

Phuket Gazette

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'SOME PEOPLE AREN'T EVEN PAYING ATTENTION ON THE ROADS'

Motor madness

Regulators back national initiative for more stringent driving standards

By Chutharat Plerin

THAILAND has the second worst death toll from road accidents in the world, according to the World Health Organization.

With more than 20,000 people killed annually throughout the country, Phuket officials have announced their support for more stringent guidelines before issuing would-be motorists with a driver's license.

Earlier this month, the Department of Land Transport (DLT) announced the initiative, titled "Difficult to Get, Easy to Lose," at a meeting of the national road safety committee chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Prawit Wongsuwan.

The program is meant to amend laws related to traffic rules in order to improve road safety throughout the Kingdom.

The initiative comes after Thailand joined the United Nations' 'Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020' campaign, which aims to halve road accidents and fatalities within 10 years.

Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO) chief Sommai Sudkhao told the Gazette this week that he has yet to receive any official orders regarding the initiative. Despite that, Mr Sommai said he's already in complete agreement with the plan.

"At this stage, there is no further information on the program," he said. "The training and testing requirements proposed for people who apply for their driver's licenses within the next two years are currently being examined by the DLT."

"Before it is officially put into place nationwide, the plan must be approved by the Ministry of Transport," Mr Sommai



A crashed vehicle is suspended against the jungle by an electrical pole. Thailand's 30 million motorists drive on the second most deadly roads in the world. Photo: Gazette file

added.

Mr Sommai confirmed a report by *The Nation* that the new regulations would set a higher bar for driver ability, as well as increase the number of lecture hours for would-be motorists before they are issued a license.

Currently, regulations require recipients of a driver's license to attend four hours of lecture. Next year and in 2018, that will increase to five lecture hours. Students are currently not required to practice driving before receiving their license, but in the next two years nine hours of driving practice will be made mandatory.

"Getting a driving license is very hard in many other countries," Mr Sommai said. "In Thailand, it's been very easy to get one

for a while, so some people aren't even really paying attention on the roads. The new program is a great idea, and so far feedback has been very positive. The longer they're trained, the better their understanding of traffic laws."

But Dr Wiwat Seetamanotch, the deputy chair of Thai Road Safety Network (RSN) and an executive adviser to the National Institute of Emergency Medicine, said he doesn't think the plan of adding training and driving practice hours is enough, particularly when compared to other countries.

"It could help to a certain point, but it's still not enough," Dr Wiwat said.

Continued on Page 4

Muslim cleric assassination conspirators apprehended

Authorities have arrested three men they believe to be a part of a guns-for-hire gang responsible for the shooting of a Phuket Muslim cleric.

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Narathiwat cashes in on fruitful bounty with provincial promotion.

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Robotic butlers and smart homes are reshaping 21st century living.

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LOCAL NEWS

Briefly

Blood Centers need type AB

THE Phuket Regional Blood Center (PRBC) is holding blood donation sessions in Phuket throughout September to replenish blood stocks, especially AB blood types.

Under the banner 'Give Blood to Fellowmen', the September blood donation drive is in honor of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's 84th birthday anniversary and His Majesty the King's 70th anniversary of his accession to the throne.

PRBC chief Pornthip Rattajak said donations of AB blood types are urgently needed to bolster stocks in case blood is required for emergencies in Phuket and other neighboring provinces.

Volunteers may donate on September 13, at the Toyota Pearl on the bypass road, from 10am to 4pm; on September 15, at the Peace Group (Peace Blossom Room) in Phuket Town, from 1pm to 4pm; on September 16, at the Katathani Phuket Beach Resort, from 9am to 3pm; and on September 17 at Phuket Rajabhat University, from 9am to 3pm.

– *Sukawin Tanthavanich*

Phuket Town fire guts house

IT TOOK five fire trucks about 40 minutes to extinguish a second-storey blaze in Phuket Town on September 4.

Emergency services received a report of the house fire at 9:20am at number 44/2 on Patiphat Road.

The second floor bedroom and prayer room in the two-storey house were ablaze when firefighters arrived, police reported.

The fire gutted the building. Investigators estimate the blaze caused about 300,000 baht worth of damage.

Police believe the fire was caused by a short circuit.

The house was not occupied at the time and no injuries or deaths were reported. According to the homeowner, no one else was left in the house after she and her son had left that morning for breakfast.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

Patong drills for bombing



Explosive Ordinance Disposal personnel rehearse responding to a mysterious package in Patong. The Provincial Electricity Authority (PEA) simulated the bomb incident on August 31. Fire fighters and medical personnel, along with police and the bomb disposal squad, evacuated crisis actors on stretchers for the annual drill as part of the PEA's Incident Management Plan. PEA executives from Phuket, Surat Thani, Nakhon Sri Thammarat, Krabi, Trang and Phang Nga observed the drill. Photo: PEA Patong

Social media again takes city officials to task

A PHUKET woman turned to social media for help after her complaints about an injury from a hanging wire allegedly went unheeded.

Facebook user Fern A Romdee shared her complaints on a public Facebook group on August 31. She said the incident occurred as she was driving past Supercheap at Naka market.

Ms Fern was reportedly riding her motorbike when she ran into a low-hanging wire, causing her to crash.

She said she called the Phuket City Municipality the next day to get further information about her case, but received no update.

Ms Fern's post was shared by several social media users and caught the attention of the national media as well.

Her latest post states that when she called the municipality again on September 2, officials responded within 10 minutes and assured her that the wire would be taken care of.

"Thank you for all the comments and messages of support that I have received," Ms Fern said in her post.

– *Chutharat Plerin*

Last power lines buried in Phuket Old Town

THE Provincial Electricity Authority (PEA) announced that it had finally completed a three-phase project to bury electric cables in the center of Phuket Town on September 3.

The beautifying of Phuket Old Town by burying power cables began in 2010 along touristic Thalang Road in the town center.

The second phase saw the removal of overhead cables along parts of Dibuk Road, Krabi Road and Phuket Road in 2012.

The third and final phase of the project began in 2014 with a 32 million baht budget to remove electrical poles and overhead wires along Phang Nga Road, Yaowarat Road and more of Dibuk Road by the end of 2015.

"We apologize for the delay and any inconvenience caused during the removal process, but now we are pleased to announce that the charm of the old town has been restored," said Boontham Charoenpong, deputy manager of the PEA's Phuket Office.

– *Sukawin Tanthavanich*

SUV running red-light kills motorcyclist

A MOTORCYCLIST was killed in Chalong on September 3 when a Honda CRV driver ran a red light and crashed into him.

CCTV footage from Chalong Municipality shows the CRV colliding with the motorbike at the T-junction in front of Baan Chalong School on Cha Fa West Road.

The rider, Wattana Enkbuth, was thrown off and his head hit the ground. He died instantly.

A crash helmet was found at the scene. The CCTV footage revealed that Mr Wattana was not wearing the helmet at the time of the crash. It was in the motorcycle's basket.

The CRV driver, whose name is being withheld by the police, was criticized for 'trying to escape' and 'not helping the victim'. However, Chalong Police Lt Chanat Hongstitti-chaikul clarified that the driver surrendered to police on the spot.

"He was charged with reckless driving causing death, property damage and disobeying a traffic light," he added.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

3 foreign tour guides arrested

THREE foreign nationals were arrested for working illegally as tour guides in Phuket on the morning of August 31.

The arrests were made by a team of provincial officials on the lookout for illegal workers at the Asia Marina in Rassada.

"The team spotted the three men working as guides for Chinese tourists at about 10am," said Phuket Vice Governor Prajiad Aksornthammakul.

The suspects were named as A Liang, 30, and A Ming, 31, both Myanmar nationals. The third, Sornthong Sae-Lee, is from a hill tribe in northern Thailand.

"The three were escorting the tourists and bought them ferry tickets, so the officers approached them and asked to see their work permits but none of them could provide one," said the vice governor.

All three were charged for working illegally as tour guides, a protected 'profession' reserved for Thais only. The trio were then handed over to Phuket City Police for further processing.

– *Chutharat Plerin*

Bus trapped as sinkhole opens up underneath

THE back of a bus was swallowed by a sinkhole that opened up beneath it in Thalang district on September 3 after several hours of torrential rain.

Baan Kluay Road in Srisoonthon sub district was closed off until the bus could be removed and the hole in the road filled in.

Srisoonthon's mayor, Worrawut Songyot, said the municipality had to find a construction company to fix the road.

"Heavy rain had washed away the soil underneath the road. We closed off the road and installed a sign and flashing lights to let motorists know about the danger," said Mr Worrawut.

In August 2009, then Patong Mayor Pian Keesin was himself the victim of a similar sinkhole that opened up and swallowed the rear end of his car as he was travelling along Phra Baramee Road.

– *Gazette reporters*

Suspect in Imam assassination attempt surrenders to police

THREE men, allegedly involved in a targeted assassination attempt against a Muslim cleric in Phuket last month, are in police custody after two were injured in the attack and the third surrendered to police on the morning of September 6.

Police said they believe the three men are involved in a 'network' that includes at least one other conspirator that targeted an Imam in Koh Kaew.

The cleric, Weerachat Kahapana, and his son left their house to attend evening prayers at the Bang Pae mosque.

Then two men on a motorbike pulled up and shot into his car, wounding him. Mr Weerachat then reportedly chased down and hit the fleeing men with his car.

The pair of assailants managed to flee on foot after the crash, while Mr Weerachat and his son were both taken to the hospital.

The 49-year-old Imam received one bullet wound in his rib-cage. His 3-year-old son escaped the shooting unscathed.

It was also reported that the attackers later stole a motorbike to get away from the scene, after fleeing the crash on foot.

Two suspects, Thanachai Choothong, 24, and Wisuth Yokyong, 23, were apprehended after the shooting, and

have been in police custody since the incident on August 4.

"We interrogated Mr Thanachai and Mr Wisuth for several days in order to find out who hired them to shoot Mr Weerachat," said Col Sermphan Sirikong, deputy commander of the Phuket Provincial Police.

After interrogating the assailants, warrants were issued for two men, named as Lamom Ratderm and Nattaphat Songna.

Mr Lamom surrendered to police on the morning of September 6 at about 10:30. Police are still searching for Mr Nattaphat.

Both are being charged with hiring others to perform an illegal act, attempted murder and for involvement in a murder attempt.

Mr Weerachat is the Imam for the Bang Pae mosque and also the vice president of the Phuket Islamic Committee.

"I saw the men when I left my house that day and they looked suspicious," Mr Weerachat told the *Gazette* from his hospital bed.

"I had received a threat once before at my house. They clearly want to kill me, so I would like to cooperate with the police to help arrest everyone involved – especially the leader of this network."

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*



The 49-year-old Imam chased down his attackers in his car and ran over their motorbike. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong



Mr Weerachat recovered from an abdominal gunshot wound. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

Patong gets more CCTV

TEN additional CCTV cameras will be installed along Bangla Road, Patong police announced on September 8.

The cameras are to be installed as part of a public-private sector partnership, Patong Police Col Chaiwat Auikam said.

Managing Director of the Pisona Group and member of a well-known Thai family in Patong, Preechawut 'Prab' Keesin said the project received support from a representative of Thai-Bev and Patong entrepreneurs.

"Ten cameras are to be installed at a cost of 1 million baht. Each camera has a 300-meter zoom and 360 degree panorama capability. They will help promote safety in Patong," said Mr Preechawut.

Mr Preechawut said that the current plan would allow multiple businesses to connect their cameras to a password-protected public safety network.

Col Chaiwat said that the ultimate goal is to wrap all of Phuket under the blanket surveillance of 1,000 CCTV cameras.

The project falls under the government's 'Panta Pracha Ruamjai' campaign, which aims to promote island security by fostering public-private partnerships. The campaign, which translates to '1,000 eyed community,' is aimed at installing CCTV cameras throughout the province.

"These cameras will help us track down criminals and promote Patong as a safe tourist destination," Col Chaiwat said.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

Volunteer diver mutilated

THE driver of a speedboat who ran over a volunteer diver picking up trash on August 31 surrendered to Koh Yao Police a week later.

Manop Kertsap, a driver for Happy Boat Co, turned himself in on September 7.

The diver, a fourth year student at Phuket's Rajabhat University, is continuing to undergo treatment at Vachira Phuket Hospital after having her right thumb amputated.

Thirty-one year-old Patcharin Phetlorian was diving with fellow volunteers from the Phang Nga Provincial Natural Resource and Environmental Office (NREO) when the boat, presumed to be shuttling tourists between is-

lands, ran over her.

Noppadon Ingwatcharakul of the Phang Nga NREO filed an incident report with the Koh Yao Police in Phang Nga immediately after the accident.

Ms Patcharin sustained injuries along the right side of her body, including lacerations to her shoulder, wrist and leg.

Mr Noppadon confirmed that Ms Patcharin is currently in a stable condition, but continues to undergo operations.

The accident occurred while Ms Patcharin was collecting trash in the sea near Kai Nok Island at about 2pm.

Ms Patcharin's elder sister, who asked not to be named,

said that Ms Patcharin was in a state of shock and grief after the incident.

"We are so sad for her and fear she'll feel depressed after the accident," she said. "So far, we have not seen any department really act on this case. Nobody has really taken responsibility for what's happened to my sister."

Before Mr Manop came forward Ms Patcharin's sister expressed frustration at what she saw as a lack of initiative from law enforcement officials.

"I would like to see police and officials hurry up their investigation and find out who did this. Justice must be served," she added.

– *Winai Sarot*



Illegal fishing hauls confiscated

OFFICIALS from the Department of Fisheries removed about 2,700 tonnes of frozen tuna from two fishing vessels that were detained under suspicion of illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing seven months ago.

The fish will be transferred from Phuket's Deep Sea Port, where the vessels are located, to cold storage at the Fish Marketing Organization in Rassada.

The transfer was approved on September 2 at the request of the vessels' owner, who claimed that the company has spent more than 11 million baht on maintenance since the ships were seized.

The two vessels were named as Mook Andaman 018 and Mook Andaman 028. They arrived at Phuket Deep Sea Port on January 30 after tuna fishing in the Indian Ocean.

A week earlier, before seizing the boats, Phuket officials arrested 37-year-old Than-



Authorities unload confiscated tuna at the Phuket Deep Sea Port. The fishing hauls will be held until the trial is concluded. Photo: Winai Sarot

ongsak Raksawong, who was in charge of the two boats, after the Crime Suppression Division alerted Marine Police of his involvement with the vessels.

Mook Andaman 018 was crewed by a total of 28 people from China, the Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam. The captain was named as Huang De Tian.

Mook Andaman 028 was crewed by a total of 27 from

China, the Philippines, Indonesia, Myanmar, Vanuatu and Vietnam. The captain was named as Zhou Feng.

Yosathon Chaleewan of the Phuket Muang District's Fisheries Office confirmed that it would take a few days to remove all the fish, which will then be taken care of by the Department of Fisheries until the trial is concluded.

– Winai Sarot

Road rules

From page 1

“Even though more hours will be added, we need a lot more rules to change if we really want to make Thailand's roads safe.”

“Other countries use a Graduated Driving Licensing System (GDLS); during the first year of driving, drivers must have somebody capable sitting besides them at all times, and are only allowed to drive during the day,” Dr Wiwat said. “This is something I expected Thailand to implement. Learners do not have enough experience on the roads, and could easily get into an accident.”

The DLT plans to make it compulsory for people applying for a driver's license to take driving lessons at private schools beginning in 2018. The department said it would then step back, taking only a regulatory role. Applicants would be required to attend lectures and practice driving at the schools, he said.

“In Phuket we have one school already in our system and another one is now in the process of applying to be a driver's education training and testing school,” said Mr Sommai of the PLTO.

“All the private schools will be qualified by the DLT, which will make sure they follow all of the standard requirements. However, until further notice, we will continue with the regular process we have.”

Dr Wiwat said he agreed with the DLT's plans for opening the private academies.

“It will ease the workload for officials and it'll be good to have private schools be involved because it'll save a lot of time, but the DLT must be the ones to certify instructors and check their qualifications. Most importantly, the academies must make sure that the drivers really pass the test by themselves and are not able to just bribe their way through the test,” said Dr Wiwat.

The “Difficult to Get, Easy to Lose” program will also usher in an increase in the number of exam questions and require applicants to correctly answer at least 90 per cent of them to pass the test. The program also marks the first time attending a driving academy would be required.

Besides raising the benchmark for the issuance of new

licenses, the DLT is considering implementing regulations that would make it easier for current drivers to lose their licenses, including one amendment that would allow the authorities to revoke any driver's license if they are deemed too risky to continue to use the Kingdom's roads.

The program would also launch a centralized database, containing the records of every infraction committed by individual drivers, as well as their identification information.

Mr Sommai said one of the biggest concerns for regulators in Phuket are the lengthy waiting times applicants must endure before taking their driver's license tests.

“I have ordered officials at the PLTO to make sure applications get processed more quickly,” Mr Sommai said. “For example, if an applicant submits the required documents one day, they should begin knocking off their training hours the next day and take the driving test as soon as possible.”

“Applicants cannot be waiting for months to get their training or conduct their driving test like it has been in the past,” he added.

Currently, applicants must receive a physical check-up, are required to attend a four-hour lecture and must then take an exam at the DLT's offices. Once they pass the theory and driving test, they qualify for a driver's license.

“There are a lot of new applicants every day,” Mr Sommai said. “We are doing our best to get to everyone as quickly as possible, and I like the idea of adding more hours and driving classes because the applicants will soon realize that it's not easy to get the license, but it's easy for them to lose it if they are not a good driver.”

DLT deputy director-general Nantapong Churdchoo said the DLT will push for a legal change to make sure that bad drivers can have their licenses revoked easily.

“Today, 30 million people hold a Thai driving license,” Mr Nantapong said. “Four-thousand people apply for a new license every day. These changes would make the system more efficient.”

“The current system is not linked between agencies, including the police,” Mr Nantapong added.

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Tranlee Co's assets auctioned off

MORE than 150 assets of the embattled Tranlee Travel Co were up for auction between September 6 and 9.

The assets – 33 boats, 57 buses, parcels of land and millions of baht – were seized after investigators declared that the Phuket-based tour operator had been established illegally back in June.

Investigators seized buses, boats, land and millions of baht after delving deeper into the operations of Phuket-based tour operator.

Three teams of police simultaneously seized the assets in July. Police also raided Racha Spa Co Ltd, located in Phuket Villa 5 housing estate in Chalong. Police said at the time of the raid they believed the documents found there would reveal a papertrail of money being siphoned out of the country by the company.

There has been no word as to whether such a papertrail was found.

Tranlee Travel senior director and shareholder Kritchakorn Roongmongkolnam, reportedly a foreign national, was arrested in June on suspicion he had passed himself off as a Thai national, using counterfeit credentials to establish the company.

His partner, Weerachai Kampaiprapankul, reportedly



Tour companies, private owners and resort representatives bid on Tranlee assets from September 6 through the 9th. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

fled the country.

The auctions were organized by Phuket's Anti-Money Laundering Office (AMLO).

The auctions began at 10am at Phuket City Hall on September 6, with Tranlee's assets auctioned off during the week.

Bidders were required to register beginning at 9am on September 5 and were required by the AMLO to pay cash or

cheque deposits before bidding began.

"The AMLO takes no responsibility for the condition of the assets," warned Gen Chaiya in a statement before the bidding began. "It is up to each bidder to inspect the assets beforehand."

Several boats went under the hammer in City Hall's packed out meeting rooms this week,

with furious bidding pushing the price of the passenger vessel *Sumpaotong* up from an opening bid of 4 million baht to 12.9mn baht.

However, bidding for another similar vessel, the *Sumpaotong I*, was slightly less fervent with the opening price of 12mn million baht rising by only 100,000 baht when the gavel signalled the closing of

the bids.

Competition among buyers was also tense for some of the smaller vessels. Bidding for a vessel named *Insee Marine 8* opened at 900,000 baht and ended up fetching 2.7mn baht. Other similar sized boats sold for between one and three million baht

– Kritsada Mueanhawong and Chutharat Plerin

Police arrest first bombing suspect

POLICE confirmed on September 4 the arrest of a suspect linked to the wave of bombings in tourist towns last month that killed four people and left at least 30 wounded, including foreigners.

The August 11-12 bombing and arson attacks throughout the south of Thailand, including in Phuket, raised fears that a Muslim separatist insurgency, largely confined to three provinces in the deep-south, is spreading.

Police have issued three warrants in connection with the blasts, but the suspect detained on September 3, identified as Abdul Kadae, was the first to be arrested.

Police stated that Mr Abdul is undergoing interrogation. He can be held in military custody for up to seven days before he

is allowed access to a lawyer according to Thai law.

Police said Mr Abdul is from Pattani province and he has connections to separatists in the south.

Mr Abdul is suspected of committing arson in Trang Province as part of the August attacks.

Police in Krai discovered two devices, similar in design to the ones used in last month's bombings in Krabi Town last week.

Authorities believe that the devices, which consisted of wires connected to an electronic circuit board, were left to scare passersby and to test the emergency response capabilities of police.

Krabi police said they currently do not have any leads after examining CCTV footage.

– The Nation

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Train bombing derails hopes of peace

THAIS in the deep South continue to endure regular violent attacks, despite ongoing peace talks in Malaysia.

Trains operating in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat have been suspended for 10 days after another bomb blast on the railway line on September 3.

The State Railway of Thailand (SRT) ordered the temporary suspension of train services to the three southern-most provinces in the deep South on September 4, after a bomb exploded on a Pattani district train track.

Manop Muenpreecha, chief of Tanyongmas train station in Narathiwat, said his station alone would lose revenue of at least 30,000 baht a day due to the suspension of rail services. The loss of revenue for the entire region was not revealed.

Travelling by train is a regular mode of transport for residents here, he said, but parents would now have to rent cars to take their children to school.

Yala train station, which usually serves around 3,000 passengers a day, wore a deserted look the day after the bombing.

The bomb attack, which took place on the evening of September 3, killed one railway official and wounded three others.

The blast led to the derail-



The bomb detonated underneath a train car, killing one and injuring three others. Photo: The Nation

ment of the train and the rear carriage was severely damaged. The local train was leaving Sungai Kolok district in Narathiwat and heading for Hat Yai in Songkhla province when the explosion occurred.

Officials said the train had been targeted by insurgents, who have orchestrated violence throughout the region since early 2004. More than 6,500 people have been killed since then.

Nobody claimed responsibility for the attack, but Pattani provincial police chief Maj-

Gen Thanogsak Wangsupha said militants led by Seri Taemamu might be responsible for the attack.

Authorities had their names on a watchlist but the officer declined to give further details. He said officials were working on the case and would hunt for them.

The train attack happened just a day after peace talks in Kuala Lumpur between government representatives and separatist umbrella group Majlis Amanah Rakyat

(MARA) Pattani.

The talks in Malaysia made little progress as both sides agreed in principle on the terms of reference for the peace process but did not make any agreement in written form. This action has raised suspicion among observers on whether both sides really want to restore peace.

MARA Pattani, an umbrella group of long-standing Malay separatist organizations in the Muslim-majority southern border provinces, established

contact with the authorities last year to get a peace process started.

The military government under Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha was reluctant to recognize the role of the group and doubts if it really represents militants operating on the ground or has any capacity to control them.

Meanwhile, some analysts said MARA Pattani also did not want to negotiate with the military government, which is due to leave office after elections late next year, causing uncertainty with regards to the longevity of any agreement.

However, with the junta showing an intention to stay in power longer and the possibility of Prime Minister Prayut retaining power after the election, the MARA Pattani group had no choice but to maintain the momentum of the talks in Kuala Lumpur, an observer said.

Despite dispatching senior officer General Aksara Kerdphol to the talks, Prayut said his government would not accept any conditions set by the group to initiate talks unless peace was restored.

Another observer said the meeting in Malaysia at the end of August yielded only one thing – that both sides would continue their contact.

– *The Nation*

Tourist paralyzed after fleeing possible sexual assault

AN AMERICAN tourist fell into a crevice off of a 45-meter-high cliff at Railay Bay in Krabi province, while reportedly attempting to save herself from sexual assault on September 8.

The suspect, named Apai Ruangwong, 28, admitted to the attempted assault when police questioned him. He was also the one who notified the authorities for help.

Locals reported that the man, who is well-known in Railay, is believed to be mentally deficient.

Hannah Michel Gavios, 23, received injuries to her spine and was unable to walk when rescue workers were alerted to her predicament by Mr Apai some two hours after her fall.

“We received reports of the incident at about 11pm,” said Nitipat Mongkolpradit, director of the Krabi Rescue Center. “We initiated a search but could

not find her, so we waited till the next morning and found her about 15 meters from the sea.”

“The victim was first taken to Krabi Hospital and later transferred to Bangkok Hospital in Phuket for treatment,” Ao Nang Police Superintendent Piyapong Boonkaew told the *Gazette*.

“Mr Apai said that he had known the victim for a day. He volunteered to walk her to her place, but couldn’t stop himself from touching her inappropriately. The victim was frightened and ran away to escape him,” Lt Col Piyapong said.

She has since had an operation on her spine and is doing well, but still has no sensation in her lower body.

Mr Apai was charged with obscene behavior toward another person and causing serious injury.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*



The victim was evacuated from the crevice nearly 12 hours after she fell in. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

BMA tears down twelve houses in Fort

AN AGREEMENT has been reached between Mahakan Fort community and the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA), which has been seeking to evict the residents, after an intense confrontation at the site on September 3.

Both sides agreed that no more houses would be torn down and a multilateral committee headed by the National Human Rights Commission would be set up in a bid to resolve the conflict.

Some 12 houses were dismantled by the BMA Public Works Department and one family had to move out from their traditional Thai teak house after negotiations between the two sides ended and officials began their work while residents watched.

Abused Burmese workers fight back

FOURTEEN Myanmar migrants who worked on a poultry farm in Lop Buri have filed a lawsuit against Betagro Group and Thai officials, seeking 46 million baht in compensation and civil damages for alleged abuses at a property.

The poultry farm was a supplier for Betagro. On August 1, Lop Buri's Department of Labour Protection and Welfare ordered the farm to pay compensation worth 1.7mn baht to the workers. The workers subsequently filed a lawsuit, as they were not content with the payout figure.

They claimed that they suffered abuses at the farm for five years, getting less than the minimum wage and no payment for overtime.

They also alleged that deductions were illegally taken from their pay, and they were threatened with confiscation of their personal identity documents.

A source said Deputy Prime Minister Wissanu Kreangam had hinted that a politician who lost money because of the crackdown on illegal resorts was behind the threat.

Prime Minister Gen Prayuth Can-o-cha said the demolition of illegal resorts was based on a court order.

"The court has already ruled that they are against the law," he said.



Five arrested for murder of two women

FIVE suspects reportedly confessed to murdering two women, saying they were hired by an influential Laotian woman 'Nang' to kill the victims in exchange for a payment of 400,000 baht, Kalasin police chief Maj Gen Apichit Thianphermphoon said on September 5.

The bodies of the two women were found in a wooded area with gunshot wounds to the head. One of the women was reportedly involved in a romantic relationship with Ms Nang's husband.

The bodies were transported back to Laos for religious rites.

A representative of Laos's Consulate General in Khon Kaen, Sonpetch Pianbuppha, thanked the Thai police on behalf of the victim's families for their swift arrest of suspects in the case.

Dad, daughter both killed in school blast

A MUSLIM father and daughter were killed in Narathiwat when Muslim insurgents detonated a homemade bomb hidden in a garbage bin. The blast occurred in front of Taba School in Narathiwat's Tak Bai district at 8:25 am on September 6.

Police were directing traffic in front of the school at the time. Four policemen and four civilians were injured in the blast.

NATIONAL NEWS Briefly

Rohingya traffickers arrested, 2 men charged

A HUMAN trafficker has been sentenced to 34 years in prison and fined 200,000 baht for illegally transporting Rohingya migrants within Thailand, but the provincial court in Nakorn Si Thammarat's Pak Phanang District dismissed links to a trans-national crime operation.

The court convicted Sunon 'Ko Mit' Saengthong of human trafficking while two accomplices were found guilty of the lesser charge of collaborating in and abetting the trafficking of persons in violation of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act.

Suriya Yodrak was jailed for one year while Warachai Chadathong was given a six-month sentence.

The three were captured in Nakorn Si Thammarat in January while transporting Rohingya people from Ranong to Songkhla.

Police, who had been tipped off about the operation, intercepted five cars and arrested the three suspects. Another three drivers escaped.

Officers found 98 Rohingya in the cars, including 42 children under the age of 15.

The victims, who were all from Myanmar, were extremely exhausted and some had died from suffocation.

Two pregnant women come down with zika

PUBLIC health authorities have stepped up surveillance on the spread of the Zika virus after two pregnant women in Bangkok were found to have been infected.

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) said that from January 1 to September 4 this year there were eight Zika virus cases in the capital, including the two pregnant women.

One of the women has already given birth to a healthy baby who has no symptoms of the virus so far. However, authorities will continue to monitor the baby's health and conduct regular blood and urine tests.

The other infected woman is in the 18th week of pregnancy and her condition is being closely monitored by health authorities, according to Benjasai Keeyapat, the BMA's spokesperson.

Phetchabun governor gets death threats

THE Phetchabun governor has received threats to his life after he facilitated the dismantling of illegal resorts at Phu Thap Boek.

As of press time, the operation had been suspended as officials assessed the situation.

Boonlarp Suksai, who heads the Forest Management Bureau 4, alerted police that someone had called him to warn the Phetchabun governor that if the demolitions did not stop, he would be at risk.

Phu Thap Boek is a growing tourist town in the northern province. The government wants to regulate the area and tear down illegal resorts.

Prime Minister General Prayut Chan-o-cha said on September 2 that police were looking into the case and close to issuing an arrest warrant.

"Authorities can definitely trace the person who made threat. It can be traced from that phone call," he said.

Officials face gambling charges

TWELVE officials are under investigation after they were found gambling inside the Tambon Khao Kaeo Administrative Organisation's offices in Chainat province on September 4.

The men were reportedly caught red-handed with gambling paraphernalia and cash.

Sapphaya district chief Prapas Wandia has ordered a disciplinary probe into local political-office holders. If found guilty, they will be dismissed.

All but two of the suspects admitted to the crime.

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Phuket Gazette

Put the pedal to the metal

A PROPOSAL under consideration by the Department of Land Transport that would privatize driver education nationwide correctly recognizes and attempts to address the horrific state of road safety in the Kingdom. Unfortunately, the root causes of the problem run at a far deeper level than any bureaucratic reform could ever hope to reach, let alone rectify.

It seems that hardly a day passes without a deadly road accident happening somewhere in Phuket – and the situation only seems to worsen with each passing year. Not too long ago, reports of road accident fatalities qualified as front-page news. Such incidents are now so commonplace that they are often relegated to the back pages of the news section, if in fact they are marked at all.

The sad reality we all face is that Thai roadways are among the most dangerous in the world – and Phuket's roads are among the most dangerous in Thailand, if not the most dangerous.

The roads themselves are generally poorly designed, constructed and marked. Signage, especially the English-language version, often seems like a deliberate attempt to confuse.

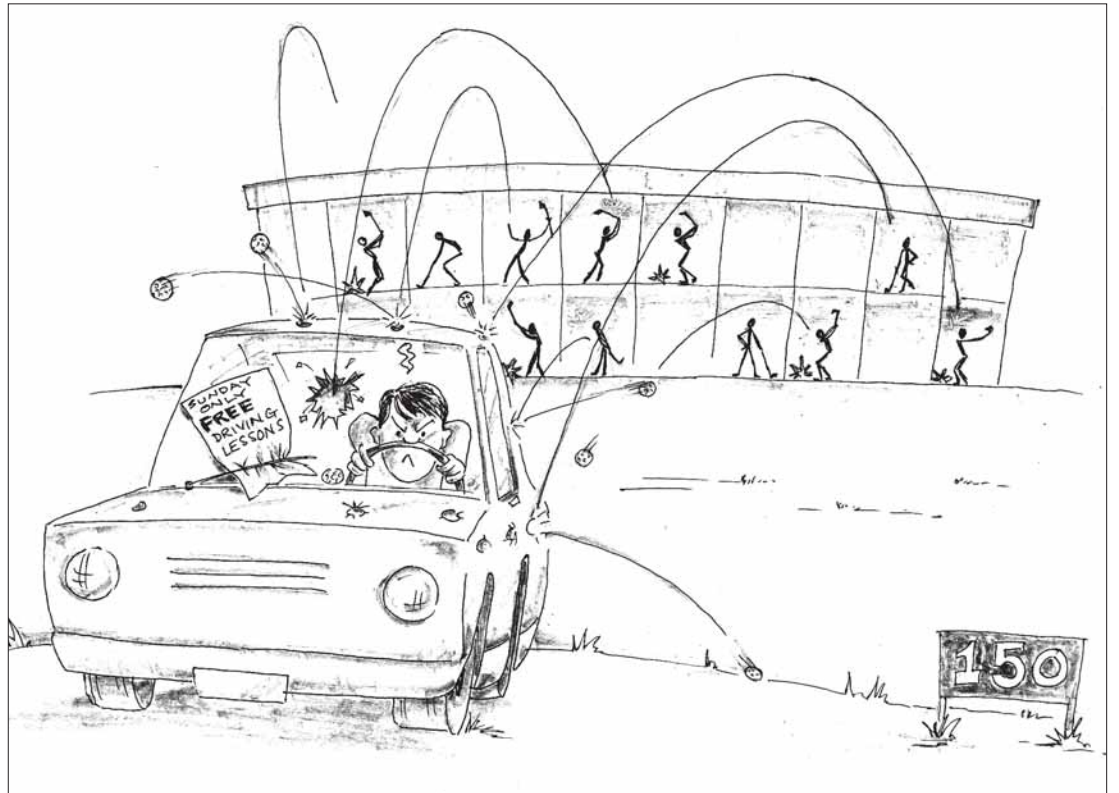
Phuket's huge tourism economy, coupled with the woeful state of public transport, results in the island playing host to more clued-out 'guest drivers' than any other province.

Speeding about like lunatics in their midst are the so-called 'professional drivers' who operate at breakneck speeds in their frenzy to get from Point A to Point B. Throw into this mix the almost complete lack of traffic law enforcement when it comes to 'moving violations' and you have an almost perfect storm.

A high degree of what can only be described as 'wishful thinking' exists among far too many local drivers.

The typical reasoning seems to run something like this: I want to get past this lumbering lorry in front of me, so it is safe to assume that there are no other vehicles approaching from the opposite direction, the view of which is currently obscured by said lorry.

For an unlucky few, such thoughts will comprise the last attempt at reasoning they ever make. Adding new layers of bureaucracy will never seriously impact the resulting pervasive 'culture of carelessness' that persists on our roads. Perhaps our best hope lies in new technologies – such as self-driving cars.



There's no scenery left for tourists

Re: CPN invests B20bn into new Central Phuket, Sep 5

Soon there will be no scenery for the tourists and they will stop coming.

You can visit shopping malls in any big city in most countries without the expense of travel.

It is not as though you will find anything different or cheaper in the malls of Thailand; anywhere in Thailand, not just Phuket.

James H Miller
Facebook

Apalling driving in rainy weather

Re: Underpass closure results in traffic nightmare, Sep 6

Given the terrible weather conditions at the moment, some of the driving I witnessed this morning was absolutely appalling. No one seemed to be taking the heavy rain into consideration.

Mister Ree
Gazette forum

Driver should be charged for murder

Re: Motorcyclist killed as CRV driver runs light, Sep 5

He should be in jail for murder. He broke the law by running a red light and was in charge of a deadly weapon – the van – and killed someone.

Although this is so sad, this is Phuket and it happens all the

Letters to the Editor

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

time and he will not get much of a sentence or have to pay much compensation.

Bad driving is the normal driving here and they are not bothered about stopping it. It's been the same for years.

simon
Gazette forum

Phuket still has a long way to go

Re: Municipality springs to action as social media complaint goes viral, Sep 2

Phuket still has a long way to go. When mentality has no value for human life this is what you get. I think the world is getting stupider instead of progressing.

Alessandro Baldieri
Facebook

Registration process not practical

Re: Opinion: Easing the migrant registration process, Sep 7

Not all migrant workers work as laborers. They're increasingly replacing Thais in service sector positions. This is why the registration process is already convoluted and diffi-

cult, and has been made increasingly complex.

For instance, by having all workers from an employer go to the employment office to have their renewal papers assessed at the same time. How can that be 'practical and applicable in real life'?

CaptainJack
Gazette forum

Many sad cases ahead of us

Re: Law, Life and Society: The real cost of incarceration, Sep 2

So if it is no longer on the list of Category 1 hard narcotics, does this mean it is no longer illegal? Including dealing? Crystal meth is one of the worst hard drugs out there, so why not also remove the others such as coke, heroin, etc, from the list?

Heck, make it all legal. Sorry, but if this is true, this is a very bad move, with many sad cases of new druggies ahead of us.

sh
Gazette forum

Irreparable damage to tourism

Re: Tourists flee stinking trash on Koh Tao, Sep 6

What a disgrace. This is ruining Thailand's reputation and causing irreparable damage.

Heidi May
Facebook

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Managing Director: Oranee Hildebrand
General Manager: Natthira Susangrat
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Contact us:

Editorial: news@phuketgazette.net
Advertising Sales: adsales@phuketgazette.net
Classified Advertising: classads@phuketgazette.net
Website services: anna@phuketgazette.net
Gazette Guide: guide@phuketgazette.net
Events Sponsorship: events@phuketgazette.net
General: info@phuketgazette.net

Telephone: 076 273555 (10 lines) Fax 076 615240
79/94 Moo 4, Thepkasattri Rd, T. Koh Kaew, A. Muang, Phuket

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Know your rights

FIRST PERSON

BUYING or investing in property may seem like a straight forward and easy transaction. You simply pay the money, transfer the ownership and that's it. But it's not that easy.

If it was, there wouldn't be so many issues related to buying property in Phuket. Many foreigners face problems after they have already bought property. They have to appear in court to fight cases, which is a huge waste of time and money.

One such recent issue was at Aspasia. In March this year, ten foreign tenants from the Aspasia Phuket Resort, led by Dutch national Jan Cornelis van Zuilekom, complained to Phuket Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada that he and other tenants had been locked out of their rooms and had their electricity and water cut off.

The tenants wanted the management to provide them with financial reports, but their request was refused. They then stopped paying the maintenance fee, which resulted in their electricity and water being cut off. The management team claimed that the tenants had no right to see the reports according to their contract, which is why they were punished by having their electricity and water cut off. All of this, the company said, was written down in the management agreement.

This can be a good lesson for others to exercise caution. There are many similar cases of this nature in Phuket.

The problem with this arrangement is the ignorance of both parties – the buyer and the project owner – about the man-



Panuwat Somrit is a Phuket lawyer specializing in property. He has been practicing law for the past six years. He graduated with a Bachelor's degree in law from Ramkhamhaeng University.

Here he talks about how to buy and invest in property in Phuket.

agement plan or management agreement, after buying or investing in the property.

Buyers or investors mostly focus on the buying and selling agreement, but nobody pays much attention to the management plan. Most buyers and investors are unaware of what else that they have to pay or what are the terms and conditions applicable for when they live in that property afterward.

There are two types of property investment: leasehold and freehold.

Leasehold is a long term rental that can last up to a maximum of 90 years, but the contract has to be renewed every 30 years. A freehold transaction is when you actually buy that property.

Every property in Thailand falls under Thai law, as well as each private business's own regulations. Therefore investors, especially foreigners, have to be careful and study these laws before they decide to buy or lease under a freehold or leasehold agreement.

Most buyers are cautious when deciding how much they have to pay upfront and how much they need from the bank. However, it's what happens af-

terwards that causes problems.

For example, in some cases, owners have the right to vote on how much maintenance fee they want to pay per year. They also have the right to see the financial documents showing the usage of the maintenance fee, as well as examine how the juristic persons work. This is usually the case in condos.

In other types of property, the project owner or management team has the right to decide on how they will utilize the maintenance fee. They can even set their own price for water and electricity. The tenants or owners have no right to be involved with management. They just have to pay the maintenance fee as required.

So everything depends on the management agreement between the buyer and project owner.

As a lawyer, I highly advise all parties to carefully consider the management agreement before making investment and buying decisions. This will highlight what you can or can't do after you have bought it, what are the management's responsibilities and so on. Be careful, read the management agreement carefully and do not limit your focus on only the buying and selling agreement.



Travelling can be frustrating if things don't go as planned. Photo: Marcelo

Woes of a traveller

Island View

By Sahar Aftab Paliwala

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

PEOPLE say they love travelling, but what they really mean is that they enjoy spending time in other places, not the actual experience of travelling itself. Air travel is one of those unfortunate gray areas where regulations seem to vary from airport to airport.

For a recent trip from Phuket to Bangkok, I booked and paid for my flight online. I also checked in on the airline's website and printed out my ticket and boarding pass. As per their instructions, if you didn't have baggage to check in, you could go straight to the boarding gate at least 20 minutes prior to departure.

Just to be on the safe side, I arrived an hour before my flight. I decided to grab a bite before boarding and followed the '24-hour Burger King' sign at the far end of the airport, only to find it shuttered closed.

The only other option being overpriced airport food and snacks, I passed up and decided to proceed to the boarding gate. To my annoyance, they sent me straight back to the airline

counter to get another boarding pass, telling me the one I'd printed from the website wouldn't suffice.

The employee at the airline counter took my boarding pass and replaced it with an identical one. He also verbally told me a different gate number from the one on the boarding pass. I double checked if this was due to an error in printing and he said that it had just been changed. I proceeded to the gate I was told to go to, only to find it deserted. A quick walk around the departure lounge showed me that the gate number printed on the boarding pass was, in fact, the correct one.

On the return trip from Bangkok, everything turned out to be just the opposite. This time, despite having a printed boarding pass already, I stood in line at the airline counter to get a new boarding pass.

To my surprise, I was told that I didn't need it. I told them about the incident with the airport and airline personnel in Phuket, but they just smiled and shrugged.

As I returned to Phuket and made my way to the parking area, I thanked my lucky stars that unlike the dozens of tourists waiting for taxis, at least I wouldn't have to pay an exorbitant amount of money to get back into the city.

Words from the Wise

“Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything.”

– Plato

“The trouble with the world is that the stupid are cocksure and the intelligent are full of doubt.”

– Bertrand Russell

Issues & Answers

Why are bricks being moved at Central?

WHILE passing by the Central Festival intersection, I spotted workers moving bricks off the median.

I am afraid this will hamper the traffic on that road. Can you please update us on what these workers are doing?

Mark Aides
Phuket

Project Engineer Somkiet Yimpong replies:

Thank you for your query.

We received a complaint about water flowing from the median onto the road, so we are tem-

porarily moving the bricks and paving concrete inside it to prevent water from flowing on to the road.

Once the concrete has been paved, we will put the bricks back as before.

Please do not worry about this disturbing the traffic flow, because we are not blocking any sections of the road. This process will ensure that there is no water flowing on to the road, especially when it rains.

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

Submit your issue at:

www.PhuketGazette.net/IssuesAnswers

Bullish biotech breaks previous highs



Finance

By Don Freeman

AS OF early June, the US S&P 500, Nasdaq and the Dow are all at critical turning points because after a two-year long correction, the market is tightly compressed and sitting only a few points from a new all-time high – or making new highs such as with the Dow and S&P500.

The big picture is this: The last two years has seen a nasty correction for many small cap stocks; but the S&P 500 is starting to show a very bullish bottoming formation as it hit a new high last summer. The S&P 500 then experienced a correction before bouncing back up to a new (but lower) high, then fell back down again to a new lower low. The index later rallied to a new lower high before last month's 3-4 per cent correction and its now testing its previous highs.

This has been a very strange market for the S&P 500, because it has repeatedly come close to the previous all-time high, which it needs to clear and see follow through to the upside, only to roll over again. However, if the S&P 500 can break decisively above those previous highs around the 2,100 level, it should move up to the 2,300 to 2,400 level (basically, add the difference between the previous lower lows and lower highs to the cur-



The S&P 500 has repeatedly come close to the previous all-time high, only to roll over again. Photo: AIG

rent index level).

Here is also something else I have noticed about the markets lately: one sector or market will be weak one week and then strong during another week with the strength rotating around between sectors or markets, but the ultimate trend is both positive and up. I am under invested and will be using weakness (all bull markets give entry points or pullbacks) in the weeks ahead to enter strong sectors and stocks. As the market moves higher the strong sectors and leadership stocks are coming to the surface. This is where you need to be invested.

For example, while the S&P 500 and the Nasdaq were flat

during the first week of June, the PHLX Gold/Silver Sector (INDEXNASDAQ: XAU) was up 12 per cent while the iShares 20+ Year Treasury Bond ETF (NASDAQ: TLT) was up 3 per cent. The iShares MSCI Emerging Markets Index ETF (NYSEARCA: EEM) was also surprisingly strong after being weak some weeks ago when the S&P 500 was performing well.

With that in mind, here is a quick summary of what is occurring with some other key market indices or sectors that I am also watching for clues:

The SPDR S&P Biotech ETF (NYSEARCA: XBI) is now a confirmed bullish play as it broke above some previ-

ous highs in the first week of June. I'd like to see it hold its current zone and break higher before putting more money into biotech. LGND is a biotech stock that I like and will be buying if the market holds up.

The iShares PHLX Semiconductor ETF (NASDAQ: SOXX) has cleared December and April highs. This is particularly bullish as we need semiconductors to lead so that tech stocks along with the S&P 500 and tech-laden Nasdaq can also move higher.

The Russell 2000 (INDEXRUSSELL: RUT) was up 1 per cent in the first week of June and has broken above a couple of previous highs. This tells me that money is starting

to flow back into riskier small-cap growth stocks.

The S&P Mid Cap 400 Index (INDEXNYSEGIS: MID) also moved up 0.5 per cent and is above some previous highs. If MID ends up rolling over and breaking below a previous 2-3 per cent correction from a month ago I'll be raising cash again in client portfolios. So far it is breaking upward to new highs and shows promise. This is a good sector in which to invest.

The NASDAQ Composite (INDEXNASDAQ: IXIC) ended the week poised to break above its most recent high and then (eventually) take out its higher December 2015 high.

Finally, investors need to keep in mind that there is considerable uncertainty over what the Fed will do with interest rates. Regardless of whether you think it's right or wrong or whether it will all end badly, global central banks are still the driving force of the markets and can still drive them higher.

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

Big C acquisition underway

THAI conglomerate Berli Jucker (BJC) has completed the book building for what will be the country's largest ever debenture issuance in a single transaction. The three, five, seven and 10-year debentures are worth Bt54 billion.

According to Kasikornbank, one of the joint-lead arrangers, the proceeds will be used to finance the bridging loans taken

for the acquisition of Big C Supercentre.

The joint-lead arrangers for the transaction are Bangkok Bank, Krungthai Bank, Siam Commercial Bank and Phatra Securities. BJC bought the 59 per cent stake in Big C in February from France's Casino Group for 3.1 billion euros or approximately 122bn baht.

– *The Nation*

Chinese investments hit all time high, second to Japan

CHINA'S investment in Thailand has shown rapid growth with the value of projects submitted for tax privileges in the first seven months hitting 21 billion baht.

Industry Minister Atchaka Sibunruang said China was second only to Japan, which applied for Board of Investment privileges for projects worth 27bn baht during the period.

"Chinese enterprises are attracted to the policy to promote the 10 target industries in the Eastern Economic Corridor," she said on September 1.

As of May, China's 2016 investment was valued at 8.89bn baht, which rapidly in-

creased within two months to the current number.

The targeted industries are: automotive and auto parts, petrochemicals, smart electronics, agriculture and biotechnology, tourism, medical, digital, robotics, aviation, and textiles.

According to the Board of Investment, under the '10 targeted industries' scheme, foreign companies applied for incentives for 161 projects with a proposed investment of 57.9bn baht from January to May.

At the end of July, the value of project applications in the 10 target industries accounted for 43 per cent of the value of total applications, or 139bn baht.

This success encouraged the

BOI to increase the 2016 investment-value target by 20 per cent to 550bn baht.

Meanwhile, the new economic corridor is designed to spice up the development of the Eastern Seaboard.

To promote investment from China, Siam Commercial Bank this week announced a 5-billion baht bridge-loan scheme for Chinese companies' land purchases in Thailand.

Sarasin Viraphol, executive vice president of Charoen Pokphand Group, said at a recent conference that Asean as a whole could see a fivefold increase in Chinese investment over the next five years due to cheap labor.

– *The Nation*

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Push to promote growth in provincial fruit sales

FRUITS from the southern province of Narathiwat were the highlight of an exhibition held in Central Festival Phuket from September 2-4 with the aim of promoting local produce grown at plantations in neighboring Narathiwat Province, including Rambutan, Durian, mangosteen and Longkong.

The opening of the exhibition was chaired by Phuket Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada, who was joined by the Narathiwat Vice Governor Surapol Prommul.

“We welcome the opportunity to promote Narathiwat’s unique local fruits to Phuketians and tourists,” said Narathiwat V/Gov Surapol.

“The ultimate goal of the showcase is not solely for profit, but to support Narathiwat’s farmers and represent their products.

The popular and sought-after Longkong Sipo was also presented at the occasion, which is a sweet delicacy in Narathiwat.

“Narathiwat has about 139,000 rai of Rambutan, Durian, mangosteen and



Seasonal fruits from plantations in Narathiwat Province were of the event. Photo: Sukawin Tanthavanich

Longkong plantations producing about 28,000 tons annually, earning the province about 373 million baht a year,” proclaimed V/Gov Surapol.

“We have maintained a benchmark in terms of training our farmers and plan to maintain the highest standards in

fruit production,” he added.

Also present was Phuket Vice Governor Prajiad Aksornthammakul, who was keen to encourage cooperation between the two provinces in promoting local produce to the international market.

“Having these locally-pro-

duced fruits exhibited at Central Festival Phuket is a boon to local producers. Narathiwat will become recognized for its prize produce,” he said.

He recommended that farmers put Chinese-language labels on their fruits to boost sales.

– Sukawin Tanthavanich

Thais privy to online discounts

NEARLY 80 per cent of Thais who shop on the web are influenced to buy impulsively from online merchants when prices are lower, according to a recent survey by Mastercard.

Mastercard’s Online Shopping Index 2015 identified that 75.8 per cent of those surveyed said they often shop compulsively – are attracted to low prices or discounts offered via online channels; second only to shoppers in the Philippines who weigh in at 76.4 per cent.

This price competitiveness factor is considered to be the number one driver in shoppers’ online decision making in Thailand. Other factors which trigger impulse shopping online include advertisements and promotions (56.2 per cent) and unique products available only online (48.7 per cent).

The index also reports that clothing and accessories are the items that most often trigger impulse shopping (44.7 per cent), followed by beauty and personal care products (34.6 per cent) and toys & gifts (31.9 per cent).

Tax exemptions during festive seasons have encouraged Thais to spend their earnings on dining, shopping and traveling, according to the survey.

– The Nation

Busan reiterates support for ‘Phuket smart city’

A DELEGATION from the South Korean city of Busan visited Phuket on August 30 to reiterate their support for Phuket’s ‘smart city’ endeavors.

Busan’s special economic advisor, Gi-Ryong Jung, and an entourage of Korean agency representatives were at the 2nd Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on smart sustainable cities and e-government, held at Le Meridien Phuket.

Phuket Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada welcomed the Busan City delegation, which included representatives from the Ministry of ICT, the International Telecommunication Union, the Software Industry Promotion Agency as well as Straits Asset Incorporated, which is registered in Thailand as a regulated financial advisory entity to Phuket under licence granted by Thailand’s



The forum was held at Le Meridien Phuket. Photo: Phuket PR

Ministry of Finance.

Gov Chamroen said that Phuket welcomed the Busan City delegation’s support and confirmed that the Phuket Smart City concept was backed by the Korean Infrastructure Fund.

“Smart Network, Smart Grid, Smart Meters, Smart Energy and Smart Transportation are all part of this project which Strait Asset Inc will be raising funds for,” he said.

– Sukawin Tanthavanich



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Hainan Governor checks in at PIH for medical tourism talks

Phuket International Hospital welcomed a delegation from Hainan Province in China, led by the province's governor, Lu Junhua, to discuss cooperation in promoting medical tourism.



Hainan Governor Lu Junhua (center left) was welcomed at Phuket International Hospital by Medical Department Director Dr weerawat Yosaengrat (center right) and Phuket Plastic Surgery Institute Director Dr Sanguan Kunaporn (4th from left) and staff.

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Hip stars shine at Central

Crowds of fans flocked to Central Festival Phuket to scream and go googly-eyed at pop stars and silver screen celebrities performing for the Toyota Pearl Hipster Day August 26-28.



Award-winning actress Aum Patcharapa was the MC for the Hipster Day event.



Singer-songwriter Itthipong Kritthakorn Na Ayutthaya from indy band Paradox.

ents in Paradise

Jungceylon joins campaign to cut down on plastic bag use

Jungceylon shopping mall in Patong this week joined the eighth provincial campaign to reduce the use of plastic bags with the launch of cloth bags featuring the slogan 'Zero Bag Zero Waste'. Helping promote the anti-pollution drive were the campaign's chairman, Phuket Governor Chamroen Tipayaongtada, who was accompanied by representatives from Kathu District office, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment and Jungceylon executives.



Phuket Governor Chamroen Tipayaongtada (left) and Jungceylon Patong Phuket CEO Prawit Janyasittikul hold a cloth shopping bag to promote the provincial anti-pollution drive.

Budding young golfer makes Kajokiet proud

Kajokiet International School student Rattanabhadin Tassanathipakorn was the proud recipient of an award for completing the TGA-SINGHA Junior Golf Ranking 2016-2017 competition held at Laguna Phuket Golf August 27-28.



Laguna Golf Assistant Vice President Paul Wilson hands a certificate of achievement to KIS student Rattanabhadin Tassanathipakorn after she successfully completed the 2016 TGA Singha Junior Golf Ranking.

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Learning to value waste

By Sahar Aftab Paliwala

ON AN island like Phuket, with millions of visitors, expats and locals coming and going every year, one of the major problems we are left dealing with is pollution. Environmentalists cry about our bleeding oceans, but no one seems to pay much heed. Perhaps it's time we change our approach to this issue by incorporating this mentality in our younger generation.

Many schools worldwide have 'recycling projects' that provide their students with hands-on experience to help them see that efforts to cut the wasteful use of resources does make a difference. By engaging young learners in a variety of proactive activities, children are taught to take responsibility for keeping the earth cleaner for a better future.

One cost-effective way to ingrain this mentality in children is to set up a recycling program. The first step is to organize teams of dedicated students, teachers and support staff to take charge of recycling. These teams will then divide the school into 'zones' and conduct waste audits. A waste audit is an in-depth analysis of how much waste is generated in each area of the school and how it can be collected and sorted. This is a critical step, as knowing the types and volumes of waste being generated will allow you



We can reuse and recycle plastic containers from the school cafeteria. Photo: EKM-Mittelsachsen

to determine which materials to collect.

Once you have decided on the types of waste that can be reused or sold to local recycling plants, establish a system for collecting and storing the recovered materials. The best way to do this is to collect trash at the point of origin. For example, each classroom should have a container to collect paper, the cafeteria should have bins to collect plastic bottles, aluminum cans and so on.

A program such as the one outlined here is simple to implement and follow. How-

ever, it is important to establish goals at the get-go. Students may be willing and able to make an effort, but if they don't know what they're doing or what the purpose of what they're doing is, the program is likely to be less effective.

It is important to educate all participants about the purpose and goals of the program. Recycling bins must be made widely available and be properly labelled. Students' interests can be engaged in a number of ways, such as holding a contest to design a poster, name the campaign, or come up with the

best innovative solution to reduce resource usage.

Last, but not least, we must establish a reward system. We must explain to students that the work itself is the reward, but incentives such as medals, recognition certificates or small prizes can go a long way in generating interest in the campaign.

It is not difficult to establish such a program at a school of any size, but the important consideration is to monitor and keep track of results and not let the program 'phase out' due to lack of attention and participation.

Thai student develops app to help farmers

CHULALONGKORN University student, Maneerat Wongjaroenporn, 22, developed an app to help the country's farmers, as part of TechFarm, an agricultural startup that she founded.

The app, called LenNam, aids farmers who work in the fishing and shrimp industries help observe the quality of water.

Ms Maneerat hopes that this new invention will help create a better and more stable life for farmers. Her efforts have won her a top prize in the Thailand Women Entrepreneurs Startup Competition for TechFarm's work on the agricultural project LenNam.

"Farmers have to physically maintain the water quality themselves, and have constant concerns about the survival rate of their shrimp," she says.

"So if I hear even one story of a farmer leading a more comfortable life because of my product, I will feel like all our hard work has been worthwhile."

Ms Maneerat participated in the Microsoft Imagine Cup 2015 Finals in Thailand, a competition focused on student inventions and potential startups. She also excelled in the DTAC Accelerate Program in 2015. She is set to represent Thailand at next month's at Start Tel Aviv 2016 in Israel.

— *The Nation*

'Formula 1 in schools' to be launched in Thailand

F1 IN SCHOOLS, a not-for-profit company with a vision to provide a challenging educational experience, through the appeal of Formula One racing, to students all over the world, is looking to establish its programs in Thailand.

Andrew Denford, Founder and Chairman of F1 in Schools, visited Thailand to meet with local businessman Chakrit Thararam to discuss the implementation of the program in Thailand.

F1 in Schools is the only global multidisciplinary challenge in which teams of students aged nine to 19 deploy CAD/CAM software to collaborate, design, analyze, manufacture, test, and race miniature compressed-air-powered Formula One cars



Mr Denford (right) with Mr Chakrit. Photo: Siamese Vision Media Co

out of the official F1 Model Block.

Mr Denford and Mr Chakrit

began discussions to take the program forward in Thailand. Mr Denford appointed Mr

Chakrit as the in-country coordinator.

"It is a need to create engineers of the future and to satisfy the demand of the Thai industry to have better qualified and inspirational engineers who are ready for the world of work. F1 in Schools does all of that because of the nature of the program. We deliver science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in the classroom in a fun and exciting way," says Mr Denford.

"We are running in 44 countries around the world and have succeeded in many countries and improved the quality of the students that are leaving schools."

Mr Chakrit says he intends to start the initiative in some

pilot schools first and to get the initiative launched by 2017.

He adds that among the plans is to ultimately get the support of the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Education to disseminate the program across the whole of Thailand's national school network.

The next F1 in Schools World Finals, where the best teams from around the world compete for the Bernie Ecclestone World Champions trophy, will be held in Austin, Texas from October 16-19, 2016.

"I look forward to welcoming Thai teams at the next World Finals event in 2017," says Mr Denford.

— *Phuket Gazette*

Brothers compete for the throne

Looking Back

By Anand Singh

IN THE year 1851, when King Rama III died, Siamese nobles, led by Chaophraya Srisuriyawongse, supported Prince Mongkut and invited him to leave the monkhood to claim the throne. It was during this period that Siamese politics took an unusual turn.

King Mongkut had a brother, Prince Chuthamani. When Mongkut became king, he elevated Prince Chuthamani to the rank of 'Phrabat Somdej', a title reserved only for a crowned king. Chuthamani became known as King Pinklao, a second king of Siam with a rank that equalled his brother's.

King Mongkut reigned for 17 years. He had four children with his royal consort, Queen Debsirindra. The oldest was Prince Chulalongkorn, born on September 20, 1853.

The king had a special interest in science and astronomy since his early days as a Buddhist monk at Bowonnivet Temple. In 1868, he predicted that a solar eclipse would take place on August 18. During that time Siamese society was particularly superstitious. Solar eclipses were bad omens. But the king challenged that notion and proposed that solar and lunar eclipses, like many other natural occurrences, could be explained by science and astronomy.

On August 18, 1868, King Mongkut, Prince Chulalongkorn and a royal party of consorts,



A fire broke out in the Grand Palace on the night of December 28. Photo: Andy Marchand

courtiers and European guests made their way to an observatory in Wakor village in Prachuap Khiri Khan province to witness the solar eclipse. True to his calculations, the eclipse did occur. The court was astounded.

On the way back to Bangkok, tragedy struck the royal household. The king and Prince Chulalongkorn were infected with malaria. Six weeks later, King Mongkut passed away in Bangkok. Prince Chulalongkorn, however, survived.

Chaophraya Srisuriyawongse, the most powerful noble during that time was to become kingmaker for the second time in his life. Presiding over a council of nobles and princes, it was unanimously declared that 15-year-old Prince Chulalongkorn should succeed his father and become king. As the king was underage, Srisuriya-

wongse would serve as regent and administer the country for the next few years until the king came of age.

Things got a bit complicated here. King Pinklao was head of the front palace before he passed away. In Siamese royal tradition, a younger brother of the king could be bestowed the title of 'Uparaja', or vice-king. He would occupy the Front Palace but still be under the king's command. But this was the first time in Siamese history that there were two kings, both of equal rank. The Front Palace therefore gained an unprecedented amount of power and prestige.

King Pinklao had a son, Prince Vichaichan. It was clear that Vichaichan was going to succeed his father as head of the Front Palace. But the council was divided on whether to appoint him as vice-king right away.

Some of the princes suggested that appointing a vice-king was the king's prerogative and that the decision could wait until the king came of age. But Chaophraya Srisuriyawongse wanted a stable transition. He argued that the appointment should be made straight away. Eventually Prince Vichaichan was appointed as head of the Front Palace, without King Chulalongkorn's consent.

King Mongkut elevated Chuthamani to become a second king because he loved his brother. But the legacy of the second king would spell trouble for his son many years later. By this time the Front Palace had become much more powerful than it had ever been. The second king commanded his own army. He also controlled a naval force of several steam-powered gunboats and claims to a large share of

state revenue.

In 1873, King Chulalongkorn turned 20 and was finally ready to administer the country. The regent, Chaophraya Srisuriyawongse stepped aside.

King Chulalongkorn was a reformist who wanted to modernize the country. In one of his first acts as king, he created the Auditing Office to simplify the collection of taxes. From the start his reforms were aimed at centralizing the administration of government. It did not sit well with the nobles and Prince Vichaichan, who saw Chulalongkorn's reforms as a means to limit their power and boost his own.

Tension and mistrust grew between the king and the vice-king. In December of 1874, Vichaichan began mobilizing some of his troops and quartered them within his own palace. In response, King Chulalongkorn mobilized his own troops.

On the night of December 28, a fire broke out in the Grand Palace. The flames quickly spread, threatening to engulf the king's residential quarters. In such a situation, custom dictated that the Front Palace head would have to lead his men to the king's aid in times of danger. But Vichaichan never came. In the end the fire was put out.

The king suspected that the Front Palace might have had a role to play in this malice. He ordered his troops to surround the Front Palace in order to contain the situation. The two kings were on the edge of an all out civil war.

To be continued...

Thai universities make world rankings

EIGHT Thai higher-education institutions have made it into the latest list of the world's top universities, with Chulalongkorn University (CU) leading the Thai group.

Released on September 6, the QS World University Rankings 2016/2017 place CU at 252, up one place from a year earlier. The other universities on the list include Mahidol University, Chiang Mai University, Thammasat University, Kasetsart University, Khon Kaen University, King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi and Prince of Songkla University.

First published in 2004, the QS World University Rankings highlight 916 of the world's top universities, based on six key performance indicators including reputation and citations.

More than 3,800 institutions around the world were reviewed in compiling the list, with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology retaining the top spot, followed by two other American universities.

Stanford moved into the second spot; Harvard third; Cambridge took fourth place and the California Institute of Technology ranked fifth.

— *The Nation*

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Beat the rush, bicycle by boat



THERE'S no doubt that cycling on Phuket is becoming more challenging by the day, as traffic volume, road works and ongoing urbanization of our once-unspoiled island proceeds apace.

Yet, being an island (as we very nearly are), we have on our doorstep ideal cycling getaways to nearby islands, where beautiful and quiet rides are readily available and indeed the pace of life is slower, the locals friendlier and the environment still relatively undeveloped.

There are two key 'escape gateways' from Phuket's east coast out to the island bounty in Phang Nag Bay. Rassada Pier to the east of Phuket Town is tumultuous and chaotic with hordes of back-packers thronging the wharves.

Large ferries leave here on their regular routes out to Koh Lanta (three hours); Koh Phi Phi (one hour) and onwards to Krabi Town.

Further north, Bang Rong Pier, the gateway to Koh Yao Yai and Noi, is a contrast of tranquility and laid-back charm. Here the boats tend to be much smaller, often wooden-built and necessitating the use of waterproofs when the monsoon rains sweep across Phang Nga Bay.

You can cycle to either of these jump-off points, braving



There is a marked sense of relief when you board the ferry with your bike. Photo: Baz Daniel

the warren of Phuket Town's packed sois to get to Rassada, or cycling east from the Heroine's Monument along a much more enjoyable ride to Bang Rong Pier.

In either case the sense of relief once you board your ferry with your trusty bike propped in a corner, is palpable.

Every time I take off on an island cycling escape like this, I can't help but smile with relief as the boat breasts the wide open waters of Phang Nga Bay. Indeed, it seems to me that my fellow passengers are also breathing a deep sigh of relief to be leaving the madness of Phuket behind, at least for a while.

Certainly once you disembark,

you are confronted by much quieter roads, more considerate fellow road users, less environmental damage and a local populace who seem to project all those traditional Thai smiles and values that Phuket's tourism media machine so loves to trumpet.

Koh Yao Noi offers a charming loop around the island, with some off-road tracks through rubber plantations too. While this island is getting more developed, it does have a good number of resorts and restaurants for stop offs. Koh Yao Yai, by contrast, is still a backwater of quietude and wonderful vistas with very little traffic.

Koh Phi Phi itself is not at all cycle-friendly, but you can stop

here for a walk around and an evening beachside meal accompanied by exciting fire-turning shows, en route to Koh Lanta.

Lanta is a large island, offering great rides along the beaches and into the central mountain massif. There's plenty of inexpensive beachside accommodation and a laid-back hippy vibe still pervades this throwback to a quieter time.

You can also take your bike on a long-tail from Chalong Pier out to Koh Racha Yai to ride, and then of course further south towards Malaysian waters the outlying isles of Turatao, Adang and Koh Lippe beckon... But these will have to wait for another article.

Thai tennis star shines at Futures 3



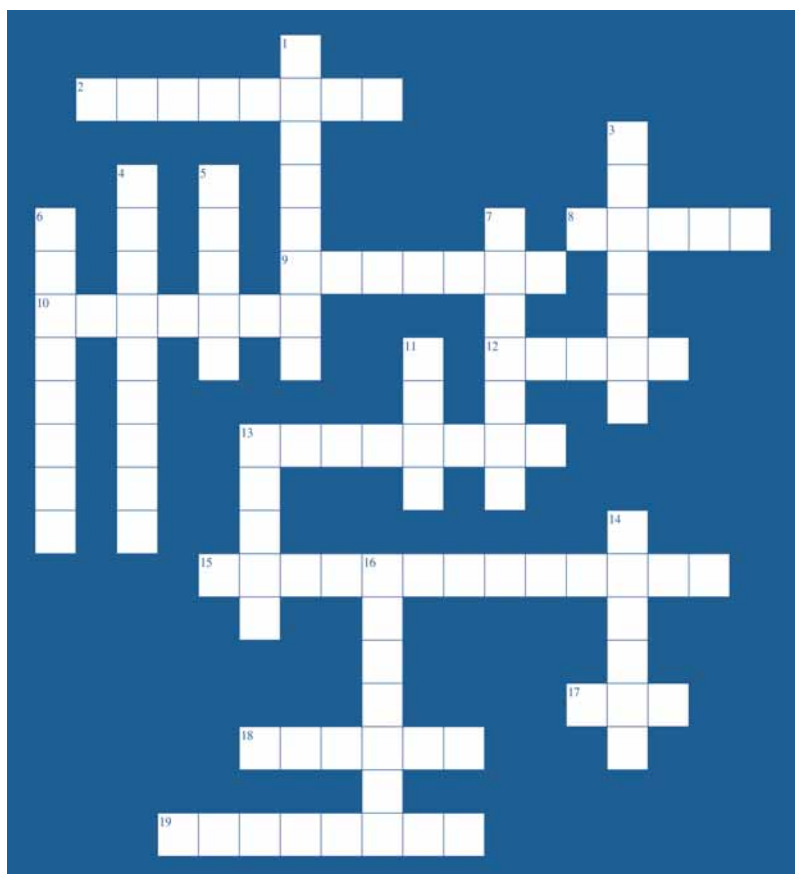
Jirat Navasirisomboon in action. Photo: The Nation

RISING teenage tennis star Jirat Navasirisomboon put up a commendable fight to upset third seed Vishnu Vardhan of India 7-5, 3-6, 6-5 in the first round of the US\$10,000 Cal-Comp & XYZ Printing ITF Thailand Men's Futures 3 tournament at True Arena on September 6.

The 19-year-old Bangkokian is the only Thai to win a Bangkok Challenger first-round match. He staved off several break points in the seventh game of the final set to produce an upset win over the 477th-ranked Vardhan in one hour and 52 minutes.

"Holding that game was very crucial. I knew I could turn it around if I went up 4-3 as he seemed tired and started missing. I'm happy to pull it off in a tough match like this," said Jirat.

- The Nation



Gazette Crossword

Test your local knowledge and word power

Across

- 02. To wave, especially a knife
- 08. Phuket's 'Beach of Honor'
- 09. Phuket seafood specialty
- 10. Machine used to dig up surfaces
- 12. Secret meeting between lovers
- 13. Thai celebration of New Year
- 15. Thailand won two gold medals for this in Rio
- 17. Phuket's bomb disposal unit (abbr)
- 18. Local fruit with pungent smell
- 19. Highest ranked official in Phuket

Down

- 01. Large movie theater
- 03. Major revenue earning profession in Phuket
- 04. A place of refuge or safety
- 05. Supple and graceful
- 06. Steal or misappropriate funds
- 07. Angelina Jolie was spotted at this Phuket mall
- 11. Virus transmitted by mosquitoes
- 13. Cut off, separate
- 14. Touts illegally parade this creature on Phuket beaches
- 16. Traditional Southeast Asian noodles

Solution on opposite page.



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Choose salad dressings with care



FIRST rule of nutrition, as well as weight loss, is to choose real food that is minimally processed. Often real foods (except those naturally preserved) have a short shelf life.

In the past, I have spoken of the potential health dangers of trans fats, vegetable oils, MSG, sugar – especially high fructose corn syrup – additives, colorings, preservatives and so on. Well, unfortunately these could even be lurking in your nutritious salad, if you choose the wrong dressing.

As I say to my clients, if it comes in a package then you have to read the label to see if you're getting more than you bargained for. Additionally, if you don't know the ingredients, it's a good idea to put it back on the shelf.

Look at the ingredients to this very popular creamy Italian salad dressing:

Water, soybean oil, vinegar, sugar, salt, contains less than 2 per cent garlic, xanthan gum, citric acid, propylene glycol alginate, onions, polysorbate 60, spice, red bell peppers, garlic, phosphoric acid, parsley, vitamin E and natural flavor.

There will be 'experts' out there saying there is nothing wrong with these ingredients. As I wrote in my last column, you can just about find a positive study on nearly every food out there – including the first ingredient after water: soy bean oil.



A healthy organic salad can be ruined with an off-the-shelf dressing, which may contain non-nutritious ingredients. Photo: pixabay

I previously wrote about my concerns with soy as a hormonal disruptor, but the oil is not only oxidized through the processing (creating free radicals), it also is full of Omega 6 oils that could lead to a range of inflammatory issues.

The fourth ingredient is our old foe, sugar. That too in a highly processed form. Much of the sugar today comes from high fructose corn syrup, but watch out. They keep changing ('updating') its labeling name.

So why ruin something so healthy with a harmful dressing, when you can easily make your own? The first ingredient has been well studied. It tastes amazing, is minimally processed and is the key to most

dressings – extra virgin olive oil.

Here are three very simple dressings that I make at home. I am not a chef so feel free to get creative. Put all the ingredients in a jar and shake vigorously for 30 seconds.

LEMON ZEST

- 4 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil.
- 4 tablespoons of apple cider vinegar.
- 4 tablespoons lemon juice.
- A pinch of natural sea salt.
- A pinch of black pepper.
- A dash of lime and fresh mint vinaigrette.

Here's another twist on this. 4 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil.

- 1 teaspoon of grated or minced lime zest.
- 2 tablespoons of fresh lime juice.
- 2 tablespoons of chopped fresh mint.
- Sprinkling of water.

GARLIC AND MUSTARD

- 4 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil.
- 2 teaspoons of Dijon mustard.
- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar.
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced.
- 1-2 teaspoons sea salt.
- A pinch of freshly ground black pepper.

RED WINE VINEGAR

- 4 tablespoons of extra virgin

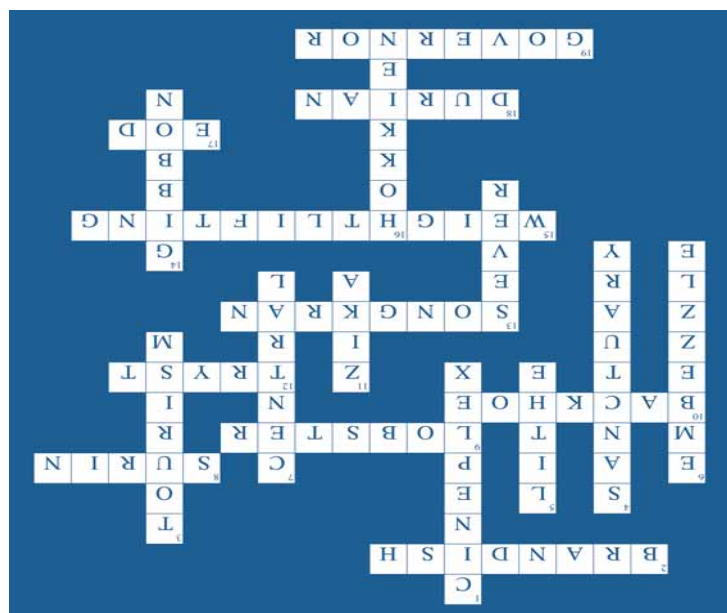
- olive oil.
- 2 teaspoons of Dijon mustard.
- 4 tablespoons red wine vinegar.
- 1 tablespoon of flaxseed oil.
- 2 shallots, finely diced.
- 1-2 teaspoons of sea salt.
- A pinch of black pepper.

So, don't hold back on the salads. It's no secret that fresh raw vegetables offer a bounty of goodness. Just steer clear of the nutrient poor 'fake foods' trying to rob your body of health. Keep it simple, keep it real.

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

Crossword Solution

Turn the page upside down to read the answers.



Phuket gets new air routes

Vietjet launches new flight routes from Phuket this month

VIETNAMESE low-cost airline Vietjet announced its 'domestic debut' in Thailand on September 6, and the launch of new flight routes from Phuket to Bangkok and Chiang Rai this month.

The 'new-age' airline already flies from Bangkok to Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, and operates 53 routes in Vietnam and Thailand, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, China and Myanmar with A320 and A321 aircraft.

The new daily Phuket-Bangkok route takes off on September 15, as does the Phuket-Chiang Rai route, which will fly three days a week. The airline is also launching daily flights on a Bangkok-Chiang Mai route starting September 26.

The budget airline also unveiled a promotional campaign to tie in with the new route launches, offering one million 'zero-baht' air tickets for bookings made from September 9 to September 11 for passengers booking flights on its website.



The airline has offered one million free tickets for bookings made between 9 and 11 September. Photo: Vietjet

Speaking at the launch event, Tourism and Sports Minister, HE Kobkarn Wattanarangkul, said the new low-cost routes would help foster relations between Thailand and Vietnam, in line with the mis-

sion of TAT's 'Two Countries, One Destination' program, which has been running since last year.

Vietjet's Vice President, Madam Nguyen Thi Thuy Binh, said "Three years ago,

Thailand became Vietjet's first international destination. Thailand and Vietnam have shared a close relationship thanks to our similarities in culture, cuisine and character. There are now more than 300

Thai expats working in a variety of positions at Vietjet, which is also a driving force for us to further expand our flight network in Thailand today."

– *Phuket Gazette*

Why walk when you can ride

TRAVELLERS out there who spend day and night in-transit between one airport and another can look forward to an exciting new toy in the works. The idea originally came from a kickstarter campaign called Modobag, who are developing the world's first motorized, rideable luggage.

This might just change our overall experience of running around from terminal to terminal, trying to catch our next flight.

The company started a successful campaign on Indiegogo and has managed to raise over US\$300,000 of their required US\$50,000 startup budget – and still counting.

Representatives from Modobag claim that the suitcase is capable of taking the rider at a whopping top speed of 8 miles per hour, or roughly three times the speed of an average walker. An indoor setting for airports, however, keeps the speed at a nominal speed of 5mph.

The team has pimped out the bag with LED lights, exterior



The bag is expected to make travelling easier for those trying to catch their connecting flights. Photo: Modobag

pockets, a memory foam seat and handle bars that control direction.

Its battery pack doesn't pack as big a punch as a Tesla, but does the job by letting the rider travel six miles on a full charge.

It's also equipped with a USB charging port and a GPS tracking device for when you check in your bag.

At the price tag of US\$995 though, these new wheels sure don't come cheap.

– *Zohaib Sikander*

Low cost carriers duke it out in domestic rivalry



AirAsia is headquartered in Malaysia. Photo: The Nation

MALAYSIAN low cost carrier AirAsia is going head to head with Vietnamese low-cost airline Vietjet, which announced its domestic debut in Thailand on September 6.

AirAsia announced that it is giving away free seats until Sep-

tember 11 to several destinations in Thailand for travellers booking through the AirAsia mobile phone application.

The promotion is valid for travel February 6 and October 28.

– *The Nation*

Age of the robotic butler



Across the Land

By Amy Koh

ROBOT butlers could soon be something seen in modern homes in the not too distant future. Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg is reportedly building an artificial intelligence system to operate and control his entire home, which will apparently be ready to perform a demo in the very near future.

When we think of butlers, we usually envisage a man traditionally dressed in a white-wing collar dress shirt with a grey vest, black morning coat and pinstriped trousers, topped off with a black tie and white gloves.

As times have changed along with shifting social trends, so the roles of a butler have evolved.

The primary role of a traditional butler is to attend to the needs of their employer. That has not changed in modern times but has evolved to include household management as well.

These days a butler can organize, manage and operate all aspects of the household in an efficient, stable and cost efficient way – whether for a single professional, a couple or a family living in one home, or



The future in robotics will arrive in Phuket sooner or later, for which property developers need to start preparing for as a need for potential home buyers. Photo: Public Domain

several homes.

Many of us will never be in a position to hire a real-life butler to attend to all of our needs but robot butlers could soon become an affordable alternative.

Controlling lights, temperature, locking doors and other tasks in your home are all part of the smart automation making its way into modern homes. Apple Inc has created a framework called HomeKit, which allows developers to create

such smart products that can be controlled via an iOS app either from within or outside a user's home.

Imagine coming home to an already cool home after a day in the blistering 43°C heat. The front door automatically unlocks and opens as you approach then closes and locks behind you once you are safely inside.

Among the 'smart' home accessories that can be controlled by an iOS device

emerging now are lighting appliances, switches, plugs, locks, sensors, heating, cooling, shades and more.

After pairing an accessory with the iOS device, the accessory can be controlled with voice commands to Siri such as 'Turn on the lights' or 'Dim the lights – set the brightness to 50 per cent' or 'turn on the coffee maker'.

More complex commands are also possible, such as 'set the temperature to 24 degrees'.

The set up can be customized for specific zones or rooms. Then you can use commands like 'turn off the upstairs lights,' or 'turn off Adam's light'. Or perhaps, 'turn on the printer in the office'.

You could even have a customized setting for the command 'dinner party' or 'goodnight'.

Fully-fledged smart homes are yet to arrive in Phuket, but it is definitely something that developers should be planning for as a future need of home buyers.

When home buyers look for a new home, they expect innovation and new products. New technologies incorporated into a new home will surely be a must-have. Home automation is already here so the robot butler is sure to follow soon.

So the next time you are buying a new home, as well as the usual questions about price, location and proximity to the nearest school or supermarket, you might want to ask the developer or real estate agent about its operating system too.

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

Tourists bring a whole world of change

CBRE Research launched its 'hotel megatrends' survey on September 7, which analyzed two major trends currently reshaping the regional hospitality industry – the increasing number of Chinese tourists and growth of shared accommodations. The report additionally provided recommendations on how best to respond to these trends for hotel operators.

The report claims that the Asia-Pacific tourism sector has been booming in recent years, mainly due to a growing middle class and rising incomes, which are enabling more and more people to take holidays overseas.

By 2020, intra-regional trips will increase to a number of about 286.3 million, while in 2015 about 279.2mn international tourist arrivals were recorded. The latter's arrival

numbers are expected to increase to about 355 million.

The problem, and opportunity, lies in the fact that despite the massive number of tourists coming in, the current hotel sector is unable to cater to some of the tourists' demands with the current operating models in place.

Due to advances in technology and social media, tourists have options such as Airbnb for accommodation instead of paying for hotel rooms with full fledged hotel amenities to go with it.

Airbnb and the like are 'shared accommodations' or 'short-term rentals', and come with additional (and generally free) amenities such as washing machines and kitchens, which traditional hotels rarely offer.

"The growth of shared ac-



A shared room accommodation provided to a traveller using Airbnb. Photo: Scott cutler

commodation does pose a longer-term challenge for the hotel industry, especially during peak seasons, and this trend has prompted hotel operators to review their operational models. Several multi-brand hotel

chains have responded by expanding their portfolios to the affordable segment with younger travelers in mind. These hotels have utilized innovations such as mobile check-in services and more

open spaces and common areas for guests to socialize with each other, all at a lower price point," said Robert McIntosh, Executive Director at CBRE Hotels, Asia Pacific.

– *Phuket Gazette*

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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

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Phuket Gazette

The Phuket Gazette seeks to fill the following position:

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- ▶ Graphic-design skills and knowledge of Adobe Illustrator, PageMaker, Indesign, Photoshop required
- ▶ Freehand drawing and web-design skills a plus
- ▶ Responsible, hard-working, attention to detail
- ▶ Able to work in a fast-paced environment and meet deadlines
- ▶ 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:

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Phuket Gazette

Entrepreneur, connoisseur, philanthropist

By Nick Davies

BANGKOKIAN Naphatwong Niyomadul holds the prestigious title of Owner's Representative at Centara Blue Marine Resort & Spa Phuket, operated by Patong Cliff View Co Ltd. Well, you could say he is entitled to it and has a vested interest in the resort, which his family established in 2002.

At 36 years old, Mr Naphatwong already has a wealth of experience under his belt. He is a successful businessman in his own right, a connoisseur of fine wines and holds a position of Assistant Judge at the Region 8 Labor Court.

He studied at Assumption University in Bangkok and then went on to graduate from Queensland University of Technology in 2005 with a master's degree in business marketing.

Armed with his qualifications from 'Down Under', Mr Naphatwong returned home and jumped into the role of a sales representative for his family's resort.

The resort was the family's

first foothold in the hospitality industry at a time when the island's tourism was really taking off, especially in Patong, where the family had a piece of prime land next to the sea.

The family business was already a successful enterprise – the second largest plastics factory in southern Thailand – but it was time to diversify and develop the beachfront land.

Mr Naphatwong has added even more diversity to his family's legacy with his own business ventures as the owner of Suppatra Travel & Tour and as an authorized dealer of Good Spirit Bangkok – an importer of boutique French wine and champagne to Krabi, Phang Nga and Phuket.

Despite his business suc-

cesses, Mr Naphatwong says his best experience is being appointed as Assistant Judge for the labor court, where he has the chance to help others resolve disputes.

"I've learned a lot about doing business over the years. There have been betrayals and lost opportunities, which have

taught me to be more careful and to have more patience, but I also need to do something in return, for society," he says.

Ultimately though, Mr Naphatwong sees happiness as a mark of success.

"To me, the goal in business and in life is to have the support of family, friends and acquaintances, while being able to help others in need of support."

To me, the goal in business and life is to have the support of family, friends and acquaintances while being able to help others in need of support.

– Naphatwong Niyomadul, Owner's Representative at Centara Blue Marine Resort & Spa

I've learned a lot about doing business over the years. There have been betrayals and lost opportunities, which have taught me to be more careful and to have more patience.







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