Phuket Gazette

January 30 - February 5, 2016

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'AT LEAST 100 MEN CAME AND ATTACKED US'

Violence erupts at sea gypsy village

Deputy Prime Minister receives plea for help in resolving land dispute

By Chutharat Plerin

MORE than 30 people were injured in a violent confrontation between private investors and sea gypsies in Phuket on Wednesday.

"At least 100 men came to our village and attacked us. They put out rocks to block us from accessing our village and an area where we perform traditional ceremonies," alleged Nirund Yangpan, 40, a Rawai sea gypsy representative.

Mr Nirund went on to claim that the men even injured a woman who was five-months pregnant.

"We need protection. The businessmen have already threatened us with guns. They will never stop. It will only get harder and harder.

"Today we were injured, who knows if any of us will be killed soon," he said.

Following the violence, Rawai sea gypsies submitted a written plea for help to Deputy Prime Minister Admiral Narong Pipatanasai, who on the island at the time.

"We knew that Deputy PM Narong was coming to Phuket, so we had already prepared to ask him to help us by revoking the *Chanote* title that private investors are using to claim our land. We have been living here for generations," Mr Nirund told the *Gazette*. "We don't even know many of the...

Continued on Page 4



More than 30 people were injured in the violence conflict. Photo: Rawai PR

Blood banks run dry, German in desperate need

HEROIC efforts by island residents in responding to an emergency call for Anegative blood has allowed doctors to continue necessary surgeries to save the life of a German man injured in a motorbike accident.

However, more blood is still needed.

Story on Page 3

BUSINESS



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PROPERTY



Hotel occupancy shows strong recovery in 2015, says STR Global.

LIFE&STYLE



Mountains surrounding Bang Wad Dam could offer stellar cycling.





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LOCAL NEWS Briefly

HKT on high alert for MERS

HEALTH officials at Phuket International Airport have ramped up efforts to identify any Phuket travellers who could be infected with the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome-Coronavirus (Mers-CoV).

The news follows Thailand's second confirmed case of the virus on January 23.

Any travellers showing signs of influenza will be checked by medical officers at the Disease Control Center on arrival.

- Sukawin Tanthavanich

Foreigner killed, allegedly jumps in front of bus

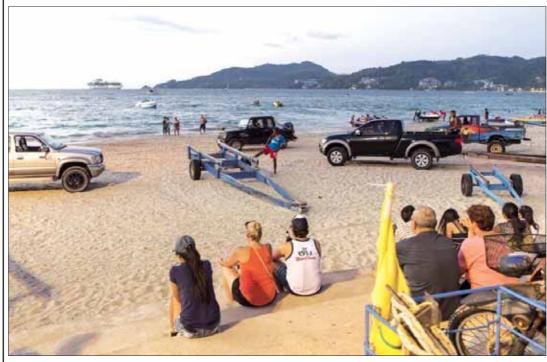
POLICE are working to identify a foreigner who was killed after allegedly jumping in front of a tour bus in Patong on January 27.

Bus driver Somkhit Wongpan switched lanes to avoid hitting the man, who was standing in the road. However, he allegedly jumped in front of the bus.

The body was taken to Patong Hospital.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

Jet-ski regulations and woes dominate beaches



Six new jet-ski regulations will be put in place within the next month, including a new age requirement stating that a renter must be at least 18 years of age to operate the vehicle by themselves. However, nothing can be done about chaos caused by jet-ski operators driving their trucks and trailers onto the beaches, explained Phuripat Theerakulpisut, acting director of the Marine Office Region 5. For the full story, visit PhuketGazette.net. Photo: Andy A Helbling

Officers arrest heroin dealer

POLICE arrested a confessed drug dealer on January 26 for selling heroin to teenagers and others in the Thalang area.

Nikom Damrongrit, 40, was arrested with 81.39 grams of heroin and other drug paraphernalia at his house in Paklok.

He was charged with possession of a Category 1 drug with intent to sell.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

Demolition of Surin Beach pushed back

THE expected demolition of buildings on Surin Beach has been pushed back to next month.

Vice Governor Chokdee Amornwat noted that the tie up is due to a lack of communication between the Cherng Talay Tambon Administration Organization and Phuket Provincial Administration Organization.

Vice Governor Chokdee

said that he does not expect to hold any more meetings with the committee until the demolition has been complete.

- Kongleaphy Keam

Airport to ban paging boards

PHUKET International Airport is considering banning private paging boards at the arrival hall.

An announcement was posted on the facility's Facebook page announcing that the new policy banning private agents using the boards to pick up passengers would come into effect on February 1.

However, the Gazette has confirmed that there is no set launch date for the plan.

- Chutharat Plerin

New Zealand national dies in motorbike crash

A NEW ZEALAND national was killed in a single vehicle crash in Chalong on January 23.

Police believe that the woman may have been driving at high speed when she lost control of her bike at a curve and crashed into a nearby tree.

The body was taken to Vachira Phuket Hospital to determine a cause of death.

- Kritsada Mueanhawong

Unidentified body found on Nai Harn boat

POLICE discovered the severely decomposed body of an unidentified male on a boat off of Nai Harn on January 23.

Police believe that the man had been dead for at least a week before being discovered.

The body was taken to Vachira Phuket Hospital to determine the cause of death.

- Kritsada Mueanhawong

Kiwi dies in early morning tryst in Patong

A 68-YEAR-OLD New Zealand man died at the home of a bar owner in Patong on January 23.

Police confirmed that the man had gone home with the bar owner, whom he met on Soi Paradise at about 1:30am.

The bar owner called the hospital for help after the man fell unconscious 15 minutes into intercourse.

The body was taken to Patong Hospital to confirm the cause of death.

- Kritsada Mueanhawong

One killed, one injured in fire

ONE man was killed and another injured after the boat they were crewing from Phuket to Phi Phi Island burst into flames and sunk on January 25.

Transport boat Sapsin was able to arrive before rescue teams, and save Sommat Petchrat, 42, and recover the body of Echa Sawaengwit, 59.

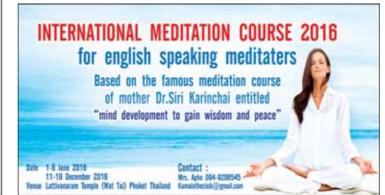
Officials have yet to verify the value of the boat and the goods on board.

- Chutharat Plerin



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Plea for blood to save German

By Sukawin Tanthvanich

THOUGH news of the desperately needed A-negative blood to save the life of a German man produced eight units, more is still needed.

Bernd Langer, 51, was involved in a single vehicle motorcycle crash in Rawai at about 5am on January 24.

"Witnesses said that Mr Langer fell over while driving his motorcycle," explained Lt Chollada Chokdeesrijan of the Chalong Police. "He was wearing a helmet at the time of the

Despite wearing a helmet, Mr Langer was seriously injured and in need of a number of surgeries.

"We have already conducted several operations, during which a lot of blood was lost," said Ampai Saengwichitr, a medical technologist at Vachira Phuket Hospital. "We are monitoring him to ensure that there are no infections.'

Mr Langer is expected to undergo further surgeries.

"Doctors needed four units of blood for Wednesday's operations, which we already



Vachira Phuket Hospital and Phuket Regional Blood Center (PRBC) had zero units of A-negative and Onegative blood earlier this week. Photo: Gazette file

had," Ms Ampai said. "However, we are not sure how many more operations will be reauired.

The blood bank at Vachira Phuket Hospital and Phuket Regional Blood Center (PRBC) had zero units of A-

negative and O-negative blood earlier this week. The facilities have again called on donors to step forward.

Blood donations can be made at Vachira Phuket Hospital, Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 8pm, and Saturday and Sunday, 8:30am to 3pm.

Donations can also be made at the PRBC, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm; Tuesday and Thursday, 8:30am to 8pm; and Saturday and Sunday,

Tourists must now have ID to board boats



Tourists must show their ID to **CCTV** cameras before boarding any boat. Photo: Marine Dept

TOURISTS will be required to show a form of government identification to CCTV cameras before boarding boats at any piers, said Phuket Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada.

"Having passengers show their identification will help us check on tourists' safety," Governor Chamroen explained. "If anyone goes missing or is involved an accident, we will know which boat carried them out. In addition, we will be able to monitor if boats are carrying more passengers than their limit."

Foreigners are required to show their passports, while Thai nationals may use their Thai identification cards.

- Chutharat Plerin



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Deputy PM roped into sea gypsy land claim

...people who are claiming the land, but we are still fighting encroachment allegations in court - we have no other place to go."

On Monday, tension mounted at the sea gypsy village when the local community prevented alleged landowners from blocking access to the

"Representatives of Baron World Trade Co, which claims it owns the land, attempted to blockade the area with the help of about 40 officers from the army, Provincial Office and Chalong Police," said Rawai Mayor Aroon Solos.

Chalong Police Deputy Superintendent Parinya Panthasuwan, who was at the scene, explained that eventually officers and business owners backed down to prevent the situation from escalating to violence.

"The company representative asked for officers to back

them up in case the villagers resisted. They were afraid that things could become violent if officials were not there to help negotiate," said Lt Col Parinya. "The company proved that the land is rightfully theirs by providing a Chanote title deed, so we did our best to talk to the villagers for about an hour, but then had to back off."

Chatree Madsatun, a representative from Baron World Trade, explained to the Gazette on Wednesday that the company was clearing the 33 rai of land in order to build 17

"We legally own the land, but could not do anything with it because the villagers were always forcing us away," Mr Chatree said. "However, our Chanote is legal and we have the right to use the land for our benefit.'

Mr Chatree explained that at this point the company was not blocking sea gypsies from accessing the land, but was



Rocks were placed to prevent access to the area and military personnel put on site to prevent further violence. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

preventing motorcycles from crossing onto it.

"We are investigating the violent incident; so far we have yet to conclude how many people were involved and how many were injured," said Col Parinya.

Deputy PM Narong accepted the letter from Mr Nirund and promised to look into the matter.

"I have already discussed the matter with the Governor. We will see what can be done. However, please be aware that we must do everything in accordance with the law," Deputy PM Narong said.

Police and military officers

were stationed at the village to prevent further violence, confirmed Phuket Vice Governor Chokdee Amornwat.

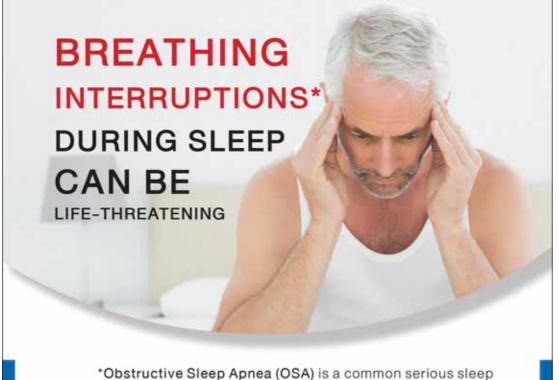
The Rawai sea gypsies have been fighting for many years to prove their right to the land that their families have been living on for generations.

In 2014, DNA tests on skeletal remains unearthed in their village confirmed that the seafaring nomads have called Phuket's southern beach home for more than 100 years.

The Department of Special Investigations stepped in after the DNA test results were revealed and vowed to provide evidence to support the villagers' fight to continue living there.

Establishing long duration of residency is a key element in the gypsies' fight against private investors, who had won court orders to evict some villagers from the site.

> Additional reporting by Kritsada Mueanhawong



disorder mostly associated with aging, overweight and a lack of exercise. Sleep specialists recommend an overnight study called Polysomnography (PSG) to reveal an individual's current sleep data, number of times breathing is impaired during sleep, and the severity of sleep apnea.

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Officials take action against companies using illegal guides



Mr Santi said illegal guides would be deported. Photo: MOTS

OFFICERS arrested six illegal tour guides in Phuket on January 20 and suspended the business licences for the companies that hired them.

'Working along with military personnel and police, we stopped buses and passengers at the Tah Chat Chai checkpoint in an effort to crack down on illegal tour guides on the island," said Santi Pawai, director of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MOTS) Phuket Office and head of the Tourism Business and Guide Registration Region 2.

The companies who hired the guides were contacted and their business licences suspended for 15 days.

"If we catch them hiring illegal guides a second time, we will suspend their licence for 30 days. And if they are caught a third time, we will revoke their licence entirely," Mr Santi said.

Five of the six tour guides arrested were foreigners, while one was a Thai national who was registered to work in Chachoengsao and Bangkok

"The foreigners who were not carrying identification cards were all charged for working illegally. The Thai guide was charged for working outside his remit," said Mr Santi.

Mr Santi declined to name the suspects, but noted that he will ensure that the foreigners, if found guilty, are deported and blacklisted in accordance with the new regulations.

- Chutharat Plerin

SIMILAR to Phuket attempting to turn back the wheels of time on its beaches - by deeming some of the island's well-trampled sands to be 'virgin' - a decade ago, officials were trying to ensure that Phi Phi Don remained an idyllic paradise island, following the destruction of most of the island's man-made structures

ff system is lifejackets.

"We must turn back [sic] Phi Phi back into a paradise for tourists, so there must be no more mooring of boats along the beach, as there is now," said then Deputy Prime Minister Suwat Liptapanlop.

by the tsunami.

The statement was made during a meeting with frustrated Phi Phi locals, who pointed out that the construction of Ton Sai Bay pier, which had been given a budget of 200 million baht, had yet to even commence.

The locals left the meeting 'shaking their heads in disappointment at the continuing lack of progress'. Now in 2016, with the pier packed with boats, the shore line obscured by long-tails, and the bay itself full of vessels - not to mention the ongoing construction of a shopping mall on the small island - perhaps having restricted the number of

The gift of

visitors by never rebuilding the pier would have been the best way to protect the natural environment of the island.

However, entire external hard drives could be filled with the woes of the Phi Phi archipelago, so let's move to the meat of the January 28 -February 3, 2006 issue of the Gazette: puppy problems.

Locals alleged that up to 100 soi dogs were poisoned by people driving a Patong Municipality garbage truck.

The municipality denied that there was any official culling. However, the number of dogs on Phuket at the time remained a serious concern with the dog shelter overflowing and Soi Dog Foundation doing its best to manage the population. Further into the issue, the Gazette spoke with Dog Pound Chief Panupong Banditsak, who had a job 'nobody wants'.

More than 400 of the island's estimated 3,400 feral canines were being kept at the

Mid Road Dog Shelter at the time.

"We feed them rice and dog kibble every day at 10am, but there just isn't enough to go around. There are so many dogs; they are always ravenous," Mr. Panupong said. "They tend to fight over the food and once in a while a worker gets bitten in the dogs' scramble to eat.'

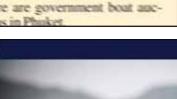
It was desperate times at the shelter, especially as Mr Panupong could only expect the number of dogs to continue to rise, spreading the already distressingly low resources even thinner.

Glancing back to just last year, the measures being taken by the Rawai Municipality to control the well-fed, friendly soi dogs in Nai Harn suddenly didn't seem so dire. A decade of good work by the Soi Dog Foundation, the Phuket Ani-Welfare Society (PAWS) and the local municipalities has paid off. And although there is still work to be done - at least there are no reports of mass poisoning, which took the idea of being as 'sick as a dog' after a night in Patong to a whole new level.

- Isaac Stone Simonelli



Spate of burglaries in Cherng Talay area



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Police, CAAT concerned about 'child angels'

CHILD angels – the baby dolls that many Thais have been carrying in public in a recent fad – have become a serious issue for the Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CAAT) after an airline agreed to allow passengers to buy tickets on behalf of their dolls.

For example, child angels must be subject to X-ray checks like carry-on luggage, despite being issued airline tickets, as they could not be scanned like real passengers.

As the CAAT focuses on potential ramifications for aviation safety, police have separately sought to address alleged criminal acts connected to doll owners.

In Bangkok and nearby provinces, Economic Crime officers raided several shops that were allegedly evading tax when selling the popular dolls. In the North, police said drugs were discovered in a doll at the Chaing Mai international airport.

World's first working titanium thumb

IN A world-first, a team of Thai doctors and engineers has successfully transplanted a workable



titanium thumb onto a patient.

Thipachart Punyaratabandhu, the chief in Phramongkutklao Hospital's Orthopaedic Section, revealed on January 26 that the first metacarpal was replaced by a titanium bone created by using 3D printing.

The operation was performed on a 37-year-old woman, whose thumb had deteriorated due to a tumour.

Traditionally, her lost bone would have been replaced by another bone, which would not match the thumb joint and

would not have been usable.

More deaths reported from cold weather

AS NORTHERN Thailand continues to be affected by the cold spell, nine deaths believed to stem from hypothermia were reported in Bueng Kan, Nakhon Phanom, Tak, Rayong and Udon Thani provinces, reported *The Nation* on January 27.

Authorities to determine if debris relates to MH370

THE Air Force on January 25 transported debris found washed ashore in Nakhon Si Thammarat to Bangkok to determine if it was part of the missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370.

The 102 kilogram piece of metal was found by a villager in Pak Phanang district on January 23.

MH370 disappeared on March 8, 2014, with 239 people on board while en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing.

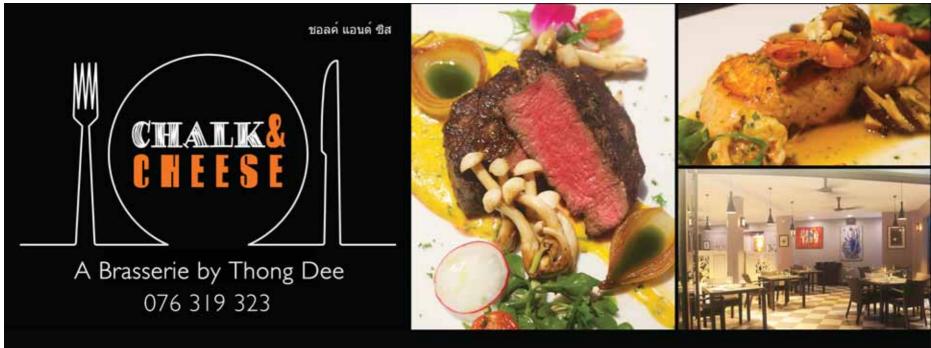
EU gives six more months to tackle IUU fishing woes

THE European Union has given Thailand another six months to solve the problem of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and urged authorities to widen the crackdown on use of illegal labor in other sectors.

Overall, the EU team said it was satisfied with Thailand's actions over the past eight to nine months to solve the IUU problem and would continue to monitor progress closely over the next six months before making a decision

Hundreds in South affected by big waves

AT LEAST 20 homes in Ban Ba-reh, Ban Koh Yao, Ban Pula Wangya Ngeh and Ban Kubae Leudee villages were damaged by waves on January 26.



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Education is key

THE recent arrest and threat of deportation and blacklisting of a tour guide from China comes as little surprise given the preponderance of guides from the 'Sleeping Dragon' that operate illegally in Phuket.

Tour guiding is one of the many occupations restricted for Thai nationals under the 'Working of Alien Act', which was promulgated in 2008. Regardless, foreign guides are common with every emerging tourism source market. Before the latest ruckus over illegal Chinese guides, the focus was on illegal Russian guides. Before that, it was South Koreans.

In the past, authorities would arrest the foreign tour guides, while turning a blind eye to the Thai tourism business operators who employed them in the first place.

As the old adage goes, if one does not attack a problem at its roots, it will persist. Thus, the recent arrest of six illegal guides at the Tah Chat Chai checkpoint marks a significant change in policy, as the Thai companies that hired them had their business licences suspended for 15 days.

However, how the operations of these companies can realistically be suspended when they already have groups of foreign tourists under their responsibility in the country is a question that needs to be asked.

If such suspensions actually result in package tourists being stranded in this Land Of Smiles, it could result in a public relations nightmare for the Thai tourism industry.

It is easy to forget that the People's Republic could easily ban its citizens from travelling to Thailand, which would have devastating results for the Phuket economy.

The Ministry of Tourism and Sports should also pause and take this opportunity to look at the bigger picture with regards to the long-standing problem of illegal foreign guides.

The root cause of this problem, and so many others, lies in Thailand's abysmal government education system.

Thousands of students are graduating from Thai government universities every year with degrees such as 'English for Service' following 12 years of mandatory English-language education in primary and secondary school. Yet the vast majority could not even give a foreign tourist the time of day in English.

What is going on in these classrooms if university graduates in English have communicative skills inferior to those of a Patong bargirl?

The real key to ending the illegal guide problem lies in producing enough Thai tour guides who can actually do the job.

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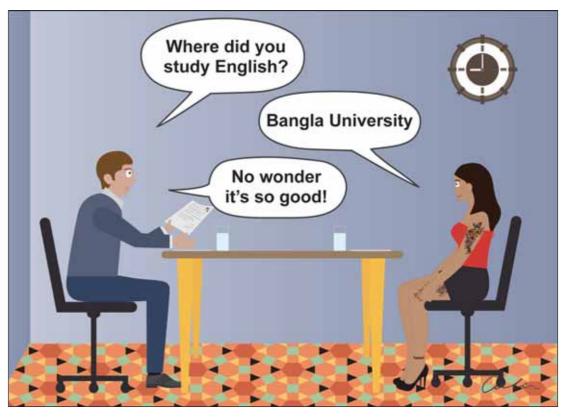
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Too much pollution everywhere

Re: Island View: Preventing pollution in Phuket, January 26

Very good article and a major concern for the island's people. But worse than any of this air pollution, I believe, is the plastic pollution.

I spent a lot of time in Mexico in the 80s. Virtually all Mexican cars, in addition to the air pollution, would throw their trash out of the window and it accumulated along roadsides everywhere – in the mountains and along

It never made any difference to them.

Capt Ron-KathuUSA Gazette forum

Nice seeing officials stand their ground

Re: One map, one more problem: PM Prayut told survey cut out 1,200 rai, January 23

Yes, how can any home or resort be surrounded by a gazetted National Park?

Keep doing a great job, Mr Damrong. I wish every official was as diligent as you and Mr Kitiphat.

If the greedy are allowed to steal the land belonging to all Thai people, there will be nothing left of Thailand's beauty for the children, even their own.

> Chob Gazette forum

Consistency will keep vendors at bay

Re: Opinion: More beach blan-

Letters

to the Editor

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

ket bilko, January 24

Excellent editorial. There is no oversight of the beaches, so therefore the rules are ignored all the time.

The Laem Sing Beach situation is an example of what happens when the vendors don't see any inspections. The vendors take over and do whatever they want.

The vendors at Kamala Beach who were providing just mats and umbrellas have now set up sit-down restaurants. They will continue to take more and more every day until they're stopped.

There must be enforcement. *Pinot*

Gazette forum

Tourists need name boards on arrival

Re: Phuket International Airport looks to ban paging boards, January 23

What a stupid rule. If tourists have prearranged to be picked up at the airport through their hotel, they need to know who is picking them up and taking them to their destination.

Or let's go back to the days where you are harassed by taxi drivers trying to get your business when you exit the terminal

New arrivals need to know

who is collecting them and name boards are the best option.

> Gill Gazette forum

Tourists won't want to carry their ID

Re: All tourist boarding boats must carry ID, says Gov, January 22

Hopefully a passport photocopy will be acceptable as few tourists will be willing to carry their real passport or government ID around while on holiday.

Sunseeker Gazette forum

Patong Beach has become shocking

Re: Minimum age requirement for jet-ski rental to be implemented in 30 days, January 22

I had family visiting last week. They wanted to walk around Patong and do some shopping.

I hadn't bothered going near the place in years. It was shocking to see how much worse the beach has become.

People corralled into little sections, main portions taken over by boats and jet-skis and the gasoline-oil smell was terrible.

Think of Copacabana, Waikiki, Cancun beaches – they don't look like this crap.

Total ignorance.

Tim Gazette forum

Creating sustainability

FIRST PERSON

IN TERMS of tourism, the island is doing great at the moment. Of course, most of this is due to the fact that we are in peak season right now.

In about a month, however, we will be losing many tourists, as it's the end of the Chinese New Year, which also marks the end of Phuket's high season. This year, I have to say that I am a bit worried, as China's economy has started to have problems and there is no clear way of knowing what the long-term effects will be.

The best way to describe it is that China has come down with a slight cold, but hasn't gotten a fever yet. All we can do is wait for them to get better or sneeze and see what the effect will be on the countries around it.

At the moment, Chinese tourists still come to Phuket in tour groups. In the meantime, the number of high-end tourists are increasing as well. The PTA is currently trying to figure out ways to encourage those who come on charter flights or tour groups to become high-end, free independent travellers (FIT). This is actually our biggest project in the Chinese market.

As far as the European market is concerned, the numbers are quite low. Australian tourists are also dwindling because of the devaluation of the baht – making it so they must pay more to come to Thailand.

But, as I said before, the peak season is nothing to



Bhummikitti Ruktaengam, 43, is the vice president of the Phuket Tourist Association (PTA). Born and raised in Phuket, he graduated with a Masters in Business Administration (MBA) from the University of Missouri, Kansas City, USA.

Here he talks about different tourist markets and how the PTA plans on making them more sustainable.

worry about; Phuket is doing well.

However, it's now time to take a closer look at our options. Currently, we are working on ASEAN roadshows to appeal to new markets close by. I think this will sustain, or at least maintain, our AEC tourists.

But in order to expand and promote Phuket tourism to these market, as well as others, we need more variety – not just sun, sea and sand.

Because of this, we will now focus more on sports tourism and cultural tourism, due to Phuket being recently named by UNESCO as a City of Gastronomy.

I think this helps to promote Phuket's image tremendously, as gastronomy is not something that is out of our reach. It is all around us – you can see it in Phuket's variety of food. We have our own recipes that we have been using for generations and will continue to do so for generations to come. This has great potential to change Phuket's tourism industry.

Another thing we are going to promote is the image of

Phuket as a 'Smart City'. The reason for this is because there are so many investors coming to the island. They are technically not tourists, as they come to work and travel, but they often have their family and friends visit. In this aspect, they provide a lot of income to the island and we want to maintain the interest of investors by utilizing information and communications technology to enhance the quality of urban services.

Supporting investment and technology on the island will definitely help boost sustainable income.

However, at the end of the day, Phuket is a tourist destination. Both the government and private sectors are doing their best to develop and push the island's tourism forward.

The PTA will do everything it can to help sustain and promote tourism on the island, but most importantly, I wish to see all of Phuket's residents help by being good hosts to our visitors and to remember that we are not only representing the island, but also the country, through the eyes of international tourists.



The disregard for the law on Laem Sing is telling. Photo: Gazette reader

Micromanaging Phuket

PHUKET is basking in the financial waterfall of government funded projects from Bangkok, as exports slump to a five-year low and the entire country becomes increasingly reliant on the tourism industry. However, with it comes the type of micromanagement that reaches even beyond the imagination of Bill Lumbergh.

If I want to have an ice-cold beverage, umbrella and sun lounger as I soak up the equatorial sun, clearly Phuket – Smart City, UNESCO City of Gastronomy and pilot province for an uncountable number of projects – is not the place to be. However, a short ride away, all that bureaucratic silliness dissipates like morning mist.

The beach chair fiasco that has plagued Phuket for what feels like an eternity seems to have no end in sight.

Mostly disliking sand, sun and salt, I couldn't care less if the beaches have loungers or don't. However, the fact that there is such a blatant disregard for the law, as was seen on Laem Sing Beach, is telling. Either this is a bad set of provincial rules, because they are unenforceable, or they are a good set of rules that require officials to break ties with the old ways of turning a blind eye when they find a couple of

Island View

By Alex Stone

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

thousand baht on the ground.

The real issue is that this is a provincial rule with wavering enforcement.

The beaches in Phang Nga, Krabi and countless other provinces are also 'public land' yet they are being utilized for private businesses, from drug-driven Rasta bars on Koh Lanta (they openly advertise magic shakes), to sublime lounging experiences in Khao Lak. So why does Phuket have to be different? The confusion, struggle and contention about the issue seems to be driving tourists away.

Further bureaucracy, red tape and rule structure is not what is needed. Common sense by local leaders, who can then be trusted by the central government to manage and protect one of Thailand's most valuable assets, is essential. As the *Gazette* has opined in many an editorial, Thailand might be 'The Land of Smiles', but it is surely not the land of common sense — even holidaymakers seem to give up on being reasonable when they set foot on Phuket.

Words from the Wise

"The gift of fantasy has meant more to me than my talent for absorbing positive knowledge." — Albert Einstein

"It's a strange world of language in which skating on thin ice can get you into hot water."

— Franklin P Jones

Issues & Answers

Can tourists or students open bank accounts?

I JUST came to Phuket to travel for a few months and think I may want to stay longer and take language lessons. Because of this, it would be more economical to have a Thai bank account instead of constantly getting fees charged on my international card.

Is it possible to open a bank account on a tourist or student visa?

Panicha Pradit, Siam Commercial Bank, Phuket Boat

Lagoon branch manager replies:

Those who hold a tourist visa are not allowed to open a bank account in Thailand because a

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

Submit your issue at:

www.PhuketGazette.net/ IssuesAnswers work permit and passport are required to be shown.

Opening a bank account on a student visa is possible if you have a one-year student visa, a passport and a residence permit. Please note that you also need 500 baht for an initial deposit.

Additionally, it is more convenient for an international student to have the school or institution they are registered with to open a bank account for them, rather than attempting to do it themselves.

10 PHUKET GAZETTE BUSINESS January 30 - February 5, 2016

Fancy dabbling in semiconductors?



Finance By Don Freeman

THE semiconductor industry helps drive technological progress and yet many semiconductor stocks have lagged the performance of the broader technology sector recently. However, small cap MaxLinear, Inc (NYSE: MXL) is an exception as shares are up 134 per cent from the start of 2015 to November, plus shares rallied close to 28 per cent after the company reported third quarter earnings last November.

MaxLinear is a provider of integrated, radio-frequency (RF) and mixed-signal integrated circuits for broadband communications. Basically they make the chips or circuits that allow electronic devices (such as cable boxes, digital TVs, mobile 'phones, computers, vehicle displays etc) to process digital and analog broadband signals so that consumers can watch TV on them with a wireless broadband connection.

This is a highly important semiconductor niche, as although the Internet has been around for more than two decades, the struggle for bandwidth to both stream and process multimedia content has been a persistent problem. The same can be said of devices that can take large amounts of bandwidth and process it in a power-efficient way at very high performance levels.

When MaxLinear went pub-



Semiconductors are used in electronic devices such as smartphones and TVs. Photo: Aisart

lic in March 2010, it didn't meet all of the benchmarks considered necessary for a successful IPO because it was a small company with just US\$51.4 million in revenue (for 2009) and only one profitable year since it was founded in 2004. Nevertheless, shares debuted at US\$14 and soared some 38 per cent because it was a clean IPO in the sense that the company was not trying to raise money just to survive, pay off debts, or pay off private equity investors. CNBC's Jim Cramer touted the stock on his show, saying "MaxLinear is a

play on many of the big themes that we've been hitting on all the time.... This is at the heart of the tsunami. Broadband video on your phone?! Oh man! That defines the tsunami!"

However, MaxLinear's shares quickly began falling after the IPO, finally finding a bottom in 2012 before rallying both in 2013 and for most of last year. Future signs that the stock will continue trending upward are:

1) Third quarter net revenue rose 34.4 per cent sequentially and 193 per cent year-over-year

to US\$95.2mn; net income was US\$1.6mn compared to a net loss of US\$30.6mn sequentially and net loss of US\$3.2mn year-over year; and cash, cash equivalents and investments totaled US\$104.8mn at the end of the third quarter compared to US\$82.1mn sequentially and US\$93.9mn year-over-year.

2) Third quarter results were fueled by the acquisition of Entropic Communications for nearly US\$300mn earlier this year along with broad-based sales strength with increases across all end-market focus ar-

eas. The company also gave a bullish outlook.

3) There has been a wave of semiconductor Merger and Acquisition deals in recent quarters as the era of cheap debt nears its end. This has some investors speculating that MaxLinear could itself be a takeover target, or be the acquirer of other semiconductor players.

Risk adverse investors should keep in mind that the semiconductor industry can be very cyclical as when the economy is improving, consumers tend to buy more electronics containing the components produced by companies like MaxLinear. But when the economy stalls, consumers have less disposable income to spend on electronics.

In addition, MaxLinear is a small cap stock with a market cap of just over US\$1 billion - meaning shares are more thinly traded and not held as widely by Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs) or others, compared to large cap semiconductor stocks like Intel or Texas Instruments.

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

Future fund set for 2016

THE Thailand Future Fund may be launched this year after the government finalizes the issuing conditions.

"The working group of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and Finance Ministry has been working on the conditions that match the government's demand to issue

the fund worth 100 billion baht since last year," said Duangmon Chuengsatiansup, assistant secretary-general of the SEC.

The details that are still being worked on include what assets will be sold to the fund, such as the income-generating assets owned by state enterprises. – *The Nation*



Banks post overall lower profits for 2015

THE 11 listed banks have reported combined net profit of 198.50 billion baht for 2015, down by 6.3 per cent from 211.78bn baht in 2014, after taking substantial loan-loss provisions.

Krungthai Bank's net profit decreased by 14.2 per cent to 28.49bn baht as a consequence of rising non-performing loans from small and medium-sized enterprises and corporate customers in the retail and steel industries.

Kasikornbank reported a similar decline of 14.5 per cent in net profit to 39.47bn baht from setting aside a higher allowance for impairment losses on loans.

KBank also recorded an extraordinary expense from setting a 2.3bn baht allowance



SCB posted the highest profit, but deepest drop, in 2015. Photo: Mattes

for impairment of application software in order to manage the cost of its information-technology system.

Among the 11 banks, Siam Commercial Bank reported the highest net profit of 47.18bn baht but also the deepest drop of 53.3bn, or 11.5 per cent, mainly due to high provisions.

Analysts expect the earnings of the banking industry this year to improve from last year based on hoped-for government investment. However, high loan loss provisions and the economic slowdown will continue to pressure profitability. They also expect bank loans to grow in tandem with gross domestic product.

— The Nation

January 30 - February 5, 2016

BUSINESS

PHUKET GAZETTE 11

Maximize social media impact



WHEN using social media, it is very important to establish exactly what it is that you want to achieve. It is also important to understand that each social media platform works differently and can achieve different things.

Overall there are a many purposes for which social media can be used, but the most common are branding, lead generation, information sharing and product awareness.

Often the common goal for all social media is to get the potential customer or target audience to move from the social media platform to a website or into a database.

Each platform is different and requires a slightly different approach. For example, a blog can be largely written content, with only one image, and so a lot of information can be included.

Google + and Facebook tend to feature posts with small or medium written content and images, or video, which then often send the viewer to a blog or website, or to 'Like' a fanpage.

At the other extreme are Twitter. Pinterest and



A common goal is to get a customer from the social media platform to a website. Photo: WOCinTech Chat

Instagram, which feature very small written content and images or video. And YouTube which is all video, but longer in content.

There are a few common strategies that remain important, no matter what the platform:

1) Consistency – remain consistent to your product and your company branding and image.

Don't swap and change your image between platforms as this will just confuse your audience.

2) Relevance – always make sure that what you are posting is relevant to your theme and branding. Don't go off point, as this will only confuse your audience and potentially attract the wrong target market.

3) Match your content with the correct platform – don't try

and put long and detailed content where you know the viewer's attention span and customized use is short. It does not matter how good the content is, it will lose its power. Better you use a teaser, and direct them to your website.

Make sure you match your goals with your content and platform – you are much better off keeping your social media

light and sales free and save the sales pitch for your website or email marketing.

4) Make your call to action very clear – if you want people to do something spell it out for them. For example; click here to get a free sample, go here to join our mailing list, to read more about this go to our website – and make the path to the next step as simple and automated as possible.

Make sure you measure and analyze each stage, so you know what is happening, what is working, where any bottlenecks or break downs occur, and then fix them. The great advantage of social media is its speed, so make sure you utilize this.

5) Keep up to date – it is always good to know not only about social media, but how your industry and competitors are using it. Monitor what they do, how it is working for them and how you relate. If you need to change you can – be creative and don't just be a copycat.

So think about your social media goals and plan before you post.

Simon Wetherell is a social media expert and lawyer. He trains businesses and individuals on how to profit from the social media industry. For more information: Visit PhuketOnlineMarketingSchool.com or call 095-085 3355.

AIS budgets B40bn on 4G

AIS chief executive officer Somchai Lertsutiwong announced that the company would initially spend 20 billion baht this year on the installation of its 4G network at 7,000 sites in 42 provinces.

A company source said AIS was currently awaiting board approval to spend an additional 20bn baht on the 4G network in the middle of this year, which would give it a total of 14,000 sites in 72 provinces.

Mr Somchai said the 20bn baht earmarked to be spent on expanding the 3G network would result in the company covering 27,000 3G sites nationwide.

Also this week, True Corp CEO Suphachai Chearavanont said True would spend 55bn baht over three years on the expansion of its 4G service on the 1,800MHz, 2.1GHz and 900MHz spectra, and on the development of 2G service on 900MHz.



AIS CEO Somchai Lertsutiwong. Photo: The Nation

AIS, meanwhile, is hopeful of signing a partnership deal with TOT during the current quarter to provide 3G service jointly on the state agency's 2.1GHz spectrum, Mr Somchai said.

AIS subsidiary Advanced Wireless Network currently offers 3G service on 2.1GHz under the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission licencing regime.

It won the 1,800MHz licence in an auction held by the regulator in November.

- The Nation



Looking for a place to stay?

See more classified ads at www.phuketgazette.net



This week's eve

Offering new experiences

To celebrate its 30th anniversary, Phuket International Hospital recently took 60 children with developmental impairments and their parents to see the dolphin show at the Dolphins Bay Phuket in Chalong. The outing was part of the hospital's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program, in order to offer new experiences to children in treatment.

Piyarat Kulvanit (2nd row, right), marketing manager of Phuket International Hospital, and her team enjoy a day out with the children and their parents.





Feeling beachy

COCO SEA condo by Con-F Group Co Ltd hosted its grand opening party at Nai Harn Beach on January 15.

Authanop Pankamnerd (Center), MD of Con-F Group Co Ltd with guests Malichan Cipolat (left) and Tanattinat Onseethong.

Loyalty holds the key

The Aspasia Phuket recently presented a car and motorbikes to five staff members for their long-term loyalty and commitment to the resort and as a symbol of recognition for their achievements and dedication.



(From L-R) Plein Leesu, cleaning supervisor; Aom Patmanee, hotel manager; Chitpol Meesapsiri, IT director; Denchart Nawin, general technician supervisor; Nattaya Hamphan, income and AR supervisor; and Sakchai Kungmuang, public area supervisor.

Congratulations to Keemala

The Phuket Gazette congratulated Keemala Exclusive Pool Villas & Resorts at their grand opening and wished them a happy New Year with a basket full of goodies.



Oranee Hildebrand (left), managing director of the Phuket Gazette, and Samornpun Somnam, executive director of Keemala Exclusive Pool Villas & Resorts and The Kee Resort & Spa.

The gifts of friendship just keep on coming



Oranee Hildebrand (left), managing director of the Phuket Gazette and Worraporn Noiladtee, PR & marketing manager of Sleep With Me design hotel in Patong.



Supanun Supawong (left), Phuket Gazette assistant sales manager and Songphop Dulphinitphattana, PR & marketing communications manager of the Crest Resort & Pool Villas.

nts in Paradise

Running creates | Clubbing just got a a winning combo

The '2nd 10 Mile International Run by Thanyapura' press conference was held at Central Festival Phuket on January 15. The event will see the cooperation of Supersports and Thanyapura to organize the second international run in Phuket on March 13th. Last year, the event saw nearly 1,500 runners on the island's streets.



Tony Morton (middle left), president of CRC Sports, and Chris McCormack (middle right), Thanyapura executive chairman, promote the '10 Mile International Run 2016 Phuket Presented by Thanyapura' at Central Festival Phuket.

whole new meaning

88 Land and Houses opened its clubhouse at 88 Land and Houses Hillside Phuket on December 19. It was a cheerful night for visiting Land and Houses homeowners, celebrated together with a pool party and many activities and prizes.



Ruksapong Khumkhuanjum (right), general manager of LH Muang Mai Co Ltd, hands a lucky draw prize to one of the night's many attendees.



READY TO MOVE IN

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076-615-188

Buffet-style dining done right

Sea Breeze Cafe brings a whole new level to buffet-chic

By Katie P Arnold

IT IS a common misconception that resort bars and restaurants are for in-house guests only. But at the Holiday Inn Resort Phuket every dining experience is open to all those who seek it.

That is no different at their popular bi-weekly seafood buffet at Sea Breeze Cafe and there is no place better suited for this delicious spread than poolside with a view of Patong Beach.

Sea Breeze Cafe offers an interactive buffet experience with six kitchens featuring a rotisserie, hot wok, grill, bakery, pasta station and a walk-in cold room for fresh salads, seafood and sushi.

Starting at 6:30pm on Tuesdays and Saturdays, staff are constantly and courteously escorting away guests who want a little sneak peek or snack before dinner time.

999 baht ++ will get you fresh seafood, sushi, soups, salads, pastas, pizza, desserts and more, and children under the age of 12 eat for free.

All recipes are prepared by a master chef with fine dining in mind. Most notably the white fish with butter garlic sauce, lobster bisque, and fresh oysters and steamed mussels with a variety of dipping sauces.

Staff are very attentive, clearing plates, replacing sil-





Sea Breeze Cafe's seafood buffet will change the way you think of buffet-style dining. Photos: Amber Kissner

verware and filling your water glass, smiling as they walk past.

With so many options, lines

are a non-issue and tables are seated away from the spread, overlooking the pool, with the lighting and atmosphere similar to a small French bistro.

As for the children, they are all well behaved, having their own buffet table of dishes and treats to distract them.

The open area dining is completely relaxing. And should you sit down at around 6:30, you will be there right in time to see the sunset.

The most popular location is the barbecue station, featuring a front row view of the action and offering treats such as steak, prawn and crab-legs cooked right in front of you.

The excellent thing about this buffet is that it offers so many dishes for vegetarians and those who may not be very adventurous in the seafood aspects of their diet.

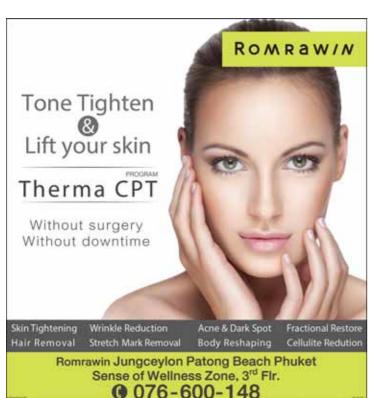
Spaghetti with chili and herbs, chickpea salad, margarita pizza, fried potatoes, all well-crafted and made by the kitchen to allow everyone to enjoy their dining experience.

To end an amazing meal, the dessert display looks like something from a movie, with vibrantly colored cakes and tarts, ice cream and custard, to fresh fruit and a chocolate fountain.

The seafood buffet at Sea Breeze Cafe is a beautiful way to end your Tuesday or Saturday evenings, and a lovely place to bring a date, a friend, or even the whole family.

It is certainly not your typical buffet and is an experience to be had.

Call to reserve your table at 076-370 200.



December 15 - January 31. The 11th Junior Dublin Literary Awards for Thailand

The 11th Junior Dublin Literary Awards for Thailand is an essay contest for high school students.

If you are creative and enjoy writing in English you can win a free trip to Ireland. There are also cash prizes of 5,000 to 10,000 baht.

Write an essay on the theme 'World With No Boundaries' and send it to: thanat_soonationgroup.com.

The deadline for submission is January 31 2016.

For more information about the awards, visit www.facebook.com/njmagazinefanpage.

This event, now in its 11th year, is proudly sponsored by the *Phuket Gazette*.

WHAT'S ON in Phuket

January 29-31. Southern Architectural Expo 2016

The Association of Siamese Architects under Royal Patronage (ASA) is hosting the Southern Architectural Expo 2016 in Phuket.

The theme of the event is Yaap Roi (South Up), which is meant to reflect and promote the identity of the South.

Education and economic development in the South have contributed to the increasing number of qualified architects in the area, which is why the ASA decided to organize the expo as a way to boost the lo-

cal architectural industry.

The event will be held at Limelight Avenue in Phuket Town. It will run from 10am-10pm each day and feature exhibitions, free consultations on building maintenance and networking opportunities with suppliers and architectural publications.

Entry to the expo is free.

This event is sponsored by PGTV and the *Phuket Gazette*.

January 29-30. Lighthouse market

Eat, chill and shop at the Lighthouse Market in Phuket's Boat Lagoon marina from 6pm -10pm.

The *Phuket Gazette* and PGTV's 'Phuket Today' show are proud to sponsor this series of highly popular local events.

When two kings sat on the throne

By Anand Singh

IN JULY of 1824, King Buddha Loetla Nabhalai, Rama II, suddenly fell very ill. Not long after, he passed away. According to the palace's succession law, the throne would have to pass on to the son of Queen Suriyendra, Prince Mongkut. Queen Suriyendra was King Rama II's consort and according to Siamese royal tradition, only the sons of a royal consort can succeed as king.

Earlier in 1824, however, Prince Mongkut had been ordained as a monk. The young prince was inexperienced in politics and had little influence among the nobles of the time. Prince Jessadabodindra, although the son of a concubine, was much more powerful and had the support of the courtiers. He was older than Prince Mongkut and had been serving as the Minister of Trade and Foreign Relations during his father's reign. When King Rama II died, a council of nobles immediately declared Prince Jessadabodindra as the King of Siam.



Relief of King Mongkut's privy seal and signature photographed at King Rama IV's monument. Photo: Xiengyod

Prince Mongkut chose to stay in the monkhood after his half-brother's coronation, in order to avoid political confrontation. As a monk, Prince Mongkut was known by his ordination name, Vajirayan. He travelled around the country, studying Buddhism with prominent monks of the day.

In 1833, Vajirayan became

abbot of Bowonniwet Temple. located in what is now central Bangkok. During this time, he studied western sciences, Latin, English and astronomy. He often conversed for long hours with western missionaries and travellers and became very proficient in English.

Prince Mongkut had a

younger brother, Prince Chutamani. Like him, Prince Chutamani was also passed over as a candidate for the throne when King Rama II died. Unlike Prince Mongkut, who chose to remain in the monkhood during the entire of King Jessadabodindra, Prince Chutamani chose to enter into

government service. He was given the title of Kromma Khun Isaret-rangsant.

Just like his brother, the young prince loved everything western. He was keenly interested in western mechanics, technology and science, and his proficiency in English was reportedly even better than that of his brother, Prince Mongkut.

The two brothers maintained a good relationship during their years as princes. On April 2, 1851, King Rama III passed away without naming a successor. Although he had at least 50 sons, none of the king's wives had been raised to the status of queen. Dis Bunnak, the minister of defense and one of the most powerful nobles during the time, suggested that the council of nobles invite Prince Mongkut to take the throne. After all, he was the son of King Rama II with a royal consort and was directly in line to succeed the throne.

Stay tuned for part two of 'When two kings sat on the throne' to be published next month.



Dreams of Bang Wad mountain biking

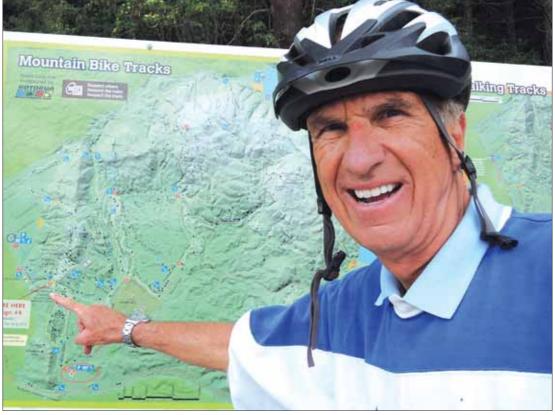


UNDOUBTEDLY the Bang Wad Dam and its surrounding mountainous environs could offer fabulous recreational and cycling potential if they are developed with foresight and care.

Former-Governor Nisit Jansomwong announced last year that over 30 million baht from the 2016 fiscal year budget had been approved for the development of this area, including the installation of bike lanes.

In fact, plans for recreational development of Bang Wad Dam were tabled by former Phuket Provincial Administration Organization President, the late Paiboon Upatising, as early as 2011. In addition to bike lanes, Mr Paiboon's vision included jogging tracks, botanical gardens, recreational areas and retail infrastructure.

While encouraging, commencement of work is still over a year away, and while I was cycling around the dam's tree-covered loop road last week, it was difficult to see what purpose new cycle lanes would actually serve. The road itself is very nearly free of traffic and already offers



Bang Wad Dam should be developed with New Zealand's famed Rotorua in mind. Photo: Baz Daniel

one of the island's best cycleways, surrounded by beautiful hillside and water vistas. Much of the road has been resurfaced in the last year, making for perfect cycling as

A more visionary use of the earmarked funds would be to develop the surrounding hills with mountain biking trails, weaving through the lush vegetation and offering fabulous views across much of the central part of the island.

I recently cycled in the Whackarewarewa Forest, just south of Rotorua Town, on New Zealand's north island. It's one of the oldest mountain bike networks in this cycling-mad country, with carefully-crafted trails, unbeatable riding surfaces, well-draining volcanic

soils, varying topography and fantastic scenery. No wonder Rotorua is renowned among mountain bikers as the premier riding destination worldwide.

The New Zealand government, who research such things very carefully, have reams of data showing the significant contribution that this mountain biking area makes to the lifestyle and economy of

the country, hosting such events as the New Zealand National Championships, the Singlespeed World Championships and the ten-day annual Rotorua Bike Festival.

This, I believe is how the Bang Wad Dam area could and should be developed. Phuket desperately needs safe cycling trails far away from vehicular traffic and the increasing levels of air and ground pollution.

Cutting trails through nonproductive degraded land, as exists on the hillsides above Bang Wad Dam, would be an inexpensive and simple use of the allocated budget and would provide exactly the wild and varied terrain that mountain bikers and families with children crave.

Bike rental shops, restaurants, cafes and licensed massage services could be offered to complete the attractions, for visiting and local cyclists alike, and to monetize the whole endeavor so that it can be properly maintained and administered on a going basis.

30 million baht is not a lot of money if you plan to build parks, botanical gardens, retail infrastructure, a conference center jogging tracks and concrete bike lanes, but it could cut a lot of first class and well maintained mountain biking tracks



Who's up for trying a triathlon?

THE resurgence in bicycling that's gripping Thailand has found its natural extension in enthusiasm for triathlon competitions. Despite being a gruelling combination of cycling, swimming and long-distance running, the triple-sport has turned a surprising number of everyday people into devotees, including some very well-known personalities.

The triathlon actually arrived in Thailand more than 20 years ago, with handfuls of Thais joining foreign enthusiasts first along the shores of Pattaya and later in Phuket. The allure, like any individual sport, as opposed to team efforts, is in testing your personal boundaries. And stretching your stamina to the breaking point in three different disciplines is perhaps the ultimate test.

"It's booming because more people are changing



Thai people have a changing attitude about health. Photo: PR Dept

their attitudes about health and, most importantly, it's a really challenging undertaking," says Vijitr Sitinawin, secretary general of the Asian Triathlon Confederation and president of the Triathlon Thailand Federation.

Navin 'Tar' Yavapolkul first took up running for health purposes, then added cycling and swimming to it, before participating in his first of many triathlons in 2013.

He points out that Thailand isn't famous for its swimmers, and swimming in a lake or the open sea is much harder than in a pool. He also considers the Philippines ahead of Thailand in its triathlon events and the quality of athletes.

- The Nation

Thailand full of dieting fanatics

LIFE & STYLE



I WAS recently sent an article titled: 'Consumer online searches reveal the most popular diets around the world'.

The article highlighted the countries that searched the most for diet plans and for which ones. Surprisingly, Thailand landed in the eighth spot.

Globally, it seems that the three programs that attracted the most interest are the Atkins, Duran and the Paleo diets.

What is it about these three? 1. Atkins - One of the

prominent high fat, high protein diets that kicked off the low carb revolution.

2. Duran – A very high protein feast to start, then, like Atkins, this diet moves into other phases with a maintenance of one or two full protein days per week.

3. Paleo – This diet is based



Nuts, as well as vegetables, fish, good fats and clean meat, are part of the well-designed Paleo diet, says Mr Burton. Photo: Adam Wyles

on ancestral eating patterns essentially avoiding foods that are the newest introductions to our diet, such as processed foods, grains and dairy. The diet focuses on vegetables, including higher carb root vegetables like sweet potato, clean meats and fish, good fats like eggs, nuts and seeds and seasonal fruit.

Paleo also wins hands down because it encourages a long term style of eating and the key to long term weight loss is the dieter's mentality.

Losing weight in the short term is easy for most - keeping it off is another story. That requires a permanent lifestyle decision, which means focusing on the foods that nourish you and hopefully that you like.

Which is why I think many people choose the wrong definition of diet.

According to Webster's dictionary the word diet can mean different things:

- a) Food and drink regularly provided or consumed
 - Habitual nourishment
- The kind and amount of food prescribed for a person or animal for a special reason
- d) A regimen of eating and drinking sparingly so as to

reduce one's weight

Clearly, the majority of people will use definition 'd' for the word diet – which for most people is a temporary action.

Yes, most overweight people clearly eat and drink too much (especially processed food, sugar and alcohol) and many need to reduce their portion sizes. But in my opinion healthy individuals need to get out of a temporary mindset and consider diet as the ongoing selection of foods that serve them best, leaving them satisfied and not constantly hungry. Otherwise they will always fall into the diet trap and yo-yoing back and forth while continually looking for quick fixes.

Sorry folks there are few effective and safe quick fixes as most know already. Weight loss is a side effect of healthy habits and they need consistency and commitment. The basics never change for creating optimal health.

There are health risks to eating out too often

tourists, in Phuket have given up on making meals at home due to the astonishingly cheap price of eating out, home prepared meals remain the best way to control calories, fat, sugar and other nutrients.

According to Reuters Health report, researchers in the United States found that eating food from restaurants whether from fast food places, or better establishments - led to increases in calories, fat and sodium compared to meals made at home.

Public health interventions targeting dining-out behavior in general, rather than just fast food, may be warranted to improve the way Americans eat, says the study's author. Given the amount of sugar, low-quality oils and MSG that appears to be the foundation of so many meals on the island, those in Thailand should also take heed.

Ruopeng An, a professor of kinesiology and community health at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, noted that people have previously equated fast food with junk food.

'But, people don't know much about the food provided by full-service restaurants and



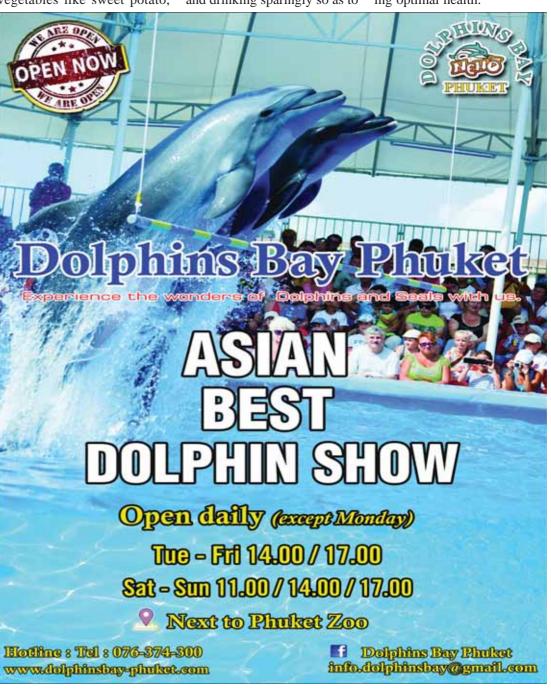
Preparing your meals at home is the best way to control calories. Photo: Rene Schwietzke

if it is better or healthier compared to fast food or compared to food prepared and consumed at home," Dr An told Reuters

Compared to participants who ate food prepared at home, those who visited fast food restaurants consumed an average of 190 more calories per day, 11 grams more fat, 3.5g more saturated fat, 10mg of extra cholesterol and 300mg of additional sodium.

Participants who dined at full-service restaurants, however, consumed about 187 more calories per day compared to those who ate food prepared at home, 10 more grams of fat, 2.5g more saturated fat, almost 60mg more cholesterol and over 400mg more sodium.

- Phuket Gazette



PROPERTY January 30 - February 5, 2016

Live in Phuket, work abroad

THERE is a growing trend in Phuket for expats in Southeast Asia



to relocate their families here while commuting to work in major cities such as Singapore, Hong Kong, KL and Bangkok.

Phuket's international airport provides regional business-people convenient access to multiple destinations at low costs. Therefore, the option of using Phuket as a base to do business throughout the region is a viable one.

The living standards, cost of living and infrastructure that Phuket has to offer is a major draw for families who would otherwise be living in much smaller and more expensive properties in locations such as Singapore and Hong Kong.

For the price of a two bedroom condo in Singapore, a family could own or rent a fourplus bedroom villa with a private pool in Phuket. Phuket offers first class schooling, international medical care, good infrastructure, fantastic beaches, numerous leisure activities, low cost of living, great dining, a large expat community and a lifestyle that many crave.

Families often require spacious accommodation with at least four bedrooms, a large pool and garden, a good location, and a secure environment

A great example of this type of property is the four bedroom freehold villa pictured here, that sits in a quiet, residential area known for its high-end properties. The spacious property (800sqm) features mature gardens and the internal area is 450sqm.

It is an ideal family home,

perfect for entertaining and suitable for pets due to its high

walls.

The large, U-shaped kitchen includes modern, gloss-white cabinetry with high-end appliances. The attached breakfast bar/work space seats three. The kitchen flows into the large dining area. The lounge has vaulted ceilings and opens out onto the spacious pool terrace with a large 54 cubic meter swimming pool, an external Jacuzzi and a sala perfect for outside dining and entertaining.

The roof terrace sala offers another option for entertaining or just relaxing. It hosts a small prep kitchen, a dining area and a seating area, all with expansive sea views.

Three of the bedrooms have ensuite bathrooms. The master suite hosts a walk-in wardrobe. The bedroom also has a walk-out balcony that offers great sea views.

The house is finished in a modern style with excellent attention to detail. The floors throughout are made of teak. The bathrooms are finished in tile and granite. The ceilings are quite high, lending a peaceful, cool airy feeling.

In addition, there is also a maid's room and a laundry room. The spacious car port will accommodate two cars and has an automatic gate.

The villa has both a home security system and estate security with a guard at night.

The price has been reduced to sell quickly, which brings us on to another current hot topic in Phuket's property market. The seller is Russian and has

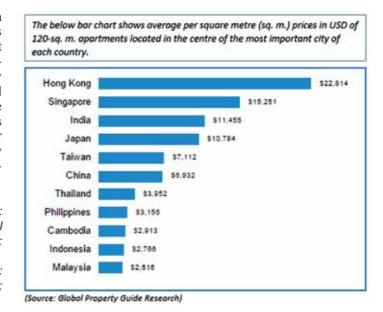


For the price of a two bedroom condo in Singapore, a family could own or rent a four-plus bedroom villa with a private pool in Phuket. Photo: Siam Real Estate

seen a dramatic devaluation in the rouble. This property was originally bought for almost 30mn baht but the seller is currently able to offer it for only 19mn baht and would still walk away from such a sale without losing money. This really is a great opportunity for a buyer to purchase a property well below its appraised market value.

For more information, contact: Kevin Hodges at Siam Real Estate, quote ref. number: HSSV6018

Tel: 076-324042 Email: kevin@siamrealestate.com; www.siamrealestate.com



Knight Frank research indicates rising villa prices

PHUKET'S villa market showed a tremendous increase in prices in 2015, according to research by Knight Frank Thailand.

The market had also slowed, however, with only 176 units sold in 2015 compared with 220-250 units sold annually between 2012 and 2014, explained Nattha Kahapana, executive director Knight Frank Phuket.

However, he said it was interesting that the average selling price of superprime villas launched in 2015 had jumped up as high as 252.4 million baht to 360mn baht per unit, in contrast to

units launched earlier that sold at 96mn baht million to 160mn baht. These new super-prime villas offered sea views with four to eight bedrooms.

However, he noted that Phuket's residential market was not looking too good as there was a supply of 11,177 units, 1,654 of which were launched in 2015.

He said there had been cumulative sales of 7,393 condominium units from 2007 to 2015, representing a 64.89 per cent sold rate.

A drop in demand had been caused by the slowdown of the world economy and the Russian rouble depreciation, causing Russian buyers to fade from the market, Mr Khan said.

Frank Khan, executive director and head of residential at Knight Frank Chartered (Thailand), forecast that Hua Hin's property market this year would remain the same as in 2015, showing no significant movement with supply way over demand.

He said Pattaya would see growth as Chinese and Russian buyers were coming back. "We will start to see some movement in Pattaya in the second quarter of 2016," he said.

- The Nation



Knight Frank research shows rising prices in Phuket's villa market. Photo: Gazette file

Hotel occupancy shows strong recovery in 2015

THAILAND'S hospitality industry reached new highs in 2015, enjoying its best year in more than two decades, according to research by STR Global.

Average occupancy for hotels in Thailand last year was 73.4 per cent, an increase of 13.6 percentage points over 2014 thanks to arrivals soaring to nearly 30 million, driven by the China market.

December alone was a particularly strong month as occupancy levels reached 77.4 per cent, the highest since 1995.

The number of arrivals to Thailand are expected to surpass 30 million this year, again driven by China despite the 'new normal' of its economy, explained Jesper Palmqvist, Asia-Pacific area director for hotel-data analyst STR Global.

Adding to Mr Palmqvist's optimism was Bill Barnett, managing director of C9 Hotelworks and Gazette columnist, who said Thailand clearly enjoyed the most vibrant tourism industry in the

It is attracting investment and is positioned as the tourism hub of the Asean Economic Community, he said.



Mr Palmqvist said year end occupancy rates hit 77.4. Photo: Gazette file

InterContinental Hotel Group on January 25 unveiled the expansion plans of its Hotel Indigo brand in Phuket, after its Bangkok launch last year, and elsewhere in Southeast

The group will open the 180-

room Hotel Indigo Phuket Patong in 2018 with its partner Kebsup Group Co, said Clarence Tan, IHG senior vice president for development in Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

The brand will continue to expand across Southeast Asia

this year with the opening of Hotel Indigo Katong in Singapore and Hotel Indigo Bali Seminyak.

Meanwhile, Gaw Capital Partners, which manages more than 360 billion baht in hospitality and real-estate assets across the world, also has interests in Thailand.

These include Dusit Thani and Pullman G hotels in Bangkok and Pattaya and the upcoming Park Hyatt Phuket under the Pioneer Global

Gaw Capital Partners also recently renovated the iconic The Strand Hotel Yangon in Myanmar, which it has owned for many years. It was built by the Sarkies Brothers, also famous for Singapore's Raffles Hotel.

"As a destination for hotel investment, Thailand remains one of our preferred choices because it is one of the most attractive travel destinations in the region," said Kenneth Gaw, president and managing principal of Gaw Capital Partners. "Operating costs are relatively low and there is an abundance of opportunities.'

The Nation

Infrastructure projects boost confidence in property

LISTED property companies have set aside investment budgets worth a combined 60 billion baht to buy land for the development of residential projects and investment overseas through to the end of next

Many of them have expressed confidence that the domestic property market will start to pick up pace this year due to the government's investment in infrastructure projects - and in mass-transit routes, in particular.

"We have set an investment budget of 14bn baht this year to purchase undeveloped land for the development of residential projects this year and next, because we are confident Thailand's property market will maintain [annual] growth of between five and seven per cent through 2020.

"This is thanks to the government's strategy to expand the investment in infrastructure projects, such as 10 new masstransit routes in Bangkok and its suburbs and other rail systems, such as double-track rail and high-speed trains," said Pruksa Real Estate's president and chief executive officer, Thongma Vijitpongpun.

- The Nation



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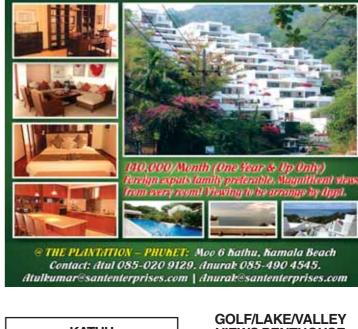


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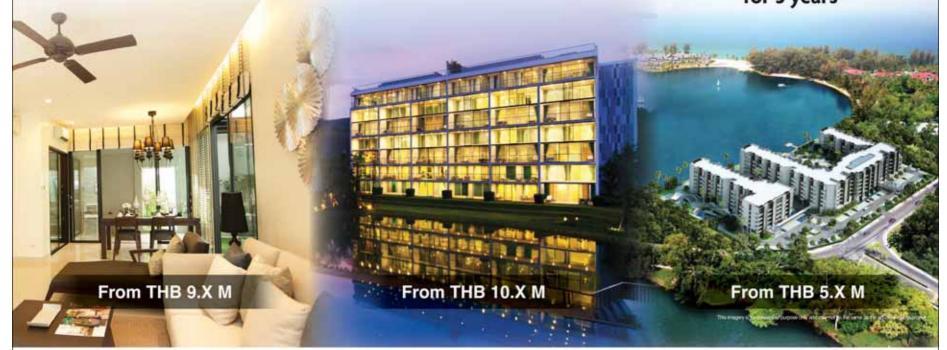




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