

# Phuket Gazette

July 2 - 8, 2016

Now inside **THE NATION** every Saturday

56 Pages / 20 Baht

‘MIGRANT WORKERS IN PHUKET HAVE NO PROBLEMS WITH MONEY’

## Burmese better off

■ Aung San Suu Kyi visit marks new era of bilateral relations

By Sukawin Tanthavanich

NOTHING much will change for the 100,000 migrant Myanmar nationals currently living and working in Phuket, Phuket Employment Office director Pitoon Damsakorn told the *Gazette*, shortly after the visit to Thailand by the State Counselor of Myanmar Aung San Suu Kyi last week.

Ms Suu Kyi's arrival in Thailand on June 23 for a three-day visit to meet with ministers and firm-up bilateral ties between the neighboring nations, saw the signing of three memoranda of understanding and agreements exclusively to deal with better management, facilitation and capacity-building for Myanmar workers.

Unofficially, about 4-5 million migrant workers, plus displaced people, are living in Thailand. For the past two years, 1.5 million workers have been registered, allowing them to work and receive social benefits, including education and healthcare. More registrations are expected in coming months.

However, for the thousands of Myanmar nationals working mainly in Phuket's construction industry, little will change as they 'already earn more than the minimum daily wage of 300 baht for Thai nationals', said Mr Pitoon.

"The Myanmar nationals working in Phuket are much better off than their counterparts in Samut Sakhon, near Bangkok, for example, where many are employed in the fisheries industry, receiving low wages and often going without pay when bad weather prevents them from working," he said.

"Construction work is plentiful all year round for migrant workers in Phuket. They don't have any problems with money at



A large number of Myanmar nationals flocked to see Aung San Suu Kyi when she visited Thailand last week to strengthen bilateral ties between the neighboring countries. Photo: The Nation

all," he said.

However, Kriengkrai Arpabuthsayan, head of the Phuket Provincial Office of Labor Protection and Welfare, said Phuket still faces major problems dealing with illegal migrant workers.

"The biggest problem we face in Phuket is tracking down migrant workers who continue to flout immigration laws," said Mr Kriengkrai.

"Our greatest challenge is stemming the flow of Myanmar nationals involved in human trafficking, especially children," he

said, referring to Thailand's Tier 3 status in the US annual report on Trafficking in Persons (TIP) since 2015.

However, the United States on June 29 announced that it had decided to remove Thailand from its list of worst human trafficking offenders.

The upgrade, confirmed by a US official in Washington and a Bangkok-based official from an international organization with direct knowledge of the rankings...

Continued on Page 4

### Taxi operators reject PLTO's fare reduction proposition

OUTCRY over social media vlogger's viral video results in government officials' meeting with taxi operators in Phuket, but fails to reach an agreement over lower minimum taxi fares.

Full story Page 3

### BUSINESS



The ramifications of Brexit and the unrest that some members may feel.

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## LOCAL NEWS

# Briefly

### Chalong drug ring raid siezes 9,100 pills

FOUR Thai men were arrested after drug raids in Chalong uncovered crystal meth (*ya bah*, *ya ice*), guns, bullets and marijuana (*ganja*), police confirmed.

At a press conference on June 27, Phuket Provincial Police announced that the arrests were made by following social media leads.

Mr Teerapong Rithirak, 23, was caught on June 23 in Chalong, while allegedly trying to sell 1,700 *ya bah* pills; 0.7g of *ya ice*; and 52.6g of *ganja* to undercover agents.

Mr Teerapong confessed that he had received the contraband from Kittipong Chaupol, 21.

Police then raided Mr Kittipong's house and found 7,400 *ya bah* pills, 337.5g of *ganja*, 5 guns, and 268 bullets, as well as Mr Kittipong's associates, Pananat Praveeranan, 22, and Yongyuth Thipparong, 21.

"Mr Kittipong said he had received most of the material for his operation from a 'Mr

## Patong bus crash injures newly-arrived tourists



Five tourists, including a five-year-old boy, were injured when a tourist bus flipped over in Patong on the morning of June 25. The bus was carrying 14 Chinese nationals, heading toward the Patong Bay Hill Resort & Spa from Phuket International Airport. The driver said he was trying to drive up a hill when he lost control due to the 'air pressure in the tires' and the 'steep incline of the slope'. The injured were taken to Patong Hospital. Photo: DDPM Patong Office

Yai,' and procured the weapons from social networking sites, pointing to dealers in Thailand's central region," Col Teerapol said.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

### Broke customer firebombs city karaoke venue

POLICE are hunting for a man who allegedly firebombed a Phuket Town karaoke bar on June 26, after his phone was seized in lieu of payment for beer and a sing song.

A man indentified as Dam, approximately 35 years-old, ordered two bottles of beer and several karaoke machine tokens. When he was unable to pay, the bar's staff confiscated his cell phone.

At closing time, Mr Dam was seen on his motorbike, throwing a Molotov cocktail into the bar.

No one was injured in the attack. Police are still searching for Mr Dam.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

### Teen dies after being stabbed

THE body of a teenager, who was stabbed 18 times in the latest incident of violent crime in Phuket, was found outside his house in Koh Kaew late in the evening of June 26.

The victim was named as Manasanan Bunga, 18.

Phuket officers reportedly found Mr Manasanan's body lying on the ground, surrounded by relatives mourning his death just before midnight.

Mr Manasanan's family told police that they were watching a movie together when he received a phone call from a 'friend'. He then stepped outside the house, telling his family he would return soon.

The number has been traced and an arrest warrant will be issued, police confirmed.

– *Winai Sarot*

### 'Super-algae' being used on Phi Phi's reefs

ALGAE began being deployed in the Phi Phi National Marine Park on June 20, in a world-first attempt to revive bleached coral.

Bleaching has affected about 80 per cent of coral in Hat Noppharat Thara – Ko Phi Phi National Park's protected area.

Park officials blamed rapid tourism growth and high sea temperatures for the bleaching.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

### Lovers' quarrel leaves tourist dead, 1 missing

A KOREAN tourist is dead and another is missing after a domestic dispute led them to fling themselves into the sea in the early hours of June 29.

According to witnesses, including a hotel guard, the couple were sitting on the beach arguing, when the woman flung herself into the sea. The man dragged her back out and the pair sat down again. The couple then resumed arguing, with both flinging themselves into the sea yet again, but this time being washed away.

Patong police said that they are working to recover the body of the still-missing man, but search efforts are being hampered by strong surf.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

### Another bus crash in Patong injures tourist

ONE man was injured when a bus, laden with Chinese tourists, veered off the road and broke through a roadside barrier on Patong Hill on the evening of June 26.

The crash occurred in front of the Sea Pearl Hotel, Patong Police confirmed.

The driver, Tairong Chutai, 30, was returning 25 Chinese tourists to their hotel in Patong after a trip to Phang Nga. He claimed to have 'lost control of the brakes' on the way down the hill. The driver said he attempted to slow down by the roadside, but ended up crashing into a barrier.

The injured passenger suffered minor head injuries and was taken to Patong Hospital for treatment. He was discharged later that night.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

### V/Gov praises OTOP vendors

TRADE representatives involved with the government's One Tambon One Product (OTOP) initiative took part in a festival at the Chatuchak Market held on June 19-25.

Phuket Vice Governor Kajornkiet Rakpanitmanee praised vendors, including those from nearby provinces.

– *Sukawin Tanthavanich*

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# Taxis say 'no' to lower fares

FOLLOWING the latest public backlash against high taxi fares, officials from the Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO) met with drivers' representatives on June 23, to discuss a new minimum price for their services.

The meeting ended with the taxi and tuk-tuk drivers turning down the PLTO's suggestions.

Public outrage erupted across the internet, after Thai-speaking expat vlogger Jack Brown posted a video on Facebook, in which he complained that a one-kilometer tuk-tuk ride in Kata had cost him 200 baht.

The video quickly went viral, with many sharing their discontent with local taxi services in Phuket, putting the PLTO under pressure to finally take meaningful action.

"We have already cleared Mr Brown's case," said PLTO Chief Sommai Sudkhao. "He was not cheated - he had agreed to a price before the trip, so there is no criminal case here. In fact, he later apologized to the public, adding that he only meant to raise awareness about taxi prices, not damage Phuket's reputation."

"However, public pressure did not ease up. The people are pushing for price reductions, which led to this meeting," Mr Sommai added.



Taxi driver representatives meet with PLTO officers on June 23. The taxi representatives turned down the PLTO's recommendations. Photo: Kongleaphy Keam

In September 2012, more than 50 representatives from taxi organizations across Phuket agreed to a schedule of higher standard fares to be charged island-wide.

According to that agreement, each of the main tourist areas, including Kata-Karon, Patong, Kamala, Rawai, Phuket Town and Phuket Airport, have fares posted at taxi ranks so that customers can see their fares before getting into a taxi.

Currently, the minimum fare is 200 baht, but can be negotiated for shorter distances, Mr Sommai said.

"Taxi drivers say that Phuket

conditions are very different from Bangkok, where you can pick up passengers anywhere," he said. "In Phuket, if you take a passenger from Karon to the airport, you cannot bring anyone back, as they have separate taxis designated for the airport."

"The same goes for other places in Phuket; drivers often have to come back with empty vehicles, which makes it very expensive for them."

He added that the public is unwilling to pay the 200 baht minimum charge, even though the price is negotiable.

"The public wants to bring

the minimum fare down, but drivers feel that short distances are not worth the fare and that not many tourists hail rides for such short distances. We have given them time to reconsider our suggestions, and will have another meeting soon in order to come to a decision," Mr Sommai said.

"During this period, we will try to spread awareness among the public that Phuket taxis are not unduly expensive," he insisted. "Public transport is very important for Phuket as a tourist destination, therefore we will do our best to solve this issue."

- Kongleaphy Keam

# 5 arrested in assault on tourist

A TUK tuk driver and four accomplices were arrested for ganging up on a Swedish tourist and beating him unconscious in Patong in the early hours of June 27.

Police responding to reports of the beating found Frederik Gustav Wilhelm Erikson Holm, 32, lying unconscious at the end of Soi Bangla at 3.45am. He was sent to Bangkok Phuket Hospital for treatment.

"According to witnesses, Mr Holm appeared drunk when he staggered out of Soi Bangla onto the Patong beach road and began arguing with tuk tuk driver Natee Det-ooop, 27," said Phuket Tourist Police Chief Maj Naruewat Puthawiro.

"The pair came to blows and then several other locals joined in to help the tuk tuk driver. Mr Holm was knocked unconscious."

Police soon arrested the suspects after reviewing CCTV footage. All five of the men were charged with assault.

Mr Holm's injuries were not serious and he was later discharged from hospital.

- Kongleaphy Keam

# Hoteliers discuss safety measures

PHUKET officials met with tourism and hospitality operators on June 24, to discuss safety measures and contingency plans in case of emergencies.

Phuket's Vice-Governor Chokdee Amornwat, as well as officials from the Thai Hotels Association and Ministry of Tourism and Sports Phuket Office (MOTS), met with representatives from private and public sector hospitality businesses at a conference held at the Royal Phuket City Hotel.

The vice-governor spoke of the need to enhance safety measures in the wake of the Erawan Shrine explosion in August of last year, and added that the incident had smeared the image of Thailand as a peaceful tourist destination.



Hoteliers at the conference. Photo: Phuket PR

"The major tourist-oriented provinces are Bangkok, Phuket, Chiang Mai, Pattaya and Hua Hin, and it is important for staff in the hospitality business to educate others on how to handle such situations, in addition to improving the quality of service," said V/Gov Chokdee.

- Sukawin Tanthavanich

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# Phuket to become Chinese sister city

PHUKET Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada welcomed Chinese representatives to Phuket Provincial Hall on June 27, where officials signed a letter of intent to become sister cities with Suining.

The southwestern Chinese city has an estimated population of around 660,000; roughly the same size as Phuket's.

"Suining is located in the central Sichuan Province of China, on the middle reaches of the Fujiang River," Governor Chamroen said. "We have brought our officials to meet Zhao Ping, Xiang Qionghua, and Luo Qinglun from the Sichuan Province delegation, as well as Wang Huijuan from our own Chinese Consulate in



Chinese delegates meet with Gov Chamroen and Phuket Town Mayor Somjai Suwansupana at Phuket Provincial Hall. Photo: Phuket PR

Phuket."

Governor Chamroen said the letter of intent would commit both cities to building a partnership in education and tourism. That letter would set the stage for a Memorandum of Understanding between the

cities, which became available on June 27.

Phuket is sister provinces with the Chinese provinces of Hainan and Yantai, as well as Nice in France, India's Port Blair and Russia's Nakhodka.

— Sukawin Tanthavanich

# Ms Suu Kyi's political waltz



State Counselor of Myanmar Aung San Suu Kyi flanked by government officials after her arrival in Bangkok on June 23. Photo: The Nation

From Page 1

...would mark a rare boost for US-Thai relations. Ties between the countries have flatlined since the Thai military seized power in 2014, in a move strongly condemned by Washington.

Bangkok has protested publicly to Washington that Thailand should be removed from the lowest ranking on the State Department's annual Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report, which was, at the time of going to press, due to be released on June 30.

The report organizes countries into tiers based on trafficking records: Tier 1 for nations that meet minimum US standards; Tier 2 for those making significant efforts to meet those standards; Tier 2 'Watch List' for those that deserve special scrutiny; and Tier 3 for countries that are not making significant efforts.

The latest TIP report is expected to cite improvements in Thailand's efforts to combat human trafficking, especially in its vital multi-billion-dollar seafood industry, the US official said.

The upgrade would put Thailand on the so-called 'Tier 2 Watch List'.

Phuket's reputation as a destination for human traffickers was put under the international spotlight in 2008, after 54 illegal migrant workers, including an eight-year-old girl, suffocated to death in a tiny seafood container truck while being smuggled from Song Island,

Myanmar, to Phuket.

The 'Ranong human-smuggling incident' occurred on the night of April 9, when 121 Burmese workers were transported illegally by fishing boat from Song Island in Myanmar to a landing near Ranong.

All were illegal migrant workers being transported to Phuket, where they sought jobs as day laborers. Each had reportedly paid the smugglers 6,000 to 10,000 baht for the journey.

They were all herded into an airtight seafood refrigeration unit on the back of a truck measuring six by 2.2 meters. Among the dead were 36 women, 17 men and the eight-year-old girl.

Thailand's government says the situation for migrant workers has changed in the past two years due to the so-called 'zero tolerance' approach, adopted to counter human trafficking and slave labor. These efforts are still considered a work in progress by several international human rights groups.

Before departing last week, Ms Suu Kyi thanked the Thai government for taking care of migrants and urged workers to behave themselves.

"Myanmar workers in Thailand are guests of their host country, and should love, be honest with and behave well toward their hosts," she said.

During Ms Suu Kyi's first visit to Thailand four years ago, she openly opposed the government's stance on migrant workers, and urged her countrymen to fight for their rights.

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# Family demands damages

THE family of a German man killed in a Phuket road accident in December of last year has demanded 1.3 million baht as compensation for his death, and 800,000 baht for his partner's injuries.

The suspect, Jakarin Rodpradit, 26, has requested a month to assess the situation, after both sides met for negotiations at Phuket Provincial Court on June 24. Mr Jakarin was granted a delay until August 4, which is when the parties are expected to next meet.

Mr Jakarin originally denied responsibility for the fatal crash between his car and the victim's motorbike, driven by Andreas Walter, 47, with his partner Patcharin Lammai, 35, riding pillion.

Phuket police had originally treated the case as a reckless driving incident, allowing Mr Jakarin to drive away from the scene and



Ms Patcharin is seeking 800,000 baht in damages. Photo: Gazette file

failing to conduct a sobriety test after the suspect admitted he had been drinking. A week after the accident, Ms Patcharin and her

family submitted CCTV footage and presented witnesses to the police. When faced with new evidence, Mr Jakarin confessed to

the charges, Lt Nipon Temsung of the Karon Police told the *Gazette*.

"Mr Jakarin was charged with reckless driving causing death, injury and property damage, without stopping and assisting the victims. This is a more serious crime than just reckless driving," said Ms Patcharin's lawyer, who asked not to be named.

"Mr Walter's family initially wanted to fight the case and have Mr Jakarin serve jail time. However, after his confession, they agreed to negotiate for compensation."

Mr Jakarin took the opportunity to apologize for his actions in December, and is currently involved in discussions with his private insurance provider, as well as the PorRorBor (the compulsory motor insurance provider).

"1.2mn baht is the maximum

amount that insurance companies are liable to pay in these situations – one million baht by the private company and 200,000 baht by the PorRorBor. We need time to discuss the extent to which the companies are willing to pay in this situation," said Mr Jakarin.

"As for the 800,000 baht for Ms Patcharin's compensation, I honestly feel it is quite high. However, we will consider and discuss this as well."

Ms Patcharin, however, was insistent on her demands and said that she will push for a harsher sentence if they are not met.

"This amount includes the hospital fee, plastic surgery, laser treatment, loss of income and various other expenses. We want everything to end peacefully. Let's wait and see what happens in August," she said.

– *Kongleaphy Keam*

# Domestic dispute ends in bloodbath

A 49-YEAR-old Myanmar national was stabbed to death in Kathu on the night of June 24, after a domestic dispute escalated into a bloodbath.

Kathu Police received reports of the man's shirtless body lying on Baan Na Koh Road near Loch Palm Golf Club.

Officers arrived at the scene to find the body of the victim, named only as Mr Ta, on the road about 20 meters away from the cottage where the altercation took place.

"The suspect, Anan Chua-yupakorn, 72, admitted to stabbing Mr Ta at the cottage. The floor was covered in blood and we found a knife with a 6.5-inch blade," said Lt Col Umpolwat Sangrueng of the Kathu Police.

Mr Anan told police that at about 8pm, Mr Ta and his wife came to his house and requested to live with him.

"They then started arguing with each other. I tried to intervene and stop them from fighting, but Mr Ta attacked me with a knife. However, I managed to snatch it away from him," Mr Anan told the police.

"Mr Ta was stabbed three



The weapon allegedly used in the incident. Photo: Kathu Police

times – once in the abdomen, once in the right shoulder and once in the back," confirmed Col Umpolwat.

Mr Ta's wife reportedly ran off, whereas he stumbled out of the cottage and collapsed on the road. Mr Anan was taken to Kathu Police Station for further processing.

The relationships within the trio have not been determined. Police are searching for Mr Ta's wife and investigating further before pressing any charges.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

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## Family narrowly avoids landslide



Ms Rorya looks out over the wreckage of her former home. The family lost everything in the landslide. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

A FAMILY of three narrowly escaped being crushed to death in a landslide in Krabi that completely destroyed their house on June 24.

The 56-year-old owner, Rorya Marya, was staying at her house in Baan Thapradoo, Khlong Thom District with her nephew and mentally unstable son when she heard rumbling sounds and went outside.

"I saw a landslide moving very fast toward our house, so I shouted to my son and nephew to get out. Moments later, the landslide swept our

house into the Khlong waterway nearby," said Ms Rorya.

The house, as well as all of the family's possessions, were lost in the slide. Officials later surveyed the area and advised neighborhood residents to move out to avoid being caught in more landslides.

The family is temporarily staying at a neighbor's house, as they have no place to go.

The president of the Huay Nam Khao *OrBorTor* said the organization is looking for land on which to resettle the family.

— Kritsada Mueanhawong

## Aussie lawyer calls into question DNA evidence

AN AUSTRALIAN lawyer drafted a letter on June 25 to Thailand's Ministry of Public Health, questioning the procedures and practices of its laboratory quality standards.

Mr Ian Yarwood's letter calls into question the death-penalty verdict handed down to two Burmese men, convicted for the rape and murder of Hannah Witheridge and the murder of David Miller in September of 2014.

Zaw Lin, 22, and Wai Phyo, 22, were given the death penalty on Christmas Eve of 2015, for the Koh Tao killings, which took place on an island to the north west of Samui. The two are currently awaiting execution in Thailand's Bangkwang prison, and deny any charges held against them.

Mr Yarwood penned an open letter of complaint to Suthon Vongsheree, the Director of The Bureau of Laboratory Quality Standards, under the Department of



Ian Yarwood has called into question the forensic handling of the evidence. Photo: Gazette file

Medical Sciences, Ministry of Public Health.

The letter highlights inconsistencies that Mr Yarwood said surround the DNA testing that the chief judge reportedly based his guilty verdict on. Mr Yarwood also asked for an investigation into the handling of the DNA.

"No original mixed semen samples were ever made available to the defence for

independent examination," Mr Yarwood's complaint alleges.

"The police and prosecutor only ever made 'amplified' DNA evidence available to the defence but without the original samples one could not be sure of the original source. Only 5 microlitres of the original mixed semen would have been necessary for the test so there was no valid reason that none was made available to the defence lawyers.

"No chain of custody of the forensic samples was ever proved by the prosecution, which meant the prospect of contamination, substitution, change of condition and misidentification could not be excluded."

Mr Yarwood's complaint not only affects the defendants in the Samui case, but also calls into question the operations of the Accredited Laboratory and its ability to conduct DNA analysis and interpret DNA profiles in criminal trials.

— Gazette staff

## Stolen vehicles may be used in attacks

NATIONAL security agencies in the Deep South have been put on alert for four pickup trucks and five Honda Wave motorcycles that were stolen and might be used as vehicle bombs in the restive region during the last 10 days of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan.

A source at a national security agency revealed on June 28 that security measures were being increased, following an intelligence alert that vehicle bombs might target economic zones or Thai Buddhist communities in Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat and Songkhla between June 27 and July 6.

"The pick-up truck that tops the watch list is an Isuzu D-max silver-bronze-colored truck, which was stolen from Narathiwat's Reu So district after the owner was shot dead on June 12, 2013.

"Another truck on the list is a grey Mitsubishi with Pattani plates, which was stolen from Narathiwat's Muang district on January 25, 2010.

"We are also looking out for a white Toyota Vigo truck with Bangkok plates that was carjacked on April 22, 2012 and another grey Toyota Vigo truck with Bangkok plates, after its owner Suchat Suwanchaley was killed on June 21, 2012," the source said.

Meanwhile, the source said that police had identified from CCTV footage the suspect responsible for the car bomb at Narathiwat's Sungai Kolok district on June 26.

The suspect was identified as alleged insurgent operative Sukiman Kubaru, who is believed to have fled to a neighboring country.

— The Nation

## Bombings hit restive south

A VOLUNTEER ranger has become the latest victim in the ongoing unrest in Thailand's deep south.

An explosion injured Thanakorn Suandaeng on June 27, who was on a team providing security to teachers near the Ban Bang Moo School in Pattani's Panare district.

Mr Thanakorn suffered a fractured skull and a broken left arm, among other injuries. He has since been transferred to a better-equipped hospital in nearby Yala province for surgery and treatment.

Violence has continued unabated in the country's southern-most region for more than a decade, with bloody attacks taking place on almost a daily basis, including during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Pattani police chief Pol Maj-General Tanongsak Wangsupa said bombings and other attacks seemed to have intensified since the beginning of Ramadan on June 6.

Gen Tanongsak has said security forces will step up



A bomb detonated at an ATM in Pattani. A series of bombings hit the southern province over the June 26 weekend. Photo: The Nation

enforcement, after several incidents took place in Pattani over the weekend; On June 26, a bomb exploded at an ATM in Pattani's Yarang district around seven o'clock in the evening. Twenty minutes later, a second bomb detonated at the same spot. Officers cordoned off the area but initially halted investigations over concerns of additional hidden bombs.

Another bomb exploded about three kilometres away at 8pm on the same day, causing minor injuries to an on-duty policeman. An arsonist also burnt two vehicles belonging to a construction firm the same night in the province.

Another dud bomb was found in front of a bank in Yarang on the morning of June 27.

— The Nation

## Army sends condolences as disciplined corporal dies

THE ROYAL Thai Army apologized to the family of Corporal Panya Ngern-rian, who died from heat stroke after he was ordered to run around Surasri Camp in Kanchanaburi's Muang District as a disciplinary action in mid June.

The National Human Rights Commission suggested Cpl Panya's family could file a complaint with the agency so it could probe the incident and be allowed by the military to access facts so as to ensure justice for all sides. Army spokesman Colonel Winthai Suvaree said on June 24 that Panya was ordered to do five laps and it was expected that a young man like him could cope with it.

However, Cpl Panya suffered a heat stroke on the third lap, passed out and was taken to hospital, Col Winthai said, adding that Panya was not physically assaulted and nothing was done to him against Army regulations. He said the 9th Infantry Division would set up a committee to probe the incident.



## Gold mine to shut down soon

CHATREE gold mine employees in Phichit received dismissal letters on June 22, after the cabinet-ordered shutdown of the mine at end of the year, sparking concerns among the



employees. The mine operator, Akara Resources, pledged to compensate its employees.

## Bomb goes off near school in Narathiwat

TWO people were injured when a bomb in a pick-up truck exploded near a security base and school in Sungai Kolok in

Narathiwat Province on June 26.

Four police officers on patrol spotted a man parking the pick-up truck and then jumping on the back of a waiting motorcycle.

The police approached the two men to question them, but they sped off. Police gave chase but failed to catch up the suspects. The bomb went off a few minutes later. Police returned to the scene to find the pick-up truck ablaze. Bomb fragments and debris were scattered all over. Two locals suffered minor injuries and were taken to the hospital.

## Bangkok's Governor in deep waters

BANGKOK governor Sukhumbhand Paribatra blamed the heaviest rain in 25 years for flooding many parts of the capital on June 24. The prime minister subsequently urged reform of all flood prevention systems to solve the problem.

Photos and updates of the flooding went viral on social media, which prompted Gov Sukhumbhand to ask the media not to say Bangkok was facing floods but to instead call it "water waiting to be drained."

**Mom Tri's Kitchen**  
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## Phuket Gazette

# Correcting the gender balance

THE Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has a rich and diverse history when it comes to churning out tourism promotion campaigns, so it comes as somewhat of a surprise that the agency's recent designation of August as its 'month for women travellers' has managed to raise a few eyebrows.

The TAT clearly recognizes that the gender ratio of visitors has been skewed over the decades, with male tourists consistently outnumbering their female counterparts. The last official TAT reference to the imbalance we could find put the ratio at about 60:40 – probably a conservative estimate.

One need not possess the insight of Einstein to come up with a plausible explanation for why such an imbalance has persisted for so long – it could be our huge, tourist-oriented sex industry, which so far has catered predominantly to male visitors.

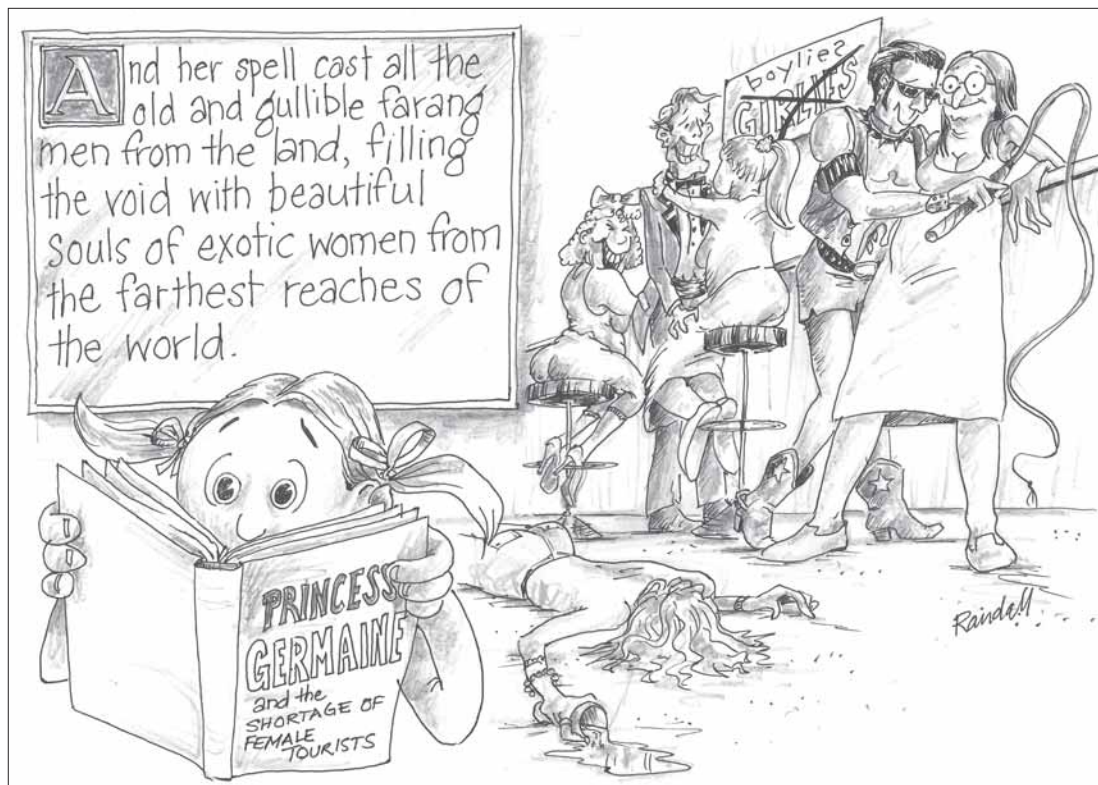
Given our national obsession with keeping up appearances and never losing face, it comes as little surprise that our country's reputation as a sex tourism destination is never directly addressed by the TAT. Rather, government officials simply make subtle references to our 'vibrant nightlife scene' when forced to reference this ever-present elephant in the room.

Interestingly, the upcoming promo was initially branded as 'Ladies' Month' when first pitched by the TAT early this year. An official TAT news release published in April hints at enticing underlying attractions: 'Of course, the nightlife has long had a reputation for being mainly aimed at male tourists. But this is all changing, and many pubs and clubs are targeting women travellers by arranging ladies' nights, often mid-week, when it's possible to enjoy cut-price drinks and food.'

When fully fleshed out, however, 'Ladies' Month' was downgraded to the less-than-titillating 'month for women travellers' – which makes us suspect there may be too many politically correct chefs at work in the TAT propaganda kitchen.

Why all this backtracking and beating around the bush? We think the original 'Ladies' Month' moniker was not only more natural, but a good attempt to keep Thai tourism up with the times.

Under whatever name, this watered-down promotion is unlikely to have much of an impact here in Phuket, since it comes during one of the slowest – and rainiest – months of the year.



## Serious negligence by bus driver

Re: Newly-arrived tourists injured in Patong bus crash, Jun 25

The driver lost control due to the 'air pressure in the tyres'.

He knew, then, that the pressure in his tyres was wrong before he started to drive. So why did he not correct it before he drove? This is serious negligence.

w.p

Gazette forum

### Driver should be fined and jailed

Re: Fatal crash victim's family demands B2.1mn in damages, Jun 24

So she's only demanding the money that the insurance companies should be paying out anyway? That's ridiculous. She should get that money anyway, and the scum-bag driver should go to jail.

CaptainJack  
Gazette forum

### Every solution may not be practical

Re: Super algae solution for bleached Phi Phi coral, Jun 24

"We are going to use super algae in a world-first attempt to restore the bleached coral."

I wonder what could go wrong here.

I am sure the finest scientific minds in Thailand have worked this out in the lab and taken every possible side effect under consideration.

There is undoubtedly a

## Letters to the Editor

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

lengthy peer reviewed paper on the lab trial results as well.

Scudman  
Gazette forum

### Badly maintained buses, poor drivers

Re: Chinese passenger injured in tour bus crash on Patong Hill, Jun 27

Nothing new here. We see more buses and mini-buses crash in Phuket than we see sunrises. What was the excuse this time? Wet road, bad brakes, blind corner, pink flying elephants? The real reason is badly maintained buses and poor drivers.

Simon Lomas  
Gazette forum

### Other reasons to blame for tourism decline

Re: Thailand tourism faces uncertainty over Brexit fallout, Jun 24

So many reasons that there is a decline in tourists visiting Thailand, but no one in Thailand seems to be able to see these reasons.

Thailand needs to sort out its domestic problems and only then they will be able to draw

tourists again.

Blaming the world economy for the decline in tourism to Thailand is a blindfold that needs to be removed to face the reality.

All the small talk about infrastructure and petty cash robberies has got nothing to do with the problems that tourists really face when they visit Thailand.

Chris Joubert  
Facebook

### Wouldn't hurt to lower taxi fares

Re: PLTO, taxi reps in stalemate over cutting fares, Jun 25

"The public wants to bring the minimum fare down, but drivers feel that short distances are not worth the fare and that not many tourists hail rides for such short distances."

So, if not many tourists hail rides for such short distances, it wouldn't hurt you to lower the minimum fare then.

Worst case, you will get more customers for short rides since it's now cheaper.

zib  
Gazette forum

### Surely, a Thai ID card is not enough

Re: Opinion: The never-ending battle to protect Thai tourism, Jun 26

Is a Thai ID card enough for most foreigners to pass themselves off as Thai nationals?

Aaron  
Gazette forum

The Phuket Gazette is Published  
in association with The Nation Multimedia Group PCL

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Publisher: The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd

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Volume 23 Issue 27

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# Protecting our people

## FIRST PERSON

FIRSTLY, let's talk about some of the positive aspects of Chinese tourism in Thailand. The number of Chinese tourists in Phuket has increased rapidly in recent years, ranking China as the number one tourist market for Phuket, and Thailand as a whole. Last year, there were about 1.5 million Chinese visitors to Phuket alone.

Chinese tourists have made great contributions to the development of Thailand and Phuket's tourism industry. They help to boost the economy, generating both local and foreign investment in the region. This growth also helps to promote friendly international relations.

So far, the Chinese government has attached great importance to the legal interests of Chinese nationals overseas, which is why we have established a consular office in Phuket, one of the most popular tourist destinations in the country.

The Chinese Phuket Consular Office is the only career consular organization in Phuket. The consular districts cover Phuket, Phang Nga and Krabi. We really appreciate the strong cooperation we have received from the local government, police and other relevant officials in Phuket, ever since our office was established here.

The Chinese Consular Office in Phuket has tried its best to provide consular protection and assistance to Chinese nationals if they run into problems during their visit.

However, although we



**Wang Huijuan** is the Chinese vice consul general and head of the Chinese Consular Office in Phuket. Originally from Beijing, she has been working in this position since 2014. She graduated with a Bachelor's degree in English Literature from Nankai University in China.

Here, she talks about her suggestions to solve the problem of unexpected incidents and accidents involving Chinese tourists on the island, and how Chinese-speaking rescue workers and other tourism officials might help to reduce such incidents.

make our best efforts to keep things running smoothly, unexpected incidents occur from time to time. We have seen several drownings, as well as road and marine accidents this year, the most recent being the boat crash which caused two deaths and several injuries.

We are not blaming anyone for this, as these incidents are often unexpected. However, we are doing our best to find a solution for these kinds of incidents, and are working to prevent such incidents from happening again.

We noticed that Prime Minister Gen Prayuth Chan-o-cha and the Minister of Tourism and Sports (MOTS) have, on many occasions, emphasized protective measures to ensure the safety of tourists. Additionally, the local government has also done a lot to ensure the safety of Chinese tourists in Phuket.

Chinese Embassy and Consulate Generals in Thailand also pay close attention to the personal safety and legal interests of Chinese tourists.

We really appreciate what the local government has done for us so far. However, we hope that practical and effective measures can be taken in some additional areas to further enhance the security and safety of our tourists.

First of all, we hope that the local government will encourage the professional training of Chinese-speaking tour guides and rescue workers. I think they can really enhance the services provided by existing rescue workers, lifeguards, police officers and other relevant officials.

If they can speak Chinese, communication will be much smoother and misunderstandings can be avoided. I think misunderstanding and miscommunication are two of the major reasons for accidents.

In order to improve the overall tourism environment in Phuket and in Thailand, the Chinese Consulate General would like to work together with the local government to promote friendly relations between the two countries.



Walking about Old Town can be quite relaxing, despite the constant buzzing of crowded telephone wires. Photo: Meagan Benetti

## Walk about Old Town

AS A first time traveller to Thailand, I've spent some time aimlessly wandering around Old Phuket Town, which, despite the constant buzzing of crowded telephone wires and motorbikes, can actually be quite peaceful.

This town isn't really intended for the casual stroller. Locals will hop on a motorbike just to cross the street and if they have to walk, it's at a brisk and purposeful pace.

Most of the pedestrians I've seen are the few, but easy-to-spot, tourists with backpacks and cameras in tote, usually looking up from a phone while trying to find their destination.

There is an unmistakable busy-ness here. At first, it feels a bit frenetic, but if you slow down enough to see what is going on around you there is a rhythm to it all. The more I walked around, the more I saw the beauty of Old Phuket Town.

The Sino-Portuguese architecture is enough to stop you and get your attention. The buildings need a little love, but there is something charming about them, as they seem stuck in time.

## Island View

By Meagan Benetti

Do you have an opinion to voice?  
Email [Editor@PhuketGazette.net](mailto:Editor@PhuketGazette.net)

Without notice you can turn a corner and see a painted creature on the side of a building – my favorite being a smiling tiger on a three-storey wall with bright colors and Aztec shapes.

Cafes are sprinkled around town, each with a unique feel – from a quaint 1950's living room with Motown music, to an ultra-modern space with white walls and minimalist decor.

Art galleries are nestled here and there with unassuming store fronts. The artists are laid-back and friendly, usually lounging around with their artwork. Others are quietly practicing their craft with a meditative regularity, but all are more than happy to share their work with you.

It's easy to get caught up in demands of daily life or the itineraries of travel. But sometimes it's worth taking a moment or two to take in all that this town has to offer.

## Words from the Wise

**“Success is a lousy teacher. It seduces smart people into thinking they can't lose.”**

– *Bill Gates*

**“The future is something which everyone reaches at the rate of 60 minutes an hour, whatever he does, whoever he is.”**

– *C. S. Lewis*

## Issues & Answers

### When will the underpass be ready?

I LIVE near the Samkong area and frequently pass through the Samkong Underpass.

However, the road surface there is very rough, making it difficult to drive there.

When will the road be paved again and suitable for use?

*Mardi Samkong*

**Mr Chalernpol Wongkiattikun, Samkong Underpass project engineer from the**

**Department of Highways, replies:**

Thank you for your query. We will pave the underpass

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

Submit your issue at:

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

road again after the construction work is completely finished.

We are avoiding paving the road now because we are concerned that the road above cannot handle too many vehicles.

Because of that, we have to let traffic go through the underpass for the time being.

Sorry for any inconvenience. We are trying to speed up the construction process and complete the work as soon as possible.

# Brexit may bring unrest in members



Finance

By Don Freeman

THE RESULTS of the Brexit vote have shocked markets almost as much as it has shocked the global and Brussels elites, with plenty of talk of impending doom and gloom for the UK and the markets. For example, the Morgan Stanley strategy team was quick to proclaim they expect European stocks to fall 15 to 20 per cent from their close on June 23, and that the British pound could collapse as well.

But before you start to panic, take a step back and ask yourself how many of the so-called “experts” reacted to:

-The Fukushima nuclear power plant meltdown and the subsequent meltdown of the Nikkei Index?

-The repeated and dragged out Greek debt crises and bailouts that has created continued uncertainty for the EU and European markets?

-The various bird flu or swine flu epidemics that have repeatedly roiled Asian markets?

-The 9/11 terror attack, which actually shut down Wall Street?

Each and every time there were predictions of doom for the markets – only to see them remain intact or eventually recover. And, while the US economy is still feeling the lingering effects of the collapse of



The EU referendum resulted in 51.9 per cent of British voters opting to leave the EU. Image: Petr Kratochvil

the housing bubble, US stock markets have recovered their losses and moved higher since the 2008-2009 financial crisis.

As for the Brexit, it won't happen overnight. It will take years for the UK to untangle itself from the bureaucrats and politicians in Brussels. Until the UK does, it will still have to abide by EU laws, regulations, trade agreements and treaties, which means nothing has changed.

The UK also represents only around six per cent of the world's GDP. So even if many of the doom and gloom claims made by the ‘remainers’ come true, it's not going to have anywhere near as big an impact on the global economy or markets

as the US housing bubble and subsequent collapse did.

More telling was the reaction of London versus European indexes. The FTSE 100 (INDEXFTSE: UKX) dropped immediately from its June 23 close at 6,334, to as low as 5,806 just after markets opened the next day, before bouncing back up to 6,138.69 – down 3.15 per cent. Keep in mind that back in January, the FTSE 100 bottomed with other markets at the 5,536 level.

On the other hand, Germany's DAX (INDEXDB:DAX) sank from a June 23 close at 10,257, to open Friday morning at around 9,264 and then closed at 9,557 – down 6.82 per

cent. France's CAC 40 (INDEXEURO:PX1) sank from a June 23 close at 4,461, to as low as 4,013 on Friday morning, and closed only modestly higher at 4,106 – down 8.04 per cent. In other words, despite what experts are saying, it seems investors think Brexit is going to be much worse or more painful for the EU than it will be for the UK.

In the short term (which may end up only being last week), the markets are going to get hit hard. However, I don't see Brexit triggering some sort of global recession, unless January through February lows are broken, plus the US Fed, ECB and other Central Banks will

liquefy the markets to try to quickly restore confidence. I personally own US stocks and funds (which will probably benefit from a flight to safety), but I have no direct exposure to Europe, the UK, or emerging market stocks or markets.

As for the EU, it's in – and faces – a much bigger mess than the UK does with Brexit. Without tough love and discipline, two things the bureaucrats and politicians of Brussels have been (thus far) unwilling to practice, the EU may find itself slowly coming unglued by rising and increasingly angry populist movements within its remaining members.

If Greece continues to fester and the migrant crisis goes on unabated, the UK leaving will look like the first passengers who boarded the Titanic's lifeboats. While the EU ship may not yet be sinking, its clearly rudderless and listing hard under its own weight.

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

## Chinese start-ups wanted

THAILAND is inviting Chinese start-up companies to invest in the Kingdom in high-tech industries, such as information and communications technology, automobiles, aviation and electronics.

“The country needs more high-end industries, such as research and development. Chinese companies can provide these,” Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak said on

June 27, as he prepared to take representatives of the private sector to China to seek more investment and talk with start-ups about setting up in Thailand.

Last year, the government approved 81 investment projects from China worth 28 billion baht. From January to April this year, 27 projects valued at 5.9bn baht received approval.

– *The Nation*

## Tesco Lotus leaps for online shopping growth year-on-year

THE UK-based hypermarket chain Tesco aims to double its online shopping business in Thailand every year for the next three to five years.

Wanna Swuddigul, digital and online business director for Tesco Lotus, said on June 27 that the growth was in line with the greater demand of consumers for instant access to information, products and services they can buy at the tip of a finger.

“The majority of our online customers are in Bangkok and key cities. From our data collected by Dunhumby, 77 per cent of our online customers are female,” she said.

“The largest age group is 25-44 years old. Most online customers are mid- to up-mar-

ket customers,” she added.

“As demand tends to come from customers living in urban areas, Tesco Lotus has recently introduced a new delivery service at lockers located at 48 condominiums [in Bangkok] along the BTS and MRT lines, in prime residential areas, such as Sukhumvit, Sathorn, Ratchada, Phayathai and Phaholyothin in Bangkok,” she said.

“Tesco Lotus pioneered the digital platform in 2012, the first retailer in Thailand to have done so”.

According to data from ‘We Are Social’ last year, there are 38 million internet users in Thailand, which equates to a 56 per cent penetration rate. About 45 per cent use the internet on

mobile devices, for year-on-year growth of 30 per cent.

“However, we aim at least to double the growth of our online sales and order numbers every year,” Ms Wanna said. “The online shopping business at Tesco in the UK and other European markets is very mature, compared to Thailand.”

The average online basket size for shoppers is 3.5 times as large as at the store.

“The best-selling product categories are cold beverages, household chemicals and cooking needs, such as seasonings. This clearly reflects the hypermarket's core customers, who are women as well as mothers and homemakers,” she said.

– *The Nation*

# Ready, steady, let's get Footloos

By Sahar Aftab Paliwala

THE multi-billion-baht Phuket tourism industry caters to adventurers and wellness seekers from across the globe, with a seemingly endless stream of tour companies offering a multitude of services. Now imagine if you could get all these services in a few clicks on a single platform. That, in short, is the idea behind Footloos, an online marketplace dedicated to an adventurous lifestyle, active travel, and wellness luxury on popular tropical island destinations in Asia.

Co-founders Neal Ayer and Sylvia Adrenalin came up with the concept late last year. Mr Ayer has a background in banking in Switzerland and Ms Adrenalin is a wellness consultant and green activist hailing from Singapore.

Founded in January and launched in June after 6 months in development, Footloos marketplace is in the midst of establishing partnerships with over 500 businesses in seven locations across Thailand: Phuket, Koh Samui, Koh Phangan, Koh Tao, Koh Phi Phi, Koh Lanta and Koh Chang. And until Footloos launches late July for travelers to make bookings, they welcome all interested businesses to join the Footloos movement.



Footloos is an online marketplace, much like Airbnb, dedicated to active and wellness tourism on popular tropical island destinations in Asia. Photo: Footloos

Businesses (or hosts) can list their services for free, under multiple categories. Hosts are charged 10-19 per cent commission for every booking made through the website (commission depends on the price of the listed service), in return for which Footloos offers them marketing exposure, and handles their entire transactional flow, including bookings, payments, cancellations and refunds.

The technology also allows

hosts to choose among different calendar types to manage live availability, view sales and analytic reports, track and accept payments directly to their chosen bank account, interact with travellers prior to service provision, and share listings on multiple media platforms. In addition, hosts will receive an SMS notification whenever a booking is made. Interaction between hosts and travelers is encouraged through the Footloos secured messaging

system.

Travellers can read reviews of different businesses, compare prices and services, and make bookings and online payments instantly.

The Footloos marketplace features 10 broad themes over 140 categories, including outdoor adventure guides, diving courses, sail charters, boat excursions, adrenaline sports, fitness, yoga, custom detox, anti-stress programs, culinary services, healing therapies, and beauty and

spa treatments, to name a few.

“We will be breaking old habits and revolutionizing old experience by introducing paperless technology that will improve social standards of island communities as well as the environment, says Mr Ayer.

The business was listed in Singapore due to technological limitations in Thailand, the founders say.

The founders are also passionate about the environment and creating a positive impact. They have committed to donate a percentage from each successful booking via its platform towards its own initiative known as the ‘Island Fund’ project to help local charities, social causes and partake in environmental preservation efforts.

“Wellness tourism to island destinations is a trending global movement and as healthy and active islanders ourselves, we witness and understand the fragility of island communities, losing its culture and environment due to rapid commercialization. It is time to give back,” says Ms Adrenalin.

They also encourage businesses that list with them to actively participate in green efforts, such as recycling and efficient waste management.

For more information, visit [www.footloos.com](http://www.footloos.com) or email [hello@footloos.com](mailto:hello@footloos.com).

## World trading system facing winds of change

BREXIT, the Arab Springs, the Orlando shooting and the migration crisis may seem disconnected but in Supachai Panitchpakdi's grim interpretation they mark the end of the long-existing global economic landscape and the birth of a new, closed trade regime.



Mr Supachai at the Thai Chamber of Commerce. Photo: The Nation

The former director-general of the World Trade Organization and former secretary-general of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development made these remarks in a speech to the University of Thai Chamber of Commerce's executive program last week.

He said that all these crises stemmed from inequality, all chaos was interconnected and Asia, including Thailand, could not be spared.

“Global trade would no longer be influenced by economic policies, but political

policies, and the benefits will depend on whose side you are on,” said Mr Supachai.

He said that a scenario was imminent where no particular country would have absolute control over the global economy.

“The world lacks an economic steering. We can't rely on the conventional, useless leaders. What the world needs is common governance to address structural problems [that underline global conflicts]. These could be tackled by free trade and equality,” he said.

– The Nation



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Jungceylon Shopping Center, Patong, Phuket

# Radio Thailand Phang Nga gets new director

Former Deputy Chief of the Phuket Provincial Public Relations Department, Sophon Kiemkarn, was officially appointed the new director of Radio Thailand Phang Nga on June 25, at a celebration party held at the Royal Phuket City Hotel.



Vice-Governor Chokdee Amornwat (left) presents Sophon Kiamkarn with a Buddha image to congratulate him on his appointment as director of Radio Thailand Phang Nga.

# TAT launches Grand Sale 2016

Stores at the Jungceylon shopping center in Patong teamed up with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and Visa to launch the Amazing Thailand Grand Sale 2016 on June 23. About 300 participating stores are offering discounts for shoppers using Visa credit cards.



The TAT's Tourism Investment Department Executive Director Wiboon Nimitrwanich (center) and Phuket Square Co Ltd's Chief Marketing Officer Tassanee Teprasertvangsa.



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**Events in Paradise**

# Little inventors

Youngsters from around the island gathered at Phuket International Hospital recently to have fun making elephant caps. The Small Inventors day was held to help kids develop their imagination. The hospital will be staging another free event for local kids on July 9.



A young participant shows off an elephant cap, which he made himself.

# Tai Ping opens in Phuket

Thailand Carpet Manufacturing PLC hosted the grand opening of their new branch at Koh Keaw on June 25. The company was established in 1967 under the brand name 'Tai Ping' and is now recognized as one of the leading carpet designers and manufacturers in the world.



(from L-R) Dr Charlie Jungwichtkul, Managing Director of Thailand Carpet Manufacturing Plc (Tai Ping); Yaowalak Hongsyok of the Ministry of Interior's Lady Association Phuket Province; Pakpoom Intharasuwan, Phuket's Provincial Chief Administrative Officer; Sumate Suwanvongkij, Managing Director of Royal Thai International Co Ltd (Tai Ping International); Dr Siripatra Kusuwan Na-Ranong, Pearl Hotel Phuket Deputy Managing Director; and Dr Krisada Tansakul, President of the Southern Chapter of the Thai Hotels Association.

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# Hair-raising Hollow Mountain

HOLLOW Mountain Extreme Adventure Park in Krabi has a perfect score on Trip Advisor, with 54 five-star ratings out of 54 ratings.

That's no feat to scoff at—particularly not in the days where everyone wants free wireless internet and zero mosquitoes wherever they go—and it's especially impressive considering they've only been open one year.

Run by two middle-aged English expats, Hollow Mountain's ropes and swings courses have been in the works for the past five years. Simon Ramsden and Roger Boulton have been leading teams of rope, climbing, mountaineering and safety experts along the half-hour trek through the jungle to the base of the limestone monolith for the past four years.

It's a labor of love, and it's had its share of setbacks.

Hiking along the trail, covered in sweat and mosquito bites, Simon occasionally points out areas where they've had difficulty getting their zip lines set up.

"We had a top-rated ropes guy anchor that cable, and he left it half-tightened one day after work" Simon told me during our trek, "So the next day, when we're tightening the other cables, that one breaks free and



The author takes a plunge off of the 'Decapitation' zip line, before the Emperor's Swing. Photo: Hugi Nori

slams into the tree trunk over there [across the jungle], where I had just been standing."

Hauling hundreds of pounds of inch-thick gauged wire up a mountain has been the easiest part of setting up the adventure park.

"We spent all day hauling a generator up here, turned up the next day and it was gone. Somebody had stolen it,"

Simon tells me as we climb into the cavernous mountain, where the new generator is chained to the cliffside.

Hollow Mountain is aptly named. The entire limestone prominence has been carved out by the elements, leaving an inter-weaving and self-butressed complex of arches. It's perfect for Ramsden's and Boulton's high-flying acrobatic

shenanigans.

There's the 'Decapitation' zip line, the 'Terminator' zip line and the coup de grace, the 'Emperor Swing.'

Despite the intimidating names, jaw-dropping surroundings, huge distances and forces of physics at work, I felt incredibly safe from the moment we set out from the rubber plantation at the base of

the mountain.

These two know what they're doing. They know the risks, and they've taken every precaution to ensure your mind is safely blown. That makes the experience that much more enjoyable, or unnerving.

Standing on the ledge, hanging off of the topmost arch of the mountain, I was both screaming internally and yet confident.

The Emperor Swing is over 100 meters long (and you can add slack to the twin ropes supporting you), and is only reached by scaling the mountain's arches with safety gear and taking the 60-plus meter Decapitation zip line through an archway.

None of that prepared me for the initial freefall of stepping off the ledge, or the rush of 'Oh thank [insert choice of divine being here]' feeling of the rope gently catching and swinging you out over Krabi's jungled canopy.

Simply put, the experience is the best I've had in Thailand. It's safe, yet exhilarating. And while 3,000 baht is a high price for any experience, it's a pittance for the years of hard work and knowledgeable toil of the Hollow Mountain crew, let alone the adrenaline rush I felt for weeks afterward.

— Wes Martin

## Cycling fest brings in crowds

THE 'Kathu Cycling Fest 2016' was a two-day cycling festival organized by the Kathu Municipality Office.

Kathu Mayor Chaianan Sutthikul presided over the event. The positive response from last year's cycling festival encouraged the municipality to organize another one, he said.

"Cycling not only promotes exercise, but also encourages people to stay away from drugs and keep themselves healthy," said Mr Chaianan.

About 700 cyclists participated in the event. The first day was 'ladies' day' in which Anoma Wongyai, director of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Phuket Office, also took part.

Bikers started off at about 4pm, escorted by the police as well as several medical personnel to ensure that emergency assistance was at



About 700 cyclists participated in the two-day event organized by the Kathu Municipality Office. Photo: Zohaib Sikander

hand if needed.

About 45 minutes and 19 kilometers later, the cyclists returned to the venue and were greeted by an enthusiastic crowd.

"I am excited to be part of this event, as it gives me a chance to hang out with my friends and also meet new people along the way," said Sophon Pol Kaew In, one of the participants in the

cycling festival.

There were also more than 30 stalls selling food and drinks, as well as a concert to entertain the crowd.

"We also invited Thai stars Jiranan Manojam and Thanakorn to enjoy Kathu's unique culture, and promote local tourism," said Mr Chaianan.

— Sukawin Tanthavanich



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# Exposing the cruelty behind high fashion

AN AWARENESS campaign by Thailand-based advertising agency Ogilvy & Mather won five awards at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity held from June 18-25. The video shows 'Leatherworks', a typical pop-up shop of luxury goods located inside a large shopping center in Bangkok.

Unsuspecting shoppers are filmed browsing through rows of snake-skin shoes and crocodile-skin handbags, but once they look inside, they see beating 'hearts', stretchy 'sinew' and pools of 'blood' that coat their hands and feet.

The campaign is aimed at shining a spotlight on the cruelty of the exotic-skins industry.

"Every year, hundreds of thousands of reptiles are crudely bludgeoned and skinned alive, all for the sake of so-called 'luxury' shoes, belts and bags," says Jason Baker, PETA's vice president of international campaigns.

"PETA Asia's gruesome pop-up shop reminds shoppers that the only way to keep blood and guts out of our closets is to choose vegan clothing, shoes and accessories."

Thailand has the world's largest crocodile farming industry and is the prime destination for international fashion brands looking for skins, says PETA.

According to the latest statistics distributed by PETA Asia,



Unsuspecting shoppers were filmed browsing through rows of snake-skin shoes and crocodile-skin handbags. Photo: PETA Asia

about 700,000 crocodiles are raised in crowded tanks or pools of fetid, stinking water on 22 large-scale and 929 small farms across the country. A recent PETA exposé reveals workers sawing open reptiles' necks while the animals are still alive.

Snakes killed for their skins are commonly nailed to trees, and their bodies are cut open from one end to the other as they are skinned alive, PETA reports.

Their mutilated bodies are then discarded, but because of these animals' slow metabolism, it can take hours for them to die. Lizards are often decapi-

tated, and others writhe in agony as the skin is ripped from their bodies.

"Leatherworks allows people to experience and see with their own eyes that every leather product caused a sensitive animal to endure a miserable life and suffer a terrifying death," says Puripong Limwanatipong, associate creative director of Ogilvy & Mather Advertising Thailand.

"By surprising shoppers with the cruelty behind the exotic-skins industry, we can wake them up and spark change that will save animals' lives."

- *Phuket Gazette*

# Students shine at southern robot building olympiad



Students showing off their robots at the regional competition held at Phuket Rajabhat University last month. Photo: Nattamon Meesin

THE World Robot Olympiad 2016 (WRO) competition was held at Phuket Rajabhat University (PKRU) on June 23-24. The competition was organized by Gammaco (Thailand) Co Ltd, in conjunction with PKRU.

WRO is an annual robot building competition that aims to bring together young people from all over the world to develop their creativity, design and problem solving skills through challenging and educational robot competitions and activities.

Competitions in the north-east will be held on July 5-6, central region on July 14-15 and northern region on August 15-16.

Winners from the regional competition will participate at the national level competitions, to be held in Khon Kaen on September 16-18. The winners

of the national level competition will participate in the international olympiad in New Delhi from November 25-27.

Winners from the under-12, under-15 and under-19 categories were announced at the end of the competition. They will now participate in the national competition in September.

Dr Siriwan Chatmaneeerungcharoen, head of the general science department at Phuket Rajabhat University, expressed her strong support for the event.

"Two years ago, our university was selected to represent Thailand at a competition in Russia, and we ranked 6th among more than 40 participating countries," Dr Siriwan said. "We hope this year will bring further success for Thailand."

For further details, visit [www.gammaco.com/wro](http://www.gammaco.com/wro).

- *Kongleaphy Keam*

# Muslims to celebrate Eid at end of Ramadan

MUSLIMS in Phuket are celebrating 'Eid-al Fitr' this week, one of the most important days for practicing Muslims, as it marks the end of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan.

The exact date depends on the sighting of the moon, which is the traditional requisite for proclaiming the arrival of a new month in the Islamic calendar.

Special Eid morning prayers will be organized at all the major mosques in Phuket.

On the morning of Eid-al Fitr, Muslims visit the mosque for prayers. After praying, it is traditional to make amends with everyone around you, to



Special eid prayers are organized all over Phuket. Photo: Gazette file

apologize for wrongdoings and to forgive each other. After amends are made, everyone enjoys a big meal.

The rest of the day is spent visiting nearby relatives and enjoying meals together.

- *Sahar Aftab Paliwala*

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# To splurge or not to splurge

## Diving

By Isaac Stone Simonelli

LIKE most people new to freediving, as well as many experienced divers, I have a desire to go deeper to set new personal bests. Also, like many divers, my head is so full of inaccurate and misleading information that a faulty premise on how to do this is floating in my mind.

“I need to buy stiff, carbon fiber fins to help me hit new depths.”

In cycling, gear goggles – much like beer goggles – are a common phenomenon. Those who spend any time in the saddle will inevitably ride past an overweight lawyer pushing an extraordinary bike up a hill. The man has spent thousands of extra dollars on the perfect wheel set, carbon fiber seat stem, carbon fiber handlebars – in fact the entire bike might be entirely made out of carbon fiber – in order to shave a few grams off the bike. The reality of the situation is that he should have focused more on slicing a few kilograms off his waistline instead.

The same idea applies to freediving. Sitting down with Sarah Whitcher and Richard



Each fin affects your form in the water, so it's good to consistently wear the same pair. Photo: Richard Wonka

Wonka from Phuket-based We Freedive, we start pulling apart the multiple layers of poor assumptions made in my premise.

“First, new fins aren’t going to make you dive deeper. If you have the money, go for it, but if you really want to improve, that money is better spent on education,” says Mr Wonka.

Outside of those on the brink of setting a national or world record, fins are not going to be the limiting factor in performance. And even then, the fins are probably not what’s holding an athlete back. Nonetheless, each fin affects your form in the

water, so it’s good to consistently wear the same pair.

Okay, so I don’t need new fins, but I want them.

Do I need to spend the big bucks for carbon fiber fins, or can I go with blades made of one of the other popular materials, such as plastic, plastic composite or fiber glass?

“Let’s get back to that,” says Ms Whitcher. I’m apparently kicking in the wrong direction again.

Despite fin blades being what most of us on the peripheral of the sport hear about when people are talking about fins, the

key is actually the foot pocket.

“You want to make sure the foot pocket is a good fit,” says Ms Whitcher. “Many models allow you to change out the blade, so getting a good, comfortable fit is very important. You can worry about the blades later.”

For recreational freedivers comfort becomes essential, as you could very likely spend hours fining at the surface while taking turns being the safety diver with your buddy.

Once you’ve found a brand and model with pockets that hit the spot, we can get back to the blades. Carbon fiber blades are often touted as being more responsive than plastic fins, which are known to be more durable. The bottom line is that it depends on the model, explains Mr Wonka.

Instead of getting dragged into the material sciences behind the products for our first fins, let’s focus on stiffness.

“Stiff fins aren’t necessarily higher-performance fins,” explains Ms Whitcher. “A stiffer fin converts more of the energy in a kick into power. However, that’s not always what’s best for the diver’s performance.”

A big guy, let’s say Samoan rugby player Henry Tuilagi, with thighs the size of tree trunks, will have no problem

with stiff fins. However, most of us just getting started can struggle to maintain correct form with stiff fins, as the pressure forces our ankles and knees to buckle. So opting for soft or medium fins will provide a more efficient diving experience – and freediving is all about efficiency. Even once you’re stronger, soft fins might continue to be the right fit for you as a diver, so it’s best to leave macho egos at the door.

“A blade stiffness that is chosen not for the size of the ego, but for the size of the body will make learning to freedive that much more enjoyable,” says Richard. “It’s possible to achieve good form with a stiff blade. A stiffer blade just makes a task that is challenging to begin with that much more difficult.”

Sitting across the table from the two accomplished freediving instructors, I reconsider my premise. “Okay, so let’s say this: I’m going to take a course to improve as a freediver. Then, I’m going to buy some sweet fins, because I want them. The fins will be sweet because I’ll try on enough pairs to find a foot pocket that makes my toes smile and I’ll get a soft flex fin so I can focus on my form,” I say.

They agree, and suggest you do the same.

## Tai Ping launches in Phuket Food for the older soul

BANGKOK based fabric designer and manufacturer Thailand Carpet Manufacturing Plc opened its first satellite store in Phuket on June 25 to cater to growing demand in the province for high-quality custom design flooring.

Targeting Phuket’s hospitality industry, the company, under the brand name Tai Ping, expects to earn about 20 million baht in revenue in their first year.

Located off the Bang Khu junction in Koh Kaew, the showroom features a vast range of floor fabrics in thousands of designs, such as hand-tufted carpets, shag pile rugs, tiles, laminated wood and British-made Axminster carpet.

Thailand Carpet Manufacturing Plc began business under the brand name Tai Ping in 1967 and has grown to become one of the world’s leading carpet manufacturers; listed on the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET) in 1994 and boasting control of more than 65 per cent



Tai Ping has built its reputation on employing highly skilled weavers to design custom carpets. Photo: Kongleaphy Keam

of Thailand’s carpet market.

“Tai Ping has built its reputation on using only top-quality yarns, the best dyes and employing highly skilled weavers to design custom carpets for any situation,” Tai Ping director Sumate Suwanvongkij told the *Gazette* at the store’s grand opening event late last month.

“Tai Ping employs a team of about 20 designers and produces more than 50,000 square meters of carpet each month. Our specialty is creating customized carpets, especially for hotels and

resorts. Orders are typically completed within 60 days.”

“The Phuket store was opened after seeing an increase in demand from local businesses and hotels, with an annual revenue of about 4 million baht. With the opening of the Phuket branch we can expect annual revenue to reach 20 million baht in the first year,” said Mr Sumet.

Curtains, blinds and sofa fabrics are also on display. The company also offers carpet cleaning and repair services.

– Kongleaphy Keam

SMART Food, a project to develop healthy food products for the elderly, was launched earlier this year by the National Science and Technology Development Agency’s Innovation and Technology Assistant Program (ITAP).

The project brings together scientists, researchers and members of the private sector who are interested in working on nourishment essential to the ageing population.

“Our greying population is on the rise. We must study and learn to provide proper food for them. This is a form of preventive medicine and will save our spending on medication in the future,” said Dr Anuwat Jangchud of Kasetsart University’s agro-industry faculty.

“Also, by starting now, we are helping businesses interested in this senior foods industry to have a better understanding of the products we need, and thus be able to compete on the market.”



The Smart Food campaign aims to provide older people with better nutrition. Photo: The Nation

The project is working on the science of nutrition, ingredients and product development, as well as any criteria that might help seniors choose the right products.

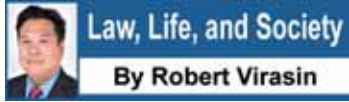
Research and development is slated to run for eight to 12 months with product prototypes submitted between April to next July.

The ITAP expects to have at least 25 Smart Food products in the market within three years.

– The Nation



# Adopting a child in Thailand



Law, Life, and Society  
By Robert Virasin

AN AMERICAN recently contacted us to assist him with the adoption of his Thai wife's nephew. The child has been living with the couple since he was a few months old. The mother (sister of the Thai spouse) was financially incapable of caring for the child. After two years, they decided that it was time to formalize the arrangement. They initially wanted guardianship over the child, but after consultation, decided to adopt him.

So, what is the difference between guardianship and adoption?

A guardianship establishes a legal right between a minor or incapacitated person but does not terminate the legal relationship between the minor and the biological parents.

A guardian is usually appointed by a court to take care of a minor and manage the child's affairs but the guardian's activities are usually monitored by the court. If the biological parents' rights have not been terminated, the biological parents can file a court action to remove the guardian.

In an adoption, the legal rights of the biological parents are terminated and the adoptive parents assume full custody over the child. The adoptive parents are given all of the rights and responsibilities that once belonged to the natural parents. Once the adoption has been finalized, the court's role



A non-Thai prospective parent must obtain a police clearance from their home country and the clearance needs to be certified by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Photo: Mojpe

over the child is over. Terminated parents no longer have any legal rights to intervene in the affairs of the children.

It is also important to look at the process involved in adopting a child.

All adoptions in Thailand are processed through the Child Adoption Center or through an agency that is authorized by the Department of Social Development and Welfare. The adoptive parents must be at least 25 years of age and must be at least 15 years older than the adopted child.

If the adoptive parent is not a Thai national, they must be eligible to adopt under the laws of their country. If the couple is applying to adopt, the couple must be legally married.

After the initial application

is made, a home study is generally required. The home study will be made through an approved government authority. They are given the task to inspect the physical health of the prospective parents, their ability to support the child, their community reputation, a criminal background check, and the living conditions of the family.

A non-Thai prospective parent must obtain a police clearance from their home country and the clearance needs to be certified by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. If one of the prospective adoptive parents is related to the biological parent and the child has been in the care of the prospective adoptive parents, a physical home study can be waived.

After all of the documents

have been submitted and the home study has been completed, the adoption center will issue an adoption certification. The adoption certificate is valid for 6 months. The adoption certificate needs to be registered with the local government office to complete the process. The adoption process in Thailand generally takes about six months.

The process for foreigners outside of Thailand who want to adopt a Thai child is much more complex. The adoption must comply with multiple levels of legal jurisdictions. For example, an American couple who is seeking to adopt from a Thai orphanage must comply with US Federal Immigration law, Thai adoption laws, and also The Hague Convention on adoption. The first step for potential

international parents usually begins by submitting an application for adoption with the Department of Social Development and Welfare. The adoptive parents can make a request for a specific gender and whether they want a child with special needs. Younger children are generally placed with younger prospective parents.

The Hague Convention requires that Thai orphans be placed with a family in Thailand prior to allowing the child to be placed for international adoption. A home study will have to be completed and the prospective parents will be interviewed by the Child Adoption Board. The process for an international adoption generally takes over two years.

Adopting a child is a big decision. For those in Thailand who want to adopt a child, the best place to start would be to contact the Child Adoption Center or a reputable agency that understands the legal process.

For those who are currently living outside of Thailand, it is important to obtain guidance from a reputable adoption agency that understands their local adoption procedures as well as Thai adoption procedures.

*Yutthachai Sangsirisap is a licensed Thai Attorney at Virasin & Partners who has experience handling adoption and child custody matters. Robert R. Virasin is a licensed US Attorney and managing director of Virasin & Partners. They can be reached at info@virasin.com or at www.virasin.com.*

## Angsana tees off golfing giveaway



GUESTS staying in Laguna Premier Rooms at Angsana Laguna Phuket can take advantage of the resort's offer of unlimited rounds of championship 18-hole golf from now until October 31. This 'Unlimited Golf, Unlimited Fun' offer includes perks such as free airport transfer, daily breakfast for two and discounts on spa treatments as well as at the resort's bars and restaurants.

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# Don't take your granite tops for granted

THIS is the first in a series of articles to help home-improvement hobbyists make their homes beautiful. Today, Mark Dietrich talks about granite counter tops and their maintenance 'done the right way'.

If you buy new or upgrade, most likely you will choose granite counter tops. First remember that not all granite is equal. Granite is a lot harder than marble and easier to maintain, but experience shows, liquids can soak in to polished granite. If you notice a spill, clean it up right away and you may not be left with a stain – especially if it's grease. The moisture from the grease that has imbedded the surface pores of the counter causes light to reflect differently and this is why you see a dark spot or streaks.

The wise thing to do is seal your granite as soon as it's installed. (Don't rely on your contractor or developer to do this). Out of hundreds of surveys I have performed, most have stains on the counter tops left over from construction personnel. Don't seal over a stain as it will be permanently locked in. If you have a stain there is a shop in Phuket called the Stone Doctor. They sell a fantastic product imported from Germany that should draw out the stain. They carry well over 40 products. And, of course, they



**Granite counter tops should be properly sealed as soon as they are installed to protect against stains and scratches.** Photo: Granite Charlotte Countertops

sell the sealer to apply after all the stains are gone. Reseal your granite every year.

Train your cleaning staff not to put bottles of harsh chemicals on the counter tops as well. Note these tips below.

## Preventive Measures

The basic things to remember when caring for granite counters are:

- Wipe off all stains immediately, so staining is minimized.

- Avoid placing hot pans on granite.

- Avoid impact with heavy or sharp items.

## The Do's

- Minimize stains by using only penetrating sealers recommended by professionals.

- Clean up spills immediately. Hot oils will penetrate the granite even if it has been sealed.

- Use a chopping board to

chop or cut food.

- Use coasters under cups and place pots and pans on hot pads.

- Always have a good stain remover on hand. Call or use a professional, such as the Stone Doctor, to remove tough stains or restore the finish on the granite.

## The Don'ts

- Even though granite may be harder than steel, don't use

very sharp knives directly on the counter. Remember most homes in Thailand have the black granite work tops, which is the softest of all granites.

- Don't step, stand or lean on the counters, especially near cutouts. It may break. Remember to instruct staff as well. No standing on the granite.

- Don't place hot pans directly on the granite. It may break due to uneven expansion.

- If you have an under-mount sink, avoid leaving it filled with water and dishes for a long time, it may become dislodged from the granite above.

- Avoid hot oil spills from frying pans – if you have hot oil stains, remove them quickly with your cleaning solution.

- Avoid dragging boxes and other containers along the counters, as any sand or dirt on the bottom of the box may scratch the surface, – especially when moving house.

Mark Dietrich is a professional inspector and property builder with a Master's degree in building engineering. He came to Phuket after working for 25 years in the custom home and inspecting industry in the USA, and has been working in Thailand for more than 11 years. Visit [www.certifiedphuketrealestate.com](http://www.certifiedphuketrealestate.com) or email him at [propertyinspectorthailand@gmail.com](mailto:propertyinspectorthailand@gmail.com) or call on 085-809 8755.

# Kebsup Group goes indigo with IHG

THE first Hotel Indigo property is set to open in Phuket after InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) inked a management agreement with Phuket-based Kebsup Group Company Limited late last year.

Set to open its doors to guests in 2018, the 180-room Hotel Indigo Phuket Patong is to be located at the northern end of Patong Beach.

The Thai-inspired decor and artwork as well as the locally-inspired menus at the hotel's restaurants and bars are designed to offer diners an 'authentic taste of the island'.

"Phuket is one of the top resort destinations in Thailand, welcoming more than five million tourists in the first half of this year alone.

"We are delighted to be launching our Hotel Indigo brand in the Patong Beach town with our partners Kebsup Group Company Limited to



**The Holiday Inn Express Phuket Patong Beach Central Hotel (above), jointly developed by IHG and Kebsup Group, opened in 2012. The partners plan to open Hotel Indigo Phuket Patong in 2018.** Photo: Holiday Inn

cater to the growing number of both domestic and international visitor arrivals to the island," said Leanne Harwood, vice president of operations, Southeast Asia, IHG.

"We are confident our guests will welcome the arrival of

the new Hotel Indigo Phuket Patong where they can truly enjoy the individuality and style of a boutique hotel with the security and consistency of an international hotel company."

Hotel Indigo is the second

Phuket hotel jointly developed by IHG and the Kebsup Group.

The first property developed by the partners was the Holiday Inn Express Phuket Patong Beach Central Hotel, which opened in 2012.

"Phuket is a destination that

grows in popularity every year and tourists to the island are increasingly well travelled and savvy," said Kebsup Group director Chalermluck Kebsup.

"Hotel Indigo Phuket Patong will cater to travellers who appreciate the unique tastes and cultures that make up the vibrant Patong neighborhood, and we look forward to providing them with great guest experiences through the hotel's locally-inspired architecture and cuisine when it opens in 2018," she said.

IHG currently operates a total of 18 hotels and resorts in Thailand under five different brands: InterContinental, Crowne Plaza, Holiday Inn, Holiday Inn Express and Hotel Indigo.

There are 13 hotels in the company's development pipeline for Thailand, due to open in the next three to five years.

– *Phuket Gazette*

# Five kinds of serenity in Koh Kaew

By Zohaib Sikander

PROPERTY developer Land & Houses has opened new doors in Phuket for families with the residential development '88 Land & Houses Koh Kaew'.

Construction of the gated community is set to be completed by 2018.

About 50 per cent of the 140 units have already been sold and new owners are already moving in.

Located on Thepkassatri Road, the 88 Land & Houses Koh Kaew project is built on 53-3-16 rai of land and based on the concept of 'Tropical Serenity', which is a careful mix of greenery and modern living for a family-oriented environment.

There are a total of five different types of two-story, single-detached houses available in the Koh Kaew project: Iconic; Idealist; Acacia; Amplo; and Grando.

The houses range in size from 136 to 239 square meters, with 3-4 bedrooms and 3-4 bathrooms. Each house has a living room, although just the



The Grando houses are additionally equipped with two balconies and a 25-meter-long swimming pool for its residents, with parking for at least two cars in each unit. Photo: Land & Houses

'Grando' has a maid's room.

A two-story club house that will contain a public lounge

and fitness room is set to be complete by the end of this year, located near a kids' park

also inside the premises.

"We mostly have 35-year-old buyers coming in to buy

these houses from Phuket as well as neighboring provinces such as Phang Nga, Krabi and Surat Thani," said Pphada Amornpreedee, marketing executive at Land & Houses. "Our customers range from newly-weds to families with three to four children."

The project provides residents with keycard access, a 24-hour security system with CCTV, as well as regular security patrols.

The principal business of Land & Houses is residential housing development, concentrating particularly on single detached houses.

Focusing on urban living, Land & Houses has developments in Bangkok and other major cities such as Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Khon Kaen, Nakhonratchasima, Udonthani, Hua Hin, Mahasarakham and Ayuthaya.

Other projects currently under development in Phuket by Land & Houses are: 88 Land & House Hillside in Chalong; 88 Land & Houses Phuket – a modern home office in Chalong – and Inizio Koh Kaew.






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# Working his way to the top

By Kongleaphy Keam

ADISAK Pitakrojanant from Ratchaburi Province is currently the general manager of Mom Tri's Villa Royale at Kata Noi Beach, Phuket.

He graduated from Ramkhamhaeng University with a Bachelor's degree in hotel management and has more than 10 years of experience in the hospitality business, eight of which have been in management.

"I was not born to be a general manager," says Mr Adisak. "My first job in the hotel business was that of a waiter at the Phuket Yacht Club. Over the years, I was promoted several times to get to where I am now."

Mr Adisak worked very hard at his first job, after which he was promoted to the position of secretary to the general manager. This was followed by several other positions as a human resource team member, front office manager, operations director, assistant to the general manager and finally the general manager.

"Effort, patience, diligence and determination are what got me here," he adds.

Mr Adisak's current position is not an easy one, requiring 24/7 dedication to the job.

"This is a non-stop business in which you have to make sure things are running smoothly all day long," Mr Adisak explains. "It's important to love the job you do and work in harmony with the management, staff and customers, in order to keep everyone satisfied."

Mr Adisak says that the most important aspect of his job is dealing with people.

"Working with people is unpredictable, and each person is different from the other. It is important to deal with others on an honest and personal level, so we can understand their issues and help them solve their prob-

lems better. This way, they respect your actions and you build mutual understanding and respect," he says.

"I believe working with people is one of my strengths; over the years, I have learned to deal with different types of people through experience."

Mr Adisak says each individual has the potential to work hard and achieve success, and although it's not easy, determination and hard work can lead you there.

"My boss gave me a chance to prove my worth and I worked diligently to do so," he says. "Developing a respectful and beneficial relationship with upper management was one of the factors that allowed me to reach the top."

Mr Adisak says that Phuket is one of the best places he has worked.

"Phuket's potential as a tourist destination is a great op-

portunity for all hotel businesses to expand and prosper," he says.

Mr Adisak wants young people to know that anything is possible if they try their best.

"I want to tell as-

piring hoteliers that good linguistic skills, knowledge and ability are not enough in the hospitality business. You need patience, hard work, diligence and people skills to get ahead in this field," he says.



My first job in the hotel business was that of a waiter at the Phuket Yacht Club. Over the years, I was promoted several times to get to where I am now /

– Adisak Pitakrojanant, general manager of Mom Tri's Villa Royale

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ISSN 1905 - 8268