

Phuket Gazette

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‘THERE WILL NOT BE ANY FLOODING IN PATONG THIS YEAR’

Down the drain

Phuket chiefs confident B433.5mn in improvements will help keep island dry

By Kongleaphy Keam

THERE will be no flooding in Patong this year, Mayor Chalermkluck Kebsup told the *Gazette* on August 1, following the approval of a 420-million-baht budget for flood prevention measures in one of Phuket's most densely developed municipalities.

Mayor Chalermkluck said she was confident that the implementation of several short- and long-term flood prevention measures currently underway will ensure that Patong is not inundated with runoff during the monsoon rains, as it has been over the past 20 years.

Patong Police Station has been regularly inundated with flood water more than a meter deep, damaging equipment and files at the station and often crippling its operations.

“This year, the police station will not be affected by any flooding following approval of the budget from the Phuket Provincial Public Works and Town & Country Planning Office, which is to be used over the next two years to undertake a variety of flood prevention initiatives. A construction company was contracted in April to carry out the work,” Mayor Chalermkluck said.

“The municipality has been dredging canals and removing obstructions, such as trash blocking drainage pipes. These temporary measures have been successful and there has not been any flooding in Patong so far this year,” said Mayor Chalermkluck.

“However, continually clearing blockages has been costly and we are



Seasonal flooding in Patong municipality has crippled the city in the past and cost billions of baht in damages for local government and private sector businesses. Photo: Gazette file

looking at better, longer-term solutions, such as building a pond in which to collect trash to prevent it from clogging up waterways,” she said. “That would make dredging the canals no longer necessary.”

Phase two of the flood-prevention project for Patong Municipality is to build a new culvert leading from Bang Ton Khao Khlong, in the north of Patong, directly out to the sea, Mayor Chalermkluck said. The municipality will also build a flood barrier at Pak Bang Canal in the south to prevent sea water from flooding the city.

“Currently, runoff is directed down a small drainage pipe that is already 10 years old,” she said. “It’s too small to cope with the excess water, so a much larger under-

ground culvert is to be built, running under Phra Baramee Road and out to sea, instead of flowing through town.”

“The flood barrier at Pak Bang Canal, at the southern end of the municipality, will prevent sea water from flowing into Patong. We will also build up hillside walls along the canal in order to help prevent landslides. As an extra precautionary measure, additional water pumps will be installed across the municipality to help drain any excess water,” she added.

The mayor said the municipality is planning to build a new road alongside the renovated canal, which she said would become a “local tourist attraction.”

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Chinese may boycott the Kingdom

BACKLASH against vehement criticism of Chinese tourists in Thailand has led to rumors that they may remove the country from their travelling plans in the near future.

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LOCAL NEWS

Briefly

Monsoon rains delay flights

BAD weather prevented several flights from taking off and landing at Phuket International Airport on the morning of August 3, causing delays of up to five hours for some passengers.

Airport Director Monrudee Gettuphan said a total of 19 flights from the following airlines were affected: Beijing Capital Airlines, Shanghai Airlines, Juney Ao Airlines, Spring Airlines, Asia Atlantic, China Southern Airlines and Bangkok Airways.

Ms Monrudee confirmed most of the planes were back on schedule by the afternoon, except for Bangkok Airways and Spring Airlines flights.

– *Kongleaphy Keam*

Employers of migrants issue letter to V/Gov

A CROWD of more than a hundred local employers of migrant workers gathered on the morning of August 3 at Phuket Provincial Hall to protest difficul-

Bank of Thailand issues commemorative note



Twenty million commemorative 500 baht bank notes celebrating Her Majesty the Queen's 84th birthday on August 12 will be issued by The Bank of Thailand. HM the Queen's birthday marks the seventh cycle of the Chinese Zodiac, with each cycle comprised of 12 years. Photo: Bank of Thailand

ties registering workers under their employ.

The protestors submitted a formal letter of complaint to Phuket Vice Governor Kajornkiet Rakpanitmanee, demanding fair treatment of migrant workers and their employers while they are being registered.

At least 20,000 foreign la-

borers, predominantly Myanmar nationals, have registered at the Phuket Provincial Employment Office's (PPEO's) 'one-stop center' since it began accepting applications on April 1.

However, employers and migrant workers have also been subjected to raids and arrests by officers from the PPEO and other departments while their applications are being processed.

– *Chutharat Plerin*

Car bursts into flames in Phuket Town

THE owner of a 20-year-old Opel Corsa Swing was forced to abandon his vehicle in Phuket Town on July 31 when it suddenly burst into flames outside the Expo Market on Soi Dilok Uthit near Chana-Charoen Road.

Two fire engines took about 20 minutes to extinguish the blaze, reported the Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) Phuket Office.

A representative of the fire department at the scene said that the car's owner and his colleagues were heading back to Koh Sireh from the nearby Kaset Night Market when the vehicle caught fire.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

Kuwaiti father drowns at Patong Beach

A KUWAITI man, on holiday with his Thai wife and their child, died while swimming at Patong Beach on the afternoon of July 29.

Abudullam Haalmusawi, 71, was found floating face-down by other swimmers off Patong's Loma Park. He was taken to Patong Hospital, where he was pronounced dead, police confirmed.

Mr Haalmusawi's distraught wife, Kamla Rungrueng, aged approximately 40 years old, said she and her husband had been on holiday in Phuket with their 10-year-old son for the past 10 days.

Mr Haalmusawi went swimming at about 3:30pm, leaving his wife and child on the beach. About half an hour later Mrs Haalmusawi was stunned to see people crowded around lifeguards attempting to resuscitate her husband.

The lifeguards said Mr Haalmusawi first swam out of the safe swimming zone. They called him back and he returned to the safe zone to swim among the other tourists.

Some time later, swimmers noticed he was unconscious in the water.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

Myanmar nat'l abducted and extorted by false 'officers'

A MYANMAR national reported on August 1 that he had been abducted a week prior by a group of men claiming to be 'Special Force officers' investigating illegal workers.

The victim told police that a group of four or five men abducted him in Phuket Town on July 28, then stole 120,000 baht from his bank account.

According to the police report filed by the victim, he has been a Phuket resident for more than a decade and was approached by the gang while outside Community Hall in Phuket Town, where migrant workers have been told to register as part of a nationwide campaign to legalize thousands of un-registered workers from Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos.

The victim said he initially refused to pay, so he was driven past his house.

At the Phuket City Police station, the victim identified the driver from the Royal Thai Police database.

"That man, who cannot be named at this stage, is now under investigation," Phuket City Police told the *Gazette*.

– *Winai Sarot*

Teen arrested for possession of guns, ammo

TWO men were arrested after a police raid on their Kamala house turned up illegal firearms and ammunition on July 27.

Col Sirisak Wasasiri of the Kamala police said officers were tipped off by informants that the suspects possessed illegally obtained and home-made weapons.

"Thitiwat Prateep Na Thalang, 19, a Phuketian, was found in possession of two guns and two .22 caliber bullets," Col Sirisak said.

"Anuchait Kwansri, a 28 year-old Krabi native, was also found in possession of two of .22 caliber bullets. He was charged with illegal possession of ammunition," he added.

Col Sirisak said the tip-off led to the arrests as Mr Thitiwat liked to boast about his guns online and purchase ammunition through Facebook.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

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V/Gov advocates Bangkok buy-back scheme for sea gypsy land

PHUKET'S Vice Governor advocated national intervention in the ongoing land dispute between private property developer Baron World Trade Co Ltd and the sea gypsy community in Rawai on July 29.

Vice Governor Prajiad Aksornthammakul encouraged the National Reform Steering Assembly (NRSA) to convince Bangkok to buy up the disputed property near Rawai Pier from private owners.

The land dispute surrounding the sea gypsies' village and villagers' access to a nearby ceremonial site has been going on for years, often turning violent.

In January, more than 30 people were injured in a confrontation between Baron employees and Rawai sea gypsies.

In February, Weerachai Tantiwattanawalop, who claims to own five rai of land currently occupied by the sea gypsies, said he and other land owners submitted a letter to Prime Minister Gen Prayut Chan-o-cha, asking the government to step in and buy their land.

The NRSA, which advises Bangkok on social affairs, completed a circuit of sea gypsy communities in Phang Nga on July 28, before meeting with V/



V/Gov Prajiad advocated that the government buy the disputed property at the National Reform Steering Assembly. Photo: Chutharat Plerin

Gov Prajiad and officials in Phuket.

Phuket Vice Governor Prajiad explained to the committee that there are five sea gypsy communities in Phuket, which comprise an estimated 4,500 people. The largest – and most problematic according to V/Gov Prajiad – is the Rawai community in question, with 244 households and a total population of 2,063, according to provincial government estimates.

“Each of these [sea gypsy] communities has its own problems,” V/Gov Prajiad told the NRSA representatives. “The community that seems to have most problems in Phuket is the Rawai community, with the

Laem Tukkae community coming in second. Their problems are primarily economic in nature, with neighboring touristic demand driving up land values, because these communities are located on private land.”

“We know that almost every sea gypsy area has land conflicts, in one form or another,” V/Gov Prajiad continued. “The price of land in Phuket is very high, and that really heightens the seriousness of these problems.”

V/Gov Prajiad told the assembly that Phuket's provincial government has contacted the Ministry of Interior, as well as the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, requesting that the government

purchase the disputed land.

“After we buy back the land, we can move on to the next step, where we manage the land for the [Rawai sea gypsy] community. We'd also offer the villagers access to public utilities and education,” V/Gov Prajiad said. “I think that within six months to a year, the villagers will have a greatly improved quality of life.”

But NRSA chairman Anothai Ritthipanyawong said he disagreed with the proposed government buy-back scheme.

“To my knowledge, so many pieces of land across the country – and of course in Phuket – are under investigation about how the land owner obtained their title deeds,” Mr Anothai said.

“Most of the land in Phuket falls under that ambiguity, and I have a feeling that these pieces of land do so as well.”

“We cannot say at this point that the government has to buy back this land for the sea gypsies. I don't doubt that the reason we're at this point in the first place is because the land was illegally issued,” Mr Anothai said. “Why don't we at least wait until the land ownership case is officially finalized in court.”

– Chutharat Plerin

First Muslims in Thailand leave for Hajj

ONE hundred and fifty eight Thais left Phuket International Airport on August 2 to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, as this year's Hajj begins.

This is the first flight of Thai nationals from the southern region leaving for Hajj this year. Seventy nine of the passengers were from Pattani Province and the other half were from Nakhon Sri Thammarat.

Muslims are required to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, called Hajj, once in their lives. The pilgrimage is one of the central tenets of Islam. This year's official Hajj begins on September 9 and will last until the 14th.

Representatives of Phuket's provincial departments, hospitals and police officers gathered at Phuket Airport on August 2 to wish the group well and to see them off, aboard a chartered flight to Dubai and Medina.

Additional flights for the island's Muslim communities are scheduled to depart Phuket Airport August 11-15. Phuket Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada will convene a ceremony on the July 11 to bless the pilgrims and to wish them well on their Hajj.

– Kongleaphy Keam

Chinese tourists 'boycott' Thailand

AFTER months of stories about Chinese tourists and their loud and 'inappropriate' behavior while visiting Thailand this year, rumors on social media suggest that they might be looking to remove the Kingdom from their list of countries for holidays.

Reports in the *Gazette's* mass circulation Thai-language newspaper partner *Komchad-luek* suggest that Tourism and Sports Minister Kobkarn Wattanavrangul has discredited the rumors, but that she nevertheless issued orders on July 26 to keep an eye on tourist numbers from major cities in China.

Rumors about the Chinese 'boycotting Thailand' started when a group of Chinese tourists expressed displeasure at being judged for 'inappropriate behavior.'

In March, the internet was ablaze with vehement criticism of Chinese tourists after Chinese media company 'Shanghaiist' published a 33-

second video clip showing them in a feeding frenzy at a shrimp buffet in Chiang Mai on March 18, followed by photos showing large amounts of food being wasted.

“Tourism Authority of Thailand offices in major Chinese cities have not noticed any widespread calls for boycotts, except in Yunnan,” said Ms Kobkarn. “We won't treat this matter lightly, however. Our sources have mentioned that the Yunnan government has educated its residents about the rules for taking their motor homes to Thailand.”

The issue came to light in February this year as nearly a dozen recreational vehicles were spotted in Phuket. At least 3,000 Chinese cars and buses entered Thailand during the Chinese New Year holidays alone, prompting officials to rethink regulations for vehicles from that country entering Thailand.

The recent drop in Chinese

tourists rolling into northern Thailand due to the introduction of expensive and complicated regulations has caused officials some concern, but Ms Kobkarn said that Chinese tourist numbers have actually increased since January.

“There has been a 20 per cent nationwide increase in Chinese tourists to Thailand, accompanied by a 30 per cent increase in Thailand's Gross Domestic Product around the same time,” said Ms Kobkarn.

Kanapoj Boonpornkan, the Phuket Tourism Association's marketing executive, said that a 'boycott' would not be a problem for Phuket. He did, however, state that the Chinese market needs to be monitored in the aftermath of Thailand's investigations of China's Tranlee Travel Company, whose assets – worth millions of Thai baht – still remain frozen here.

– Chutharat Plerin

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Baby elephant quarantined

A BABY elephant is being monitored by the Phuket Provincial Livestock Office (PPLO), after her owner was charged for moving the animal to Phuket without a proper permit on July 1.

Tourists and locals expressed concerns for 'Nang Chok', the six-year-old elephant, after she was found wandering on Bang Tao Beach.

"Boonchu Rattanadilok Na Phuket, the owner of Nang Chok, does not have the proper documentation for moving the elephant to Phuket," Surajit Witchuwan of the PPLO told the *Gazette*.

"The elephant was transferred from Surin Province to Phang Nga before being moved to Phuket, but Mr Boonchu did this without the permission of a local veterinarian," Mr Surajit said.

Mr Boonchu was charged under section 34 of the Animal Epidemic Act, which states that



Officials said they will monitor Nang Chok for 30 days. Photo: PPLO

"any person moving elephants, horses, cattle, buffaloes, goats, sheep, pigs, their embryos or semen for breeding purposes, as well as any other kind of animals specified in ministerial regulations, or animal carcasses to the provincial area, shall first obtain a permit from

the local veterinarian concerned".

"The PPLO is currently keeping an eye on Nang Chok for 30 days to ensure that she is in good health. After that, Mr Boonchu and the elephant must leave Phuket," said Mr Surajit.

— *Sukawin Tanthavanich*

Preventing flooding

From Page 1

...The mayor blamed old, crooked pipes leading to the water treatment plant near 200 Pi Bridge as contributors to Patong's flooding woes. Those pipes will be replaced with wider and straighter passages as part of the two-year improvement plan.

Mayor Chalermluck assured the *Gazette* that the entire operation will be completed by 2018. "Some things are still in the planning stages, but construction will begin soon," she said.

Following a heavy downpour on July 19, neighboring Karon village experienced the worst flooding of the city in decades. Shops and houses opposite hillside construction sites along Patak Road were inundated with mud and water up to one meter deep.

Following the Karon flood, Phuket Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada convened a meeting of authorities across the province to discuss flood prevention measures. Governor Chamroen ordered local authorities to monitor areas at risk of flooding.

Karon Municipality Acting Chief Administrative Officer Wanchai Saetan told the *Gazette* this week that village workers were still in the process of shoring up flood-prone spots.

Mr Wanchai blamed last month's flooding on a damaged water pump that sucked in trash and could not function properly.

"A large water pump has already been installed where the flooding was most severe on July 19 and three more pumps have been ordered at a cost of 500,000 baht. The new pumps should be installed within the next three months," said Mr Wanchai.

"Four other water pumps have already been installed in other locations and we have widened the drainage pipes in some areas. However, flooding is still a problem, due to trash clogging the waterways," Mr Wanchai said.

"Another problem is new housing and hotel developments filling in land with topsoil, which often blocks

our natural waterways."

Mr Wanchai said municipal workers will soon install grills over drainageways to prevent floating trash from getting into the pumps, as well as dredging canals across the municipality to allow runoff to flow more freely.

The municipality is also running a public awareness campaign, explained Mr Wanchai. "We are encouraging locals not to throw rubbish into the canals and waterways. People caught doing so can be fined as much as 2,000 baht," he said.

In August last year, flash floods in Chalong caused long tailbacks and left many motorists pushing their scooters through deep water on Chao Fa West Road, in front of the TOT office.

Chalong Mayor Samran Jindaphol told the *Gazette* this week that his municipality was "100 per cent" prepared for flooding this year.

"We have solved almost all of the flood issues in Chalong," Mayor Samran said. "The canals in the area are constantly dredged and we have been focusing our efforts on building retaining walls to prevent landslides in potential hotspots along both Chao Fa East and West roads."

Mr Samran said some of the walls had already been built and that more are to be constructed, along with a large water drainage center to be completed by 2018.

"There will be no flooding outside of the TOT office this year," he said. "We have spent about 13 million baht on building three culverts to carry runoff. They should be completed within a week."

"Another major trouble spot in Chalong has been at Chalong Temple, where three drainage channels converge. However, those channels have now been split up so there will be no more flooding there," he added.

While the three municipal heads admitted that heavy rains would still cause flooding in some spots, all three said they were confident that any flood waters would take no more than 10 to 20 minutes to drain away.

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Resort under investigation

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

A FOUR-STAR hotel in Koh Yao Yai has had its assets frozen, after officers from the Anti-Money Laundering Office (AMLO) began investigating whether the resort is being used to launder money and evade taxes for the embattled Tranlee Travel Co Ltd.

During a joint task force raid on July 30, AMLO officers said they were inspecting Blue Bay Resort's land documents, and suspect that the 330 unit luxury hotel is being used to shelter profits for the travel group under investigation.

Police arrested a Tranlee senior director and shareholder on June 15 for allegedly faking two Thai national ID cards used to register the company. Another director has reportedly fled the country.

In early July, investigators



Tourist Police commander Suchet speaks with task force officers during the raid. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

seized buses, boats, land and millions of baht from Tranlee as part of their investigations into the operations of the Phuket-based tour operator.

"When we arrived at the hotel we were greeted by a Mr Wittaya, who claimed to be the resort's director, and another person named Mr Apichat, who claimed to be the operation's

lawyer," said AMLO officer Piya Sriwika. "The pair claimed that they had just bought the rights to the hotel and had taken over management of the property in May."

"We believe that the hotel's assets come as part of Tranlee's laundering of money and tax-evasion," Mr Piya said. "We will freeze Blue Bay Resort's

assets for 90 days while we look at their books. The business can still run normally, but the revenue and all assets will be under the control of the AMLO. This way it will not affect tourism," said Mr Piya.

The task force was led by Tourist Police Commander Suchet Hakpan, joined by the AMLO, Phang Nga's Vice Gov-

ernor, the Phuket Provincial Police Deputy Commander, Marine Police personnel, Department of Forestry personnel, Phang Nga police personnel, Department of Business Development and Army personnel.

The Natural Resources and Environmental Crime Division is also checking Blue Bay Resort's land documents.

"Initially, they presented seven pieces of land ownership documents, covering more than 19 rai," General Suchet said. "We then divided the task force into seven groups to measure the plots and noted all of the developments for further investigation."

"We will transparently look into the land documents and take every precaution not to disrupt tourism," he added.

During the task force raid, officers found that more than 40 per cent of the hotel's guests had moved out of the hotel.

Thief defecates on Aussies' doorstep

A THIEF in Chalong defecated on one of her victims' doorsteps in the early hours of July 29.

The perpetrator reportedly broke into four homes, primarily occupied by foreigners, at the Nga Chang villa complex in Rawai. Police reported that the crapper focused on stealing cash, although she clearly had access to other valuables.

Jake Newton, 19, an Australian Muay Thai fighter training in Phuket, discovered that several thousand baht had been taken out of his wallet after a neighborhood security guard alerted him to the fact that a woman had just had a bowel movement on his doorstep.

"I'm moving to a new place on August 1, so I had just changed 250 Australian Dollars [into baht]," Mr Newton said.

His housemate, Uyen Ha, 19, also a Muay Thai fighter from Australia, said she believes the intruder had been in her villa before.

"I was sleeping and woke up in the middle of the night," Uyen told the *Gazette*. "I could tell that my door was open, so I turned on the light on my mobile phone and saw a face looking at me from the doorway."



Ms Ha and Mr Newton point at the entrance police believe the thief used to break into several villas. Photo: Wes Martin

The pair have since moved out of the complex.

The intruder, a slender woman, possibly Thai, reportedly broke into the villa through an unlocked bathroom window.

Other than vengeance or raw fear, the reasons for the thief's departing gift on the doorstep remain unclear.

- *Phuket Gazette*

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Int'l criminal caught after overstaying visa in Samui

AS SLOVAKIAN man suspected of siphoning off 283,000 euros (about 10.9 million baht) while working as a hospital director in Zlate Moravce City was arrested in Koh Samui on July 24.

Police arrested Michal Grujbar, 38, in front of a Koh Samui hotel and initially charged him with overstaying his visa.

"Police investigators later learned that the Slovakian court and Interpol had issued arrest warrants for him in 2012 and alerted all 190 member countries to keep a lookout for him," said Transnational Crime Coordination Center deputy chief Suchat Theerasawat at a press conference held at the Royal Thai Police head office in Bangkok on July 28.

Colonel Suchat said the suspect had admitted to being the same person as the one wanted by Interpol.

— *The Nation*

Crewmen sustain severe burns after trawler catches fire at sea

SEVEN crew members of a fishing vessel were saved in a dramatic rescue off Phang Nga on July 30, when their boat burst into flames and sank after refueling at sea.

Three crew members were injured in the fire, one of them suffering severe burns to at least 20 per cent of his body, mostly on his back and arms.

The fishing boat, a 68-ton vessel named *Sorachainavy*, had just finished taking on diesel from a refueling vessel about 12 miles off the coast of northern Phang Nga.

The incident was reported to the Port In-Port Out center at Tai Muang District in Phang Nga, and a Navy rescue boat was dispatched to respond to the *Sorachainavy's* emergency call.

However, another fishing boat located near the refueling vessel was the first on the scene and pulled the crew members to safety as their boat sank.



Rescue workers assist a crewman who suffered severe burns. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

The Navy rescue boat then ferried the injured to Takuapa Hospital in Phang Nga.

The boat had been at sea for three days before the incident, having departed from Kuraburi in Phang Nga on July 27.

The loss of the *Sorachainavy* is estimated to have cost its owner about 5 million baht.

Investigators have yet to determine the exact cause of the fire.

In December, another fish-

ing vessel sank after being hit by a rogue wave off of Kata Beach in Phuket. All six crew members of the *Na Pornprasit* were rescued by Phuket Marine Police.

— *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

Officials warn south to expect monsoons

THE renewed monsoon season is expected to cause heavy flooding and high seas across the southern provinces this year, the Office of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) announced this week.

DDPM officials issued severe weather warnings for Phuket, Phang Nga, Krabi, Petchaburi, Prachuap, Khiri Khan, Chumphon, Surat Thani, Nakhon Sri Thammarat, Chonburi, Rayong, Chantaburi, Trat and Ranong provinces that failed to materialize in substantial downpours.

Wave heights in the Andaman Sea regularly surpass three meters during the southwest monsoon season, which lasts from May through November.

In Phuket, officials warned against possible floods and windstorms that may trigger landslides. DDPM officials across the province urged those who live on hillsides or areas immediately downhill to stay tuned to local radio and television channels for updates.

Officials also warned resi-

dents near waterways to keep an eye on streams and runoff areas prone to flash floods, as the southwest monsoons are known to drop as much as 90 millimeters of rain within 24 hours.

In Phuket, DDPM officials said they had prepared rescue vehicles and equipment in case of flooding, and placed reserve DDPM personnel on standby.

The Thai Meteorological Department (TMD) warns residents of southern Thailand that during the seventh and eighth of August, the moderate southwest monsoon prevails over the Andaman Sea, the South and the Gulf of Thailand.

The TMD said chances of rain into the coming week remain high, with isolated heavy downpours likely in the East and the South.

Typhoon 'NIDA,' which made landfall over Hong Kong on August 2 was downgraded to tropical storm status.

In case of a weather-related emergency, Phuket residents may call the DDPM Phuket office: 076-218444.

— *Phuket Gazette*

Bomb attacks hit south amid army withdrawal

FOUR border policemen and a civilian were injured in a double bombing attack in Saba Yoi in Songkhla on the morning of August 2. Two village defence volunteers suffered minor injuries when a third bomb exploded in front of a school in Khok Pho in Pattani later the same day in a separate attack.

The policemen were injured in the first explosion at about 7am in Ban Daru Moo 3 in Tambon Than Khiri. Minutes later, a 57 year-old woman on her bicycle was injured by a blast in the middle of Kabang-Sabayoi Road, just a kilometer away. Army officials said they suspect that the second bomb was intended to injure personnel responding to the first incident.

At around 8pm in Khok Pho, two defence volunteers guarding Solihyah School were injured by an explosion in front of the school. No teachers or students were hurt, although the school closed for August 3 as a precaution.

National police chief Chakthip Chaijinda announced



Soldiers inspect the site of the third bombing. Photo: The Nation

that the national intelligence agency had warned of possible attacks in the three southernmost provinces, particularly ahead of the August 7 constitutional referendum and throughout the month of August.

He said the predicted attacks would target state officers and would be carried out by two groups linked to local political entities and insurgent groups.

General Chakthip admitted that probes into the attacks would be difficult to mount as police officers and army personnel are on a heightened alert

before Saturday's referendum vote.

The attacks come after Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha announced on July 27 that he plans to continue the troop withdrawal of Thailand's three southernmost provinces.

The drawdown would leave seven Royal Thai Army battalions in Yala, Narathiwat and Pattani provinces.

Colonel Therdsak Ngamsanong of the Yala Special Task Force said that the move would result in the fewest number of troops in the region in 12 years.

— *The Nation*

Another tour co caught with fake ID cards

POLICE searched the Fuan Travel office in KSL Tower in Ratchathewi District on August 2, for evidence in relation to claims the company was set up by a foreigner using a fake Thai ID card.

Initial inquiries found that the man, who was not named but holds an executive position in the firm, allegedly took the identity of a man called Somkiat Khongcharoen – who died nearly 10 years ago – to open the business and provide tour services, said Tourist Police chief Pol Maj-General Surechet Hakpan. Police also arrested three alleged accomplices – company executive Thawal Jaemchokchai, and tour guides Phuwadol Sukcharoen, and Thanakrit Rinrat, both of whom are suspected to be Chinese nationals.

B100mn seized from contractors

THE Anti-Money Laundering Office (AMLO) has seized 100 million baht from two Klong Dan contractors, AMLO chief Pol General Chaiya Siriamphankul said on July 30.

Involved were 70mn baht in two bank accounts of Gateway



Development Co and 30mn baht in a bank account of Prayoonvit Karncharng – money from the first installment of payments by the government.

The two firms were part of joint-venture NVPSKG, which related government agencies representatives were told to pay 9.6 billion baht in fines for the notorious Klong Dan project.

The AMLO chief vowed that his agency would try to retrieve the remainder of the 25bn baht back from contracted parties involved in the 24-billion baht Klong Dan wastewater-treatment plant in Samut Prakan Province.

Previously, AMLO resolved

NATIONAL NEWS Briefly

to seize the second and third installments paid by state agencies, worth 6.4bn baht.

It asked the Department of Special Investigation to proceed with a money-laundering charge against the six companies and one individual who allegedly benefited from payment of the first installment. He said the agency had so far seized assets worth 6.6bn baht in this case.

1000 stateless children to get Thai citizenship

THE Prime Minister has ordered the Interior Ministry to tell all provincial governors and district chiefs in provinces that have less than 1,000 stateless, unregistered students to make them Thai citizens next month.

The move is part of a plan to give citizenship to thousands of stateless children who are eligible to be Thai citizens.

The provinces with less than 1,000 stateless children include

Kalasin, Kamphaeng Phet and Ayutthaya, Government Spokesman Maj-General Sansern Kaewkamnerd said on July 30.

Gen Sansern said for provinces with more than 1,000 stateless children – such as Ranong, Kanchanaburi and Trat, the premier had ordered governors to directly supervise the process, as this would indicate the administrative ability of governors and district chiefs.

As of July 7, there were 78,175 students nationwide without Thai nationality – 20,337 of whom were eligible to receive it. So far 9,277 people applied for citizenship, and 5,728 children received it.

Plane crash in Bangkok kills one, injures 4

THE pilot of a small plane was killed and four others were injured in a crash in Bangkok on August 1.

The plane, a 10-year-old Piper Chieftain registered as HS-FGB, belonged to Rabbit Wings Co Ltd. It was reportedly travelling from Nakhon Ratchasima Province to Suvarnabhumi Airport when it crashed a few kilometers north of the runway.

The people on board were employees of the airlines. The injured included a co-pilot, a machinist and a company employee, as well as a local woman in the area.



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Phuket Gazette

Let's talk weather

AS THE annual monsoon strengthens and the gripefest begins, Phuket residents might want to pause for a moment to reflect on what a wonderful climate we enjoy year round, every year.

According to records dating back to 1951, the temperature 'extremes' in Phuket Town are listed as follows: record high 37.8°C (about 100°F); record low 17.4°C (63.3°F).

That is a narrow range of about 20°C that is somehow perfectly centered at about 27°C, roughly the same temperature at which many of us set our air-conditioners – near optimal.

Compare that to a place like Montreal, Canada (high 37.8°C, low -37.6°C) to better appreciate just how good we have it here.

We also have it better than other Thai provinces. Temperature fluctuations in Phuket are moderated by the sea that surrounds us and generates cooling sea breezes most of the year.

We also seem to be 'off the beaten path' for major storms. When was the last time the island took a direct hit from a tropical depression or typhoon of the types that pound the coastline along the South China Sea? Never, at least as far back as this long-time observer can recall. The cherry on top is the fact that the rain eases up during winter, making it an ideal escape for tourists from harsher climates further north.

One of the few drawbacks to living in such a climatic glass bubble is that over time we get spoiled. We wear thick sweatshirts to the cinema. Like Goldilocks, we wake up in the middle of the night changing the temperature of the A/C unit by a single degree because it is either too hot or too cold. It is hard to imagine what our ancient ancestors would think if they knew what 'weather wussies' we have become.

Of course it is human nature to complain, so with the lack of truly severe weather we tend to direct much of our weather whining toward the only thing left: the rain.

In reality, the copious amount of rainfall here should be counted as a blessing. Unfortunately, in our collective rush to cover this island with concrete and bitumen, we have managed to destroy or disrupt many, if not most, of the natural watercourses that once channeled all this runoff harmlessly into the sea. The inevitable result, of course, is flooding.

Karon has seen the worst flooding in decades this year – and the rainiest months of the year are still ahead of us.

Let's hope that flood prevention measures put in place by authorities across the island [see Page 1] help turn the tide on Phuket's completely man-made and ever-worsening flooding problem.



Chinese need to change first

Re: Rumors of 'Thai boycott' raise eyebrows, Jul 29

They bring a lot of money but take so much.

They have a lot more developing to do before being accepted.

Just look at their attitude in the South China Sea. No respect for people or law.

David Warburton
Facebook

Flying is usually a better option

Re: Buses aim to compete with low cost airlines, Jul 29

The problem is that, as good as the buses may be, the time versus cost makes flying a much better option.

I actually like bussing it around Thailand but a recent trip from Pattaya to Phuket on Bangkok Air cost only 1,200 baht more than the bus and saved me more than 12 hrs.

Short trips are no problem but for longer journeys there is no contest.

Nick Mallett
Facebook

Single stocks not the way to beat market

Re: Finance: Five emerging leadership stocks, Aug 1

Trying to pick single stocks is not a good way to beat the market.

You may spot a single stock with an upward trend, but you're likely to fail at picking.

There is also the danger of

Letters to the Editor

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

a black swan, when a company blows up from an unforeseen event, like BP's oil rig disaster.

The best thing to do is to find a low expense Index ETF such as SCHD.

Pinot
Gazette forum

No point of having a tsunami drill

Re: Tsunami warning buoy out of action, Jul 26

What was the purpose in having a tsunami drill in recent weeks?

But it's okay; they have a water sensor in Phang Nga.

Too little too late. It's supposed to be an early-warning system that could save thousands of lives?

Harry
Gazette forum

Children should not be allowed to wander by themselves

Re: Body of baby found at construction site, Jul 28

"The mother told police she did know when the child wandered out of the house."

Sorry, my four-year old is

not leaving the house, even when it is just in the fenced garden, without any parental supervision.

Sh
Gazette forum

No one wants to visit empty beaches

Re: Governor's Letter: Improvement plans for Phuket, Jul 27

Yes the beaches are now in their "natural state" but high spending western tourists want to laze on a beach in the sun on sun loungers, eat something and maybe get a beer, then go to a beach restaurant and watch the sun go down.

They will not come to stand and look at empty beaches.

Yes, the beach mafia needed removing, as do the jet-ski and parasail people, but taking away the very reason Westerners come here is extreme.

SHWE
Gazette forum

Need to implement harsher penalties

Re: Late night Bangla shooter hunted for attempted murder, Jul 27

So give him a 2,000 baht fine, right?

And then we wonder why violent crime is happening every day?

seeall
Gazette forum

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Controlling public transport

FIRST
PERSON

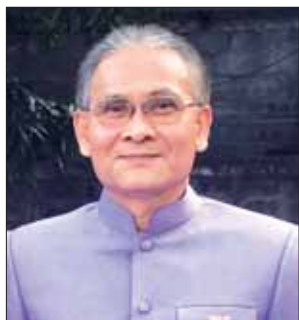
PHUKET is the tourism province of Thailand. Therefore, the most challenging job for the transport office is how to control public transport. Our main job is to balance the interests of passengers and public transport operators. We have to make the service smooth and satisfactory for both sides.

Transportation is the core and most basic need for tourism. Therefore, the more we can improve our transportation networks, the better tourism will become. We have several plans in the works that are aimed at improving the transportation system in Phuket.

Firstly, we are working hard to control the price of public transport here. We are not going to lower the prices, as several officials and drivers agreed to current prices years ago. However, we will keep monitoring all public transport operators so that they only charge standard prices.

Secondly, to ensure that the standard prices are known by passengers, particularly tourists, we're going to mandate that public vehicles display prices inside their vehicles and in every boarding zone. A budget has already been approved for this project. We are working on printing out the price list, and expect to be done in the next few months.

We will also be increasing the number of parking spots for public vehicles. We are now working on establishing more than 70 parking spots across the island for public transport. This will give tourists more choices when it comes to which buses to take, and make it easier for them to lo-



Sommai Sudkhao, originally from Phatthalung province, is the Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO) chief. He was the director of Bangkok Area Transportation Office Area 2 before moving to Phuket in May. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in economics from Ramkhamhaeng University.

Here, he talks about managing Phuket's transportation systems, the challenges poised by the province's dependence on tourism and his plans for the island while in office.

cate public alternatives. Tourists will not have to walk very far to find taxi stops anymore. This will also help public transport be better organized.

Currently, there are more than 4,000 green-plate taxis on the island. My plan is to keep this number from increasing. The original idea of green-plate taxis was that those taxis are hired by any specific businesses such as hotels, restaurants and the airport. However, the problem in Phuket is that those taxis have become private businesses.

That is where the problems begin. When they become private operators, they get out of control. This is where the taxi mafia came from, because these private operators would have to compete with each other for positions in a taxi queue; they can lower or increase their price as they want. Therefore, we are going to keep a closer eye on green-plate taxis and are not allowing any more to register.

Besides the reduction and control of green-plate taxis, we also plan to increase more taxi meters in Phuket. Taxi meters are the fairest for passengers in terms of price, as you pay according to the distance you travel. This way, we do not

have to solve the problem of taxis cheating passengers.

We are also going to start a public vehicle operator education project. The project will educate drivers about the rules, regulations, safety measures, and how to react, take action and properly take charge during an emergency situation. The public drivers have to be responsible for many lives, so they have to be well trained. Our target is to educate at least 200 drivers this year.

Besides the plans mentioned, I believe the upcoming light rail project will be a much better solution for Phuket. As you know, public transportation such as buses in Phuket don't really work well. The problem is that no one really wants to invest in them because they don't earn as much compared to the taxis.

Therefore, I believe the light rail project will be a boon to Phuket. It will help greatly reduce the traffic congestion and people will use it, especially tourists, so the number of private cars will be reduced. I am hoping to see big improvements in Phuket once the light rail project is finished.

We are doing our best to help make the public transportation in Phuket better.



The National Broadcasting and Telecommunication Commission intends to propose 'special' SIMs to track tourists. Photo: kaboompics

Tabs on travellers

Island View

By Sahar Aftab Paliwala

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

THAIVISA recently published an article titled 'NBTC to propose special SIM cards for foreign tourists so they can be traced'. The article states that the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) intends to introduce 'special' SIM cards for mobile users, in order to 'track' foreigners while they are staying in Thailand.

The news is worrying on so many levels that it's hard to know where to begin. It goes without saying that this is an unprecedented invasion of privacy, so I won't dwell on that too much. As per the article on thaivisa.com, the NBTC secretary-general says that this is a matter of 'national security' and should not be viewed as an individual's violation of privacy.

Additionally, the 'traceable' SIM cards will reportedly not be a requirement for Thai nationals, because "they are required to show their ID cards when they buy SIM cards", the article states. This one is a head-scratcher for me, because everyone – Thai national or otherwise – is required to show their ID when purchasing a SIM card.

Foreigners, especially, are much more easily 'traceable' to begin with, what with the arrival and departure forms and hotel reservations we have to submit when entering the country.

However, all of that aside, my biggest concern is how hostile such a move might appear to a visitor. Imagine being a first time visitor and walking up to an airport counter to buy a sim, only to be told that your activities would be monitored for the duration of your stay, in order to ensure that you're not a criminal.

On the flip side, I wonder if foreigners are even going to be informed of this at all.

The proposition also brings up a number of burning questions I'd like answered. For instance, how do they intend to track travellers who use international SIMs with roaming? What about foreigners, such as myself, who purchased their SIM cards long before the introduction of the new ones? Also, if an international criminal element really does enter the country, he or she would probably know enough to make other arrangements anyway.

The idea could have been acceptable to foreigners, at least in theory, if packaged even slightly more diplomatically, but what with this 'guilty until proven innocent' approach, that doesn't seem likely either.

Words from the Wise

"The surest way to corrupt a youth is to instruct him to hold in higher esteem those who think alike than those who think differently."

– Friedrich Nietzsche

"My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor and some style."

– Maya Angelou

Issues & Answers

Are Layan Beach trash cans still in use?

I WENT to Layan Beach over the weekend and spent quite awhile looking for a trash can.

The ones I did manage to find were laying on the ground. Are they still in use, or they just lying there because beach staff don't work on the weekends?

Would it be any problem if we just lift them up so we can use them?

Beachgoer
Phuket

Ms Bussara Wari, Cherng

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

Submit your issue at:

www.PhuketGazette.net/IssuesAnswers

Talay Tambon Administration Organization official, replies:

Thank you for your query.

Yes, of course the trash cans are still in use. However, we have no idea why they are just lying there.

Normally our staff manages and looks after beach-side trash cans.

We will let staff know as soon as possible to seek out the trash cans and ensure they are useable.

Thank you very much for informing us. It's useful to have the public's help in keeping our beaches clean.

Hedging your way through Brexit

Finance

By David Mayes

THERE has already been a lot written in this paper – and many others – about Brexit, but I'm getting lots of questions from both sides of the investment coin, so I thought it a good idea to highlight some of the things to think about before doing anything drastic.

Are there any opportunities to exploit now that British voters have voiced their desire to leave the EU? Are there any risks that we need to hedge against?

There is no such thing as a 'dead cert' when delving into financial markets, so let's explore a variety of possible scenarios and what effects they may have.

Is now the time to be moving more heavily into Euro stocks? Should you move currency into USD and EURO? Should you move currency back to GBP now that is low?

If you had a crystal ball, you could make a ton of money by knowing which move to make right now. Depending on what happens next there is a lot of money to be made. Of course there is also a lot to lose if you end up on the wrong side.

There are a few key questions to consider. Is the UK the first domino in what will be the



The author goes back to the basics of Brexit to answer some important questions. Photo: Jeff Belmonte

ultimate demise of the European monetary union? Will the British government figure out a way to justify not following the wishes of the British people and remain in the EU anyway? Will Brexit go through and leave the rest of the EU intact in the long term?

The first scenario is probably the scariest for the global economy. The EU has issued mountains of debt on the premise that it is backed up by the taxation power of the entire union.

If it falls apart, EU debt be-

comes worthless, and every major financial institution on the planet will suffer the same. This would be disastrous – not only for European stocks and bonds – but for the global markets as well.

Having a part of your portfolio in gold and USD denominated securities is a hedge against this scenario, as a flight to safety would likely see US government bonds and gold both go up.

If the UK reneges on leaving the EU, the GBP will likely rally, as well as EU stocks in

general.

While many people see this as very unlikely, given that the process could take two years, I don't think it is a risk that can be written off entirely.

Any strategy that was based on the Brexit would suffer a sharp reversal if at some point the government finds a way to cancel the exit.

The long term determination of the banking institutions to see global consolidation may be a lot stronger than most people think. However, if I was a gambling man, I would

not be betting for this scenario.

If the UK is the only country to leave and the EU remains intact, then a play on Euro-based stocks would likely pay off. However, given all the risks, I think this is a time to play defensively rather than seeking opportunities.

When the opportunity arrives, it will be very clear that a serious crisis is underway and global stocks will be in free-fall.

The old saying to 'buy when there is blood in the streets and banks are failing' is my favorite, but we are not in that environment by any stretch of the imagination.

I have already written about getting your pension out. Other than that, if you have currency risks to the GBP or the EURO, I would try to spread that around and hedge yourself. That is the extent I would argue you should react to Brexit.

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

Fund inflows drive SET

THE Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET), in the first half of this year, outperformed other bourses in Southeast Asia in terms of fund inflows and dividend yields.

The SET said its dividend yield in the first half was 3.3 per cent, overtaking Singapore's 3.1-3.2 per cent. Thanks to fund inflows, the SET recorded average daily turnover of 46.67 billion baht in the first six months of the year.

According to SET president Kesara Manthusree, including daily turnover of 64bn baht in July, the average in the first seven months would be 48.16bn baht, up 0.97 per cent from the same period last year.

For the first six months, the Thai bourse recorded 35.98bn baht in net buys by foreign investors, turning around from a

net-sell last year and making it the highest figure in Asean, Mr Kesara said.

The Thai stock market is still underweight while foreign funds were in rebalancing mode, increasing the chance for continued inflows, according to Santi Kiranand, senior executive vice president of SET. About 30 Thai stocks are described as 'investability', or those with market capitalizations of more than US\$1 billion and daily turnover of more than US\$10 million.

In addition to the SET's support for activities related to investments, Mr Kesara said it would launch the 'sSET Index', covering small to medium-cap stocks that were out of the SET100 Index in November.

– The Nation

US researcher warns of Thai R&D

THAILAND stands a slim chance of success in reforming its innovation and research ecosystem if the country does not tackle the personnel as well as conflict-of-interest issues at its existing facilities, a leading US-based researcher has warned.

"No matter how good the plan for 'Thailand 4.0' is, if the same group of people still run our R&D [research and development] programs going forward, nothing is going to happen," said Professor Methi Wecharatana, associate chairman for graduate studies at the New Jersey Institute of Technology.

"Ideas, people and tools are the three critical components of a nation to succeed in its innovation drive. In short, we need to discuss how industry, and people like us, can help to re-think, retool and re-man for Thailand 4.0," said Mr Methi,



Thailand 4.0 may just remain a dream. Photo: ecolepolytechniqueups

also an adviser to the board of directors of the Association of Thai Professionals in America and Canada (ATPAC).

Mr Methi scheduled to meet with Deputy Education Minister Teerakiat Jareonsettasin the next day to suggest that the government alter its current reform direction on the national R&D system.

He is bringing in his team from the United States for several workshops and conferences

held by ATPAC and other agencies in Bangkok from last week until August 9.

Among his proposals for the government is to make 15 national research centers more accountable. Their focuses should be narrowed to key technologies or research areas that are considered crucial to the nation's success in the future.

"New management teams need to be installed. We've had these centers for 30 years, but they have been [operating] too broadly. Money comes after a clear mandate and people to make things happen," he said.

Pailin Chuchottaworn, a former chief executive officer of PTT and the chairman of the council of the Vidyasirimedhi Institute of Science and Technology shares Mr Methi's views on money and other issues.

– The Nation

Aboard the 3D bandwagon

By Zohaib Sikander

VIRTUAL tours have finally arrived. And in a place like Phuket where you will find a hotel or resort at every nook and cranny, the time isn't far when the entire province is on the internet with quality photo spheres guiding tourists around from across the world.

At least that is what Geoff S Whitley, managing director of Panoramas Thailand, dreams of.

Born in Scotland and raised in Canada where he was a wedding photographer, Mr Whitley moved to Thailand in 2006. By 2008, he changed his focus to the more technical – by pursuing the up and coming trend of sphere photography. Seven years in, he has developed his business and is in sync with what is required by his customers and more.

"I am a Google trusted photographer," he proudly says. "We have certain quality guidelines that separate us from the rest – there are only 10 of us in the country."

Mr Whitley does 360-degree virtual tours, Google street view and has now started offering 3D augmented reality tours to his customers.

"I've done about 20 augmented reality projects in Phuket recently, which give tourists a greater insight into



Geoff stays on top by offering his clients the latest products available in the market. Photo: Panoramas Thailand

their intended destinations. You can connect the new 3D Virtual Reality (VR) gear to your phone and simply 'walk into' a hotel or a bar from the comfort of your own home, 'feel' the ambience and decide whether you want to pay a visit or not. Interestingly, statistics suggest that customers are twice as likely to visit and location if they 'see' the inside first. My clients' hotels and resorts are

fully booked come high season as well as Christmas time. All in all, I've gotten some great feedback and no complaints," he says.

Mr Whitley told the *Gazette* about his process in depth. "It takes me anywhere from three days to a month to finish a project from the time of its inception. I go onsite to take the pictures, and do all of the stitching myself, as for me, quality is

paramount. The finished project goes to my client for preview and approval after which I upload it to their website." The price range of his contracts vary from 10,000 baht to over 200,000 baht. "The good thing about my work is that I get to travel all over Thailand," says Mr Whitley. I really like that part of my job, among other things."

For more information, visit www.panoramas-thailand.com

Kasikorn pushes credit card drive



Kbank has been pushing several new products. Photo: GuillaumeG

KASIKORN Bank has launched the 'Route to Iceland' sweepstakes to accelerate acquisition of credit card customers in the second half of this year after the bank fell far behind the pace in the first half.

Noppawan Jermhansa, executive vice president, said on August 1 that the bank issued 180,000 credit cards in the first half, while the target for the whole year is 600,000.

The contest should help the bank issue at least 200,000 credit cards because new credit card customers who spend 1,000 baht or more within 30 days after card approval will be given 10 chances to win prizes. Travel spending grew 30 per cent, regarded as the highest segment. The bank wants to cater to customers in this category.

Existing card holders will get one chance for every 1,000 baht in spending.

– *The Nation*

Italian companies eyeing investments in Thailand



More Italian businesses may be coming to Phuket. Photo: Omarukai

ITALIAN chocolate maker Ferrero and agriculture truckmaker New Holland are eyeing opening in Thailand after the formation of the Italian-Thai Business Forum last year.

Isara Vongkusolkrit, chairman of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, said on August 1 that new forum members were companies from Italy such as Ducati, Italcementi, Ferrero and Pirelli and 17 companies from Thailand such as Thai Airways International, Bangkok Bank, Siam Cement, Charoen Pokphand,

Central and Dusit International.

"The new joint-forum will encourage more investment from Italy to Thailand such as automobiles, food, furniture and industrial design, and from Thailand to Italy like hotels, retail, food and tourism," he said. To encourage investment here, the forum and chamber will provide training and exchange information with Italian companies.

"The forum would be the new channel for Thai entrepreneurs to enter the Europe Union for further investment," he added.

Busaba Chirathivat, senior vice president of Central Retail and co-chairwoman of the forum, said the forum would help operators or members in Thailand find partners in Italy more easily than working with government bodies, because executives and companies feel comfortable discussing and working together.

– *The Nation*

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Kajonkiet hosts summer camp

Kajonkiet International School Phuket hosted a 'Young Pilot Summer Camp' July 4-22 for pre-nursery Year 2 students, providing kids with a variety of edutainment options.



One of the camp participants shows off a paper-doll she made.

Paradise Beach glows

Paradise Beach Phuket held their biggest event yet on July 30 with a 'Glow in Paradise' party under the half moon.



DJ Vadim Almazov dropped mad beats live on stage for the club's glow-painted revellers.







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www.villaroyalephuket.com

Events in Paradise

Hunks woo at the Hilton

Twenty aspiring male models made it into the final round of the Mister Phuket 2016 contest at the Hilton Phuket Arcadia Resort & Spa on July 24 to receive prizes and bouquets for their groovy moves and dashing looks.



Mister Phuket 2016 winner Phuvadol Koysomboon (center) walked away with 100,000 baht for first place. 2nd was Natthanai Tongleng (left), who received 30,000 baht in prize money. Rameth Koran (2nd left) was awarded 20,000 baht for 3rd place. 10,000-baht prizes were also awarded for Mister Personality 2016 (right) and Media Choice Award 2016 (2nd right).

Phuket Marriott Resort and Spa, Nai Yang reveals fresh new look

The Phuket Marriott Resort & Spa Nai Yang Beach revealed its newly renovated beachside rooms and villas on July 29.



(From L-R) Phuket Marriott Resort and Spa, Nai Yang Director of Operations Francois Poletti; Bangkok Marriott Queen's Park Cluster Director of Sales and Marketing Roger Parnow and Cluster Assistant Director of Marcom and PR Variya Lulitanond; Phuket Marriott Resort and Spa, Nai Yang Marcom and PR Manger Panchan Noimeechooen; and Bangkok Marriott Queen's Park Cluster Assistant PR Manager Pemika Kanchanatechanon.



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Thanyapura trainees head to Rio

EIGHT members of FINA (Fédération Internationale de Natation), who have trained extensively at Thanyapura, are confirmed to be competing at the Olympics in Rio.

Their names were officially announced on July 29, 2016. The athletes include Kimiko Raheem from Sri Lanka, Eloi Imanirugaha from Rwanda, Vinity Hemthom from Cambodia, Shajan Aminath from the Maldives, Sirish Gurung from Nepal, Sajan Prakash and Shivani Kataria, both from India, and Mohammad Rahman Sagor from Bangladesh.

All of them spent a year at Thanyapura Sports & Leisure Club, training with in-house expert coaches Miguel Lopez Alvarado and David Escolar Ballesteros, who worked closely alongside the FINA team.

"We've all become very close. I feel about them as I think I would feel about my children which means I treat them like people I care enough [about] that I won't tell them what they want to hear but what I think it's the best for them, which sometimes they don't like but they end up appreciating," said Mr Lopez.

Thanyapura was selected as the official training center for FINA and has been cooperating to promote talented swimmers from around Asia by supporting the scholarship



Athletes from all over the world have been training at Thanyapura for a year, and broken national records more than 150 times. Photo: Thanyapura Sports & Leisure Club

'Targeting Rio 2016', and providing the athletes with accommodation, training facilities and professional coaching.

"Thanyapura offers a large variety of service and facilities to ensure that the athletes optimize their stay there. Moreover, Phuket, with its easy flight connections to all major cities in Asia, makes it a perfect option for us," said Dr Julio Cesar Maglione, President of FINA

Development.

The team this year has broken participated in several competitions from Russia, Japan, Malaysia and Hong Kong, including World Championships, Asian Age Group Championships and South Asian Championships.

"After a year of training and after our FINA swimmers have broken national records more than 150 times, we finally get to see eight of them

representing their countries and Thanyapura at the Rio Olympics 2016," Mr Lopez noted.

"We couldn't be any prouder unless, of course, which is what we hope, we get to break a few more national records and put one or two of them in the semifinal, which would be a great success in the history of Southeast Asia."

– *Phuket Gazette*

Municipality to hold mini-half marathon



The marathon is being held in honor of HM the Queen's birthday. Photo: Peter Fristedt

CHERNG Talay Municipality has organized the '12th Cherng Talay mini-half marathon' on August 12 in honor of HM the Queen's 84th birthday. The purpose of the marathon is to encourage locals to stay healthy.

"About 800 people registered for the race last year," said Somsak Limpawitthayanon of the Cherng Talay Municipality. "We are expecting about the same number this year."

Runners can register for a 3.5-kilometer fun run, a 13km mini-marathon and a 21km half-marathon.

The race will start from the Cherng Talay Municipality Office, go past Dusit Laguna and Banyan Tree on the way, and return to the starting point.

Registration for the event is open. The fun run is free, while the mini-marathon and half-marathon are 250 baht and 300 baht respectively.

For more information, call 076-324 440.

– *Phuket Gazette*

App to help seniors focus

AN AWARD winning neuro-feedback cognitive training game developed by Chulalongkorn Hospital, Bangkok is helping the elderly 'focus'.

The university's Department of Psychiatry has developed an attention training system to help the elderly avoid the symptoms of dementia and Alzheimer's disease. The game was awarded a gold medal at the International Exhibition of Inventions of Geneva in April.

Dr Solaphat Hemrungronj of Chulalongkorn Hospital's Cognitive Fitness Centre and the assistant dean for educational innovation and information at the medical faculty, explains that the system comprises six game sets, specially designed for the elderly. Her team is working on adding more games and improving existing ones.

– *The Nation*

Prosthetics give soi dog new lease on life

A PUPPY that had its two front legs hacked off earlier in May has been fitted with new prosthetic legs, the Phuket-based charity Soi Dog Foundation announced on July 31.

Theprachen Srisoda, 36, reportedly hacked off the puppy's front legs with a sword because it had chewed one of his shoes left outside his house.

Public outcry and a 96,000-signatories petition organized by the Soi Dog Foundation saw Mr Theprachen sentenced to one month's detention by a court under the new Animal Welfare Law.

Thailand's new animal welfare laws have only recently criminalized animal cruelty. The maximum penalty under the law is a two-year custodial prison sentence and a 40,000 baht fine.

After the attack, the puppy, named Cola, underwent treat-



Ms Dalley (2nd left), a double amputee herself, brought Cola back with her to Phuket to continue his recuperation. Photo: Soi Dog Foundation

ment at a Bangkok clinic.

The head veterinarian, who also holds an engineering degree, created prosthetic legs for the nine-month-old male

puppy.

Last week, Soi Dog Foundation co-founder Gill Dalley flew to Bangkok and brought Cola back with her to Phuket

to continue his recuperation and rehabilitation.

Ms Dalley, herself a double amputee as a result of a rare bacteria she picked up while saving a dog in 2004, is now teaching Cola to walk again.

Even when not wearing his new legs, Cola has managed to teach himself to walk on his back legs, holding his stumps in front of him 'kangaroo style'.

Soi Dog Foundation is a not-for-profit organization established in 2003. It is legally registered in Thailand, the United States, Canada, Australia, the UK, France and the Netherlands. Its mission statement is to improve the welfare of dogs and cats in Asia, resulting in better lives for both animal and human communities, to create a society without homeless animals, and to ultimately end animal cruelty.

– *Phuket Gazette*

Melt your troubles away

By Chutharat Plerin

BREEZE Spa, located in the four-star Amari Phuket hotel in Patong, recently announced its partnership with leading American dermatologist Dr Howard Murad.

Combining Dr Murad's innovative skin therapies with Breeze Spa's facilities, the partnership introduced five new facial treatments this month, which I, of course, had to try.

Once I arrived at the reception area I was welcomed by a bouquet of smells – peppermint and rosemary oil. I was greeted with the spa's signature drink of passion fruit, pineapple and lime, served in a glass with the rim covered by crystalline sugar and local honey from their responsibly-sourced apiary.

There are several facial treatments to choose from: hydration, deep cleansing, sensitive and after-sunburn, brightening and anti-aging.

I chose the anti-aging facial treatment, and was led to a wooded sala. On the way there, we passed a small natural stream. Before my treatment started, I was offered a visit to the steam room, just to warm up my body.

Sitting wrapped in a soft cold towel in the steam room, I began to relax and lose my worries. I spent a few minutes in the room before the 75-minute facial treatment began.

Breeze Spa is one of Phuket's most impressive spas.



Treatments are offered in teak wood salas that sit atop the edge of a cliff, offering guests privacy as well as a dazzling view of Patong Bay. Photo: Breeze Spa

The teak wood sala sits atop the edge of a cliff, overlooking a dazzling view of the sea. The open-air sala allowed me to experience the sea breeze amid a tropical forest, with the enchanting sounds of nature enveloping the spa experience. Each of the four salas is separated by a garden walkway to ensure the privacy of every guest.

The anti-aging facial treatment is meant to reduce the appearance of wrinkles with a powerful intensive peel that

also infuses the skin with long-lasting hydration.

After we completed the treatment, I jumped in the outdoor jacuzzi atop the cliff's edge, overlooking Patong Bay. Warm water was just what I needed after the treatment, and I could feel my senses tingling all over.

The spa staff were waiting for me with water when I stepped out of the dressing room. While sipping my water and leaving the spa, I passed the stream again and

saw birds and the sea at low-tide. I felt completely relaxed and calm. The skin of my face also felt much softer and younger.

Breeze Spa treatments focus on boosting energy and bringing balance back, with a diverse range of therapies and relaxing treatments based on mood analysis, which will refresh and create a sense of well-being.

The spa is open daily from 11am to 9pm. For more information, visit www.breeze-spa.com.

Laguna to hold charity concert



Prapa Hemmin (right), Laguna Phuket's Director of Sales-MICE and Corporate Events, at the event press conference on July 14. Photo: Sukawin Tanthavanich

LAGUNA Phuket is holding a charity concert at Laguna Grove on Saturday, August 13. The concert is called 'Big Body+ Charity Concert' and will feature 'Bodyslam' and 'Big Ass', as well as up and coming artist Justin Pongumpai.

Part of the proceeds of the concert will go to Phuket Panyanukul School, a special school for intellectually and hearing disabled students, located in Pa Khlok.

Tickets are priced at 500 baht (free standing seats) and are available at Limelight Avenue, Canal Village, unit 34 in Laguna Phuket, Phuket Indy Market and Chillva Market.

The concert is intended to promote a healthy and active lifestyle and encourage people to stay away from drugs.

For more information, contact Laguna Phuket at 076-362300-99, extension 1404.

– Sukawin Tanthavanich

Prairie oyster hangover cure

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 raw egg
- 1 teaspoon worcestershire sauce
- Dash of hot sauce
- 1 pinch of salt
- 1 pinch of ground black pepper



METHOD:

- Step 1:** Break the egg into a glass carefully, so as to not break the yolk.
- Step 2:** Put worcestershire sauce, salt, pepper and hot sauce, preferably tabasco sauce.

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Advancing sail tech in Phuket



On Deck

By Duncan Worthington

IT'S OFTEN said that technology starts at the top, at the most advanced businesses developing cutting-edge products, and then trickles down to everyday life objects and activities. The same can be said for sailing. In particular, sail technology.

Observing at the recent Cape Panwa Hotel Phuket Raceweek the vast variety of sail materials and brands used by the fleet, I thought it was time to take a deeper look into this. Surely, with all the technology at our fingertips and the storied history of sailing as a pastime and a sport, there would, by now, be some consistency in the use of sails by sailors.

Sort of.

Early materials used in sail making were flax (linen), hemp or cotton – mainly natural fibers. Today, however, sails are made from synthetic fibers. In 1851, the yacht *America* beat the best of the British fleet in a race around the Isle of White and the trophy awarded has become known as the America's Cup. *America* raced with cloth sails.

Take a look at the America's Cup 156 years and 35 editions on. Things have changed considerably.

It is high-profile events like the America's Cup, the Volvo



Team Land Rover BAR, current leader of the Louis Vuitton America's Cup World Series, held in Portsmouth, UK July 21-24. Photo: America's Cup

Ocean Race and others that lead the technological charge and change in the sport. Today, technological advancements from the pinnacle events in the sport have trickled down to day sailors, cruisers and racers the world over.

Competitive sailing, in my opinion, appears to be very much about having and using the best technology, the latest materials and design. What-

ever edge you can get – or think you can get – you take. Phuket can be proud that most global sail companies have a presence on the island.

The latest technology from Quantum Sails, North Sails as well as from homegrown Rolly Tasker is available here through local representation. It is impressive that such global brands have invested so much in this small island. It also underscores

sailing and the marine industry's importance to the island's economy.

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

Life vest design under development



The life vest under development. Photo: Patagonia

LIFE jackets are an essential but often cumbersome piece of equipment for most water sports, but adventure clothing manufacturer Patagonia aims to make movement a lot easier and safer for athletes on the water with a brand new self-inflating life vest designed to be worn under a wet suit.

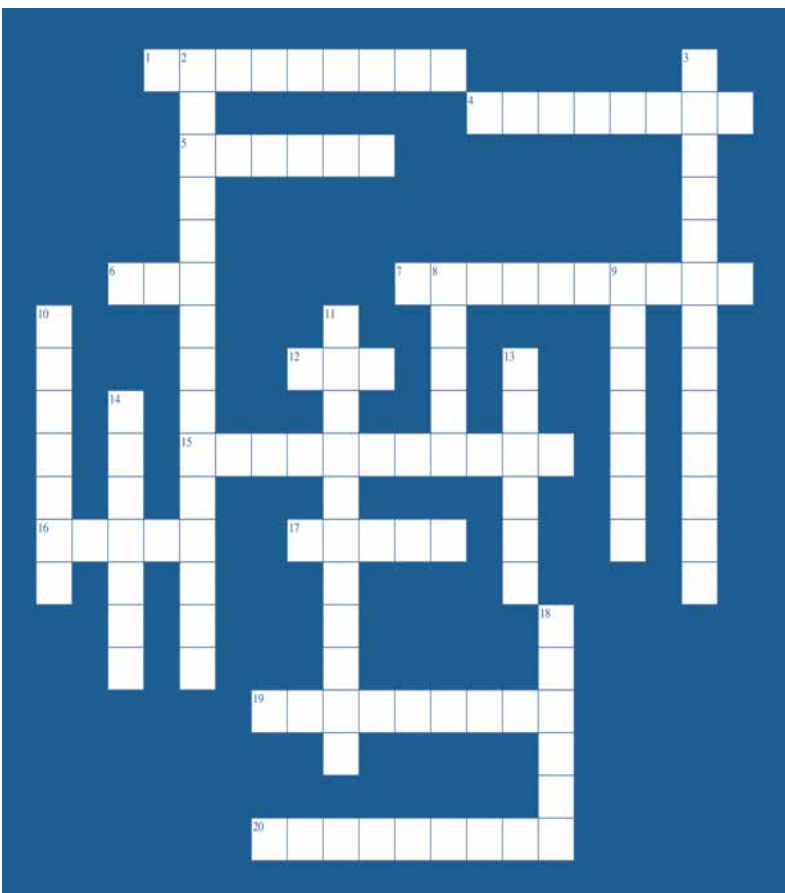
The Portable Self-Inflating (PSI) Vest is being primarily developed for surfers, claims Patagonia.

Collaborating with field testers, Patagonia's R&D team is working to make the unobtrusive life vest compatible with a range of different wetsuits and with a release valve for quick deflation in the water – a pioneering, purpose-built tool for use in the most critical surf conditions.

"After extensive development work, prototypes of the PSI Vest were circulated for water trials and testers are currently putting them through extended use in big wave sessions around the world," the manufacturer claims.

The company is expected to make the life vest available for commercial sale some time next year.

– *Phuket Gazette*



Gazette Crossword

Test your word power and local knowledge.

Across

1. Detrimental to coral
4. District administrative organization
5. Patong walking street
6. Slang word for 'crystal meth'
7. Department of Disaster Prevention and _____
12. Tie the knot
15. Structure used in building construction
16. Neighboring province
17. Islamic food
19. Native fruit with 1,500 baht price tag
20. Unable to make a move

Down

2. Phuket seafood extravaganza being held this month
3. Large native reptile
8. To be annoyed
9. 2004 disaster
10. Sing along
11. Do not swim in this area
13. Home made gun popular with delinquents
14. Dolphins
18. Veer

Solution on opposite page.



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Slow suffocation by plastic

Keep It Green
By Patrick Campbell

I AM unashamedly returning to a subject which I only recently aired in these columns. No apology. It is a crucial topic, in my case stimulated anew by an excellent analysis in 'China Daily' called 'Drowning in Plastic', and secondly by the cover story in a recent edition of the *Gazette*.

Entitled 'Fished Out', it expressed surprise at the decline in fish catches in the seas around Phuket. The main contributor to that story, Somkyos, president of the Phuket Fishing Association, cited pollution as a major problem, including, rather oddly 'farang feces', but failed, even once, to mention the 'P' word.

Anyone interested in ecological issues knows that the principal culprits for the catastrophic decline in marine life are the triple evils of overfishing, inadequate regulation at all levels, and pollution. For decades, weighted trawl nets have scoured the shallow bottom of the Andaman Sea, removing not only entire fish colonies, but all its benthic life, including colonies of sea grass.

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 more of an issue in Phuket, with inadequate waste disposal systems chucking thousands of tonnes of raw sewage



Plastic is more abundant on some beaches than naturally occurring debris such as coconuts. Photo: epSos.de

into the sea. Not to mention eutrophication, whereby 95 per cent of Phuket's agricultural pesticides and herbicides, mostly toxic, end as chemical run-off in the vast sink we call the ocean.

And plastic? Actually, it is one of the biggest problems of all. Consider these statistics. By 2050, says a reputable UK organization, the world's oceans will be "expected to contain more plastics than fish (by weight)". Garbage soup.

A report by 'Stemming the Tide' identified five countries – all Asian and including Thailand – of contributing between "55 and 60 percent" of all the plastic found in our oceans. And 90 per cent of all plastic that is produced annually is thrown away. Where does it end up? Some in landfills, more in our seas.

You may argue that plastic is harmless. Far from it. It degrades

in tidal water, mostly ending up as small particles that appeal as potential food to marine life. A University of California study recently showed that fish in the North Pacific ingest plastic at a rate of 12,000 to 24,000 tonnes a year. Another oceanographer Erik Van Sebille of London's Imperial College concurs.

"There is so much plastic in marine animals at the moment. Almost every fish and bird that is cut open for science, we find plastic inside it," says Van Sebille. "There is fast-growing evidence of direct harm to animals that eat plastics, including young fish starving to death (choked gut perhaps?), oysters stopping reproduction, and birds being weighed down."

Of course, the chemicals in the plastic add to the harm – potent pills, full of toxic chemicals. A staggering 693 species have

been harmed by the stuff.

To be more specific, olive ridley turtles, which feed largely on jellyfish, mistake plastic bags for prey and choke to death, or like other turtle species, are maimed or killed by entangling nylon nets. Small fish eat the plastic microbeads that are contained – thousands of them – in face washes and exfoliants. Albatross chicks die from ingesting colorful plastic lighters.

And of course, all this plastic travels up the food chain. It is sobering to think that we are also victims. In some ways, it feels like we deserve to be.

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

Get fruity



Mangosteen is in season. Photo: Chutharat Plerin

WITH the onset of the annual rains comes new taste sensations with new harvests of seasonal fruits, which will be dropping in price throughout August at the local markets. Buying fruits in season is not only cheaper, but means you get better quality fruit in its naturally ripe state, as well as more variety.

Fruit farmers down south are now harvesting mangosteen and rambutan so you'll be seeing market stalls piled high with these juicy fruits this month. Oranges too should be getting a bit cheaper.

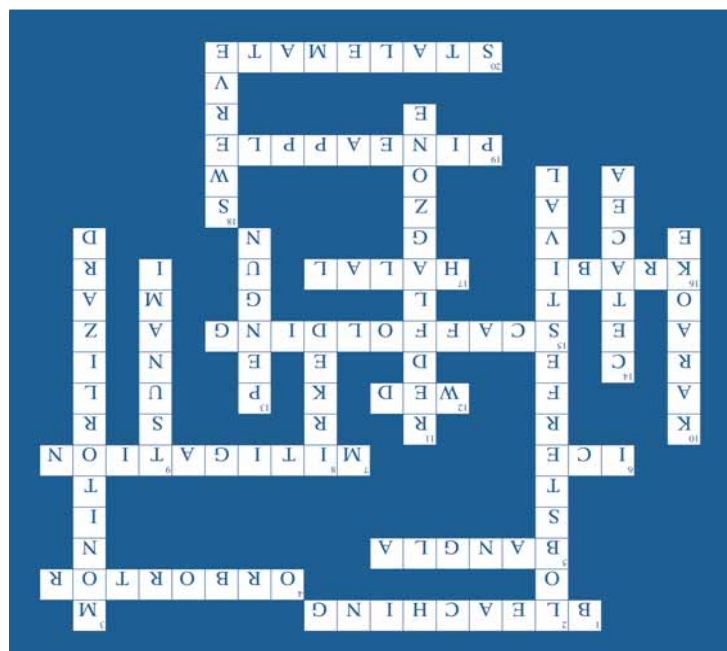
With mangosteen, there's a trick to breaking through the deep reddish-purple rind to the sweet, succulent and tangy citrus fruit inside. You can use a knife to make a shallow cut all around the circumference of the fruit and pull off the top half of the rind, leaving the fruit nestled in the base. Or, using only your hands, you can pinch the rind between your thumbs while holding the fruit sideways with the base in one hand and the top in the other.

Mangosteen is used in traditional medicine to treat skin infections, wounds, dysentery, and urinary tract infections.

– Nick Davies

Crossword Solution

Turn the page upside down to read the answers.



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Pricing your property accurately



By The Book

Kevin Hodges

WHEN listing your property for sale, one of the most important things to do is establish an asking price. As the seller, you don't want to set the price too low and miss out. Equally, you must not price too high as you can put off potential buyers.

The first step to correctly pricing a property is to have an industry professional value it for you.

Valuation is the process of estimating the most probable price that would be paid under typical market conditions at the date of valuation.

A sale at 'fair market value' is by definition the amount of money a well-informed buyer would pay and a well-informed seller would accept for the property that has been on the open market for a reasonable amount of time, assuming neither buyer nor seller is acting under pressure.

When a sale is deemed valid, it can be used to help determine fair market value for other, similar properties. The goal is to value all properties fairly and equally, while being as close to fair market value as possible.

There are three methods for valuing a property, outlined below.

The 'market approach' involves comparing a property with characteristics of similar properties that have recently



The first step to correctly pricing a property is to have a professional value it. Photo: Siam Real Estate

been sold.

The 'cost approach' involves estimating the replacement cost of a structure, and adjusting that estimate to account for depreciation.

The 'income approach' is an analysis of a property's value based on its capacity to generate revenue for the owner.

Due to the embryonic nature of the Phuket property market, the 'market approach' is most commonly used – valuating homes based on what an average person would be willing to pay for a similar property in the province.

This data is derived by looking at current sales in Phuket.

Every attempt is made to use sales that have the same characteristics as the property to be valued – the 'subject property'. These would include, but are not limited, to the total area and the number of bedrooms and bathrooms, for instance.

If a subject property doesn't have enough matching sales, adjustments are made to the sale properties most closely resembling that one to create a more equitable value.

Consider what you paid for the property, how long you have lived there, local comparable property prices, any improvements added, present condition of the property, ask

about the current property climate, and arm yourself with the facts. By not establishing a realistic price from the beginning, many home sellers end up costing themselves hundreds of thousands of baht.

Do not over price the property and think you can wait, because you are not in a hurry to sell. This in fact has the opposite effect. The buyer sees that the property has been on the market for a year or more and asks 'what's wrong with it?'

It's a mistake to be greedy and ask for an unrealistic selling price. Buyers have a wide selection to choose from and will simply go elsewhere.

Supply and demand is also a factor in determining the value of your property. If there are a lot of sellers and few buyers, prices tend to go down, and homes take longer to sell in a 'buyer's market'.

When the opposite is true and there are many buyers but few homes for sale, prices rise and homes sell very quickly in a 'seller's market'.

A common mistake made by Phuket property owners is to over price their property when they initially list it. This is not necessarily due to the owner being greedy, but simply because they did not have access to the correct information to make a proper valuation in current market conditions.

Sellers often tell brokers that they want to price their house at X, because their neighbor's house is on the market for a higher price. Or they heard a house down the road from them just sold for X price.

Unfortunately, their neighbor's house is probably overpriced too and won't ever sell at that asking price. With re-sales, it's difficult to find information widely available on the actual selling price so when a neighbor tells you they got a great price for their house, take it with a pinch of salt. And ask your broker for an accurate valuation.

For more information about this article contact Kevin Hodges, Siam Real Estate (SRE) at 076-324042 Email: kevin@siamrealestate.com; www.siamrealestate.com

Foreign investors eye Asean properties

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.

Surachet Kongcheep, associate director of research at property consultancy Colliers International, said buyers from mainland China and Hong Kong were the main targets for



Sansiri sold 2bn baht worth of condominium units to buyers from Hong Kong, mainland China and Taiwan. Photo: Gazette file

developers focused on the luxury residential market.

Country Group Development plans to kick off the third round of sales of its Four Seasons Private Residences Bangkok in Hong Kong in the

current second half of this year. Additionally, Myanmar and Indonesia have passed laws allowing foreigners to at least partly own condominiums and houses in their countries.

– The Nation

Minibars unnecessary, research suggests

MORE than 70 percent of travelers say they never use hotel mini-bars according to a survey conducted jointly by GO Airport Express, and The GO Group, LLC, an international ground transportation service provider.

Just fewer than four percent said they always raid the mini-fridges, while 20 per cent said they do so sometimes or occasionally.

Several of the more than 733 survey respondents had comments, noting that they think the food and beverage offerings are too expensive, or they use the mini-fridges to store their snacks bought elsewhere.

Of those who did purchase from the hotel mini-bars, men were more likely to purchase alcoholic beverages, at 27 per cent, compared with 14 per cent of women. Women bought more bottled water (47 per cent) compared with men (35 per cent). Women also purchase healthier snacks such as nuts and granola bars, than men, at 14 per cent and seven per cent respectively.

"Today's travellers are more savvy, health and budget conscious," says John McCarthy, president of GO Airport Express. "Successful hotels are starting to respond by catering to the changing preferences of their guests."

– Phuket Gazette

Angsana launches luxury villas

BANYAN Tree Hotels & Resorts launched 'Angsana Villas Resort Phuket' as an addition to the Angsana family on August 1. It was rebranded from the former Outrigger Laguna Phuket Resort and Villas.

The resort has 48 villas and suites, with all rooms featuring living areas. Guests can opt for one, two and three-bedroom suites or three and four-bedroom villas with kitchenettes and balconies. In addition, all villas are surrounded by gardens and have private swimming pools.

Dining options are available al fresco at Panache Restaurant, where guests can enjoy Asian and international cuisine while relaxing outside by the pool or in the air-conditioned indoor seating area. Additionally, the *Baan Aroi* restaurant serves both Thai and western dishes.

Angsana Villas Resort Phuket's facilities also include a fitness center, kids' club, swimming pool, a bar, as well as two meeting facilities with private swimming pools.

Guests at the Angsana Villas Resort Phuket can also enjoy access to all the amenities at Angsana Laguna Phuket, including the resort's 323-



Four-bedroom villas (pictured above) are equipped with kitchenettes and balconies, are surrounded by gardens and have private swimming pools. Photo: Banyan Tree Hotels & Resort

meter free-form pool around the resort, Xana Beach Club, Angsana Spa, and restaurants such as *Bodega & Grill*, *Baan Talay* and *The Poolside*.

A complimentary scheduled shuttle service is available to transport guests between Angsana Villas and Angsana Laguna Phuket.

"In addition to Angsana La-

guna Phuket, we are delighted to add Angsana Villas Resort Phuket to the Angsana family and expand our presence in Asia's first integrated resort Laguna Phuket. Both resorts are committed to excellent service and delivering beautiful memories for every guest," said Brian Connelly, General Manager of Angsana Laguna

Phuket and the newly rebranded Angsana Villas Resort Phuket.

"This move enables us to provide more guests with an unforgettable Angsana experience and it shows our dedication to expanding the brand while maintaining high standards of luxury and service."

- *Phuket Gazette*

B100bn set aside for investment

A NUMBER of leading developers have set aside investment budgets worth more than 100 billion baht combined for this year through 2022 to fund merger-and-acquisition deals for office, hospitality and other non-residential projects in Thailand and abroad.

TCC Land Asset World, a property arm of beverage tycoon Charoen Sirivadhana-bhakdi, plans to invest more than 74.2bn baht for hotel development until 2022.

Country Group Holdings, owned by the Taechaubol family, has reserved 6bn baht to acquire businesses and invest both locally and overseas.

Singha Estate has set aside an investment budget of 18.8bn baht, Land & Houses earlier announced 7bn baht in investment this year, whereas Pruksa Real Estate has set aside 1.5bn baht to acquire major stakes in the hospitality sector next year, after its restructuring into a holding company is completed by the end of this year.

- *The Nation*

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PHUKET VIEW POINT



Sugar Palm Condominium, Suan Luang. Top floor (11st). Corner unit. Panoramic view. Park, city, mountain and sea views. 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 2 balconies. 96sqm. Unfurnished. Asking price: 6.9 million baht. Tel: 089-593 8690 (English), 088-762 3837 (Thai). Email: ruen_narayan@hotmail.com

2-STOREY SINGLE HOUSE FOR SALE



Burasiri Village. Koh Kaew. Next to BIS. 3 bedrooms (master bedroom with ensuite and walk-in closet), 3 bathrooms. Fully furnished, 4 aircons, kitchen with separate pantry. Parking for 2 cars. Communal swimming pool, garden and fitness.



For sale: 6.6 million baht or sell down payment: 400,000 baht. Long-term rent: 45,000 baht monthly, 520,000 baht yearly.

Tel: 089-840 5290 (Thai), 094-579 5666 (Thai / Eng.)



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Boat Lagoon's new brand builder

By Simon J Hand

LAST week, the Global Marina Institute (GMI) announced that Wicky Sundram, the new executive director at Phuket Boat Lagoon, was the latest 'Certified Marina Professional' (CMP) to join its ranks. Wicky is only the sixth person in Asia to receive this accolade and the first in Thailand.

That's a fine achievement for someone who, when he first joined the Royal Langkawi Yacht Club (RLYC) eighteen years ago, hardly knew one end of a boat from the other.

Today, when someone arrives in Langkawi by sea, one of the first things they see is the impressive field of masts protruding from the 250 berth RLYC – now the largest marina in Malaysia.

When Wicky joined RLYC as general manager, however, it was a far more modest affair; just fifty-something berths and a nice, quiet clubhouse.

At the time, Wicky had built a solid career in the high-traffic food and beverage trade, and it was his hospitality acumen that the RLYC's holding

company hoped he would bring to the marina operations. Even so, Wicky wasn't sure the move would be a good fit.

"I asked them to give me six months," he says as we relax over a refreshing beverage on the boardwalk at the Boat Lagoon. "But what if someone comes and asks me something about boats?"

Eighteen years later and the GMI certification would seem to prove that Wicky has picked up quite a bit of knowledge on the subject, much of it garnered while managing the RLYC through a series of redevelopments, upgrades and facelifts that has turned it into the award-winning marina we see today.

In 2003, the club was instrumental in launching the annual Royal Langkawi International Regatta, with Wicky and his team rolling around the region for a year before its inception, gleaning all the knowledge they could from the established regattas, which of course meant spending quite a bit of time in Phuket.

"For the last twelve years I've been coming here 3-5

times a year," he explains. "So, it's not like moving up here is moving to a strange land – I have a lot of friends here already."

Upon completing RLYC's most recent 'face-lift' at the beginning of this year – a project he had been working on since 2013 to bring the marina services in line with the fast-developing tourism infrastructure nearby – Wicky was looking for a new challenge. And the challenge that presented itself was in Phuket.

"Everyone knows Phuket Boat Lagoon. You go to marinas in Malaysia or Singapore and mention Phuket Boat Lagoon? Yes, everyone knows it. It's one of the best facilities for boat repair and hard stand."

Wicky explains that his role at the marina is brand development and strategic marketing – taking the Boat Lagoon brand to the next level.

"We've had a lot of planning meetings, but it's going to take some time. I've been here now only two and a half months. I'm still learning all the services meeting with all the teams."

His overall plan is to consolidate the message emanating from the marina's many operations.

"The owners have built this place as a village – it's got a hotel, shops, a little arcade, more facilities and properties

surrounding it. While the marina is still very much the core, the focus is now on

lifestyle. I'm working with the team here to bring this lifestyle brand up," Wicky smiles. "We're giving the lifestyle a face-lift."



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