‘WITHIN ONE YEAR WE’LL GET THE FORESTS BACK UNDER CONTROL’

TAKING IT BACK

Following a court ruling that the plantation was in fact encroaching on public forest land, Thalang District Municipality issued a letter informing residents of the ruling and ordering them to demolish the construction immediately. Photo: Phuket PR

THALANG locals are furious after a joint task force of government officers demolished a man-made plantation in Suan Pa Bang Kanun on December 19 as it was reportedly encroaching on 120 rai of public forest land in Phuket.

The first round of demolitions in the area took place on July 14 this year, during which five houses, a palm-tree plantation and a rubber plantation on about 48 rai of land overlapping forest reserves were torn down.

A 1998 census of registered community members and property claims showed that the area, spread out over some 2,000 rai, is partially covered by forest.

Government officials said that they had allowed community members to settle on land where the forest had died off naturally, but villagers not counted in the census were accused of encroaching onto government-controlled land, which is the origin of the long-standing issue.

At the time of the first demolition, former Phuket Vice Governor Chokdee Amornwat said that the court was also considering whether another 100 rai or so had been encroached upon.

Following a court ruling that the plantation was, in fact, encroaching on public forest land, Thalang District Municipality issued a letter on September 12 informing residents of the ruling and ordering them to demolish the construction immediately. However, no action was taken by the locals.

Another letter, issued a month later on October 11, gave locals 45 days to demolish any construction on public land, but it also went unheeded. More than two months after the second warning was issued, officials stepped in to clear the land themselves.

Officials cited the Forest Act, B.E. 1941 section 54 and National Reserved Forests Act, B.E. 1964 section 25(3) as the legal basis for the action.

The raid was led by Capt Boworn Promkeawngam of the Royal Thai Navy’s Phuket-based Third Area Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC), and Kasem Sukwaree, chief of the Natural Resources and Environment (NRE) Phuket Office.

More than a hundred officials from several departments were also present, including Thalang District Office, Royal Thai Navy Third Area Command, Army 41st Military Circle, Thalang Police, OrBorJor, Thepkrasattri and Sakoo OrBorTor, Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP) and Phu Yai Baan.

A local named Ampa Thongthep tried…

Task force makes final cut to reclaim Forestry Dept land

By Winai Sarot

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A local named Ampa Thongthep tried…

Fatal visa run claims 3 lives in horrifying road crash

KBV Phuket Visa Run Company van crashes into Phang Nga house, resulting in the deaths of three and six seriously injured foreigners during a visa run from Phuket to Satun.

Continued on Page 4
Man in ICU after high speed collision

A MAN ended up in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and a woman was severely injured in a gruesome high-speed motorcycle collision in Thalong on December 15.

Captain Suporn Muangkhi of Thalong Police received reports of the accident about 6.30am and arrived at the scene on Khao Laan intersection, SriSoonthorn Road to find Kittis Chareonrat lying underneath a motorcycle with a piece of metal embedded in his leg.

Capt Suporn confirmed that the other victim, named Chuithima Marsingthong, 21, was lying 5 meters away on the asphalt with a twisted left arm.

“Broken helmet visors and pieces of metal were strewn about onsite,” said Capt Suporn.

“It took rescue workers about 15 minutes to remove the metal shard from Mr Kittis’s leg, which was still attached to the bike. Both Mr Kittis and Ms Chuithima fractured their legs in the collision,” confirmed Capt Suporn.

“They were then taken to Thalang Hospital and later transferred to Vachira Phuket Hospital.”

Mr Kittis was in and out of consciousness with labored breathing and in critical condition at the ICU as at press time.

“We are still investigating the crash but are having a hard time figuring out exactly what happened as there were no witnesses. For now we believe it was a head-on collision.” – Winai Sarot

Female cobra captured in Chalong house

SNAKE catchers were called out to a house in Chalong on December 16 to capture a large adult cobra that had hidden itself among antique jars in a store room.

“We had to be very careful capturing this one, a female cobra, to make sure we didn’t damage the fragile jars, which were Chinese antiques,” said volunteer snake catcher Sayan Thummapan.

Mr Sayan said the snake was about 3-4 meters long and it was later released in the wild, adding that his team of volunteers from the Ruamjai Foundation have been bagging an average of 2-3 snakes a day over the past two months.

The foundation can be contacted at 076-283346/7 for any such issues. – Kritsada Mueanhawong

American found with slashed throat

AN AMERICAN man was found dead, with deep slashes to his neck, at a rental room in Rawai on December 20. Police suspect may have taken his own life but have not ruled out other possibilities.

“Inside the bathroom, we found the body of the 62-year-old victim (whose name is being withheld) lying face up, with a 15cm long wound on his neck, likely caused by a sharp object. We also found a box cutter covered in blood and a pair of scissors covered in blood in the sink,” said Maj Thada Sodarak of Chalong Police.

“The victim is believed to have been dead for at least an hour before his body was discovered by his girlfriend, who reportedly fainted when she first saw him. She returned from work to find the room locked from inside. She tried to call, but no one answered, so she asked her neighbors to help break down the door,” said Maj Thada.

Police also questioned a friend of the deceased.

“The friend said the deceased’s visa had expired a year ago and he had been overstaying ever since. He also told us that his friend had asked his embassy for help and was given advice on the documents he needed to provide, but he did not have enough money to get his paperwork processed and pay for the visa,” said Maj Thada.

Police found no signs of struggle or ransacking onsite.

“At this stage, we can’t say what exactly happened. It looks like he may have cut his own neck, but we are still collecting more evidence, and questioning relevant people,” he added.

The body was taken to Vachira Phuket Hospital for further examination and the American Embassy was informed of his death.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

Pick-up burnt to a crisp on Thepkasattri

TWO MINOR explosions rocked Thalang on December 19 when a pick-up truck caught fire in the southbound lane of Thepkasattri Road.

The vehicle was burnt to a crisp with an estimated 600,000 baht in losses incurred. The driver of the vehicle escaped unharmed mere moments before the flames erupted.

“The blue Toyota Vigo belonged to 34-year-old Wichai Buasri, who was on his way to Phuket Town from Pa Khlok,” said Sen Sgt Maj Suthee Maneesing of Thalang Police.

“After passing by Heroines’ Monument he saw smoke coming from under the hood. He parked it on the roadside and exited the vehicle. Two explosions were followed by fire.”

“Luckily, Mr Wichai managed to stop in time and right in front of the Tha Rue police box. Officers at the box called in Tha Rue police station. We also informed the fire fighters, who closed off the side lanes to prevent damage to others nearby and extinguished the fire within 30 minutes.”

Police have yet to figure out the cause of the fire, but believe it was either a short circuit or a leak in the engine. The pick-up is being investigated.

– Winai Sarot
KBV Phuket Visa Run company van fatalities: Three foreigners killed

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

THREE foreigners died and six others were seriously injured when the van they were traveling in crashed into a house in Phang Nga on the morning of December 21.

The foreigners were on their way from Phuket to Satun for a visa run with KBV Phuket Visa Run company, when the van crashed in Bang Tuey sub-district.

Police and emergency responders rushed to the scene of the accident.

“We found a severely damaged white van with a KBV Visa Run logo, which had crashed into a nearby house. The survivors and bodies of the deceased were immediately transferred to Phang Nga Hospital,” said Capt Chatree Phrattayai, captain of Phang Nga City Police.

Mr Prawit and his wife sustained minor injuries while the condition of the hospitalized foreigners was reported to be precarious at press time.

Two injured as truck crashes into electric pole

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

TWO people were injured when a trailer truck carrying a backhoe crashed into an electric pole in Phuket’s Thalang District on December 14.

Thalang Police received news of the crash on Thepkrasattri Road northbound at about 3:45 pm. Officials and rescue workers rushed to the scene where they found the truck trapped in a jumble of wires.

“The front side of the vehicle was heavily damaged. We found the driver, Somporn Thiepput, in a confused state. He was still inside and had injured his back,” said Police Lt Sunan Petnhu.

“There was also a child with him, who had sustained minor injuries in the crash,” he added.

The driver told police that he was heading back from Phuket Town when a pick-up truck driving in front of him braked “without warning”. He added that he hit the brakes, but as his vehicle was “too heavy”, he lost control, hitting the pole at the side of the road.

The incident caused a traffic jam for several hours on Thepkrasattri Road.

Mr Somporn was charged with reckless driving and causing damage to public property.

– Winai Sarot
Russian dies in grisly collision

By Winai Sarot

ONE RUSSIAN tourist died and another was severely injured in a horrifying collision with a taxi, while riding their motorbike southbound on Thepkrasattri Road, in front of Baan Jee Teng on the evening of December 20.

The 25-year-old deceased man was named as Roman Melehin. Part of his foot was sliced off and was still attached to the bike, while he also suffered serious injuries to his neck and head.

The other tourist accompanying him was conscious throughout the ordeal, and suffered a broken leg among other injuries. He is currently recovering in hospital. The taxi driver sustained minor injuries.

“The 38-year-old taxi driver, named as Nattawat Thongsaphe, told Lt Sunan Penhu of the Thalang Police that he was heading down southbound Thepkrasattri in the middle lane when the tourists swerved their bike from the left lane over to his lane. “He told us that it was too late to brake”.

Mr Nattawat was charged with reckless driving causing death and injury. Officials confirmed that further investigation into the case will be necessary.

A DOZEN people were arrested in a raid on a gambling den located at a townhouse in Wichit on the afternoon of December 19.

Most of the gamblers were tour guides, it was reported.

The raid by a joint task force comprising 41st Military Circle and Wichit Police officers was carried out after a month of surveillance following complaints by neighbors of illegal activities at the three-storey house in Chao Fah subdistrict.

Police identified the house owner and alleged operator of the gambling den as 45-year-old Sompat Chiwinsirithada.

“The door needed a key card to open it. We didn’t want to alert anyone of our presence so we waited patiently until we could follow one of the players as he entered the house. Officers immediately moved up to the second and third floors where the gambling was taking place,” said Wichit Police chief Thanasak Sawangsri.

Police arrested Mr Sompat and 11 gamblers in the raid.

Mr Sompat was charged with illegally providing gambling services and the others were charged with gambling offenses.

Maj Thanasak revealed that gamblers at the den were each required to place a minimum bet of 5,000 baht.

– Krisada Mueanhawong

Already expired

From Page 1

…to get officers to halt the demolitions by presenting a document from the Ministry of Interior dated October 2010, saying locals were authorized to use the land temporarily. However, officers at the scene informed her that the document had expired.

Most of the encroached area consists of rubber plantations along with some sato and betel palm trees, which were chopped down in the raid. The raid and subsequent demolitions are part of a directive by PM Gen Prayuth Chan-o-cha.

“This demolition is part of government policy. There are four steps in the forest reclamation plan,” Mr Kasem said.

“Within one year, we’ll stop deforestation and begin to get the forests back under government control. In a span of two years, we’ll be focusing on improving our forest management, and over the next decade we’ll be restoring national forests.”

A PHUKET man drowned while diving for clams in a swamp in Kathu on the morning of December 18.

The incident occurred near a cement factory on Wichit-Songkram Road. Police arrived at the scene to find the body of the victim, named only as Wirot, lying on the ground. His friend, Narong, was waiting for the authorities at the scene.

“Mr Narong told us that he and Mr Wirot had come to the swamp to find clams and that they had been drinking together before jumping in,” said Capt Wichote Meephob of Kathu Police.

Mr Wirot said his friend disappeared and so he searched in the water for him and found his body at the bottom of the swamp.

“He said that he pulled his friend out of the water and then alerted us. We found no signs of struggle or bruising on the body,” said Capt Wichote.

Police believe the dead man may have suffered from a cramp, causing him to drown, but they are investigating the matter further before concluding the case.

– Winai Sarot
Brawling Bangla tourist at risk of brain damage

By Kritsada Mueanawong

A GERMAN tourist was knocked unconscious from a severe head injury early morning December 18, following a brawl with bouncers at a Bangla Road bar.

Thomas Rapp, 31, reportedly racked up a 2,000 baht bill following a night of heavy drinking at Dragon Night Bar on Soi Freedom.

"Staff and other witnesses told us that Mr Rapp and a friend were celebrating his birthday. When the bar was about to close, staff handed him his bill, but instead of paying it, he started creating a scene," said Maj Phatthapee Srichai of Patong Police.

"They added that Mr Rapp punched one of the doormen who tried talking to him. Two others then stepped in and a fight ensued, during which Mr Rapp was knocked unconscious."

He was taken to Vachira Phuket Hospital, while the bouncers, named as Surachart Chuchuy, 26, Pison Inthasara, 22 and Suthat Deeprai, 20, were taken to Patong Police Station for questioning.

Doctors told the Gazette the same morning that Mr Rapp suffered a brain hemorrhage, but could not yet confirm whether he would need surgery.

The bar staff have not been charged so far as police are collecting CCTV evidence and investigating the matter further.

POLICE ON December 16 announced a 20,000 baht reward to help track down a 19-year-old who escaped police custody after he was apprehended in Phuket Town for a failed robbery attempt on December 14.

The teen, named Chaiwalan Pennuanong, was arrested after he and an accomplice snatched a bag from a female student. She had chased them down while his accomplice fled the scene.

Col Kamon Osiri of Phuket City Police told the Gazette that they were tracking his movements using live CCTV footage until officers reached his house at Tri Trang Beach in Patong.

"He hailed a motorbike taxi and met with his mother – he wasn’t there when we arrived. His mother told us that he packed up some things and left without telling her where he was headed," said Col Kamon.

"We will capture him soon, and award 20,000 baht to whoever alerts us of his location."

– Kritsada Mueanawong

PHUKET NEWS

PHUKET GAZETTE 5

DISCOVER AMARI PHUKET’S MAGICAL FESTIVE CELEBRATIONS

Let’s enjoy a remarkable time of the year with a fabulous dining experience on the seaside, surrounded by the cool breeze of the Andaman Sea.

Christmas Eve - Saturday, 24 December 2016

Delectable Traditional Christmas Buffet
Enjoy the Christmas buffet with a festive beverage and traditional delicacies, together with the finest seafood and beverage choices.
Have fun with the entertainment, carolers and greetings from Santa.
Price: 2,800 THB++ Venue: Rim Talay Time: 19:00

Christmas Gala Dinner
Be welcome with a festive beverage, savour a five-course Italian Gastronomic set dinner prepared by Chef Patrizia Batello.
Enjoy delightful ocean views and listening to traditional Christmas carols.
Price: 3,000 THB++ Venue: La Gritta Time: 19:30

New Year’s Eve - Saturday, 31 December 2016

New Year’s Eve under the Stars
Join a spectacular gala dinner and relish a true feast of international and Asian delicacies.
Welcome 2017 with entertainment by traditional international shows, live band and DJ to complete the night.
Price: 5,500 THB++ Venue: Rim Talay Time: 19:30

New Year’s Eve Gastronomic Dinner
Celebrate New Year’s Eve with a premier selection of five-course Italian Gastronomic set dinner while enjoying the spectacular beachfront scenery.
Price: 4,900 THB++ Venue: La Gritta Time: 19:30

Remark: All prices are per person, excluding beverages, and are subject to a 10% service charge and 7% VAT.
Children under 12 years of age will receive a 50% discount.

Reservations: +66 (0) 7634 0105-14 or reservations.phuket@amari.com
Website: www.amari.com/phuket and www.lagritta.com
Address: 2 Athornpang Road, Patong Beach, Kathu, Phuket 83150
Protesters crash deep-sea port hearing

ABOUT 300 protesters broke into a public hearing on December 15 on the ‘destructive’ Songkhla II deep-sea port, claiming the forum was false as only supporters of the project were invited.

Demonstrators gathered in front of the BP Samila Beach Hotel in Songkhla from early morning in a bid to stop the hearing being held by the Marine Department. At 9.30am, they successfully breached the venue and continued to protest inside the meeting room.

Deputy Songkhla Governor Anuchit Trakulmututa said that although many protesters tried to shut down the session, it continued without incident.

“The [security] officers are the ones to be applauded. The situation was under control and there was no violent clash,” he said.

The event was reportedly heavily guarded with hundreds of police and military personnel.

The Songkhla II deep-sea port is part of the bigger Satun-Songkhla Landbridge project. The proposed site for the seaport is at Ban Suankhao in Tambon Nathap of Chana District, although three other sites were proposed at Ban Khokskuk, Ban Thayang, and Ban Pakbang.

Mr Anuchit stressed that the new seaport was essential for the province as it could save a lot of expense transporting goods from the region to elsewhere. He said that the first Songkhla deep-sea port was getting close to its maximum capacity and the goods from Southern provinces had to transport to Penang Seaport in Malaysia instead.

Somboon Khamhang, secretary-general of the NGO Committee on Rural Development in the South, said that despite authorities proclaiming that the forum was a success, the meeting result should be considered void.

“The Environmental Impact Assessment study and public hearing for only Songkhla II deep-sea port is unjust. This project links to the other projects such as Pak Bara deep-sea port and a railroad connection between two seaports to form the big Satun-Songkhla Landbridge project.

“They have to be studied as a whole in order to understand the impact from this mega-project,” he said.

“We will still carry on our campaign against these destructive projects because they will significantly transform the Southern region into an industrial zone and devastate the pristine natural resources which foster the agricultural, fisheries and tourism economy of the region.”

He said the first public hearing on the Pak Bara deep-sea port in Satun will be held in February 2017.

Renil Vejaratpine, an expert on EIA and former lecturer at Silpakorn University, warned that the separate EIA study and public participation will lessen the overall impact of the project.

“I still cannot see any economic worthiness from this landbridge project and I do not think it is worth trading rich natural resources for the wealth of some top elite,” he said.

– The Nation

Dep Mayor vows cleanup of littered Samui beach

A Facebook post displaying the rubbish at Chaweng Beach went viral. Photo: Suchat Hankij

SAMUI officials vowed to clean up Chaweng Beach in Koh Samui after photos of the trash there went viral on social media on December 19.

As per the pictures being circulated via the Facebook post, about 500 meters of the beach is littered with garbage comprising bottles, old shoes, spray cans, Styrofoam and plastic buckets. The area has begun to smell and the water has become dark, locals reported.

Koh Samui Deputy Mayor Muensil Poonsawat told the Gazette that floods after heavy rains caused the trash to eventually end up at the beach.

“There was a lot of trash that washed up into the Chaweng canal after the city was flooded. The trash went into the canal and ended up in the sea. When the floods came, so did the trash onto the beach,” said Dep Mayor Muensil Poonsawat. “The trash subsequently littered all of the beach. Our staff is working on cleaning the area as fast as possible.”

– Suchat Hankij

Stolen bag returned to American tourist

Mr Rusciano was reunited with his belongings. Photo: Suchat Hankij

A THAI couple was arrested on December 18 for the theft of an American tourist’s bag from a hotel room in Koh Samui on December 17.

Christopher Rusciano, a pilot for Spirit Airlines, was staying at Ark Bar Beach Resort, where the incident occurred.

“Mr Rusciano left his room to meet his friend, who was also staying at the resort in a nearby room. He had left the door to his room unlocked,” said Bo Phut Police Captain Sirichat Kamunee.

“When he returned, he noticed that his bag – containing gadgets and equipment worth 150,000 baht – had disappeared, so he raised the alarm.”

Police tracked down and arrested two suspects: Uthen Kaseam 25, and Saifon Suudth, 20. They were still in possession of the bag containing Mr Rusciano’s belongings – including a camera, lens and iPad – except his passport, which they had discarded.

Mr Rusciano collected his belongings at Bo Phut Police Station on December 19 and thanked officials for their swift resolution of the matter.

It was confirmed that he will be issued an emergency passport from the American Embassy in Bangkok.
Demolition execs charged over 4 deaths

POLICE have charged the managing director and engineer of a demolition firm over the collapse of an eight-storey building in Bangkok that killed four workers on December 16.

Boy Ocean Star Company insisted that it had subcontracted the job to another firm, Mega Tools.

However, police have charged the company’s managing director, Mana Kaewmanee, and the firm’s engineer Kittipong Yoobrom with recklessness causing deaths and injury – mental and emotional – to others.

Both denied any wrongdoing and were released on bail of 120,000 baht each.

According to Boy Ocean Star manager Nattapon Rattanatrakool Suk, Mega Tools, via its representative Kritachaya Sriwanna, took over the work from his firm on October 11, and started demolishing the former car showroom at Sukhumvit Soi 87 on November 7.

He added that although his firm was not directly involved in the incident, it was ready to help families of the victims.

On December 20, the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) continued its efforts to retrieve the bodies of workers Prai Khanoonram, 38, and Boonjaeng Leslaong, 46, who had been buried under the rubble.

Asked whether the BMA would take over demolition of the building in the wake of the tragedy, Mr Banchong said the administration would look into which party should be in charge.

Yuttapan Meechai, secretary to Bangkok Governor Gen Aswin Kwanmuang, said the BMA had already consulted experts from organizations such as the Engineering Institute of Thailand over the situation.

Deputy Bangkok Governor Amnuay Nimmano said people could report irresponsible building demolitions to the BMA.

Meanwhile, Admiral Banawit Kengrian, a former chief adviser to the Defense Ministry who lives in the area, said the demolition of the building had adversely affected local people since the project began.

“ Aside from dust and debris, sometimes vehicles of the firm involved have blocked our soi,” Adm Banawit said.

Digital TV operators ask for govt’s help

PRIME MINISTER General Prayuth Chan-o-cha on December 21 invoked special powers under Article 44 of the Interim Charter to issue relief measures for digital TV operators, that have faced business difficulties for problems which many say were caused by the state regulator, as well as the global economic slowdown.

The moves, which include extending the deadline under which state agencies have to return their radio spectra – or bandwidth – for reallocation, were welcomed by broadcasters, who said they would help ease financial strain.

The PM’s order extends the deadline for all 21 state agencies to return their spectra to the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission by another five years from the original deadline of April next year.

The moves, which include extending the deadline under which state agencies have to return their radio spectra – or bandwidth – for reallocation, were welcomed by broadcasters, who said they would help ease financial strain.

The PM’s order also allows the Broadcasting and Telecommunications Research and Development Fund Commission to subsidise the monthly cost faced by digital TV broadcasters for transmitting their programmes to satellite and cable platforms for three years, at a total subsidy of 2.5 billion baht.

The fund commission will pass the subsidy to Channel TV 5, which will seek transmission services for broadcasters. Currently, broadcasters seek transmission services on their own.

Trucker on ice wreaks havoc

A six-wheel truck driver, allegedly under the influence of crystal methamphetamine, was nabbed near Sukhumvit Soi 63 in Bangkok’s Wattana district on the afternoon of December 21 for causing a 38-vehicle collision.

The suspect, who was fleeing after crashing into a policeman’s motorcycle, went on to hit 10 other vehicles and then caused a pile-up of 26 vehicles in a 5-kilometer stretch of Sukhumvit Soi 63. The incident also caused severe traffic jams.

Upon hearing of the accidents at 1pm, police rushed to scene to find 26 cars and two motorcycles hit by the truck from the middle to the mouth of the soi, where the truck was parked after having run out of petrol.

The truck driver, identified as Ekkaphot Yossiri, 27, reportedly fled towards Ekamai Skytrain Station on foot, where he was surrounded by some 20 people who had given chase.

City police chiefLt-Gen Sanit Mahathaworn said that Ekkaphot confessed to being high on drugs, a claim that was backed by a positive urine test and 1.93 grams of “ice” in his possession.
As good as it gets

AS the year draws to a close, social media has been flooded with an increasingly common sentiment: Good Riddance 2016. Fair enough. The past year has been so full of unprecedented — many would say negative — developments that it would be futile to try and list them all here.

A few do stand out and seem to point to some global trends, however. In terms of democracy, at least where it still functions to a reasonable degree. 2016 left many people reeling.

First was the United Kingdom opting out of the EU with the surprising result of the “Brexit” referendum. This was followed by an equally jolting development in the US, where the Electoral College chose reality TV star Donald Trump as its new Commander-in-Chief.

In the Middle East, the world’s undisputed leader when it comes to sectarian violence, ISIS continues its land war to claim responsibility for horrific acts of terror abroad. The latest stop on calendar of observances is Christmas, whose real birth date is, of course, unknown.

But as arbitrarily as they may come to us, holiday traditions provide us with the perfect vehicle to spend time with friends and loved ones, to reflect on the past — and plan for the future.

With all that in mind, the Gazette wishes all our readers safe and happy holidays and extends our best wishes for 2017.
Regularly risking life and limb just to remain legal

By Nick Davies

IF YOU are a foreigner living in Thailand you need a visa. That’s fair enough. It’s like that all over the world. But no matter what kind of visa the foreigner has – tourist, non-immigrant, retirement, education and so on – he or she often has to spend time, money and frequently risk life and limb just to stay legal.

This week we have heard about the deaths of at least three foreigners related to visa issues.

On the morning of December 21, news came in of three foreigners killed in a horrific minivan crash in Phang Nga while doing a border visa run from Phuket [See Page 3].

The driver who survived, lost control of the van as he took a bend at high speed on the wet, slippery road and then slammed into a power pole and a house front.

What a senseless waste of life, all because these foreigners had to cross a border to stamp their passport, only to turn around and come back again instead of being allowed to make a trip to the local Immigration Office.

Most foreigners, I’m sure, don’t mind abiding by the law and just want to make an honest living. Maybe supporting a family as well. However, no one really benefits from the foreigner having to do these regular three-month visa runs to another country.

And now, because of completely unnecessary idiocy on the road, at least three families will be in mourning this Christmas because the foreigners were forced to put their lives in the hands of a reckless driver, who likely received no real safety training.

On top of that, it’s so difficult to really be sure what kind of visa to apply for and what is needed to apply for it. There is little official information online. A simple search reveals mostly stories by other foreigners plagued with the same problems of trial and error.

Even law firms shy away from offering visa advice services as it’s a quagmire they’d rather not get into.

Apart from foreign deaths, hundreds of Thais will no doubt die on the roads again over the new year holiday.

There will be police checkpoints, which will perhaps save a few lives by preventing drunkards from driving or the overloading of old vehicles, but the police simply cannot be held responsible for people’s own stupidity.

Raising penalties for dangerous or drunk driving is all good, but what is really needed is widespread public relations campaigns so that more people grow up understanding the risks and speaking up when other drivers put their lives at risk.

Here we drive on the left because Thailand copied much from the United Kingdom’s roads when building highways. Having a left opening or ‘helmetless riding’ as the major causes of accidents and deaths on the road. However, a relatively overlooked area in my opinion – is road rage.

One recent incident involves a 21-year-old Thai man, who threw a large rock at a passing car, causing the driver to crash into a nearby pole, injuring him, as well as his wife and child.

Police later tracked the man down and called him in for questioning, who explained that the driver had cut him off first and that he wasn’t aware that the man’s wife and child were in the car with him. After apologizing and paying a nominal fine, he was sent on his way.

Another incident involving a Thai TV celebrity who publicly beat up and humiliated a motorcycle rider for scratching his brand new car, generated plenty of debate last month.

Videos captured by bystanders showed the celebrity dragging the man off his motorbike, repeatedly striking and intimidating him, and finally forcing him to apologize to his mini-cooper before letting him go.

The video was shared on several social media websites, particularly Facebook and YouTube. The victim’s family reported the incident to the police, but said they didn’t want to make a big issue because they were worried it might affect his future. The boy suffered a broken nose, damage to both eyes and extensive bruising from the beating he took.

The resultant public outcry cost the celebrity his job in a public announcement and apology by his employers, who were quick to cut him loose when he fell out of public favor. Weeks later, it was revealed that the actor had taken the oath of monkhood and all was forgiven.

One point that stands out in this whole debacle, other than the obvious and disgusting display by the offenders, is the lack (or in some cases total absence) of negative reinforcement.

Merely levying a fine conveys the message that if you pay up, you are free to abuse. In order to discourage such behavior, especially if the injured parties suffer from serious physical or mental harm, the appropriate course of action needs to be much harsher and include at least some jail time, in order to make any real difference to our roads.

Unnecessary carnage before Christmas: Three foreigners died horrifically and other passengers were seriously injured when a visa run minivan crashed in Phang Nga.

Words from the Wise

“Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.”

– Leo Buscaglia

“There is no passion to be found playing small – in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living.”

– Nelson Mandela

Thai idioms and their meanings

Thai idioms often take their cues from nature.

If one wants to point out a stark contrast in a situation, it is seen as being like ‘a crow holding a chili pepper in its mouth’ (ka khap prik).

The striking black feathers of the crow clashing with the bright red of a ripe chili pepper are what make for the contrast.

For couples wishing to tie the knot, it is of course tradition for the man to ask the bride-to-be’s family for their daughter’s hand in marriage in an appropriate way. This is expressed with the phrase ‘khao tam trok, ork tam pratu’, which translates as entering by the street and exiting by the door.

It’s basically expressing the proper way to do it.

The red of a chili against the black of a crow is a stark contrast.

Road Rage: No one wins. Image: PublicDomainPictures.net

AS FAR as road safety in Phuket goes, authorities always highlight ‘speeding’ and ‘helmetless riding’ as the major causes of accidents and deaths on the road. However, a relatively overlooked area – in my opinion – is road rage.

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

December 24 -30, 2016

Countering roadrage

Island View

By Sahar Aftab Paliwala

Unnecessary carnage before Christmas: Three foreigners died horrifically and other passengers were seriously injured when a visa run minivan crashed in Phang Nga. Photo: Phang Nga Rescue Team
TAT rethinks plan as China arrivals drop

THE TOURISM Authority of Thailand (TAT) is reassessing the Chinese market after arrivals from the Kingdom’s No 1 source destination dropped for three consecutive months due to the Thai government’s crackdown on zero-dollar tours and illegal tourism businesses.

TAT Governor Yuthasak Supasorn said the number of tourists from mainland China fell 16 per cent in October and 30 per cent in November compared to the same months last year.

The number is expected to drop by 10 per cent in the current peak season compared to December last year.

The government has cracked down on zero-dollar tours and illegal tourism businesses since September, including the seizing of OA Transport, which controlled more than 2,150 tourist buses that mainly served the China market.

“The government will continue the crackdown on zero-dollar tours and illegal business in a bid to shift to more quality [tourism],” he said.

Mr Yuthasak added that the arrivals target from China this year has been revised down from 10 million to 8.9 million. However, the China market will remain the largest source of international arrivals to the country – about three times higher than the No 2 market, Malaysia.

As of December 14, mainland China had contributed 8.4 million visitors to the Kingdom, up from 7.5 million in the same period of 2015, or a 11.2-per-cent increase. The China market alone is expected to generate income of 400 billion baht this year.

In a bid to stem the drop in Chinese tourists since the crackdown, the governor said TAT and high-ranking officials had talked with the Chinese government and the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) and held a familiarization trip to Guang-zhou in China last week in an effort to encourage tourists to return to Thailand. The TAT will also provide a list of guaranteed Thai travel operators to the Chinese government after presenting the CNTA with a long list of approved Thai companies previously.

Following the crackdown, tour operators in China have adjusted the average package price to Thailand from 2,000 yuan (10,000 baht) to between 5,000-10,000 yuan per trip. It has been reported that some companies sold packages for as low as 600 yuan before the crackdown.

The Thai tourism agency is also seeking to join marketing campaigns with airlines to promote Thailand, particularly in Shanghai and Beijing, along with encouraging more charter flights from China to the country between December and February.

“We should pass through this difficult period with regard to the China market and hope to receive more quality tourists in the coming year,” Mr Yuthasak said.

“TAT expects to welcome 9.8 million Chinese travellers next year,” he added.

TAT said the Chinese market might no longer be an emerging market after the crackdown.

— The Nation

SEPO draws up five-year strategic plan to improve land, sea and air transport

THE STATE Enterprise Policy Office (SEPO) will propose to Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak its five-year strategic plan for 11 transport-related state enterprises, aiming to increase annual transport investment by 10 per cent and reduce goods-transport costs to 6.9 per cent of gross domestic product.

Kritchhep Simlee, acting deputy permanent secretary of the Transport Ministry, said SEPO had proposed to the ministry a strategic plan running from 2017 to 2021.

The third strategy involves state enterprises’ capability to generate income from their core and non-core businesses, while reducing the losses that some have suffered due to too-high expenses for staff and inefficient operations.

The fourth strategy is to increase governance and good management, and the fifth aims at innovation and technological improvement for the transportation system.

The Transport Ministry planned to send SEPO its comments and additional information on the strategic plan by December 21 and propose it to the Deputy Prime Minister on December 23, before forwarding it to the State Enterprise Policy Office Committee chaired by Prime Minister Gen Prayuth Chan-o-cha next month.

The strategic plans of each state enterprise in the transportation field will be drawn up this month and in January. The committee will then review the plans in March.

— The Nation
Luxury stores could do more to impress

A survey by International Service Check has found that the Internet is playing a crucial role for Thai consumers of luxury products.

Over 68 per cent of customers are doing research online before deciding to buy luxury items, but 72 per cent of luxury purchases are made offline.

Among those who do research online, 67 per cent use non-brand-related channels, such as social media and online reviews. Meanwhile, 53 per cent of consumers decide what to purchase through official brand communication online, 37 per cent make a decision in-store, while 35 per cent are likely to be influenced by recommendations from friends and family.

After doing their research, consumers decide whether to purchase online or in-store.

Consumers who purchase online cite such reasons as better prices (85 per cent), convenience (85 per cent), and the ability to compare products and prices before buying (54 per cent).

It was found that the higher the price of a luxury product, the less likely it would be purchased online. The average maximum spend online for a luxury product is 25,500 baht. The top reasons for not buying online are the product being too expensive (one in 25 visits) and the product not being available (one in 25 visits). To offload and fill a product (50 per cent), being afraid of counterfeit products (48 per cent) and mistrust of websites (24 per cent).

Therefore, the importance of good service offline is still just as crucial as before, if not more important, in pushing consumers to make a decision to purchase.

International Service Check conducted mystery shopping visits to the top fifteen local and international luxury brands in Thailand from September 19 to October 24. Evaluators assessed 57 major luxury brands for overall service quality and impressions and found an “unimpressive” average score of 72.2 per cent, which is quite low compared to expectations in luxury stores, where customers expect to be pampered.

“While almost all of our evaluators felt impressed by the stores’ atmosphere (97.9 per cent), their impression went downhill from the moment of interaction with the sales assistants,” International Service Check said.

Across all five categories, the results obtained an average score of 67.2 per cent. The top sections were closing and farewell (78.3 per cent), delivery of solutions (70.2 per cent) and engaging with the customer (69.5 per cent). The bottom sections were fitting experience (69 per cent) and emotional connection (49.2 per cent).

“Our evaluators found that while most sales assistants actively tried to show products (83.8 per cent), the product characteristics and/or benefits were not as readily discussed,” the firm said in its report.

“Material and quality were discussed only in one out of two visits, followed by style and design (one in three visits), functionality and use of item (one in four visits) and details of manufacture (one in 25 visits).

“Based on these results, the information provided in store is not enough for a customer to make an immediate decision. Only 13 per cent of customers felt confident to buy based solely on the visit to the store.

“After buying, consumers typically return to the Internet and social media to evaluate their purchase. If they were happy with their experience and the product, 55 per cent share their feedback with friends and family.”

— The Nation
Ministers open 16th Thailand Yacht Show

Thundery skies Thursday afternoon did nothing to subdue the festivities at the Opening Ceremony of the Thailand Yacht Show 2016. After being greeted by the Show’s managing director Andy Treadwell, accompanied by Minister of Tourism & Sport Kobkarn Wattanavrangkul and Deputy Minister of Transport Omsin Chivapruk, the Guest of Honour, Deputy Prime Minister General Thanasak Patimaprakorn and a whole host of senior government representatives and officials were escorted through the Show’s Exhibition Pavilion and then on down to D’ Deck overlooking Ao Po Grand Marina Dec 15.
Le Meridien hosts first Relax Bay, Karon Classic contest

Congratulations to the winners and participants of the first ‘Relax Bay, Karon Classic 2016’. After a 2km Ocean Swim followed by a 1km Beach Run, Wong Kin Long (Hong Kong) won the race. Scott Bartlett (New Zealand) came in second, followed by Mek Austin Ren Fong (Singapore). Australian Consul-General for Phuket, Craig Ferguson presented trophies to the winners. The event was jointly organized by Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort and Relax Bay Water Safety Academy sponsored the event with the support of the Australian Consulate-General in Phuket and Phuket International Hospital.

From left: Scott Bartlett from New Zealand (2nd Place), Australian Consul-General for Phuket Craig Ferguson, Wong Kin Long from Hong Kong (1st Place), and Mek Austin Ren Fong from Singapore (3rd Place).

Hyatt holds glittery night

The Hyatt Regency Phuket Resort held a silver and gold-themed ‘Glittery Sunset Night’ of culinary creations and entertainment with a lucky prize draw on December 2.

From left: Hyatt Regency Phuket Resort executives Vasikan Karnchananan, Director of Sales; Stephen Radcliffe, General Manager; and Sirithorn Viravat, Marketing Communications Manager.
The Technology Price Index (TYS) was undertaken by Linio to understand the global economic trends in the price of electronics and to provide an understanding of global markets. The index helps people more confidently interpret variations in tech price around the world. Increasingly, the average citizen is a global one, and with a better understanding of global markets comes increased empowerment to travel, shop, and live smarter.

The results were calculated by researching the average retail cost, including taxes, of 14 popular devices, including Apple and Windows-powered products, in 72 countries. Linio also polled 5,000 participants on owning and buying new technology. The results reveal 78.20 per cent of respondents consider their smartphone to be their most important gadget. Laptops came in second at 10.7 per cent, followed by the TV at 3.9 per cent, and gaming consoles at 2.7 per cent.

According to research undertaken by Latin America’s leading e-commerce platform Linio.com, Thailand ranks 36th in average price of smartphones in a study of electronic devices and brands across 72 countries. Linio has released the 2016-17 Technology Price Index comparing the cost of 14 popular devices and brands and has undertaken the research to better understand the global economic trends in the price of electronics.

The Technology Price Index takes into account the cost of smartphones, laptops, games consoles, tablets, smart devices, and other gadgets, ranking the countries on the average cost of all products researched.

To conduct the research, Linio looked at the costs of all products in the study from several brick and mortar chain stores and smaller retailers in all major cities in each country. The study also took into account the average costs from at least three reputable online outlets in each country. Taxes and other associated purchasing costs, minus delivery, were also accounted for.

The results, which were ranked in order of the average cost of all products researched, also reveal that Thailand is in the top 15 most affordable countries for iPhones.

Andreas Mjelde, Linio’s chief executive officer, said that it is hoped the index helps people more confidently interpret variations in tech price around the world. Increasingly, the average citizen is a global one, and with a better understanding of global markets comes increased empowerment to travel, shop, and live smarter.
Aphrodite claims Superyacht Rendezvous Winner’s Cup

Superyacht Aphrodite was the first champion of the ASR Winner’s Cup at the 16th annual Asia Superyacht Rendezvous. Photo: Asia Superyacht Rendezvous

THE crew of Superyacht Aphrodite was the first champions of the 16th annual Asia Superyacht Rendezvous (ASR) Winner’s Cup last weekend.

Owners, guests, captains and crew came together for the high-class three-day event organized and co-sponsored by Asia Pacific Superyachts, Mai Khao at SALA Phuket Resort & Spa.

As well two days of races, events on the social calendar during the rendezvous included a a cocktail party on board S/Y Dunia Baru and the Benetti Challenge – a model yacht competition hosted by Co-Sponsor Benetti Yachts – plus a gala Dinner at the host resort’s Sala Restaurant.

Competing in the races were: S/Y Bliss; S/Y Dallinghoo; S/Y Aphrodite; and S/Y Tiara.

“This year’s Rendezvous was certainly one for the books with outstanding participation from all crew members, owners and captains to create a light-hearted, yet competitive atmosphere for both the Benetti Challenge and Winner’s Cup,” said Race Director Andy Dowden.

Day 1 of racing was anything but dull with clear skies, calm seas, light wind and an unusual occurrence of two races.

According to the committee boat M/Y Azul A, the first race resulted in one yacht recording damage and another retiring, leaving a series final of 2 points for S/Y Aphrodite; 5 points for S/Y Tiara; 6 points for S/Y Bliss; and 7 points for S/Y Dallinghoo with the lowest score being in the lead.

However, what made this race day so unique was that three yachts crossed the finish line within a minute of each other.

As the sun set after the first day of racing, the music was turned up for the Benetti Challenge at SALA Phuket, where crew members mingled before hunkering down in an epic battle to create miniature model yachts out of various materials and then raced them down two troughs with nothing but lung power.

Cheers and jeers from the crowd made for a lively evening with the overall winner announced as the S/Y Tiara crew and the best design prize going to the crew S/Y Dunia Baru.

Race day 2 proved to be an even better day to be out on the water with stiff winds, lovely weather and the added bonus of double points.

S/Y Aphrodite, S/Y Tiara, S/Y Bliss and S/Y Dallinghoo battled it out in an impressive display of workmanship to create an exciting race for spectators.

After the final yacht crossed the finish line, scores totaled 4 points for S/Y Aphrodite; 9 points for S/Y Tiara; 12 points for S/Y Bliss; and 15 points for S/Y Dallinghoo, making S/Y Aphrodite the first champion of the ASR Winner’s Cup.

Captain Simon Blundell accepted the trophy on behalf of his crew and after a little friendly jabbing at his competitors, stated that he looked forward to coming back again next year.

Race Director Andy Dowden noted that this was one of the best fleet of yachts he has seen in years.

– Phuket Gazette
ACCORDING to recent statistics, Thailand has the fourth largest seafood export industry in the world, valued at a massive annual 6.5 billion dollars.

With its fleet of Phuket-based fishing vessels and substantial shrimp-farming industry, the island is a significant contributor to this figure. However, adverse international publicity in the last few years has caused some decline, following allegations not only of human rights abuses but also of IUU (Illegal, Unreported, Unregulated) fishing abuses.

Greenpeace recently claimed that an international crackdown on human rights crimes, plus depleted fish stocks in the Gulf of Thailand and now the Andaman Sea, has prompted some Thai vessels to explore waters off the coast of Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, others to travel 7000km to the rich and bio-diverse Saya de Malha bank off East Africa, a shallow marine system that is not properly policed. These excursions into remote and lawless waters only exacerbate the problem, whereby trafficked men – slaves in effect – are sold and mistreated at sea. Moreover, seafood caught by these ‘pirates’ – not only unregulated, but also illegal – is entering the supply chains of multinational companies that process food. They then sell it globally, in clear violation of international labor, fishing and marketing codes.

One of the problems in Thailand is that the industry relies so heavily on migrant labor. Though precise figures are elusive, more than 90 per cent of crews come from outside Thailand. These fishermen effectively possess no rights; prisoners on board, as catches are transferred at sea, to refrigerated ‘reefer’ vessels, which then return to port. The news is not all bad. In 2015, the government embarked on a comprehensive reform program. Aimed at curbing these malpractices, the regulations have frozen the registration of new boats, and surveyed the existing fleet of 42,000 vessels.

Licences have been restricted in some cases – from open to limited-access fisheries – and a quota imposed on the number of days a vessel can fish. Boats must be marked with details of their size, fishing gear, and designated area of operation.

Most relevant to this debate, new directives aim to regularize the laws concerning the protection of migrant workers, and to eliminate criminal labor brokers. Inspections of seafood factories – where migrants are also heavily employed – has led to the closure of 17 such establishments.

If human rights abuses are one issue, over-fishing is another. According to official statistics, from a peak catch of 300kg per hour in the 1960s, Thai fishing boats are now catching just 18kg. And technological advances, by virtue of their very efficiency, have accelerated the decline, as sonar has developed. Tharamat, a local fisherman, explains: “Now it is a race to get to the fish, so the boat with the biggest sonar usually wins.”

Speaking at the port of Nivat, a Phuket merchant adds: “Most of the big fish are gone. We used to have over 30 trucks a day just for tuna from the seas around Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia. Now we have maybe five to 10 trucks…all that comes from Indonesia.”
Something for everyone at Moon Bistro

By Zohaib Sikander

WITH the Cherng Talay area filled with flashy eateries, it is often difficult to decide where to grab a bite to eat. Driving down Lagoon Road, a small joint named Moon Bistro and Restaurant catches the eye at first glance.

This elegantly-designed restaurant appeals to tourists, as well as long-term expats and locals, with both indoor and outdoor seating separated by large glass doors.

The owner, Mazar Jobi, is an interior designer by profession, and has done a commendable job creating an atmosphere that is both functional and inviting, by painstakingly crafting each aspect from the walls to the furniture. The high canopy-style ceiling fits well with the wooden interior, while the walls are adorned with large paintings that complement the funky, yet laid-back atmosphere Ms Jobi has strived to create.

The restaurant has recently expanded their menu to include a larger variety of both Thai and ‘farang’ food, with regular favorites such as burgers, sandwiches, soups and steaks, as well as offerings for those with a more adventurous palate.

After a refreshing lemon and ginger welcome drink, I started off with some ‘nibbles’, including spring rolls wrapped in shrimp, and chicken satay. Ms Jobi, who is a gracious host and interacts frequently with all her customers, explained that the idea behind her restaurant is an upscale joint with a relaxed vibe, offering reasonable prices and quality food.

The main course consisted of pasta served with a chicken creme sauce and mushrooms, calamari stuffed with minced chicken, Tom Yum seafood soup, garlic fried rice and chicken with coconut curry, as well as a sausage chicken baguette which I packed away for some delicious midnight snacking.

Although I was quite full before dessert (the portions are quite generous, unlike many other restaurants in the area), I couldn’t help but reach for a few mouthfuls of mango with sticky rice, which was a great end to a satisfying meal.

In an area brimming with over-priced cafes and bars, the Moon Bistro is refreshingly affordable. Average prices for entrees are 200-250 baht, unless you’re ordering steak, which will set you back about 550 baht tops. A number of meal-in-a-box options are also available, with prices starting at 120 baht (not including delivery charges).

For more information, contact Moon Bistro and Restaurant at 092-414 2914. Delivery is free within a 5km radius.

Pan grilled salmon and pineapple fried rice are only some of the delicacies on offer at prices that won’t pinch your pocket. Photos: Moon Bistro

Crossword Solution

Turn the page upside down to read the answers.
Festive five per cent financing offered for Laguna Park’s townhomes, villas

INVESTORS in Laguna Park’s two-bedroom townhouses and five-bedroom villas located next to the Laguna Phuket Golf Course are being offered a special five per cent financing option for the festive period. Aimed at couples and growing families, the homes by the Banyan Tree Group are priced from 9.3 million baht and come ready to move in with several options available for buyers to further develop the properties, such as adding a third bedroom or even a rooftop Jacuzzi.

The three-story standalone villas encompassing 340 square meters of light filled space are designed for families. The spacious modern-tropical homes priced from 14.9 million baht feature four bedrooms and five bathrooms.

As well as the five per cent financing option, buyers who purchase a home at Laguna Park during the limited seasonal discount period are also entitled to a five-year golf membership to the adjacent Laguna Phuket Golf Course, along with Angsana Vacation Club membership, which includes up to five-years of free stays in their portfolio of resorts, said Head of Banyan Tree Group Property Stuart Reading.

“To celebrate the festive season and to make purchasing even easier, we are offering, for a limited period, five years financing at only 5 per cent interest. Plus we have a bonus gift of a free furniture package so new homeowners can start enjoying their residence immediately,” said Mr Reading.

The villas and townhomes are located in a tranquil and secure low-density gated neighborhood on the fringes of 1,000 acres of lush tropical parkland adjacent to the Laguna Phuket Golf Course. Residents can also benefit from the ‘Laguna Lifestyle’, being situated in one of Asia’s finest integrated resort destinations among five-star resorts, residences, a shopping village, spas, restaurants and bars.

“The gated development provides a family-friendly community, embodying the project’s concept of ‘Growing Together’,” said Mr Reading.

Contact the Laguna Park sales office for more information. Tel: 076-362 333. Email: info@lagunaproperty.com Website: lagunaproperty.com
Prepare your property properly

By The Book

Kevin Hodges

THE onset of high season is here again. The monsoon rains have passed, the sun is out and businesses are preparing for the influx of tourists to Phuket.

The next six months are when most buyers will visit Phuket and when most property sales occur. Phuket real estate brokers will have already been short-listing those properties they will concentrate their efforts on most.

Market conditions remain slow but there is an increase in transactions in the resale market, which is offering great value for buyers right now. Real Estate brokers will always concentrate their efforts most on those properties they feel show best, offer excellent value and are the most attractive to their potential buyers.

If you are preparing your property for sale this high season, here are some pointers.

ESTABLISH A PRICE

The current market is very competitive so price your property correctly to attract potential buyers. Consider the price you paid for the property, how long you have owned it, comparable property prices, what similar properties have sold for, any improvements added, present condition of the property, current property climate and exchange rates movements since buying.

Arm yourself with all the facts and remember: a property’s value is only what someone is willing to pay.

GETTING YOUR HOUSE IN ORDER

Before a buyer is found for your property, it is advisable to check through a certified lawyer in Thailand that you have all necessary ownership documents to sell your property, an estimate of the transfer taxes payable upon sale and an explanation of the selling options available to you. You need to know whether you can sell the property leasehold or freehold, or with a land-owning company. Also check whether you need to be physically present to complete a sale, or if you can give power of attorney to your lawyer beforehand.

SIGNAGE

Allowing the agent to erect a sign is very important as brand name and reputation may draw in passersby.

NEGOTIATING

Be prepared to negotiate on your asking price. Phuket is currently a buyers’ market and in the end it is what the buyer will pay, regardless of your price.

SHARING COSTS

In Thailand it is customary for the seller and buyer to share the transfer costs 50/50 but this is up to you to negotiate. Sellers must understand associated costs and incorporate them into the selling price. Trying to renegotiate fees after a selling price has been agreed will almost certainly lose the sale.

Having found a buyer and negotiated the sale price and terms, it is not uncommon for the seller to run into issues that can potentially ruin the sale, such as missing documents or higher than anticipated tax. All of these are likely to result in a lost sale, or at the very least, returning to the negotiating table, delaying the sale and creating higher closing costs.

For more information about this article, contact Kevin Hodges, Siam Real Estate (SRE) at 076-383646, or email kevin@siamrealestate.com; www.siamrealestate.com.
**PROPERTY FOR SALE**

**300,000 Baht/Unit**
The Bay Skycliff
Starting 5.3 MB

**BUILDING FOR SALE / RENT**
Brand new, 19 apartments, 2 shops. Ideal for hotel / spa / medical clinic. Good location, located in Patong. Tel: 094-887 0869 (English), 088-012 1425 (English & Thai). Email: nuchy listings@gmail.com

**HOUSE FOR SALE / RENT**
Located in Boat Lagoon, 3 bedrooms. Tel: 097-230 5717.

**FIRESALE BUSINESS**
12-bedroom mint property with 15% ROI for sale in high-end location in Patong. Land and building was 200 million baht 7 years ago but the owner died. Owner’s names have been transferred in the company to family members so all OK now. Fire sale at 80 million baht, no offers! Located in Patong. Tel: 080-124 1245. Email: kay@phuketandamanrealestate.com

**LUXURY SEAVIEW POOL VILLA FOR SALE**
40sqm, 5 bedrooms with aircons, 8 bathrooms, living room, maid’s room, swimming pool, 728sqm land. For sale: 19.5 million baht. Tel: 089-729 8009. Email: spec.trum.phuket@gmail.com

**POOL VILLA FOR SALE**
Private pool villa 3 bedrooms. In Rawai. Special price for Christmas. Tel: 085-302 6686. Email: dchabut@gmail.com

**POOL HOME 8.5 MB KWANG ROAD**
Fully furnished in Maneekram Village no. 68/126 Soi Maneekram 15. Asking price at 8.5 million baht. 3 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, 5 Mitsu-bishi aircons, 2-car parking, CCTV, small garden. All movable wood furniture is included. Land is 298sqm. House is 160sqm. Owner’s sale: 8.5 million baht. Tel: 089-927 0009. Email: nuchy listings@gmail.com

**APARTMENT FOR SALE**
Beautiful 51.50sqm studio apartment, furnished, wifi, CCTV, telephone line, swimming pool, elevator. Quality construction. Short walk to Kata beach. Tel: 098-713 0176. Email: sisli.san1@gmail.com

**CONDO FOR SALE**
Royal place condo, 31st at the corner with swimming pool view, 45sqm. Fully furnished.
Pls contact 086-4769612 | annanol1@hotmail.com

**NEW SMALL HOUSE KAMALA**
A new small house in Kamala, very quiet place, 1 bedroom, 1 living room, wc-shower, aircon, WiFi, TV cable. Tel: 094-584 7760 (English & Thai). Email: jimdroz@gmail.com

**URGENT SALE BELOW MARKET PRICE**
The Title Condo, Rawai. New, 2 bedrooms, 1.5 bathrooms. Unfurnished, never occupied. Building B, 2nd floor, sea view. 4,946,817 baht (77,777 baht/ sqm). Tel: 089-908 5754 (English), 089-772 7136. Email: tedleefisher@hotmail.com

**HUA HIN**

**3-BEDROOM POOL VILLA**
Only 5 pool villas left, brand-new furnished villa. Plot size: 450 sqm, living area: 150sqm. 10-minute drive to beaches, golf courses, shopping. 4.25 million baht. Ready to move in. Tel: 087-821 1077, 085-665 9532.

**FIRESALE SEA VIEW CONDO**
Highly discounted massive panoramic sea view freehold condo. Reduced from 55 million baht, lowest price on the project and best view. Urgent sale: 36 million baht. Located in Kata. Please call 080-124 1245. Email: kay@phuketandamanrealestate.com

**LAGUNA CHERNG TALAY**
Land plot 5.530sqm. Only 17.8 million baht. Please call 062-215 1802. Email: soipasak8@gmail.com

**URGENT SALE BELOW MARKET PRICE**
2 new beachfront, pool access luxury condominiums. Baan Mai Khao. A Saranari development “East Condo”. Asking price: 18.5 million baht and 19.8 million baht. For more information, please visit links at www.facebook.com/beachfrontpoolcondos and https://youtu.be/Te0KRG5qG00

**2 Luxury Beachfront Pool Access Condos / Owner Sale**

**2-BEDROOM HOUSE IN CHALONG**
In Ananda Gardens, a quiet location close to Chalong Pier and Home Pro. Newly decorated inside and out. 2.7 million baht. For further details in English, please call 093-651 4162 (English & Thai). Email: 1donieoleary@gmail.com

**CHALONG STUDIO**
Beautiful 30sqm studio apartment, fully furnished with high standard amenities and ready to move in. Chalong area with view over Phunaka Golf drive range. Low maintenance fees and close to all facilities. For sale: 1.49 million baht. Email: mbernard94@gmail.com

**POOL VILLA**
Contemporary Thai style, extremely spacious, 3 bedrooms, European kitchen, quiet but highly convenient location near the sea in Chalong, 9 million baht, fully furnished. Located in Palai, Chalong. Tel: 076-282522, 085-438 2289 (English), 084-850 1701 (Thai). Email: arcurtis1@hotmail.com

**INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY**
Luxury 3-storey, swimming pool, walled garden house. Standing in a very nice position between Rawai and Nai Harn area, all in a 5-minute drive to the nice beach. Option to be 5 bedrooms and bathrooms with a separate maid's room. Large outside living area with 740sqm of land. For sale at 12 million baht. Tel: 095-061 2868, 081-397 1835. Email: l.dewis@hotmai.com

**URGENT SALE BELOW MARKET PRICE**
The Title Condo, Rawai. New, 2 bedrooms, 1.5 bathrooms. Unfurnished, never occupied. Building B, 2nd floor, sea view. 4,946,817 baht (77,777 baht/ sqm). Tel: 089-908 5754 (English), 089-772 7136. Email: tedleefisher@hotmail.com

**HUA HIN**

**3-BEDROOM POOL VILLA**
Only 5 pool villas left, brand-new furnished villa. Plot size: 450 sqm, living area: 150sqm. 10-minute drive to beaches, golf courses, shopping. 4.25 million baht. Ready to move in. Tel: 087-821 1077, 085-665 9532.
RAWAI VILLA FOR RENT

4 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms. Short/long-term available. Please call 085-392 6666. Email: dchaibut@gmail.com

TEENIS CLUB FOR LEASE / SALE

Established for 10 years on 1.5 acres with regular customers. Due to the owner returning overseas. The business is available for sale 9.5 million baht / month. Tel: 081-826 9390.

COZY HOUSE FOR RENT

A high-grade house, furnished, minutes from Rawai and Nai Harn. Two large bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms and aircon. One guest toilet. Large living / dining room. Telephone and internet. 20,000 baht per month. Located in Sai Yuan. Tel: 081-895 3043 (English & Thai), 091-874 9505 (Thai). Email: dchaibut@yahoo.com, phuketsport.com

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Long term only. 66sqm, furnished. True Vision and WiFi. Tel: 081-892 1621.

ACCOMMODATION AVAILABLE

PATONG

5,000 BAHT / MONTH

Very large ensuite room with balcony, utilities and kitchen available, and apartment available, at sensible long-term rate in Patong. 10 minutes to beach and to Jungceylon. Only 5,000 baht plus electricity monthly. Also weekly. Negotiable rates. Tel: 081-082 2897 (English & Thai). Email: reservations@stayphuket.info

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1 bedroom, 2 bathrooms, condo in central Patong. 500m to beach, 1km to Bangla. Quiet. Please call 091-874 9505. Email: yesgeof@gmail.com

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Brand new, 19 apartments, 2 shops. Ideal for hotel / spa / medical clinic. Good location, located in Patong. Tel: 094-887 0969 (English), 089-012 1425 (English & Thai). Email: nuchylistings@gmail.com

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310sqm total area & 85sqm internal, modern fully furnished & equipped, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, each with queen-sized bed and aircon, Smart LCD TVs, private outdoor plunge pool, CCTV security and remote control gate, situated in quiet Chalong area near Big Buddha, close to fresh markets, convenience stores & restaurants, only 10 minutes from beach. 35,000 baht/month. Tel: 089-729 6244, http://www.ipv.global

BEACH HOUSES CHALONG

Sea views, pool, furnished, 2 & 3 bedroom houses from 12,000 baht. WiFi, cable TV included. Tel: 089-470 6104. www.house rentalsphuket.com

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2,400sqm land at Chalong Bay. Tel: 081-826 9390.

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HOUSE WITH POOL

14,000 BAHT / MONTH

Furnished, aircon, kitchen, free cable TV & internet, swimming pool, green area. Located at Welcome Inn Villa Rawai. Tel: 089-475 1200 (English & Thai). Email: info@welcomeinnvilla.com, welcomeinnvilla@live.com

NAI YANG HOUSE FOR RENT

Quiet, modern, furnished 2 and 4 bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms. Kitchen, aircon, internet, TV. 700m from Nai Yang Beach. Starts at 15,000 baht/month (long term). Tel: 081-837 5774 (English), 092-431 5962 (English & Thai). Email: info@adrinflatables.com

VILLA, 5 MIN FROM MARINA

2-bedroom villa with 2 ensuite, covered car park, new kitchen, fresh painted wardrobes, new fridge. Available for rent also as 4-bedroom house. Ao Po. Tel: 081-537 1356, 090-868 0695. Email: clem@wdrace.com

POOLSIDE CONDO

Fully furnished 2-bedroom / 2-bathroom condo for rent. Aircon, fans, WiFi and cable TV. Patong. Tel: 085-792 2815 (English). Email: bern@global.net.au

VILLA, 5 MIN FROM MARINA

2-bedroom villa with 2 ensuite, covered car park, new kitchen, fresh painted wardrobes, new fridge. Available for rent also as 4-bedroom house. Ao Po. Tel: 081-537 1356, 090-868 0695. Email: clem@wdrace.com

KATHU HOUSE FOR RENT

3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, fully furnished, 3 aircons. For more information, please call 087-266 7191.

HOUSE FOR RENT 10MIN TO AIRPORT

2 bedrooms, living room, big sala, garage, aircon, fast internet. 20,000 baht/month. For more information, please call 081-719 7015. Email: jyfivet@gmail.com

POOL SIDE CONDO

Furnished, aircon, kitchen, free cable TV & internet, swimming pool, green area. Located at Welcome Inn Villa Rawai. Tel: 089-475 1200 (English & Thai). Email: info@welcomeinnvilla.com, http://welcomeinnvilla.com

VILLA, 5 MIN FROM MARINA

2-bedroom villa with 2 ensuite, covered car park, new kitchen, fresh painted wardrobes, new fridge. Available for rent also as 4-bedroom house. Ao Po. Tel: 081-537 1356, 090-868 0695. Email: clem@wdrace.com

6TH FLOOR FURNISHED CONDO FOR RENT

Long-term rent. Great location, fully furnished 2-bedroom/2-bathroom condo with kitchen next to new Duty-Free Mall, overlooking lake. 100m swimming pool, gym, internet, 2 cable TVs, 3 aircons, washing machine, parking. Security. Close to all shopping malls. 25,000 baht/month. Located in Kathu. Please call 081-893 9127 (English), 087-886 7985 (Thai). Email: duncan eclipse@yahoo.co.uk

LONG-TERM RENT (MINIMUM 1 YEAR)

In small friendly atmosphere building close to the markets & shops in Kata Beach center with indoor pool, sauna, elevator. 1) 65sqm apartment, completely furnished, first floor, close to the pool. 24,000 baht/month. 2) 60sqm apartment, third floor, new luxury furnishing (never used). 24,000 baht/month. 3) Fourth floor 60sqm apartment also new furnishing. 26,000 baht/month. Tel: 081-788 8280. Email: maurice.phuket@gmail.com
JOBS / RECRUITMENT

SCUBA TRAVEL AGENT
Email: ebay@rock-star.asia, please see details in weblink: https://magazine.diviac.com/job-vacancy-online-travel-agent/

LAWYER WANTED URGENTLY!
Prefer Thai female, 22-35 years old. Bachelor’s degree in law or equivalent, new graduate is welcome. Fair English skills. Located in Patong. Tel: 076-344 180, 093-886 8525. Email: admin1patong@ilo-phuket.com

OPERATIONS ASSISTANT
Required at weddings & events company in Cherng Talay. Must have experience in events and work under pressure. Good organizational skills, hard working, good administration skills. Tel: 089-973 2159. Email: meesak@phuketweddingsevents.com

FEMALE GALLERY MANAGER
Art gallery in Phuket Town needs Thai female with previous sales experience. Good English and Chinese essential. Great salary offered. Located in Phuket Town. Tel: 087-884 8271, 086-509 7510. Email: simon@colonial-connection.com

Position: Chief Engineer
- Follows company preventative maintenance procedures and guidelines for guestrooms, equipment, public space and building envelop, etc.
- Maintains engineering related check book accounting procedures to ensure department operates within budgeted guidelines while maintaining required stock of supplies and materials.
- Assures that basic mechanical and/or electrical equipment, machinery and/or circuitry of the property are kept in good working order.
- A complete understanding of all building related systems – Electrical, HVAC, Plumbing, Life Safety, IT, etc.
- Any other duties assigned by Management

Position: Sales Representative
- Listening to customer requirements and presenting appropriately to make a sale
- Cold calling to arrange meetings with potential customers
- Responding to incoming email and phone inquiries
- Negotiating the terms of an agreement and closing sales
- Gathering market and customer information
- Negotiating on price, costs, delivery and specifications with buyers and managers
- Creating detailed proposal documents, often as part of a formal bidding process which is largely dictated by the prospective customer
- Coordinate and follow up sales with agents
- Prepare artwork for advertising in social network marketing and media

Position: Executive Assistant General Manager
The Executive Assistant Manager assists the General Manager and the Hotel Manager. He/she provides both Managers with information of all the departments. An Executive Assistant Manager is responsible for keeping a perfect coordination between all departments and controlling their operation with regards to the company’s standards, revenues and controlling costs and the highest comfort and satisfaction for guests.

Responsibilities include the following:
- Manage schedules, answer and respond to phones, set up meetings and general office support for the General Manager and other team members as identified
- Coordinate travel arrangements, expense reports and department invoice processing
- Coordinate department-wide events, meetings, off-site venues, and training programs
- File, track and organize department documents and contracts
- Handle privileged and confidential information appropriately
- Act the view projects will be assigned as necessary
- Maintain and order office supplies
- Monitoring and supervisor of all operations in all department

Qualifications:
- 2-5 years administrative experience required preferably in a hotel environment.
- Must be fully versed in Microsoft Office applications including Word, Excel, and PowerPoint
- Ability to work in a complex, fast paced environment with changing priorities
- Prioritization and multi-tasking against time lines
- Excellent written and verbal communications skills are required
- Team player and highly collaborative
- Demonstrate high levels of trust and confidentiality
- Sales and PR experience is required.

Marketing Coordinator Wanted
Real estate company is looking for marketing coordinator.
- Excellent English
- Male/female, Thai national
- Driving licence

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

GENERAL CLASSIFIEDS

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

SAILING COMPANY
Established in 1999 - Sailing School, Charter service, Yacht Chandlery and Management for sale complete - yachts, dinghies, vehicles, and advance sales, with all staff and infrastructure in place. Many opportunities for growth and expansion. Capital for four work permits. Sale due to the principal’s health. Contact by email or call. Tel: 076-397942, 081-370 1995 (English). Fax: 076-397942. Email: inq@sea-yss.com www.sailing-thailand.com

LAUNDRY FOR SALE 2 MILLION BAHT
Laundry shop in Phuket Town with semi industrial equipment with existing customers for sale. Eligible for work visa. Tel: 084-662 9961. Email: pinyo@zoltionsthailand.com

PHUKET COUNTRY CLUB
Lifetime family membership 440,000 baht includes transfer fee. Tel: 091-034 0495 (English), 082-805 3403 (English & Thai). Email: mikecahill1806@gmail.com

BLUE CANYON MEMBERSHIP
Lifetime membership for sale 690,000 baht plus transfer fee. Tel: 088-886 9506. Email: onobu.yukio@gmail.com

BLUE CANYON MEMBERSHIP
Blue Canyon corporate membership (2 players). Special offer: 700,000 baht including transfer fee. Tel: 081-737 5085 (English).

BLUE CANYON MEMBERSHIP
Lifetime membership for sale: 700,000 baht, transfer fee paid by buyer. Tel: 081-970 9055.

CLUB MEMBERSHIP AVAILABLE

PHUKET GAZETTE
The Phuket Gazette seeks to fill the following position:

ACCOUNTANT
- Thai national, aged 22 years up
- Bachelor’s degree in Accounting
- Some fluency in spoken and written English

Good salary for the right candidate. Qualified candidates are invited to send a CV by email to admin@phuketgazette.net

The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd
79/94 Moo 4, Thepkrasattri Rd, Koh Kaew, A. Muang, Phuket 83000
Tel: 076-615244 Ext. 102 Fax: 076-615240

Contact Person: Tukta
Email: info@theviewphuket.com | Mobile: 083-691 4028

BULLETINS

Alcohols Anonymous
If you want to drink that is your business
If you want to stop that is ours
Daily Meetings
Paton, Phuket Town, Chalong, Surin, Karon
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Email: phuketaaa@yahoo.com
Google AA Phuket

Marketing Coordinator Wanted
Real estate company is looking for marketing coordinator.
- Excellent English
- Male/female, Thai national
- Driving licence

Please call 089-594 6888. Email: info@arthouse.asia
Classified Advertisements

Please use this form to write your classified advertisement. Then hand it to any of our agents.

Classified ads are charged per line. Each line is 140 baht, with a minimum of 4 lines (heading included) per ad.

All advertising must be paid for in advance.

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

PHUKET GAZETTE 23 
December 24 - 30, 2016

WHEELS & MOTORS

MAZDA 3 FOR SALE
Perfect condition. Please call 092-261 4287.

MITSUBISHI PAJERO FOR SALE
Pajero Sport Diesel, 4WD, automatic, top model, October 2014, 64,000km, 1 owner, no accidents, 7 seats, navigation system, etc. 890,000 baht. Located in Thalang. Tel: 090-153 1833 (English). Email: jhorr2000@yahoo.de

NISSAN JUKE - 16,000KM
2015, white, top model. No accidents. Original paint. New condition. 55,000 baht. Tel: 081-891 6174 (English & Thai). Email: jckhan@hotmail.com

TRUCK FOR SALE
Price: 250,000 baht. Contact: Julie. Tel: 082-421 6414.

BOATS & MARINE

SESSA 20 MOTORBOAT FOR SALE
20 foot walk-around motorboat, 2007, includes trailer, 140hp 2-stroke Mercury engine, 9.8hp Tohatsu spare engine, toilet, cushions, fenders, ropes, etc. 740,000 baht. Thalang. For more information, please call 090-153 1833 (English). Email: jhorr2000@yahoo.de

MAZDA 3 FOR SALE
Perfect condition. Please call 092-261 4287.

MITSUBISHI PAJERO FOR SALE
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NISSAN JUKE - 16,000KM
2015, white, top model. No accidents. Original paint. New condition. 55,000 baht. Tel: 081-891 6174 (English & Thai). Email: jckhan@hotmail.com

TRUCK FOR SALE
Price: 250,000 baht. Contact: Julie. Tel: 082-421 6414.
Reaching for the finish line

Long-time Phuket vacationers now have a new reason to visit

By Zohaib Sikander

THOMAS and Sonja Baumgartner may be two among thousands of athletes who competed in this year’s Laguna Phuket Triathlon, but their story is an inspiring one nevertheless.

Hailing from snowy Switzerland, the couple are regular vacationers to Phuket. Although of an active and sporty disposition, they had never thought about taking part in a triathlon event until their daughter brought it to their attention more than 15 years ago. Since then, they have participated in several competitions.

Sonja’s first triathlon in Thailand was the 2009 Laguna Phuket Triathlon. She came back the next year and took part in Ironman 70.3.

“Due to our busy schedules, we train extra hard to make these events worth our while,” says Sonja, who works as a specialized physical therapist.

“We try to take our vacations in hotter countries when it’s snowing and raining back home,” adds Thomas. “This year, we landed into Chiang Mai to take part in a biking tour to conquer Doi Inthanon, the highest mountain in Thailand. While we were there, we heard about the triathlon and came here.”

Thomas and Sonja feel there are no limitations as to who can participate in these events – anyone who’s serious enough about it can do so.

“First, you need to set yourself some goals. Start with shorter distances that you can easily achieve.

“For example, it’s foolish to think that you can build endurance in just a couple of weeks. To start training, set realistic goals and maintain a healthy diet,” says Thomas.

“If you’re a complete novice, start running and swimming once a week, and riding a bicycle (even a basic mountain bike will do) twice a week. Do this on a weekly basis and over the next few months you will begin to develop stamina and strength to go longer and faster,” says Sonja.

“About two years is a good time to be ready for a triathlon.”

They also suggest that the first time anyone takes part in something like the LPT, the goal should not be to win.

“It’s important to simply have fun and go at your own pace. Take in the experience and enjoy it. The goal should be to finish it and not succumb to any pressures of winning the race. Your second attempt will definitely be easier,” says Thomas.

Although the pair may not be able to participate next year, they are excited for the 25th anniversary race in two years time.

“This is more than an event; it’s a lifestyle. We know many people here. If you are part of this community, you meet like-minded people along the way,” says Sonja.