

Phuket Gazette

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'WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF OBSERVERS WERE NOT THERE?'

Phuket votes

Province leads the south in support of draft constitution

By Gazette reporters

MORE than half of Phuket's eligible voters turned out to cast their ballots in the August 7 draft constitution referendum, Phuket Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada told the *Gazette* this week.

Almost 90 per cent of last Sunday's 150,326 voters in the province voted to accept the proposed draft constitution, the highest percentage out of any province south of the Isthmus of Kra.

Provincial Election Commission officials said they had hoped for an 80 per cent turnout at the polls, but Gov Chamroen said that rain and heavy traffic may have prevented some from making it to the province's 370 polling stations.

The governor cast his own vote on Sunday at the Phuket City Municipal Hall polling station.

"A total of 150,326 (54 per cent) of the province's 274,407 eligible voters turned out to vote on August 7," he said in a statement prepared by the Phuket Provincial Public Relations Office. "Out of that, 125,643 (88 per cent) voted 'yes' for the draft charter and 17,801 (nearly 12 per cent) voted 'no'."

Voters in Phuket also overwhelmingly approved a second ballot question that would allow senators to join parliamentarians in selecting the country's Prime Minister. According to the now-passed draft constitution, the ruling National Council for Public Order (NCPO) would be allowed to appoint 250 seats in Thailand's 500-seat parliament.

According to official figures released



Gov Chamroen speaks with reporters after voting at Phuket City Municipal Hall polling station, while voters cast their ballots behind him at Sapan Hin Sports Complex. Photo: Phuket PR

the day after the vote, 118,969 (85 per cent) of local voters said 'yes' to the Senate being involved in the selection of the Prime Minister; 20,022 (14 per cent) voted 'no'. A total of 3,181 (2 per cent) of the ballots were voided.

Leaders within the NCPO have stated that they expect the draft constitution to be ratified within 30 days of the vote.

Phuket's seemingly wide-spread support for the referendum echoed voting results around the country. At press time, the Central Election Commission had counted 94 per cent of ballots cast, with initial turnouts across the country projected at 58 per cent of all eligible voters.

According to the Election Commission, as many as 15.5 million (61.4 per cent of total voters) approved the draft charter, while 9.7 million (38.6 per cent) voted against it. Thailand's Northeastern provinces, which comprise the red-shirt stronghold of Isarn, was the only region carried by 'no' votes.

On Sunday evening, the leadership of the opposition Pheu Thai Party, acknowledged defeat, stating that the vote for the referendum was indicative of a clear desire on behalf of the majority of Thais to return to the democratic process.

Continued on Page 4

List alleges extortion of migrants

A LIST, circulated on social media, accuses Provincial, Tourist, Immigration, Border, Patong and Phuket City Police officials of extorting migrant workers as the Employment Office wraps up workers' registrations.

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BUSINESS



The Pokemon Go craze teaches a valuable marketing lesson.

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PROPERTY



Phuket Marriott Resort & Spa, Nai Yang Beach gets revamped.

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LIFE & STYLE



Miss World Australia 2016 speaks to the *Gazette* on her visit to Phuket.

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LOCAL NEWS

Briefly

Teens threaten riders with gun

TWO men filed a complaint against two unidentified teenagers who allegedly threatened them with a gun in Cherng Talay on the night of August 4.

Satja Kongrat, 20, and Ekkachai Chaidam, 19, were both riding on a bike on Srisoonthorn Road, heading to Bangtao, when the incident occurred.

Cherng Talay police reported that Mr Satja and Mr Ekkachai said they arrived at Cherng Talay fresh market at about 6pm when two men dressed in black, both about 17-19 years of age, started riding their bike really close to them.

Mr Satja said he asked the teenagers why they were staring at them, when one of the teenagers took out a gun and told them to stop.

The two then sped away, straight to the police station.

– Winai Sarot

Illegal dumping garners outrage

LOCALS and tourists complaining about a mangrove for-

Truck flip scatters shrimp



A pick-up truck loaded with fresh shrimp flipped over in front of the Agricultural and Development Office on its way into Krabi Town, spilling its cargo all over the road on August 3. Rescue workers said that the driver and passenger survived the accident with barely a scratch between them. A rescuer stated that locals helping to retrieve crustaceans were thanked with handfuls of shrimp in return. Photo: Winai Sarot

est at Mu Ko Phi Phi National Park, may actually get a response from officers in charge of the area, after outrage over repeated illegal trash-dumping incidents spread across social media during the week of August 6.

The pile of trash comprised about 10 tonnes of construction debris, wires, broken toilets, mirrors, wheels, as well as various other items including the head of a mannequin.

Locals took to Facebook, stating that the trash threatened the natural ecosystem of the area, including hundreds of monkeys that live in the forest. Park chief Sarayuth Tanthien, after seeing the post, dispatched officers to clear out the trash.

“It will take some time to take care of the trash,” said Mr Sarayuth.

“We will not just do a clean up this time. We will find the people responsible, so that legal action can be taken against them,” warned Mr Sarayuth.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

Elderly tourist dies swimming

AN ELDERLY tourist is dead after reportedly suffering health complications while swimming off of Koh Phi Phi on August 8.

Krabi tourist police reported that 67-year-old Hongzhu Tang, a Chinese national, was swimming with a life vest on Loh Mu Di Beach at 1pm, when he reportedly cried out in

distress.

Mr Teerawat said that the tourist went into the water around 11am with his life jacket on. Shortly thereafter, Mr Tang had cried out for help before he was retrieved unconscious.

Mr Teerawat said crewmembers attempted to resuscitate Mr Tang before he was transferred to Phi Phi Hospital, where he died.

– Winai Sarot

Phuket Town serial robber apprehended

PHUKET City police reported on August 3 that they believe they have caught the man responsible for a wave of robberies across Phuket Town.

Jakkarin Seesong, 27, reportedly could not remember how many robberies he had committed in the past month, but confessed to police that it was “at least 10.”

Mr Jakkarin was charged with robbery using a vehicle, which carries a sentence of up to five years imprisonment and a 10,000 baht fine.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

Jungceylon re-opens after inspection fixes

JUNGCEYLON shopping mall in Patong was given permission on August 3 to reopen a section of the complex that had been closed to make repairs to crumbling columns discovered in June.

After an inspection on August 3, Phuket Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada announced that the mall had followed all of Patong Municipality’s recommendations and could now be reopened.

Patong Mayor Chalermluck Kebsup said Jungceylon will continue reporting to Patong Municipality.

– Chutharat Plerin

Five Chinese tourists rescued

FOUR Chinese tourists aboard a sinking longtail boat were rescued from Phang Nga Bay on the evening of August 3.

The *Nateesup* was on its way from Koh Ngai to Koh Lanta with two women, a man and a child on board. They were navigating through heavy surf when the captain noticed that the boat’s hull had cracked and that sea water was flowing in faster than they could pump it out.

Several boats responded to the *Nateesup*’s distress call, rescuing the tourists and the boat’s captain.

In a separate incident, another Chinese tourist was rescued after being dragged out to sea from Kata Beach in Phuket on the morning of the same day. Lifeguards rescued the man, who was swimming in a red flag zone in heavy surf.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

Man run over before family

A FATHER of two on holiday with his family was run over and killed in front of his wife and children while crossing Thepkassattri Road during a stop-off to shop at 7-Eleven on the night of August 9.

The 54-year-old man, identified as Shengbin Lu, was part of a group of Chinese tourists on their way to Phuket Airport to fly home after being picked up from their hotel in Patong.

– Winai Sarot



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Imam chases down, runs over drive-by shooters

A MUSLIM cleric was injured in a drive-by shooting in Koh Kaew on the night of August 4, after which he attempted to chase down his attackers, seriously injuring both.

Weerachat Kahapana, 49, an Imam at Bang Pae mosque, received one bullet wound in his rib-cage, while his 3-year-old son, who was in the car with him, escaped unscathed.

The perpetrators were seriously injured as Mr Weerachat reportedly tried to run them over in the aftermath of the shooting.

"We received reports of the shooting at 7:45pm and rushed to the scene with Phuket City Police officers," said Phuket Provincial Police Deputy Commander Peerayuth Karajedee. "Mr Weerachat's car, sprayed with multiple bullet holes on the passenger seat glass, was parked at the scene with a damaged motorbike stuck under the front. Two helmets, a mobile phone and footwear were also lying nearby."

"Mr Weerachat had already been taken to Vachira Phuket Hospital by the time we arrived, while witnesses claimed to have seen the two shooters escape to a nearby forest," he



The Imam chased down his attackers in his car and ran over their motorbike. Photos: Kritsada Mueanhawong

added.

Witnesses told the police that Mr Weerachat and his son left their house to attend evening prayers at the Bang Pae mosque, when the two men on a motorbike pulled up and shot at his car.

A short chase ensued, which led to Mr Weerachat attempting to run over the shooters with his car. The two managed to flee on foot. Mr Weerachat

and his son were both taken to the hospital.

It was also reported that the attackers later stole a motorbike to get away from the scene.

"With the help of CCTV footage and witnesses' accounts, we found that the shooters ended up at Vachira Phuket Hospital at about midnight," said Col Peerayuth. "They had been transferred there from Thalang Hospital

due to the severity of their injuries."

When being questioned by the police, the suspects denied any involvement in the shooting. However, police are closely monitoring them while they receive treatment at the hospital.

Mr Weerachat has reportedly been threatened once before, at his house.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

Axe-wielding motorbike thieves caught

PHUKET City Police on the night of August 6 captured robbers who stole a bag from a Slovakian tourist at Phuket Downtown Fresh Market the night before.

Riding a motorbike, the robbers snatched a bag from Domonkoso Vaniko, 28, after pulling up beside her.

It was initially believed that the suspects threatened their victim with a small hammer. However, it was revealed following their capture, that the pair used an axe.

Police traced two brothers, Somchai Buraphut, 29, and Sompong Buraphut, 20, to a house in Phuket Town with the help of CCTV footage and apprehended them the night after their attack.

The two confessed to the crime after police raided their residence and found Ms Vaniko's purse, a mobile phone, 5,000 baht in cash, a driving licence and the motorbike used in the robbery.

The brothers reportedly told police that they planned to use their ill-gotten gains for travelling.

Police charged the pair with committing theft at night and using a motor vehicle to commit a crime.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

Police called in to quell riot at juvenile facility

A GROUP of 35 juvenile delinquents, including at least one charged for involvement in the Thalang riot last October, wreaked havoc at the Phuket Juvenile Observation and Protection Center (JOPC) at Saphan Hin on the afternoon of August 5.

Phuket City Police were called in to control the situation by JOPC Director Rawee Kuhapimook.

"The group grabbed hold of fire extinguishers and sprayed them into the building's ground and pond. They also destroyed property on the premises, including in the canteen, behavior therapy room and grounds," said Ms Rawee.

Police subdued the unruly youths and rebuked them.

"Once we had the situation



The incarcerated juveniles were subdued. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

under control, everyone was fed and gathered together on the second floor," said Col Komol Osiri of Phuket City Police.

The instigator of the incident, a 17-year-old brought in on drug charges and identified as one of protesters in the Thalang Police Station riot last year, has been temporarily moved to Phuket Provincial Prison, Col Komol confirmed. "He was bullying newcom-

ers and inciting others to join in the destruction," said Ms Rawee.

The incident, which took place during visiting hours, has pushed JOPC officials to increase visiting frequency from three days a week to daily. Ms Rawee said that frequent interaction with family members will help prevent such incidents in the future.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

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List alleges widespread corruption

A LIST of 20 officers allegedly extorting bribes from employers of migrant workers has prompted Phuket's Governor and the Provincial Police Chief to condemn corruption and vow investigations into the allegations.

The list – which details officers' names, department and phone number – went viral across social media sites like Facebook and Line on August 3.

Governor Chamroen Tip-ayapongtada urged police departments to investigate whether there was any truth to the extortion allegations and to report back to him their findings.

Phuket Provincial Police Commander Teeraphol Thipjaroen told the *Gazette* he was aware of the list, saying that "justice will be served."

The allegations came a day after a crowd of more than a hundred employers of migrant workers gathered at Phuket Provincial Hall to protest difficulties in registering their

workers.

The list purportedly showed that officers would take 2,000 baht per month from migrant employers on the tenth of every month.

Implicated in the allegations are Patong Police, Phuket City Police, Thung Thong Police, Wichit Police, the Tourist Police, Provincial Office personnel, Immigration Police, Region 8 Police, Border Patrol Police, Phuket Provincial Police, Special Branch, as well as several divisions of the Central Investigation Bureau.

The list also shows whether the transaction was to be made in person or via a wire transfer. It alleges that 3,000 baht a month goes to the Bangkok Office of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Committee. "I'd heard about some bribery schemes over some migrant employers a long time ago and I sent out a letter ordering them to collect all the evidence they have and to file complaints against those officers," Gov

Chamroen said. "However, to this day, I've never received any complaint or evidence of bribery from them."

"If the employers of migrants feel like they're being bullied or treated unfairly, I encourage them to please come to see me," he added. "I will personally oversee the investigation."

Major General Teeraphol said his office will be investigating the allegations in two stages.

"Our first priority is to find out if those officers are real, then to find out where this list came from," he said.

"I personally have never gotten involved in any form of bribery or extortion. If the employers of migrant workers feel that they've received unfair treatment from any officer, please file a complaint with us."

Commander Teeraphol said he will appoint a deputy commander to handle the case.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

Phuket votes 'yes' on draft

From page 1

... This week, organizers of We Watch – an independent watchdog – reported numerous irregularities at polling booths during Sunday's referendum vote.

Chompunut Chaliebun, the coordinator of We Watch, said the watchdog's volunteer observers found that an individual in Phuket voted on behalf of someone else, and staff at a polling station in Bangkok's Jomthong district did not seal ballot boxes before voters inserted their ballots.

The problem at Jomthong was fixed after observers pointed out the problem, although Ms Chompunut asked, "What would have happened if the observers were not there?"

Ms Chompunut also said that observers found that six polling stations in Chachoengsao province, east of Bangkok, counted votes at a coordination center at the district level, rather than at polling stations, as stipulated by Election Committee guidelines.

Without identifying the locations, she also said some polling booths were preparing to count votes before 4pm, when polling stations were scheduled to close. Observers stepped in and asked staff to follow the rules and start counting after 4pm, she said.

In a polling station in Kalasin province, she said, the number of ballots counted was different from the number of people who voted. Staff did not perform a recount, Ms Chompunut said.

She said two stations in Bangkok were moved to different locations without notifying voters and staff at a dozen polling booths did not read aloud the names of voters when they registered, as the rules specified.

Staff at many stations, including in Bangkok, did not show the ballots to the public while they were being counted. Meanwhile, western powers,

including the United States and the European Union urged the NCPO to end restrictions on freedom of speech, and to allow inclusive discussion on the new constitution after Sunday's referendum vote.

EU Spokesperson Federica Mogherini stated that during the campaign period before the vote, there were serious limitations on political debates and campaigning.

"It is essential that the current restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly are lifted to allow for an open, inclusive and accountable political process," Ms Mogherini read in a statement after the vote.

"The EU continues to call upon the Thai authorities to create the conditions for a genuine democratic transition leading to

We strongly urge the government to lift restrictions on civil liberties, including the freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly.

– Elizabeth Trudeau, US State Department Spokesperson

early general elections. All main stakeholders in Thailand need to engage in an inclusive dialogue and work together peacefully towards this aim."

In her daily press briefing on August 8, US State Department Spokesperson

Elizabeth Trudeau said that the US remains concerned that the drafting process for the constitution was not inclusive. Ms Trudeau also stated that open debate was not permitted in the run-up to its adoption.

"As part of the process to return Thailand to democracy, we strongly urge the government to lift restrictions on civil liberties, including the freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly, so the Thai people can engage in an open, unimpeded dialogue about the country's political future," she said.

Ms Trudeau also criticized the ability of the NCPO to appoint lawmakers to parliament.

"We've raised concerns about it not being inclusive, not being open. And in terms of the reservation for the military seats, as I said, we continue to urge Thai authorities to return Thailand to an elected, civilian-led government as soon as possible."

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V/Adm wants to limit, register tourist visits

PHUKET'S top Naval officer criticized local officials' management of tourism in the Andaman at a meeting held on August 3.

Royal Thai Navy Third Area Commander Sayan Prasongsamrej was particularly critical of the Phuket Marine Office, saying that officials there needed to do a better job of documenting international vessels anchoring or docking in Thai waters.

"A major concern of mine is that we're not controlling yachts from other countries coming into our region, especially those coming to Phuket," V/Adm Sayan said during the conference.

"I was told that Phuket has a yacht control center and assured that they have a good system in place already, but I doubt that because it's much harder to monitor traffic at sea than on land or air.

"I want to urge every officer to ensure that they do their job correctly. The more we record tourist and yacht-related data, the better we will be able to control and document who comes in or out of our territory."

Officials from tourist management departments throughout the region discussed the possibility of limiting the number of tourists visiting islands and other fragile habitats, in



V/Adm Sayan listens to reports from Marine Offices around the Andaman. Photo: Chutharat Plerin

order to preserve the Kingdom's natural resources.

V/Adm Sayan told the *Gazette* that the meeting was called so he could get a better idea of what problems tourist departments in the region were facing and to ensure that tourist areas are preserved.

"One of my suggestions was to have a maximum of 200 tourists at the same time on Ta Chai island," he said. "Controllers at the pier would make sure of this."

Ta Chai Island and the surrounding waters were closed to tourists and members of the public on May 16 with no scheduled reopening date.

"In the meantime, we have

yet to get a clear picture of when the island will reopen," said V/Adm Sayan.

The Vice Admiral's proposal dates back to September last year, when he first raised the idea of controlling the number of visitors to the Andaman region's tourist attractions, including Phi Phi Don, in order to promote environmental sustainability.

There is no clear indication of when – or if – the vice admiral's proposal will be adopted.

"Marine officers are sorting out details of the plan, but I want to see a clear picture on controlling the number of tour-

ists. Moreover, I want to see how they'll make sure that all tourists come back to shore safely and for them to have records of when tourists and boats leave for the islands," said the admiral.

"When tourists spend the night at one of the islands, officers must have a record of where they're staying.

"Although we cannot directly command every tourism office in the region to implement these measures, we can call them in to discuss their progress and have them update us to make sure we are on the same page."

– Chutharat Plerin

Pair leaps off Sarasin Bridge

A 51 year-old man died after he and a 15 year-old girl jumped off the Sarasin Bridge at about 7pm on August 7.

The Thai pair, who police believe to have been father and daughter, were rescued by fishermen passing by on a boat.

Police said that the man, named as Ruab Duangjan, was unconscious at the time of his rescue, while the girl was reportedly in hysterics. The *Gazette* is withholding the minor's name.

Rescue workers from Phuket and Phang Nga were originally unable to locate the pair, until receiving word that they had already been picked up by the fishing vessel.

The two were rushed to Takuatung Hospital in Phang Nga for treatment, where Mr Ruab later succumbed to his injuries.

"On arrival, the man was unconscious, but the girl was not seriously harmed," said Mai Khao rescue worker Nattawut Plukmaidee. "Unfortunately we haven't been able to get any information about why the two jumped from the bridge, as she's been crying a lot."

The Sarasin Bridge is historically known as the 'love bridge'. In February 1973, a couple bound their hands together and jumped off the bridge. Since then, a number of people have jumped from the bridge to their deaths. Earlier this year, a brokenhearted girl also jumped off the bridge, due to a failed relationship.

– Winai Sarot

Tour guide admits to attempted rape

A TOUR guide confessed on August 4 that he attempted to rape a receptionist in Cherng Talay earlier that morning, police confirmed.

Cherng Talay Police officers responded to a call from the Imperial Ocean Palms apartment complex at about 4am, and questioned the victim, whose name the *Gazette* has withheld.

The 24-year-old receptionist told officers that she was alone at the apartment's front desk at the time of the attempted assault.

She reported that a visibly drunk tour guide, named as Mr Wongsathorn, 29, dragged her to his room, where one of his

friends was also staying, and attempted to sexually assault her.

The victim reported to police that Mr Wongsathorn tried to bribe her with 2,000 baht to have sex with him.

She refused, and tried to escape from the room, shouting for help.

Mr Wongsathorn confessed to the police, apologized to the victim and paid 5,000 baht in compensatory damages.

As the two reached a private agreement, police said they will not be pressing any charges against Mr Wongsathorn, but noted the incident.

– Winai Sarot

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Phuketians join nationwide well wishing for HM Queen

THAIS across the country celebrated Her Majesty, Queen Sirikit's 84th birthday on August 12. The day also saw the passing of a national holiday and Thailand's official Mother's Day.

In Phuket, officials and well-wishers offered food to monks at Saphan Hin and signed a congratulatory book, extending their regards to HM the Queen at Rajabhat University. A crowd paraded at Sanamchai in Phuket Town and officials brought decorated items to HM's portrait at Saphan Hin.

This year's royal birthday is a particularly auspicious occasion, as it marks HM the Queen's 7th cycle of the 12-year Chinese Zodiac.

HM the Queen is the oldest reigning consort of a monarch.

Activities are held annually throughout the country during the month of August to celebrate the Queen's birthday, and in 2003, Thailand's Cabinet designated August 1 as Thai Women's Day.

Each year, women's groups in the public and private sectors nationwide join the



Her Majesty Queen Sirikit turned 84 years of age on August 12. Photo: Gazette file

Ministry of Social Development and Human Security in celebrating Thai Women's Day in honor of Her Majesty.

This year's theme was the "Power of Thai women under

the Auspices of Her Majesty the Queen," and concluded with an awards ceremony, honoring the work of Thai women.

Her Majesty the Queen,

who is recognized as the 'Mother of the Thai Nation,' has given immense support to the cause of Thai women, sponsoring programs and organizations that provide

opportunities to enable women to improve their economic and social welfare.

Her Majesty has advanced supplementary occupations for Thai women to earn extra income through the SUPPORT Foundation since 1976, providing them opportunities to earn additional income.

Her leadership has received recognition world wide in the form of awards and honorary degrees from many institutions and organizations, including the UNICEF Recognition Award and the UNIFEM Award of Excellence.

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has designated August 2016 a month for women travelers, in celebration of Her Majesty the Queen's birthday.

Various activities are being held throughout August, as part of the "Women's Journey Thailand" program.

Special offers, discounts, and privileges are aimed at women travelling in Thailand alone or with groups of friends.

– *Phuket Gazette*

Chumporn weightlifter wins Olympic gold

OLYMPIC weightlifter Sopita Tanasan was awarded Thailand's first Olympic gold medal on August 6, at the beginning of the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games.

The 21-year-old, Chumphon Province native took first in the 48 kilograms women's weightlifting category, lifting an aggregate 200kg.

A total of 12 weightlifters took part in the event at the Riocentro – Pavilion 2, but powerhouse China's world champion Jiang Huihua could not compete due to a reported injury. Ms Jiang was expected to be arguably the strongest contender in the 48kg category.

Ms Sopita, for whom this is the first time competing in the Olympics, made her presence felt in the 2013 World Weightlifting Championships

in Wroclaw, Poland, where she took home the bronze medal in the 53kg category.

In the weightlifting event, competitors' total weights are combined after performing a 'snatch,' in which a lifter must raise the barbell from the floor over their head; and a 'clean and jerk,' in which competitors lift a usually heavier weight from the floor to their collar bones, then above their head.

Ms Sopita snatched 91kg and lifted 109kg in the clean and jerk.

The world record for women's 48kg snatch is 98kg, and for clean and jerk is 121kg.

Her closest rival, Indonesian Sri Wahyuni Agustiani, lifted 192kg for silver, and Japan's Hiromi Miyake took home bronze at 188kg total.

– *Phuket Gazette*



Sopita Tanasan was the first Thai athlete to win a gold medal at the 2016 Olympics. Photo: Reuters

Chonburi girl wins Thailand second gold

SUKANYA Srisurat handed Thailand the second Rio Games gold medal when the 21-year-old weightlifter from Chonburi set the Riocentro Pavilion 2 in Rio de Janeiro alight with her new Olympic record on August 9.

The resounding success made Ms Sukanya the fifth women's weightlifter from Thailand to win the Olympic gold medal. She lifted 105 kilograms in her first attempt in the snatch (in which a lifter must raise the barbell from the floor over their head), before raising 108kg successfully. In her third attempt, Ms Sukanya lifted a new Olympic record of 110kg, erasing the old Olympic standard of 108kg established at the London Games four years ago by Chinese Li Xueying.

In the 'clean and jerk' event, Ms Sukanya lifted 130kg in her second attempt, but failed in her third effort of lifting 132kg. Due to the combined lifts of 240kg, Ms Sukanya was awarded the gold medal.

After winning gold medal in the Rio Games, Ms Sukanya has been guaranteed of claiming 10 million baht cash in incentives from the National Sports Development Fund. Sponsors and private sectors are expected to offer a large sum of cash incentives to Ms Sukanya upon her return to Thailand.

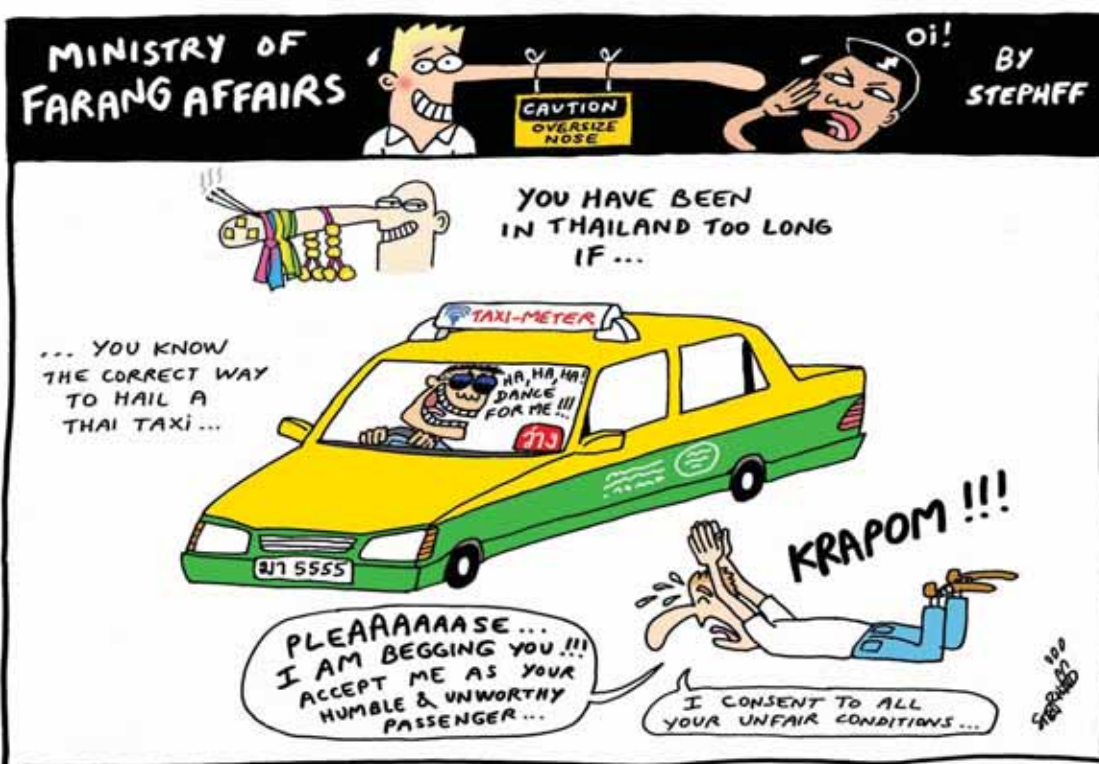
Gang-rapists denied bail, in police custody

A 19-YEAR-OLD girl who died during an alleged gang rape in a Bangkok hotel on August 3 may have been drugged and taken to the hotel against her will.

Four young men are in custody following the assault in the hotel on Soi Paholyothin 11. The men reportedly confessed that they invited the girl to a party in the hotel and admitted having sex with her after they got drunk but denied killing her.

Metropolitan Police Division 2 Maj-Gen Charoen Srisasalak said that the footage showed that the group met the girl elsewhere and that she was carried by the accused to the hotel room.

Suspect Khanakorn Thongaim, 19, surrendered to police at the scene on August 3. Suspects Khongkrapan Sangmeeno, 21, Khettawan Wiwatthananon, 21, and Tha-watchai



Bupparamatanang, 28, were detained the same day.

"Police suspect the group carried out the offence without the victim's consent, as she only knew Mr Khanakorn through Facebook," Gen Charoen said. "A pill was found under the girl's tongue, which may have been a sexual stimulant. The medical examiner has said that the girl's death resulted from heart failure."

The accused men were initially charged with raping a defenceless woman and gang-raping her to death. They were sent to apply for a court order for detention on August 5. Police objected their release on bail.

No royal pardons for drug dealers, thieves and rapists

CONVICTED rapists, robbers and abusers of authority are among the inmates not eligible for royal pardons on two important occasions.

Pardons were granted to mark the 70th anniversary of His Majesty the King's accession to the throne and on HM the Queen's 84th birthday, but criminals jailed for many offences don't have the right to apply.

"Inmates convicted of sexual assaults are ineligible," permanent secretary of the Justice Ministry Chanchao Chaiyanukij said on August 9, regarding the royal decree promulgated on August 8.

"Drug offenders given a jail term of no fewer than eight years don't get royal pardons either," he said.

NATIONAL NEWS Briefly

3 soldiers in Yala wounded

A SERIES of attacks rocked the southern border province of Yala on August 8, including a grenade attack at a military base, wounding three soldiers.

The area was also hit by a number of arson attacks, with targets including a telephone pole, a power pole and four security cameras. Firefighters also took several hours to control a blaze set by arsonists at a logging plant at 1am, which was finally extinguished at about 8:30am.

Media uproar as students shackled

THE National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has recommended corrective measures after authorities used shackles to restrain seven university students as they were brought to a military court last month.

"Such use of restraints violates both human rights and human dignity," NHRC representatives said on August 9.

The students were arrested while campaigning against the charter draft, accused of violating an order by the National Council for Peace and Order.

The students, now freed, were photographed while being taken to Military Court wearing ankle shackles.

Thai Gov't to limit Pokemon hunters

CELLULAR service providers have agreed to draw up play zones for Pokemon Go while Niantic Inc, the US developer of the wildly popular mobile phone game, will be asked to make certain places off limits to 'monster hunters' for security and safety.

Government House will be one of the no-entry locations for hunters, as well as other public offices, temples, hospitals and private property. Dangerous areas such as railroad tracks, roads and riverbanks will also be considered 'red' zones.

Takorn Tantasith, secretary-general of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission, said that telecom firms also backed a suggestion that Pokemon Go fans should not be allowed to play the augmented reality game at night in order to avoid 'untoward incidents'.

"True Corp, a local licensee of Pokemon Go, will send a written request to Niantic asking for its cooperation," Mr Takorn said, adding that the game developer would also be informed of Thailand's restricted areas and other places that are out-of-bounds for game players.

Police said motorists would be fined 400-1,000 baht if found playing the game while driving, while police will also be subject to disciplinary action if they are caught engaging in the game while on duty.



Phuket Gazette

Getting back on track

THE passage of the national referendum on the proposed constitution last weekend indicates a national desire to get back on track and resume our effort to develop a more civil society, even if it means once again placing trust in the military as the unlikely shepherd to lead us to the promised land of a truly functional democracy.

Results differed on a regional basis, with parts of Lao-speaking Isarn and the Malay-speaking majority in the Deep South opting to reject it. The overall result nevertheless indicates a clear show of support for the efforts of Gen Prayuth Chan-o-cha, et al, since taking power in May 2014.

Most notably, most of the provinces in the north, which have traditionally been loyal to former populist premier Thaksin Shinawatra, voted in favor.

Given that there have been no major allegations of ballot fraud, we hope that the result can be widely accepted – even by those who voted against it.

The collective ability of a society to respect voting results, even when they go against personal preferences, is a cornerstone of any functional democracy. This aspect has also been one of the major ‘missing links’ in our start-again, stop again experiment with democracy, which dates back to its inception in 1932.

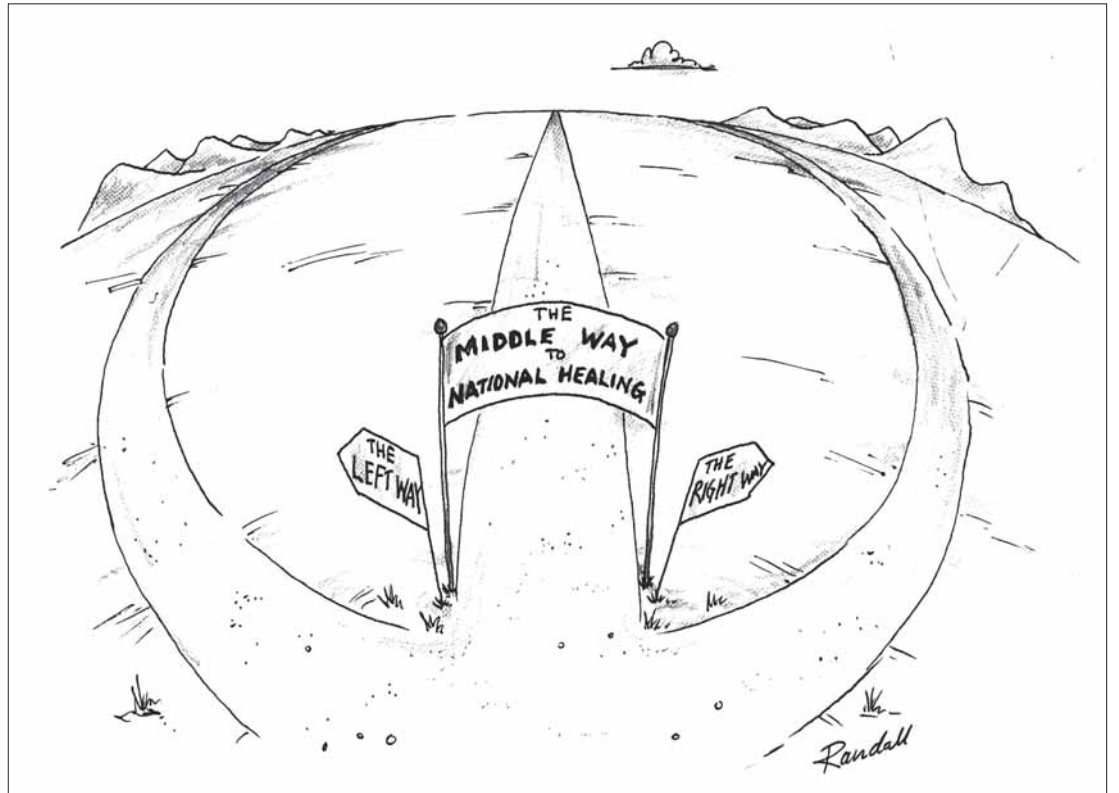
While it is very easy for ideologues to find flaws with the military’s pre-referendum tactics, especially its arrest of students who came out in public opposition against the proposed charter, the bottom line is that a rejection of the charter would have been a major step backwards.

The last thing we need after a full decade of political divisiveness is to take another step backward into the kind of political uncertainty that Brexit supporters in the UK are now grappling with – and one which US residents could also experience after their elections in September.

In this context the passage can be seen as a positive call for national reconciliation.

Nevertheless, we need to keep in mind that we have had more than 20 national charters since the original in 1932, averaging out to about one every four years.

It is the collective willingness to abide by the rule of law that will determine our future as a society. Constitutions can always be amended; human social behavior is not so easily changed.



Thailand needs the tourist dollars

Re: Opinion: Tracking tourists for ‘national security’, Aug 9

It would never work. Someone coming to Thailand with ill intent would simply get someone else to get the simcard.

The best thing to do is pour more effort into the airport screening of passengers coming to Thailand, especially from countries with high instances of terror related problems.

Regardless of views, Thailand needs tourist dollars, or many people will be left in poverty, and this would result in higher crime rates.

Tez
Gazette Forum

So what about the people who don’t have a phone? Or have a flat battery? Or pin locked and unconscious?

An Australian company invented a wrist band that can be linked to a person’s profile.

This was specifically designed for activities such as those in Phuket. It is in Phuket and being used now with very good results.

Affordable, works everytime and water proof.

Maurice
Gazette Forum

Need more focus on women’s rights

Re: Tour guide apologizes for attempted rape, Aug 4

This is absolutely disgusting – getting out of an attempted rape by paying 5,000 baht. People really need a kick up the backside if this is considered ‘justice’.

Letters to the Editor

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

It should be an automatic criminal offence. Women’s rights are sadly lacking in Thailand, as in other Asian countries where rape appears to be acceptable behavior.

Mister Ree
Gazette forum

Officials deserve credit when its due

Re: Police arrest bag-snatching brothers, recover stolen items, Aug 6

Good job, we always criticize the police, but when they do a job like this quickly, well earned praise is due.

Ricky Black
Facebook

Yachtsmen not causing damage

Re: V/Adm wants to limit number of tourists visiting islands, August 5

So what is the impact on the environment from a few hundred yachts per year that visit the whole of the Thai waters, with an average of two persons on board, compared with the scores of tourist speed boats that arrive at nearly every island every day, packed with around 50 tour-

ists per boat?

We are talking about 400-500 yachtsmen who are very environmentally conscious, compared with thousands of Chinese who can’t swim.

kanalao
Gazette forum

Never say ‘never’

Re: Phuket prepared for floods with B433.5mn budget, officials say, Aug 8

I have two things to say about this.

1) People in office should never, ever claim that a natural phenomenon, albeit partly man made, will not happen. If it rains hard enough, Patong will flood. Look at it; it’s in a hill-bounded basin, and it is over-developed already.

2) It is a real shame that the north end of the beach is now to have a sewer installed.

This is tragic. At least keep the toilet outflow to the south end (under the bridge) only.

Geoff
Gazette Forum

Phuket crime rate steadily on the rise

Re: Gun-toting teens threaten bikers in Cherng Talay, Aug 6

I had never seen or heard of any crime in Phuket 15 years ago.

It seems to be a common problem now and it’s only going to get worse.

Paul Frank
Facebook

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Keeping Patong safe

FIRST PERSON

PATONG is one of the most popular areas of Phuket. Countless tourists visit and many locals work here as well.

Within a 16 square kilometer area, we have more than 300 hotels and resorts, as well as more than 500 nightlife venues. On average, including both tourists and locals, we have more than a million people entering the Patong area per month. That makes it quite difficult for us to monitor and control.

Being a popular tourist area has both its advantages and disadvantages. The high number of tourists boosts the economy and helps develop Patong. On the other hand, more people also means more crimes are likely to be committed.

As per last year's statistics, Patong had more than 4,121 complaints filed, which is quite high compared to other areas. Most of them were drug cases, while assault cases also ranked high on the list.

In order to fight crime, we have to work hard and maintain close vigilance.

This year, there are 16 safety projects planned to improve safety in Patong.

The first project is *Pan Ta Saparot* meaning 'thousands of pineapple eyes'. As you know, we have a limited budget to install CCTV cameras. Therefore, we will ask for help from hotels and nightlife venues in the area. If each of them installs at least one CCTV and turns it around to face outward, there will be more than 800 public CCTVs in Patong. So, if a crime is committed, suspects are less likely to escape unnoticed.

This project benefits every-



Col Chaiwat Auikam, originally from Saraburi, is currently the superintendent of Patong Police Station. He assumed the role two years ago. Col Chaiwat has been working as a policeman for more than 27 years. He graduated from the Armed Forces Academies

Preparatory School and Royal Police Cadet Academy.

Here, he talk about the current project to improve safety measures, especially for tourists, in Patong.

one. The private sector only has to spend a small amount of money, but it brings long-term benefits for everyone. It will also make tourists and locals feel more secure.

The second project is *Puen Baan Tuen Pai* (neighborhood alert). This is for high-risk areas where there aren't many people or CCTVs, as well as areas with a high crime rate. To deal with such areas, we will assign special officers to keep a closer lookout and patrol the area more often.

We will make daily calls to check with locals in the area about any suspicious activities they have witnessed. We will also alert them to be careful, lock their doors and cars, and turn on the lights. We request people in the area to cooperate with us by calling and informing us of any suspicious activities.

The third project, which is already in action, is called *Tat Mue Tat Thao* (cut hand, cut foot). 'Hand' refers to the firearm or weapon used to commit a crime, whereas 'foot' refers to the vehicle used in any incident. We are working diligently on this one and have set up random check

points in the Patong area, with at least three checks a day. Last month, we arrested drivers of at least about 20 vehicles without plates and confiscated more than 100 weapons, such as knives, axes, swords and others.

The police cannot do everything alone; we need help and cooperation from locals. For this purpose, we have a project called *Jai Prasan Jai* (heart to heart) to connect locals from different communities and build a good relationship between them and the police. We will have frequent meetings with local representatives to hear out problems and discuss solutions.

These are just the projects that were launched this month. However, there are still many others, such as 100 per cent helmet, traffic control, encouraging negotiations rather than sending the issue to court and regular checks on hotels and nightlife venues, among others.

Another important project besides this is to get rid of bribery. If police keep receiving bribes, there will never be a change. We are working to make Patong Police as transparent as possible.

Burma border run

Island View

By Nick Davies

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

BEING relatively close to Phuket (about 350km), the Burmese border is a destination of choice for visa runs and can be done by car in a day.

When you drive yourself you can stop and snack or stretch out whenever you want, or even spend some time at one of the many beaches along the coast as you pass through Phang Nga and Khao Lak.

Google tells us the journey each way should be under three hours, but the winding roads and the occasional slow-moving lorry can make it anything between four to six hours each way.

I once tried starting out extra early with the aim of getting back to Phuket in the early afternoon, but a 4am start meant I was trundling along dark, unlit roads in Phang Nga for the first part of the journey, and no amount of coffee could shake my body's desire for a few more hours' sleep.

So a 6-7am start will likely get you to the border by around midday, travelling mostly within the speed limit.

Apart from your passport – hopefully with your white TM card still stapled to one of the pages – the only thing you really need to prepare in advance is a crisp US\$10 bill to hand over to Myanmar Immigration when they stamp your passport in and out.

There is a Bangkok Bank in Ranong, directly opposite the border crossing, where you can change your baht for dollars, but if you go on a weekend, you will have to pay over the top

rates to have one of the touts exchange it for you.

It's also good to have a pen on you to fill in the Immigration forms and TM card when leaving and entering Thailand.

Directions are straight forward. Head off Phuket into Phang Nga on route 402 until it joins Highway 4 (Phetkasem Road). Hang left and stay on that road as it hugs the coast and winds its way up and down through dramatic mountainous scenery until you get to Ranong.

Once past Ranong Airport, it's a few more kilometers to the Ranong Immigration check point at Saphan Pla Pier, where you can park up at the PTT gas station for 40 baht.

As soon as you park, a tout will offer to take you across the water to Kawthaung in Myanmar, which takes about 20 minutes. Haggle if you like, but the average price is 500 baht for a private return trip. Or you can wait and pay 50 baht to get on the next long-tail ferry packed with locals. First though, get copies of your passport at one of the shops in the gas station forecourt.

There are a few stops along the way as you leave Thai waters and then cross a patch of open sea before entering Myanmar's waters. These are what the photocopies are for. Your boat driver will take care of it.

Once across the water, hop off the boat and walk to the Myanmar Immigration office. A few local lads will offer to escort you and help buy duty free. They are harmless and genuinely helpful, but will ask for a few baht in return for their assistance.

And if on the return journey you find your boat driver has picked up a couple of extra fares, roll with it.

Words from the Wise

"All you need in this life is ignorance and confidence, and then success is sure."

– Mark Twain

"In a time of universal deceit - telling the truth is a revolutionary act."

– George Orwell

"Others have seen what is and asked why. I have seen what could be and asked why not."

– Pablo Picasso

Issues & Answers

Why does underpass ceiling have wires?

MY FRIENDS and I spotted a mass of colorful wires on the top of the Samkong Underpass tunnel last week.

We were wondering if this is due to some kind of mistake during the construction process?

Dining Free
Samkong

Mr Chalermopol Wongkiattikun, the project engineer from the Department of

Highways replies :

Thank you for informing us, but do not worry about it as the wiring system is still a work in

progress.

We have yet to take them out of the ceiling and manage the wires properly in order to avoid future electricity problems.

Do not be alarmed, as it is not dangerous in any way.

We are trying our best to ensure that all systems in the tunnel will be perfect by the time the underpass is completed.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for further queries.

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

Submit your issue at:

www.PhuketGazette.net/IssuesAnswers

Hold on to stocks: more rallies coming



Finance

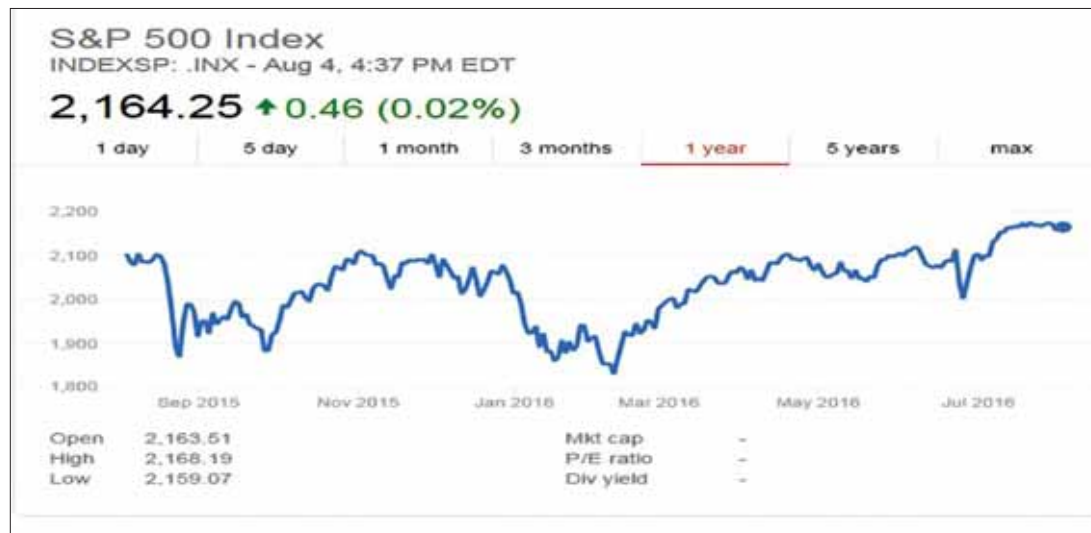
By Don Freeman

THE past one and a half years have been anything but a smooth ride for investors, given that the market's seen two rapid 10 to 15 per cent pullbacks, and we've seen entire sectors (such as biotech, oil, industrials) and soon take some hard knocks.

For investors exposed to unlucky sectors, it's been difficult to keep pace with the S&P 500's performance, as bad news or uncertainty (such as plummeting oil prices, European debt crisis, uncertainty in China, Federal Reserve rate hikes, US elections jitters and increasingly deadly terror attacks in western countries) largely overshadow any positive news (such as steady progress in the US economy, a more benign Federal Reserve, market-friendly policies from overseas central banks, oil price stability and a sound bottom formation).

Positive price action of US and global stocks is showing us the bull market is still alive, climbing a wall of worry built by the news media, with no shortage of sectors and leadership stocks emerging on a weekly basis.

However, stock market price action is improving, new leadership stocks appear ready to take off. The struggling S&P 500 Index has once again reached new



The S&P 500 has rallied from January's Brexit shakes. Photo: Gazette file

record highs. On the other hand, the stock market, bonds and gold have spent much of July rallying at the same time. This makes for a confusing mess for investors, as all three are not supposed to be rallying at once, because gold and bonds are considered to be more defensive or safe havens from the riskier stock market.

Here is a quick rundown of the latest price action for the sectors I am watching.

The S&P 500 has broken out of its near two-year consolidation pattern and has had roughly two weeks of new highs (or at least staying above its pre-breakout price level), but we need to remain cautious as another pullback is still possible.

The Dow Jones has also broken to new highs on broad-based buying pressure while the NASDAQ has finally cleared its

big January plunge. The NASDAQ's recent performance is especially important and is due in part to leadership stocks forming in the tech sector, but there are still two previous highs that the index needs to clear.

The SPDR S&P Biotech ETF (NYSEARCA: XBI) was absolutely slaughtered during the last two-year period, but it looks to be finally bottoming. This bodes well for the NASDAQ.

The iShares MSCI Emerging Markets Index ETF (NYSEARCA: EEM) and iShares FTSE/Xinhua China 25 Index ETF (NYSEARCA: FXI) have bottoming formations on their technical charts that are starting to look pretty solid. Both have also broken out without a pullback – another positive sign.

The Technology SPDR ETF (NYSEARCA: XLK) has been

hitting higher highs while the Market Vectors Semiconductor ETF (NYSEARCA: SMH) hit a higher low back in January and also after Brexit, before powering ahead in recent weeks. Semiconductors are leading the US markets higher – very important to see this.

The iShares North American Tech-Software ETF (NYSEARCA: IGV) has also broken out and hit an all time high.

The iShares Transportation Average ETF (NYSEARCA: IYT) tracks a very economically sensitive sector and could be on the verge of breaking higher. If IYT were to instead rollover and retrace Brexit lows – something that appears unlikely at the moment – that would tell me that a recession could be coming.

There are a number of sec-

tors and individual stocks still fighting to reach their old highs while defensive gold has begun to weaken and pull back a bit. Given that the Dow and S&P 500 have both hit new highs, there is a good chance for most sectors and many individual stocks to follow. Moreover, my 17 years of money management experience tells me that when markets are at new all time highs with strong price action (like we have been seeing), there are long-term opportunities for investors.

My personal feeling though is that the market is not going to pull back much, but will instead keep rallying, with most sectors hitting all of those old highs again. Any pullback that does manifest will likely be bought, as many institutions are sitting on high cash levels and are missing out on the rally. Stay diversified in the top industry groups, sectors and leading stocks and remain patient.

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

Thai bourse rises after vote

THE Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET) responded positively to the approval of the referendum, resulting in an influx of fund flows thanks to investors' confidence on August 8.

SET recorded the highest market capitalization of 14.95 trillion baht. However, brokerage firms warned that the fund inflows could revert to developed-country stock markets if

the US federal funds rate is raised by the end of this year.

The SET Index rose 23.57 points or 1.55 per cent to close at 1,542.26. The same day's turnover was 76.29 billion baht with foreign net-buys of 6.89bn baht. Most trading volumes were stocks in the banking, telecom and communication, and energy sectors.

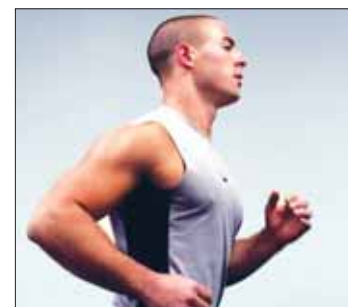
– *The Nation*

Fitness fad brings in US Co

PHUKET is part of the expansion plans of Under Armour, a US-based company that makes performance sportswear and apparel. The company has decided to make its presence known in Southeast Asia. They plan to add at least two branches per year in Thailand, to cash in on the fitness fad.

"After launching six stores at strategic locations in Bangkok, the company is opening two stores in Central Festival Pattaya in October and Jungceylon, Phuket in December," said Michael Binger, chief executive officer and co-founder of Singapore-based Triple Private Ltd, the exclusive distributor of Under Armour in the region, on August 9.

"Each location will occupy 200 square meters and cost 20 million baht," Mr Binger said



The current fitness trend is driving the company. Photo: Gazette file

at an anniversary event of the company's business in Thailand.

The distributor also operates the brand's biggest house in Southeast Asia at the Siam Center shopping mall. The 480-sqm flagship store stocks a wide range of products, apparel and sports accessories. With the growth in interest in sports and fitness in Thailand, the company will continue to put more money

into branching out its stores.

"The company wants to concentrate on its core apparel products and is emphasizing that training is a key fundamental in improving all kinds of sport performance," Mr Binger said.

Thailand is a new market for Under Armour, but there is more room to grow.

Last year, Thailand's apparel and sports-gear-related business represented about a quarter of the Southeast Asian market, which was worth about US\$1 billion, (35 billion baht). This market is expected to grow by 7-10 per cent a year.

"Our business growth in Thailand is now higher than the region's. We expect this year, total sales should [expand by] 15 to 20 per cent, mainly driven by its growing distribution," he said.

– *The Nation*

Market it right and they will follow



AS AN avid fan of marketing, it's always interesting to see the next big global trend emerge and to watch it evolve into a successful operation on a macro and micro scale. Right now, here in Phuket, we are witnessing one of those global phenomena.

Have you recently seen mature adults chasing invisible objects, using strange terminology and just generally behaving weirdly, while others look on but don't find it strange?

With this new trend comes a slew of hard-to-follow social media posts that appear to refer to an outbreak akin to Gremlins.

Welcome to Pokemon GO.

This latest installment from the Pokemon stable was launched in Thailand on August 6 and is taking the country by storm. People use their mobile phone to hunt down and capture virtual animated mythical creatures and get rewards to advance in the game. The goal is to catch all 151 Pokemon characters.

What's fascinating is that the craze has transcended demographics across all nationalities, genders and age groups. It's making adults act like fool-



If you can connect with your target audience, they will do anything you want: Pokemon Go London Massive Lure Party on July 23. Photo: John Lubbock

hardy children with reckless abandon for the law.

One of the companies behind it, Nintendo, doubled in market value almost overnight.

As marketers, there is so much we can learn from this and how to apply it to our own circumstances.

Firstly, Pokemon GO is a free app. As there is no cost to download and play it, how can this generate billions of dollars in value for the app maker?

The lesson for all businesses – what I have banged on about

ad nauseum – is that they have built a massive database and then offered in-app purchases. Better for them that they do not actually sell anything real, only virtual products, so it is all profit; players spend money to achieve better results in the game more quickly.

There are also real-world revenues through merchandising as well as spin-off revenue from increased traffic, branding and user awareness.

So what can we as business owners and marketers learn

from this?

First, make sure you find something that appeals to your target market. If you can connect with them the way Nintendo and other big brands have, they will literally do anything you want.

Ask yourself, what am I offering and what problem does it solve for the consumer?

Learn how to package it correctly and you are bound for success. The more people who need that problem solved, the more money you will make

helping others.

Secondly, give them with the chance to spend money with you. Use promotions and displays. Take advantage of up-sell opportunities. Use the database to maximum effect. Understand and appreciate its value.

Once successful your loyal customers can help gain peer acceptance with testimonials and referral programs, multiplying success.

The message is, once you get your audience's attention, plug in potential customers to your sales funnel while providing them with quality support and information. Giving away something for free, or even as a loss leader, can make very sound business sense.

When done well, the result is increased revenues. Word of mouth marketing and market positioning will take your business to the next level.

It doesn't matter what your business is, as long as you follow the principles of attraction marketing; building a database while providing quality and value.

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

Phuket businesses cash in on Pokemon craze

PHUKET tour operators are among some of the local businesses cashing in on the worldwide Pokemon Go phenomenon following the August 6 launch in Thailand of the new promotional campaign by Niantic.



Pokemon Go has garnered worldwide attention. Photo: lphonedigital

Phuket Tour Holiday manager Yongyuth Chankol told the *Gazette* his business was capitalizing on the popularity of the game by adding Pokemon tours to their regular tour program.

"Our customers will have opportunities to catch Pokemon at some of Phuket's iconic landmarks," he said.

Pokemon Go is a free mobile application that uses your phone's GPS tech to know your location.

The premise is to catch creatures called Pokemon, that can be found anywhere, at any time.

"This idea will add a whole

new element of fun to our regular tours," said Mr Yongyuth.

The company has jumped on the Pokemon bandwagon by offering Pokemon tours to local landmarks such as Khao Rang, Thalang Road, Promthep Cape and Karon View Point and Chalong Temple.

Mr Yongyuth said tourists were charged depending the number of people in their group and the duration of the tours.

– *Chutharat Plerin*



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Jungceylon Shopping Center, Patong, Phuket

Phuket gets ready to host new Ironman triathlon

Phuket representatives visited Cebu in the Philippines to observe Sunrise Events Inc's management processes for the Ironman 70.3 Philippines 2016 on Aug 7. The aim of the visit was to learn more about the Ironman event before it is staged in Phuket on Nov 27.



Phuket Vice Governor Dr Prajiad Aksornthammakul (center right) presents gifts from Phuket to event organiser Wilfred Steven Uytensu (center left) and his wife, to thank them for a warm welcome. The visiting group also included (L-R): Virat Patee, Director of the Sports Authority of Thailand's Phuket office; Phuket Town Deputy Mayor Kawee Tansukatanon; and Pol Maj Thaweeb Muangsuwan of Phuket Police.

To the heart of the matter

Bangkok Hospital Phuket recently hosted the Southern Cardiac Conference Meeting to present new technology and methods for the treatment of the heart and atherosclerosis .



Dr Somrit Jantarapatin, Director of Bangkok Hospital Phuket (center) with the heart and atherosclerosis specialists who spoke at the conference.



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Events in Paradise

Miss World Australia has a barbie at Banyan Tree

Banyan Tree Phuket welcomed the Miss World Australia 2016 winner and runners up with the organizing representative from TAT Sydney for an in-villa barbecue on the evening of August 6.



Banyan Tree Phuket's General Manager Sriram Kailasam (right) and Ludovic Gallerne, Area Director of Sales and Marketing (left), corral the Miss World Australia 2016 winner and runners up in the gardens.

HKT to HDY with love

Phuket International Airport (HKT) staged a Mon Rak Lookthung theme party at Kiss Garden Home Chic Hotel in Hat Yai for AOT staff from Phuket and Hat Yai, and for the press. Bangkok Airways flew the partygoers to Hat Yai (HDY) to find out more about the international airport's expansion. The evening flight between Phuket-Hat Yai is to launch this September.



Deputy Director of the AOT's Phuket office Amnuay Sarachart (left) and Phuket International Airport Director Monrudee Gettuphan dressed in colorful southern-style attire for the party.

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• 88 Land and Houses Hillside Phuket, Construction Start: APR 2012 Expected Completion: JUN 2017. • 88 Land and Houses Koh kaew Phuket, Construction Start: MAR 2013 Expected Completion: DEC 2015. • inizo Koh kaew Phuket, Construction Start: AUG 2012 Expected Completion: MAR 2016.

Treat yourself to Sunday Tapas

By Sahar Aftab Paliwala

GREAT food, great company and relaxation is what Sundays are all about. The Sunday Tapas lunch at Banyan Tree Phuket provides all that and much more. This weekly feast is a three and a half hour affair, which starts at noon and replaces the company's signature Sunday Seafood Brunch.

The ambience at the newly relocated 'The Watercourt' is perfectly complementary to the meal. A live jazz band, a sparkling view of the lagoon, and friendly, attentive servers.

The meal begins with a variety of 'cold tapas' including sushi, sashimi, salmon and asparagus frittata and my personal favorite in the category, a prawn, avocado and chili ceviche. The tapas were served with a variety of sides, including hummus and marinated stuffed olives. And, of course, you must try the chef's recommendation, pata negra – cantaloupe wrapped in ham.

"The meal is designed so that guests can relax at their tables rather than having to go serve themselves like you do at a buffet," says Michelle Alejo, Assistant Manager of Marketing Communications



Cold tapas include sushi, as well as a variety of other items including salmon and asparagus frittata, and prawn and avocado ceviche. Tea, coffee and dessert are included with every meal. Photos: Chutharat Plerin



at Banyan Tree.

By the time we were done with our first course, I was already feeling full. Tapas are traditionally considered finger food and served in small portions, but these elaborate, sophisticated dishes are a far cry from finger food.

"By the time you're finished with dessert and coffee, I doubt you'll have room for dinner," Ms Alejo says through a smile.

The second course, hot tapas,

was just as impressive as the first. Specialties included fine de claire oysters, seared and glazed foie gras, banana leaf steamed seabass, zucchini-stuffed ricotta with parmesan, fish cakes with sweet chili sauce and falafel with yogurt mint dip, to name a few. This was followed by the wonderfully diverse main tapas, including lemon and garlic chicken sous vide, snow fish, rice noodles and angus rib eye with chimchurri sauce and po-

tato wedges.

There is also a rather unique way to 'take a break' if you feel too full to carry on eating.

"You can place a little white flag [that the restaurant provides at each table] to indicate that you don't wish to be served just then. Three other flags – blue, red and green – indicate that you're ready for your cold tapas, hot tapas and main tapas respectively," says Ms Alejo.

For me, the most appealing

aspect of the meal was the diversity of the cuisine – Mediterranean, Spanish, Mexican, Middle Eastern, Thai and Western, to name a few. This is not surprising, given the star-studded cast working behind the scenes. Executive Chef Alfonso De La Dehesa from Spain, Executive Western Sous Chef Kreaton Crutajar from Malta and Executive Thai Sous Chef Pittaya Suppanarm have worked at some of the world's best five-star hotels, resorts and restaurants and bring unique elements of their own experiences and cultures to the table.

Guests can also enjoy lagoon activities (weather permitting), neck and shoulder massages and a kids' corner to keep children happily occupied while parents dine in comfort.

Prices start at 2,000 baht net for food only, 2,500 baht net for food and unlimited beer, soft drinks and a selection of cocktails, 3,000 baht net for food and unlimited White Sangria and 3,500 baht net for food and a bottle of champagne per couple. Dilmah tea, coffee and dessert are included.

For more information, call Banyan Tree Phuket Food and Beverage Concierge Desk at 076-372 400, ext 5463.

Magical tattoo: Belief, knowledge and money

WITH the answer to any question just a few taps away on a mobile phone, why do certain superstitions and beliefs in the supernatural still exist? If you're one of Phuket's magic tattoo masters, the answer is in the currency of belief.

"Things exist only because people believe in them," said Bunphet Limlai, who goes by the name 'Ajarn A' – where Ajarn means teacher or master – one of Phuket's masters of magical tattooing.

"In contrast, if no one believes in something, it's as if that thing never existed," Ajarn A said.

The tattoos, called 'Sak Yan', and their process, 'Yantra' tattooing, originated thousands of years ago in ancient Cambodia. Sak means 'tattoo' in ancient Khmer, and Yan means talisman. Together, the words mean that the tattoo is imbued with a supernatural power.

Sak Yan have been popular among the native populations of Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar and Laos for years. However, the tattoos started to become

well-known to westerners, particularly after actress Angelina Jolie received a tattoo in 2003 by Ajarn Noo Kanpai.

In Phuket, Ajarn A is one of the most famous Sak Yan tattooists. From his shop near Siam Niramit on Bypass Road, Ajarn A tattoos Sak Yan for good luck in wealth, work or love, either with visible black ink or with a non-visible oil.

The holy oil-based tattoos disappear after a week, but supposedly maintain their magic properties. They have gained popularity among those who do not want tattoos to remain on their body forever.

"In a captious world, everything is about money," Ajarn A said. "We all need money, and when you only have a little bit, you will do whatever's necessary to earn more money. But when you cannot work any harder than you already are, human nature makes us turn to the supernatural for help. Tattooing stems from that belief."

Ajarn A has been interested in the supernatural for over 23



Sak Yan, or magical tattoos, originated thousands of years ago in ancient Cambodia. Photo: Kongleaphy Keam

years.

"Whether or not it has real magic, all that really matters is whether you believe in it," he said. "If you believe in something, it exists. Magic tattooing has been present in Thai society for years. If there were no results, it would've died out. People believe in magical tattoos because it makes their lives better," he added.

Ajarn A started his Sak Yan business in his hometown when he was around 20 years old, and when it became popular

enough, he brought his business to Phuket.

On an average day in Phuket, Ajarn A has around 40 customers, both getting tattooed and receiving blessings. An average tattoo costs 500 baht.

"Even though it's a business, it takes a lot of knowledge, and there's a culture at work behind the Sak Yan. I have been working hard to learn it since I was 17 years-old. It is a very rare form of knowledge and is growing increasingly esoteric," Ajarn A said.

"During my monkhood in Ratchaburi Province, I met a magic tattoo artist called Ajarn Kan. He was famous for supposedly having his tattoo protect him after he was shot in the head. I started to get along with him and learn from him.

"Many unbelievable things have happened to me since then, which made me continue pursuing this field by learning fortune telling, bone healing and love spells."

"My life goal is that I am going to use the money I earn from this to build a Sala [pavilion] in my hometown. Inside, I will build a shrine dedicated to each of the 108 hermits, so people do not have to go many different places to pay their respects. I will also write down all of this knowledge there on the wall, so the next generation can go there and learn," Ajarn A said. "It is part of our heritage of ancient Thailand, and I don't want it to disappear from Thai society," he added.

– Kongleaphy Keam

Bicycles can be agents of change



AS SO often happens in the frenetic super-connected era in which we now live, new terms and expression go from obscurity to inhabiting the tips of our globally-connected tongues, almost overnight.

So it is with the term 'change agent' which Bill Clinton memorably used to describe his wife Hillary at the Democratic Convention last week. Bill let us in on his secret that his missus was, 'the best darn change agent he had ever met'.

If I was being unkind, I might suggest that Hillary might apply her amazing talent for change to her ubiquitous dowdy pant-suits, or that if Bill's friend Monica had been a better 'change agent' of her dresses, he might not have got caught. But then I'm not unkind, so I won't.

Bicycles are without doubt



Bicycles can beat the traffic tailbacks. Photo: Baz Daniel

monumental agents of change and many bicycles would, in my opinion, make better presidents than the candidates we are currently being offered.

Bicycles change those who regularly ride them in all sorts of wonderfully positive ways. From physical health benefits, to mental outlook and focus, to better eating and sleeping patterns, to sociability and camaraderie, all the changes that cycling brings

about are highly positive, if you don't get involved in an accident... which is a big 'if' in the current Phuket environment.

Bicycles can also act as immensely positive change agents for the environment in which they are deployed and for the social and organizational structure of communities. This becomes abundantly clear if you compare commutes in bicycle-friendly cities, such as

Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Brisbane, and even post Boris-Bikes London, to the daily commuter hell in which Phuketians are mired.

Last week I planned to use my bicycle as I always do, to run a few errands around the Chalong area where I live. Exciting visits to the laundry, Home Pro, Villa Market and my favorite wine shop were on my agenda. Imagine my chagrin then, when upon trying to get out onto Wiset Road I found a tailback of almost a kilometer, stretching back well past Fisherman's Way where I live.

Undeterred, I plunged into the stationary traffic replete with its retinue of fuming drivers and tailpipes and cycled down to the traffic-clogged Chalong turning circle and managed to complete my errands in about 30 minutes.

While I had to endure the horrible pollution being pumped out by all those stationary vehicles, had I tried to do the same errands by car, I might well be stuck in

that traffic to this day.

The point is, that as an agent of changing the way we live, interact and move about, bicycles could have an enormously positive impact on the lives of all Phuketians if only we gave them a chance.

Of course not all journeys could be switched to bicycles overnight, but a lot of them could be, and the effects on our health, well being, environment and overall contentment would be dramatic.

The two key progenitors of such a positive change in Phuket are clearly marked cycle-paths separated from vehicular traffic and a pay-as-you-go bike rental scheme, both of which are simple and inexpensive to implement.

Sadly, though it seems that the likelihood of such a positive agent of change being introduced into Phuket is about the same as a sane billionaire property developer becoming the next incumbent of the White House.

Get your geek on



School children get hands-on science experience at Rajabhat University's Science Week. Photo: Rajabhat University

RAJABHAT University is inviting the public to visit its Phuket campus for 'Science Week 2016' August 17-19.

The annual exposition of the university's science education facilities is part of an initiative sponsored by the Ministry of Science and Technology to motivate interest in science subjects.

University students are putting on demonstrations of the institution's science tech in an edutainment-style format from 8:30am to 4:30pm over the three-day event.

Dean of the Faculty of Sci-

ence and Technology at the university, Rangsan Polsamak, said on August 5 that the goal of Science Week was to motivate youngsters, students and the general public to learn about new ideas and get hands-on experience at scientific research.

"The more people seek out and gain knowledge of science, the more Thailand's own technology can be updated and the country can become a trendsetter of innovation that can be integrated into real life," said the dean.

- Sukawin Tanthavanich

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Outstanding mother recognized

By Chutharat Plerin

A HARDWORKING single mother from Phuket was presented the 'Phuket Outstanding Mother 2016' award on August 12.

Suksan Promthong, 68, travelled to Bangkok for the ceremony, where HRH Princess Somsavali graciously presented awards to her and other winners. The awards were part of an annual event to honor Her Majesty Queen Sirikit on her 84th birthday, which is celebrated as National Mother's Day nationwide.

The National Council on Social Welfare of Thailand (NCSWT) is the main organizer of tribute-paying activities for HM the Queen. The National Mother's Day event is now in its 40th year.

The 'Outstanding Mother Award' is presented to recognize and honor outstanding contributions by mothers toward their children.

"I worked very hard to raise my three sons by myself. The best thing I could give them is education. Money comes and goes, but knowledge will always help them. It does not matter how much trouble I had to go through for my children - I was willing to do so," said Ms Suksan.

Ms Suksan mainly made a living by selling food and dessert on her motorcycle around Phuket Town. In her spare time, she did housework for her



Suksan Promthong, a single mother who raised three sons, was awarded for her dedication to her children in a ceremony held in Bangkok on August 12. Photo: Chutharat Plerin

neighbors for a small amount of compensation.

She did this for 20 years, until all three of her sons had graduated. She only stopped working after her sons begged her to, as they had all settled down in their own lives and could afford to take care of her.

"It's not easy to raise your children to be good people. You have to be a great role model and strike a balance between empa-

thy and discipline. I showed them how hard I worked to raise them all, selling food everyday for years and years, come rain or shine," she said.

"All I asked of them was to be good boys. They have fulfilled my wishes and made me immensely proud. They worked as laborers during school holidays in order to save up money for their own education. At the end of the school

break, they would give their savings to me. They even used to take their own lunch to school, as they knew our family could not afford to spend a lot of money."

Ms Suksan has also been working with the Phuket Red Cross since 1997, and says she loves doing volunteer work to help people.

"Long live HM the Queen," Ms Suksan added.

Cyclists pedal for charity



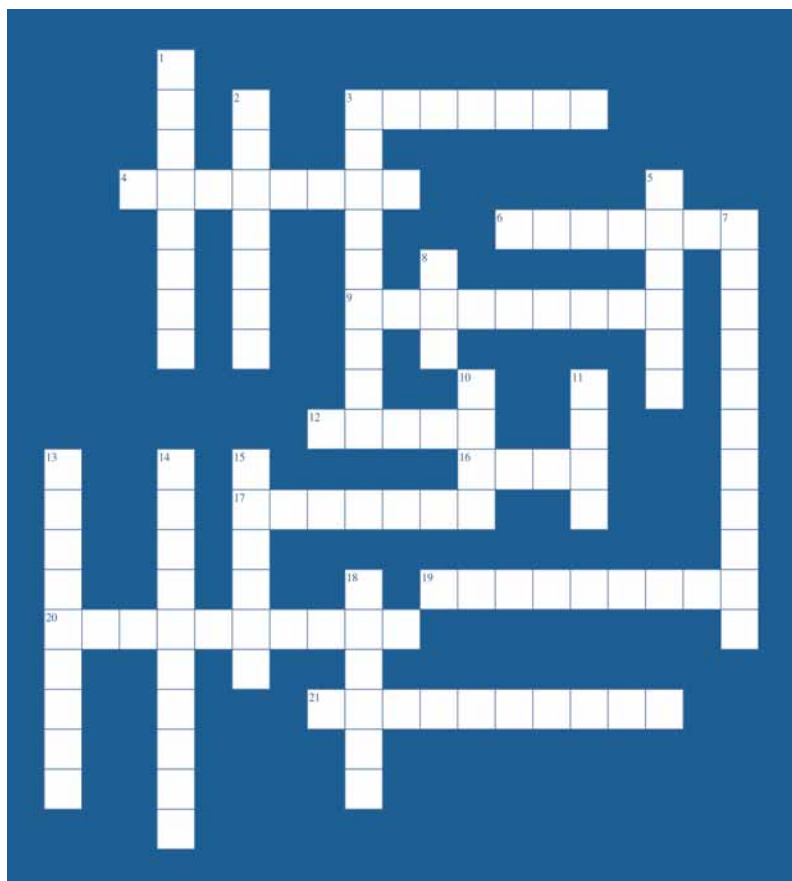
The event raised about half a million baht. Photo: skeeze

MORE than 1,000 cyclists answered last month's call from budget airline Nok Air to join the charity rally 'Ride for Life,' to raise funds to treat kids with heart disease through the Cardiac Children Foundation of Thailand, under the Royal Patronage of HRH Princess Galyani Vadhana. The event raised 460,872 baht.

For the cyclists, in addition to travelling from Bangkok and elsewhere to participate, the bike ride was also an opportunity to attend Nakhon Sri Thammarat's annual Khanom Festival, as well as sample some delicious Southern fare.

Participants included Win Sirivongse of Sqweez Animal and GMM Grammy's young artists Phurikoolkrit Chusakulwiboon, Tawan Vihokratana, Weerayut Chansook and Aththaphan Phunsawat.

- The Nation



Gazette Crossword

Across

5. Guarantee issued by manufacturers
6. Beach close to Phuket International Airport
7. Starter or hors d'oeuvre
8. George _____, author of 1984
13. Rock Band '_____ Dan'
17. An exceptionally smart person (informal)
18. Gesture to give silent assent
21. Relating to a city or town
22. Excite the senses

Down

1. Historic bridge connecting Phuket and Phang Nga
2. Celebration to honor moms (2 words)
3. Pasta dish (eaten with meatballs)
4. US space organization
9. Recent vote held nationwide
10. A pleasing view
11. (A document stating) qualifications
12. Picturesque
14. One who has been taken prisoner
15. Vietnam's neighbor
16. Leading cause of marine pollution
19. Ability to speak (and write) well
20. Leafy vegetable with cholesterol lowering benefits

Solution on opposite page.



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The flaws of nutritional science

Excuse Buster
By Craig Burton

I RECENTLY had a session with a gentleman, who from the outset spoke about his frustration at the health industry, particularly in regards to the constant opinion changing about what is healthy and unhealthy.

I agree with his sentiment – seems every few years the ‘experts’ change their minds. I remember eggs were bad, then good again 10 years later according to Harvard Medical School. The same can be said for butter, coconut oil and so on – seems especially these fatty foods making a comeback of late. Nutritional Science can seem like an oxymoron at times. Why?

There are many reasons for this, including the influence of MAJOR food producers. Anyone who has read up on the history of the design of the USDA’s food pyramid will see that the recommendations were not purely based on hard science, but the food industry also weighed into the recommendations that became the guidelines nutritionists, dieticians and the like were taught and told to pass on.

But why do we have so many studies contradicting each other?

For instance, a recent article I wrote on soy said “Soy foods can stimulate the growth of oestro-



Every few years, experts seem to change their minds about what’s healthy and what’s not. Photo: pixabay

gen-dependent tumors and cause thyroid problems”. (Source: *New Zealand Medical Journal vol 113 Feb 11 2000*).

While a researcher at the American Institute of Cancer reports that the research she follows suggests soy lowers cancer risk: “These findings are great news for women who want to use soy as a source of protein while cutting back on animal protein such as red and processed meat for better health and lower cancer risk.” (Source: *Bette J. Caan, DrPH.*)

Why are there so many mixed outcomes? I think it is a combination of factors, some of which are discussed below.

Due to a lack of research

standards – sometimes we study the effects on rats and other animals consuming the food; or long-term studies whereby participants record their consumption, or short-term consumption, with people stuck in confined labs. These varied research compiling techniques often lead to differing results.

Some of the researchers are not as independent as we would hope – it costs money to run these studies and often a sponsor conducts a trial to hopefully support their food – whether it is grains, dairy, vegetable oils, meat, wine, and so on – this can then create a bias in testing.

This is a bit like what we do as consumers though – have a

hidden agenda.

We want the foods we like to be healthy so then look for the research supporting these foods and then often love sharing this information – especially with family and friends. Many people do this without even reading the whole study but just the headline, in order to support our choices.

You like red wine – you will find studies supporting the health benefits of moderate consumption. Guess what? There are studies out there suggesting that even moderate wine consumption leads to an increase in cancer. Same applies to many other common foods and drinks consumed.

So what is the answer? How

do we protect ourselves from so much misinformation? For one, we are all a bit different, which is why as Hippocrates said ‘one man’s food is another man’s poison’. So you need to start listening to how your body responds to food – especially with regard to intolerances like gluten, dairy, eggs and so on.

Here are some general rules:

1. Focus on whole, real foods that we have been regularly consuming for a long period of time. The longer the better. Fortunately, when the studies suggested eggs were bad I did not follow it – how could they be, since we have been consuming them for so long?

2. If it comes in a packet with a label and multiple ingredients, be wary. Especially if there are ingredients you need a chemistry degree to decipher.

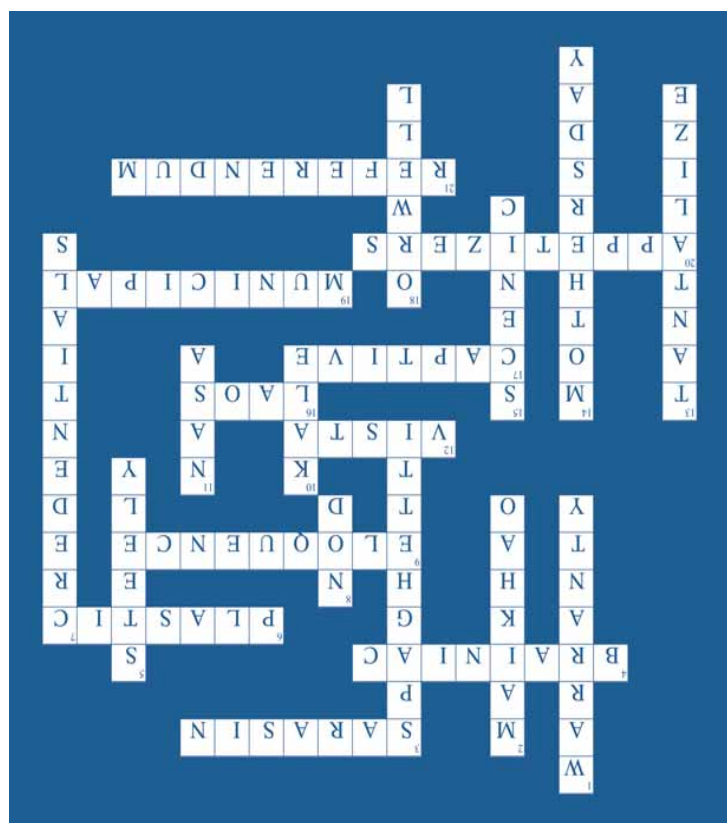
3. The more advertising it has, often, the worse it is. Look at soft drinks and processed food like breakfast cereals.

4. Look at how much processing has it undergone. This is why I often don’t recommend flour products (including most whole grain breads and pastas, which are still refined) as they can cause blood sugar issues.

Craig Burton is a Certified Sports Nutritionist (CISSN) with a Bachelor of Science degree (Sports Science) and a National Academy of Sports Medicine (PES) certification.

Crossword Solution

Turn the page upside down to read the answers.



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Using social media to list property



Across the Land

By Amy Koh

DURING the green season in Phuket, most real estate brokers spend their time listing new properties to boost up their listing stock ahead of the high season. Good & varied listings across the market segmentation of the property market are ideal to appeal to a wider spectrum of clients. Property listings need not necessarily be large in numbers, but being quality listings and in accordance with the client's demands are crucial.

The real estate market in Thailand works on a mostly 'non-exclusive' listing agreements and that is no exception in Phuket. Exclusive listing allows the appointed exclusive agent the sole rights to sell the property. It is normal for exclusive agents to work with other real estate agents to list and sell the property. In exclusive listings, a commission is payable to the exclusive agent regardless of which agent sells the property and the agent who sells the property also receives a commission.

A non-exclusive listing is when a property owner is allowed to list their property with different agents simultaneously. This allows the property owner the ability and freedom to market the property themselves and through different agents and only pay a



The property business has been milking the online market lately. Photo: George Hodan

commission to the agent that completes the sale of the property. As different agents have different clientele, this also allows the property to receive a wider exposure to the property market. The downside to a non-exclusive listing is that some agents have thousands of listings and a property owner's property may be 'drowned' in those listings and unless the agent remembers your property, the property might not be marketed efficiently, nor viewed by any potential clients.

With the increasing use of social media, real estate agents are resorting to social media as a tool to promote and market properties. The use of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram

and others is common nowadays, with a wide global reach. Some accounts even have followers in the thousands and millions.

If those followers were to share the post then even more people would see it. Information shared through social media is fast and it doesn't cost extra. A photo followed by a caption not more than 140 characters may not immediately sell a property, but it may spark interest and a potential client can post questions or request for more information to get the ball rolling.

With the amount of content passing through social media every second, the photo used has to be eye catching, of good

quality or even thought provoking. A short precise description is all that is needed to accompany the photo.

Photos are one of the first gateways to introduce the property to the market and we cannot stress the importance of the use of professional photos.

A professional photographer would be able to produce signature shots for the property that can be effectively used in on social media, in website listings and any other printed media.

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

Dream Hotel, Duetto aim to predict profits

THE Dream Hotel Group, which has resorts in Phuket, New York, California and Florida, is aiming to fine-tune and predict its profit margins after teaming up with profit optimization technology provider Duetto.

The new partnership between the hotel group and the hospitality solution provider was announced on July 29 with Duetto saying it aimed to implement their revenue strategy solutions for the Dream Hotel Group to 'bring new insights on pricing and demand to the company's Dream, Time, and Unscripted hotels totalling close to 2,000 rooms in urban and resort destinations'.

Duetto claims its cloud-based predictive analytics platform, GameChanger, allows hotels and resorts to independently yield rates by channel, segment and room type in real time.

The new technology uses consumer-centric data, including web shopping regrets and denials to help hotels gauge their lost business.

Duetto CEO Patrick Bosworth said on July 29 that the agreement would allow the hotel group to implement 'revenue strategy solutions' to its unique properties around the world.

- *Phuket Gazette*

Island's occupancy on the rise

ACCORDING to industry analysts Smith Travel Research (STR), resorts in Phuket have experienced an 8.7 per cent increase in occupancy to 70.3 per cent this year, while revenue per available room (RevPAR) also went up by 6.6 per cent to 2,027.98 baht.

American depositary receipt (ADR) in the market was down 2.0 per cent to 2,883.46 baht, stated the report, which also revealed that RevPAR for Phuket has increased year over year for six straight months, behind a 12.7 per cent year-to-date increase in demand.

- *Phuket Gazette*

Foreign buyers eye Asean homes

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

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

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

Last year, the company recorded 3.5bn baht in presales from foreign customers, and it expects overseas presales of up to 5bn baht this year. The company's overall presales target is 42bn baht.

"We plan to roadshow our



Thai property companies have been promoting local housing projects to overseas buyers this year. Photo: Alex Proimos

luxury condominium projects in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore this year, having witnessed [foreign] demand to buy into these projects last year,"

said SC Asset Corp chief executive officer Nuttaphong Kunakornwong.

The company's luxury Saladaeng One project, which

was launched last year, has achieved sales of 900 million baht to buyers from Hong Kong, Singapore, mainland China and Taiwan, he said.

The implementation of the Asean Economic Community this year and a weaker baht have been seen as the main factors boosting foreign demand for condominiums in Bangkok's central business districts.

Meanwhile, Indonesia's government now allows foreigners to own landed houses as part of efforts to boost the economy, after the release of a regulation signed by President Joko Widodo on December 22, 2015, according to *The Jakarta Post*.

The regulation stipulates that foreigners who hold resident permits are allowed to own houses under the Right to Use Title.

- *The Nation*

Marriott Nai Yang relaunched

By Zohaib Sikander

AFTER a multi-billion baht renovation this year, the Phuket Marriott Resort and Spa, Nai Yang Beach relaunched on June 1, sporting two brand new looks: one reflecting traditional Thai-style architecture, the other, a new contemporary style.

More than 2.3 billion baht has been spent on sprucing up the resort's 180 guest rooms overlooking the Andaman Sea.

"In 2013, we signed an agreement with TCC Land Asset World to develop seven hotels and resorts in Thailand.

"We successfully opened Hua Hin Marriott Resort and Spa in March and are delighted to welcome this Phuket resort under our flagship brand, said Marriott International's Area Vice President Karl Hudson, ahead of the new launch in June.

"This recent addition of Phuket Marriott Resort and Spa, Nai Yang Beach increases our total portfolio in Thailand to 18," he said.

"Guests now have a choice of traditional Thai-style rooms



The resort overlooks the Andaman Sea and comprises 180 rooms, built in either traditional-Thai style or with a more contemporary decor. Photo: Phuket Marriott Resort and Spa, Nai Yang Beach

in earthy tones, or they can opt for a more contemporary look with modern decor and other touches," said the resort's general manager David Ippersiel.

"Phuket welcomes approximately 12 million visitors per

year. They are mostly tourists from European and Asian countries," he said.

"Phuket is one of the largest contributors to Thailand's tourism industry, bringing around 200 billion baht to the country

each year.

"The opening of Phuket Marriott Resort and Spa, Nai Yang Beach, will address the needs of both local and international travellers," said Mr Ippersiel.

High-rises hit record high

WHILE Phuket's condominium market caters to mid-range buyers seeking accommodation in the province's central business district, buyers are paying record prices for condominiums to reside along Bangkok's Sukhumvit Road, where the more prestigious high rise units are priced at more than B300,000 per square meter.

The latest survey by the Agency for Real Estate Affairs (AREA) revealed that The Diplomat condominium complex by KPN Group Corporation on Sukhumvit 39 has the highest prices at B411,111 per square meter.

Nimit Langsuan by Pace Development Corp is asking slightly less at B405,186 per square meter, followed by The Residences at Mandarin Oriental Bangkok by IconSiam Super Luxury Residence Corp at B400,000 per square meter.

However, even these high asking prices will be beaten by 98 Wireless by Sansiri, which will open for presales next quarter at Bt550,000 per square meter.

- *Phuket Gazette / Nation*

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Phuket Gazette

She's beauty and she's grace

By Zohaib Sikander

MADELINE Cowe, winner of Miss World Australia 2016, visited Phuket last week as part of the Tourism Authority of Thailand's 'Women's Journey Thailand' campaign. Her entourage included the runners up of this year's competition, along with Courtney Thorpe, the winner of the 2014 pageant, and Deborah Miller, national director of Miss World Australia.

Madeline and her group went to Bangkok first, followed by Ayutthya, Hua Hin and then Phuket. The newly crowned 23-year-old met with the *Gazette* at Cape Panwa Hotel to talk about her life and how she is dealing with the spotlight.

"I grew up on my parents' cane and cattle farm in rural North Queensland. When I finished school, I decided I wanted to study law and moved to Townsville at the age of 17," says Madeline.

When 'Australia's Next Top Model' came to town, she decided to audition for it. She got through the auditions as well as the filming stages, and eventu-

ally decided to follow this lifestyle. She then moved to Sydney to model, which is also where she first tried her hand at pageantry.

"I did quite well and decided that the Miss World competition was the one for me," she says.

Madeline is very close to her family and her eyes light up when she talks about them.

"I am very family-oriented. My family celebrates Easter and Christmas together, usually with both my mom and dad's sides coming together for the holidays. They were all in Melbourne when I won, and I think both my sisters were in tears when my name was announced," says Madeline.

She also managed to have an exciting time with her team in Phuket.

"We've been snorkeling, which was quite enjoyable," she smiles. "We've been travelling through Thailand so fast, that this was the first time we got a chance to kick back and relax."

"This entire trip has been absolutely amazing, and we're so proud and grateful to be ambas-

sadors here. Thailand will forever have a place in our hearts and we will happily promote Phuket and Thailand as much as we can internationally," she says. "Everyone has been generous and amazing. I couldn't have asked for a better trip."

Back in Australia, Madeline is determined to make a difference. She helps raise funds for sick, disadvantaged and disabled kids for a children's charity called 'Variety,' through the Miss World pageant's 'Beauty with a Purpose' program.

"Our goal is to let these kids live, laugh and learn – we just want to help them be like other kids," she says.

Madeline says she's very excited about the upcoming Miss World 2016 competition.

"The big night's on December 18 in Washington DC. I've been quite happy with what I've learned from previous pageants and my law training to get through to the nationals. But now that I'm going to the international competition, I'm going to focus on my speaking skills. You need to be able to think really quickly on your feet in these situations,

and answer just about anything. Sometimes you get questions that are a little bit pushy and controversial and you have to know how to handle that."

Madeline's message for young men and women is to always go for it and never give up on chasing your dreams.

"If there's something you want to do, you should know that you can do it. Whether it's to be a pageant

queen, doctor, lawyer or anything else, just fight for it. There weren't many opportunities where I grew up – I could never have imagined all this before. It can happen for anybody if they believe in themselves and really try."







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