

Phuket Gazette

July 23 - 29, 2016

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'BY 2050, THE OCEANS WILL CONTAIN MORE PLASTIC THAN FISH'

DEATH BY PLASTIC

COMMENTARY

Plastic pollution is threatening life in the Andaman Sea

By Patrick Campbell

MY CONCERNS over plastic pollution were stimulated anew by an excellent analysis in the *China Daily* called "Drowning in Plastic," and also by the cover story in a recent edition of the *Gazette* in which a seasoned local fisherman expressed surprise at the decline in fish catches in our seas.

The main contributor to that story – the president of the Phuket Fishing Association – believed the weather to be the principal factor in fish depopulation, as well as "restrictions on fishermen". Both analyses are very questionable. The source also blamed "pollution and waste... from hotels" that was more to the point. But the "P-word" was never mentioned in his analysis.

Anyone interested in ecological issues knows that the principal culprits for the catastrophic decline in marine life in Thailand are the triple evils of over-fishing, including poaching; inadequate regulation of the industry at all levels, including human rights issues and abuses; and pollution.

For decades, weighted trawl nets have scoured the shallow bottom of the Andaman Sea, removing not only entire colonies of fish, but all its benthic life, including deep-water coral, sea grass and bottom feeding molluscs and crustaceans. There has been no effective control over net mesh sizes, hence the sad mountains of tiny fish in markets – evidence that the next piscine generation has already gone the way of all flesh.

As for marine pollution, it is daily becoming an issue in Phuket, with inadequate waste disposal systems chucking thousands of tons of raw sewage into the sea.



This Frasure's Dolphin succumbed to injuries caused by plastic pollutants. Photo: Gazette file

On neighboring Phi Phi Island, there is no sewage plant at all. Apparently one would cost 300 million baht, and the island, despite its huge revenue from tourism, cannot stump up the money.

A shocking 83 per cent of liquid waste is discharged straight into the sea. "Our only hope is that hotels, restaurants and other businesses act responsibly," declared Punkum Kittithonkun, president of the Ao Nang *OrBorTor* on April 10.

Most of the coral in the Andaman Sea has already gone. Add land run-off, where 95 per cent of Phuket's agricultural pesticides and herbicides end up, and it's easy to be frightened about what we're doing to that vast sink we call the ocean.

Mangrove swamps, which used to

fringe most of Phuket and its surrounding islands, act not only as nurseries for most species of marine fish, but as giant filters for effluence. They are literally losing ground to developers.

Among many others, current cases concern several marinas here in Phuket and in Krabi, where one of them is alleged to have widened a klong (canal) through the mangroves from three to 50 meters. Imagine how many trees have perished.

Effluents themselves have a profound effect on oxygen levels, and all aspects of ocean life. Increasingly in Phuket we are getting jellyfish warnings – Surin Beach just this week was warned of several sightings

Continued on Page 4

Koh Lanta Yai official cornered in bribery sting

ORBORTOR vice president arrested for allegedly demanding B20mn from property developer to issue a land title on two plots of land on Lanta Yai.

Story on Page 3

BUSINESS



Social media advertising and online purchases is on the rise.

PROPERTY



British expats in Phuket are taking a big hit thanks to Brexit.

LIFE&STYLE



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Royal Navy finds missing officer's body

A ROYAL Thai Navy search and rescue team recovered the body of an officer on July 17, who reportedly slid off a rock at Khao Na Yak in Phang Nga and went missing two days prior.

Pongsathorn Pakdee, 22, was fishing with his friends when the incident took place, after which Janya Plaimuang, his aunt, reported the incident to Thai Navy Region 3.

"We provided ships and helicopters to help find Mr Pongsathorn. After a two-hour search, we spotted his body floating in the sea near Khao Na Yak, about 200 yards from where it was reported to be missing," said Vice Admiral Sayan Prasongsamrej, commander of the Royal Thai Navy's Third Area Command.

The body was sent to Phang Nga Navy Base Hospital for an autopsy.

– Sukawin Tanthavanich

Thalang thieves emboldened by inaction

THALANG police responded to a man who reported that the batteries were stolen out of his parked six-wheel truck in Srisoonthorn on July 18.

Forty-seven year old Pipop Sasan from central Thailand said his vehicle was parked near the Democrat Party's Phuket office in Thalang.

Patong fire guts Bangla alleyway



A blaze destroyed shops in an alley off Bangla Road in Patong on July 17. The fire broke out around midnight near Thaweewong Road (beach road), damaging several shops, including a tailor's and a minimart. Firefighters and six fire trucks took more than an hour to extinguish the inferno, which is estimated to have caused several million baht worth of damage. Inspectors believe the fire was caused by a short circuit. No one was injured in the fire. Photo: Patong Police

The theft of the batteries, which Mr Pipop said cost about 5,800 baht, is the latest incident which locals chalk up to increasingly bold thieves.

Police said they believe the perpetrators have a decent knowledge of automotive mechanics, but were unsure how many were involved.

Srisoonthorn residents complained to police that they've been plagued by a rash of thefts recently, both of vehicles and of items taken from inside their

LOCAL NEWS Briefly

homes.

"We would like to urge police officers to patrol more often, to at least scare the thieves so they know the area is under watch by police," said a resident who declined to be named. "The thieves are not scared of robbing us, but hopefully we could at least scare them that they may be caught."

– Winai Sarot

Aussie arrested after drunk driving crash

AN AUSTRALIAN man is under arrest after he allegedly hit several parked vehicles in what police reported as a drunk driving incident in Cherng Talay during the early morning of July 16.

Police received a report from Somchai Choomrak, 52, at Baan Pa Sak in Cherng Talay around 4:30am. Mr Somchai stated that the suspect left his Honda Jazz parked in the middle of the road

and went home.

Police reportedly found Paul Vockler at his home with blood on his face, "reeking of alcohol."

Cherng Talay Police reported that Mr Vockler claims he received the injury after being attacked by locals.

Police reported that Mr Vockler's blood contained .22 per cent alcohol, while the legal limit in Thailand is 0.05 per cent.

Mr Vockler was charged with drunk and unsafe driving.

– Winai Sarot

Portuguese Man-of-War seen at beaches

DEADLY Portuguese Man-of-War jellyfish were spotted floating off several of Phuket's popular beaches this past week.

The Phuket Lifeguard Club President told the *Gazette* on July 15 that the siphonophores are common to Phuket shores during the monsoon season.

The sting of a Portuguese Man-of-War can sometimes be fatal for humans.

The jellyfish were first spotted at Nai Harn Beach and then off Kamala, Nai Thon and Surin beaches

– Kongleaphy Keam

Teen suffers emasculation in farm incident

A TEENAGE shrimp farm employee had the skin of his penis ripped clean off when he fell onto a spinning mechanical aerator used to oxygenate the water on July 18.

The victim, a Myanmar national aged 17, suffered severe blood loss.

"He was writhing in agony and covered in blood as locals rushed him to Thalang Hospital. He was later moved to Vachira Phuket Hospital," said Capt Suporn Muangkai of the Thalang Police.

"It turns out it was actually the boy's day off, but he was helping a colleague plaster a wall at the farm when he fell onto the aerator," said Capt Suporn.

Doctors could not say whether the victim would regain full functionality of the organ or not.

– Winai Sarot

Patong Police arrest, charge 'fake' monks for begging

TWO monks with fake ordination certificates and a bank book were arrested by Patong Police on July 15.

According to reports from locals, Tanai Jai-uea, 52 and Bundit Sairat, 42, have been regular food beggars at the Sai Nam Yen intersection on Rat-U-Thit 200 Pee Road in Patong for two years.

"They were not doing alms rounds like other monks do, so we asked them to produce papers and verify their identities after repeated complaints from locals," said Aniruth Bua-on of the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation's Phuket Office.

"My staff found on them fake ordination documents linked to Wat Suwan Khiri Wong and a Siam Commercial Bank book issued at Chantaburi Province's Tesco Lotus Branch."

They two have been charged with carrying fake documents and were taken to Patong Police Station for further processing.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

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Govt encourages migrants to register as arrests continue

OFFICERS from the Phuket Provincial Office (PPO) and the Royal Thai Navy arrested 80 migrant laborers during two raids in Thalang on July 17.

The raids came even after the Phuket Provincial Employment Office (PPEO) encouraged illegal laborers to register throughout the month of July, with PPEO officials stating that the government is showing leniency with employers and illegal workers.

Officers raided a National Housing Authority construction site around 2pm, after reportedly receiving a complaint of illegally-registered migrants working there.

“There were more than 70 workers at the site in Srisoonthorn, both Thai and migrant men and women, working under four employers,” said Wansurachart Detaran of the PPEO.

“Some of them ran away, and some stayed back to be checked. Most of them had passports, but no work permits,” Mr Wansurachart said. “Some had permission to work in the fishing industry, but were working in construction instead.”

Law enforcement officers across the province had largely, until Sunday’s arrests, suspended raids and detentions of illegal immigrants for the past month.



Migrant workers wait to be processed behind Phuket Provincial Hall. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

The registration drive is part of a nationwide campaign to legalize unregistered migrants from Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos working mainly in the country’s construction and fisheries industries.

“At least 20,000 foreign laborers, predominantly Myanmar nationals, have registered at Phuket’s ‘one-stop center’ since it began accepting applications on April 1,” said Phuket Provincial Employment Office (PPEO) senior officer Sukrita

Canyook.

The second site raided was an under-construction housing development in Soi Baan Taiteen, off of Thepkasattri Road.

Officers said that they found more than 30 migrant workers at the site.

After checking their documents, officers found migrants also working without a work permit or working in a different field than permitted.

“All the migrants who were

caught – those who were working without permission and those who were working in a different field than written in their work permit – have been handed over to the Thalang Police for prosecution,” Mr Wansurachart said.

He also said that the officers had to raid the sites because complaints were filed to the PPEO.

Migrant construction workers must have either a passport or ‘pink’ ID card in

order to register for employment in that industry, while migrants working in Thailand’s infamous fishing industry and at seafood processing plants do not require any documentation.

“I would like to call on all employers of migrant workers to come and register in time, otherwise they will be liable for prosecution,” Ms Sukrita said. “At the moment the government is being flexible with employers and illegal workers.”

Thailand’s fishing industry has extended deadlines, with employers having until July 31 to register workers. The PPEO stated those workers will receive a ‘one-year’ work permit that would retro-actively cover them from February 2, 2016 until January 31, 2017.

Workers involved in the country’s substantial seafood processing industry – which warranted a visit this month from Burmese stateswoman Aung San Suu Kyi – were able to register with the Department of Labor from February 23 until August 22.

Non-fishing industry employers, including construction companies operating in Phuket, are to register all of their migrant laborers by July 29.

– Chutharat Plerin

Karon hit with historic floods

SHOPS and houses opposite hillside construction sites in Karon were inundated with mud and water up to one meter deep, after a heavy downpour on the morning of July 18.

“This is the worst flooding we’ve seen in decades,” said the municipality’s deputy mayor Ittiporn Sangkaew.

Mr Ittiporn and municipality staff joined locals in helping them rescue belongings from the flooded houses and business premises.

The flood water subsided after about two hours, confirmed Mr Ittiporn, who added



A car drives along the flooded Patak Road. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

that he has ordered drainage ditches to be dug along the road to prevent more flooding.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

Injured, dead dolphins keep washing ashore

A DEAD dolphin was discovered off Patong Beach and another is recovering at a Royal Thai Navy facility on Koh Lanta. Both were discovered by scuba divers on July 16.

Phuket Marine Biological Center veterinarian Patcharaporn Gaewmong told the *Gazette* that she believes recent discoveries of sick, injured or dead cetaceans are likely the result of monsoon season currents and winds.

"This appears normal for what we see around this time of the year; however we are running tests on the body of the Patong female dolphin to determine the exact cause of death," Ms Patcharaporn said. "We will also be looking into environmental factors that may have contributed to this animal's decline in health."



Rescue workers recover the sick Koh Lanta bull. Photo: Winai Sarot

She said that preliminary examinations of the Patong female found wide-spread infections in the animal's blood.

That dolphin was recovered by Kusoldharm Foundation volunteer Vincent Modell and his team after Patong Beach lifeguards notified the organi-

zation at about 5pm. Mr Modell is also a full-time scuba instructor at Sea Fun Divers.

A 2.5 meter-long male dolphin was recovered by Blue Planet Divers owner Gedi-minas Zakarauskas off Koh Lanta, in Krabi, also on July 16.

Lieutenant Commander Peerapat Pattanasophon of the Third Naval Area Command told the *Gazette* that the 60kg dolphin is being cared for at a Lanta naval facility.

Lt Peerapat said that Navy staff suspect the dolphin was injured after being caught in a fishing net, which they believe exhausted the mammal before it managed to free itself.

The five-year-old bull dolphin is the second to be discovered off Lang Sod Beach within a week.

— *Phuket Gazette*

Drowning in plastics

From Page 1

...of Portuguese Man O'War. Apart from delivering nasty stings, jellyfish are potent enemies of our environment, devouring plankton, fish eggs and small fish. The blow to plankton alone should be alarming, as the tiny collective organisms do more than anything else to sequester carbon and produce oxygen – a life-support system for everyone on the planet.

This brings us to the "P-word." Plastic pollutants are one of the biggest problems not just in Thailand, but world-wide.

By 2050, says a reputable UK organization, the oceans will be "expected to contain more plastics than fish (by weight)."

A report by the American environmental group 'Stemming the Tide' identified five countries – all Asian and including Thailand – that contribute between "55 and 60 per cent" of all plastic found in our oceans. Ninety per cent of all plastic that is produced annually is thrown away.

Ironically, the fishing industry in Phuket is one of the worst local offenders. All the garbage from these boats is simply jet-tisoned overboard.

On 'International Coastal Cleanup Day,' the most frequent beach litter and sea pollutants – all plastic – were as follows: over 1,000,000 food containers, 1,000,000 drink bottles, and 1,000,000 bags. Caps and lids came in at 690,000, straws and stirrers at over 600,000 items.

A recent study concluded that 8 million tons of plastic waste flow into our oceans every year, enough to cover one foot of every coastline in the world.

A University of California study recently showed that fish in the North Pacific ingest plastic at a rate of 12,000 to 24,000 tons per year. Oceanographer Erik Van Sebille, from London's Imperial College, concurs: "There is so much plastic in marine animals at the moment. In almost every fish

and bird that is cut open for science, we find plastic."

So what, as concerned individuals, can we do to ameliorate this global problem?

The first and most important statement we can make is to reduce our dependence on the stuff. Plastic is one of the main by-products of an affluent society, and developing Thailand is particularly culpable.

Take your own re-usable bag when you shop, avoid plastic cling-film and polystyrene containers for your fried rice and coffee. Use your own mug at Starbucks. And support any initiatives to reduce plastic packaging. Tesco Lotus in Thailand tried and failed, largely for want of public support.

Stop buying water in plastic bottles. Every year, 20 billion are tossed in the trash. If you are worried about the quality of tap water – as you may be in Thailand – consider buying a filtration unit. It will quickly pay for itself.

It is a point almost too obvious to make, but we need to remind ourselves to recycle where and when we can. And it can be done. True, different kinds of plastic complicate matters.

Nonetheless, most kinds are recyclable. And if you don't trust the refuse truck, then save your cast-offs for the local trash collector, who will gladly take them on their bulging samlors to a proper disposal facility.

At sea level, there are promising initiatives to skim the plastic from the ocean's gyres where so much of it ends up. At the end of the day however, prevention is better than cure. We must produce less plastic.

And if we must have plastic, then, for the planet's sake, don't manufacture so much of the single-use, disposable stuff. This material is the single largest contributor to marine plastic pollution.

The irony is that such a practical and ubiquitous material invariably outlives its usefulness; in the blink of an eye, plastic has become a scourge rather than a benefit.

Stop buying water in plastic bottles. Every year, 20 billion are tossed in the trash.

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Koh Lanta Yai official caught in attempted B20mn payoff

KOH Lanta Yai Administration Organization (OrBorTor) vice president Anusorn Wangphon was arrested on July 18 in an anti-corruption sting operation.

The National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) allege that the 49 year-old official requested 20 million baht from a businessman in exchange for the issuance of land title deeds.

The operation was led by NACC Assistant Secretary-General, Colonel Ittiphol Kit-suwan, who said Mr Anusorn was caught with 2,000 bank notes, totalling 2 million baht, packed in a bag along with two mobile phones and cheques totalling 18 million

baht.

“Mr Anusorn was charged with dereliction of duty, receiving bribes and extortion,” Col Ittiphol said.

The sting operation came after Thai Wattana Asset Co Ltd director Suthat Siwapiromrat filed a complaint to the NACC a week earlier. Mr Suthat told authorities that he had agreed to buy two plots of land, totalling more than 40 rai, from Waraporn Huathaolom, the executor of Mid Asikul.

According to Mr Suthat, Mr Anusorn allegedly asked for 20 million baht, claiming that the two plots are located on public land and that his office would need to survey it, in order to set up new boundaries.



Mr Anusorn Wangphon (left) is charged with bribery, extortion and dereliction of duty. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

“Mr Anusorn then gave directions for the handover of the money in Ao Nang,” Col Ittiphol said. “Mr Suthat brought 2 million baht in cash, along with cheques for

10 million, five million and three million baht, made out to Mr Anusorn. Mr Suthat made copies of the cheques and the routing numbers on several bills and subsequently

handed them over to the NACC as evidence.”

Col Ittiphol and officers from Region 8 recorded the exchange between Mr Suthat and Mr Anusorn at a table in the Hotel Sofitel Krabi Phokeethra Golf and Spa Resort. After about 30 minutes, Mr Suthat handed over the bag and cheques to Mr Anusorn.

Mr Anusorn received the bag and left for the nearby car park, where he was intercepted by officers and taken into custody.

Mr Anusorn was taken to Ao Nang Police Station for further questioning, but so far has denied the charges.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

Naka Noi land dispute settled

THE Land Department has concluded a Naka Noi land ownership dispute by revoking land ownership documents held by Six Mountain Company Co Ltd.

Land Department Director-General Apinun Suetanu Wong told the *Gazette* that he would side with the standing committee presiding over the dispute on July 14. That committee found that the *NorSor3Kor* of 24 rai held by the company was illegitimate.

“The committee found that a flying *SorKor1* was used to issue the *NorSor3Kor*,” Mr Apinun said.

A flying *SorKor1* is a title deed issued for a specific plot of land, but then used to claim the right to occupy another plot of land elsewhere. The land dispute has been going on since late 2014.

The dispute began in last December, when the Department of Special Investigations (DSI) investigated a complaint alleging land ownership on Naka Noi by Thai actor Puri Hiranpruk.

The DSI found that the *SorKor1* was upgraded to a *NorSor3Kor* for a plot of land on Naka Noi in 2014. The up-

graded documents also changed the size of the plot, from about seven rai to about 17 rai, and was upgraded to 24 rai.

After the DSI released their findings, Mr Puri kept fighting against the document’s owner – Six Mountain Co Ltd. In an April Facebook post, Mr Puri stated that armed gunmen had approached the forest reserve on Naka Noi near his property. That post prompted a visit by Phuket Vice Governor Chokdee Amornwat, who visited the reserve and found no evidence of gunmen.

The director of Six Mountains Co Ltd and his son have repeatedly called for justice during the case, stating that they have only ever lawfully owned the land. The repeated calls for justice led the Land Department to set up a committee to analyze the case.

That committee ruled against Six Mountains Co Ltd in May, revoking their land ownership. The committee’s findings were only an initial suggestion, but Mr Apinun’s decision to revoke Six Mountains’ *NorSor3Kor* concluded the land dispute.

– Kongleaphy Keam

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Tourists, officials clean 2km stretch of Ao Nang



Officers were joined by tourists to clean up trash strewn along Ao Nang Beach, due to recent rains in the area. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

PUBLIC officials in Krabi began picking up trash that had washed ashore along a two kilometer stretch of Ao Nang Beach on July 13.

The officers were joined by private companies and tourists, who pitched in to clear the beach after the heavy rains and strong surf washed trash up along the Ao Nang shoreline. Officials said they were concerned about the effects of the trash on Krabi's main tourist attraction, as Ao Nang's white beaches were turned

brown and black by the plastics and unnatural trash strewn about its shores.

"We really appreciate the tourists who came out today to help us pick up trash off the beach," Muang Krabi District Chief Suriyun Damrongkul told the *Gazette*. "The plastics and trash littering the shoreline pose a big problem for Krabi tourism."

The beach cleanup lasted several days.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

Satun smugglers' cig stashes seized

MORE than 200 boxes filled with smuggled foreign cigarette cartons were seized in Thailand's deep-south province of Satun by the Royal Thai Navy.

On the morning of July 19, a joint task force of around 20 Royal Thai Army and Navy personnel, joined by local government officers, raided three rental houses in Khuan Khan, Satun Town, after reportedly receiving a tip-off.

The Navy estimated the value of the contraband at over one million baht. The cigarettes, which allegedly had not paid customs or import taxes, were waiting to be transferred to smugglers, officials reported. A police report named Ms Prateep Kongsri as the owner of the rental properties.

The report states that after the task force found the house gates locked, Navy personnel called the sub-district headman Sittichai Leela and Satun Town headman Boontir Laongwijit, to witness the break-ins and raid on the three houses.



Over 200 foreign cigarette boxes were seized in Satun. Photo: Royal Thai Navy

After searching, 229 boxes of American cigarette cartons were found: 139 boxes of Rx Reds, 86 Rx Greens and four boxes of Astro cigarette cartons.

The boxes of cigarette cartons have been transferred to the Satun Customs House.

– Chutharat Plerin

Overcrowded prisons prompt govt response



As prisoners' conditions have come under the spotlight, new policies are being implemented in order to change the management of inmates. Photo: Gazette file

A HUMAN rights commissioner from the national government in Bangkok visited Ko Samui District Prison on July 18.

The National Human Rights Commissioner Chatchai Suttiklom, the President of the Human Rights in Judicial Process Subcommittee, led a team to visit Ko Samui District Prison in Surat Thani to oversee the quality of life of inmates and officials' internal management policy.

The prison currently houses 702 inmates, significantly exceeding the maximum capacity of the prison. The overcrowded prison complex was only designed to hold 452 inmates. Seventy per cent of the inmates are charged with offences related to narcotics, according to the prison director Pornthip Rattanachaiyarit.

On this occasion, the human rights

commissioner advised the prison director to incorporate communities outside of the prison into a development network for prisoners and inmates, and to ensure all inmates' basic human rights were respected.

The commissioner has also urged the prison director to implement the policies for changes in the correction system as guidelines for the management of inmates.

The National Human Rights Commission was established in accordance with the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, BE 2540 (1997), which was effective on 11 October 1997.

The National Human Rights Commission consists of a chairperson and 10 commissioners who were appointed by HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

– Phuket Gazette

Lawyer turns himself in over Facebook post

A KRABI lawyer surrendered himself to the police on July 16, after he became a wanted man for breaching the Public Referendum Act via a Facebook post.

Chuwong Maneekul, 51, expressed his opposition to the referendum and its authors on his Facebook page two weeks ago.

"I posted the status to express my feelings without any hidden agendas, but by the next day I was informed by an officer that a case had been filed against me," said Mr Chuwong. "So, I decided to give myself up to the Krabi City Police."

"He is the first person in Krabi to breach the Referendum Act BE 2559, section 61, paragraph 2, a crime with a



Mr Chuwong turns himself over to Krabi Police. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

penalty of up to 10 years imprisonment and a 200,000 baht fine, or revoked election rights for five years," said Lt Pipat Wongdet of Krabi City Police.

Mr Chuwong was later released on a 150,000 baht bail.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

Possible love triangle ends in stabbing

TWO INDIAN men were arrested on suspicion of stabbing to death their countryman who ran an Indian restaurant in Sukhothai. The two men, Devender Sink and Rewis Jaeni denied committing the crime.

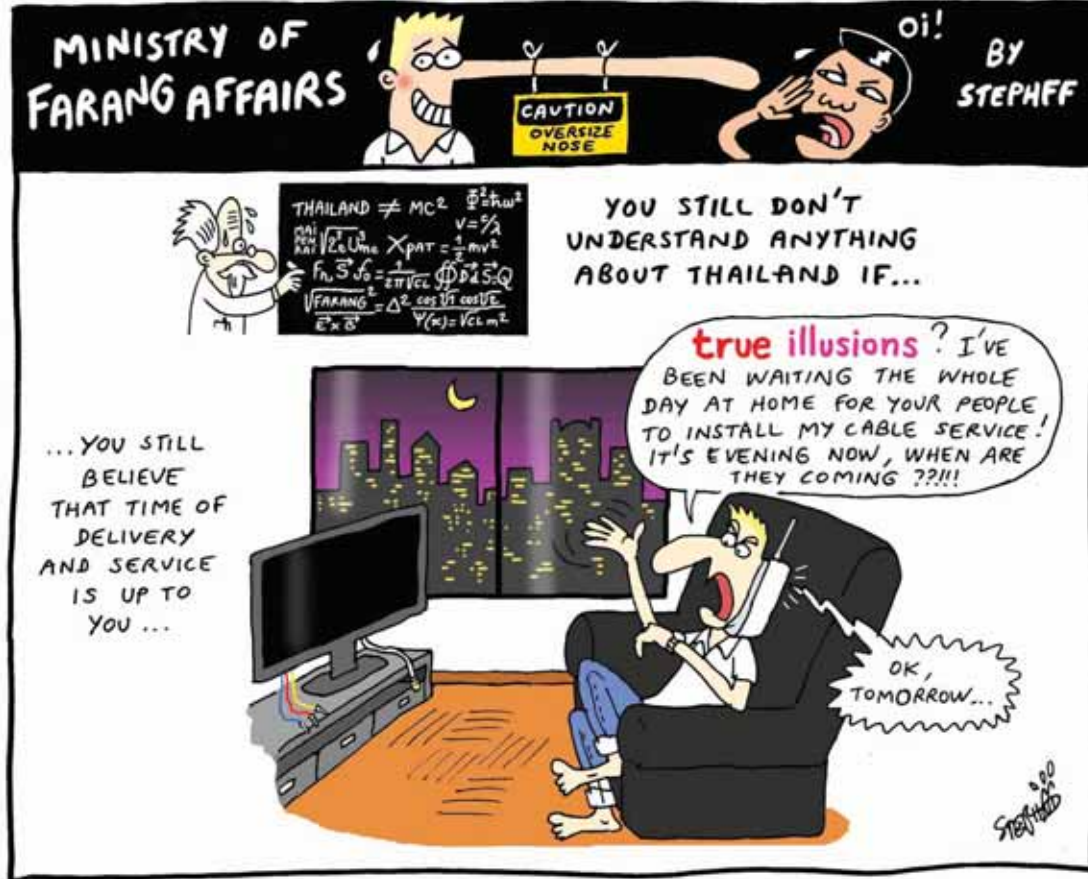
Hem Singh's body was found tied to a stone bench with eight knife wounds, in the Yom River in Phitsanulok's Prom Phiram District. Police inspected Mr Singh's restaurant Ali Baba Indian Foods and came across the same type of stone bench.

They surmised that Mr Singh was killed in his bedroom and kitchen. Police are investigating two possible motives – that Mr Sink had fallen in love with Mr Singh's wife, or that Mr Sink was angry and had argued with Mr Singh over money owed to him for various jobs.

Chonburi croc farm slapped with ban

A CROCODILE farm in Chon Buri was hit with a ban by the Fisheries Department on July 17 for allowing tourists to board a floating platform to feed fully-grown crocodiles in its pond.

Chon Buri chief fisheries officer Bancha Sukkaew served



the order from the department chief to operators of 'Anachak Chang', also known as the 'Realm of the Elephant' farm in Pattaya.

The order prohibited tourists from using the platform to feed hungry crocodiles by hoisting chicken meat on rods in the middle of the crocodile pond.

The farm's activities have been widely debated after a tourist posted a video clip on Facebook showing tourists teasing the crocodiles by lifting the meat away when the reptiles

NATIONAL NEWS Briefly

jumped into the air to try to catch the food. Many men shared the clip and posted notes saying they wished they had a chance to take their wives to the farm.

Mr Bancha said Fisheries director-general Adisorn Promptep had seen the clip and believed the activities were not safe.

PM Prayut in defiance of Council of State

PRIME Minister General Prayut Chan-o-cha pledged not to submit the nomination of Somdet Chuang as the new supreme patriarch for royal endorsement, fearing it would spark turmoil.

"I can't submit something that is problematic," Prayut said on July 11 in defiance of

the Council of State's opinion that the Sangha Supreme Council (SSC) had complied with laws in nominating Mr Somdet as Thailand's highest-ranking monk.

The SSC endorsed Somdet Chuang, but the nomination has not gone further amid intense opposition – he faces a criminal complaint related to an illegal Mercedes that was registered under his name early this year.

High-profile figure charged in Bangkok

ACTING Metropolitan Police chief Lt-General Sanit Mahathaworn assigned an investigation to the alleged human-trafficking charge brought against high-society figure Monta Yokrotanankan.

Officials stated that an initial probe found that from July 2009 to February 2010, Ms Monta allegedly lured a 17-year-old girl, 'Jit' from Mae Hong Son, to work at her condominium in Bangkok for 4,000 baht a month.

Ms Jit was allegedly refused pay and decided to go home, while Monta allegedly threatened to have her parents arrested.

Ms Monta has been involved in similar cases in the past, including harboring migrant workers. She was charged with human trafficking for using forced labor at Prachacheun Police Station on July 15.



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Phuket Gazette

Death sentence

The current government has made a commendable effort in convincing the European Union (EU) and other international observers that it will impose some order over illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) practices in the Thai fishing industry. The fact remains, however, that bureaucrats from Brussels to Bangkok have little to no control over the commercial forces that are turning our seas and oceans into vast repositories for the signature refuse of modern 'civilization': plastic debris.

This week's edition provides a sobering overview [see page 1] of the ever-worsening calamity that is a primary symptom of our collective inability to control our actions – to act in a moderate, sustainable fashion to respect and maintain the environment that supports us all.

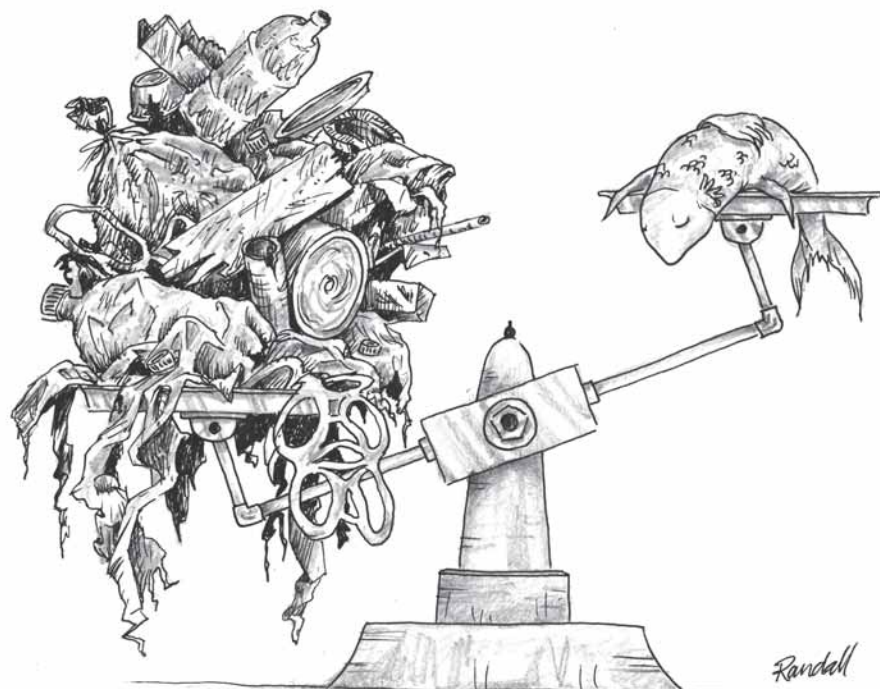
It is sad that in a country that announces Buddhism as the state religion, the real teachings of the Buddha, which comprise an almost perfect prescription for sustainability, are almost never applied by state-sanctioned clergy to environmental issues.

In stark contrast, these same clergymen (woman need not apply) also support, promote and financially benefit from clearly non-Buddhist, non-scientific and superstitious beliefs in a way that differs little from 'playbook capitalism' when it comes to teaching younger generations about the need to protect the environment.

Our temples should be kept as uncluttered as an enlightened mind. Instead they more often serve as collection points for mountains of plastic and foam rubbish, catering to temple fairs and other such profit-driven, non-spiritual affairs. All of these efforts are foolishly wasted on animistic idolatry and so-called 'merit-making' that has nothing whatsoever to do with real Buddhist teachings and, in fact, only reinforces the substrate of consumer-driven attachment that is the driving force that is laying such waste to the environment, both terrestrial and marine.

There is considerable debate in the international scientific community as to whether or not it is correct and/or appropriate to refer to the current geological era as 'the anthropocene', defined as 'the period during which human activity has been the dominant influence on climate and the environment'.

It is amazing that so many calories can be burned debating such issues, while so few are expended on actual measures that could help bring obvious environmental problems under control.



NOBODY SAYS THE WORD "POLLUTION".

Hope land grabbers are charged

Re: Naka Noi land dispute settled, as Land Department Gen revokes ownership, Jul 19

I take it that now it has been resolved, the claimants who fraudulently tried to grab the land will be charged and prosecuted under law.

Somehow, one never hears of any similar land fraud cases in which the perpetrator is actually prosecuted.

Why would that be?

*Uncle Roy
Gazette forum*

Wastewater may be killing dolphins

Re: Dolphins washing ashore, injured or dead, Jul 18

"...that she believes recent discoveries of sick, injured or dead cetaceans are likely the result of monsoon season currents and winds."

No, they just came too close to shore and took a sip of the black wastewater flowing untreated into the sea everywhere.

*Jome
Gazette forum*

Foreigners should not be blamed for everything negative

Re: Scarce hauls concern local fishermen, conservation officials, Jul 11

On page 1 and page 4 of the *Phuket Gazette* (July 9-15), it is quoted that 'The Andaman Sea is filled with farang feces and trash'.

I strongly object to this state-

Letters to the Editor

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

ment, which is just hear-say, but certainly accuses all foreigners of polluting the Andaman Sea with feces.

Did you check the DNA of the feces?

Why is everything bad put on foreigners?

*P Keemss
Letter to the editor*

Need to put an end to hillside building

Re: Karon hit with worst flood in decades, Jul 19

That's what happens when uncontrolled hillside building is allowed.

Just imagine the hidden erosion under the existing developments that have poured concrete on the hillsides such as the ones around Kamala.

Only a matter of time.

*David Crammond
Facebook*

Fire could be prevented for a minimal cost

Re: Blaze guts alleyway of shops in Patong [video], Jul 18

For a small cost (under 7,000 baht), an automatic suppression system could have been in-

stalled at the power box stopping this from happening.

*Darren
Gazette forum*

Another commandment for farangs

Re: Island View: Irrefutable commandments for Phuket farangs, Jul 19

Don't forget thou shalt hang out on balconies, drink till thou stinketh & argue with Thai girlfriend.

*Larry Stein Sr.
Facebook*

Changi one of the strictest airports

Re: Indonesian busted at Samui airport with 3kg of cocaine in suitcase, Jul 16

Something smells fishy... there is no way that bag would've made it out of Singapore without being detected.

The baggage scanning/screening at Changi is one of the most rigorous in the world.

*Bill Bremner
Facebook*

Terrible representation of Thais

Re: Fake monks charged for begging in Patong, Jul 16

It is so unfortunate that we get to hear of such incidents. All Thais are not like that.

*Sarah Adams
Facebook*

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Plans to develop Phuket



Governor's Letter

By Chamroen Tipayapongtada

NO ONE can put a stop to, or change the course of, development. Phuket has been developing at a very rapid pace. It is imperative that we learn to adapt to these changes and keep pace with them.

Development is, of course, a positive thing. However, it may bring with it some negative aspects as well. Some of these include over-population, traffic congestion and increase in the incidence of crimes, drug consumption and accidents, among others. So far, I have been doing my best to get rid of and prevent such vices from taking root in our society.

I am very happy with the beach management campaigns so far. After reclaiming these beaches to their natural state, the next important thing is developing infrastructure for land, sea and air.

As far as development of land-based infrastructure is concerned, there are many ongoing projects in Phuket. We are working hard to finish the Samkong Underpass by August, while Chalong and Bang Ku are on the way as well.

As far as development of marine-based infrastructure is concerned, one of the main developments there is the Phuket Yacht Control Center and the project for expansion of Phuket's deep sea port is also underway.

The biggest improvement of air transport in Phuket is the new airport, which will be officially opened in September this year.

Another important item on our agenda is improving the landscape and city cleanliness.

We are cooperating with local authorities and working on



Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada assumed his role as Phuket Governor on September 30, 2015. He is a Phuket native with a Master's degree in political and administrative science from the National Institute of Development Administration. Last month, he was awarded the honor of 'best drug fighting governor' by the Deputy Prime Minister.

Here, he talks about his plans to improve Phuket within the next five years.

putting electricity wires underground. The project started with Patong and Phuket City. In some areas, it is already complete, while in others, we are making rapid progress.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment has approved a 15-million-baht budget for wastewater management. We will study all the wastewater systems and rearrange the whole system of waste management in Phuket. There will be no more brown water flowing into the sea.

We are also working on trash management by assigning one vice governor to take care of each district, especially the trash on the island's main roads.

Another project is the 'Smart City' for which we have a budget of about 368 million baht. By the end of the year, Phuket will have 1,000 free WiFi spots in Patong and Phuket Town. We will also install more CCTV cameras, especially in areas where there isn't any coverage at present.

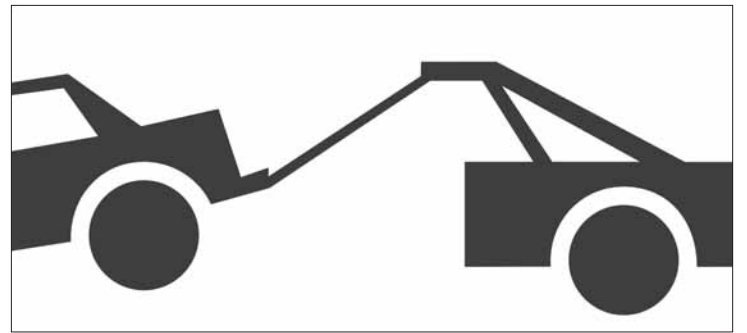
Reducing the number of accidents in Phuket is another one of our main concerns. We are fix-

ing many of the unsafe roads and making structural changes to prevent future accidents. The Safer Road Foundation has helped us with several projects. We built a 2.8-million-baht roundabout at the Narisorn-Surin intersection for this purpose. Before the construction of the roundabout, there were 50 deaths there in the last 10 years. However, there hasn't been a single accident there since.

Next year, we will push all ports in Phuket to install CCTVs and mandate every tourist to show their passport before getting on a boat.

As far as boosting the economy is concerned, Pracharat Rak Samakee aims to increase the income of local people. It promotes local products such as pineapples, lobster, batik and goat milk, and enhances community tourism.

I cannot take sole credit for any achievement, as it is due to the combined efforts of every single officer and Phuket citizen. I expect these projects to gradually and slowly improve Phuket and make it an ideal place to live within the next five years.



The officer refused to listen to my explanation, insisting that 'Thai people are always kind and ready to help'.

Not always helpful

A FEW days ago, I had some business to take care of in Cherg Talay. On the way back, my car started smoking up and shut down in front of the 7-eleven near Heroines' Monument. I was a bit shocked and turned on the hazard lights for the safety of other drivers.

I exited my car and asked around for help, as I had no idea what to do. A few people gave me directions to a nearby garage, but no one helped me push my car to the side of the road. Also, there was no police to be found anywhere, which was surprising, as the area was very crowded. I had to leave my car behind and walk down an alleyway to get help from the garage myself.

The mechanic asked me to ride back to the car with him on his motorbike. When we got there, I was shocked to see a police officer taking photographs of my car. When I asked him why, he complained that I had left it 'abandoned' on the road.

I tried explaining that it had broken down and I was looking for someone to help me push it to the side, but since nobody would help, I was forced to leave it there and go to the garage myself. However, the policeman refused to listen to my explanation, insisting that 'Thai people are always kind and ready to help'. Then he

Island View

By Sucha Mart

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

seized my driving license and proceeded to process a fine.

I was anxious to ask for my license back, but set that concern aside for the time being, until my car was fixed. This took about two hours, as the mechanic had to jump-start it and put water in the radiator, which had dried up and caused it to smoke and break down. He took my car with his team and checked it for a while. He also warned me that I needed to bring the car in for a full maintenance soon.

When I finally got to the police box, the officer appeared to be kinder and in a better mood – very possibly due to the soothing effect of being in an air-conditioned room. He didn't charge me anything and sent me on my way with my license in hand.

On the way back, my car was still jerky and nearly broke down again. I reached home safely, but couldn't believe what I just went through. I thought policemen were supposed to be helpful, but clearly, in my experience, this hasn't been the case.

Words from the Wise

“Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.”

– Confucius

“Money has never made man happy, nor will it. There is nothing in its nature to produce happiness. The more of it one has the more one wants.”

– Benjamin Franklin

Issues & Answers

Can I still report theft after six years?

I HAVE some questions about reporting a theft that occurred about six years ago. My ex-girlfriend stole my motorbike and jet-ski, worth about 600,000 baht each. She sold all these items while I was still in Germany, so I didn't know anything about it at the time.

I was very occupied in Germany, so I didn't return to Phuket for the next few months. I want to know if I can still file a police report six years after the incident

took place, and also report the dealer in Bangkok who was involved in the sale?

Lars Widiawati
Germany

Lt Cholada Chokdeesrijan of the Chalong Police replies:

Cases of theft can be reported for up to 10 years, so you are still eligible to file a complaint.

It will help you even more if you submit as much evidence as possible.

However, in general, you should try to file a complaint within 90 days of finding out about the issue, as it will make your case stronger.

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

Submit your issue at:

www.PhuketGazette.net/IssuesAnswers

A formula for prosperity

Finance

By David Mayes

THERE IS a fantastic equation that can be used in almost any decision you make in life.

I learned this from the supplement company that I work with but it also applies to financial planning, life planning, and many other areas in life. The equation is simply $X=Y$.

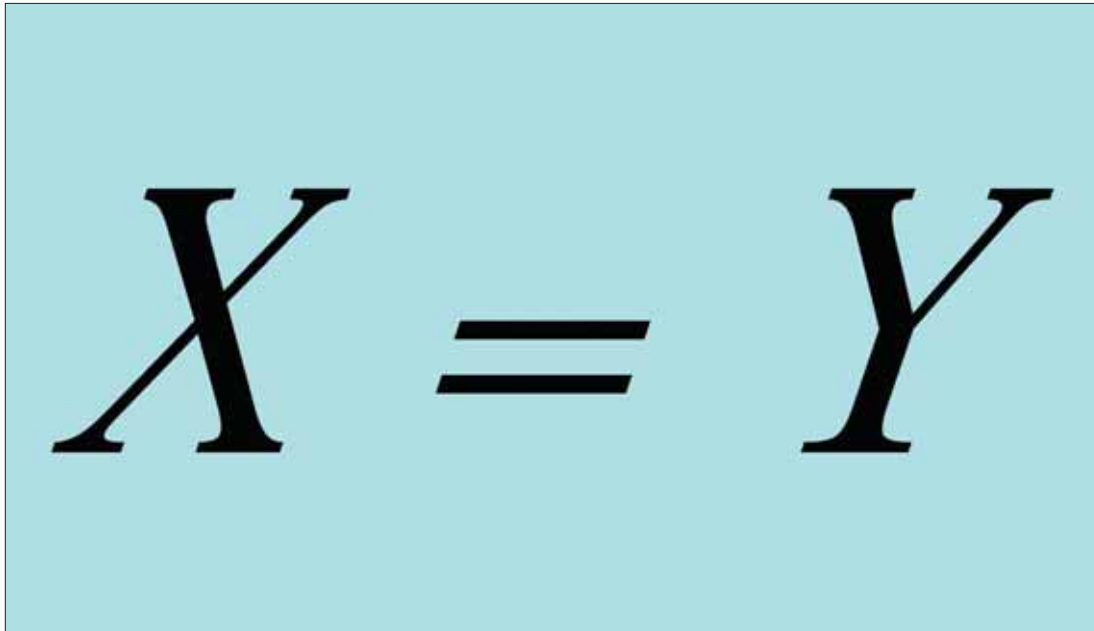
In the equation we can substitute any action for X so that Y is the result of that action.

An easy example is: if you wish to lose weight and get more fit, then Y is 'losing weight', because that's the desired result. X is the action you have to take to achieve the weight loss, such as eating healthier and exercising more.

If you are not getting enough Y – the pounds aren't coming off – then you simply haven't done enough X, so you need to exercise more and control your diet better.

If we substitute 'investment' for X and "return" for Y, we can then use this framework to decide the best option between competing alternatives when considering what to do with our money.

For example, consider in-



The author claims that this equation can be used in all facets of real life decision-making. Image: Gazette file

vestments A and B (X) both return \$100,000 (Y). Investment A requires \$1,000,000 and investment B only \$500,000. As Y is the same, we choose from the options of X.

I know this is a simple example but it demonstrates the point that when Y is the same we choose the easier X.

However, if both investments required \$500,000 but A returned twice as much as B, we would obviously choose A. So if X is the same we will choose the better Y.

Another example of this could be where X and Y are equal but one X is less risky. In that event we choose from whichever X has less risk.

Of course, when investing, we don't always have all the information that we need, but thinking along this framework can aid the decision making process.

This is even more the case if we have a very clear Y. Knowing exactly what you are trying to achieve makes it much easier to choose the best path to get there.

If you get to the train station without knowing where you want to go, you won't know which train is right. Choosing the fastest train may simply put you even further in the wrong direction.

When planning our life, or our retirement, it is very important to make our goals as clear as possible, and then explore as many different paths as possible to get us there.

If our Y is very clear, then we can examine and choose the best X to get us there. If we are not

getting enough of the result we want, it is often a case of us simply needing to increase the X.

In finance terms, that may mean we need to save more money out of our monthly pay packet. Using this framework may also help us decide if that money is best put towards real estate or some kind of financial investment.

In any event, it is a nice framework to substitute into any area of life, even our marriage. If a happy marriage is our desired result, we can look at how we spend our Friday night as a choice between various cases of X and how they will affect the Y we have chosen.

Often our actions don't always match up with what we really want in life, simply because we don't take the time to think things through all the way.

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

Digital technology use advised during economic slump



Economic slumps affect all kinds of businesses. Photo: Pixabay

THE DIRECTOR of the Gem and Jewelry Institute of Thailand (GIT) has advised Thai jewelry entrepreneurs to use digital technology to promote their sales during a global economic downturn.

GIT Director Pornsawat Wathanakul advised the Thai jewellers and entrepreneurs to open themselves up to beneficial information and constantly de-

velop their businesses to meet the customers' demands as they are to adapt to the sluggish global economy. She said that jewelers should adopt digital marketing channels to aid their business by promoting their products and unique identities online to attract customers, especially in the ASEAN and Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam (CLMV) countries who have preferences for gold accessories.

The GIT will assist and provide confirmation to bolster confidence among the jewellers on the effectiveness of online retail marketing while all the entrepreneurs should already have investment and anti-risk plans, the director said.

– NNT

Cloudseeding operation as water reserves plummet

BANG Lang Dam representatives in Yala Province have requested a cloudseeding operation, as water reserves have fallen below expected levels, adversely affecting farmers' businesses.

The latest report from the Information Center of Hydro Power Plant puts the water behind Bang Lang Dam at 220.59 million cubic meters, or just under 19 per cent of capacity. The chief of staff, Kati Chon-neebumrung at Bang Lang Dam Power Plant, that is situated in Bannang Sata District of Yala Province, has reached out for assistance from the Provincial Royal Irrigation Office, requesting a cloudseeding operation over Bannang Sata and Than To Districts. He said rainwater in the two districts would flow directly



With reservoirs empty, representatives have requested cloudseeding operations to help farmers replenish their lands. Photo: eladg

to the dam. The request of which is currently under review.

Rain showers have previously occurred in Krong Pinang, Yaha, Kabang, Raman and the capital districts, away from the reservoir.

The power plant in Bang

Lang Dam is located on the eastern side of Pattani River, and has three 24-megawatt generators with a combined capacity of 72 megawatts. It can generate 200 million units of electricity per year.

– NNT

Keeping up with tech trends



IF YOU have been following this column regularly then you will be aware of the statistics confirming the increase in the use of the Internet and Social Media in recent years. Even in the last year there has been a large move away from traditional advertising in print and television to the online medium.

Coupled with this is the substantial increase in the use of smart phones. Many platforms such as YouTube and Facebook have now specifically set up self-filling forms to assist in using smart phones to easily place orders and provide information to complete online commerce transactions.

It is worth noting that some demographics are more or less likely to embrace certain technologies. While millennials are happy to use smart phones for e-commerce, and almost everything else for that matter, the older generations are still getting used to using desktops to do their online purchasing.

As a company, you should understand your target market; their behaviors and the things that are likely to reach them successfully.



Statistics confirm a substantial increase in the use of the world wide web for advertising. Photo: Rock1997

This can be uncovered with some online research or through forums and marketing companies.

The secret to success with technology is to be aware of current trends. Then you can be pro-active and keep up with them.

It's even better to be one step ahead, so that you are planning and launching your marketing into the mediums that are getting the best results while they are at their peak, rather than turning up late to the party.

An important aspect of using analytics is that the company can direct resources to solutions that produce results. Trends are good at identifying marketing priorities. They may cause a big stir, but the stir may not affect the company's bottom line. So trust tight analysis.

Facebook 'likes' are a classic example of this. In Thailand, it is very easy to get likes, but the real trick is to convert the likes into dollars.

I was recently talking about this over coffee with the share-

holder of a large online systems company. The company is very informative because they are very good at analytics.

As I have said many times, if you don't know your numbers, you are relying more on good luck than good management.

The company in question provides an IT-based platform for global distribution services (GDS) in ASEAN, and more specifically Thailand.

In reviewing their year-on-year results, they noticed a 240 per cent increase in

online sales from the agents using their systems and a large drop in counter-based sales. This has been repeated for several years now and shows no sign of changing.

This translates to a complete consumer behavioral change, where customers are no longer buying products at a retail counter, but preferring to book online.

The trend is the same for all users, which shows how important it is to evolve with the times, or risk being left behind. Examples of industries where this has happened include book sales, newspapers, magazines and video stores, and they will certainly not be the last.

So where is your business in relation to the future, and are you keeping up with the times?

It's never too late to start thinking about this, but the sooner you get into the mindset and start preparing, the better it will be for your business with less damage done.

Simon Wetherell is a Digital Media Expert, Trainer and Lawyer. He now resides in Thailand where he shows businesses and individuals on how to profit from the Social Media industry. For more information go to PhuketOnlineMarketing.com or call him on 095 085 3355.

Kasikorn Securities aims to be country's premium operator

KASIKORN Securities (KS), one of the country's top 10 brokerages by market share, has positioned itself as a premium operator in a bid to differentiate itself from discount brokers in the face of stiff competition.

"Over the past three years, we have launched a lot of new products, including offshore trading, short-term debentures, derivative warrants, options over the counter, and applications," said chief executive Thiti Tantikulanan.

KS has a market share of around 4 per cent. It is one of 34 brokers that has undergone the hard process of brokerage fee liberalization.

Mr Thiti said the company's new products served customers who were mostly educated and wealthy.

He said launching marketing campaigns was now easier given



Ksecurities' parent company is Kasikorn Bank. Photo: The Nation

the social media revolution. "Overall securities trading via the internet now accounts for up to 60 per cent of the total market, compared to only 30 per cent in the past. For KS, broker securities transactions via the Internet is about 65 per cent of our total transactions," Mr Thiti said.

The KS Offshore Investment, a new service in which customers are provided with stock to trade in 41 major mar-

kets in 31 countries, was launched this year.

Mr Thiti said thanks to parent company Kasikornbank, KS was able to offer a low brokerage fee to offshore trading customers. The brokerage fee is about 0.2 per cent of the trading value, which is close to the domestic brokerage fee, while the foreign exchange rate is charged at the interbank rate.

- The Nation

Thailand going for cashless

"THE Kingdom will be on its way to becoming a cashless country, if about 20-30 per cent of the holders of banks' 75.24 million individual current and savings deposits register for the PromptPay service," stated Anuchit Anuchitanukul, adviser to the Finance Ministry's national e-payment project.

PromptPay is the first stage of an national e-payment plan. Official registrations opened on July 15, in which 9.7 million people signed up - according to the Bank of Thailand. The value of e-payments last year was 282.92 billion baht, up from 266.31bn baht in 2014.

- The Nation



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A wild night in Paradise

PARADISE Beach Club's 'Black Moon Festival Zoo' party on July 2 had revelers donning animal masks for a night on the wild side.



Masquerade: party goes at Paradise Beach Club's Black Moon Festival Zoo.

Sino Phuket Rotary Club appoints new president

THE ROTARY Club of Sino Phuket appointed Jakkapan Jitsomboon, owner of Kopi de Phuket, as the charity organization's new president at a ceremony held at the Phuket Pearl Hotel on July 15.



Jakkapan Jitsomboon speaking on the evening of his new appointment as President of the Rotary Club of Sino Phuket. Photo: Thai Asean News



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Events in Paradise

Governor honored for anti-drug drive

DEPUTY Prime Minister Visanu Kruangam presented Phuket Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada with a plaque of honor recently in recognition of his 'outstanding efforts' in implementing policies to deal with illegal drug issues in the province. The event was held at the Army Club in Bangkok last month.



Phuket Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada (left) receives his plaque from Deputy Prime Minister Visanu Kruangam.

Bangkok Airways awarded as World's Best Regional Airline

BANGKOK AIRWAYS was awarded as the 'World's Best Regional Airline 2016' and 'Best Regional Airline in Asia 2016' at the Farnborough International Airshow 2016 in London on July 12. The award ceremony was held at the Skyview Hall.



Bangkok Airways President Captain Puttipong Prasartong-Osoth (2nd left) and staff show off their two new award certificates at the awards ceremony in London.

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PPAO aims to boost halal tourism in the Andaman

AN EXPOSITION is planned to promote halal businesses from both private and public sectors in Phuket. The seminar is part of the Phuket Andaman Halal Tourism 2016 campaign.

Phuket Provincial Administration Organization Chief Teera Jiasakul, as well as other relevant officials, attended the first seminar held on July 21. The seminar marked the launch of a halal business application.

“This is the eighth time this festival is being held in Phuket. This year, the National Food Institute has launched a five year strategy to support halal food and products. Additionally, we aim to standardize every halal restaurant to be accredited by The Central Islamic Council of Thailand,” said Mr Teera.

Another exhibition is being held from July 22-24 at Saphan Hin. It showcases OTOP vendors and stage performances, among other features.

– *Sukawin Tanthavanich*

Three-month Lent retreat begins

By Chutharat Plerin

DEVOUT Buddhists in Phuket and across Thailand are observing Khao Phansa – or Buddhist Lent – which started July 20 and is observed for three lunar months.

Khao Phansa literally means the ‘rains retreat’. This is the customary time for laymen to ordain as monks.

For this three-month period, monks traditionally retreat to temples for the rainy season, as the monsoon rains make it difficult for them to meditate in the forest or do alms rounds.

It is also a time for intensive meditation. Many Buddhists choose to observe this period by adopting strict practices, such as giving up meat, alcohol, or smoking.

Asanha Bucha, the day before the beginning of Lent, commemorates the Lord Buddha’s first teaching of Dhamma (Truth) to his disciples. What started as a sermon for just five disciples during a full-moon day has turned into a worldwide celebration with an estimated 400 million followers.



For this three-month period, monks traditionally retreat to temples for the rainy season, as the monsoons make it difficult for them to meditate in the forest or ask for alms in villages. Photo: Chutharat Plerin

The words ‘Asanha Bucha’ derive from the ancient Pali language and mean ‘fourth month worship.’

The fourth month of the ancient Indian lunar calendar is equivalent to the eighth month of the Thai lunar calendar. It’s on the full moon of

that month that Asanha Bucha takes place.

The holy day marks the first teaching of the core tenets of Buddhism, the four noble truths: there is suffering, which is caused by craving but there is a state beyond suffering and craving – the way to enlightenment

through living righteously – via the eight-fold path.

To ensure the monks are able to sustain themselves during the period of Lent, people make larger-than-usual offerings during Khao Phansa, most commonly with donations of meter-long candles.

Rose returns as TYS ambassador



Thailand Yacht Show ambassador Rose Maitland-Smith. Photo: Gazette file

THE Thailand Yacht Show (TYS) team announced this week that Rose Maitland-Smith has renewed her role as the show’s official Ambassador.

The second TYS is set to take place at Ao Po Grand Marina December 15-18.

The show will give visitors access to a cross-section of exhibitors, including international brands, local Thai icons, lifestyle companies and a broad range of luxury boats and superyachts for sale and charter.

The show also features on-water demonstrations, parties, live music and more.

“We are thrilled to have Rose back onboard with the Thailand Yacht Show.

“Rose’s passion for yachting and sterling reputation in Asia as a trend setter, make her the ideal ambassador for the values that the show holds,” said Andy Treadwell, managing director of the TYS.

“We have no doubt that she will once again contribute greatly to making the show a

huge success,” said Mr Treadwell.

Rose was also the official Ambassador for the first TYS held at the Ao Po Grand Marina from February 11-14.

The organizers said that the first Thailand Yacht Show attracted almost 5,000 visitors in four days and hailed the inaugural event a resounding success.

For more information about the 2016 yacht show visit thailandyachtshow.com.

– *Phuket Gazette*

Kathu to Bangwad bike route rolled out



Over 4,000 participants of all ages cycled 8km from Kathu Municipality offices to Bangwad Dam on July 17. Photo: Kathu Municipality

KATHU Municipality Office in collaboration with *Nation TV* and Mitsubishi Motors held a cycling event starting from the municipality office on July 17 to promote a new bike route.

The event was named ‘Enjoy together in Nature – Bike routes @Kathu’, aiming to boost cycling trends and promote local tourism in Kathu.

“During this wonderful activity, everyone was in touch with the culture and nature of Kathu, and we are overwhelmingly pleased with the response from locals as well as the pri-

vate and public sector representatives who participated,” said Kathu Mayor Chaianan Sutthikul.

A total of 4,200 cyclists took part with some joining from Phang Nga and Krabi provinces to ride the 17km route from the Kathu Municipality office to Bangwad Dam.

“We now have bike routes totalling 8km in the province. We are also making the scenery around the dam attractive to promote it as a leisure destination,” said the mayor.

– *The Nation*

Thor hammers home regatta win

Multihul winners announced after a brisk day's racing

By Greg Reynolds

With podium places on the line, the nervous excitement and anticipation of a great day's sailing was clear to see by the feel at the breakfast tables around the Phuket Yacht club.

What made it even better, Mother Nature decided to grace Chalong Bay with a westerly breeze of 10 to 12 knots, which promised to grow throughout the day.

Race officer Simon James motored out to a position in the northeast corner of the bay and bang on 10:30am, the racing was underway. First off were the racing multihull class, and all eyes were on the three boats battling out for the podium positions. The fresher breeze suited Henry Kaye's Sea Cart 30 *Thor*, and they jumped to an early lead. It looked like a 'first and fastest' was on the cards, but a small technical problem allowed the three chasing *Stealth* cats to close the gap. *Hurricane* put their stamp on the regatta with a resounding win, followed by *Java*, while *Thor* hung on for third.

In race two for Racing Multihulls, the breeze increased to 16 knots and some great photos were taken, along with stories of top speeds to bring everyone home with smiles. *Thor* again jumped out to lead, and this time with no mistakes, romped home to take a deserved 'first and fastest'. The *Hurricane* crew sailed very



In race two for racing Multihulls, *Thor* bagged 'first and fastest'. Photo: Scott Murray / Sea Yachting

well with awesome speed and flawless sailing to take second with *Top Cat* coming in third. Overall winners were Asia Catamarans *Hurricane* led by Alan Carwardine clearly dominating the class, while second went to the new and improving *Top Cat* skippered by Peter Woods. Third went to *Java Yachting* led by John Coffin, who showed glimpses of winning speed, but not often enough to pressure *Hurricane*.

Second startaway were the *Fireflies*, whose racing and speed were a joy for everyone

to watch. The fresher breezes suited the very consistent and well-sailed *Twin Sharks*, but out of the pack emerged a new contender for the top position in Advanced Racing Team *Mamba* showed fantastic speed around the three-lap windward and leeward course, and then the longer coastal race that followed.

Second and first places were just rewards of her speed and smarts on the race track. It was the very consistent *Twin Sharks*, however, who placed first and second over the two

races to comfortably sew up the 2016 title. A couple of other boats also showed out during these windier races, with *Blue Noze* and *Moto Inzi* grabbing third placings each day. When all the points were tallied it was *Twin Sharks* first, *Advanced Racing Team* second and *Voodoo* in third.

The one-design Corsair Pulse 600 fleet reveled in the conditions and eagerly jumped at the chance to plane around the race course and enjoy high speeds providing onlookers with quite a spectacle. The fleet

raced two, three lap windward and leeward courses and the windier conditions also threw a few different results in the fleet.

In the first race of the day, *Pixalux* showed great speed and tactics to race away to an impressive all the way win, which also tied up first place in the regatta. Chasing hard was *Multihull Solutions* to score a second and third, clenching second overall. Third place went to Phuket Island radio helmed by Qu Jaimin.

Race two around the windward and leeward course saw the breeze increase, favoring the crew of *Pulse Red* helmed by Paul Baker. Second was *Pixalux* and third was *Pulse Yellow*, which was a great reward for the perseverance of the crew. Overall it was *Pulse Blue Pixalux* helmed by Mick Tilden in first place, *Multihull Solutions* helmed by Andrew deBruin in second, and *Pulse Red* helmed by Paul Baker in third.

This year's record fleet was a grand show of strength for multihull sailing in the region and also the organizing body, Phuket Yacht Club. Special thanks must go to the sponsors of the regatta, without whose contributions the regatta may not have been the great success it was. Finally, a big thanks to all the volunteers who donated their time and efforts to make the 2016 Multihull Solutions Regatta the best ever.

Buses aim to compete with low cost airlines

THE Transport Company Limited has launched a hundred 15-meter-long buses to compete with the rising trend of low-cost airlines, the company revealed on its 86-year anniversary on July 13.

"They contain extra-comfortable seats; lockers above every seat; free wifi; as well as modern entertainment services to watch movies and sports matches," said Transport Company chairman Anusorn Saengnimnual.

The company will do test-runs on four main routes from Bangkok; Phuket, Mae Sot, Nakhon Phanom and Chiang



The project was launched on the company's 86-year anniversary. Photo: The Transport Company Limited

Mai. These tests are being done from July 13 till October 31.

The company also plans to add 300 more buses to these routes if they get positive response.

– Sukawin Tanthavanich

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More marine cooperation needed

On Deck
By Duncan Worthington

ALMOST three weeks of back-to-back yachting events in Phuket sounds great, right?

December is set to be a veritable orgy of regattas, boat shows, lavish cocktail parties, gala dinners, pomp and glam – it’s an all-out marine love-in and it starts with the 30 year old Phuket King’s Cup Regatta from December 3-10 at Kata Beach Resort & Spa. Thailand’s premier regatta, the Phuket King’s Cup is the jewel in Thailand’s regatta crown. Royal Patronage makes the event truly unique and the fleet of keelboats and multihulls attracts some of the best sailing talent from around the world to create an unrivaled diversity, with 30+ nationalities of sailors out on the water each day.

Just overlapping the event is the new kid on the block, the Phuket Superyacht Rendezvous, held from December 10-12. The race is organized and hosted by Kata Rocks. Having hosted the Asia Superyacht Rendezvous for a number of years, Kata Rocks are well versed in all things superyacht.

This is followed by the Thailand Yacht Show from December 15-18 at Ao Po



Phuket is the sailing destination of choice for many of the world’s billionaires and their mega yachts during the Phuket Superyacht Rendezvous, to be held this year December 10-12. Photo: Gazette file

Grand Marina. A celebration of boating lifestyle, the second Thailand Yacht Show will bring together all sizes and types of boats, from tenders and jet skis, to some of Asia’s premier superyachts.

The 16-year-old Asia Superyacht Rendezvous will take place in its traditional date slot of December 16-18. This year it moves to a new venue, the five-star SALA Phuket Resort & Spa on Mai Khao Beach. A stunning venue that will no doubt delight the superyacht captains and crews who attend.

If that’s not enough, there’s also talk of a Phuket charter week in December, and you

could book-end everything with the Ocean Marina Pattaya Boat Show from November 24 – 27 – the Gulf of Thailand’s leading boat show organized for five years by Ocean Marina – and the 14th Phuket International Boat Show from January 5-8, 2017 – Thailand’s original boat show and billed as ‘Asia’s favourite boat show’.

I’m sure each event organizer has a reason for their choice of dates, but surely a little co-ordination would benefit all?

Many of these events attract international visitors – Phuket’s primary source or revenue – and I’m sure the island’s hotels

would prefer to have bookings spread across the year, rather than forced into a few weeks of busy madness during their already peak period. It’s worth noting how organizers of the Bay Regatta (which will take place from February 15-19, 2017, after Phuket’s peak season) and the Cape Panwa Hotel Phuket Raceweek (which will take place in July 2017, during the low season), have both chosen dates during the year which will benefit both Phuket’s tourism and marine industries.

Similarly, the island’s media industry can only report on so much in a short space of time, meaning some events are likely

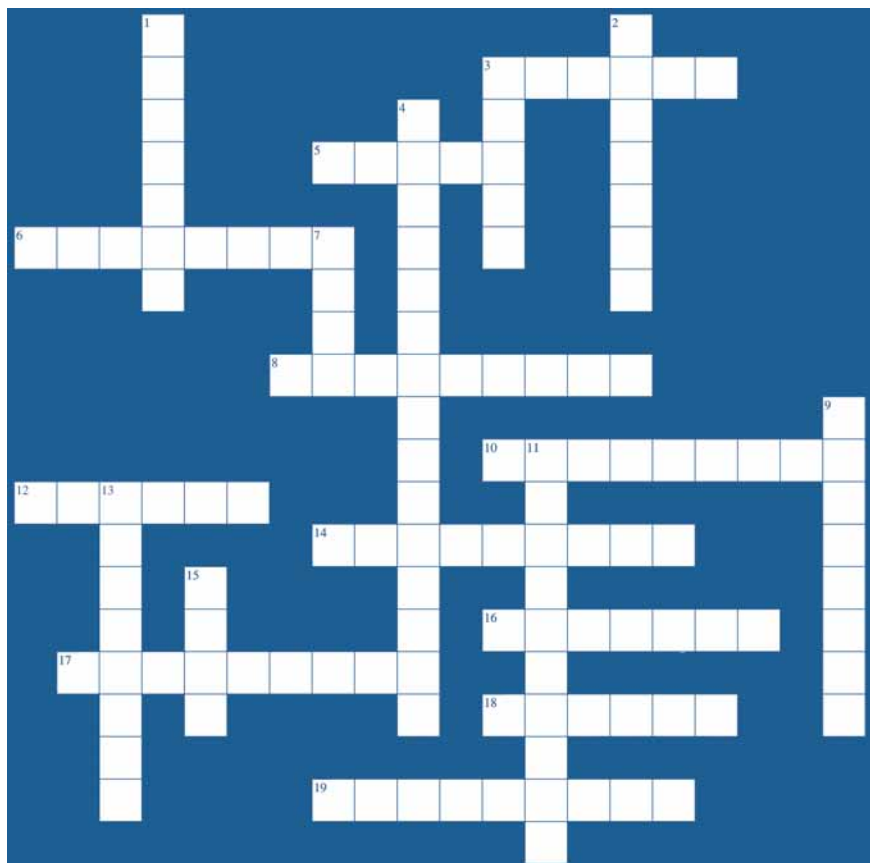
to lose out. Not only is this a shame for those events that do lose out, but it’s also a missed opportunity for the marine industry. Long-term media exposure of the industry and its activities is much more beneficial than a short hectic period followed by months of quiet.

And let’s not forget about the industry itself, that is, the people who work at, exhibit at, or provide services to these events. Any company accountant will tell you a longer period of sustained business is preferable to a short blast of revenue – much better for cash flow and business planning.

Here’s hoping for more cooperation in the industry. We need a long-term vision and planning that puts the industry first, where events can deliver tangible and intangible benefits to the industry while achieving private owners’ own goals.

There has to be a better way for the greater good of Thailand’s marine industry than what is planned for the end of 2016. December is overkill.

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



Gazette Crossword

Test your word power and local knowledge.

Across

- 3. Asian mustard
- 5. _____ of the Andaman
- 6. Deadly floater found off Phuket beaches
- 8. Slyly done
- 10. Fear of bees
- 12. Hotel in Phuket Town
- 14. Thailand has 76 of these
- 16. Mangrove dweller
- 17. Chain store
- 18. Smelted and shaped
- 19. Cut short

Down

- 1. 16th century vessel
- 2. Ladyboy show
- 3. Cymru
- 4. Place for perished sailors
- 7. Sun devourer
- 9. Talking like a walk
- 11. 5-note scale
- 13. Hold back
- 15. Municipal color

Solution on opposite page.



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Erotic undertones of orchids



THE EPITHET ‘sexy’ is much overused, not to say abused. It appears in contexts that have nothing to do with people’s erotic appetites at all. Inanimate objects can apparently fit the bill; cars, dishes or even flowers.

‘No Orchids For Miss Blamish’, a raunchy 1939 novel, invoked orchids in its title because author James Hadley Chase knew they possessed all the right credentials.

Thus Victorians were offended by the blatant sexuality of orchids. Ruskin called them ‘prurient apparitions’ while artist Georgia O’Keefe has frequently in her paintings depicted them as veiled representations of female genitalia. And it doesn’t stop there. The word comes from the Greek for testicle – a reference to the plant’s pseudobulbs – while the flowers emit chemicals (pheromones) to dupe insect pollinators into thinking they are mating with a female. Wow!

End of diversion. Previously, we soberly considered two varieties of orchid: phalaenopsis and dendrobium. There are many more though, for this is the largest family of flowering plants, with total species numbers around 25,000.

In the dense jungles of New Guinea and Sumatra, there are likely yet more undiscovered species. More cultivars con-



The cattleya orchid is a native of Central and South America.

stantly appear, as the orchid is the most widely hybridized of all plants.

Native to Central and South America, cattleya fits the general orchid mold. It is epiphytic. There are two basic types: two-leaved varieties, which produce clusters of smallish flowers at the top of the stem, and single-leaved ones, which beget fewer but substantially larger blooms; the prime target for cross-breeding.

Justifiably popular, these produce dramatic flowers in a bewildering range of colors ranging from deep magenta (‘Lucky Strike’) to pure white

‘Queen Sirikit’. A typical bloom has three sepals and three, usually broader petals. One petal is modified to form the characteristic lip, which is often in a different hue. Thus ‘Alma Kee’ is yellow with a startling red, frilly mouth. The flowers are fragrant and invariably last well: up to six weeks is normal.

Cattleyas need light to flourish but not full tropical sun. Morning light is especially appreciated, as is regular feeding with a liquid fertilizer. Re-potting should be done at least every two years, or when new growth reaches over the edge of the container.

Two other genera in the fam-



Being a native of China, the slipper orchid flourishes in colder climates.

ily of orchidaceae deserve a passing mention. Oncidium orchids, also epiphytic, have pseudobulbs which consist of double-leaved stems and sprays of showy, widely-spaced flowers, numbering up to a hundred, mostly in shades of brown or yellow. The sought-after ‘Dancing Dolls’ has long clusters of vivid yellow blooms.

Slipper orchids (paphiopedilum) were fashionable as house plants in my youth. Partly, I suspect, because they are terrestrial and grow – quite conventionally – in soil. Hailing from China and points south, they had a better chance of surviving in English drawing rooms.

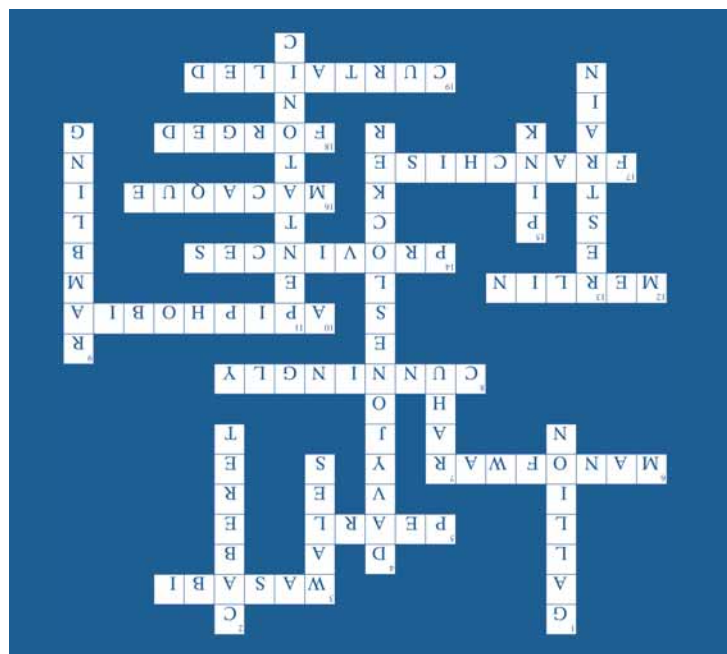
Characteristically, they have leathery, often dramatically mottled leaves and flowers. The predominant color is white or cream with deep purple flecking. In the tropics, they need to be placed in a relatively cool and partly shaded location. Protect from tropical storms, and replace the potting mix at least once a year.

All orchids, like humans, enjoy a change.

If you have gardening or environmental concerns, contact Patrick at drpaccampbell@gmail.com. Many of his creative and academic publications can be found at his website: GreenGaloshes.wordpress.com.

Crossword Solution

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Expats hit by Brexit fallout



Across the Land

By Amy Koh

TWO DAYS after the United Kingdom held a referendum to leave the European Union (EU); now famously known worldwide as “Brexit”, the global financial markets suffered US\$3 trillion in paper losses.

The aftermath is eerily quiet. The consequences of Brexit will unfold in the coming months or years ahead, and they will be far-reaching. Good or bad, they will undoubtedly reach the shores of Thailand, and Phuket.

There is still a large expatriate community from the United Kingdom who are business and property owners in Phuket. Many permanently reside here and others use their properties in Phuket as holiday homes.

The first thing to have affected British expats with salaries or funds paid in British pounds is the exchange rate. The dramatic fall of the pound against the US dollar hit a 31-year low after the EU referendum results. Funds and pensions transferred from the UK to pay for living expenses or maintenance costs here are now at least 10-12 per cent less than before Brexit, which immediately translates to an increase in monthly costs.

We can expect to see fewer holiday makers and less sales



Some British expat property owners here may be planning on walking away from their assets. Photo: Unsplash

activity from UK-based property investors this coming high season, except for expatriates already living in Asia.

With less than six months until the Christmas and New Year holidays, even travel bookings are slow. Travellers who usually book early to avoid disappointment may well adopt a wait-and-see attitude instead. This will likely result in many more late and last-minute holiday bookings.

We also expect to see more British expat owners of property here listing those properties for sale with the long-term goal of disposing of their assets in Phuket.

As for property investors

from the UK, they will probably hold off on overseas investment and buy domestically, where exchange rates are not a factor in the purchase.

Leading consultancy firms in the UK forecast a drop in property prices all over the kingdom of between 5 and 10 per cent.

UK-based real estate agents are now busy with increased interest from property buyers in Asia, Spain, Italy and the Middle East, who are looking for a bargain while exchange rates are in their favor.

Meanwhile, the rest of Europe and the European Union is dealing with the issue of consolidating, after the Brexit and

the weakening of the Euro.

There has been much speculation over the future of the Euro. Some analysts anticipate its imminent collapse while others believe a paradigm shift has begun.

Overall, investors are now looking for yields in emerging markets, and Asia will be the main focus. Growth in Asia is predicted. Not much, but growth all the same, as we wait to see how Brexit really plays out.

Amy Koh is the sales manager of Engel & Voelkers Phuket. To contact Amy or for more information, visit engelvoelkers.com/en/phuket

KKP bank reports Q2 drop in loan applications

KIATNAKIN Bank Public Company Limited (KKP) saw a further rise in non-performing loans (NPL) in the second quarter, mainly from small and medium-sized property developers, taking its gross NPL rate to 6.1 per cent from 5.8 per cent at the end of last year.

KKP has the highest gross NPL rate of its peers.

In its report to the Stock Exchange of Thailand on its second-quarter and first-half performance, it said the increased NPLs were mainly from lending to real-estate developers. The loan portfolio for the second quarter contracted by 0.4 per cent from the previous quarter, resulting in an overall contraction of 1.6 per cent for the first half of 2016.

KKP's hire-purchase loans in the first six months contracted by 2 per cent and commercial loans, mainly to small and medium-sized property developers, dropped by 7.9 per cent. Meanwhile, corporate loans increased by 13 per cent.

Despite the drop in lending and rising NPLs, KKP's net interest income amounted to 2.535 billion baht in the second quarter, up by 15.1 per cent year on year from B2.202bn.

— *The Nation*

Government takes back more land, angers locals

LOCALS are furious after government officers demolished plantations and houses in Thalang on July 15.

“This is incredibly unfair,” said Sorasid Saksuay, a representative of the 200-member community, talking to the press yesterday. “We’ve been living here since before 1998.”

A Suan Pa Bang Kanun census in 1998 registered community members and property claims. The area, spread out over some 2,000 rai, is partially covered by a forest. Government officials said they allowed community members to settle on land where the forest had died off naturally, but villagers not counted in the census are accused of encroaching onto government-controlled land.

The demolitions, which claimed 5 houses, a palm-tree

plantation and a rubber plantation, were carried out using two backhoes.

Vice Governor Chokdee Amornwat claimed that the structures and their inhabitants had encroached on more than 48 rai of forest reserves.

“The government decided to step in after locals filed a complaint,” V/Gov Chokdee told the *Gazette*. “The case was taken to court, where it was ruled as encroachment, which led us to do the demolitions today.”

“The court is also considering whether another 100 rai or so has been encroached upon,” he added.

Boonsueb Samakraj, Director of Forest Management Bureau No 12, Krabi Province, said that the raid and consequent demolitions were the result of a directive by Prime



Heavy machinery was brought in to demolish plantations said to be encroaching on public land in Thalang. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong.

Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha.

“There are four steps in the forest reclamation plan,” Mr Boonsueb said. “Within one year, we’ll stop deforestation and begin to get the forests

back under government control. In a span of two years, we’ll be focusing on improving our forest management, and over the next decade we’ll be restoring national forests.”

“We hope to take back over 40 per cent of the country’s encroachments and restore them to their natural state,” Mr Boonsueb added.

— *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

B9mn for pier improvements

By Sukawin Tanthavanich

A BUDGET of 9 million baht has been allocated to spruce up Chalong Pier with plans to improve facilities for the hundreds of tourists that visit the ferry point daily.

Transportation Division Chief Prasit Yotharak of the Phuket Provincial Administrative Organization (PPAO) said on July 18 that renovation plans include adding more seating, building more toilets, shower stalls and a Muslim prayer room.

There are also plans to install new lights along the length of the pier.

“The plans have been sent for government approval, which we expect to receive by August, so that construction can begin in September,” said Mr Prasit.

However, Mr Prasit could not reveal precise details of the plans until they have been finalized.

A tour boat operator at the pier, who wished not to be named, estimated that about 500 tourists arrive at the pier every morning, before boarding boats for excursions to nearby islands.

“Shaded seating areas are desperately needed,” he said.

“It is total chaos in the mornings. When it rains it is an absolute nightmare as 500 people try to cram into an area only suitable for 30 to 40,” said the boat operator.

“The toilets are another ma-



More than 500 tourists arrive at Chalong Pier every morning but have nowhere shaded to sit while they wait to board boats on excursions to nearby islands. Photo: Gazette file

major problem; ladies toilets especially. There simply are not enough. Just four sit-down toilets for 500 people. They are

also in a disgusting state by mid morning and my guests often refuse to use them, even after they have had to queue up for

at least ten minutes.”

Officials recently realized that the narrow building construction is causing the

problem, due to which new, broader seating areas at the Yachting Control Center will accommodate tourists.

Developers target Asean investors

FOREIGN INVESTORS have been buying residential properties in Asean countries as prices remain relatively low and their currencies are weak against the US dollar.

Thai property firms have been promoting their residential projects overseas since early this year, and many have closed sales with foreign buyers wanting a second or vacation home in the Kingdom.

Sansiri sold 2 billion baht worth of condominium units in the first half of this year to buyers from Hong Kong, mainland China and Taiwan.

Last year, the company recorded B3.5bn in presales from foreign customers, and it expects overseas presales of up to

B5bn this year. Its overall presales target is B42bn.

“We plan to roadshow our luxury condominium projects in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore this year, having witnessed [foreign] demand to buy into these projects last year,” said SC Asset Corp chief executive officer Nuttaphong Kunakornwong.

The company's luxury Saladaeng Ond project, which was launched last year, has achieved sales of 900 million baht to buyers from Hong Kong, Singapore, mainland China and Taiwan, he said.

The implementation of the Asean Economic Community this year and a weaker baht have been seen as the main

factors boosting foreign demand for condominium units in Bangkok's central business districts.

Surachet Kongcheep, associate director of research at property consultancy Colliers International, said buyers from mainland China and Hong Kong were the main targets for developers focused on the luxury residential market.

He said some condominium projects in Bangkok along Sukhumvit Road had sold out their foreign quota – 49 per cent of the units – to buyers from mainland China, Hong Kong and Japan within days.

– The Nation



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Phuket's jet-setting race officer

By Simon J Hand

THE yachts may change, the weather always, but one constant in the Phuket sail racing firmament is Race Officer Simon James. Up at the crack of dawn and ready on the start line as the racers roll out their mainsails, Simon James has officiated at almost every regatta in the Andaman and the Gulf of Thailand since the turn of the century.

Despite his being a resident on the island, it's rare to come across him when there isn't a race in the offing. That's because as popular as he is for his steadfast on-water management in Thailand, he is equally in demand on the start boats of regattas across Asia and Oceania.

"To be honest, these are the only times I'm in Thailand these days," says Simon during our meet at the Phuket Yacht Club, where he was prepping for the Multihull Regatta and getting organized for this week's Cape Panwa Hotel Phuket Raceweek.

Once he's packed up at

Raceweek, he's back in the air. "The following week I'm in Hong Kong and China, then I'm off to the Hamilton Island Race Week. Back on August 29, then I go straight to the Asia Kiteboard Championships in China. Then a meeting for China Cup, the Foiling Kiteboard Worlds, and after that I've got to go to the UK for an IRC meeting in Rourke. Then it's straight back out to Asia for China Coast, China Cup and the Hainan race – they're all back to back – then the Raja Muda (in Malaysia), then it's the King's Cup.

That final stop on the calendar, the Phuket King's Cup, is where Simon first officiated at the start line, back in 2000, but his involvement dates back to his first months in Phuket in 1995, when he came to the island to set up the RYA sailing school.

Simon went to work for the yacht charter operator, Sunsail, and encouraged the company to get more involved in events like the King's Cup to better serve their client base. "We didn't have a big budget for

sponsorship but we (Sunsail) could provide products and support."

That initial impetus from the island's largest charter outfit at the time, led to long-term benefits for the island's top regatta. Today, the King's Cup boasts a 25-30 strong charter boat class, with a further 30 yachts chartered to compete across a range of other classes, making the charter yachts a significant component of the fun and games at the regatta.

Simon's involvement in the regattas does not begin and end on the water. As representative for the UK's Royal Ocean Racing Club and a World Sailing International Race Officer, he is committed to training a whole new generation of Asian race officers at regattas around the region, who he admits will ultimately replace him.

He is also focused on helping to develop new and exciting formats of racing for the regattas he works on. This includes current negotiations to bring an international kiteboarding event under the umbrella of the King's Cup and a plan to deliver a whole

new fleet of high-speed catamarans – the M32s – into the Asian circuit. These 32-foot cats have replaced monohulls for the world match racing series and Simon hopes to have them in a class of their own at the next King's Cup.

"The plan is to bring a container load of 6-8 boats to the region," he explains. "Basically the company ship them to an event and

set up everything. Then the owners fly in, get on the boats and race them."

Despite his globe-trotting lifestyle, he still happily calls Phuket home and is well aware that his success as a race officer began right here.

"As far as I'm concerned, this is a great stop-off point in between going places," he says.







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