

# Phuket Gazette

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‘I FELT SOMETHING WAS WRONG WHEN MALAYSIA SEALED ITS BORDER’

## THE HUNT IS ON

■ **Aftermath of 11 explosions that rocked the Kingdom**

By Gazette Reporters

BLASTS ripped through seven provinces over the Mother's Day weekend August 11-14, leaving four dead and more than 30 wounded across Thailand's southern provinces, including in Phuket.

The carnage of what appears to have been coordinated attacks was most fatal in Hua Hin, Prachuap Khiri Khan province, and unprecedented outside of the country's Deep South – the restive Pattani, Narathiwat and Yala provinces – where an insurgency has targeted government officers for decades.

On August 16, Royal Thai Police Deputy Commissioner Srivara Ransirahmanakul issued an arrest warrant for an alleged perpetrator of last week's bombings.

Police allege that DNA recovered from an explosive device in Patong matches that of wanted bomb-maker Ahama Lengha. Phuket Forensic Police reportedly had the DNA tested at a Region 8 Police lab in Surat Thani.

Mr Ahama, who is from Narathiwat province's Tak Bai District, is the fourth suspect to be identified by police in connection with the 11 bombings and at least one detonation of an incendiary device.

Following the first of twin bombings in downtown Hua Hin on August 11, police detained two men from a southern province. A Chiang Mai man was also detained on August 13 by police in Nakhon Sri Thammarat. They believe the suspect to be the arsonist responsible for a fire that gutted a Tesco Lotus department store.

Police said evidence gathered from the device in Patong and presented to a Nakhon Sri Thammarat Military Court showed DNA matching that on file from



EOD personnel dismantle the bomb found in Patong. Photo: Winai Sarot

Mr Ahama's criminal record in Narathiwat.

Gen Srivara said that Mr Ahama has been involved in many attacks in the Tak Bai district and would be key to leading investigators to the mastermind behind the Mother's Day attacks.

The 11 explosions across Thailand's south occurred in less than 24 hours, and included two blasts in Patong that wounded a motorbike taxi operator.

The blasts began on Thursday, August 11 in Trang Province, where an explosion killed one and injured seven others while vendors were setting up stalls in a downtown market.

Later that night, two bombs concealed in nearby planters detonated in Hua Hin,

leaving one dead and 24 wounded, ten of whom were western tourists. One of the injured later succumbed to injuries.

The next morning, a blast outside the Marine Police headquarters in Surat Thani left one dead and injured three others. Thirty minutes later, another blast hit the district police station. No one was harmed in the second attack.

Around the same time, a blast occurred at a police box on Bangla Road in Patong, leaving one person injured. That was followed by a blast at Loma Park off Patong Beach, where crowds had gathered to celebrate Mother's Day and the birthday of Her Majesty the Queen.

*Continued on Page 4*

### Navy rescues four fishing boat crew off Promthep

A ROYAL Thai Navy search and rescue operation helped recover four crew members of a fishing boat that sank about two nautical miles off the coast of Phuket.

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### BUSINESS



Phuket's new local grocery store challenges established brands head on. *Page 11*

### PROPERTY



Tips for potential investors on what to look for when buying property. *Page 18*

### LIFE&STYLE



Read all about birds and bees in this week's gardening column. *Page 16*

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## LOCAL NEWS

# Briefly

### Tourist dies after ignoring red flags

A RUSSIAN man was pronounced dead shortly after lifeguards at Karon Beach pulled his unconscious body from the surf on the morning of August 14.

Lifeguards reported that the 50-year-old man, identified as Sergei, entered the water in the red flag no-swimming zone at the beach and disappeared in the surf about 11am.

"It took a while for the lifeguards to locate the man after he went under because of the strong waves," said Phuket Lifeguard Club chief Uten Singsom.

Lifeguards attempted to resuscitate the man on the beach. He was then taken by officers from the Third Naval Area Command to Patong Hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

### Five arrested in 400 kilogram kratom raid

FIVE suspects were arrested with 400 kilograms of kratom leaves during a raid in Rassada on August 16.

Governor Chamroen Tippayapongtada revealed details of the arrests at a press conference held at the Phuket office of the Narcotics Control Board (NCB) the next day.

The suspects were named as Sirichai Madlerdsak, 35, Chaisiri Sekpatan, 30, Usaman Mani, 25, Samlee Yapa, 25 and Aris Srirat, 19.

Samran Yukhontorn of the NCB received tips from locals about young men frequenting a rented house in Rassada.

NCB officials raided the house to find numerous packages containing kratom, and arrested the suspects when they returned in a pick-up truck with its trunk loaded with sacks of kratom leaves.

All five suspects were charged with processing a category 5 drug with intent to sell.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

# Tourist 'invited' to apologize for outfit



A tourist who wore a see-through dress while visiting a temple in Chalong apologized on August 10 after pictures of her outfit were shared on social media. Tourist police 'invited' the foreigner, her tour guide and a representative of a tour company to apologize at a police station in Phuket Town. Also present at the station was a representative of the temple, Wat Chalong. The police refused to release the name or nationality of the woman, saying it could affect 'tourism relations' with her country. Photo: Winai Sarot

### Krabi dentist escapes injury in car blaze

THE driver of a Mazda 2 escaped serious injury on August 15 when her three-year-old hatchback burst into flames as she pulled into her driveway.

Nattira Phumchat, 27, a dentist at Krabi Hospital, was arriving home from the market in Krabi Town at around 8pm, when smoke began billowing out from under the car's hood.

Ms Nattira said she stopped the car and jumped out. She then tried to put out the fire with the garden hose, but it got worse so she called the fire brigade.

Firefighters arrived to find the Mazda blazing away, causing a series of explosions, which threatened to spread to an electrical transformer inside the grounds of Krabi Nakarin International Hospital, located next door to Ms Nattira's residence in Pak Nam sub-district.

Firefighters battled the blaze for 40 minutes until the flames died down, but fuel that had leaked from the car reignited and engulfed the car in flames for a second time.

Ms Nattira said she'd had the car for three years and had it regularly serviced.

Police believe a short circuit caused the fire, which completely gutted the 500,000-baht car.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

### National park chief praises Chinese tourist

THE chief of Koh Phi Phi National Park said he was impressed after watching a video in which one Chinese tourist lambasted another for trying to drag driftwood off Ao Nang Beach.

Translated versions of the video went viral and were shared by media outlets across the region and throughout China.

The woman, named Bin Bin Ji in online forums, ranted in her video about how some Chinese tourists behave in an arrogant manner when they go on vacation.

She also mentioned how one particular Chinese woman she had just encountered wanted to take a piece of wood from the beach back to China, even though tour guides told her it wasn't allowed.

Ms Ji stressed that tourists should follow rules in Thailand.

Park Chief Sarayuth Tanthien said the complaints of the video's author cue into some widespread Thai sentiments regarding Chinese tourists in general.

He added that the clip shows the improvement of Chinese tourists' behavior and helps to make Thai people less negative about them.

– *Kongleaphy Keam*

### Burmese man murdered on first day of work

PHUKET City Police are searching for two unidentified men, believed to be Myanmar nationals, who stabbed another Burmese man to death on his first day of work at a wood factory on the bypass road on August 10.

Police received reports of the stabbing from staff at the factory at about 7pm.

"Ar Naing, 42, was sprawled face-up over some wooden planks, with multiple stab wounds on his body," confirmed Pol Lt Ronnaphum Permpoon. "There were cuts on his back and left arm, and blood all over the floor."

Factory staff told police that Mr Ar had just been hired to

carry wood and this was his first day on the job. They also said that the suspects arrived on a motorbike and parked nearby. The men then entered the shop, stabbed Mr Ar twice, and immediately fled the scene.

"We believe that the men knew each other and had had an argument, which ended in Mr Ar's death," said Lt Ronnaphum.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

### Samkong underpass delayed to end of August

THE expected mid-August completion date of the Samkong Underpass has been pushed back yet again, this time until the end of this month.

"The rain has made the process quite slow," said Chalernpol Wongkiattikun, the project engineer from the Department of Highways. "The underpass is about 90 per cent complete and we expect the entire project to be completed by the end of the month."

The project was last postponed from July 31 to mid-August, when it was reported to be 83 percent complete.

The construction company Wiwat Construction Co Ltd has been fined 2 million baht per day since January 22.

In February, the Transport Minister gave the company until April 10 to complete the project. However, the deadline was pushed to the end of June, then July 31 and then mid-August, before this latest delay was announced.

– *Kongleaphy Keam*

### Stolen bag, cash, recovered in Thalang

A stolen bag containing 37,000 baht in cash was recovered from a rented house in Thalang on August 15. The bag was accidentally left behind by a guide in a toilet at Phuket International Airport, but when he returned it was gone.

Officers traced an iPad in the bag and ended up at the residence of Patima Wangso, 23. They recovered the iPad, a wallet containing the money, an ATM card and some documents.

Ms Patima declined any knowledge of the crime, but was nevertheless charged with theft.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*



## Light rail plans given go-ahead



The plans will now be presented to the Ministry of Transport. Photo: Chutharat Plerin

THE multi-billion-baht light rail project plans were finally agreed upon on August 15.

The news comes in the wake of a push by Governor Chamroen earlier this month, when he called on the Office of Transport and Traffic Policy and Planning (OTP) in Bangkok to sort things out or dismiss the project entirely.

The meeting was presided over by Project Manager and OTP secretary Sirigate Apirat.

“We will now wrap things up and present the plan to the Ministry of Transport as soon as possible,” said Mr Sirigate.

“At present, the project cost has exceeded 30 billion baht, because we have to build at least three underpasses in order to prevent accidents, as well as a special station at the airport, so passengers can get directly on to the light rail if they choose.”

Mr Sirigate said the plan has been added to the Ministry of Transport’s 2017 Action Plan.

“I do not think it will be long until construction can finally begin,” he said.

– Chutharat Plerin

# Sunken boat crew members rescued in Navy operation

By Chutharat Plerin

A ROYAL Thai Navy search and rescue team plucked five men from stormy seas on August 16 after their fishing boat sank about two nautical miles off Promthep Cape the day before.

One of the men was pronounced dead on arrival. Five other crew members are still missing.

The Third Naval Area Command responded to a call at 9:20pm on August 15 from a person concerned that the Thai-flag fishing vessel *Bumroong Thai Nawa* was in trouble.

After a four-hour search there was no sign of the fishing boat or the crew. Faced with severe weather conditions, the rescue boat turned back to shore at 1:30am and then resumed the search at first light.

“The deceased was the boat’s captain, identified as Prayad Kaewklahan,” Lt Cdr Wirapong Jenjaruscheewakul of the Third Naval Area Command told the *Gazette*.

“The others are now safe but exhausted,” he added.

One Thai and nine Burmese men were on board when the vessel began taking on water off the coast of Phuket.

Another crew member was rescued by a fishing boat later the same day.

The crew member was



A Royal Thai Navy rescue team searches for the missing crew members. Photo: Royal Thai Navy

found floating in the water at 11:55am by the fishing vessel *Sor Samut 2* and ferried to the Royal Thai Navy ship *Tor 933*.

He was reported to be safe and able to walk, but exhausted from the ordeal. All victims were transferred to Vachira Phuket Hospital.

The search was temporarily called off on the afternoon of August 16 due to severe weather conditions.

Rescue personnel from the

Royal Thai Navy resumed their search efforts at first light the following day.

“Search efforts are now focused on an area where we would expect the currents to have taken the missing men,” said Lt Cdr Wirapong.

“We hope to find the men alive. They were all wearing life jackets, we have been told,” he added.

As of Wednesday, August 17, the search for the remaining crew members was still

ongoing.

The Thai Meteorological Department had issued a storm warning on August 15 for the Andaman region as monsoon rains continued to batter the southern provinces and the Gulf of Thailand.

All ships were advised to proceed with caution and small boats warned to stay ashore until August 18, as strong wind whipped up 2-3 meter high waves in the Andaman Sea.

## Phuket governor moved in shuffle

PHUKET Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada is being transferred to Nakhon Sri Thammarat effective October 1.

Prime Minister’s Office spokesman Sansern Kaewkamnerd on August 17 announced the Cabinet’s decision to transfer 19 officers in the Ministry of Interior. The list also included the Phuket governor. Maj Gen Sansern did not specify the reasons behind the move.

Governor Chamroen assumed his current position in Phuket on September 30 last year.

Vice Governor Prajiad Aksornthammakul has been as-



Gov Chamroen assumed his position last year. Photo: Gazette file

signed as the acting governor until a new governor is appointed.

Gov Chamroen was not available for comment.

– Kongleaphy Keam



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# Tourist police visit Bangla Road to boost confidence



A team of officers led by Tourist Police chief Naruewat Puttawiro patrolled Bangla Road on August 13, in an attempt to boost tourists' confidence after two bomb blasts in Patong on August 12 led to a complete shutdown of the area. Military personnel, Ministry of the Interior officers and police volunteers are continuing to patrol tourist areas to ensure the safety of locals, expats and tourists. Photo: Chutharat Plerin

# Cops close in

From Page 1

....At 9am, two more explosions reportedly occurred at a clock tower in central Hua Hin. There are no reports of injuries in that blast.

The *Gazette* received reports of two more blasts in Phang Nga shortly after 10am on August 12. No one was reported killed or injured.

The same day, Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha ordered security to be stepped up in municipal areas, tourist destinations and at landmarks.

A spokesperson for the Airports Authority of Thailand (AoT) said security was also bolstered at Phuket International Airport. "The PM has issued emergency orders to the relevant agencies in affected areas, in order to prevent another bombing and to increase security in crowded areas," Government Spokesman Maj-General Sansern Kaewkamnerd said on August 12.

The General said at the time that it was still too early to identify who was behind the attacks, but assured the public that authorities would bring those responsible to justice. He asked the public to remain vigilant and to report anything suspicious to local police.

Gen Sansern also stated that the PM had ordered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to take care of the tourists affected by the attacks in Hua Hin the night before. However, he declined to comment on reports that the mobile phones used to detonate several of the devices were imported from neighboring Malaysia.

Gen Srivara said at the time that he preferred not to reveal too much while investigations were ongoing but confirmed that police forces had questioned nearly 50 witnesses of the attacks so far.

Former National Security Council chief Lt-General Paradorn Pattanathabutr warned on Tuesday that the government should not rule out the possibility that the separatist Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) movement played a role in the bomb and arson attacks.

Foreign analysts have suggested that the insurgents in the Deep South might have expanded their operations to areas outside their traditional territory, but the government has maintained an official line that

the incidents were 'domestic sabotage' motivated by the August 7 draft charter referendum.

Lt Paradorn, however, said he was confident about his theory due to the depth of his involvement in addressing the insurgency in the South. He formerly led a government delegation in peace talks with the BRN in 2013.

"I felt something was wrong when Malaysia decided to seal its border before the attacks. The telephone signals used in detonating the bombs came from Malaysia," he said.

He said he believed the BRN launched the attacks in retaliation of the government's failure to proceed with peace talks.

Pol Maj-General Apichat Bunsiroj, commander of Surat Thani Provincial Police, said surveillance cameras had recorded images of two other suspects planting bombs in the province on Thursday. However, their identities were not immediately released.

In the case of Chiang Mai resident Sakharin Karuehas, who was detained for allegedly setting fire to a department store in Nakhon Si Thammarat, Gen Srivara said police had sought his arrest based on the available evidence.

It is widely believed that Mr Sakharin, who works on an oil rig in the Gulf of Thailand, was wrongly arrested because his image was captured on a closed-circuit camera. He is currently being detained under the absolute power granted by the interim charter's Article 44.

Gen Srivara said on Monday that the suspect would be handed over to police after a seven-day period, which would allow officials to consider releasing him on bail.

National police chief Chakthip Chaijinda said police were working to identify other suspects believed to be still hiding in the Kingdom.

"We want to catch them all, but it still relies on the evidence we have against them. We are working against time, but this task cannot be rushed and we have to investigate very carefully," said Gen Chaktip.

"Judging from what I saw while inspecting the site in Hua Hin on Monday, the investigation team is working very hard and the job is nearly 70 per cent complete," he said.

Gen Chakthip said comments about the BRN's role were just speculation.

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# Gov invokes Article 44 in attempt to fix migrant registration issues

PHUKET'S Governor invoked Article 44 of Thailand's Interim Constitution to resolve ongoing issues with migrant employers trying to register their workers at a meeting between government agencies on August 11.

Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada ordered the Phuket Employment Office to extend their work hours to every day of the week, and ordered additional lines for expedited migrant registration applications.

The governor's decision to invoke the highly controversial Article 44, which has been seen to give government officials carte blanche, comes a week after he received a complaint from a group of employers of migrant laborers, who protested restrictions on their workers outside Phuket Provincial Hall.

"The Employment Office is now available seven days a week in order to make sure there will always be an official present in case employers need to work in a different place than they are registered," Gov Chamroen said.

Among the complaints highlighted by the protesting migrant employers were location-based



**Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada orders the Phuket Employment Office to work seven days a week.** Photo: Chutharat Plerin

working restrictions.

"We used to be able to have our workers work anywhere, in all the three districts of the island," said Panuwat Prompechr, one of the protesting employers. "Now we have to choose to work either in a district or a sub-district, but only within an area covering ten villages."

"If we want to expand our workforce, we have to apply at the Employment office," Mr Panuwat said. "That takes a week to get everything approved, and sometimes we have to get to work immediately after getting an order from our customers. We can't afford to wait for days. Most of the time

our jobs are only for a short while, sometimes they're even done in a day."

Gov Chamroen, who is a Phuket native, said difficulties between authorities and contractors hiring unregistered migrant laborers goes back at least ten years.

"[By imposing Article 44] we are following the law, but making it flexible enough for employers," the governor said.

Phuket Employment Office chief Pitool Dumsakorn said that his office has simply been following the letter of the law and that previously his hands were tied.

"To be honest, according to the law, you cannot just regis-

ter to work in three districts across the island," Mr Pitool said. "Yes, we can be flexible with the application of the law based on our authority, but we cannot break it," Mr Pitool added.

At the meeting, Mr Pitool confirmed that Employment Office staff will be working on the weekends and have been authorized by him to allow migrants to work in additional areas. He also promised to finish registering 20,500 migrant applications by the end of August.

Mr Panuwat said he was impressed by the governor's decision to invoke Article 44 in order to expedite the registration process and expand work availabilities for employers and migrants.

"We came to the provincial hall last week asking the governor to push the Employment Office to finish their work on time, but he made it clear that it wasn't going to happen in time," Mr Panuwat said.

"We all really want to do everything legally and above board so that we can keep our contracts and our employees, but there are so many laws and steps to follow that it's never

really clear if we're in full compliance or not," he added. "We just wanted to get some clarification about our legal standing while our workers are being registered, and to know what to tell authorities that come to our sites looking for illegal workers."

Mr Panuwat's comments come after the publication of a list alleging widespread extortion of migrant employers and laborers by government officers and enforcement agencies.

Gov Chamroen took the time at the meeting to urge anyone with evidence of extortion to file a complaint, not just publish it on the internet.

Mr Pitool promised employers that their receipts, payment slips and copies of physical check-ups given to them when they pay for the registration of a migrant laborer could be used as evidence to keep authorities from fining or arresting them.

Mr Pitool said that he will bring forward Gov Chamroen's proposals during Labor Minister General Sirichai Distakul visit to Phuket, scheduled for August 25-26.

— Chutharat Plerin



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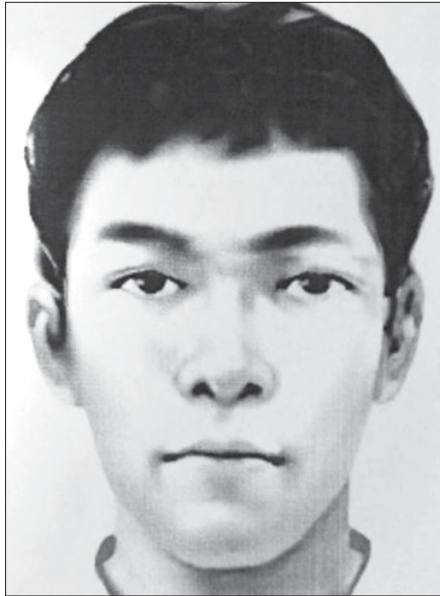
# Timeline of carnage across the south

**5pm Wednesday, August 10** – CCTV footage captures two men placing two incendiary devices in downtown Patong, Phuket: one in China Town Plaza, and another on Sai 2 Road in front of a nearby hotel.

Suspicious locals alert Phuket Provincial Police Authorities. A security guard moves the China Town bomb to a mostly-empty parking lot.

Upon investigation, investigating officers described both objects as “power banks with an incomplete wire circuit,” but conclude that neither device is an explosive.

“Two men in surgical masks, hats and gloves came into my shop to buy clothes,” said China Town Plaza shopkeeper Seetala Tanmalathong. “I thought they two were just normal customers. After they left, I went to tidy up the section they were in, when I found [the device].”



A composite sketch of the Phuket bombing suspect. Photo: Phuket Provincial Police

**3pm Thursday, August 11** – The first of 11 bombs in the south explodes at a walking street market in downtown Trang City.

The blast occurs while vendors are setting up their stalls along Ruenrom Road, on the same street as the Trang Provincial Justice Office and less than a block away from Trang City Hall.

The bombing injures eight, with one eventually succumbing to injuries at Trang Hospital. The victim is the first of four people that will eventually be killed in the series of weekend attacks.

Provincial Police cordon off the area and remove a suspicious bag.

In Phuket, Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada calls for heightened security on Thursday afternoon.



Victims injured by the first blast in Trang. Photo: Phuket Information Center Line group

**10pm Thursday, August 11** – Twin bombings injure 24, including 10 foreign tourists, in the seaside resort town of Hua Hin.

The injured foreigners reportedly included one Austrian, three Dutch nationals, four Germans and two Italians.

The two bombs went off just 30 minutes apart in an area popular for its nightlife near the Hua Hin Temple and downtown police station.

Provincial police reported that the explosions occurred some 50 metres apart and that the bombs were concealed in planters.

Police said the first explosion occurred at 10:15pm in front of a pub. The second explosion detonated in front of Rain Tree Bar around 10:45pm.

A Thai woman later succumbed to her injuries at Hua Hin Hospital. As of press time, the nationality of the second fatality was still unclear.

Police checked CCTV footage and are still investigating two men riding a motorbike around the area prior to the explosions.

Two men from a southern province have reportedly been detained for questioning, although police would not confirm whether they were the men seen in the CCTV footage.



Police inspect the site of one of the Hua Hin bombings. Photo: The Nation

**2am Friday, August 12** – At 1am, the Ministry of the Interior issued an immediate order for provincial governors nationwide to deploy additional security personnel to tourist destinations and public transportation terminals and stations.

At 2am, an incendiary device detonated at a department store in Trang City, near the Trang Railway Station. The resulting fire damaged an estimated 100 million baht in goods.

**3am Friday, August 12** – Another fire broke out at a garment-souvenir shop in Ao Nang, Krabi.

In neighboring Surat Thani province, another fire broke out at a plastics warehouse on one of the busiest roads in Surat Thani City, causing an estimated 10 million baht in damage.

**8am Friday, August 12** – Two bombs exploded outside the Surat Thani Provincial Police Headquarters and the Surat Thani Marine Police Office, killing one Mother’s Day ceremony participant and wounding at least one other.

At the same time, two bombs detonated in downtown Patong.

One motorbike taxi operator was wounded after a bomb detonated at a police kiosk near touristic Bangla Road. A second bomb exploded at Loma Park on Patong Beach, where crowds had gathered earlier that morning for a Mother’s Day ceremony.

Police then reportedly destroyed a suspicious device near Patong Beach. Initial reports point to the object being located near the Baanthai Resort & Spa.

An area of at least 200 meters around the hotel was cordoned off.

Additional checkpoints were also set up across Phuket, manned by military and police personnel.

Flights across the country and at Phuket International Airport were also delayed, as the Airports Authority of Thailand bolstered security precautions nationwide.

The devices appear to be uniform in nature and consist of a mobile phone wired to explosive charges, encased in a plastic box.



A device detonated at a police box at the end of Bangla Road in Patong. Photo: Patong DDPM



A piece of plastic reportedly from the device detonated at Loma Park. Photo: Gazette file

**9am Friday, August 11** – Twin bombings again hit the Prachuap Khiri Khan town of Hua Hin.

Bombs, again reportedly hidden in planters, detonated five minutes apart at a clock tower in the center of downtown, killing one and wounding three others.

Around the same time, two bombs ripped through Bang Niang Market in Phang Nga province. The resulting blaze burned through an estimated 80 shops and stalls and damaged two vehicles.

Another fire broke out at Lotus department store in Nakorn Sri Thammarat, causing an estimated 100,000 baht in damages.

As of press time, it was unclear whether the fire had been set using an incendiary device like those recovered in Patong, or by some other means.

Police arrested one Chiang Mai man the following day who they suspect to be the arsonist responsible for the fire.

**1pm Sunday, August 14** – Provincial police discover another explosive device in China Town Plaza, in Patong.

The device is constructed similarly to the incendiary devices removed by authorities on August 10.

At the same time, small explosives planted at four locations detonate in the restive Yala province.

There were no reports of anyone killed or injured in the blasts.



EOD personnel dismantle the bomb found in Patong. Photo: Winai Sarot

**7am Monday, August 15** – A double bombing attack in Narathiwat wounds two marines escorting teachers to work.

The first bomb, which appeared to be a five-kilogram explosive housed in metal box, detonated on the left shoulder of the road, hitting a motorcycle patrol, while the second bomb went off 10 minutes later without causing injuries.



## Helicopter on rescue mission goes missing

A HELICOPTER carrying five people on a mission to rescue flood victims in Mae Hong Son's Pang Mapha District went missing as the aircraft disappeared off radar on August 14.

At press time, government spokesman Winthai Suvaree said the helicopter was still missing.

The 7th Infantry Division and the 36th Ranger Regiment taskforce conducted a search and rescue operation after receiving reports that the helicopter with two pilots, two mechanics and one passenger on board had disappeared en route to the northern province of Phitsanulok.

Thossapol Puan-udom, Mae Chaem District chief ordered local officials, kamnan and village heads to dispatch search teams.

## Village defence volunteer shot dead in Pattani

A VILLAGE defence volunteer riding a motorcycle en route to taking a guard shift was shot dead on August 12 in Pattani's Thung Yang Daeng District.

Defence volunteer Seulaemae Shiva, 52, was shot at by two men on a motorcycle, resulting in him sustaining gunshot wounds to the torso. He was pronounced dead upon arrival at a hospital. Police suspect that the shooting was part of the ongoing unrest in the region.

## 10-20 people involved in last week's attacks

POLICE say 10-20 people were involved in the bomb and arson attacks around the south of Thailand last week. The attacks were all connected and instigated by a single mastermind, Thai police said on August 14.

Police General Pongsapat Pongcharoen said that officials are putting together facts to identify the network. He spoke after a teleconference with regional chiefs in affected provinces.

Thai authorities have sought help from Malaysian officials to track a mobile phone used in a bombing in Phuket, believed to have originated from Malaysia.



## Game-addicted minor found after 3 years

AN ALLEGED paedophile lured a game-addicted minor away from his family and sexually abused him for the past three years, according to an ongoing police investigation.

Police located the boy last week, now aged 13.

According to the mother, her son was addicted to playing games and often frequented the gaming zone of a superstore in the family's neighborhood in Bangkok.

Because the boy was addicted to games, it was easy to control him, said the abductor.

## Gov't to foot bills of injured in bombings

THE government will pay all medical expenses for people injured in the bomb and arson attacks in major tourist cities in the south last week, Public Health Ministry permanent secretary Sophon Mekthong said on August 14.

Fourteen Thais and eight foreigners are receiving medical treatment in hospitals, while one person has already been discharged.

"All patients are in a stable condition and looked after closely by medical personnel," Mr Sophon said.

The ministry has also dispatched mental health teams to provide therapy for families of those who were killed in the attacks, he said.

## Bang Saen jellyfish sting, 150 hospitalized

A TOTAL of 150 tourists have been affected by jellyfish (*Rhophi-loma hispidum*) that swept ashore all over Bang Saen Beach in Chon Buri's Muang District, Chon Buri "Chalam Khao" marine rescue group deputy president Kittipong Traiboon said on August 13.

Many sought first aid after being exposed to the jellyfish and recovered within two hours, he said adding that the number of affected people was lower than the previous day when nearly 100 people were affected. He said that so far only two people were in severe condition due to an allergic reaction to the jellyfish toxin and were being treated at Burapha University Hospital.

## Pokemon Go causes accident in Chiang Mai

A VOCATIONAL college student has been severely injured because she looked at her friend's mobile phone to see a newly-caught Pokemon monster while she was riding a motorcycle on August 8.

The accident in Chiang Mai became the talk of the town in cyberspace after the girl's father angrily posted a message on his Facebook wall to reprimand his daughter.

## NATIONAL NEWS Briefly

The girl's father said she got straight A grades for nearly all her subjects but she was 'stupid enough' to play the game.

However, the girl's mother, who identified herself as Wannipha, said her daughter was not playing the game. She was simply riding her motorcycle to her vocational college Monday morning.

The mother said a pillion rider, who was playing the game, became excited after she caught a rare Pokemon monster, so she showed the mobile phone to the girl. She ended up crashing her motorcycle into a sidewalk.

## Bangkok open post bombings, mixed feelings

FOREIGN travellers enjoying the nightlife at Bangkok's Khao San Road gave mixed responses over the weekend to the increased security measures implemented across Thailand in the aftermath of the bombing spree in seven southern provinces.

Some tourists said they had not noticed tightened security measures in Bangkok. Others said they had not heard anything about a series of bombings in an 18-hour period starting late August 11 until their parents called

them, asking them to be cautious or to return home immediately.

"[Bangkok] seems so normal that I did not know there was violence. I watched the news [about] the blasts after my parents called me, saying there were bombings and fires here," said a tourist from Spain.

Bombing and arson attacks struck tourist attractions and areas in Phuket, Trang, Hua Hin, Surat Thani, Phang Nga, Krabi and Nakhon Si Thammarat.

Despite the spate of bombs in the south, the famous entertainment street for foreign backpackers, Khao San Road, was still packed with visitors. From 8pm until 3am, the street was crowded with foreign tourists and Thais mingling along the busy street.



## Phuket Gazette

# Restoring confidence

THE *Phuket Gazette* hopes that the perpetrators of the recent bomb attacks are brought to justice as swiftly as possible so that we can all begin the work of restoring confidence in the region.

The specter of tourist-targeted bomb attacks of the kind that took place last week had been a source of dread here in Phuket for years. Already reeling with deaths and injuries, we are now left with no choice but to wait and see what will be the long-term impact on our tourism economy.

As the investigation into the attacks is ongoing as this edition goes to print, the *Gazette* will refrain from the kind of media speculation that was so rampant in the immediate aftermath of the bombings.

But given that the government has placed public safety as a cornerstone of its mandate, we hope that the security breach revealed by the blasts will help persuade the state security apparatus to reassess some of its priorities, including those concerning foreign residents.

Although there is no indication of any direct foreign role in the recent attacks, previous atrocities like the Erawan Shrine bombing in Bangkok indicate that foreign elements are capable of carrying out attacks here.

Our main line of defence against such threats rests with the Immigration Bureau, which recently introduced its 'Good Guys In, Bad Guys Out' slogan.

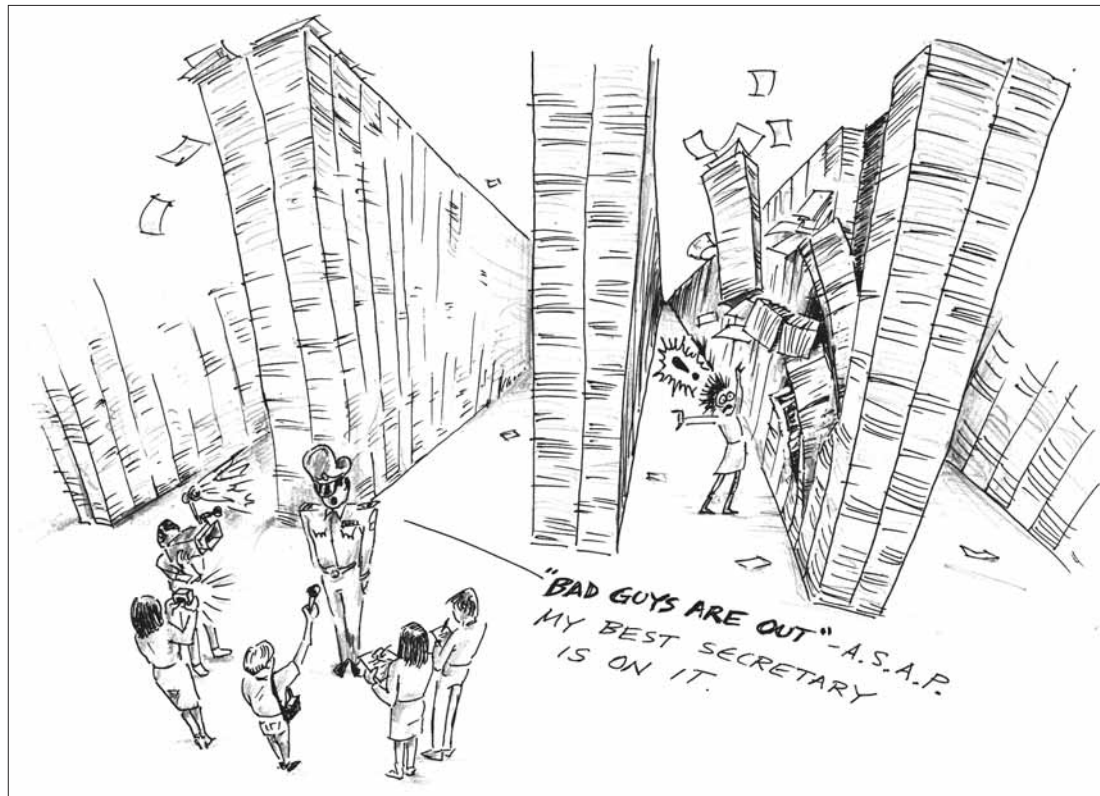
Unfortunately, the overwhelming consensus in the local expat community is that Thai Immigration is making it more difficult than ever for law-abiding foreigners to continue to reside here.

Just one area where vast resources are being expended with little observable benefit in terms of security comes with the new 'Foreign National Identification Form' that all 'aliens' must now complete when complying with even the most basic immigration requirements.

Even more unmanageable would be the recently-announced plan to begin tracking the movements of all aliens using mobile phone SIM cards.

While Immigration should of course use the best technologies available, they should be doing it in a way that maximizes state security while minimizing wasted time and expense for all concerned.

Unfortunately, the trend seems to be heading in the opposite direction.



# Red flags are there for a reason

*Re: Russian loses life in red flag swim at Karon Beach, Aug 15*

It may seem callous but I have no sympathy for these people who blatantly ignore red flags and put others at risk as well.

On Friday, there were at least 20 people in the heavy surf in Kamala, defying the red flags.

One man even had a toddler on his shoulders.

Try to tell them of the dangers and they either just look at you blankly or tell you to mind your own business – and not always that politely.

Mister Ree  
Gazette forum

## Letters to the Editor

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

them the most.

We spend our modern technology-filled lives staring at screens looking for the next fix.

Riding a motorcycle is seen by some as just transport. Pokemon is far more interesting than where they are going.

More rider training is required.

Thai Safe Rider  
Gazette forum

## Drivers should be taught to behave

*Re: Foreign tourist apologizes for visiting temple in sexy dress, Aug 11*

Good idea for the police to teach farang how to behave in a temple.

I wish they would do the same for some Thai drivers, teaching them how to behave on the roads.

Philippe Cablat  
Facebook

## Need to enforce the speed limit

*Re: Father run over, killed, in front of wife and kids, Aug 10*

Speaking as a car driver, scooter rider and a pedestrian in Phuket, risking my life on the roads here is daily life. I really

do hope that speeds are restricted/enforced here, speeding to get to a destination on time is never worth a life/lives.

That poor family, my condolences.

Sarah Whitcher  
Facebook

## Another commandment for farangs

*Re: Bombs in Patong, across south, kill 3, injure dozens, Aug 12*

So sad, hopefully they catch those responsible.

Rest in peace to those who have been killed and best wishes for a speedy recovery to the injured.

Kirsten Humphrys  
Facebook

## Wish all Chinese tourists could be just as sensible

*Re: Park chief praises Chinese woman's viral video, Aug 11*

This lady deserves an award for telling the truth. It's unfortunate that people like her get bundled up with others who don't have any manners or common sense.

Hopefully we will hear from others like her – people who are tired of being labeled and ridiculed because of the offensive behavior of their countrymen and women. Well done to her for speaking up.

Janet Murphy  
Facebook

It doesn't matter what activity it is or what country it is, if you choose to ignore the rules that are there for your own safety; you are putting your life (and the lives of others) at risk.

Be fair to yourself and others. Don't be selfish.

Andrew Drmota  
Facebook

## Unfortunately there will be more such accidents

*Re: Dad publicly embarrasses daughter after Pokemon bike accident, Aug 11*

Unfortunately there will be lots more of these. It's not distractions, but attractions that are the problem.

Human minds are easily attracted to the things that occupy

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# Safety: a universal concern

## FIRST PERSON

IT'S been five years since I moved to Thailand, after retiring from the British Royal Navy in which I served as a military chaplain for twenty years, three of them in Northern Ireland. It was there that I had to learn how to live with the constant threat of terrorism posed by the then most professional terrorist group in the world, the IRA.

Our training was excellent; the best in the world. We were taught about how the terrorists planned and carried out attacks, how they would watch someone or a place for weeks, how they would try to get the maximum amount of explosive near the maximum number of people.

They would look for patterns of behavior, for weaknesses in security and for the best place and time to attack. They might even rehearse attacks. We all knew what to look out for: the under-car booby trap; the car low down at the back because there was something heavy in the boot; the wire running to a trash bin; the open window on a cold day, where a sniper might be waiting... We all had to learn how to think like a terrorist in order to beat the terrorist.

Driving through the IRA heartland in West Belfast, as I often did, was a nerve-wracking experience – particularly as we were sometimes followed – but every soldier knew they could be attacked anywhere by bomb or bullet. We needed to be constantly alert, wherever we were, whether on patrol in Ireland or in a bar in the UK.

However, this security culture was not just seen in our armed forces. After thirty years of living with a terrorist threat,



**Andy Phillips, 58**, is a retired Chaplain and British expat who served in the British armed forces for 20 years with the Parachute Regiment and Royal Marine Commandos.

Here, he shares with us his concerns about security measures in the province following last week's spate of bombings and his experiences in Northern Ireland dealing with one of the world's most notorious terrorist groups, the IRA.

the whole of Britain had learned a vitally important lesson: everyone had to be vigilant because we were all at risk from terrorist attacks.

I am reminded of this every time I fly from Heathrow. Airport security drives me mad. They will scan my bag, scan me, search my pockets, make me take off my belt and shoes, throw away my water and so on. But such professionalism and attention to detail has foiled a number of terrorist attacks and makes me feel safe. Not only that, leave a suitcase unattended in the UK and nine times out of ten a member of the public will quickly report it.

Britain has a vigorous security culture because it learned over many years how to live with terrorism.

Thailand is different. It has a wonderfully relaxed attitude to life. It is why we expats love it here. However, one can never be relaxed about the threat from terrorism. The country has just had a wake up call, which could have been far worse, as the bombs were small. Imagine the carnage had they been car bombs. I knew something would happen one day, the only

question was 'when?'.

For Thailand has yet to learn how to live with terrorism. For example, every time I drive into one of the big department stores, I watch the security guards opening and shutting the boots of cars in front of me, while neglecting to open any suitcases within or check where the spare tyre goes.

If the police's responsibility is to respond quickly and effectively to any threat, then ours is to be their eyes and ears. The police cannot be everywhere. They need to teach us how to do this – what to look out for.

We need every security guard to do more than just blow whistles and wave their arms about. We need bar owners to tell their staff what to do if they see an unattended bag. We need shop workers to report someone nervously parking a car in a busy place and hurrying away.

Sadly, everyone living in Phuket, Thais and foreigners alike, has to learn to be ever vigilant, because the terrorist threat is not going away any time soon.

We have to learn how to live with it and how to respond to it. Security is everyone's business, like it or not.

# No pet left behind



Adopting an animal is a long-term commitment. Photo: Pixabay

## Island View

By Wes Martin

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

IT'S official. I've got puppy fever. I've started budgeting more commuting time so that I can pullover and love on whatever soi critter I happen to see while idling in the daily traffic around Phuket Town and Bypass Road.

Actually it's not just puppy fever, it's pet fever. If it's got fur, I'm off my bike, petting it. I doubt that I'm alone in my adoration for soi animals. In fact, I'm certain I'm not, as nearly every other week, someone posts on one of the dozens of Facebook expat groups in Phuket that they're leaving and trying to find a good home for their pets. Cue the inevitable digital berating, arguments and judgment.

As for me, I'm a bit on the fence with the issue. It's genuinely heartwarming whenever a soi dog or cat is taken in, for however long that may be. Besides rescuing the animal from a life of mange and misery, or ending up as eventual road kill, you're also ensuring that they're not procreating and spreading that misery to a new generation of soi kittens and pups.

Rescuing animals is, of

course, a great thing. No one in the all-caps section of the expat Facebook pages is arguing about that. What's turned them the color of chili pepper is what happens to that pup when you're done teaching, your yoga training ends or you move. It's about not having the decency to commit to the animal that you've rescued or taken in, that it's somehow okay to abandon a family member when it becomes difficult to take them along.

And that argument, at its core, is the real reason I haven't made a commitment to one of these pups yet. Adopting an animal is a commitment, but in Phuket, some expats have apparently never learned the lesson that the responsibility doesn't end when your stint as an English teacher does.

If you're not sure where you'll be in a year, you can absolutely still get an animal. You just have to understand that the animal is now coming with you. It belongs to you and is more important than the laptop you lug from country to country.

It's hard enough to navigate the immigration rules between countries when it's just you, it'll be harder still with a pup or cat in tow, but when you make that commitment, you're committed. And that's the nature of commitment – you're stuck with it, no matter what.

## Words from the Wise

**“Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity.”**

– *Horace Mann*

**“Tell your heart that the fear of suffering is worse than the suffering itself. And no heart has ever suffered when it goes in search of its dream.”**

– *Paulo Coelho*

## Issues & Answers

### Why are there wires on the roadside?

I was passing by Koh Kaew last week, near the Bang Ku Underpass construction site, when I noticed that all the electric wires and other cables had fallen down.

The mess of wires was lying about 10 meters along the pavement. Does this have anything to do with the heavy rain storm that caused the wires to fall to the ground?

*Dark Methew  
Phuket*

**Mr Suthep Jitseree, Manager of Provincial Electricity Authority (PEA) Phuket Office replies:**

Thank you for informing us. Please do not worry about the wires – they have nothing to do with the rain storm.

We are in the process of moving the electricity poles and wires in that area.

It may look messy for a short period of time, but we will get it done as soon as possible and the area will be back to its normal state in no time.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for any 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](http://www.PhuketGazette.net/IssuesAnswers)



# Where to safely stash your cash

## Finance

By David Mayes

MANY of my clients have been moving money out of GBP into different currencies or into deposit accounts in different countries. While I am not pushing anyone to do this, I am very often asked which countries are safe to hold deposits.

It's an interesting question and many are often mistaken about what guarantees actually mean.

The most common destination in the region seems to be Singapore. Theoretically, there is an unlimited guarantee on deposits by the government. The main thing to remember about this is that if any government goes bust, as many have done in the past, then the guarantee becomes worthless. I am not saying anything about Singapore specifically here, but one thing you need to consider in conjunction with a government guarantee is the strength of the government itself.

The USA guarantees up to US\$250,000, and despite all the saber rattling about offshore jurisdiction, there is more foreign-owned money deposited in US banks than anywhere on



When financial markets are volatile and can't be predicted, cash may be the best option. Photo: Pixabay.com

the planet.

The USA is officially the largest offshore jurisdiction on the planet. In every crisis, we see money flow into USD as well, so it is still considered the safest place in the world when times get rough.

However, the underlying fundamentals of the currency point to a future where this may not always hold true.

Many expats in the region have been depositing money into Cambodian banks for a

pretty decent interest rate and an unlimited guarantee. The issue I see with this is that Cambodia is not exactly the strongest economy on the planet, nor is it very rich in natural resources. There is no such thing as a free lunch.

The exchange is simply a reflection of the added risk compared to developed countries such as Australia, where you get close to nothing on your money.

So, essentially we remain in

the same environment that we have been stuck in, for what seems like forever now.

Economies all over the world are poised for another shakeout. It just depends where the dominoes fall when the next crisis comes. The advice for this kind of environment remains the same as it has for almost a decade now: it is better to forego a decent return in exchange for avoiding a huge loss.

Diversification across many currencies and in deposits held

in many different countries is the best answer if you are sitting on a large amount of liquidity. Money markets don't provide a big enough return over a simple government-insured deposit account as long as you can stay under limits. This shouldn't be too difficult if you spend a bit of time researching beforehand.

Cash may seem like a boring topic to revisit, but when the sky starts falling, cash is always king – and always will be. I am not saying the sky is about to fall, but the longer governments keep kicking the can down the road and avoiding crisis by printing money or keeping interest rates suppressed, the nastier the next crisis is going to be. Take the time to make sure your cash is safe and it will be ready to pounce when financial assets go on sale.

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

## Businesses taking out fewer loans

BUSINESSES nationwide drew down less on their credit lines in the second quarter of this year than in the first quarter, indicating that loan growth still faces a challenge, even though the economy is expected to recover over the rest of the year.

"From the central bank's internal data, a factor that shows slower growth of lending is the trend of loan withdrawals from banks declining from the previous quarter," Don Nakornthab, senior director of the Bank of Thailand's Financial Institutions Policy Group, said on August 11.

"That shows that loan demand is weak," he said.

Loan growth in the banking system in the second quarter was 3.3 per cent; unchanged from the first quarter.

Lending to manufacturers dropped 4.8 per cent, while lending in the real-estate industry did



The loan demand is low at the moment. Photo: Ken Teegardin

a turn around from a 3.7 per cent increase to a 1 per cent fall.

However, economic sentiment in the second half is expected to brighten thanks to government spending, tourism and the government's additional measures to help small and medium-sized enterprises.

"But we have told banks to help monitor the ability of SMEs. If SMEs are unable to repay debt, the banks should offer help to these customers," the BAT director said.

– The Nation

## Bangkok Airways revenue soars, Thai takes nose dive

INCREASING tourist numbers have given a lift to Bangkok Airways with the Thailand-based airline reporting a 12.5 per cent rise in revenue (13.83 billion baht) in the last half of the year.

Net profit in the first half was reported at 1.46bn baht, up by 23 per cent, thanks to a higher number of passengers, company president Puttipong Prasarttong-Osoth said.

He added that in the second quarter, revenue was 6.05bn baht, up by 8.8 per cent year on year, also mainly attributed to a higher number of passengers.

Profit before income-tax expenses was 491.7 million baht. Nevertheless, additional taxes of 447mn baht were filed because of the change in calculation for tax privileges granted by the Board of Invest-



The airlines has commenced two new routes recently. Photo: xlibber

ment. This change, announced by the Finance Ministry on June 16, caused the company to suffer a net loss of 111.9mn baht.

Bangkok Airways recently signed a codeshare agreement with Austrian Airlines, increasing its codeshare partners to 21. This partnership provides BA greater connectivity between Europe and Thailand and enables passengers of Austrian Airlines to connect with tour-

ist destinations in Thailand and Cambodia.

Bangkok Airways expects to sign new codeshare agreements with two or three more airlines during the current second half of the year.

During the second quarter, Bangkok Airways commenced the operation of two new routes, between Chiang Mai and Mae Hong Son and between Bangkok and Danang in Vietnam.

Meanwhile, Thai Airways reported an operating profit of 1.78bn baht in the second quarter, a decrease of 2.93bn baht from the same period last year, thanks to continued corporate restructuring measures and lower jet fuel expenses. They also reported a net loss of 2.9bn baht in the same period.

– The Nation



# Local store wars intensify

By Sukawin Tanthavanich

PHUKET Grocery Ltd Partnership opened its flagship store in Phuket Town on August 9 with the aim of penetrating the low-cost retail market currently dominated by the Phuket-based Super Cheap franchise.

Chairman of the new retail outlet, Pornchai Chanchuwanchkul, said he hoped reasonable prices, air-conditioned comfort and a range of customer services in a convenient location would also attract shoppers to the new store, which is situated on Nimit Circle in Phuket Town.

“Phuket Grocery offers local shoppers a larger variety than other stores of fresh and dried foods, as well as frozen products,” said Mr Pornchai.

Other services aimed at drawing new customers include a food court, a commercial



Phuket Grocery chairman Pornchai Chanchuwanchkul cuts a ribbon to officially open the new store in Phuket Town on August 9. Photo: Sukawin Tanthavanich

shopping area with various other branded products, activity zones and a large parking area for customers.

In addition, the store has a customer service counter

staffed by experts offering consultancy services for local entrepreneurs to help them establish small businesses.

Phuket Grocery was established with a 200-million-baht

investment with the aim of attracting locals and foreigners with more variety than longer established outlets with satellite convenience stores such as Super Cheap – first opened in

1995, Big C and Tesco Lotus.

Phuket Grocery Ltd Vice Chairwoman Sai Chanchuwanchkul said marketing strategies to attract foreign customers include the availability of wine, beverages and fresh meats.

“Our food court brings in Chinese tourists, and we are closely working with a number of tour bus companies to increase the inflow of tourists,” she said.

In comparison, there are a total of seven Tesco Lotus stores in Phuket, seven Big C stores and over 50 Super Cheap stores.

“Phuket Grocery’s location in the center of Phuket Town is one of the store’s competitive strengths,” said Ms Sai.

“It means that locals will not have to face traffic like elsewhere to go out and purchase cheap items”.

## ICBC to maintain annual asset growth

THE influx of Chinese investors in Thailand and a market with room to grow are enough for Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (Thai) to maintain annual asset growth of 10 per cent for at least the next couple of years.

Zhigang Li, chairman of the board of directors and the executive committee, said asset growth of 10 per cent per year would ensure that ICBC (Thai) would remain in the parent group’s top three in terms of assets and profit generators in the Asean countries.

In the first six months, ICBC (Thai) posted the asset growth while net profit grew by 15 per cent. Mr Li said that net profit exceeded the target because the bank participated in financing deals such as a bridge loan to fund TCC Group’s acquisition of Big C Supercenter from Casino Group. It also is the biggest guarantor for True Move H’s acquisition of a spectrum licence for 4th-generation wireless services.

In the first half, ICBC (Thai) granted loans to Chinese investors who came to Thailand to set up rubber-tyre and solar-energy businesses. Mr Li said rubber would be a key driver of ICBC (Thai)’s asset growth because Thailand is a rich source of rub-

ber for Chinese tyre companies. The bank provided 10 billion baht in financing to Chinese tyre manufacturers setting up factories in Rayong.

China’s Huayi Group also recently announced the investment of 10bn baht in Thailand by joining with Lakchai Muang Yang Industrial Estate to produce tyres for export.

According to the Board of Investment, Chinese companies ranked third among foreign interests requesting investment incentives, for a total investment value of 21bn baht.

More Chinese companies are coming to Thailand because the government has encouraged them to invest overseas, while the slowdown of China’s economy has encouraged manufacturers to go abroad to improve efficiency. Thailand is a base for manufacturers of rubber products because they can acquire raw materials at lower prices than elsewhere.

“We hope to maintain [healthy] growth in the second half. Actually, the Thailand market is not too big and we are very small for this market, so I think this market is [large] enough for us to grow [in],” Mr Li said.

– The Nation

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# Phuket entrepreneur honored with Business Woman award

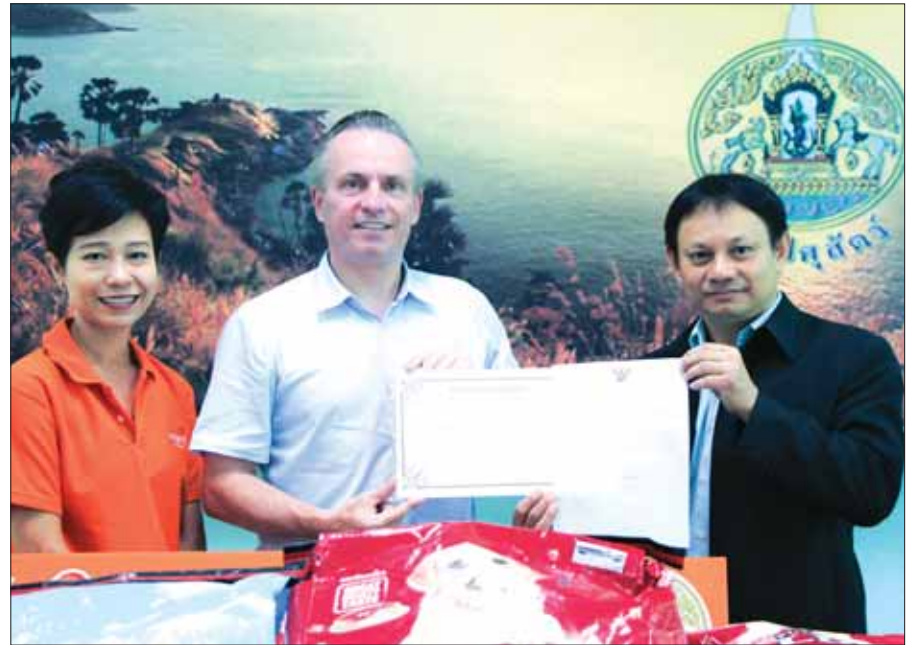
Phuket entrepreneur Rungrat Srisuk was one of 20 women honored in the country's annual Outstanding Thailand Business Woman Awards, this year held at the Grand Hyatt Erawan Bangkok. The event was organized by the Business and Professional Woman's Association of Thailand in conjunction with the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security.



Rungrat Srisuk (2nd left) and her husband Thanusak Puengdeth (left), MD of JD Pools Co Ltd , with Thanyarat and Pramookpisitt Atchariyachai (right) of the Kata Group at the awards ceremony.

# Amari Phuket supports stray cat and dog shelter

Amari Phuket recently visited the Phuket Livestock office to donate used linen and bed sheets in support of the province's Stray Dog Home project and to further promote the use of the sterilisation to reduce the island's soi dog population. The Amari team also donated dry food for cats and dogs.



Surajit Vicchuwan, Head of the Phuket Provincial Livestock office (right) presents Pierre-Andre Pelletier (center), Amari's Vice President and Area General Manager, South Thailand and Amari's Learning and Development Manager, Suchela Jackson (left) with a donor certificate to express gratitude for the hotel's support.





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**ents in Paradise**

# Saransiri Koh Kaew Phase II launched

Following the successful sell out of Phase I of Sansiri's residential development Saransiri Koh Keaw, the company launched Phase II on August 16.



Metha Angwatanapanich, Sansiri PLC's Senior Executive Vice President – Business Development and Project Development Division (Low Rise) attended the launch event to present details about the new phase.

# Swiss Society donates hardware

The Swiss Society Phuket donated a PC with monitor, printer, paper and, of course, something fun for the 51 students of Ban Tha Khao School in Koh Yao Noi on August 2. The Society's representatives then joined teachers and students from the school for lunch at the Paradise Beach Resort, which is also a supporter of the school.



Members of the Swiss Society Phuket with teachers and students from Ban Tha Khao School.

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# Young sailors cruise to victory

YOUNG Phuket sailors are making a splash at international events, with two local youngsters from the Phuket Youth Sailing Club (PYSC) winning gold and bronze at the 2016 Topper World Championships held at Ballyholme in Northern Ireland last month.

While this is a big deal in itself, the fact that these children come from underprivileged backgrounds makes this even more commendable.

PYSC is a non-profit sailing club giving Thai orphans and underprivileged children the opportunity to learn sailing. Coached by an English couple, Katy & Paul Gooch, not only do the children learn a new sport, but also spend time practicing and improving their English, a valuable skill that will certainly help them in the future.

Gold medalist Natthapong (Max) Yuang-Ngam joined the PYSC in 2010 when he was eight years old, first learning to swim and then to sail, gaining confidence and self esteem along the way.

Racing added another dimension to his sailing, and with the required experience in racing, he competed in his first Optimist Nationals in May 2011.

Max, who lives at Phuket Sunshine Village for children in need, continued sailing in the



Natthapong (Max) Yuang-Ngam, who joined the PYSC in 2010, was awarded the gold medal at the 2016 Topper World Championships held in Northern Ireland last month. Photo: Simon McIlwaine

racing team, training once a week and gaining more experience through club racing and competing at the national level. Through his success in the sport, he was selected to represent Phuket at the Phuket Youth Games and Thailand at the Double Star Regatta, in China in 2012.

He continued to enjoy sailing and racing, and his experience showed through,

with him winning the PKCR Optimist Dinghy Series in 2014 and 2015.

Two other sailors joined Max at the 2016 Topper World Championships, with 12-year-old Tanakorn (Peyton) Mervielde, another Sunshine Village resident, placing third overall. Peyton started sailing when he was seven and though still a year shy of becoming a teenager, he already has an international

bronze medal under his belt.

Kartoon (Toon) Jundet, now 14, started sailing with Max when he was eight and competed in his first Optimist National aged nine. Toon was also selected to represent Thailand at the Double Star Regatta in China in 2012.

Toon competed in the Topper 5.3 fleet – a bigger fleet with 163 sailors – and did very well to qualify for the Gold

fleet, coming 29th overall.

PYSC introduced Topper racing into the Phuket King's Cup in 2012 and the club sailors have since been enjoying racing the Topper in favor of the Optimist. They still race the Optimists occasionally, as it's the only junior class for racing in Thailand.

The Topper is a great transitional boat from the Optimist to the Laser, especially for smaller sailors. The introduction of the Topper 4.2 m2 sail allows younger and lighter sailors to enjoy the thrill of Topper sailing.

In the UK, the Topper is a recognized RYA/ISA junior development class and is part of the performance pathway that one day could lead to a place on the Olympic Team, which is mainly why the PYSC has chosen this boat for developing their sailors.

The International Topper is an ISAF recognized centerboard dinghy. Winners of these championships are recognized by ISAF as world champions. The International Topper World Championships have been run since 1982, biannually up to 2006 and annually after that.

The PYSC is looking to build up the Topper Class and encourage more children to take part in the sport of sailing.

– *Phuket Gazette*

## Thailand 'least miserable' economy, says Bloomberg

THAILAND has been named the least miserable country in the world, as per the 2016 'Misery Index' calculated by Bloomberg. A total of 74 countries were included in the survey.

The index was first introduced in 1980 by American economist Arthur Okun and is calculated by adding the inflation rate to the unemployment rate. Factors such as the strength of the job market and cost of living are also taken into account.

Thailand's unemployment rate at the end of June was reported to be one per cent, while its consumer price index rose 0.1 per cent year-on-year in July versus a 0.4 per cent increase in June. The country's overall Misery Index score was calculated as 1.11 per cent.



Locals enjoying at a food festival in Phuket Town. Photo: Gazette file

Singapore and Japan followed closely behind Thailand on the rankings, scoring 1.4 per cent and 2.7 per cent respectively. Other major economies scored lower with the UK making it to the top 20 at number 17, the US closely missing the

list at number 21 and China following not far behind in 23rd place.

On the other end of the spectrum, Venezuela was named the 'most miserable' economy, with an index of 188.2 per cent, – *The Nation*

## Phuket City hosts ancient Chinese 'Por Tor' festival



Mayor Somjai participates in the Por Tor festival. Photo: Gazette file

PHUKET is hosting the Por Tor festival this month, a tradition that has been passed down for many generations.

"Chinese people believe that worshipping their ancestors will bring them luck, as well as longer and healthier lives," said Phuket City Mayor Somjai Suwansupana.

The festival includes a variety of cultural displays and activities for residents and tour-

ists to enjoy.

Ceremonies, activities and parades are being held at several locations in Phuket, including the Thai Hua Museum on Krabi Road, Joor Shu Kong Shrine at Surin Circle, Joor Oong at Talad Nue and the Kiew Leng Ong Shrine on Takua Pa Road.

Festivities will be ongoing until August 23.

– *Sukawin Tanthavanich*



# Reckless gamers may face arrest



Gamers caught playing while driving may face arrest. Photo: The Nation

PHUKET'S top cop has warned islanders to play Pokemon Go with caution. Phuket Provincial Police Commander Teeraphol Thipja-roen expressed his concerns earlier this month, addressing both players and the game developer.

"The game is played by connecting your smartphone with real time Google maps.

As it can be played in both private and public places, there are chances that they may trespass on other people's property. This is a serious matter and could lead to arrest," said Gen Teeraphol.

Police nationwide are also taking strong action against drivers who play the game on their cellphones.

Deputy Metropolitan Police Commissioner Adul Narongsak issued an order last week for traffic officers to enforce the law strictly and arrest drivers using cellphones while they're behind

the wheel.

"By driving around and playing Pokemon Go on their cellphones, many people may engage in behaviour that threatens the safety of road users and is violating the Land Transportation Act," Gen Adul said.

The general ordered traffic police to report all arrests of offending drivers on a daily basis.

Gen Teeraphol added that he has urged police officers to pay attention to the game and understand it, in order to be aware of what could potentially happen.

"Parents and guardians must supervise their children and make sure that they do not play recklessly," he noted.

"The company must be responsible as well. They must think about where to place Pokemons and make safety their primary concern."

- **Chutharat Plerin**  
Additional reporting by The Nation.

# Israeli ambassador thanks governor for M'bala ban



Amb Roded met with Governor Chamroen at Phuket Provincial Hall. Photo: Phuket PR

ISRAELI Ambassador Simon Roded met with Phuket Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada at Phuket Provincial Hall on August 17, where one of his agendas was to thank the governor for not allowing a controversial French comedian to take the stage in January this year.

A performance by controversial comedian and hate-speech convict Dieudonne M'bala M'bala was scheduled to take place at Illuzion night club in Phuket, but was cancelled after the venue pulled the plug less than 24 hours ahead of the Frenchman taking the stage.

"Amb Roded thanked us for keeping Mr M'bala M'bala from performing, because his speech could affect Israel's internal se-

curity," Governor Chamroen said after the meeting.

Illuzion legal representatives said at the time that one of the owners of Illuzion was contacted the evening before the show by Gov Chamroen, who asked them to cancel the show due to the unknown content of Mr M'bala M'bala's speech, which could have disappointed and hurt the Jewish community.

Another topic of discussion at the table was maintaining and promoting tourism coordination.

"Amb Roded requested tourism coordination between Israeli and Phuket officials, adding that Phuket is one of the preferred destinations of Israeli tourists, with at least 1.5 mil-

lion tourists from Israel visiting the island every year."

Another suggestion by Amb Roded was about wastewater management.

"He suggested the idea because Israel has expertise in wastewater treatment technology," said Gov Chamroen.

"He also had some helpful suggestions about the smart city project."

Governor Chamroen affirmed to Amb Roded that Phuket sees public safety as its first priority, especially where tourists are concerned.

He also reassured the ambassador that officials are closely monitoring the island to ensure that peace and order are maintained.

- **Chutharat Plerin**

# Authorities join private sector to rebuild tourism

THE government and private sector are taking steps to rebuild the tourism business lost in the wake of last week's bomb and arson attacks at major tourist centers, including Phuket.

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) predicted that the country may lose 100,000 to 200,000 foreign tourists following the blasts, which would mean a loss of 5-10 billion baht in tourism income this year.

Kobkarn Wattanavangkul, Minister of Tourism and Sports, said on Aug 16 that tourism authorities were planning various events to restore tourist numbers. Some of these include a campaign called 'Expat for Fun'

and Hua Hin Festival of food and jazz music, both to be held in September.

Three tourism business meetings are also scheduled to take place in Hua Hin on August 21, 27 and 28, as well as a special event in October to boost the domestic market in the last quarter.

The ministry is encouraging tourists to visit Thailand in the coming high season, especially during China's Golden Week in October. The agency is also working with creators of the hit virtual reality game Pokemon Go to add more Pokestops and Gyms in the affected areas.

- **The Nation**

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# Local sailing clubs produce world champions



IN SAILING circles, attention is more often than not focused on the big international sailing events full of professionals: the America's Cup, Volvo Ocean Race, World Match Racing Tour etc. Locally though, and in the region, the focus is on the keelboat and multihull sailing events.

As I write this, my 30th column (yep, hard to believe!), the Olympics is in full swing and it's time to look at the 'amateur' sailors, or more importantly – dinghy sailors. More about that in a moment.

The Phuket King's Cup Regatta – also the 30th annual meet – recently held the first event of the 2016 Phuket Dinghy Series, which was established a few years back by members of the organizing committee, who were keen to see dinghy sailing make a return to the regatta. The series has grown to become a training ground for young sailors in southern Thailand, including Phang Nga, Surat Thani and Songkhla.

Racing in Optimist and Laser classes, it was Phuket sailor Yada Hasap who won the Optimist class in the first of the three-event series. Tanakorn Kaewluan of the Songkhla Sailing Club won the Laser class.

Elsewhere, local sailors were making their mark at the 2016



Kamolwan 'Bam' Chanyim, competing for the first time in the Olympics. Photo: Sailing Energy / World Sailing

Topper World Championships at Ballyholme in Northern Ireland. Katy Gooch took a team of three Thai sailors to the championship with strong local funding support to give these youngsters a shot at the big time. It was the first time overseas for some of the youngsters and likely the coldest place they had ever been. Imagine sailing in 14°C waters after training in Phuket's warm waters.

The youngsters overcame the culture and temperature shock admirably with Paton Mervielde finishing third in the Topper 4.2 World Championship and Max Yuangngam crowned the winner. Yes, you read that right. Thailand won Gold and Bronze at the Topper World Championships – Max

Yuangngam is the Topper 4.2 World Champion (see page 14).

To be a world champion is a fantastic achievement in any sport and in a sport that is still very much in its infancy in Thailand – with little nationwide infrastructure or central government support – it is a fantastic achievement indeed, and one that deserves more recognition.

Thailand, to my knowledge, has only ever produced one individual sailing world champion in the past. That was Noppakao Poonpat. At the tender age of 15, he won the 2010 World Optimist Championship.

I'm writing this on day four of the 2016 Olympic sailing competition. Sailing conditions so far have been tricky and bor-

derline insane. Representing Thailand are two youngsters in the Laser divisions: Keerati 'Top' Bualong in the Men's One Person Dinghy (Laser) and Kamolwan 'Bam' Chanyim in the Women's One Person Dinghy (Laser Radial).

There are four more races to go before the medal race so there is still plenty to play for. Nevertheless, that they have qualified for the Olympics is a significant achievement in itself.

Both are from the Sattahip schooling of youth sailing and have shown that the time and resources invested in them by the Yacht Racing Association of Thailand (YRAT) has not been wasted.

The YRAT has an impressive

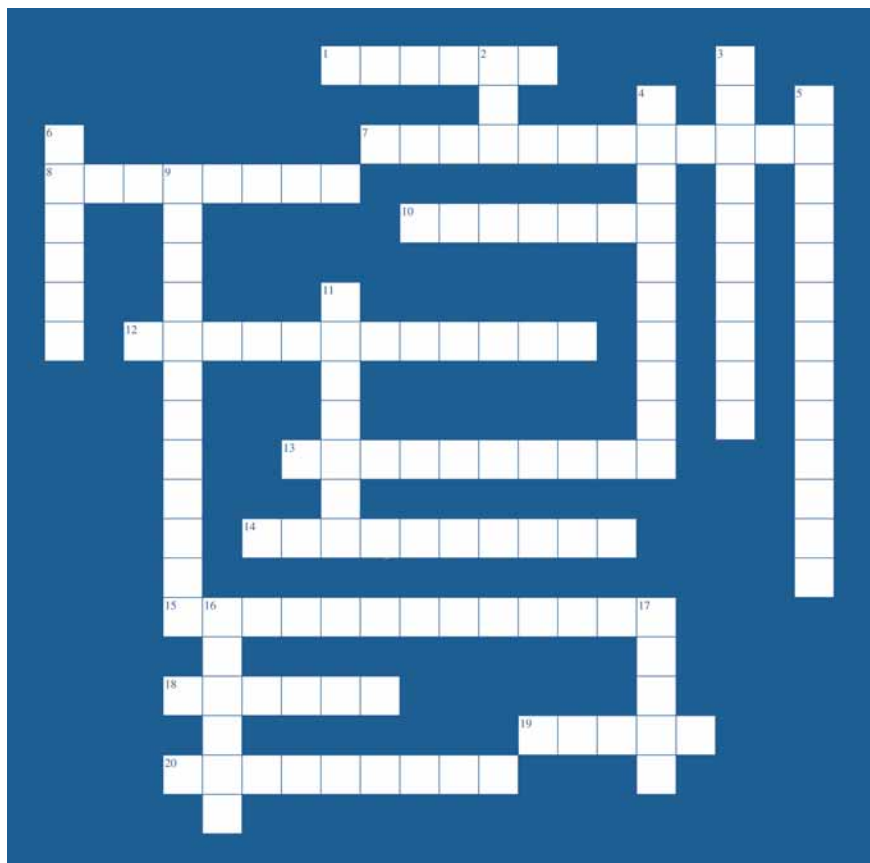
track record of success in Optimist sailing. It's the envy of most Asian nations but still more needs to be done beyond the Optimist class. A nationwide infrastructure for sailing is needed.

For a young sailor in Phuket, Phang Nga or Krabi, or anywhere outside Sattahip, opportunities to learn sailing – and to then sail competitively – are very limited. Among those dedicated individuals making a difference are Katy Gooch and Paul Firmin, who run the Phuket Youth Sailing Club, and Alfie Rowson and Liz Schoch, of the Phuket Yacht Club Sailing Club.

Elsewhere in the south of Thailand, the Samui Yacht Club and Koh Phangan Youth Sailing (Surat Thani) are running sailing programs with Optimists and double-handed 420 dinghies. And there is the Sailing Club Hua Hin. All of these clubs offer dinghy sailing for youngsters and each is privately run by people who are passionate about the sport.

More are needed to nurture youth sailing in Thailand as it's clear from recent results on the world stage that there is talent out there.

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



## Gazette Crossword

Test your word power and local knowledge.

### Across

- 01. Old fashioned (3,3)
- 07. Killed in battle by allies (8,4)
- 08. Game bird
- 10. Mother's Day flower
- 12. Before you can say \_\_\_\_ (4) \_\_\_\_ (8)
- 13. Pizza cheese
- 14. The gentle knight and his servant Sancho (3,7)
- 15. Assumes moral high ground
- 18. Reply to an order (3,3)
- 19. Sparkling attire
- 20. Daring, brave

### Down

- 02. Top card
- 03. Omnipresent
- 04. Region beyond the North Wind (Greek mythology)
- 05. Movie: Rival New York gang members fall in love (4,4,5)
- 06. Moon missions
- 09. At right angles to the centerline of a ship
- 11. Season
- 16. Shelter
- 17. Hit

Solution on opposite page.



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# Pollinators big and small



EARLY the other morning I watched a solitary oleander hawk moth, whizzing from one ruellia flower to another, hovering over each flower for five seconds at a time.

Not only are hawk moths one of the very few creatures which can hover, they also have a three-inch long proboscis, which, like a certain beer, can reach parts that other things cannot – in this case, the nectar inside the bloom. More importantly, each visit to the flower by the moth means pollen grains are distributed from the flower's male anther to the female stigma, thus fertilizing the future seeds.

The oleander (hummingbird hawk moth) can extract nectar from much tighter floral locations such as narrow buddleia or fire bush racemes, but this particular visitor to my garden concentrated entirely on ruellias. After all, it had seven hours to go. Ruellia blooms fall off at three o'clock in the afternoon. Hence its popular name. However, many insects recognize colors as well as smells, and this early bird must have realized that the nectar levels at dawn would be high.

Some insects are specialist pollinators: they are choosy about which plants to extract nectar from. When I had a passion flower vine against the back wall, carpenter bees used



The main pollinator is still the honey bee, despite declining global numbers thanks to pesticides and colony collapse syndrome. Photo: Pixa bay

to be common in the garden. They are one of the few insects capable of pollinating species of passiflora. That, plus the fact that they loved boring nest holes in my wooden trellis, accounted for their presence.

Of course the main pollinator is still the honey bee, despite declining global numbers thanks to pesticides and colony collapse syndrome. In California, the success of the almond crop – the world's largest – is dependent on the bee hives which are moved into the almond groves every year before the trees burst into blossom.

Insects are by no means the only fertilizing agents though.

Here in Thailand, those shocking pink dragon fruits are the result of visitations by bats. And nectar feeding birds are efficient vectors. In my garden there are two tiny species, sunbirds and slightly larger spider eaters, which flit daintily from bush to bush and thrust their slim beaks into the honeyed centers of flowers such as bell-shaped allamandas and chalice vines (solandras).

It took me a while to understand why the chalice vine trumpets – often fully six inches long – had been neatly pierced at the base. With blooms too long for the sunbirds to reach deep inside, they had resorted to the tactic of a

small lateral incision to reach the precious nectar.

In the New World, much pollination is done by birds, especially hummingbirds. Tiny creatures, they can hover motionless while deploying their long beaks and tongues in search of nectar. Ironically, the incidental, even accidental business of pollen grain dispersal is far more important than the acquisition of nectar. Not that the pollinators would know or care.

Nor are insects, birds and bats the only vectors. With aquatic plants, the process of fertilization is often accomplished without the involvement of other organisms. Pollen

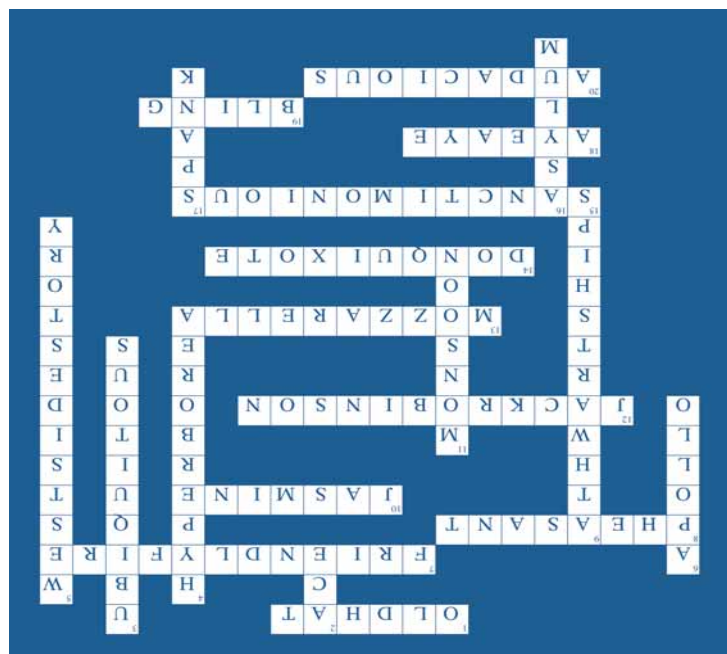
grains are dispersed directly into the surrounding water and sometimes end up on the stigma of another plant of the same species. With wind pollination, the grains sometimes travel considerable distances on the wind, rendering a successful outcome even more chancy.

Often random, accidental, even unseen, the whole process is nonetheless crucial to our survival.

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

## Crossword Solution

Turn the page upside down to read the answers.





# Sorting the wheat from the chaff



SOMETIMES the obvious is worth pointing out, because the obvious is very often overlooked or ignored. For example, driving safely reduces road accidents, injuries and deaths, so it is something worth repeating, over and over.

Similarly, if you are looking for information on property investment in Thailand, then look to proven experts with a track record of success as a key starting point. This is worth stating because within markets that are a hodgepodge of unregulated; unskilled re-invented consultants and advisers mixed in with qualified professional experienced advisers, making the waters as muddy as an algae-bloom infested canal leading to the beautiful and hopefully blue-ish sea.

In Phuket, the secret code for establishing knowledge can vary from culture to culture and from person to person, but there is one common code that applies to many:

1. How long have you lived in Phuket? (not applicable to native Phuketians)
2. How long have you conducted your business here?
3. How successful is your business? (which can be dressed up in a variety of questions such as how many employees/clients do you have)
4. Are you qualified?

Not so long ago failed to apply this test properly through



Potential investors want to know about positive and negative impacts on property values. Photo: Mark Moz

good due diligence when I selected a contractor to carry out some renovations on my property. I didn't investigate deeply enough or long enough and relied upon recommendation too heavily. This is not embarrassing. We all make mistakes and that is often how we learn.

Some of my clients have made mistakes over the years, and the best way to mitigate is to acknowledge and take remedial action as soon as you are able to, without making the mistake worse.

When you speak to agents or experts about the state of the property market in Phuket, look very closely for signs of truthfulness. Look for the provisos to the positive. Look for the description of the challenges and not just the positives. Look for

balance.

I also caution against overly negative comments; the kind which often pop up on Facebook and other forum-style environments. As many of my Thai friends will rightly say to the overly negative observers, if you don't like it that much then why are you still here?

If the location is described by an expert as 'perfect' and 'unique', what would the environment be compared to another jurisdiction for the same or even slightly higher price?

Is it really 'unique'?

Experts may describe the distance from the property to local amenities – 20 minutes to the airport, 15 minutes to an international school. Do they mean by helicopter or by car? "What about the well-docu-

mented and obvious traffic congestion and roadworks. How is that really affecting matters?

Experts may also mention the amazing architectural design of a property and talk about the amazing high tech appliances in the property. However, they may or may not mention that the property suffers severe wear and tear from exposure to the elements – the sea; salty air; monsoon downpours and the like.

Sometimes it seems that Bangkok is the only place where spare parts are stored, and where your appliance will rest until such time as multiple phone calls, emails and employed assistants have tried to secure the fixing and its return to Phuket.

When I talk to experts about property, I like to know what

they have personally invested in and their good and bad experiences. Do they walk the walk?

I would like to know the downsides too – not to put me off investing but to ensure my expectations are duly managed and realistic.

With a relatively flat property market in Phuket compared to the pre-global economic crisis boom times, an over focus by experts on the positive isn't going to be received with gullible acceptance by wary but still interested potential investors.

They want to know how Phuket's rapid development is affecting property both positively and negatively. Will the construction in certain areas ever end? Will a 7-Eleven be opened meters from my front door? Will the airport ever be complete and when will it need to be expanded again?

Experts won't know all the answers but they will have worked in the Phuket property market long enough to provide well-informed opinions supported by research, analysis and experience plus a healthy dose of practical common sense housed in a mini-shell of sincere humility; that they don't know everything about everything.

Good luck house hunting, and good luck expert hunting.

*Desmond Hughes has been an owner and operator of his law firm in Thailand for 14 years, and is a senior partner at Hughes Krupica law firm [www.hugheskrupica.com](http://www.hugheskrupica.com)*



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# Protect your property against mold

## Property Inspector

By Mark K. Dietrich

PHUKET seems to be the mold capital of the world. We all battle the mold. It surrounds us 24 hours a day in the form of spores in the air and those that have settled onto every surface inside a home.

These spores are similar to plant seeds. Think of them as time bombs waiting to go off. In almost all instances they already have two of three of the necessary ingredients to grow and thrive. The temperature inside most homes is almost always sufficient to support mold growth. The surfaces that the mold spores rest upon are usually a source of food for them. Mold will thrive on dry-wall paper, wood, some paints, fabrics, dust and so on. Soaps and other body-care products that often create a film inside tubs and showers are a smorgasbord for mold.

Mold can easily grow inside a cold refrigerator. Certain molds thrive on the natural oils found in some deck sealers. That is why it's best to use synthetic resin deck sealers that do not support mold growth. You name it, a mold will eat it. Did you know that trees and bushes produce a fine mist of sugar spray at certain times of the year? Outdoor molds thrive on this food. This is one reason your deck, patio or other outdoor furniture gets covered with mold.



The temperature inside most homes in Phuket, in addition to surfaces that stay wet for extended periods of time is sufficient enough to support mold growth, be it on wood, paint, drywall paper or fabrics. Photo: Kebabknight

Water is the third ingredient that triggers the mold spore time bombs. Surfaces that become wet from plumbing leaks, roof leaks, condensation and pet urine can sprout mold growth in a few days. If the surfaces stay wet for extended periods of time, the mold can grow at an astounding rate.

Relative humidity levels of 50 per cent or more can supply enough moisture in the air that condensation can occur at temperatures close to the actual surface temperature of the object. Common molds can cause health problems. Forget about stopping mold spores from get-

ting into your home. It is virtually impossible.

The key to stopping or halting mold is to cut off its supply of water. Vent dryers outdoors. Install high-quality fans that remove water vapor from baths and kitchens. Make sure all fans are vented to the outside. Many homes I inspect have no fan or windows that open in the bathroom or shower area. The few that have fans vent them into the attic space. Keep the shower door or curtain open when not taking a shower. Get as much water down the drain as soon as possible. Do whatever is

possible to keep bathrooms dry.

In Phuket it's important to have good ventilation in the shower and rest of the bathroom. Fix plumbing and roof leaks immediately. You can stop your mold growth by lowering the relative humidity in your home by running the air conditioner, keeping fans going or making sure your new home has plenty of air flow.

Cleaning mold is fairly simple. A solution of 4 parts water and 1 part chlorine bleach can be used to remove mold from tiles, concrete, grout and other surfaces that

are not harmed by the harsh chlorine.

Fabrics, painted walls, wood and clothing can be cleaned using non-toxic oxygen bleach.

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

## Underpass delayed again



The company has delayed completion several times. Photo: Gazette file

THE completion of the Samkong Underpass construction has been delayed yet again, until the end of August, and this time the rain gets the blame.

The project was last postponed from July 31 to mid-August as confirmed by representatives at the Highways Department.

"The rain has made the process quite slow," said Chalernpol Wongkiattikun, the

project engineer from the Department of Highways. "The underpass is about 90 per cent complete and we expect the entire project to be completed by the month's end."

Nevertheless, the construction company handling the project, Wiwat Construction Co Ltd, is still being fined 2 million baht per day since January 22.

— Kongleaphy Keam

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Notification of sale. The company known as Canvas Creations Co Ltd, trading at Phuket Boat Lagoon, ID number 08355 43002257, will be transferred to new owners on 1st September 2016. All creditors of the company are hereby notified to render in their demands to the undersigned prior to the transfer date, and all persons indebted to the company are required to make immediate payment. Any claim submitted after the notice date will not be accepted by the new owners. Muzza Nordstrand, Managing Director. Tel: 081-370 1600. Email: canvasphuket@gmail.com

### BEACHFRONT POOL VILLA FOR SALE / RENT



Chalong. 1 rai. 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms. For more information, please call 089-649 9939. Email: siri\_phuket@changrunner.com

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1-3 bedroom. Quiet area. Fully furnished. Tel: 081-892 4311. <http://palaigreen.weebly.com>

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Head Office: 26/32, Moo 5, T.Rawai, Phuket  
Email: [nina.neale@internationalvillasphuket.com](mailto:nina.neale@internationalvillasphuket.com)

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Home schooling, native English, female, Monday-Friday, 9.00-2.30pm. 3 children, 7-9 years old. Salary 40,000 baht. Tel: 081-343 0777. Email: [montha\\_phuket@yahoo.com](mailto:montha_phuket@yahoo.com)

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We are looking for real estate agent/property consultant with good English to join our real estate company (Chinese national only). Tel: 093-575 5566. Please send your resume to [tati@thehouseproject.info](mailto:tati@thehouseproject.info)

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**Marketing Coordinator Wanted**  
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- At least 5 years experiences in Manager level in retails business
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Please send the resume to [assisthrmgrphuket@wineconnection.com](mailto:assisthrmgrphuket@wineconnection.com)  
Or call 081-895 3314 for further information



The Phuket Gazette seeks to fill the following position:

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- ▶ Freehand drawing and web-design skills a plus
- ▶ Responsible, hard-working, attention to detail
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- ▶ Good communication skills, team player
- ▶ Thai-English speaker

Qualified candidates are invited to send a CV to Khun Anna (General Manager), by email, fax or post to:

The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd  
79/94 Moo 4, Thepkrasattri Rd, T. Koh Keaw, A. Muang Phuket 83000  
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Made to order. Size: 5m length, 20-25kg weight. Tel: 081-566 5155 (Thai), 081-597 3377 (English).

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# Helping travellers in distress

By Sahar Aftab Paliwala

WALTER Brown, or 'Wal' as he is popularly known, is the founder and coordinator of the Region 8 Police Volunteers.

Originally from Australia, Wal has been in Thailand for about 10 years now. He had already been retired for 15 years before he arrived here. Living on a 40ft motor cruiser in the tropics of north Queensland, Thailand was nowhere on the horizon for Wal.

All that changed when a friend asked him if he would be interested in participating in The Kings Cup Regatta. He came here for the race, and then several times afterward before deciding to settle down here.

"I am a mechanic by trade and was working as a director at a technical college group in New South Wales. After I moved here, I was approached by a volunteer working with immigration who asked if I would like to assist them. That's how this all started, with a bit of training about filling forms and so on. I started spending two days at the

Phuket Immigration Office and three nights patrolling the streets of Patong," says Wal.

He did this for several years before the then-superintendent at the Phuket Immigration Office discussed with him his concerns about supervision of the team working in Patong. After a bit of planning, a volunteer police group was proposed in 2009, which was to work under the supervision of the superintendent. It didn't start for another 10 months, however.

"Why we [eventually] started the group is lost in what we do now. We have been asked to assist in most police stations, hospitals, jails and courts in Phuket. We also have one of our group working with rescue foundations. By word of mouth, we were made aware of many concerns of tourists and expats with personal issues, and we have identified this as an important area to work on," says Wal.

In 2010, Wal and some of his colleagues started a formal volunteer program in Patong. The group started with seven people, but over the years, the number

has expanded to about 30. The group does not have a traditional office and has been working out of Wal's restaurant in Patong for the past six years.

The requirements to be a volunteer with the group is to be over 21 years of age, from another country, have a valid passport and a long term visa, a good command of English and a good understanding of Thai culture, says Wal. Participants must also be able to fund themselves with a uniform and equipment and be able to work at least one night per week, in addition to attending the occasional meeting.

"Our aim is to assist tourists in need and take their case to the next level, be it the consulate or embassy of their country, or to get them in touch with a family member or friend," says Wal.

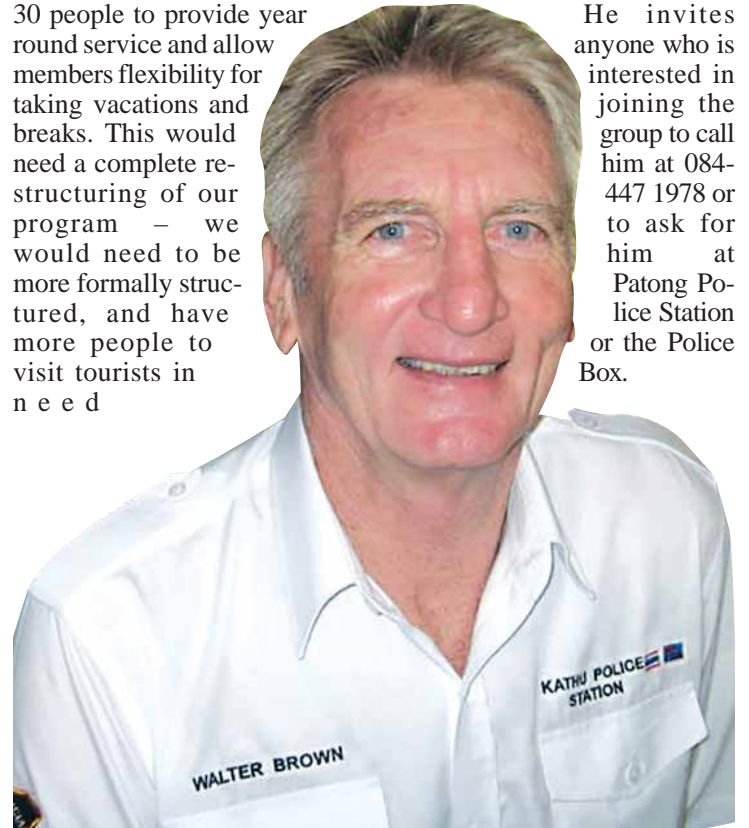
"We have meetings where we can discuss our concerns, especially the feedback from visitors and tourists. This forum is important as it allows us to get to the core of the problems and figure out who is responsible for fixing a particular problem."

The group's biggest problem, Wal says, is recruiting and retaining volunteers. Once this happens, he plans to take on a more unofficial role as trainer.

"We possibly need another 30 people to provide year round service and allow members flexibility for taking vacations and breaks. This would need a complete restructuring of our program - we would need to be more formally structured, and have more people to visit tourists in need

across the island," he says. Supervising 30 people from 12 different countries, all between the ages of 23 to 76, is a challenge, but a rewarding one, say Wal.

He invites anyone who is interested in joining the group to call him at 084-447 1978 or to ask for him at Patong Police Station or the Police Box.



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