

Phuket Gazette

PhuketGazette

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PRIME MINISTER SAYS NO IMMEDIATE BOMB THREATS IN PHUKET

PLAYING IT SAFE

Phuket Gov says safety top priority, orders island-wide security boost

By Sukawin Tanthavanich

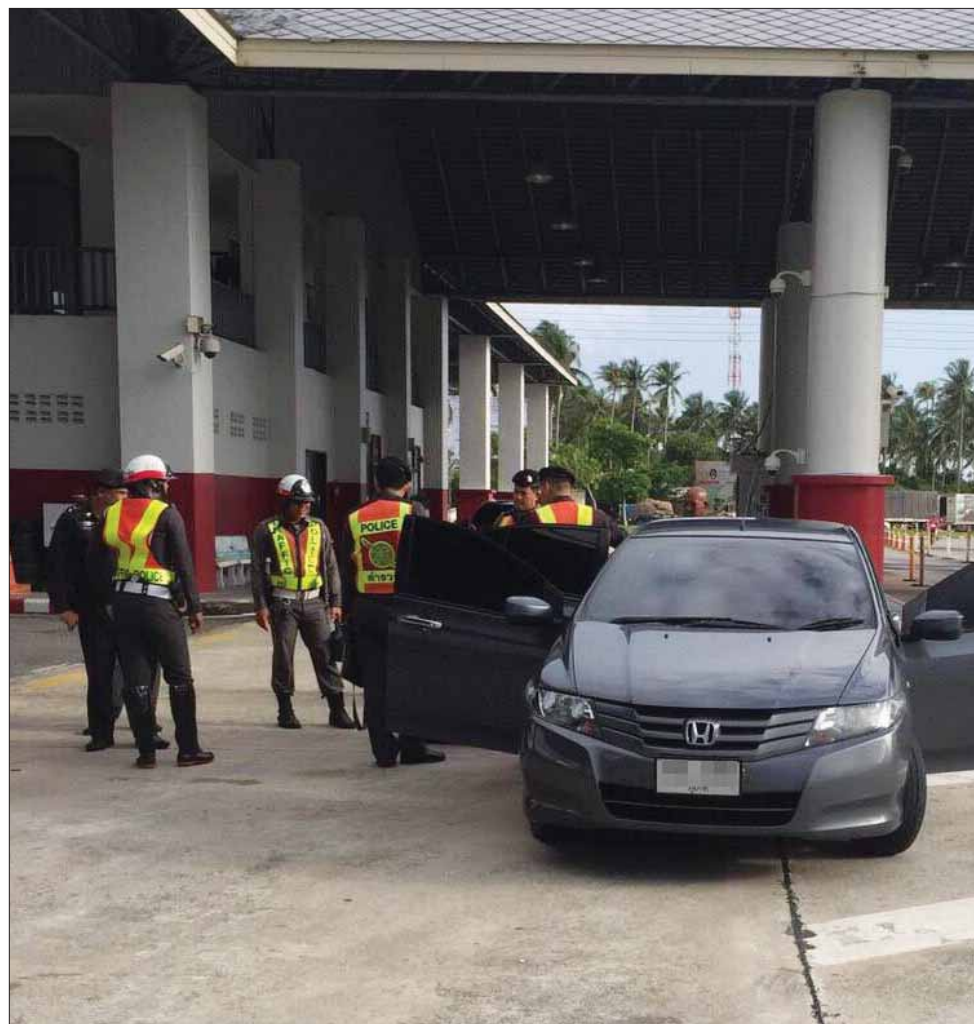
PRIME Minister Gen Prayuth Chan-o-cha and Deputy Prime Minister Prawit Wongsuwan have so far denied ‘bomb threat’ rumors in the Andaman area, despite increased security ordered throughout the island by Phuket Governor Norraphat Plodthong.

The PM also urged people to remain calm and inform officials of any suspicious activities, saying that the government’s top priority would always be the safety of locals and tourists and that such unconfirmed reports were damaging for tourism.

However, the Phuket governor – who last month warned the public to be careful about sharing unconfirmed reports on social media after a rumored bomb threat created panic among Phuket vendors – ordered officers to keep an eye on crowded areas such as department stores and fresh markets, as well as all entry and exit points such as Phuket International Airport, bus terminals, deep sea ports and checkpoints.

Following unconfirmed reports of bomb threats in Phuket and a bomb blast at Phramongkutklo Hospital in Bangkok last month, Governor Norraphat ordered 24-hour surveillance to avoid blasts such as the ones that hit Phuket on Mother’s Day last year. Prime Minister Prayuth says police are gathering evidence against suspects in the hospital blast, which injured 25 people, but could provide no details until arrest warrants were officially issued.

“In order to maintain public confidence, we will enhance safety measures throughout the island, particularly at Tah Chat Chai checkpoint. Using a consolidated CCTV



Police officers inspect vehicles at Tah Chat Chai checkpoint in Phuket. Photo: Gazette file

system, efficient license plate scanners and stricter personal checks, we will ensure that both visitors and locals are always protected,” said Gov Norraphat.

The governor also ordered officials to ensure that CCTV cameras were up to date and that officers were in constant communication with the Phuket Office of the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM).

“DDPM has a consolidated CCTV system to monitor and prevent suspicious activities at public places in Phuket 24 hours a day,” the governor added.

Lt Col Krissana Janit of Thalang Police

also confirmed that Sarasin Bridge is being closely monitored as it is a famous attraction for both locals and tourists.

Krabi and Phang Nga, which have also faced unrest along with other provinces in the South since the bombings last year, have also tightened security.

“In order to prevent any violence, we will station more officers to patrol important and at-risk areas such as government offices and tourist spots,” said Maj Gen Worawit Pranprung of Krabi Provincial Police.

He also ordered officers to ensure that CCTV cameras were working properly.

Two drown, 10 rescued at beaches

A Chinese and Thai tourist drowned and ten others were rescued at Phuket beaches this week, prompting the Phuket Governor to urge officials to find better safety solutions for tourists. The latest victim was an 18-year-old Chinese tourist, whose body washed up at Kamala Beach on June 14.

Story on Page 3

PHUKET LIFE



Although Phuket has a better record than most, a lot of effort is still needed to balance the gender ratio in the field of sailing.

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The short reads in the Gazette’s ‘weekly briefly’ are from the Gazette Online, Phuket’s #1 for traffic – web + mobi *

*Source: Google Analytics

LOCAL NEWS

Briefly

Belgian shop-lifter arrested at Phuket airport

A BELGIAN tourist was arrested at Phuket International Airport on June 12, more than two weeks after he reportedly stole a mobile phone accessory from an electronics store in Phuket.

Tourist Police officers were able to apprehend the suspect, Oliver Jerome Georges Verhaeghe, 58, while he was waiting to board Qatar Airways flight QR841 to Doha.

Mr Verhaeghe was originally seen stealing on CCTV on May 26 by staff at 'Remax', an electronics store on Yaowarat Road. The footage was widely shared on social media.

An arrest warrant for him was issued by Phuket Provincial Court on June 2 after police were able to use his credit card information (which he had used to purchase some items) to identify him.

"Mr Verhaeghe confessed to stealing a car mobile phone holder and was charged with theft. We also found the stolen item in his luggage," said Gen Thongchai Wilaiptom of the Phuket Tourist Police.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

Speedboat collides with another at pier

A SPEEDBOAT carrying 20 passengers crashed with another at the Boat Lagoon in Koh Kaew on June 11. No injuries were reported.

A speedboat belonging to 'Golden Dragon Tour 1' was carrying passengers from Koh Phi Phi to Phuket when it col-

Deputy PM, Phuket Gov help launch 'smart kiosk'



Deputy Prime Minister Prajin Juntong on June 8 chaired a seminar titled 'GovChannel Roadshow 2017: Digital Local Government' at Novotel Phuket Phookeethra in Phuket Town, introducing the launch of a 'smart kiosk' at Big C Supercenter. The launch makes Phuket the first province in the South to have one. Phuket Governor Norraphat Plodthong also attended the event, expressing his willingness to move Phuket forward under the 'Digital Local Government' campaign and provide Phuketians with modern and efficient government services. He said the project would go a long way toward providing timely and relevant information about government services to all Phuketians. Photo: Phuket PR

lided with, and landed partly on top of, another speedboat, 'K. Kanreab', which was not carrying any passengers at the time.

"Teerachai Maimard, the 'captain' of Golden Dragon Tour 1, sped up the boat in order to tread through shallow water. Unfortunately, the hydraulic hose that controlled the boat's helm broke down and the captain lost control," said Maj Tosapol Montasit of the Phuket Marine Police.

"Capt Teerachai coordinated with 'Suriyan Marine', another boat in the area, to transport his passengers to the pier at the Boat Lagoon," he added.

K. Kanreab had left the Boat Lagoon pier at 4pm and was heading to Port Yamu in Pa Khlok, but was stranded in shallow water and unable to move forward.

Both parties agreed that

'Golden Dragon Tour 1' would take full responsibility for the damages, but police are investigating further and questioning both captains.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

Be wary of 'Men of War', say lifeguards

LIFEGUARDS issued a warning to Phuket beachgoers to be wary of 'Portuguese Men of War', poisonous siphonophores that deliver a painful sting if touched.

"One of our lifeguards spotted a Portuguese Man of War on the beach on June 7. This is not the first one we have found during this monsoon season – several of them have been seen on Phuket beaches already," Phuket Lifeguard Club President Prathaiyuth Chuayuan told the *Gazette*.

"It's normal for these kinds of species to wash ashore due to strong winds and waves during the monsoon season. Please do not panic, but be aware of your surroundings," he added.

A Man-of-War sting should not be treated like jellyfish stings, which are commonly treated with vinegar or plain

water. If a swimmer is stung, lifeguards recommend rinsing the wound with seawater and calling for help.

They also urge tourists to strictly follow instructions.

"Please pay heed to the flags. If an area is flagged as red, do not go there to swim. We are here to help you, but you have to protect yourselves and listen to our instructions as well," said Mr Prathaiyuth.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

Concerns for fake Facebook profile of V/gov

A PHUKET vice governor warned the public to be wary of his Facebook impostor after a user with a fake profile added people and asked to borrow money from them.

Vice Governor Teera Anantaseriwidhya filed a complaint against the Facebook user who created a profile in his name (in Thai) on June 9.

"Please do not accept his friend request; do not believe him if he claims to be a vice governor; and do not transfer any money," Bussaya Jaipiam, chief of the Phuket Public Relations office said on behalf of

V/Gov Teera.

A similar incident occurred last month, when another user created a Facebook profile using Phuket Governor Norraphat Plodthong's picture and a name that sounded very similar to his.

The user then asked several high-ranking Phuket officials to transfer money to his account. Phuket police are hunting for both of these Facebook users.

– *Kongleaphy Keam*

ATM skimmers arrested at Sadao border

THREE Malaysian ATM skimmers were arrested at the Sadao border checkpoint between Malaysia and Thailand last week.

The suspects were wanted for conducting unauthorized money withdrawals in Songkla and Phuket, skimming more than 600,000 baht from 13 Phuket and Songkla-based accounts last month.

The police also seized more than 30 credit cards, a book with more than 1,000 ATM codes, equipment used for skimming, 400,000 Vietnamese dong, US\$20 and three suitcases that were found in the suspects' possession.

The men arrived in Thailand on May 9 and after fraudulently obtaining the money, spent all of it on travelling and shopping.

They were charged for forging electronic cards and illegally using (artificial) electronic cards.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

Injured turtle rescued by Thai, Russian

A THAI and Russian tourist received praise for rescuing an injured turtle stuck in a fishing net at Sirinath National Park on June 8.

Officers from the Phuket Marine Biological Center came to examine the creature after receiving reports from the Thai tourist, Chanyut Butrgrim, who was visiting the park at Nai Yang Beach.

The creature was an olive ridley sea turtle, 15-20 years old. She was fatigued and badly injured on her nose, neck and legs. Vets injected her to avoid infection and performed surgery to cut out part of her infected right leg.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

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Beach trash ‘normal’ at this time of year, states Mayor

By Kongleaphy Keam

PATONG Mayor Chalermluck Kebsup has responded to complaints of trash on Patong Beach after the *Phuket Gazette* submitted photos of the depressing landscape to her office on June 9.

The photos, showing a sea of trash throughout Patong Beach, were sent to the *Gazette* by a concerned reader.

“This type of thing is normal during the monsoon season, when the wind and waves bring trash from the ocean onto the beach,” Ms Chalermluck told the *Gazette*.

“However, our officers work very hard to clean it up and return the beach to its original state every day,” she added.

On June 7, the Phuket Marine Office Chief negated concerns about ‘oil spills’ on Karon Beach after a video was shared on social media claiming that that was the case.

Facebook user ‘Tonya So Say’ posted a 14-minute video on the group Siang Prachachon Khon Phuket (‘The Voice of Phuket Citizens’) with the caption:



Photos of trash submitted by a *Gazette* reader. Photo: Supplied

tion:

“There is oil spreading on Karon Beach and tourists are unable to swim. This has also impacted many hotels and businesses along the beach. How can I inform officials about this problem?”

The video was shared by several other users, who called on authorities to take action.

Marine Office Chief Surat Sirisaiyas inspected the site and responded that the supposed

‘oil spills’ were actually plankton blooms.

“The plankton is not widespread; it only appears in some spots and then disappears again,” said Mr Surat.

He insisted that the bloom was caused by heavy winds and that tourists need not worry.

“Everyone can swim normally. We just want people to be careful and avoid those spots. We have lifeguards on the beach to guide and warn

people with red flags,” Mr Surat added.

Dr Pornsri Suthanaruk, director of Regional Environmental Office 15, said that her office had received similar complaints about brown water at Karon Beach the week before and that they were awaiting results of laboratory tests to ensure that it was safe.

“Plankton blooms are often caused by excessive amounts of nutrients in the form of nitrogen and phosphorus,” she said.

The reason for the presence of excessive nutrients in the water in the first place, however, does lead back to wastewater from local sewers, as Patong Mayor Chalermluck Kebsup had told the *Gazette* in February.

She had also revealed a tentative solution to counter the plankton, which was to grow *eichhornia crassipes* (better known as water hyacinths), but no implementation timeline or any confirmation of its effectiveness has yet been forthcoming.

Additional reporting by Kritsada Mueanhawong.

Gov orders officials to enhance beach safety

A CHINESE and Thai tourist drowned and ten others were rescued at Phuket beaches in two days, prompting the Phuket Governor to urge officials to find better safety solutions for tourists.

The governor was present at the scene when the body of an 18-year-old Chinese tourist, Wei Peixin, washed up at Kamala Beach on June 14 after rescue workers were unable to locate him despite an hour-long search the day before.

His friends, both 18, were safely rescued. An American couple was also rescued from the waves at Surin Beach on June 14.

The body of a 26-year-old Thai man, Arnon Rodjui, was found off Surin Beach on June 12, whereas his two friends were safely rescued by lifeguards the day before.

Additionally, four Chinese tourists were hospitalized after going swimming in a red-flagged zone at Patong Beach on June 12. They were later transferred to Vachira Phuket Hospital.

– Winai Sarot

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Medical certificates: Who's fooling whom?

AS PART of its ongoing reforms, the current government should revise or eliminate the Medical Certificate (*bai raprawng phaet*) as a requirement in government applications.

In the process of renewing his work permit, this editorialist was handed a form citing, among numerous other documentary requirements, "a medical certificate certifying that the applicant is free from the prohibited *deceased*".

In theory, it makes sense to have a doctor certify that seekers of a work permit are in good health and free of dangerous contagious diseases.

In reality, though, there are countless private clinics in Thailand that will serve up a medical certificate in a jiffy. Just walk in and ask for one. A receptionist will hand a form to what may or may not be a doctor for signature. In many cases you'll not see that person, nor will anyone even check your pulse to be sure you're not a robot. Pay 200 baht and you're off to the next hurdle in a bureaucratic paper chase that has no finish line.

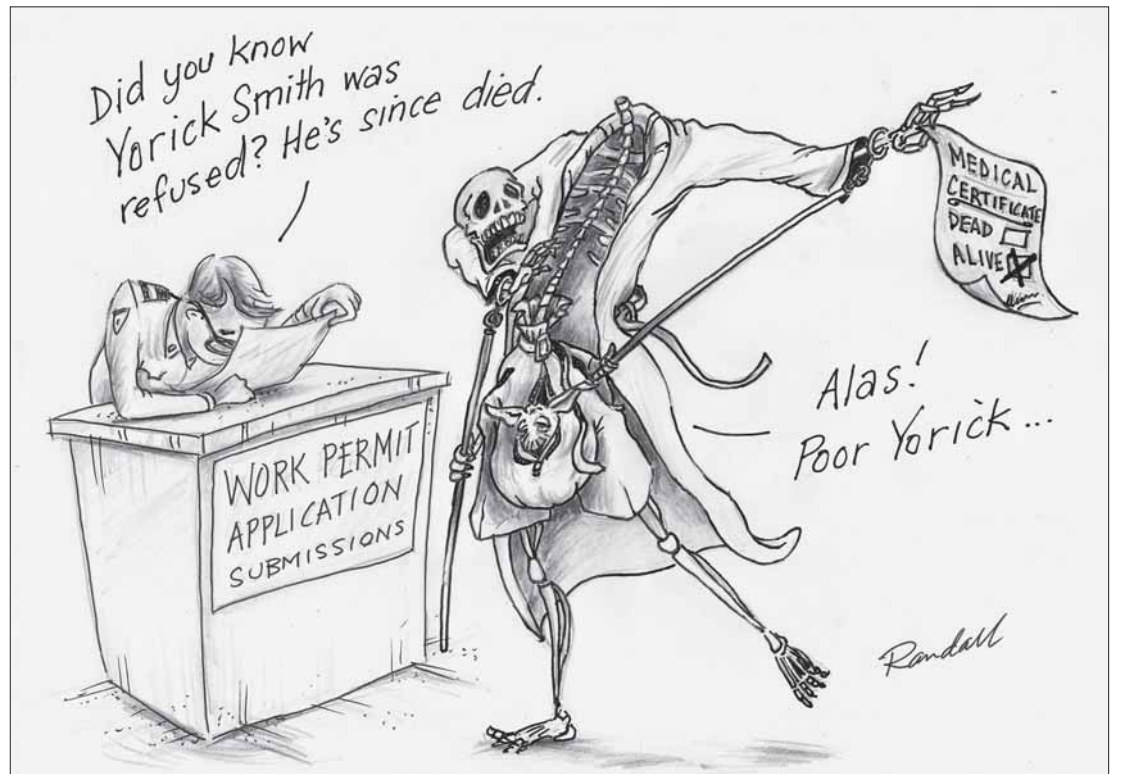
Of course some hospitals, as opposed to clinics, do have protocols that pay at least a modicum of respect to the notion that a medical certificate really shouldn't be a joke.

"Do you have elephantiasis?" is always a major feature in the application process at such institutions. Merriam-Webster defines the condition as an "enormous enlargement of a limb or the scrotum [testicle bag] caused by...worms (especially *Wuchereria bancrofti*)."

Is it an epidemic? What are the odds of contracting it? Just how great a threat to national security is a lavish alien ball pouch?

Currently the only lab test for a work permit is syphilis. What are the odds of anyone having that these days? If it's widespread here, that would certainly be news to the *Phuket Gazette*. There are a number of other, more prevalent conditions that would pose a far greater risk to public health and fitness for work.

It is impossible to estimate how many man-hours and baht have been wasted down this outdated, bureaucratic abyss. The only beneficiaries are the owners of the clinics. It is time for the government to either standardize and modernize the system or scrap it altogether.



Written exam for boat captains

Re: 20-passenger speedboat collides with another at Phuket pier; Jun 12

It is well overdue to make all these captains study and take the needed safety and navigation courses and pass a written exam. There is a commercial business next to Yacht Haven Marina that is offering these courses. It is time for the Thai Marine Department to require these captains to attend courses and pass tests before being allowed to take any passengers.

*Anonymous
Gazette forum*

More action needed from govt, hotels

Re: Huge amounts of trash on Phuket beach 'normal' at this time of year, Mayor says, Jun 9

Myself and several other mainly Thai locals cleaned 18 large bags of plastic from Kata Beach last week. It was mainly water containers used by speedboats, but I also picked up a dirty needle full of blood only meters from kids. The government, local hotels and businesses should be ashamed. Those renting out chairs also left rubbish behind.

*Jody Leow
Gazette forum*

The car driver had every right to brake

Re: Phuket police investigating horrific road death of 26-year-old biker, Jun 7

Maybe the bike rider had been trying to cut the Honda off

Letters to the Editor

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

unsuccessfully for a few minutes before the accident occurred, at which time the bike was indeed behind the Honda.

But one thing is for sure: the Honda guy had every right to brake suddenly if it was to prevent an accident, and the bike was riding too close.

*Speculator
Gazette forum*

Low season, prices contribute to crime

Re: Spree of electric wire thefts in Phuket causes B2mn in damages, Jun 8

With the high season gone and the latex price gone deep six, we are sure to see more of these petty crimes all over the country.

*Ernst Ruetimann, Trang
Gazette forum*

Foreigners are not 'walking ATMs'

Re: Thailand 'among top 20 most dangerous countries' to visit, Jun 10

1.5 trillion baht... wow! They risk losing much of that with their current attitude toward 'the farang'. I was a regular traveller to Thailand annually, Phuket in particular,

however their continual 'fleece the walking ATM' attitude needs to change for a start before I will return.

*Jono
Gazette forum*

Ignore warnings: face charges, fine

Re: One missing, six rescued from drowning at Phuket beaches, Jun 12

Those that ignore warnings from the lifeguards should be arrested and charged, if they have to be rescued.

*Agogohome
Facebook*

Rumors of mandatory insurance

Re: Krabi Hospital denies allegations of 'ignoring' injured Brit, Jun 6

Timely that there are rumors of mandatory insurance. Motorbike injuries are not covered in holiday insurance.

*Geoff
Gazette forum*

Ringleader or large bulging pockets

Re: Malaysian fraudsters arrested for skimming Phuket bank accounts, Jun 8

They Spent 600,000 baht cash on shopping and travelling and only had US\$20 left? There is either a ringleader at large or some bulging pockets.

*Ben Hobbs
Facebook*

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Markets in tech revolution buildout phase

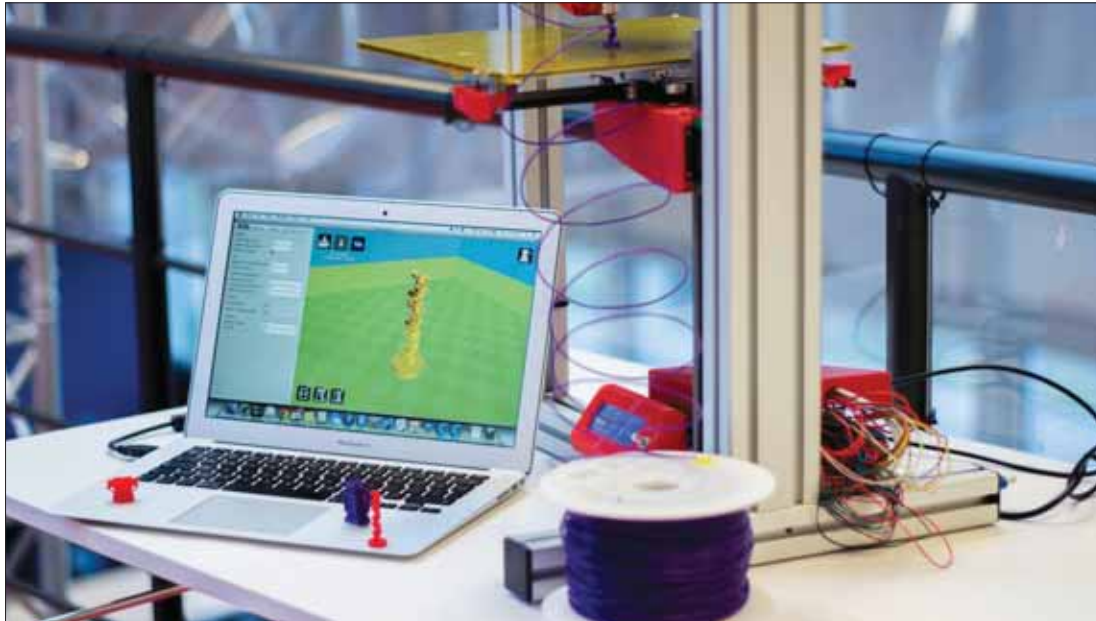


THERE are so many money managers, analysts and pundits who are negative on the current market; but I believe we can easily have another good 10-15 year market run-up based on historical results and charts.

Looking over a 100-year chart of the Dow Jones Industrial Average, we see bull cycles that last 15 to 20 years followed by bear cycles or sideways action that can last more than a decade. For example, the post-war 1920s were followed by the 1929 crash along with the Great Depression and World War II. During these years, the market rallied for a good 15 years before 10-15 years of sideways action during the troubled 1960s and 1970s.

About 1982, as semiconductor technology started to advance, the market began an 18-year bull run that ended with the dot.com bubble bursting. Unfortunately, too many investors came in around the market top and got burned when the bubble finally burst – forever scaring them away from investing in the stock market.

After 2000, the market largely went sideways, until 2013 when it finally broke to new highs to start what will hopefully be another 15-20 year bull cycle that will inevi-



The overhyped 3D printing stock bubble quickly popped a few years ago. Photo: Jonathan Juursema

tably be followed by another period of largely bearish or sideways consolidation action.

A look at the Nasdaq 100's long term chart shows a similar pattern with a massive 15-20 year run during the tech and PC revolution buildout phase. This ended with the dot.com bubble bursting into a turbulent 3-year bear market pullback with some recovery heading into the financial crisis. The Nasdaq finally began to break higher in 2012-2013.

Given that technology is hardly dead, the Nasdaq appears to be in another buildout phase just like in the 1980s and 1990s. Only this time, it's being driven by a whole range of potential

new technologies related to mobile, social media, Internet of things, Machine to Machine, 3D Printing, self-driving cars, robotics and so on.

Obviously not all of these will pan out. For example, the overhyped 3D printing stock bubble quickly popped a few years ago, while the performance of Facebook versus Twitter shows just how dramatically performance can vary within individual sectors. And while there has been a big run up since the post financial crisis market bottom, the Nasdaq (after 17 years) has only recently broken above dot.com peak levels.

This is actually very bullish and means we need to be invested in or start looking closer at growth stocks in diversified growth industries.

Microsoft Corporation had a bouncy start before a massive surge during the dot.com years followed by 15 long years of consolidation and sideways action. As of last month, it has had about six months of a breakout from its dot.com peak.

Large cap enterprise IT stock Citrix Systems has a similar chart with 5 months of breaking out above dot.com peak levels. Large cap enterprise IT security stock Check Point Software Technologies is only now breaking out

after more than a decade of post-dot.com struggles with further sideways action over the last few years.

Online travel behemoth Priceline Group suffered for years after its IPO, only to break above those levels a few years ago to further move sideways. PCLN is now breaking to new all-time highs.

Large cap chip stock Xilinx is still trying to break above dot.com highs while semiconductor stock Texas Instruments Incorporated is back at its dot.com peak.

Many tech related growth stocks are cash rich with the post-dot.com years, teaching or forcing them to become lean, mean fighting machines in order to survive.

Individual stocks can still stumble and there will always be market pullbacks and bear markets; but we need to keep a bullish bias for the long term.

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 20 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.

Marriott Nai Yang wins multiple honors at Asia Pacific Property Awards



Phuket Marriott Resort & Spa Nai Yang Beach took home five awards at the Asia Pacific Property Awards held on May 31, 2017. Launched almost exactly a year ago, the beachfront property was named "Thailand's Best Interior Design Hotel"; "Thailand's Best Large Hotel"; "Thailand's Best Wedding Venue"; "Asia's Best Large Hotel"; and "Asia's Best Wedding Venue". Entries were received from as far afield as Australia, China, India, Japan and Thailand.



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Where have all the women gone?



On Deck

By Duncan Worthington

NO, IT'S not a quiet night on the tiles in Phuket, but a question that needs to be asked in the sphere of sailing.

Most sports are segregated by sex, and some have age-group divisions too, but sailing is one sport where men and women can compete equally, at least at the amateur level.

A recent article by New Zealand based reporter Sally Murphy has been doing the rounds on social media. In it New Zealand Olympic gold medalist Jo Aleh makes some good points, particularly regarding the 35th America's Cup, the challenger series for which is currently underway in Bermuda. She says that there are no female sailors among any crew on any of the boats. Some argue this is due to the weight-to-power ratio needed to sail and maneuver the foiling catamarans at speeds in excess of 40 knots, or the strength required to do it, but not all agree.

Take a look at the Volvo Ocean Race. It's seen as the pinnacle of offshore racing – a round-the-world team race with pit stops which takes place every two years, the next being



An all-female crew will be competing at the Cape Panwa Hotel Phuket Raceweek in July. Photo: Supplied

scheduled for October 2017. Under new leadership, the 2017/18 edition has introduced a policy of positive discrimination as a way to encourage more women to get involved (or more importantly, encourage male-dominated crews to give women more of a fair go). In a nutshell, if the crew is all male the maximum number is seven, whereas mixed-sex crews allow for seven men and three women, seven women and three men, an equal five of each, or just 11 women.

Women competing in the Volvo is not new. In the last edition (2015/16) there was an

all-women team, Team SCA, but very rarely do you see mixed crews in the event or at other professional sailing events for that matter.

Looking closer to home, here in Phuket the all-female "Farrago Ladies" team have competed in most of the local sailing events and have shone a light on the abilities of women. They have underscored the fact that men and women are equal in sailing, and at the upcoming 'Cape Panwa Hotel Phuket Raceweek', the Farrago Ladies will be welcoming some additional crew from

Australia to make up a new-look all-female team.

Hailing from Sydney's Balmain Sailing Club, Lyn Evans, Wanda Carter, Karen Abel and Celine Rousseau – the Balmain girls – are joining the Phuket group to race on the Farr 1104 Farrago Express.

Lyn has been sailing since she was six years old, Wanda is a self-confessed "boat tart", Karen a carpenter and Celine a winemaker, and together they have sailed at regattas all over Australia including Audi Hamilton Island Race Week. It was there that they decided to

give Cape Panwa Hotel Phuket Raceweek a go.

"The Balmain girls had been recommended to Phuket Raceweek by club members who had taken part in the event before, and who had a great time. They got in touch with me and after a few emails, I put them together with a group of experienced Phuket-based female sailors," said Stuart Compton of Phuket charter company Sailescapes, who firmed up the charter.

The Farrago Ladies are not the only female sailors on the local scene. At any Phuket (or Thailand) regatta, you will see mixed-sex crews competing on equal terms against all-comers.

While Phuket seems to be somewhat ahead of the curve, it's clear that much more needs to be done at the professional end of the sport in order to provide an equal and level playing field for all.

Duncan Worthington is a long time Phuket resident and through Infinity Communications (www.infinity-comms.com) consults to leading consumer brands, hospitality and marine clients in Thailand. In his 'spare time' he runs the marine portal www.MarineScene.asia. #OnDeckPhuket



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Carving out a career in hospitality

By Kongleaphy Keam

NAF Somjai Tungkoo is the Group Executive Manager of Twinpalms Phuket. She's been in the hospitality business for 25 years, starting as an intern in the human resources department.

Ms Somjai says she has done her best to become what she is today, using three keywords she swears by – opportunity, flexibility and clarity.

"I cannot say that I have reached the pinnacle of success, but I am far from where I started. If I were asked what is the secret of my success, I can confidently say that I am the type of person who likes to be active and involved in something or the other all the time. I don't like coming to a standstill and always plan and work toward improvement," says Ms Somjai.

"As far as my education is concerned, I had only earned a vocational certificate in tourism back then, but later went on to obtain my Bachelor's and am now a candidate for a Master's

degree. When I started, I was not a very adventurous person, so I realized that a career as a tour guide wasn't for me. Thus, I joined the hospitality business. My first experience in a professional environment was an internship at Cape Panwa Hotel. If I'm totally honest, I'll have to admit that I chose it because it was near my house and therefore convenient to commute to," she smiles.

After working as an intern for several months, Ms Somjai was offered a full time job at Cape Panwa Hotel, where she worked for four years. She then worked at the Yacht Club for seven years, and finally joined Twinpalms Phuket where she has now worked for 14 years.

"I was not born to be a hotelier, as some people say – I never expected myself to join the hospitality business. How-

ever, I have grown to love it and am completely devoted to my work, which has made me what I am today," says Ms Somjai.

"For me the most important key to success is grabbing the right opportunity at the right time. Opportunity does not always knock on your door; even if you are the best in your field, you still have to wait for the right opportunity to present itself. Same is the case with me," she adds.

Being flexible is another important success factor in the hotel business, she says.

"I don't believe that there is a standard strategy or method to being successful in hospitality. Being flexible and knowing the right thing to do at the right time is pretty much the way to go. You have to be proactive, think one step ahead, and be ready to face any challenges, both ex-

pected and unexpected," says Ms Somjai.

"You need to be prepared to deal with different situations so you can go back and utilize the knowledge and experience for when you need it. Additionally, it's also important to make connections with the right people. There are several things to learn in this business, which come with experience and flexibility," she adds.

As far as clarity is concerned, Ms Somjai says it's important to know your strengths

and weaknesses.

"Make sure you are aware of your unique skill set as these are your selling points. If you don't have one, create it. For example, Twinpalms may not have the best views in

Phuket, but we differentiate ourselves with outstanding service," says Ms Somjai.

"The hotel business is more competitive now; everyone has to do their best to survive and thrive, which is what I am doing."



The most important key to success is grabbing the right opportunity at the right time

– Naf Somjai Tungkoo, Group Executive Manager at Twinpalms Phuket

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