

Phuket Gazette

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‘THIS IS ONLY THE FIRST COMPANY. WE HAVE MANY MORE TO GO’

TROUBLED TOURS

Major Phuket tour company's director arrested as ministries launch investigations

By Kongleaphy Keam

ONE of the largest tour companies on the island is under investigation over financial irregularities, after two of its shareholders and directors were caught with fake Thai ID cards on June 15. Other companies are expected to face similar legal scrutiny and enforcement action.

Tranlee Travel Co Ltd is a well established, full-function tour service provider, offering all-inclusive packages. The company owns boats, buses, restaurants, souvenir shops and other assets attached to its enterprise in a total of 17 subsidiary companies.

Phuket police arrested a senior shareholder and director of the company on June 15. The other director indicted in the case is suspected to have fled the country. Police have yet to confirm the nationalities of either suspect, stating only that neither is a Thai national.

Under Thai law, foreigners are prohibited from owning more than 49 per cent of shares in companies registered in Thailand.

“This is quite a serious crime,” said Phuket Provincial Police Deputy Commander Saman Chainarong. “They did not even hire Thai nationals to hold their shares for them, but instead procured fake ID cards in Chiang Rai.”

“We believe that the two directors hold more than 51 per cent of the company's shares, and we are working on proving that,” Col Saman told the *Gazette*.

Authorities named the men as Kritchakorn Roongmongkolnam and Weerachai Kampaiprapankul – the names



Tranlee Travel Co Ltd, a major tour company responsible for lining up multiple Chinese tour groups for Phuket, is under investigation. Photo: Gazette file

used on their allegedly falsified documents, as officers are still investigating the pair's true identities.

At this stage, police are only pressing falsified document charges against the two men, but said they expect to expand the charges as they continue to investigate Tranlee.

Following the arrest, officials from the Phuket Provincial Police, the Revenue Department and the Phuket Business Development Office (BDO) are investigating Tranlee's financial records. The Anti-Money Laundering Office (AMLO) in...

Continued on Page 4

Gov suggests zoning laws for island's migrant labor

PHUKET officials are considering implementing regulations that would restrict migrant workers from travelling outside specific zones across the province.

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BUSINESS



The luxury car market in Phuket is on the rise, says Millennium Auto GM.

PROPERTY



Phuket to cater to a new breed of travellers with next-gen hostel.

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ISAT

Chinese biker crashes through Kamala wall

A CHINESE motorcyclist was killed on the night of June 20 when he lost control of his bike on Kamala Hill and collided with the concrete wall of an abandoned house. His female pillion passenger suffered severe head injuries in the crash.

The crash left a gaping hole in the side wall of the house. Police named the rider as Dai Tao, 27, and his passenger as Chen Yufan, 22.

“The pair were riding to Patong from Kamala when their bike skidded into the house, crashing through one of its walls and landing in a ditch. Both sustained head injuries,” said Lt Col Somnuek Damkaew of Kamala Police.

Police are waiting for Ms Yufan’s recovery to question her about the incident.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

Thefts of water meters concern Phuket officials

THE Provincial Waterworks Authority (PWA) is warning islanders of a growing rash of thefts of water meters across the province.

The thieves are most likely stealing the meters to sell them, or to exchange them with other meters and defraud the water authority, PWA Manager Pisak Chonlayut said.

“We’ve been receiving an increasing number of reports of meters disappearing since last month,” Mr Pisak said.

The PWA is encouraging locals to stay vigilant in order to deter thefts.

– *Sukawin Tanthavanich*

Police searching for ‘farang’ thief



Police are hunting for a ‘farang-looking’ man who stole 1,400 baht from a donation box outside a mosque in Kamala. The thief was captured on CCTV using tools to break into the metal and glass box attached to a wall at the Boot Ror mosque on the night of June 16. Kamala Police said the thief appears to be a westerner, aged 30 - 35, and about 160-170cm tall. After he took out the money, the thief reportedly used his clothes to wipe off his finger prints. Police said that the thief fit the description of a man who stole money from a donation box in Patong on June 20. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

Kiwi stabbed on Kata Beach

A THAI surf board renter is on the run after allegedly stabbing a New Zealander in the back with a knife on the evening of June 20. The incident occurred at Kata Beach.

The victim, Christopher Smith, 52, is recuperating at Phuket International Hospital.

Mr Smith’s Thai wife owns a surf shop near the site of the incident.

Witnesses said Mr Smith and the suspect, Kittichai Junkaew, 29, were arguing before Mr Kittichai picked up a

LOCAL NEWS Briefly

knife and stabbed Mr Smith in the back.

Police are checking CCTV footage for clues as to Mr Kittichai’s whereabouts.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

Phuket Town driver shocked by cat snake

SNAKE catchers were called out on June 19 to bag a venomous two-meter-long snake that had become lodged inside the engine of a car in Phuket Town.

Experts said the mangrove snake, also called a gold-ringed cat snake, had become entangled in the engine of a Toyota on Luang Phor Road.

The snake catchers said they believed the animal had escaped from a snake breeder, as the species usually does not wander out of the mangroves.

The snake was later released into a forest near Kathu waterfall.

– *Kongleaphy Keam*

Officials warn beachgoers of rip currents

KARON Municipality issued a rip current warning to all swimmers at Kata and Karon beaches on June 16.

Officials said that strong monsoon winds were causing increasingly large waves to wash onto the beaches. They cautioned beachgoers to be particularly careful when visiting the beaches, and asked visitors to avoid swimming.

Rip tide warnings were previously issued in May following 35 rescues in April.

– *Kongleaphy Keam*

Patong knock-off shops raided

SEVEN shop owners were arrested in Patong on the morning of June 16, and have been charged with selling pirated goods, estimated at 2 million baht in value, police confirmed.

A joint team raided businesses along Patong’s beach road and the OTOP market, reportedly seizing a total of 2,072 pirated items.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

Motorists irate over bypass traffic gridlock

ENGINEERS working at the Bang Khu underpass project said the traffic gridlock at the bypass intersection with Thepkrasattri road would be resolved as of press time.

The construction company blamed the heavy traffic jams on a longer-than-expected lane closure, which was reportedly delayed by heavy rains.

The Department of Highways estimates that the Bang Khu underpass is now about half-way complete, and is ahead of schedule. The department estimates that the Samkong underpass project, near the Tesco Extra is about 80 percent complete, running behind schedule, while the construction near Chalong Circle has just begun.

– *Kongleaphy Keam*

PIA takes gold at inter-school swim meet

YOUNG swimmers from across the country met to compete in a friendly inter-school contest at Thanyapura on June 11.

The swim meet was the fourth session of the Thanyapura Open Swim League at the Olympic-sized swimming pool.

Six teams of students aged 5-20 years old competed, including students from St Gabriel’s College in Bangkok, the ISS Samui Sharks, the BISP Flying Fish, the Kajonkiet Baracudas, the Aqua Panthers, and the PIA swim team.

The PIA Swim Team grabbed first place, followed by the ISS Samui sharks. The Aqua Panthers came in third.

– *Phuket Gazette*

Doc proposes smart-access to health records

A VACHIRA Phuket Hospital doctor wants to incorporate medical information into the province’s implementation of a ‘smart city’ program.

The Phuket Smart Health 2020 program would allow emergency responders and hospital facilities instant access to medical records.

– *Sukawin Tanthavanich*

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Officials mull putting migrant workers into segregated zones

THE province is considering implementing regulations that would restrict migrant workers across the province to specific zones.

Phuket Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada announced on June 17 that authorities are chalking out plans to manage unskilled migrant laborers 'more effectively'.

"Each local authority should designate specific areas for foreign workers to live in," Governor Chamroen said. "Those areas should be separate from the main residential areas where locals live. Moreover, these areas must have separate master plans for buildings, security systems, water and electricity."

Gov Chamroen's statements would most likely apply principally to migrant workers from neighboring countries, especially Myanmar. Many laborers tend to live close to the construction sites where they work.

In April, Phuket Vice Governor Prajiad Aksornthammakul advocated a crackdown on migrant settlements, citing concerns of increased drug use, disease and potential conflict with local communities



Migrant workers' camps are often located near construction sites. Photo: Gazette file

that allegedly occurred more frequently near migrant worker camps. Vice Governor Prajiad had said that construction companies that employ many of the workers should be held responsible for the tenants' behavior.

"These measures will make it easier for us to manage the thousands of foreign laborers who currently live and work in Phuket," Gov Chamroen said at a press conference held in the

Westin Siray. "Each municipality would have its own system of management, or two municipalities in close proximity to each other could cooperate in this regard."

Gov Chamroen cited Singapore as a country that has successfully 'zoned' foreigners.

"Singapore has separated residential areas for different nationalities into 'color zones': blue for Bangladesh, yellow for Malaysia, green for Indonesia,

and so on. Inside these areas there are supermarkets, shuttle buses and other facilities for their needs."

Gov Chamroen said the proposal stems from the need to provide greater oversight to migrant worker communities, which already face more strict monitoring and stipulations on movement and activities than other foreign populations in the province.

– Sukawin Tanthavanich

Gov dines with Rawai Muslims



Gov Chamroen (second from left) joins Rawai's fasting Muslims. Photo: Saiyuan City

GOVERNOR Chamroen Tipayapongtada, accompanied by other government officials visited a mosque in the Rawai village of Saiyuan on the evening of June 14.

"We're here to encourage and support local Muslims during Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, which commemorates the first revelation of the Koran to the Prophet Muhammad, according to Islamic belief," said Governor Chamroen.

The officials joined the Muslim clergy for their fast-breaking dinner, called Iftar.

"This ceremony urges us to avoid negative mental and physical acts, and allows us to express our support for all Muslims during this month," Gov Chamroen said.

– Sukawin Tanthavanich

Gov proposes tourist tracking wristbands

GOVERNOR Chamroen Tipayapongtada announced on June 17 that tourists will be able to buy 'smart' wristbands to track their movements as part of the province's goal to develop into a Smart City.

"We aim to file a proposal with the government in Bangkok so that foreign tourists visiting the island would be able to pay 10 dollars or 300 baht for wristbands that would allow them to register for their hotels and receive shopping discounts," said Governor Chamroen.

The governor estimated that the wristbands would generate 3-4 million baht in annual revenue, which would be integrated into Phuket's central budget.

"If the central government turns us down, we will ap-

proach private investors to finance the project," Gov Chamroen said.

"Wristbands will prove to be useful to tourists, particularly when connected with Phuket's IT databases, as a part of the smart city project."

He also stated that the wristband project would potentially be useful when it came to ensuring the safety of tourists in Phuket.

"If tourists get lost in forests or stuck at sea, they could be tracked down and rescued," he said.

"However, there must be a consultation with the government that would ensure privacy. We don't intend to violate tourists' private lives, but instead take care of them during their visit to Phuket."

– Sukawin Tanthavanich



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Phi Phi boat collision victims compensated

PHUKET Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada met with the family of one of the deceased victims of a Phi Phi boat collision on June 17, to present them with money on behalf of the boat's insurance company.

Two tourists were killed and 20 were injured when two speedboats, carrying 62 passengers, collided near Koh Phi Phi on June 8.

Governor Chamroen presented the family of the deceased Chinese tourist with 100,000 baht on behalf of the insurance company.

The reason for Gov Chamroen's involvement on behalf of insurers was unclear.

The families of the deceased will also receive an additional 2 million baht each from the insurance companies, officials confirmed.



Gov Chamroen presented the insurance check to the victim's family. Photo: Phuket PR

The amount will be transferred to the other victim's family as well, as they could not travel to Thailand to receive it. One of the injured passen-

gers still remains under medical care at Vachira Phuket Hospital, while others have been discharged.

- Kongleaphy Keam

Manhunt under way



Col Saman speaks outside Tranlee's offices. Police say they have been investigating the tour group for months. Photo: Kongleaphy Keam

From Page 1

...Bangkok was also invited to join the investigations on June 21.

"This company earns more than 160 million baht annually, but their financial records show more than 150mn baht in expenses. This amounts to only a few million baht of income, and thus only a few hundred thousand baht in taxes. That alone is highly suspect and impossible," Col Saman said.

The arrest and on-going investigations come after Tourism and Sports Minister Kobkarn Wattanavrangkul called for increased operations against Thai nominees.

The Phuket BDO estimated in November that more than 3,000 companies failed to submit their annual financial reports, with the majority of them having foreign shareholders on their boards.

Minister Kobkarn said that Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha had instructed ministries to increase enforcement against businesses suspected of being illegally operated by foreigners at a cabinet meeting on February 23.

The Prime Minister's comments had been interpreted as a nationwide order, Ms Kobkarn said, and Phuket - as a large tourism province - set up a committee to monitor legal firms and accounting offices connected with businesses suspected of using Thai

nominee shareholders.

"Foreign investment is great for Phuket," said Phuket BDO Chief Nimit Kangkajit. "It promotes higher employment rates, financial development and economic flow. However, these investors must comply with Thai law."

Mr Nimit said the majority of investment in Phuket is currently coming from the British Virgin Islands. The amount of cash flowing in from the well-known tax haven exceeds investment from England, Hong Kong, Russia, Malaysia and China, respectively.

Investigators also told the *Gazette* that they suspect Tranlee's shareholders may try to alter their land ownership documents in order to throw off authorities.

"We have already sent a letter to the Land Department's Phuket office requesting that they do not approve any transactions for people related to this case," Col Saman said. "That will help investigators check the real assets of the company and its shareholders."

"We've been hearing rumors that they are trying to create a new committee to register as a new company. Therefore, while we are investigating Tranlee, we have requested that the BDO take precautions on its registrations of new businesses," Col Saman said. "This is just the first company. We have many more to go."

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Krabi officer dead after decor dispute

POLICE are hunting for a gas station manager who allegedly shot dead a Krabi volunteer police officer on June 20, after an argument over who left on the water to an artificial waterfall.

Lt Anuwat Raksakyot of the Ao Nang Police said he received a report on the morning of June 20 that a man was shot at the gas station on Petch Kasem Road in Khao Kram sub-district.

“The station has a decorative garden and artificial waterfall,” Lt Anuwat said. “When we arrived, there was blood on the ground and the victim, Pha Umat, 57, had already been taken to Krabi Hospital.”

Police also found two 9mm bullet casings on the ground at the scene.

“Mr Pha is a volunteer police officer and was hired to set up the garden and waterfall at the station,” Lt Anuwat said. “He was shot three times, once in the head, once in the left shoulder, and once in the chest.”

Mr Pha was pronounced dead upon arrival at Krabi Hospital.

“According to witnesses, Mr Pha arrived at the station to check on the ornamental water-



Mr Pha was pronounced dead after being taken to Krabi Hospital. The volunteer officer had installed the gas station managers' artificial waterfall. Photo: DMCR

fall, when the station manager, Chaiwinit Kaewsamduang, 54, came in and blamed Mr Pha for leaving the water on,” Lt Anuwat said.

“The two argued and Mr Chaiwinit pulled out a gun, intending to shoot Mr Pha,” Lt Anuwat said. “The two struggled over the gun until, finally, Mr

Pha lost and was shot.” After the shooting, Mr Chaiwinit reportedly fled the scene in a white pickup truck to Ao Luek district.

Mr Chaiwinit has been charged with attempted murder and is currently being sought by police.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

Monks arrested



Immigration officers speak with the abbot of Wat Klang about the deportation of two Cambodian monks. Photo: Phuket Immigration Police

PHUKET Immigration Police inspected monks at the Buddhamongkolnimitr temple (Wat Klang) on June 22, officials confirmed.

Lt Col Tianchai Chompoo and a team of officers reportedly questioned monks at Wat Klang, after receiving reports of two Cambodian monks begging for food and money from locals.

“We arrived at Wat Klang at 5:30am and waited for the pair to leave for their daily alms collections, which they eventually did around 6:30am,” Lt Tianchai said.

Police said they have arrested the pair, identified as Mr Jantee, 40, and Mr Nad, 35, neither of whom had passports. Both monks will be deported after being charged with entering the country without permission.

“We brought them to the Phuket Immigration Office, which will send them back to their home country via the Aranyaprathet border between Thailand and Cambodia,” Lt Tianchai said. “They each had around 2,000 baht on them at the time of their arrest.”

– *Sukawin Tanthavanich*



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Krabi locals pray to fossil for lottery luck



Villagers pray over an estimated 245-million-year-old fossil that was found in a field in Krabi Province. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

LOCALS prayed over an age-old fossil, hoping to receive blessings in the shape of a winning lottery ticket early June.

The fossil, among several others, was discovered when farmer Wuttichai Rodkoom was dredging his land with a backhoe in Khlong Thapsai, Khlong Thom District, in April. Each stone reportedly weighed a few hundred kilograms.

"I didn't realize the stones were fossils until some neighbors posted pictures of them on social media," said Mr Wuttichai.

Locals soon arrived with candles, incense and flowers to pay their respects, and to ask the spirits for winning lottery numbers.

Niwat Wattanayomanaporn, the head of Krabi's Environmental and Cultural Preservation Committee, also went to check the fossil after the news spread.

"Our initial examination determined the fossils to be clams or shellfish, about 245 million years old. However, we will have officers from the Department of Mineral Resources examine them again, after which we will decide what to do with them," Mr Niwat said.

Since the find, there has been no word on whether any of the villagers actually struck it lucky in the mid-month lottery drawing.

The unearthing of the fossils comes after the discovery of 30-million-year-old petrified bones, thought to be vertebrae, jawbones and teeth in Klong Paklao, Krabi Province.

Locals stumbled across the fossils half-buried in the bank of a stream, after the water level dropped following an extended period of drought.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

Farmers protest



Palm nut producers drove 10 trucks, carrying an estimated 500 tonnes of their products to a state-run facility in protest on June 15. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

PALM nut producers in Krabi province took a petition to the local Office of Commercial Affairs (OCA) on June 15, asking for government assistance in buoying the price of their products.

OCA representative Barirak Chusit received requests from palm farmers, who took 10 trucks, carrying 500 tonnes of palm nuts, to the government-run Krabi Palm Oil Extraction facility in protest.

Palm farmers in Krabi urged officials to enact regulations that would increase the quality of palm nuts purchased by refineries.

Mr Barirak said the producers' demands include: that the government-operated refineries not buy raw palm nuts from producers, which could dilute

or degrade the quality of palm oil produced.

The producers' petition also asked that the government provide a minimum profit margin of at least 0.45 satang per kilogram of palm nuts.

Producers were adamant that refineries only purchase higher-quality palm crops, and that the government must order extraction facilities to limit their purchases to only qualified palm oil crops.

Mr Barirak said the producers' petition also asked for the government to fix prices on palm nuts and palm oil, and that bunches of palm nuts should be bought at a higher price than fallen palm nuts.

He also added that palm nut producers have been complaining of lowered prices and profit

margins, as competition with lower-quality producers has driven down the price of palm nuts, which are refined into palm oil at the state-sponsored facility.

Mr Barirak said he would bring the producers' petition to the Krabi governor for consideration.

"If we have unqualified palm oil producers bringing their product to the refineries, prices will decrease and locals will continue to lose revenue," Mr Barirak said. "I've asked for farmers and palm cutters not to cut raw palms in order to maintain quality standards."

Palm nut production has also been impeded by last season's drought.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

Samui beach vendors told to clear shopfronts

KOH Samui officials inspected the Chaweng beachfront area earlier this month, to check for vendors hindering paths leading to the beach.

"We have warned beach operators against setting up signs or awnings on the public path leading to the beach, as it causes inconvenience for commuters and beachgoers," said Lt Denduang Tongsisuk of the Bo Phut Police.

A vendor, who declined to be named, told police that this could affect their sales, as tourists walking along the path



Police officers inspect vendors on Chaweng beachfront in Samui. Photo: Suchat Hankij

would need something to protect themselves from the rain

and sun.

"The operator suggested that perhaps we could reach a compromise by not having them within one meter of the beach, rather than removing them entirely from the area," said Lt Denduang.

"However, they must move their awnings and signs off the beach within seven days. If they persist, we will take necessary action as per the government's directive to clear and beautify our beaches."

– Suchat Hankij



Supplement kills young Sikhao woman

A 21-YEAR-OLD woman died after suffering an allergic reaction to an ingredient in a food supplement in Trang's Sikao District on June 18.

Aiyaornin Adulwibul, her mother, said that people should view Sataporn Panthong's case as a cautionary example and that the prime minister and his government should implement measures to supervise the standards of these products.

She died at Trang Hospital on June 11 after orally taking four supplement pills and having a serious allergic reaction to the ingredient 'Indian velvet bean extract'. Ms Aiyaornin said her daughter was epileptic since she was a child, and the people who suggested she use the product told her that there would be no side effects linked to her condition. Autopsy results are expected in 2 months.

Authorities nab Satun human traffickers

THE authorities rounded up six Myanmar migrants who had paid 10,000 baht each to be smuggled into Thailand and then Malaysia. Two Thais who aided them were also arrested at the Tammalang Pier in Satun's Muang District on June 19.

Following a tip-off, a police-army team went to the pier to

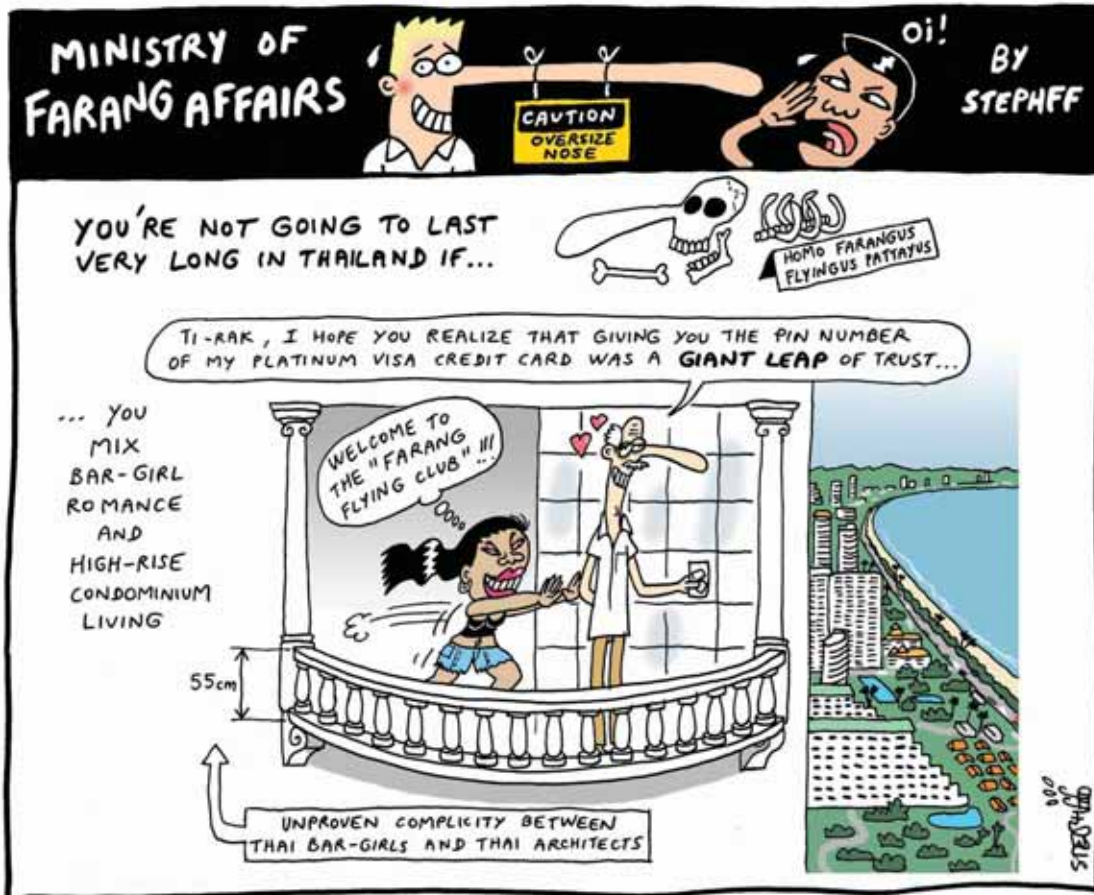
Man believes cobra is lost lover reborn

A THAI man realized that he will never be parted from his dead girlfriend, since she was reincarnated as a cobra.

He has been seen with the dangerous snake since April this year, and the story went viral when pictures of him accompanying the snake were shared on social media.

The 'couple' seems to be having a fantastic time together, going on picnics and even sleeping together.

People have commented that a cobra is, at the end of the day, a killing machine, and he needs to be wary of the consequences of this venomous relationship.



check a suspicious long-tail boat and found locals Halimee Hayibilang, 47, and Sorrae Rimad, 52, who were about to take six undocumented migrants hiding in the covered boat across the border to Malaysia. Police are attempting to find who hired the two Thais and whether the men had accomplices.

One migrant found in the boat told authorities that they lived in an area bordering Ranong province and were told by Thai and Myanmar agents that Malaysia was in need of laborers.

Thailand mulls decriminalizing ya ba and more

THAILAND is considering the decriminalization of some drugs such as methamphetamine in response to a new perspective on the issue raised at the recent United Nations General Assembly Special Session.

"We are now studying the concept," Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha said on June 20 in response to reports that his government was preparing to remove meth from category 1, the most serious level in the controlled-substance list.

The annual special session, attended by UN member states, called for the rethinking of drug prohibition on a global scale.

However, Thailand would definitely take into account domestic factors in deciding whether to embrace the concept.

NATIONAL NEWS Briefly

Five arrested, pills, meth seized in bust

NATIONAL police chief Pol General Chakthip Chaijinda announced three drug busts and a 5-suspect-arrest on June 20. 2.99 million ya ba (methamphetamine) pills, 52 kilograms of ya ice (crystal methamphetamine), and 50 kilograms of ketamine were seized.

In the first case, Sarawuth Kesornbua, Narongsak Somboon and Pattama Homlei were arrested along with 2.09 million ya ba pills, 52kg of ya ice and 50kg of ketamine in Nonthaburi's Bang Yai District on June 18. The arrest followed a tip-off about a drug gang's delivery at a Bang Yai mall.

In the second case, Padaedu Sribaina and Chalerm Medtho were arrested along with 100,000 ya ba pills in Chiang Mai's Hot District on June 16 in a police sting operation.

In a third case on the same day, 800,000 ya ba pills were seized from a Honda sedan in Suphan Buri's U Thong District.

Police said drug dealers had abandoned the car in an isolated alley, after a shootout that allegedly led to one police injury.

Refugees will return home

MYANMAR will soon be ready to take back over 100,000 refugees from nine shelters in Thailand, as the country moves towards democracy on June 20.

During the launch of a 'World Refugee Day' event at Ban Umpiem Mai shelter in Phop Phra District, Tak Province, which currently houses about 20,000 refugees. Shutaro Omura, political affairs representative at the Japanese Embassy, presided over the launch. Officials from the UN High Commission for Refugees also attended.

Bhutan embassy official takes short cut, gets electrocuted

POLICE are questioning witnesses to investigate the death of an official from the Bhutanese Embassy, who was found electrocuted on a house fence in Bangkok's Wang Thong Lang District, June 20.

Bhutanese finance official Sangay Dorji, 48, and a friend had withdrawn cash from an ATM twice on the same day. Mr Sangay is suspected to have tried to reach the ATM again by taking a short cut - climbing over his neighbors' fences.

"He grabbed onto a metal power pole that had a power leakage, resulting in his death," said Wang Thong Lang superintendent Pol Col Thamm-anoon Boonriang.

Shops up in flames in Sa Kaew market

A FIRE destroyed shops at Golden Gate Market in Sa Kaew's Aranyaprathet District on June 20.

Four appliance and clothing shops were destroyed due to the fire. Investigators believe that the cause was a short circuit, resulting in 5 million baht in damages, said Klong Leuk superintendent Pol Colonel Seksan Wattanapong.

Following reports at 1am, police found the chambers of two buildings on fire. It took about 90 minutes to extinguish the blaze.

Phuket Gazette

Protecting tourism

The recent arrest of a businessman for allegedly faking a Thai national identification card is just the latest development in the seemingly never-ending battle to protect the Thai tourism industry from illegal foreign opportunists.

Thai authorities are, of course, correct to prosecute, to the full extent of the law, any foreigner who would resort to forgery in an attempt to carve out a slice of the lucrative Thai tourism pie. We hope, however, that future enforcement as it pertains to guides adheres to the true intent of the law – otherwise it could serve as a high-capacity vehicle for extortion, collusion and nationalist-driven folly.

As has often been pointed out in this space over the years, existing Thai Labor Law is intentionally vague when it comes to defining what exactly constitutes work. The modern classic ‘Working of Alien Act (2008)’ defines work as follows: engaging in work by exerting energy or using knowledge whether or not in consideration of wages or other benefits.

Indeed, under such a broad definition, one could conceivably run afoul of the Act simply by getting out of bed in the morning, or, in the more specific case of ‘guiding’, simply by directing a spatially-confused foreigner to the nearest bank, bus stop or brothel.

Fortunately, reports of authorities taking undue advantage of the indeterminate wording of the Act have been fairly few and far between. However, a few high-profile cases, such as the arrest of volunteers here to assist in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami disaster and the arrest of a foreigner caught ‘red-handed’ working on a boat in his own backyard, serve to remind all of our friends in the expat community just how tenuous day-to-day life can be here – especially if one has managed to rub someone in a position of authority the wrong way.

Of course, with each emerging inbound market, there are corresponding outcries from legally-registered guides who see their turf, quite literally, being encroached upon. First, it was the South Koreans. After that, the Russians. Now we are seeing similar cries of foul over the mainland Chinese, who comprise the last and greatest final frontier of Phuket tourism.

The *Gazette* supports any and all efforts to root out foreign guides working commercially on the island, but we also hope that authorities will continue to enforce the law for the benefit of the Thai people – and not to their own, selfish ends.



Well done Phuket police, officials

Re: Tour company director arrested, another on the run, Jun 15

I don't know the details of this case at all but I wouldn't be a bit surprised if the directors are Chinese and they've been helped by their friends.

Good work by the police and congratulations.

*seht1912
Gazette forum*

Hotels need to take concrete steps for sustainability

Re: Gov urges sustainable building in Phuket, Jun 17

We have just seen a hotel in Kamala have a renovation that tripled its size and turned its existing car park into more rooms.

Now buses clog the streets to disgorge passengers and cars wait and wait while burning fuel.

The amenity of the neighborhood with buses making ridiculous u-turns is worse.

No government agency seems to have done anything so far to prevent this from happening.

*Chob
Gazette forum*

Dreading news of future drownings

Re: Rip current warning issued for Kata-Karon, Jun 17

Great to warn everyone. But

Letters to the Editor

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

dreading the headlines for the next few days and the Chinese bodies that will be pulled out of the ocean when they ignore the warnings.

*Simon Lomas
Facebook*

Zoning strategies may affect us all

Re: Officials eye plans to zone migrant workers, Jun 20

One man's zone is another man's ghetto.

If it works well for the authorities with the laborers from Burma, they may roll out this strategy into the general foreigner population.

*Mark Stelzner
Facebook*

Boats need to be equipped with the right type of signal

Re: Safety regulations reviewed after fatal Phi Phi boat collision, Jun 14

I would like the people investigating this to please check if the drivers of the boats know what is in the International Regulations on Preventing Collisions at Sea and if they would be able to quote Rule 6 Safe Speed. As it was in adverse

weather, they would be able to sound the correct sound signal.

Are the boats set up to have a means to sound the correct signal?

*Ken
Gazette forum*

Need relief from underpass traffic

Re: Island View: If it ain't broke, why fix it?, Jun 21

Well written. The same goes for the road from British international School to Kathu and near *Phuket Gazette*. There they have started working on the road again.

This road was practical relief for the construction of the underpasses near Toyota, Boat Lagoon and Tesco Lotus.

Just seems like lack of coordination.

*Puzzled
Gazette forum*

Maintenance is usually ignored here

Re: Opinion: Putting the public's safety first, Jun 19

Good points, but sadly the putrid drainage ditches, now covered with grates, don't stop the excrement stink from reaching the noses of visitors or locals.

The problem in Asia generally is that maintenance is not a consideration until something needs repair... and then it's often too late.

*Keith Tanner
Gazette forum*

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Planning Phuket Bay



PROPOSALS to build an artificial island off Phuket have been on the table for almost 10 years. The plans for a Phuket Bay marina-style island were conceived as a venue for international meetings, but such an undertaking requires immense planning and is not as straight forward as it may seem.

Most importantly, we must thoroughly consider the kind of impact such a project would have on the local community.

The Marina Bay Sands in Singapore, for example, was built at a cost of about 200 billion baht. It has a casino aimed at entertaining foreign visitors, but locals, especially children, are restricted from entering the area so that they are not exposed to these vices. This means that the area becomes an exclusively private zone.

Moreover, the province would have to provide water and electricity utilities for the project, which is not an option. Also, construction of such a large project would mean hundreds of heavy vehicles trucking in sand and cement to create the artificial island.

Interestingly, although Singapore is a tiny state, expansion was made possible by enlarging the island to cover a total of 700 square kilometers. Penang, as well, has managed



Phuket Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada has held his current position since September 30, 2015. He is a Phuket native with a master's degree in political and administrative science from the National Institute of Development Administration.

Here, he shares his perspective on plans for the

63-billion-baht Phuket Bay project – a 3,000 rai artificial island proposed as a host venue for international conferences.

to extend the land by about 1,000 rai.

As for deciding on the best way to develop Phuket Bay, that very much depends on how the private sector proposes to manage this project. However, the priority is to ensure that the demands of the local community are met, and that there is no damage to the environment.

If locals do agree to the project, I believe there will be private investors willing to participate, which would be essential, as the billion-baht price tag is simply too much for the public sector to foot.

Even the proposed Patong Tunnel, which would be just 3.5km long and cost about 10bn baht, is still a long way from becoming a reality, whereas Switzerland has just completed the 57km-long Gotthard Base Tunnel under the Alps. If they can do it, why can't we?

Ultimately, the project would bring many long-term benefits to Phuket. The area could also fit in with plans for Phuket to become a 'smart city'.

Forming public-private partnerships (PPPs) is the ideal way to bring about such mega projects to fruition, which will allow us to better compete with other emerging countries and tourist destinations. If the Phuket Bay had actually taken off ten years ago, we would be at a great advantage over our neighbors by now.

However, the priority is to ensure the satisfaction of the local community. Whether the go-ahead is given for each of the proposed mega projects depends on the voice of the Phuket people.

Nonetheless, Phuket cannot continue to rely on the island's natural beauty as a tourist attraction forever. We need to be able to offer man-made landmarks and attractions for tourists, otherwise we will end up being neglected against global competition.



Street food stalls are peppered all over the roadsides in Phuket, so you will always be spoilt for choice. Photo: Takeaway

Eat as the locals do

A FRIEND of mine, who intends to visit Phuket shortly, asked me what the street food here was like. Being a picky eater and mostly cooking for myself at home, I realized I hadn't tried much in the way of street food for the year that I've been in Phuket.

Armed with dozens of recommendations from friends and colleagues, I set out on my first street food adventure last week. My intention was to try as many varieties as possible, while minimizing the number of diarrhea medicines consumed. As it turns out, the two are mutually exclusive, but that is a story for another day.

Street food hawkers being peppered on every commercial and residential roadside in Phuket, the choices are endless, and in my case, agonizing, as I can potentially spend hours deciding what to eat. Wanting to start out safe, the first item I tried was chicken *satay*, something every foreigner is familiar with. Definitely a smart choice – it was delicious and gave me the courage to carry on.

On day two of my adventure, I chose pancakes, or *roti* pancakes, as they are better known here. I'm surprised it wasn't my first choice, being hopelessly addicted to desserts and all things sweet. These were definitely a long shot away from the traditional breakfast food I was

Island View

By Sahar Aftab Paliwala

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

expecting. More in the style of crepes, with banana stuffing and soaked with your choice of toppings, they were a delicious surprise that I will definitely be returning for.

Next was pineapple stuffed rice. The combination of sweet and savory isn't something I relished the thought of (did I mention I'm a finicky eater?) but I stuck with it nevertheless. The first few bites are confusing, as you try to decipher the various bursts of flavor being thrown at you. Once your tastebuds have gotten over the initial shock, you can't wait to go back for more. Needless to say, I didn't know what I'd been missing.

For fear of turning this into a menu, I will cut my reminiscence short here. However, there is one thing I would like to add. Perhaps it's declining marginal utility, or perhaps the finicky eater in me just has to find some fault, but I noticed that the same food, from the same vendor, tastes different on different occasions. Or maybe that's just the way it is in Thailand; you never know what to expect.

Words from the Wise

“I have realized that the past and future are real illusions, that they exist in the present, which is what there is and all there is.”

– Alan Watts

“Forget the past – the future will give you plenty to worry about.”

– George Allen, Sr.

Issues & Answers

Which authority can help with mosquito problem?

WE LIVE next to an abandoned house under construction, with a swimming pool full of rotting garbage and mosquito larvae. Thus, there is a constant threat of dengue fever.

The owner refuses to deal with the situation. Which local or provincial authority can we contact to get some real and urgent action?

Ms Thidaporn Thepparat,
Public Health Officer at
Srisoonthorn Health Center

replies:

Unfortunately, we have no power to get inside the house without the express permission of the owner. However, in case

somebody in the area is diagnosed with dengue fever, we will cooperate with Srisoonthorn Municipality to spray the area with mosquito repellent.

We don't use the spray ordinarily, as mosquitoes become resistant to it, making it ineffective for future use. We urge locals to protect themselves and keep their water containers upside-down and empty.

For further inquiries, contact Srisoonthorn Health Center at 076-617 795.

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

Submit your issue at:

www.PhuketGazette.net/IssuesAnswers

Defining a financial advisor

Finance

By David Mayes

IF YOU haven't yet seen it, there's a great episode of John Oliver's 'Last Week Tonight' that covers the financial services industry in America. While it is a different beast in Southeast Asia, there were many points he brought up that are very relevant to expats in the region. Go onto YouTube and search for it if you haven't seen it yet.

The first part he mentions is that in America, basically anyone can claim to be a financial advisor regardless of education. This is true – they only need to pass a very simple licensing exam that has nothing to do with understanding finance. I know this because I passed that exam many moons ago, and I also studied finance up through my MBA. I say that not to brag either, as neither has stopped me or my clients from being preyed on by greedy Wall Street scumbags in the past. In hindsight, I think these horrible experiences have probably been the 'real' education in my life.

What is more concerning is the difference between a fidu-



Mr Oliver explores several serious topics during the comedy routines on his TV show. Photo: Steve Jennings

ciary and an ordinary advisor.

Most financial advisors in the US are not even required by law to act in your best interest. Here, only Thai people are actually allowed to be financial advisors. However, they are not regulated to advise on international jurisdictions, only Thai securities.

Many people mistakenly think I'm a financial advisor, but in Thailand I'm only allowed to provide service linking policy holders to our regulated office in Malaysia. This is similar to the service you could get in Thailand when a representative of your bank

in Singapore deals with you.

However, if you use a regulated jurisdiction, such as Singapore, Hong Kong or Malaysia for international advice, you are still just as likely to require 'luck' to land someone with an ethical backbone, to look after your best interests instead of some insurance company or bank.

Basically, this is pretty much the situation all over the world, regardless of the regulations or legal frame work. This does not mean you should bury your money in the sofa and never trust anyone. However, it just

means you need to be an informed consumer of any type of financial service.

In John Oliver's segment, he also mentions heavy, sometimes hidden fees. Of course, he kind of does advisors an injustice by neglecting to address that many of them work without salary, spend most of their working hours giving advice that turns out to be free, and have often spent a fortune on their education to do so. There is a huge opportunity cost for someone who could earn a nice cushy salary in a big company that chooses to offer you financial advice instead.

I am not the one to say what a fair compensation is, but just keep that in mind when examining fees. I often use funds with high fees because the underlying managers consistently outperform, and that is something I am willing to pay for.

Of course, index funds are an alternative for those who are not so investment savvy, and he recommends those on the show. If you read my articles regularly, you know I also recommend that route, but he fails to mention 'how' to invest in those.

So, for those of you who haven't been following, my article next week will explain again how to do just that, for those of you who wish to save for retirement in the markets without using a financial advisor.

David Mayes, MBA, resides in Phuket and provides wealth management and life coaching services to expatriates around the globe, specializing in UK pension transfers. He is a regional representative of Faramond Group, located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Faramond UK is regulated by the FCA to provide advice on pensions and taxation. He can be reached at 085-335 8573 or david.m@faramond.com

Sea-shy fishermen cash in on seashells

FISHERMEN, unable to take their nets in the tumultuous seas during monsoon season, have turned to the province's beaches to earn money.

Phang Nga locals are now gathering beach shells called 'Hoi Lak Kai' to sell for 20-25 baht per kilogram. The edible mollusks are a key ingredient in many local dishes, and fetch good prices. Lower-quality shellfish are sold for less.

Baan Bang Niang, Koh Kokhao and Takuapa locals



Edible seashells are an easy alternative to fish. Photo: The Nation

walk along beaches to collect them, many of them picking up to several kilos per day.

– Chutharat Plerin

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New amendments may bring in investments as much as B450bn

AS PART of the drive towards the 'Thailand 4.0' era, the Board of Investment (BOI) introduced an amendment to the BOI law on June 15, to allow the investment promotion agency to grant personal income tax exemptions to foreign researchers and experts.

Secretary-general Hiranya Sujinai said that to promote human-capital development to facilitate the next stage of economic development, the BOI has agreed to go beyond extending corporate-tax privileges to granting personal income tax exemptions as well. She stated that the amendment would enable the BOI to attract 'world-class researchers and experts' on a case-by-case basis.

A draft of the law is currently under consideration by the Council of State.

The BOI also announced the opening of its first two overseas offices to promote and support



Investments by Japanese and Chinese companies remain the highest in Thailand. Photo: geralt

Thai investments. "We have 14 overseas offices to help attract foreign investments in Thailand, but don't have any offices to assist Thai investors abroad," Ms Hiranya said. "The Japanese remain the largest investors in Thailand, followed by Chinese investors."

Uptil now, the BOI had approved 504 projects with a combined investment value of

229 billion baht. "The BOI's full-year target is 450bn baht," she added.

According to a survey by the BOI, however, actual investments totalled 107bn baht in the first quarter, since most of them were applications approved a few years ago.

"We will follow the situation closely to reach our target."

– The Nation

Luxury trends rising

By Zohaib Sikander

THE exponential increase in the number of cars – particularly high-end ones – in Phuket in the last decade alone, warrants a closer look at some of the factors that make this multi-billion-baht business tick. Millennium Auto, one of the newest luxury car outlets to open on the island, gave an exclusive account of the ins and outs of the business to the *Phuket Gazette*.

The first choice that any brick-and-mortar business is faced with is where to locate their premises. Factors such as accessibility, business image, parking space and costs, are some of the important considerations for choosing a final location. Trends in relocating businesses in Phuket has changed due to several factors – for Millennium Auto it was the lack of customers.

“Our showroom was originally located at the Outlet Mall, but we weren’t getting the traffic we needed – the resulting sales figures were mediocre. We only sold 40 units during our time there,” Millennium Auto General Manager Viraj Thanissranont told the *Gazette*.

Master Group Corporation Asia (MGC-Asia), the holding company of Millennium Auto,



Luxury-car sales are on the rise in Phuket despite constant traffic jams and year-long bypass constructions that have made the roads ‘undrivable’ even for an everyday car. Photo: Zohaib Sikander

took over the showroom operations last year.

“The decision to shift our operations to another location yielded positive results. We started operations at our current location the same week that construction on the Bypass Road started,” said Mr Viraj.

“Despite the continued bottlenecks from the bypass construction, there was an enormous increase in our group’s annual sales, which shot up to about 10,000 units

within just one year.”

Business image is also a vital consideration for businesses such as Millennium Auto, which cater to high-end clients.

“We have a number of big names under our umbrella, such as Rolls Royce, Aston Martin, BMW and Mini. This is why it is important for us to maintain our service standards and ensure that it is unmatched by any other company in Phuket,” he said.

The dynamic nature of modern business also necessitates

that companies must differentiate themselves from others by providing exceptional support functions, in addition to merely offering a product or service.

“We have an additional body repair and paint business, for which we sent our technicians to England to train” said Mr Viraj. “It is important for us to evolve the way we do business in this industry.”

“Due to such factors and more, our customers fight the traffic jams and still show up.”

R&D hub set to open in Thailand

BOSCH, a German-based multinational engineering company, plans to set up a research and development facility in Thailand to enhance automotive and mobility solutions for gasoline systems.

“Thailand is a strategic location for Bosch Group, and is playing a key role in the growth of the Asean region,” said Joseph Ngo Hong, managing director of Robert Bosch Ltd (Thailand).

“The country is the largest automotive market [in Southeast Asia] and is an automotive hub in the region, thanks to its strategic location. Bosch already has a lot of investment capital in the country. With 1 billion baht in investments, Bosch’s fuel-injection manufacturing facility reflects the company’s confidence in the country.”

Bosch representatives said that the automotive and electrical engineers will come from diverse backgrounds.

Bosch currently has seven fuel-injection factories worldwide including in China and Japan. The plant in Thailand will be capable of producing a million fuel-injector units every year, and is expected to generate more than 800 jobs by the end of 2017. – *The Nation*

Lanna expo kicks off next month

TOURISM officials from northern provinces are hoping that a scheme to circulate tourists within the country will lead to better trade connections between Chiang Mai and Phuket.

Samroeng Chaisen, head of the office of Strategy Management Upper Northern Provincial Cluster 1, Supawan Teerarat of the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau, and other relevant officers, met on June 16 to promote the Fourth Annual Lanna Expo, to be held in Chiang Mai next month, in which they expect to garner an estimated 3 billion baht for the northern province’s economy.

Officials said that an estimated 2,000 visitors from the Andaman area will travel north for the Lanna Expo this year, and also expect 1bn baht to be earned in spa and wellness commodities.

“The purpose of this event



The government hopes that the Lanna Expo will encourage tourists to travel across Thailand on a more domestic level. Photo: Lanna Expo

is to promote the locale, as well as the entrepreneurial stimulus products that fall under the One Tambon One Product (OTOP) subsidies,” said Mr Samroeng.

Officials said Phuket is the major target of the expo, as spas and hotel businesses in Phuket are major buyers of northern wellness products. “However, with this expo, we

expect to build more connections between the north and Andaman this month,” Mr Samroeng said.

“We want the spa businesses in Phuket to attend, as they’ll have more products to choose from.”

“The new policy of the government is to spread tourists across the nation, by promoting unique elements of each prov-

ince,” Mr Samroeng said. “That way, money will flow all over the country.”

“Phuket is in the middle of the rainy season now, but in the north, it’s spring. Fruits and vegetables are growing well, and it’s a great time for tourists to visit Chiang Mai. In contrast, we’re encouraging tourists to come to Phuket from Chiang Mai during the summer season,” Mr Samroeng said.

The event will be held June 30-July 6 at the Chiang Mai International Exhibition and Convention Center. “This year’s theme is Lanna Health and Wellness under the slogan ‘Lanna, Endless Charm’, and will feature cosmetic and herbal spa products, herbal nutrition and medications, handicrafts, OTOP products, and other tourism services,” he added.

– *Kongleaphy Keam*

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Air traffic controllers awarded for quarter century pushing tin

Four long-serving air traffic controllers were awarded tie clips and gold rings for their 25 years of dedicated service at Phuket International Airport's Air Traffic Control Center on June 14, which is operated by the Aeronautical Radio of Thailand Co Ltd.



Provincial and Facilities Administration Vice President of the Aeronautical Radio of Thailand Ltd Waravuth Raphiphan (middle right) and Director of Phuket Air Traffic Control Center Wichai Kasornchandra with (from L-R): Facilities Engineering Manager (Provincial Center) Youngyut Bamroongrat; Air Traffic Control Manager (Provincial Approach Control) Pittaya Jamgrajang; Senior Air Traffic System Engineer (Provincial Center) Prasit Timthong; and Sutthichai Narktong, Senior Facilities System Engineering (Provincial Center).

French beauty products arrive for urban beauties

American cosmetics brand Urban Decay opened a satellite store at Central Festival Phuket on Jun 17. Local beauty queens Miss Grand Phuket runners up and Miss Multimedia were at the opening, showing off three makeover styles that can be achieved with the new lines of beauty products such as lip gloss, eye liner and nail colors, as well as other face and body products. The Urban Decay brand is a subsidiary of French cosmetics company L'Oreal and is situated on the 1st floor of the shopping center.



(From L-R) Urban Decay Retail Manager Panjarat Limpinon; Central Department Store (Phuket Branch) General Manager Thanamet Pongpornkullapak and Marketing Manager Supreeya Jitrawiparat; and Urban Decay Business Development Manager Pattra Wongkijchinda.

Package Lady Check

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Events in Paradise

Renaissance hosts Global Day of Discovery

The Renaissance Phuket Resort & Spa encouraged guests and members of the local community to indulge in locally produced F&B products for an 'unforgettable evening' featuring Chalong Bay Factory. The event was the fifth annual 'Global Day of Discovery', which was held simultaneously at nearly 170 Renaissance Hotels around the world on June 16.



Renaissance Phuket Resort & Spa Beverage Manager and mixologist Philip Augustin stirs up creative cocktails for guests.



(From L-R) General Manager of Chalong Bay Rum Thibaul Spithakis; Renaissance Phuket Resort & Spa Director of Beverage & Food Adthapong Visuyothapibal; Co-Founder, Managing Director of Chalong Bay Rum, Marine Lucchini; along with Renaissance Phuket Resort & Spa's Beverage Manager Philip Augustin; Director of Sales & Marketing Pornnita Bheungnoi; Executive Chef Billy Costoglou; and Assistant Director of Beverage & Food Kriangsak Chokkue.



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Unemployed primate returns to wild

By Chutharat Plerin

POM, an eight-year-old monkey who was raised by a Bang Jo couple since he was two, has been released into the jungle, as his owners could not bear to see him depressed due to being unemployed.

Pom used to work as a coconut picker and also helped to peel coconuts at his owner's coconut oil factory. A few months ago, coconut prices shot up and the owners could not afford to buy coconuts for their business.

"We used to buy mature coconuts at 5-7 baht each for years. This year, prices increased to 15-20 baht each. However, we had to keep selling coconut oil at the same price, about 300 baht per kilogram. So I decided to stop producing coconut oil a few months ago, said 61-year-old Safia Manabutra, who raised Pom after buying him for 8,000 baht.

"This year we faced a coconut crisis, so not many coconuts were grown, and nobody hired us to gather coconuts. My main job is



Pom used to work as a coconut picker and also helped to peel coconuts at his owners' coconut oil factory, which closed down due to financial constraints. Photo: Chutharat Plerin

working in the rubber plantations; making coconut oil was an additional source of income for us. During the rainy season, even the income from rubber plantations has been limited, explained Ms Safia.

"Pom got along better with my husband, Hem Manabutra,

who was the only one able to command him. We loved him and shared a bond with him. I believe he understood us when we talked to him. However, he was not really good with strangers."

Pom was fed three meals a day, usually rice mixed with ba-

nanas or other fruits. He loved drinking milk, Ovaltine and juice, explained Ms Safia. He was trained to pick coconuts by his former owner.

"We could not afford to send him to a monkey training school in Surat Thani, which costs about 10,000 baht," she said.

Pom performed his duties from 8am to midday, after which he had a rest.

"Sometimes we took him shopping with us, so he could enjoy the change of scenery and see new people," said Ms Safia.

She added that Pom had to be tied at all times, otherwise he would escape.

"If he ran loose, villagers would be scared of him or hurt him, maybe even kill him. It is very normal in the south to have monkeys working in plantations. My husband is old and cannot exert himself anymore. It was good to have Pom around to help us pick coconuts so we could earn a little extra income," said Ms Safia.

"I do not think this counts as abuse, as he lived in an open area, never in a cage. I feel more pity for animals in the zoo," she said. "We fed him, kept him clean and treated him as a part of our family," Ms Safia added.

"I left Pom in the care of the Livestock Office. I hope he is happy and able to find food for himself, as he was raised by humans since he was a baby."

Couples 'Thai' the knot during traditional wedding ceremony

SIX couples tied the knot during a mass traditional 'Baba Yaya' wedding ceremony at Hongyok mansion in Phuket Town on June 19. The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Phuket Office, along with local government officials, organized the event.

'Baba' and 'Yaya' are ancient terms for male and female respectively, used for the descendants of the late 19th century Chinese immigrants to Phuket.

"The Baba Yaya wedding has become an annual event and this is the eighth mass wedding ceremony we have organized. The event has a 200 year tradition of couples getting married in this unique style, and in recent years it has become increasingly popular," said Anoma Wongyai, director of the TAT Phuket Office.

The couples included the Phuket Vice Governor Kajornkiet Rakpanitmanee and his wife Pitima Rakpanitmanee, as well as two other Thai couples and three Chinese-Taipai couples.



This was the eighth mass Baba Yaya wedding ceremony organized by the TAT. Photo: Woranut Pechdee

A parade was also held in the evening, along Thalang Road, to the Thai Hua museum, where couples obtained their marriage registration licences.

"This year, we presented participating couples with a traditional ancient Chinese marriage certificate - a ceremonial document, not a legally-binding marriage certificate," said Orasiri Ruktaengam, secretary of the

Thai Peranakan Association.

Ms Orasiri said the Baba Yaya ceremony was also open to couples who are already married, but wanted to renew their vows or celebrate their anniversary.

The event was aimed at promoting Phuket as a wedding and honeymoon destination, and boosting local tourism and the economy.

- *Phuket Gazette*

109-year-old granny oldest person in Krabi



Plaipraya district chief Paisarn Srithep with Pliaw Petchpuang, the oldest living person in Krabi. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

PLAIPRAYA district chief Paisarn Srithep visited the oldest living person in Krabi on June 21 and was delighted, yet surprised, to find her in good health.

Pliaw Petchpuang, 109, was born in 1907.

"We were surprised to find that Ms Pliaw is in great health, able to walk unassisted and keeps herself busy," said Mr Paisarn.

Ms Pliaw stays with her children and grandchildren. During the day, she prefers to clean the house, rather than sleep.

She has no medical dietary restrictions, but avoids all kinds of meat. Her favorite food is vegetables with Thai-style salad and fish.

"She also showed us her ID card, which confirms that she was born in the era of King Rama V. It is astounding that she has lived through the reign of five Thai Kings. Her hearing and vision are both strong, and she has no serious medical issues. She is a great inspiration for us all," said Mr Paisarn.

- *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

Smart buildings of the future

Connecting sensors to share information in real-time

Smart Life

By Danny Bishop

PICKING up from my last article, the retail application is just one example (and a relatively simple one at that) of a high value application, that relies on internet connected devices (in this case the beacons), smartphones and cloud software to provide value to the consumer, information to the vendor, and be a major part of this beckoning tech revolution. It is but one of many pieces, but one that is perhaps easy to understand and relate to for the average consumer.

Another significant piece of the revolution is the concept of connected sensors, which, together with the beacons, form the important concept of the Internet of Things (IoT). So why connect sensors?

We have had sensors for a long time. The difference here is the concept of connecting them to the internet in order to share the information to a variety of real time systems, and aggregating the information in order to learn more about whatever is being measured.

INTELLIGENT BUILDINGS

This serves as a good example to show that the Internet is the obvious way to share in-



We can connect sensors to the internet in order to share the information to a variety of real time systems, and aggregate information to learn more about what is being measured. Image: jeferrb

formation between related, but difficult to connect systems. There are a multitude of systems in a building: lighting, security, elevators, HVAC, and so on. These systems are typically quite stand-alone by their nature, that is, the elevator system operates independently of the lighting, and all other systems.

However, they can both benefit from accessing information about occupancy. The lighting case is obvious – switch the lights on when someone is around, and switch them off when you leave. The lighting

system needs to get that information via occupancy sensors.

The elevators can, of course, use this information too – they can get elevators ready as they see people approaching the lift lobby on a particular floor. This results in less waiting time for elevators, and fewer elevators required per building, saving money and floor space.

So there is value in sharing occupancy information with the elevator system, but why internet connectivity? Well, there are a number of reasons.

Firstly, it is very hard to get

one system to directly interface with another, mostly for commercial, rather than technical reasons – there are many lighting systems and many elevator systems and there wasn't really an accepted way to interface between the systems. Until now, that is. The internet is becoming that accepted way to interface. If the occupancy sensors and the elevator system are connected to the Internet, a cloud to cloud interface will allow them to communicate.

Secondly, all this information can be very easily aggregated

once it is in the cloud. Think how easy it is to manage your files with Dropbox, rather than the old hard drives you had to transfer the files between. You simply log in to a new device and the software handles all the synchronization. It's a game changer in terms of managing information.

Thirdly, once it is aggregated, you can learn from it. The elevator system can learn the occupancy patterns that result in calling an elevator specifically to each floor. This aggregation and learning is another big part of the revolution. It's called 'Big Data', and we will go into that into more detail in future articles.

The revolution comprises many different concepts that are coming together to change our world. The main specific concept presented here was the IoT, which is essentially a connection of devices, such as beacons and sensors, to the Internet. The next article will describe some of the more complicated applications to the smart city, and describe some examples of bottom up and top down approaches to creating smart cities.

Danny Bishop is an entrepreneur and engineer enthusiastically working on 'data drive solutions'. He is the co-founder of www.organicresponse.com and is focused on energy efficiency, and efficient occupancy utilization of commercial offices, universities, hospitals, schools and data centers.

Organic farming urged

ENVIRONMENTALISTS and academics are strongly recommending farmers and consumers to turn to organic foods, as studies indicate alarming levels of chemical residue in common produce.

The Thailand Environment Institute held a seminar on the sustainability of Thailand's agriculture last week, where specialists brainstormed ways to promote green farming.

Randomized testing found pesticides in excess of standard levels in samples of several types of produce.

Thanawat Jarupongsakul, president of the Thailand Environment Institute, called for relevant bodies to raise awareness of the importance of organic



Experts found excessive levels of pesticides in random samples of produce. Photo: kur0shiro

farming and food safety.

He added that chemical-free farming should be expanded to urban areas, so that city dwellers can avail themselves of healthy alternatives, which can improve the quality of life of both consumers and producers and lead to sustainable agriculture.

- NNT

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Large trimarans making a splash



On Deck

By Duncan Worthington

MULTIHULL sailing isn't something new to Phuket. In fact, some would argue multihulls are the ideal boats for Phuket's waters. With their shallow draft they can more easily access some areas as compared to their monohull cousins.

While everyone has different tastes in terms of size, brand and two hulls or three, what is relatively new to the local multihull scene – specifically the sailing scene – is the larger trimarans.

On the racing front, the small Phuket-built fleet of Firefly 850 Sport catamarans kick-started the multihull racing scene quite a few years ago and while still turning out for local regattas with strong support from a core group of owners, Phuket has started to see the average size of multihulls increasing, to the point where Phuket recently welcomed its second 40-plus-foot trimaran.

The first was *Adrenaline*, a trimaran of pedigree and vintage – more of that in a future column – but this latest edition is the 'new' 43-foot *Tantrum Too* owned by Robert van Paridon.

An amateur sailor most of his life, Robert has sailed everything from dinghies to superyachts and, after relocating to Singapore from the US in 2006, Robert



The 43-foot trimaran *Tantrum Too* is set to take the local racing scene by storm. Photo: MarineScene.asia

bought a Beneteau First 44.7 cruiser/racer in 2008 to compete in local regattas, and named her *Tantrum*. As the regional fleet grew, and with it the number of professional sailors taking part, Robert decided to sell *Tantrum* and move on to different things.

Following an invite from a friend, Robert crewed on the *Corsair Zhuka* in Pattaya and while doing 20 knots in 25 knots of breeze, he was sold on trimarans. On another friend's advice, Robert headed to Brittany, France, to look at the large number of trimarans there.

"I was like a kid in paradise," said Robert.

He took out for two days what is today known as *Tantrum Too*, and also raced her in a local French regatta. Liking

what he saw, he bought her and not long after had her shipped out to Asia.

Built by Auriga Yachts with bat'kar as architect, *Krysalid* – as she is believed to have first been named – was built as a prototype in 2006. Designed as an oceangoing racer/cruiser, built from epoxy on foam and with no discernible interior, she was durable and reliable – built to cross the Atlantic, not for luxury.

"After she was launched, the yard went bankrupt, I believe, and they only built the one. She was subsequently bought out of the bankruptcy and set-up by her first owner for racing," said Robert.

Gildas Ludot, President of the French Multihull Association at the time, raced her off

the West Coast of France from 2011-2013 where she performed well against the top all-carbon boats at that time.

Set up for single-handed racing, in 2014 she competed in the *Route du Rhum* – the transatlantic single-handed yacht race between Saint Malo, France and Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe – skippered by Julien Mabit. However, after experiencing two low pressure fronts in a row and sustaining equipment damage, Julien had to pull out of the race.

Still set-up for single-handed racing, a few tweaks and modifications have been made and Robert and his crew of up to four will be campaigning *Tantrum Too* on the local scene this season.

Following their first competitive race in Singapore, they will take part in the Multihull Solutions Regatta Phuket followed by Cape Panwa Hotel Phuket Raceweek, then it will be to Malaysia for the Raja Muda Selangor International Regatta followed by the Phuket King's Cup Regatta. Back to Malaysia for the Royal Langkawi International Regatta in January, followed by the Nongsa Regatta and Neptune Regatta in Indonesia before heading back to Thailand's Gulf Coast for the Top of the Gulf Regatta and season-ending Samui Regatta.

"After one year on the regional circuit we will see how *Tantrum Too* is doing. In the future we may look to enter some of the offshore races in Hong Kong, such as the China Sea Race and Hong Kong to Vietnam Race," added Robert.

As a new addition to the local multihull racing scene and still a relatively unusual sight, expect to see more 40-plus-foot trimarans along the Andaman Coast and down to Singapore as the fleet continues to grow.

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

Ao Taled declared protected area on World Oceans Day

AO TALED in Nakhon Sri Thammarat was declared an internationally protected area on June 8 to mark World Oceans Day.

The Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR) organized marine related activities under the theme 'Healthy Oceans, Healthy Planet' with the aim of raising awareness of sustainable preservation and management of marine and coastal resources.

Watcharaphong Sakulrat from the DMCR said the area needed protection for the turtles that lay eggs there, as well as being home to a diverse ecosystem of aquatic animals and corals reefs.

– NNT



Nakhon Sri Thammarat has been declared a protected area for its diverse marine resources. Photo: Joergelman

Aussie ends Thai winning streak

AUSTRALIAN Scott Hend lifted his second straight Asian Tour title on Thai soil this year, defeating young local Gunn Charoenkul at the Queen's Cup Bangkok Airways-SAT Samui Golf Tournament held at Santiburi Samui Golf Club on June 19.

The 43-year-old Queenslander also won the European-Asian Tour co-sanctioned Thailand Classic in Hua Hin three months ago, gaining his ninth Asian Tour crown.

Mr Gunn, 24, from Phang Nga, turned pro in 2011 and had his previous best finish as sixth place in the 2013 Solaire Open in the Philippines.

The Aussie ended the five-year domination of Thais, who



Scott Hend celebrating his second straight Asian Tour title victory. Photo: The Nation

had brought home the cup each year since 2011.

A stroke behind at joint third were Thailand's own Pavit Tangkamolprasert and Prom Meesawat, along with South Korean Jeunghun Wang and American Paul Petersen.

– The Nation

Picking the perfect palm



THERE'S a maxim in the so-called 'noble art' that states that a good big 'un will always beat a good little 'un. But what is true about boxing will not necessarily be true for the inhabitants of your plot. Small gardens require small trees and shrubs – indeed, they tend to look lost in a grand environment. However, if you are lucky enough to have a large spread with wide paths and expanses of lawn, then majestic palms will certainly enhance the splendor of your tropical setting.

One of my personal favorites is the foxtail palm. Not the largest – coconut and royal palms are much loftier, while the Bismarck palm is more substantial. Nonetheless, it is beautiful in its own right, with a crown of fronds on which the feathery leaves or petioles radiate from all sides – much like a fox's bush. Most palms produce fan-shaped fronds: the foxtail is a notably neat exception. *Wodyetia bifurca* has other charms. The trunk is attractive, a smooth grayish bole with symmetrical rings. And since the bushy crown is right at the top, grass and smaller plants will readily thrive beneath its filtered shade. Tolerant of drought, a tree-lined avenue of foxtails off Chao Fa East Road is somehow managing to cope with the recent aridity.

I wish I had opted for fox-



Palms enhance the splendor of any tropical garden. Photo: www.lifeofpix.com

tail palms when I planned my garden: instead I went for yellow or golden cane palms around my pool. Unlike foxtails, cane palms (*dypsis lutescens*) grow in bushy clumps with relatively thin trunks and masses of attractive fronds which start about half-way up the stem. In strong sunlight, these fronds can indeed be golden in color. Use it as a screen, but don't expect much to grow under its canopy.

More unusual, with its vividly colorful stems, is the sealing wax palm. Like its yellow cane cousin, it grows as a group of slender trunks to about three or four meters, each with its own complement of bright green leaves. But what make it

so distinctive is its brilliant scarlet leaf sheaths which extend down most of the stem. More temperamental than the cane palm – and incidentally more expensive – it needs a steady supply of water and plenty of sun. Nice work if you can get it. As with the yellow cane palm, propagate by means of offshoots.

The Bismarck palm certainly demands oodles of space. I have two and need to keep them in check by cutting off some of the lower leaves. Left to its own devices, this palm develops into a largish tree with a wingspan of maybe 20 feet. The semicircular canopy of huge fan-shaped leaves – up to a meter across and sprouting from a massive trunk

– almost reach the ground. Although it comes from Madagascar, where it is incidentally now rare, *Bismarkia nobilis* thrives in Phuket's climate. Impressive either as an ornamental specimen or arranged as a substantial screen, its greatest glory is the color of its foliage – an arresting shade of almost luminous blue-gray. Pamper it by giving it plenty of space and a position where it can enjoy full sun.

If you have gardening or environmental concerns, contact Patrick at drpaccampbell@gmail.com. Many of his creative and academic publications can be found at his website: [GreenGaloshes Wordpress](http://GreenGaloshesWordpress.com).

Thailand aims to limit global warming to 2pc



Officials at the climate change conference. Photo: The Nation

IF THAILAND fails to tackle its climate-change challenges it won't be able to get out of the middle-income-country trap, according to the Office of National Economic and Social Development Board (NESBD).

Deputy secretary-general of the NESBD, Ladawan Kumpa, highlighted this fact at a climate change forum held on June 17.

Thailand signed the Paris Agreement in April, in support of the long-term goal of limiting global warming to well below two degrees centigrade.

"We have to pay attention to climate-change issues if we want to enjoy sustainable development and transform into a rich country," she said.

The forum was jointly presided over by Martin Hart-Hansen, deputy resident representative at the United Nations Development Program Thailand, and Jatuporn Buruspat, deputy permanent secretary of the Natural Resources and Environment Ministry.

– The Nation

Tip of the week: Climatic Conditions

THE ability for plants to cope with variable climatic conditions is variable.

They can struggle when put in different conditions to what they would expect in their normal habitat.

Thus, most tropical plants will not survive the slightest frost. When I lived in southern Spain, hundreds of hectares of avocados were wiped out by a single night of frost.

Almost as restrictive are the needs of desert plants such as cacti. If the climate is too wet, and the soil too

soggy, they will rot. Here in Thailand they require a well-drained, sandy base.

Cool climate plants need periods of chilling to produce flowers and fruits. Hence the difficulty faced with growing apples, plums and pears in Phuket.

One way plants do survive is by adaptation. Two examples are temperate deciduous trees, which discard leaves and switch off during winter, and tropical plants with waxy leaves to prevent moisture loss under the tropical sun.

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Uncertainty can damage market



Property Watch
Desmond Hughes

I WILL admit, to anyone who asks, that consultancy services often involve assisting people with the kind of matters for which they should perhaps go to the authorities to receive assistance and guidance.

Nevertheless, for one reason or another, consultancy services often involve providing advice to clear up uncertainties over laws, rules and regulations that are difficult to understand and implement.

This uncertainty can adversely affect or even permanently damage the property market. It causes fluctuations in the perceived value of the market, even though the actual tangible market values and assets keep their fundamentals as a constant.

One of the first principles of contract law in civil and common law jurisdictions is that a contract can be voided for uncertainty. You have to define what you mean before you can enforce something. That is just common sense.

Similarly, if a law is brought into effect, and it governs the behavior of citizens and persons within a jurisdiction, then that law should be clearly defined, too. Unfortunately, laws can often be vague and uncertain, or just really out of date.



One of the first principles of contract law is that a contract can be voided for uncertainty. Photo: Unsplash

Sometimes I feel that we are living with increasing uncertainty. I hope the pendulum in Phuket is swinging more towards clarity about what is, and what is not, acceptable under the law.

Property investors surely get many different answers to the same old questions. I'm quite sure obtaining clear information can be frustrating.

Here are some of the issues of uncertainty often discussed around coffee tables and in consultations:

Isn't it illegal for a Thai company that owns property and has foreign shareholders to do business? What happens when a 30-year lease expires, can the renewals [3x30 years] be enforced?

Can foreign owners take

shares directly or indirectly in a company that becomes their landlord?

Is the land I am looking at investing on through purchase of a property – a townhouse, a condo or villa – based on a legitimate title, or can the title simply be taken away?

If I buy a villa near a beach and restaurants, will the restaurants be bulldozed shortly after my purchase has been completed?

These questions never disappear, and the answers always remain illusive and confusing. I can't say that the answers haven't changed over the years, because they have. As governments have changed, so have the laws.

Phuket is currently experi-

encing an influx of large Thai developers investing in land with a view to building upscale projects and sell at reasonable prices in order to attract a new wave of potential buyers; investors emerging from the tourism sector and becoming property investors. Judging by the languages options on many of the broker websites, Chinese and Russian buyers are clearly the target audiences.

These investors will want transparent answers about what they can and can't do. They are probably used to getting clear answers in their home countries but won't be used to living in a perpetual cycle of doubt.

The onus is upon all property professionals to communicate as honestly and as clearly

as possible about the dos and don'ts in the local property market. Even to this day, I still hear agents telling their potential buyers that it is 'easy' to set up a Thai company and just 'put some shareholders' in there.

By now though, most people should know better.

Ideally, it would be very helpful for professionals in the property industry to reach a consensus about the information disseminated to clients, to avoid confusing and damaging the market.

The problem is that regulatory measures are difficult to enforce, so many foreigners end up applying their own set of rules to communications without regard to local rules and laws, making it difficult to detect and filter misinformation.

Ultimately, the final issue to deal with is that if you do search hard for clarity and truth, you will find it, but you might not like the answers you get.

I do have high hopes for the future of Thailand's property market, but developing any certainty in it is quite a long way off. Some investment of time and energy is, I believe, required beyond the glossy brochures.

Desmond Hughes has been an owner and operator of his law firm in Thailand for 14 years, and is a Senior Partner at Hughes Krupica law firm www.hugheskrupica.com

BKK offices go cheap

ACCORDING to CBRE Research's bi-annual 'Global Prime Office Occupancy Costs Survey', Bangkok has become one of the cheapest-priced office markets in the world – ranked 109th on June 15.

A total of 126 countries were surveyed, including China, Japan and India. Among these, Hong Kong (Central) is up in first place at 9,140 baht per square meter for grade A offices.

Bangkok weighs in at 959 baht per sqm on average rent for the same. The average rent increase in Bangkok's Central Business District was 6.6 per cent year-on-year and is also ranked 25th in the top annual rental increases, yet still ranked as one of the cheapest prime office rental markets in the world.

Global prime office occupancy costs that reflect rent, local taxes and service charges for the

highest-quality office properties rose 2.4 per cent year-on-year.

"Office demands remain strong despite weak economy and this, combined with completed new spaces, will continue to push up rents," said Nithipat Tongpun, head of Office Services, CBRE Thailand.

"We expect the global economy to keep growing, and the global service sector, the primary occupier of prime office properties, will continue to expand through periods of volatility," said Dr Richard Barkham, Global Chief Economist at CBRE.

Asia, on the whole, dominates the most expensive office locations in the world with Hong Kong ranked the highest, and China taking up 3 places on the list. CBRE Group established an office in Phuket in 2004.

– *Phuket Gazette*

Vintage villas announced



These limited edition villas will be located on the Bypass Road. Photo: Boat Pattana PR

BOAT Pattana Co Ltd announced a new 'limited edition' high-end villa house construction in progress in Phuket on June 13.

"The project, named 'Deva Escape', will be located on the Bypass Road (Chalermprakiat

Ror 9 Road) near IKEA, starting at 34 million baht for villas ranging 1157.6-1642.92 square meters," said Panupong Kritchanarat, chief executive officer (CEO). "Each unit comprises 5 bedrooms and a 15 meter long swimming pool."

He added that the project will be styled using ancient Thai architecture, and each villa will have an open-air area at the center.

"It is currently under construction and will be completed by January 2017."

– *Sukawin Tanthavanich*

Lub d hostel to cater to new wave of travellers

NEW Lub d Phuket Patong is a new hostel set to open on July 19 with the aim of attracting modern-day back-packing travellers who are looking for a laid back, affordable and convenient travel experience.

Although the concept is a relatively new one for Patong accommodation, it is the latest in a line of similar successful hostels in Bangkok: Lub d Silom Bangkok and Lub d Siam Bangkok.

“Our target market is the kind of travellers who want to make new friends and prefer a laid back hostel to stay at, and enjoy their time in, as well as nearby attractions outside the hostel,” said Lub d’s Assistant Experience Manager Tannapas Thanakijrujiroj.

Located on Sawatdirak Road in Patong, the hostel’s exterior design is Sino-Portuguese style, mixed with a hint of a beach resort atmosphere on the inside.



Lub d aims to attract social butterflies and travellers looking for a laid-back experience. Photo: Lub d

A total of 187 rooms spread across 5 floors includes a unique ladies-only dormitory.

There are three types of rooms available: junior and dormitory rooms, each with a floor area of 18 square meters,

and 25-sqm deluxe rooms.

The hostel’s communal facilities include: a tour desk and travel information services; a Muay Thai gym; a co-working space; a large communal swimming pool; wifi; parking space;

and a long-term storage facility for left luggage.

Mr Tannapas said the company plans to expand across Asia with new hostels in Cambodia and Philippines in 2017.

– *Phuket Gazette*

AP Thailand restructures

Developer AP (THAILAND) aims to become one of the country’s top three residential developers by 2021, when it hopes to generate revenue of B50 billion, said CEO Anuphong Assavabhokhin.

To achieve this business goal, the listed company has restructured its management team from a function-based approach – separated into construction, marketing and administration arms – to a business group-based approach, he said.

Four business groups have been established: one each for detached housing and townhouses, and two covering different segments of the condominium market.

Each group will be responsible for its own construction, marketing and administration operations, he explained.

AP (Thailand) currently ranks in the top 10 listed property firms in terms of revenue, generating revenue of B4.22 billion and net profit of B454.78 million in the first quarter. The company targets revenue of Bt23.7 billion for the full year.

– *The Nation*

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Phuket Gazette

From the pitch to the court

By Kongleaphy Keam

BOONJUAN Panich from Trang Province is the current Deputy Chief Judge of the Phuket Court. He is also the president of the Trang-Phuket Club – a group of Trang natives living and working in Phuket.

Now 49 years old, Mr Boonjuan has achieved much from a humble childhood as the second son of a rubber plantation worker in rural Trang.

“When I was a child, I didn’t pay much attention in school. I graduated with a grade point average of only 1.1.”

Ultimately, it was his love of football that opened doors for him later in life.

“My grades weren’t good and my family was not wealthy, so I was not able to go to university. However, I passed the entrance exam to study with the Royal Thai Navy in Samut Prakan Province,” he added.

“I did not know whether that was a good or bad decision. I just wanted to continue studying without having to spend money. I studied there for two

years, but my results were very bad. I was 38th in a class of 40 students.”

After graduating, Mr Boonjuan joined the ranks of the navy at a low level. In his free time, he played football for the Navy Football Club.

Mr Boonjuan was then invited to play for Ramkhamkaeng University’s football team and found a new lease on life. With a revived love for the sport, he quickly became a popular player. However, to gain a permanent spot on the university team, he had to be enrolled at the campus, with at least 18 credits a year.

“This was a turning point in my life,” he said.

Mr Boonjuan took this opportunity to study for a bachelor’s degree in law.

By his second year at university, he knew he was on a new path with a brighter future, so he quit the navy.

“This was the second biggest turning point in my life but at first, I didn’t tell anyone about my plans, not even my parents. When they did eventually find out, they were very

angry, which put me under even more pressure.”

Yet, this time, Mr Boonjuan was determined to study hard and get good results. He made a promise to himself not to return home until after he’d successfully graduated. He took school books with him every time he went to play football matches in other provinces and crammed constantly.

The effort paid off. After four years of study, Mr Boonjuan was the proud holder of a law degree. His parents were the first to hear the good news over the phone.

Throughout his studies Mr Boonjuan paid his own way with the money he earned from playing football.

Once he’d graduated, Mr Boonjuan got a job as a lawyer at a well-known law firm, through the many connections he had made during his time as a football player. He then studied further to become a barrister, passing the bar after a year as one of the top 20 students out of a total of 400.

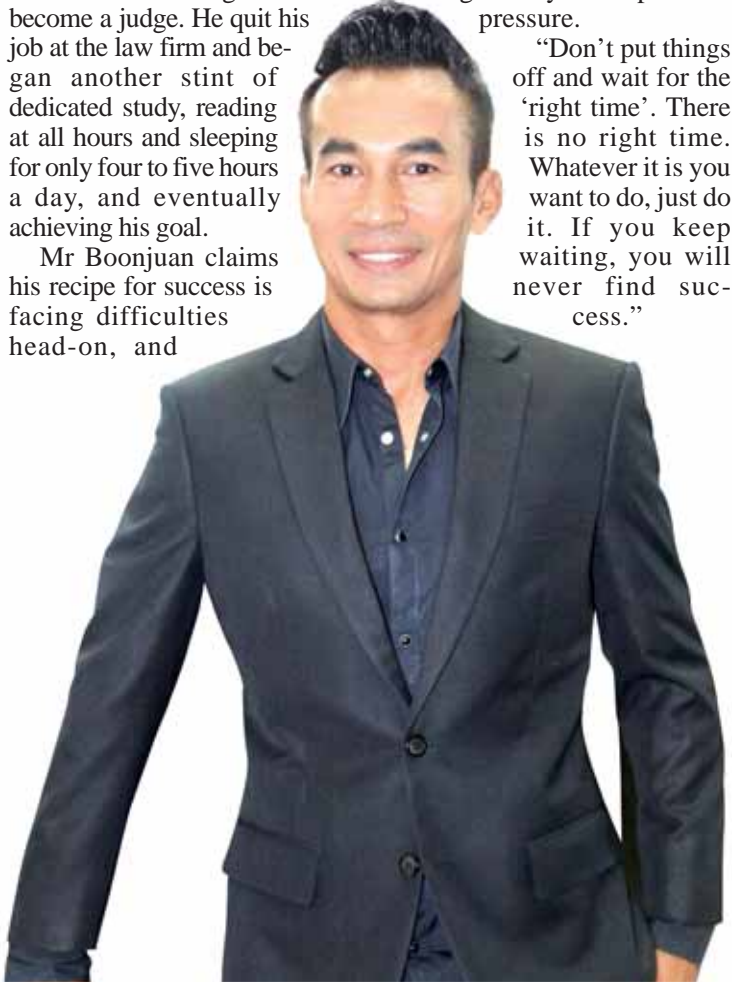
However, there was still much work ahead for this high

achiever. His next goal was to become a judge. He quit his job at the law firm and began another stint of dedicated study, reading at all hours and sleeping for only four to five hours a day, and eventually achieving his goal.

Mr Boonjuan claims his recipe for success is facing difficulties head-on, and

finding a way to cope with pressure.

“Don’t put things off and wait for the ‘right time’. There is no right time. Whatever it is you want to do, just do it. If you keep waiting, you will never find success.”





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