of the Bistro Bangtao; Jorge De La Torre K, founder of SapoGame.asia; Eduardo Valdivieso, SapoGame.asia's project manager; and Karnjana Sa-ngasri.

## Supporting Phuket's Vegetarian Festival

Sansiri Plc and Siam Commercial Bank announced their support for the famous Phuket Vegetarian Festival at Jui Tui Tao Bo Keng Shrine in Phuket Town earlier this week.



Happy at getting the upcoming festival rolling are (from L-R) Apichart Chutrakul, Sansiri Plc's CEO; Phuket Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada; and Pikun Srimahunt, Siam Commercial Bank's head of mortgage and SME products.

## Congratulations chefs

Tiger Kingdom Phuket's chefs recently received a silver and a bronze medal at the Andaman Hotelier 2015 cooking competition.



Giving the chefs and their team prizes for doing so well at this competition are Kochakorn Chaibabutr (2nd from left top row), Tiger Kingdom Phuket's managing director; and Yutthapong Chaibabutr (3rd from left top row), the park's deputy managing director.

**Now on**

**Phuket today**  
Phuket Gazette

**BROADCASTING PHUKET TO THE WORLD**

Phuket Today takes the Pearl of the Andaman to an international audience. PGTV's one-hour show features the personalities, lifestyle, sports and leisure activities that make Phuket famous.

Produced by PGTV, the show is designed to promote Phuket to tourists and the international community in Thailand.

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Saturday-Sunday: 10.30am, 9pm

**Rawai Cable**  
Coverage: Rawai, Kata, Karon  
Channel: **1**  
Monday-Friday: 10am, 1pm, 7pm, 10pm

**KDTV**  
Coverage: Phuket's West Coast from Patong to Chermg Talay  
Channel: **10**  
Daily: 8.30am, 2.30pm

**NATIONAL COVERAGE**

**MCOT World**  
Tuesday: 6.10am, 12pm, 7.10pm  
Wednesday: 6.10pm  
Thursday: 1.10am  
Friday: 1.10am  
Saturday: 1.10am  
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**Truevisions** Channel: **79**  
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## Events in Paradise

### Super Moon Super Blues party a smash hit

The Super Moon Super Blues party at The Bliss Beach Club, held recently on the unforgettable Super Moon Monday night, was a huge success. The gala event was a 'Fun Raiser' for Rotary Club of Patong Beach (RCoPB) with proceeds going to the club's charity fund, which supports a number of projects for children.



O B Wetzell, Development Management Group's CEO, having a good time at the party.



Getting into the party spirit are (from L-R) Eric Furrer, The Pavilions Phuket's food and beverage manager; Giuseppe Viva, Bliss Beach Club's GM; and Mr Duk.



John Magee from the *Phuket Gazette* (left) chatting with J B Henry, of the Black & Blues band.



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Photo: Dean Noble

AS THE sun sets on Phuket on October 13, all Chinese shrines taking part in the annual Vegetarian Festival will raise their *go-teng* poles so that the Jade Emperor, among the Nine Emperor Gods, can descend from the heavens, heralding the beginning of this year's event.

It can all be overwhelming for first timers. So, here at the *Gazette*, we've made things simpler. Check out what made our 'must-see' list this year.

### PROCESSIONS

The festival's processions are an intense experience and not for the faint-hearted. Onlookers will see graphic facial piercings and be surrounded by thousands of exploding firecrackers (the louder the better, to ward off evil spirits). Needless to say, it is an experience of a lifetime. However, if there is one procession not to miss, it is the final parade on the last day of the festival. Bring a face mask and ear plugs!



**October 18:**  
Bang Neow

Shrine, Phuket Town (departure at 7am)

**October 19:** Jui Tui Shrine, Phuket Town (departure at 8am)

**October 20:** Kathu Shrine, Kathu Town (departure at 7am)

**October 21:** Gather at the heart of Phuket Old Town as major shrines proceed toward Saphan Hin to bid farewell to the Nine Emperor Gods. (Best to be on the streets by 10pm.)

### FIRE WALKING AND BLADED LADDERS

This part of the festival is less chaotic, but just as mesmerizing. Look on

## Shrine Guide



Shrine (8pm)

as *ma song* walk across burning coals and climb ladders with bladed steps.

**October 18:**  
Ban Tha Rue Shrine (8pm)

**October 20:**  
Bang Neow

### PIERCINGS

If you are feeling adventurous and want to see the piercing process, attend a shrine an hour or so before their procession starts and watch as the *ma song* are ceremoniously skewered.



## 10 Rules of Vegetarian Festival

1. Maintain personal cleanliness
2. Clean kitchen utensils used separately from others who do not participate
3. Wear white
4. Maintain polite behavior
5. Abstain from eating meat or other animal-based products
6. Abstain from sexual activities
7. Abstain from consuming alcohol
8. People in mourning should not take part
9. Pregnant women must refrain from watching festival rituals
10. Menstruating women should not attend festival rituals

### October 23. Chulalongkorn Memorial Day

Chulalongkorn Day commemorates the reign of Rama V, who is best remembered for introducing many progressive reforms, and for the abolition of slavery in Thailand.

### October 30. Phuket Tourism

### 'By The Numbers' at AMCHAM Event

The American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM) Greater Phuket Chapter will present a tourism event led by STR Global's Area Director for Asia/Pacific Jesper Palmqvist, in the Similan Ballroom at Outrigger La-

## WHAT'S ON in Phuket

guna Phuket Resort.

STR is the leading global performance indicator for hotels and will showcase the

past, present and future outlook for the island.

Mark Simmons, Outrigger Hotels and Resorts' vice president of sales and marketing in Asia Pacific, will join Jesper on stage and lead a discussion providing insights on strategy in a volatile marketplace.

Registration begins at 4:30pm. The session runs from 5pm to 6pm.

Admission is open to the public and is 100 baht for non-members.

To sign up for the event visit [www.amchamthailand.com](http://www.amchamthailand.com) or contact Sarudha Netsawang at [orn@amchamthailand.com](mailto:orn@amchamthailand.com)



# Turmoil in Rakhine State Part II

## Looking Back

By Anand Singh

LET'S pick up the story of the Rohingya we left off last month...

In the year 1826, the British invaded and took control of Arakan after the first Anglo-Burmese War. By this time the Arakan region, plagued by war, was critically depopulated. Farms had been left untended for many years. The British encouraged native Bengali farmers as well as Rohingyas who lived in Bengal to move to the depopulated areas of Arakan.

Once again, a sudden influx of Muslim immigrants from British India began to settle in Arakan. This time however, it sparked a strong reaction from the mostly Buddhist Rakhine people of Arakan.

When the Second World War broke out, Britain aban-

doned Arakan, along with the rest of Burma after the Japanese began invading South-East Asia. In the chaos that followed, both Muslims and Buddhists in Arakan began attacking and massacring one another. As a result of the ethnic violence, Muslims fled to the north of the state where they were the majority. Rakhine Buddhists fled south. The effect was a further segregation of the population of Rakhine state.

Shortly after the Second World War, the British granted Burma its independence. Not long after, a Rakhine Muslim rebellion erupted. The rebels initially looked to annex northern Rakhine State to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) but this was rejected by Pakistan. The Rakhine Muslims therefore increased their call for an autonomous region, free from what they saw as discrimina-



Rohingyas arrive on the shores of Thailand. Photo: Gazette file

tion by Buddhist Burmese officials.

The Rakhine Muslims' call for an autonomous region was

silenced after the military coup of 1962 in Burma. The military government in Burma looked upon ethnic minority groups

with suspicion. New policies effectively denied citizenship status to Rakhine Muslims.

Ethnic tensions continue to flare to this day. In 2001, riots between Rakhine Buddhists and Muslims broke out in the state capital of Sittwe, with all started by an argument between a group of young monks and a Muslim stallholder.

An event that should have just remained a petty disagreement erupted into a night of violence in which up to 20 people were killed and several homes and shops torched. Today many Muslim Rohingyas of Rakhine State continue to flee persecution in their homeland. Stateless, they are often not accepted as citizens by either Myanmar or Bangladesh. Many have fled on overcrowded boats in the hopes of finding refuge in Malaysia, Thailand or even Australia, yet few governments have accepted them.

## Strokes from the Dragon's brush

CHINESE artist Kuku Chai Bukuk was deeply moved by her visits in August to the Grand Palace in Bangkok and the temples of old Ayutthaya. Now she's back to display the painting that resulted, a rendering of venerable pagodas titled 'The Kingdom of the Buddha'.

Ms Chai Bukuk (anyone who's passed through Terminal 1 at Hong Kong International Airport will have seen her work) is among the nine gifted 'tourists' participating in the exhibition 'Thailand through the Dragon's Brushes: Chinese Artists Paint Thai Scenes'. More than 80 works are included, collectively reflecting both the legacy of Chinese art and the charms of Thai culture.

"I chose Ayutthaya as my subject because it represents the golden era of the Siamese empire and the greatest achievements of Buddhist architecture," she says through a translator, *China Daily* reporter Cai Xiao. "Ayutthaya is very similar to Angkor in Cambodia."

Ms Chai Bukuk has also depicted bright statues of the Buddha and some gorgeous landscapes, each work displaying her mastery of traditional



A painting created by Chinese artist Wang Jianzuan.

ink and brushstroke techniques.

Led by Cai Zhixin, recognized as a National Artist in his homeland, the nine artists spent a week touring Bangkok, Ayutthaya, Chiang Mai and Lampang, gathering inspiration.

The artists recorded their initial impressions in sketched drawings and paintings done on-site. Tan Yan of *China Daily* pointed out that this was the first time they'd worked in Thailand, though some have had exhibitions here.

— *The Nation*



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A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER



# Eating up intermittent fasting



## Excuse Buster

By Craig Burton

INTERMITTENT fasting is all the rage at the moment with diets such as the 5:2 Diet going mainstream and becoming a big hit. Could temporarily abstaining from food be healthy, or is this practice potentially setting up a person for trouble?

As a nutritionist it goes against one of the original rules we were taught to preach such as: Eat small meals often and don't skip meals – especially breakfast.

Over the years, I have come to recognize that there is no 'one size fits all' dietary strategy and the key to long-term health success is that a person adapts food choices and timing according to what works for them, always taking into account their lifestyle.

Having followed my own original advice for many years to eat every 2-3 hours and not skip meals, about 10 years ago I experimented with this radical idea to not eat so frequently and even extend my evening fasting periods by performing intermittent fasting, which proved to be a revelation. I realized I didn't need to eat so often in order to still function

well physically and mentally, and it was easier to not gain fat. But the potential benefit of fasting for long-term health is another big reason it is a permanent part of my lifestyle. There is a lot of good research on the benefits of intermittent fasting. Here is an excellent summary cited in the journal *Cell Metabolism* 2014

"Fasting has been practiced for millennia, but only recently studies have shed light on its role in adaptive cellular responses that reduce oxidative damage and inflammation, optimize energy metabolism and bolster cellular protection. Fasting has the potential to delay aging and help prevent and treat diseases while minimizing the side effects caused by chronic dietary interventions."

### NOT FOR YOU

There are some people not suitable for either intermittent or full fasting:

1. Children or adolescents
2. Pregnant or breast feeding women
3. Most athletes while in training or competing
4. Young women with hormonal (including menstrual cycle) issues – fasting can potentially make things worse by adding further stress
5. People with more serious



What's for dinner? Oh, right... nothing. Photo: Gisela Francisco

health issues (physical and mental) including burnout syndrome (adrenal fatigue), blood sugar imbalances or a sluggish thyroid.

### MAYBE FOR YOU

The people best suited to intermittent fasting are those who have first got the basics of good nutrition, movement and a supportive lifestyle. For some that may take several months. If weight loss is the goal, before jumping into intermittent fasting I recommend starting by cutting sugar and starchy car-

bohydrates, coupled with eating more fibrous carbs (vegetables), good fats and clean proteins. I am always wary of someone trying to run before learning to walk; dabbling in dietary changes like intermittent fasting for some is just another style of yo-yo dieting that can lead to further issues including hormonal imbalances.

### OPTIONS

There are countless possibilities to perform intermittent fasting. Here are two popular choices:

1. 5:2 Diet method (pio-

neered by Brad Pilon who wrote 'Eat stop Eat'). This style generally means eating one meal for the day, one or two days per week with the other days eating normally.

2. Another popular method is using a lengthened daily fasting time (made famous by Martin Berkham). Instead of fasting from say 8pm (end of dinner) to 7am, you try to hold out breaking the fast until say noon and having an eating window from noon to 8pm. You may still eat two to three meals per day, but all to be consumed within the eight-hour window.

### THINK ON IT

Intermittent fasting shows an enormous clinical potential for reducing cellular damage and improving health markers, but we always need to remember that attaining optimal health should first start with the basics of clean diet, regular exercise and a supportive lifestyle, because performing intermittent fasting in a malnourished and highly stressed state may cause more problems than it solves.

Craig Burton is a Certified Sports Nutritionist (CISSN) with a Bachelor of Science degree (Sports Science) and a National Academy of Sports Medicine (PES) certification.


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## Thailand now enjoys 'olive oil of the east'

MEDICAL experts have long warned against excessive consumption of oily foods, but what if there existed a cooking oil that not only added to the taste of the dish, but was actually good for you too?

The good news is that there is such an oil and it's now becoming readily available all over Thailand. Produced by the Chaipattana Foundation, Camellia oleifera tea-seed oil – not to be confused with tea-tree oil – is of extraordinary high quality and has multiple benefits for health.

Used extensively in China and East Asia, tea-seed oil was little known in Thailand until Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn gave an ordinary brown seed that looked a little like a chestnut to Chaipattana's secretary gen-

eral Sumet Tantivejkul, and told him it was a 'magic seed'. That was 11 years ago, and the project has been in development ever since.

Touted as the 'olive oil of the east', tea-seed oil boasts no trans fats, very low levels of saturated fats and a high level of unsaturated fats. These unsaturated fats include 81-87 per cent of oleic acids (omega-9 fatty acid), 13-28 per cent of linoleic acids (omega-6 fatty acid), and 1-3 per cent of alpha-linoleic acids (omega-3 fatty acid). With these compositions, tea seed oil can help reduce the level of low-density lipoprotein (bad cholesterol) and increase high-density lipoprotein (good cholesterol) and prevent vasoconstriction, paralysis, high-blood pressure, diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

– The Nation



# Cycling to the Rugby World Cup



## Blazing Saddles

By Baz Daniel

MY PASSION for the game of rugby union blossomed about the same time as my passion for cycling, and both were formed in the crucible of early boyhood experience.

At age eleven I was sent to one of those all-male schools that believes the formation of character and excellence in young men is greatly enhanced by a regimen of tough physical exercise and strict discipline. In particular, I was subjected to twice a week cross-country runs over open, and often icy, ploughed fields, cold showers, bad food and the delights of the game of rugby.

This was a form of torture which often involved having your face ground into the cold mud of a wind-swept pitch by the studded boots of older, larger boys. Rugby was a sport



Baz Daniel takes in the Thames on the way to the Rugby World Cup.

for which a broad streak of masochism seemed to be the minimum requirement for enjoyment, and of course at the age of eleven, it left an indelible impression on me... in all senses of that word.

I also had to cycle about ten kilometers to my school each day to receive the program of education and torture in which my school seemed to specialize. Somehow, cycling and rugby union became associated

in my mind and have stayed with me throughout my life.

So it was when I found myself back in England in October, I decided to attend some of the games in the eighth Rugby World Cup at the venerable home of the sport, Twickenham Stadium.

I had booked tickets very early and had managed to snare seats for one of the most important matches in the pool stages of the tournament: old enemies and bitter rivals England (the World Cup host) and Australia.

I was staying in Ealing, which is about ten kilometers from the ground, and was looking forward with great excitement to the kick-off. But therein lay the problem, because 80,000 other mad-keen rugby fans were doing exactly the same thing and planned to descend on Twickenham for the 8pm evening match.

From previous experience, I knew that getting to the ground

for big matches could be a total nightmare and the matches just did not come any bigger than this one. Buses, tubes, trains and even the streets would be clogged with traffic and fans, many of them in fancy dress ranging from ubiquitous giant-sized hopping kangaroos to 'bishops' and 'nuns' swigging beer from cans.

What to do?

Then my adolescent association of cycling and the game of rugby presented the solution. I decided that I would cycle to Twickenham and the great game, along a route I knew well, following the Thames Path.

This wonderful route takes one through Richmond, with its famous bridge, and reaches of the Thames, which the poet John Keats described as among England's loveliest.

*Embrace the beauty of the rest of Baz's journey online in the lifestyle section at PhuketGazette.net*

## Nepal in recovery

NEPAL is returning to near normal after the massive earthquake in April, though for some residents, progress is much too slow.

Kumari Lama smiles proudly as she gestures toward her week-old son who is sleeping soundly, wrapped in a fluffy red blanket. The 26-year-old's smile, though, is tinged with sadness as she recalls the day back in April when she and her husband, Jit Bahadur Lama, 27, lost everything they owned in the earthquake that struck Kathmandu valley, killing thousands and sending buildings tumbling to the ground.

With support from within and outside their community, Mrs Kumari and Mr Jit are slowly getting back on their feet, though they are far from being where they were six months ago.

"It's the best we can have, at least so far," says Mr Jit, looking around his temporary one-room house, which includes an adjacent kitchen.

More than 8,700 people lost their lives and over 22,000 were injured. The Ministry of Home Affairs' records also show that 200,000-plus buildings collapsed completely and another 214,000 were partially damaged.

Left in the dark for the first few days, Mr Jit and his wife were then housed in a provisional camp where they lived with hun-



A home wrecked in the quake. Photo: The Nation

dreds of shattered families. With Mrs Kumari pregnant and the government's response still sluggish, Mr Jit eagerly accepted the offer of support from the Nepali arm of the Thai non-profit organization 'Change Fusion'.

Kunda Dixit of Himalmedia confirms that government efforts have been very slow, given the scale of the incident.

"The Reconstruction Authority has yet to become functional because of the politics in this country," he laments.

"However, voluntary and other groups, both Nepali and foreign, have delivered timely assistance. But a lot depends on the community too. When a community is well organized, it has been able to use outside help well and rebuild their lives. Communities that are not are finding it more difficult."

— Piyaporn Wongruang / The Nation

# NICE PEAK

Music Moving On

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## Supalai Plc trims target



A single family home built by Supalai Plc. Photo: Supalai Plc

LISTED property firm Supalai now estimates that its presales will total 21 billion baht this year, lower than the early estimate of 23 billion baht, as demand for condominiums was lower than expected in the first nine months.

However, the company has maintained its revenue target of 22 billion baht, up 17.64 per cent from last year's 18.7 billion, thanks to 11.4 billion of its total backlog of 38 billion being ready for booking to revenue during the second half of this year, deputy managing director Trithecha Tangmatitham says.

Supalai launched its first condominium project of the final quarter of the year, Supalai Loft @ Khaerai Station, worth 1.1 billion baht, earlier this week.

— *The Nation*

# Finding Mediterranean in Rawai



Phuket Pads

By Patrick Lusted

WHILE other real estate markets on the island seem to be struggling, the luxury villa sector remains steady, making room for those looking for unique, stylish villas jumping to buy.

Such is the case with a five-bedroom Mediterranean inspired villa with stunning views from its rooftop.

Located in Rawai Beach's Saiyuan Med Village, this three-year-old split level, five-bedroom, three-bathroom home is ideal for those who like to entertain and is perfect for enjoying lazy brunches, al fresco dining, and relaxing with friends while watching the sunset.

The Mediterranean theme continues in the interior with white floors and walls throughout – complemented by dark stained furnishings and vibrant accent walls.

The western-style kitchen is spacious, accompanied by a large white dining table with plenty of bench space for family and friends.

Air conditioning and ceiling fans are installed throughout the home, as well as mosquito screens for added protection.

Large arches surround the private pool with room for sun loungers on the outdoor terrace.



Rawai beach has seen a lot of real estate development over the past few years. Photo: Colm Britton

A shared community club house is available for your convenience, as well as a picnic area on a large, 700 square meter land plot.

Additionally, there is a free form swimming pool, gym, children's play area, BBQ area, changing rooms and management office, all within the commune. All areas are furnished to a high standard.

Saiyuan Med Village is a se-

cure community with an on-site security guard 24 hours a day. A gate key (swipe card) is needed to access the property, while CCTV ensures extra security.

The villa is located only minutes from Nai Harn Beach, which offers breathtaking, natural scenery. Phuket International Airport is an hour's drive, while major shopping centers, international hospitals and schools are

only 15 minutes away.

Rawai itself offers many restaurants, bars, bakeries, convenience stores and shops to explore.

The villa is priced at 12,900,000 baht.

For more information, contact Patrick Lusted at Siam Real Estate, quoting reference code: HSIL7148. Telephone: 076-288908. [www.siamrealestate.com](http://www.siamrealestate.com)

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## Call for quick action on stimulus

THREE real-estate associations have asked the government to decide quickly whether to launch measures to boost the property market, as some buyers have delayed taking delivery of their homes after the government said last week that it had such a plan.

"We hope the Cabinet will finalize the measures at its meeting next week and that they will be effective immediately," Thai Condominium Association president Prasert Taedullayasatit said.

He was speaking after a press conference to promote the 33rd 'House and Condo Show', which will take place from October 8-11 at Queen Sirikit National Convention Center in Bangkok.

Besides Mr Prasert's group, the Thai Real Estate Association and Housing Business Association will press the Finance Ministry to move ahead with the measures.



Bangkok property buyers are waiting for a stimulus package. Photo: The 3Bs

Earlier, the three associations proposed four measures to the ministry to help the property market, especially the lower-income segment.

The first of these was easing the qualifications for mortgage approval, especially for lower-income people who own a business or work freelance.

The second measure would extend the mortgage-repayment maximum from 30 years to 50 years so as to reduce monthly installment amounts.

Third, they proposed doubling the maximum to 3 million baht on loans getting a special interest rate from the Government Housing Bank.

The final proposal was a reduction of transfer and mortgage fees to 0.01 per cent.

The current final quarter of the year should see 120 billion baht's worth of residential projects in Greater Bangkok transferred to customers.

— *The Nation*



# Phuket shrugs off Bangkok slide

By Nina Suebsukcharoen

IN TERMS of property, Phuket seems to be worlds away from Bangkok, where the market has experienced a slowdown, mostly because the island is more affected by events outside of Thailand than inside the Kingdom, Robert Collins, managing director of Savills (Thailand), said earlier this week.

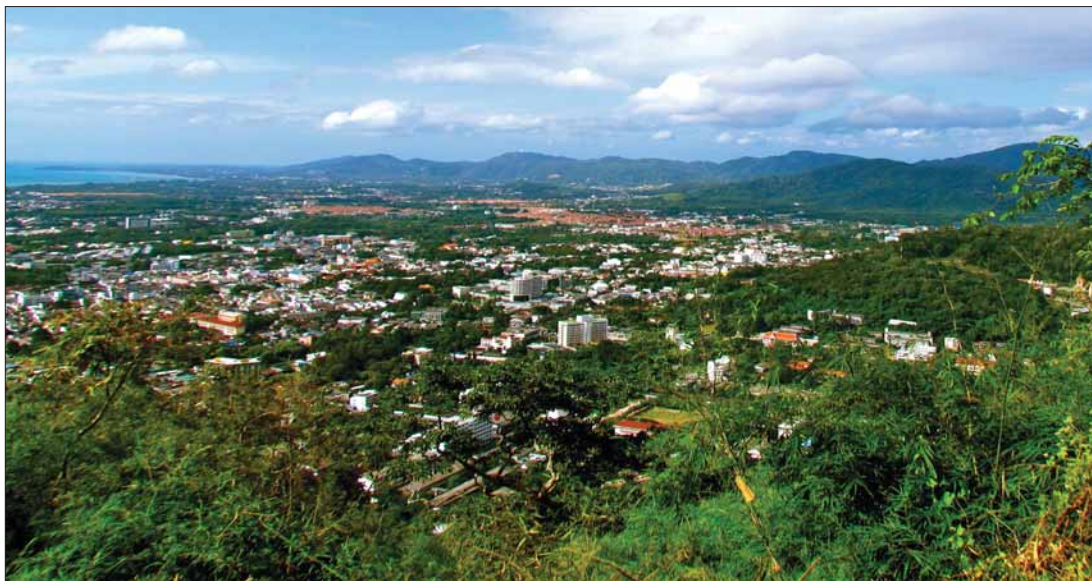
Because the Bangkok market has dipped, three real-estate associations recently urged the government to quickly decide whether it wants to launch a stimulus package to spur the market forward.

"Phuket is not really affected in the same way, it's not a mainstream housing market. The indigenous population of Phuket is not growing exponentially and their housing needs have been catered for relatively well," explained Mr Collins.

"What you find is the service sector of the Thai working population is probably the biggest driver of domestic housing, but in Phuket it forms a very small percentage of the new condominium purchasing demand."

This is very different than Pattaya, where the domestic service sector forms quite a significant buying community, noted Mr Collins.

With external factors affecting Phuket more than internal issues, Mr Collins pointed out



Savills (Thailand) Managing Director Robert Collins says Phuket is more affected by external factors than internal ones. Photo: Jeff Gunn

that the recent global stock market rout could lead to a switch in investment from stocks to luxury property on the island. Although some markets have started to recover, analysts have cautioned about the sustainability of this nascent recovery.

"It's quite likely that we will see more people exit from the stock market, the volatility of major indices around the world is quite likely to continue and might spook investors. Some people will take profit and move their money out of those markets."

"It's entirely feasible that they may put that into bargain-priced luxury properties that

we see at certain times in all markets.

"So there is a dynamic in play and the developers have got to keep their eyes open."

Some property players are hoping that the massive surge of Chinese tourists across the country will eventually translate into property purchases.

Mr Collins said that this is entirely possible, based on the observation that today's multi-millionaire buyers of luxury properties in Phuket were travellers in the 1970s and 1980s who didn't then have the money to buy. But now that they do, they are returning to the place for which they had a fondness.

"We hope that they start buying. I tell you, at this point in time, it's a trickle rather than a flood in terms of the volume of buying," Mr Collins said.

"If you look at the trend of [Chinese] buying into London, or Canada and New Zealand, it's substantial, that would be the only way to describe it."

"So if they start buying here, the market will see an immense take-up and upside in terms of value."

The sustained Chinese tourism in Thailand and the country's proximity to the 'Sleeping Dragon' establishes it as a logical places for property investment by Chinese, especially given the number of

wealthy Chinese currently bolstering property markets around the world.

"However, the type of tourists that Thailand is hosting and receiving is quite different from the people who are buying in those other countries."

Though Phuket is not suffering the same slowdown as Bangkok, Mr Collins agreed with the proposal of the real-estate associations for stimulus measures, particularly increasing leasehold from 30 to 50 years, to be implemented to spur the foreign market,

"I think that would help enormously, certainly we are lagging behind some big competition in the region."

## L&H focuses on malls, hotels

LAND and Houses, a major residential developer, wants to see shopping centers, as well as hotels, become its core business in the near future.

Its portfolio consists of mainly Land and Houses Bank, Q-House, and Home Product Center, the operator of HomePro building-materials stores. They generate revenue of 2 billion baht per year, up from 100 million baht a decade ago.

A few years ago, L&H branched out into developing and managing shopping complexes.

Chairman Anant Asavabhokhin, who recently presided over a ceremony marking the 10th anniversary of LH Bank, said the group found that this new shopping-mall business was a gold mine, as these assets can be transferred to leasehold real estate investment trusts (REITs).

For the Terminal 21 shopping



Bangkok's Terminal 21 mall attracts large crowds of shoppers everyday. Photo: Dushan Hanuska

plaza, the company invested 3 billion baht but gained 6 billion baht from selling it to a REIT.

The company is interested in shopping malls because there are still not many of them nationwide, Mr Anant said. L&H plans to open at least one mall a year at a cost of 6 billion to 7 billion baht each.

The Terminal Korat shopping mall is under construction

and Pattaya and Phuket are under consideration for the next locations of Terminal shopping malls, Mr Anant said.

"Small merchants in the provinces want more retailers to invest in shopping malls, since that will create opportunities for them," he said.

The right location with the right segment is the key to success in the shopping-mall business. — *The Nation*

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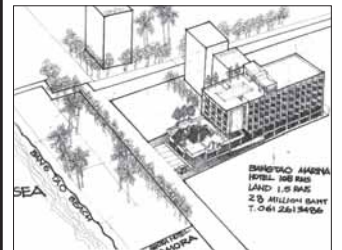
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- Driver and Administrative Officer (1 position)

The successful candidates will be offered an initial contract for two years and six months.

Further details including the Selection Criteria and instructions on how to apply for the positions are available at [www.thailand.embassy.gov.au](http://www.thailand.embassy.gov.au) under "About Us" and "Job Vacancies".

Applications close at 4.30pm, Friday, 30 October 2015.

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# Embodying Chinese spirits

By Nattha Thepbamrung

ONE of the most famous ceremonies that is synonymous with Phuket's Vegetarian Festival, or *Jia Chai*, is the soul-stirring parade of '*ma song*', who are often seen stabbing objects through their cheeks or slashing their tongues with knives, as they believe this sacrifice will take away bad fortune, sickness and danger from those who take part in the festivities.

Thitipong Saisutthikul, 26, a hotel vice general manager has been a *ma song* for seven years.

"I declined to be a *ma song* for five years before I gave in," said Thitipong.

"To become a *ma song*, you must be chosen by '*Phra*' [the angel's spirit] and I was chosen."

He recalled the first time that he became possessed by his *Phra*, *Ong Sun Tai Sai*, six years ago.

"I was hanging out in my house and suddenly my body became paralyzed. I was frozen like that for a few hours until I became unconscious and started speaking Chinese. I was

told that after I spoke, I wrote down the name of my *Phra* in Chinese letters and ever since I have taken on the duty of being a *ma song*."

Mr Thitipong said that the tools he uses during festival rituals are the classic ones used in the legend of the *Jia Chai*.

"I normally use sharp steel or swords to stab my cheeks. It doesn't cause pain, as I am unconscious at the time, but I have never used the fancy tools that people have started using recently."

He noted that, although the ceremony is meant for the *ma song* to suffer for other people, there is a legend and process to it and he does not agree with changing tools to attract more attention.

"There are some weapons that are mentioned in the legend, such as sharp steel and swords, but many people have now started using wheels, trees, guns or even bicycles."

"I don't think it's appropriate and it's more for fashion and not tradition. Many *ma songs* are campaigning and trying to tell others to follow the legend."

Mr Thitipong explained that during the festival, the *ma song* must go to the shrine and wait until their *Phra* possesses them. After they are unconscious, the shrine staff will sit them down, clean their cheeks with alcohol and use sharp steel to open a hole on each cheek and put in the object that the *ma song* had chosen beforehand.

After the processions, the *ma song* will return to the shrine where a medical team and shrine staff will remove the tools from his cheeks while the *ma song* is still possessed in order to avoid pain.

After the wounds are cleaned and closed, a ceremony is performed to lure the spirit out of the *ma song* so that they will become conscious again.

"I never feel bad about having scars on my face or feeling pain after the ceremony. I realize that I have been chosen and I am honored to sacrifice myself to help people during the *Jia Chai* Festival."

And, though he said that *Jia Chai* has changed a lot from when he was young, he is glad to see that people are still

interested and keep to the strict guidelines and traditions, such as wearing white and not eating any animal products.

"It's good to see people coming from other provinces and other countries to join the festival and ceremonies. Though they may not understand it completely, by involving themselves in the festival they will receive health and merit."

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