

# Phuket Gazette

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‘WE WILL NOT IGNORE THEIR NEEDS AND HOPE THESE DONATIONS HELP’

## CITIZENS UNITE



Vehicles cross over flood-damaged Wang Yao Bridge using a 'Bailey Bridge' that has been installed to resume traffic. Photo: The Nation

**Phuket Governor has called on islanders to help their fellow countrymen in need**

By Kongleaphy Keam

BOTH private and government sectors in Phuket have stepped up to generously donate daily items of use for flood victims in the south of Thailand.

Most of the southern provinces have been adversely affected by floods following incessant rains this month, after which Phuket Governor Chokchai Dejamornthan launched a donation drive on January 6, incorporating a special unit for the purpose.

“The floods have affected Nakhon Sri Thammarat, Surat Thani, Phattalung and Trang provinces. People there are in dire need of food and drink, daily use household items in addition to basic shelter. We in Phuket will not ignore their needs, and

hope to help them with these donations,” said Gov Chokchai. “We would also appreciate donations of jet-skis.”

Phuket Provincial Police loaded two ten-wheelers with dried foods among other commodities to send to Nakhon Sri Thammarat, Chumphon and Surat Thani.

The Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) Phuket office has been swamped with donations from locals, with Phuket Vice Governor Sanit Sriwihok and DDPM staff standing by to receive and prepare them for distribution to the affected areas.

The Cabinet has given the green light for tax measures to relieve flood victims in the South, allowing donations for them to be made tax-deductible and extending tax-filing deadlines for those affected by the flooding. This measure is in addition to the normal tax deduction for donations, which stand at 50 per cent of the donated sum or asset value.

Prime Minister Gen Prayuth Chan-o-cha called it “the worst rainfall in more than 30 years”. As of press time, floods in the South have claimed 25 lives, with two

people reported missing and more than a million affected.

Torrential rains and flooding have caused widespread infrastructural damage in several provinces, totaling 218 road sections and 59 bridges nationwide. One of the worst-affected was the Wang Yao Bridge in Prachuap Khiri Khan, which was severely impacted by forest runoff, blocking access to other southern provinces for motorists. Officials responded by installing a ‘Bailey bridge’ – a portable, prefabricated, truss structure – near Bang Saphan Intersection.

Several airports in the South announced suspension of services due to flooded runways. The Public Health Ministry announced that 112 hospitals were affected and that more than 100 mobile medical teams had been sent to help victims along with 222,000 sets of medical supplies. A further 144,000 sets were on the way, with 300,000 additional sets to be sent soon. The Education Ministry also announced that at least 1,791 schools were affected, but only a few impacted severely enough to shut down.

*Additional reporting by The Nation.*

### Rajabhat student killed by sleeping taxi driver

A UNIVERSITY student was killed in a collision with a taxi whose driver fell asleep at the wheel, crossed over to the other side and ran the student’s bike into a waterway. Police arrived to find the bloody body of the student at the scene.

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### BUSINESS



The most exciting phase of the tech revolution is unfolding before our very eyes.

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Benefits and repercussions of the new proposed Phang Nga Airport.

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A step by step guide to becoming a professionally certified English teacher in Thailand.

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## LOCAL NEWS

# Briefly

### Thai man found hanged in Pa Klok

AN UNIDENTIFIED Thai man was found hanging in a house in Pa Klok on the morning of January 6.

Lt Sunan Petnhu of Thalang Police received the report about 9.20am.

"We saw the body of the 25 to 30-year-old man hanging by a rope on the first floor of the two-storey house. His left foot was on a chair while his right foot almost touched the ground," confirmed Lt Sunan.

"We believe he was hanging for about 12 hours before his body was discovered," Lt Sunan said. He also confirmed to *Gazette* reporters that there were no signs of a struggle on the body.

"Locals said they knew the man only as Mr Sorn who had moved into the house a few months ago. They said he always left for work in the morning and returned at night. This time, however, passersby found his body hanging instead," said Lt Sunan.

"At this stage, we do not know the reason behind his death. We are currently trying to identify the man so we can contact his relatives," Lt Sunan added.

– Winai Sarot

### Indian gets face bashed in Bangla fight

AN INDIAN tourist was injured after a friendly banter with bouncers turned into an argument on Bangla Road on January 7.

The tourist, named by police as Rauka Ayush, was punched in the face at least three times and was taken to Patong Hospital before police arrived at the scene.

"We called the bouncers, Sarawut Samroengkit, 23, and Wanchalerm Oattaisong, 24, to the station to meet with Mr Ayush and discuss what happened," Capt Yingyong Chuoykij of Patong Police told the *Gazette*.

"According to their statements and witnesses' accounts, the three men were enjoying each others' company when Mr Ayush was accidentally shoved. He lost

## Koh Racha undergoes environmental 'repairs'



Fifteen new buoys and sets of artificial coral were installed at Koh Racha on January 10, following the allocation and approval of a 300,000 baht budget for environmental preservation. Artificial coral was installed at four spots including Plub Pla Bay, Siam Bay, La Bay and Tue Bay. Officials have requested boats avoid the area for the next few days while 'repairs and installation work' is ongoing. Photo: DMCR

his temper and started insulting the bouncers, ignoring his brother's pleas to calm down."

The fight escalated with Mr Ayush pushing Mr Sarawut, who then punched him and kicked him to the ground.

"After knocking each other about a little more, the men stopped fighting and walked away from each other," Capt Yingyong added.

All three men were charged with assault and fined 1,000 baht each.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

### Farang caught on CCTV stealing glasses

POLICE are hunting for a foreigner who stole merchandise from a souvenir shop in Patong last week.

CCTV footage of the incident was shared on social media by Facebook user Wiyada Wittayatantithem on January 8, with a caption that read: "Please beware of this foreign woman. She stole things from a store in Patong and then signaled to a foreign man who picked her up on a big bike, after which the pair escaped."

Santi Pruekprathin, the owner of 'BJ Souvenir' said the stolen merchandise was only worth 380 baht and he does not intend to file charges of theft, but wants this to serve as a warning to other businesses and the general public. The video was widely shared on social media.

The owner of the shop is not pressing charges, but Maj Korapol said that letting them go allows people like them to give Phuket a bad reputation.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

### Watermelon crash kills one

ONE MAN was killed and another seriously injured when a watermelon delivery truck crashed into the steel pillars surrounding the Heroines' Monument early morning of January 6.

"The truck was stuck to the pillars, while pieces of broken fruit were strewn everywhere. Rescue workers had to separate the vehicle from the fence in order to help the occupants, one of whom was already dead," said Capt Kraisorn Boonprasop of Thalang Police.

The deceased was the driver of the truck, Somsit Reden, 43.

The passenger, Sarawuth Prawong, 18, sustained serious injuries to his back.

Mr Sarawuth told police that they were on their way back from Krabi to deliver four tonnes of watermelons in Patong. He believes that Mr Somsit might have lost control of the truck due to slippery road conditions.

– Winai Sarot

### Swiss man lost and found in Thalang

AN ELDERLY Swiss man who had wandered off from his Karon rental house two days ago was found in Thalang on January 6.

Rescue workers arrived at the scene after they received a call from locals regarding the man about 10am.

"The man was found by locals sitting at a grocery store in Baan Lipon. When people couldn't communicate with him, they gave him food and drinks and called us," a Srisoonthorn rescue worker told the *Gazette*. "We handed him over to the Tourist Police.

"We learned that his name is

Peter, 79, but he couldn't give us his address. In his pockets we found a piece of paper with a phone number written on it," confirmed Capt Ekkachai Siri of the Phuket Tourist Police.

"His landlord picked up the phone, saying that he had already filed a notice of his disappearance two days ago at Karon Police Station. He told us that Mr Peter had rented a house from him and lived alone."

"We took him to his house, and told the landlord to contact his relatives and ask them to live with him to avoid future incidents of a similar nature."

– Winai Sarot

### Locals appeal for help after multiple robberies

THALANG locals are urging police to investigate a spate of robberies that reportedly took place on several occasions last month in their area.

The inhabitants of the area on January 9 appealed to officials to attend to the matter, claiming that cash from over ten houses had been stolen already and asked why the burglars had been allowed to run loose all this time. They shared details of the incidents on social media.

Resident Sanya Thampan, 42, spoke to the *Gazette*.

"A burglar broke the louver behind my house and stole a wallet containing about 6,000 baht. He did not touch other valuables such as my iPhone and iPad, focusing solely on cash – perhaps he was afraid of getting tracked," said Mr Sanya.

"I filed a complaint but nobody came to check the house for evidence," he added.

Several other residents reported similar incidents with the same 'style' of burglary.

"We request police to take action before the thieves strike again. We also request the project owners to set up CCTV cameras, so that it is easy for police to track suspects in the future," said Mr Sanya.

Phuket Provincial Police Commander Teeraphol Thipjaroen ordered the Thalang Police superintendent to take action.

"We have sent officers to keep an eye on the area. I believe we will apprehend the suspects soon. We request all parties with evidence to step forward and file complaints with police, so we can continue our investigation," said Maj Gen Teeraphol.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

# University student killed by driver asleep at the wheel



The taxi driver told police officers that he fell asleep at the wheel while driving and was awoken by the impact of the crash. Photo: Winai Sarot

By Winai Sarot

A UNIVERSITY student was killed after a taxi, the driver of which reportedly fell asleep at the wheel, crashed into her motorbike in Thalang on the morning of January 9.

“The incident occurred about 7:30am on the road between Thalang and Baan Don. The victim, Jiraporn Plotpai, 21, was lying on the side of the road, her face and body covered in blood,” Lt Sunan Petnhu of Thalang Police told the *Gazette*.

Ms Jiraporn, a 4th year student at Phuket Rajabhat University, was rushed to Thalang Hospital where she was pronounced dead.

“At the scene, we also found a white Toyota Prius and Honda Scoopy-i motorbike, both damaged. The motorbike had fallen inside a waterway by the side of the road,” said Lt Sunan.

Police questioned the taxi driver, who they named as Anupong Jangang, age 30.

“Mr Anupong told us that he drives the taxi for a hotel in

Patong and was on his way back from the airport after dropping off some passengers. He said that he dozed off while driving and was awoken by the impact of the crash,” Lt Sunan said.

Mr Anupong added that shortly before the collision he had parked his car on the side of the road to take a nap and “couldn’t explain why he suddenly dozed off again”.

He was charged with reckless driving causing death and taken to Thalang Police Station for further legal processing.

# British woman found hanged



Ms Abigail’s body was found by her boyfriend when he returned to the apartment three hours later. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

A 27-YEAR-OLD British woman was found hanged in an apartment early morning of January 7 in Chalong.

It was reported that the woman, named ‘Abigail’, had had an argument with her boyfriend a few hours prior.

However, police confirmed that the British Embassy and her relatives have been notified.

“We received the report about 6:45am from her boyfriend,” Capt Somkiet Sarasit of Chalong Police told the *Gazette*. “He told us that the night before, they had both left the

apartment and gone out together, but after having an argument, Ms Abigail returned to her room about 3am. He returned to the room about 6am and found her hanging body.”

A white bed sheet-turned-noose was also present on the floor at the scene.

“We checked the room but found no sign of a struggle or ransacking. However, we have yet to conclude the case as we will question more people and look for more evidence first,” Capt Somkiet confirmed.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

# Daring fisherman dies in rough seas



Relatives warned the man not to go out due to stormy weather, but he went fishing anyway. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

THE corpse of a local fisherman was found near the Koh Sirey Bridge on the evening of January 9.

Locals gathered around the pier as the body of Wirot Thongrueng, 56, was brought

to shore.

“His capsized boat was found near a mangrove forest in the area, while his body was found near the bridge. His lungs were filled with water, so we sent the body to Vachira Phuket Hospital for further examination,” Maj Somchai Nooboon of Phuket City Police told the *Gazette*.

“Mr Wirot’s relatives told us that he left to go fishing about 4:30pm despite their warnings of rough seas at the time. He went on a small boat to fish around the Sirey Bay area.”

Maj Somchai reiterated the importance of heeding weather warnings, reminding onlookers that ignoring them could result in a similar “unfortunate end” for them.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong



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## Italian tourists disrespect Thai flags in Krabi

TWO Italian tourists were arrested on January 8 after CCTV footage showing them disrespecting the Thai flag and damaging public property in Krabi emerged on social media the day before.

The video shows the men – named Ian Gerstgrasser and Tobias Gamper – pulling down the flags and dragging them.

The footage was shared on Facebook, with several commentators demanding punishments for both men, saying they had disrespected the Kingdom and should be held accountable. Comments also included veiled threats, warning the men to ‘be careful on the streets of Thailand’.

Following their arrest, both men apologized to the police and public, claiming that they were drunk and not in control of their actions. They also mentioned in their apology that they didn’t know the law existed as the same didn’t apply back in Italy.

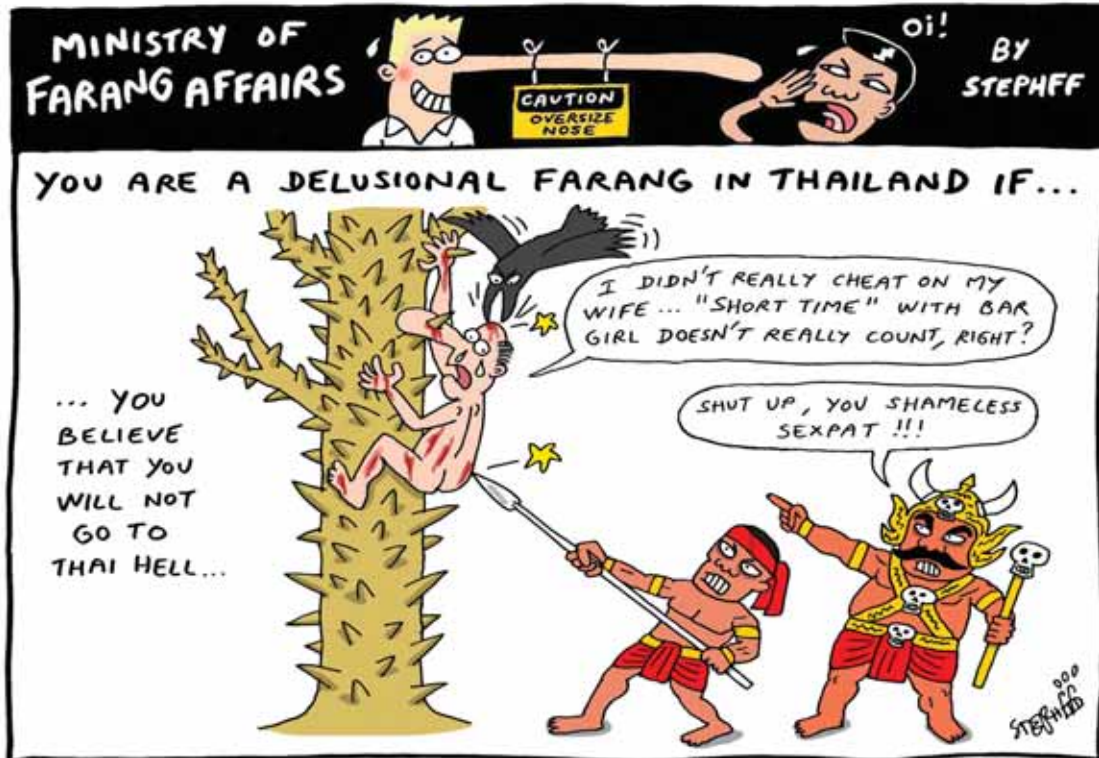
“Both men have been charged with property damage, and with damaging and disrespecting the national flag,” said Lt Kunsawai Kunno of Krabi City Police.

The Thai Flag Act stipulates a six-month prison term and a 1,000-baht fine. Thai criminal law states that anyone found guilty of desecrating flags or state symbols is subject to a jail term not exceeding two years, a fine up to 4,000 baht, or both.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

## Trang-bound bus flips, 23 injured

A BUS headed from Phuket to Trang flipped on its side and crashed into a power pole in Krabi on the night of January 6, injuring the driver and 22 passengers on board.



The crash took place on Petch Kasem Road, and Capt Suwit Kaewpreecha of Ao Luek Police received the report about 8:30pm.

“It happened on a straight road with no turns, but some part of it is under construction. When we arrived, we saw the pink and white colored bus lying on its side in a small watery ditch. It was badly damaged as it had also hit an electric pole – people were struggling to find their way out of it and were crying in pain,” said the captain.

Rescue workers pulled all the passengers out of the wreckage. Twenty-one were reported to have minor to medium injuries and one woman was seriously injured. They were rushed to Ao Luek Hospital, where all were discharged except one woman who is being treated for a serious hip injury.

“The 58-year-old bus driver, named Jaran Piyawet, also received minor injuries,” confirmed Capt Suwit. “He said that the bus’s wheel hit something on the road. He lost control and the bus careened into the electric pole and flipped on its side.”

Mr Jaran was charged with reckless driving causing injury.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

## NATIONAL NEWS Briefly

### Phuket escapee found in Maha Sarakham

A 19-YEAR-OLD robbery suspect who escaped a police station while being interrogated for his crime was finally arrested on January 5 in the northern province of Maha Sarakham.

The suspect, named as Chaiwalan Pennuanong, was first arrested on December 13 of last year, after he and his accomplice stole a girl’s bag – the girl subsequently chased them down and crashed into their motorbike to stop them.

The very next day it was reported that he had escaped, after which police announced a 20,000 baht reward to anyone who helped track him down.

Police discovered that Mr Chaiwalan had fled to hide at his girlfriend’s relative’s house in Maha Sarakham Province.

“We sent undercover officers to observe him and arrested him at the house about 8pm last night,” confirmed Lt Col Prawit Engchuan of Region 8 Police. “He told us he had escaped because he wanted freedom and didn’t want to spend time in jail. He also said he had thought of heading to Isaan so police wouldn’t find him.”

“He has been taken to Phuket City Police Station for legal processing.”

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

## Officer charged with racketeering in police exam

A BANGKOK Thesakij city regulation enforcement officer surrendered to police on January 10 and confessed to arranging cheating during the police entrance exams last month, city police chief Pol Lt-General Sanit Mahathaworn said.

The move followed a complaint by Metropolitan Police Bureau’s Training Centre chief Pol Colonel Uthen Nuiphin on January 8 about officer Jiraphot Plaidoung and 346 applicants seeking to be police. Another 178 applicants are expected to face a similar complaint soon.

Gen Sanit said that during a one-hour interrogation, Mr Jiraphot admitted he had offered to facilitate cheating on entrance exams to people who were attending tutorial schools in Pathumwan to qualify as police and state officials. He said he had been operating the scheme for about a year, adding that many such cheating groups operate in Thailand, according to police.

Police have charged Mr Jiraphot with racketeering, giving false information to police and violating the Computer Crime Act.

Deputy city chief Pol Maj-General Adul Narongsak, head of the sub-panel supervising the test, said that police had interviewed 12 people of interest. He said that the initial investigation revealed as many as 300 people could be involved.

A source in the investigation

team said Mr Jiraphot would engage intelligent students at various tutorial schools to take the police test and show the answers to his customers in exchange for 5,000-20,000 baht per head.

The discovery of cheating prompted national police chief Pol General Chakthip Chaijinda to order acting deputy Pol General Dechnarong Suticharnbancha, who oversees police recruitment policy, to investigate the Metropolitan Police Bureau, Provincial Police regions 1 to 9, the Southern Border Provinces Police Bureau and the Border Patrol Police Bureau to determine if there had been further dishonesty.

Gen Chakthip said Gen Dechnarong reported that the Metropolitan Police Bureau and the Provincial Police Region 7, had been affected by similar cheating schemes.

The city police exam, held at Ramkhamhaeng University’s Bang Na and Hua Mark campuses, was held to recruit 1,800 officers out of 13,000 applicants.

Medical students were allegedly paid to sit in at the exams and sabotage their own answers. They got the lowest scores to avoid being caught, but some later admitted they had participated in cheating.

– *The Nation*

## Passenger vans to be reduced by 2019

AS MANY as 40,000 inter-provincial passenger vans could be taken off Thailand’s roads by 2019 because they are not appropriate for public transportation, Deputy Prime Minister Wisanu Krue-Ngam said on January 6.

PM Wisanu said that the Transport Ministry’s proposal to use Article 44 of the interim charter to immediately tackle the problem with passenger vans did not solely stem from the horrific crash in Chonburi on January 2, which killed 25 people and injured two others.

He said the Royal Thai Police had, earlier this week, proposed an amendment to the Land Traffic Act for the Cabinet’s approval, while another road safety committee chaired by the Deputy PM General Prawit Wongsuwan presented road safety measures to the Cabinet last October.

– *Phuket Gazette*

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# Third phase of the tech revolution



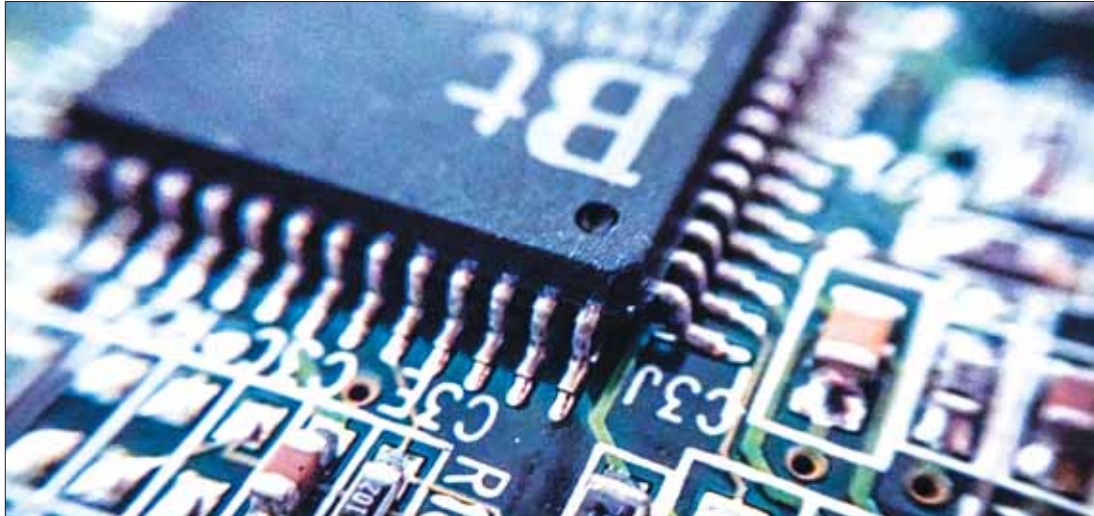
**Finance**

**By Don Freeman**

WHILE much of the world has been focused on or distracted by Brexit, problems in Europe and the Middle East and of course the US elections, a technology revolution has quietly marched onward and into its most important phase. This phase is not being recognized by the mainstream media which is so focused on making predictions about where the market will end up in 2017. The tech revolution is alive and well and just now beginning its third phase. This is an exciting time to be an investor.

The 1920s were the 'birth phase' of an industrial revolution with stocks in sectors like the automotive, aviation, radio and steel industries being big drivers for a bull stock market and a growing economy. When the 1929 crash occurred during a subsequent 'turbulence phase', stocks in these particular industries fell off hard for the next couple of years until they bottomed and began a slow, but long-term rise in a final 'build-out phase' lasting from the 1930s until the 1950s.

Today, there is a technology revolution unfolding. In the 1970s and 1980s, the basic hard-



The third phase of the technology revolution is unfolding in front of our very eyes. Photo: aotaro

ware and software programming foundation for this revolution were developed and then accelerated in the 1990s as the internet began to take off. This 'birth phase' saw stocks in technology sectors improve. However, the 2000 dot com bubble bursting resulted in more than a decade of choppy and largely sideways action for the survivors.

We are now in a 'build-out' or expansion phase that could last for another 10-20+ years – just like the previous industrial revolution. This phase began with major semiconductor indices taking off around 2013, but then dipping for two years in a period that saw plenty of uncertainty for the overall stock

market. However, last November, semiconductors took out their 2015 high and moved to break above their dot com highs.

We need semiconductors to lead as they are the backbone for any kind of technology revolution and especially one that is being driven by 'connected' devices that power everything from Uber to home automation systems and perhaps in the future, driverless cars.

A closer look at key semiconductor stocks and their technical charts shows most of them largely cooling off in a so-called cup and handle chart pattern (basically a big 'U' followed by a smaller dip resembling a handle) for the roughly 16 year period from the dot com bust

until this year. Cup and handle chart patterns are not what you see at market tops where the market is about to crash as they are usually bullish indicators forming bases or foundations for much greater future growth.

It's not just semiconductor stocks that are producing cup and handle charts as other key technology stocks like Microsoft Corporation (NASDAQ: MSFT), cloud-based stocks like Priceline Group (NASDAQ: PCLN) and social media stocks like Facebook (NASDAQ: FB) have similar bullish chart patterns.

We also need to keep an eye on IPOs in new and emerging industries that help to change the way consumers behave. For

one, Global online dating stock Match Group (NASDAQ: MTCH) is at the forefront of a global trend toward the use of dating apps or websites. The stock had a November 2015 IPO and shares have since doubled from a post-IPO low to a level back above their closing price for retail investors.

What stocks like Match Group do is only the beginning, as at some point in the future, I envision a world where you use an app on a connected device to call a driverless car to pick you up and take you anywhere, much like Uber but without the driver. And while being driven, you can use your devices to do everything from ordering your groceries or next meal online for home delivery to telling your appliances, heat or A/C to be ready for when you return home.

*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 freemancapital@gmail.com*

## Floods will not derail economy

THE southern floods should inflict losses of about 15 billion baht, not enough to derail the country's economic growth this year, according to the Joint Standing Committee on Commerce, Industry and Banking.

"The inundation in the south should have only a passing impact on the economy. Overall, the Thai economy is expected to grow stronger from last year to 3.5-4 per cent this year," Isara Vongkusolkit, chairman of Thai Chamber of Commerce and of the joint standing committee, said on January 9 after the committee's monthly meeting.

To help flood victims in the South, the committee agreed to donate 1 million baht to the Interior Ministry. The Thai Bankers Association will also discuss of-

fering support such as a stretching out of payments, or soft loans for maintenance to customers suffering from the flood.

To ensure consumers have not been cheated by traders, the Commerce Ministry sent out teams to inspect prices of goods in the southern provinces that were hit by the flooding.

The Agriculture Ministry reported that the flood had affected 391,568 farmers and damaged 982,694 rai of farmland.

Impaired rubber plantations account for 46 per cent or 531,876 rai of the total of 11.38 million rai. Of the remaining areas, 251,348 rai were for paddy fields, 44,571 rai for aquaculture, 21,673 rai for other crops and 14,878 rai for livestock.

– The Nation



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**Phuket Gazette**

# Misleading journalism

AS A regional tourism and transport hub, Phuket has an important role to play in easing the hardship of the hundreds of thousands of people who have been affected by the worst flooding in the Thai south in decades [see cover story].

Our island is fortunate to have been spared the kind of severe flooding that has stricken much of the region in recent days and weeks – with no apparent end in sight as this edition goes to print. Unfortunately, coverage of the inundation in the international media has been somewhat misleading.

Reports have predictably focused on the death toll, with the figure having surpassed 25 lives at the latest count.

In reality, few deaths have been the direct result of people drowning in raging floodwaters. In fact, the numbers are probably fewer those attributed to road deaths in the region during the recent holiday safety campaign. Of course, the total amount of human misery and property loss will be far higher. It continues to grow with each passing day as floodwaters get dirtier, access to essential supplies remains cut off, and local economies remain in a virtual state of suspended animation.

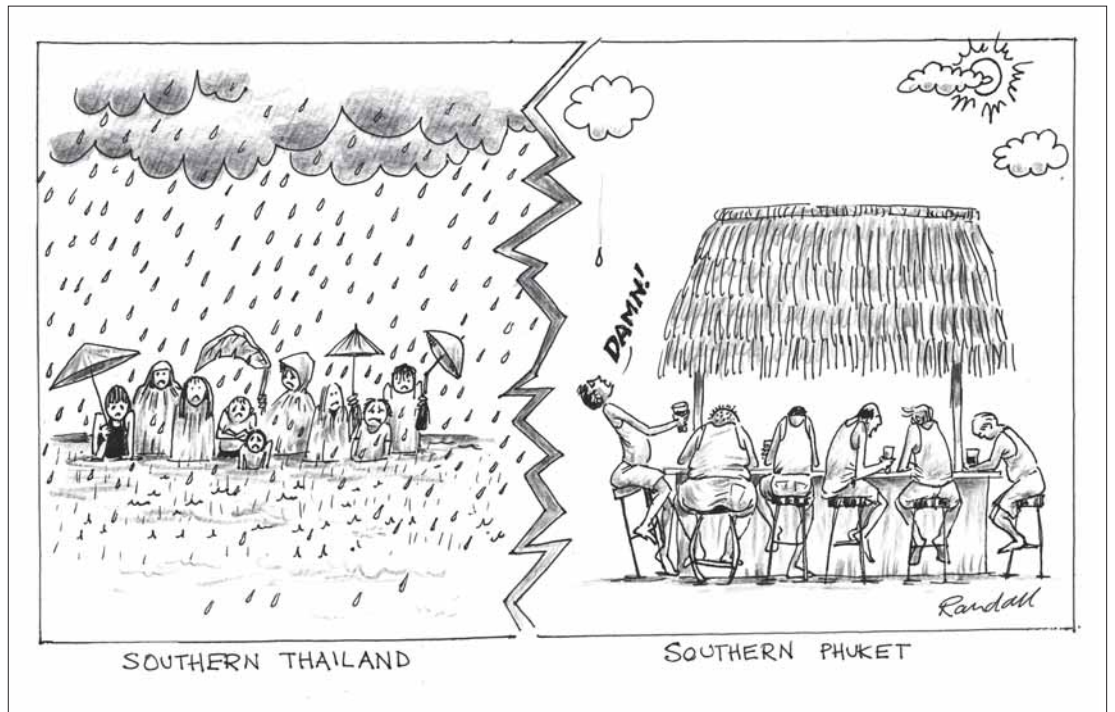
Other reports, including some by major international news agencies, incorrectly stated that heavy rain was uncharacteristic to the Thai south this time of year.

The climate in the Isthmus of Kra is characterized by an annual reversal in monsoonal flow. From May to November, a westerly monsoon predominates, bringing copious amounts of rainfall to Phuket and other Andaman Coast provinces.

It is during this period that the weather on the Gulf Coast tends to be sunny and dry. During the reversal, the Gulf Coast gets hammered from the East and the Andaman Coast tends to enjoy nice, relatively dry conditions.

It is also important to keep in mind that the recent flooding stems more from bad land-use management and planning as it does from any statistical rainfall anomaly.

From large-scale effects such as global warming, all the way down to bad individual decision making, the recent flooding once again reveals that short-sighted, profit-driven processes need to be replaced with more forward looking ones to better deal with the realities that confront us. Welcome to 2017.



## No excuse for disrespect

*Re: Two Italians charged for disrespecting Thai flag, Jan 10*

They're not just stupid, they're liars too. Disrespecting the flag or any other national symbol, it's an offense in Italy too. Damaging properties (and a flag is someone's property, right?), it's a crime too, everywhere in the world. They have no excuses, and their apologies, after they get caught are fake as a 25 baht note.

As they look quite young, I wouldn't suggest jail time and death sentence, perhaps a couple of months of hard working for the community they offended would be more appropriate, something like cleaning the beaches and roads, or caring for elders.

Francesco Greco  
Facebook

### Need for better driver education

*Re: Phuket bus flips and crashes in Krabi, Jan 7*

I took the bus from Hat Yai to Phuket – it is not my first time in Phuket and I drive every day here. I really thought we would crash at some point so seeing that news is not at all surprising, the bus was driving 105 km/h, driver was overtaking cars on the right, on the left and used its horn to make other drivers move their way out of the lane. He braked really hard many times and, of course, blamed others drivers, was not taking any safety distance, used his phone while speeding and nobody inside the bus was wearing a seatbelt or seemed concerned about it.

This guy did everything that

### Letters to the Editor

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

one reasonable man wouldn't do. This is just the mentality to change. It's like raising a kid and showing him all the bad stuffs; don't expect them to become well educated and behave. The answer is simple, however. Just enforce driving licence and get some government people to take the bus and see by themselves then remove the license of nearly half of the 'professional' drivers until they learn what is to drive and not racing.

Mathieu Matel  
Facebook

### Thieves should not be allowed back

*Re: Foreigners caught stealing motorbike on CCTV, Jan 5*

I hope police catch them and throw the book at them, a big fine and jail time so they can become honorary katoeys, with passports stamped never to come back. I hope Border Control keeps an eye out for them, and possibly even shave their beards off.

Bazza  
Gazette forum

### Thanks for the newest boat wreck

*Re: Four rescued after boat sinks in stormy weather, Jan 9*

Good. Another death trap goes to the bottom with no tour-

ists on board. Another untrained/unqualified idiot with no boat makes the tourists a tiny bit safer. Just hope there was not too much fuel on board to pollute the sea with. These boats are death traps in perfect conditions. All we can say is thanks for the new wreck.

Simon Lomas  
Facebook

### Phuket pick-ups far too overloaded

*Re: One dead, one severely injured in Phuket truck crash, Jan 6*

A quadruple overload on a vehicle with ox-cart technology is asking for trouble. The problem is that those pick-ups are loaded by volume capacity, which is easily expanded by dubious constructions, not by allowed maximum weight. Four tons opposed to the legal limit of one tonne – you get what you ask for.

Fritz Pinguin  
Gazette forum

### Dozing off seems to be the latest excuse

*Re: Phuket university student killed by driver who fell asleep, Jan 9*

Hopefully the driver was tested but I doubt it. 'Dozing off' is starting to rate right up with 'brake failure' as an excuse. There were a number of incidents recently, which indicate a lack of due care and attention.

Mister Ree  
Gazette forum

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# Enjoy the serenity while it lasts

**Across the Land**  
By Amy Koh

IT'S been three months since the new Phuket International Airport terminal was officially opened, but the moans and groans about the efficiency of the airport remain, with passengers complaining of long delays at immigration counters – whether it be inbound or outbound.

Even the domestic terminal has seen long queues waiting for luggage, and a chaos of cars, taxis and limousines upon exiting the terminal, either picking up passengers or dropping them off.

Last year, passenger arrivals at Phuket International airport exceeded the six million mark and it is expected that this year that would be surpassed easily.

The other nearest airport is Krabi International airport, which is at least a two-hours drive away, with passenger arrivals close to the two million mark.

A proposal to build a new airport just off Phuket into



A new airport at Phang Nga will assist the overloaded Phuket International airport by off loading some flights and passengers who opt for the peace and quiet that Khao Lak has to offer. Photo: Gazette file

Phang Nga province has been put forward. The proposed site is on a 2,000 rai (3.2 million sqm) land plot in the Thai Muang district, Phang Nga. More detailed information has yet to be released of the proposed airport, which would be named Phang Nga Andaman International Airport.

Tourism industry sources have confirmed that Bangkok Airways, the current operator of

Koh Samui International airport, are the ones behind the negotiations with Phang Nga provincial authorities.

Indeed, welcoming news for Phang Nga province and it is expected that beach land prices along the coast from Sarasin Bridge all the way to Khao Lak would increase and be snapped up, with foreign investors and international hotels brands all jockeying for a position.

A prominent Thai developer has begun development on a mixed use development of luxury residential and vacation villa estate in Phang Nga. With the news of a potential airport in the province, this will surely spruce the real estate market there.

Currently, along the west coast of Phang Nga, beachfront land is still available at relatively cheaper prices than in

Phuket. It is expected that more investment development, especially in the hotel sectors, will follow with the news of the proposed airport.

Hotels and businesses in Khao Lak will be the biggest beneficiaries of the proposed airport as it will cut down travel time from Phuket International airport and bring the passengers directly into the province.

This will also assist the overloaded Phuket International airport by off loading some flights and passengers who decide to opt for the peace and quiet that Khao Lak has to offer.

With the proposed airport, the potential for growth in the area will now be on the fast track.

The quiet tranquility it is known for will soon disappear, so those wanting to savor how Khao Lak really is should head there soon before it turns into another Phuket.

Amy Koh is the sales manager of Engel & Voelkers Phuket. [www.engelvoelkers.com/en/phuket](http://www.engelvoelkers.com/en/phuket)

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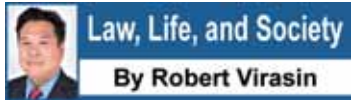
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# Becoming a teacher in Thailand



Law, Life, and Society  
By Robert Virasin

IF THERE is one thing that impels young professionals to come and visit Thailand, I believe it's the conception of many that the grass looks greener on this side of the world. Indeed, Thailand offers vast employment opportunities to foreigners, especially in the field of education. I recall being reluctant and interested at the same time as I was looking into the possibility of becoming a teacher about a year ago.

When I first came to Thailand, I worked as a manager at an international law firm in Bangkok for two and a half years. My decision to shift to a different career was swayed greatly by many different elements and, as corny as it may sound, my passion for teaching has been a major factor. I gradually developed interest when I was asked to teach basic English to a small youth group in our church for two months. That's when I realized that I loved teaching. Then I thought to myself that perhaps, I can be a real, professional teacher in Thailand.

Subsequently, I started inquiring and researching on how I could securely get a teaching job if I were to resign from my previous position. I discovered that it was not as easy as I thought and would take time. The first thing I did was return to my home



Many schools in Thailand require foreigners who are non-teacher by profession to have relevant training and teaching certificates before their applications can get considered. Photo: Ian M/ Public Domain

country to retrieve my diploma and official transcripts from the university where I obtained my Bachelor's Degree. However, more than just academic credentials are required to meet the qualifications to become a professional teacher.

Many schools in Thailand require foreigners who are non-teacher by profession to have some sort of relevant training and teaching certificates before their applications can get considered. After I left my previous company, I enrolled in a training center in Bangkok and took a 4-week Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) program. An integral part of this course is to complete an 8-hour

practical teaching requirement with different educational levels. This experience was quite helpful for me, as it gave me an idea of the typical classroom setting in Thailand. The critical understanding of the job has also enabled me to develop practical teaching techniques which I then use and apply later on in my career.

After having obtained my TEFL certificate, I felt more than ready to begin job hunting. I thought that it would be difficult for me to obtain a job because the school year had already started and I am not considered a 'native English speaker' even though I have spoken English my entire life, but I was fortunate to

find the right school about a week after I completed my course.

I was offered positions at three different schools in Thailand, but I chose a school located in the province of Rayong. It is not the ideal location if you like living in a city, but the school is near the beach and the people are very nice. I was lucky that I had entered Thailand on a Non-B visa for my previous employment. Those who entered Thailand on another type of visa would have to leave the country and apply for a Non-B visa at an outside Thai consulate and then re-enter Thailand.

About a week after I started my employment with the

school, I was informed by my agency that I'd need to take and pass the TOEIC exam as a requirement for non-native English speakers. I had to take a day off from my work since the TOEIC test center is in Bangkok and my exam was scheduled on a Wednesday. I made the trip from Rayong to Thailand in the middle of the week and took the exam. I was happy that I passed the exam.

I was then instructed by my agency to prepare documents from my university, so they can start my teaching licence application. The agency where I obtained my TEFL from proved to be quite helpful and accommodating during this process. Within a short period of time, I obtained my teaching certificate.

To legally become a teacher in Thailand demands a significant and sometimes an exigent process. The task of acquiring the proper visa and work permit can be time consuming and stressful. Although there are some who work in Thai schools without the proper visa and permits, it is still far more sensible to be prepared and compliant. After all, no one would want to end up in a bad situation in case they get caught and remanded by the Thai authorities.

Robert R Virasin is a licenced US Attorney and managing director of Virasin & Partners. He can be reached at [www.virasin.com](http://www.virasin.com). John Guzman is a teacher at a public high school in Rayong, Thailand.

## Siriraj Hospital aims to enhance cancer survival rates

SIRIRAJ Hospital aims to greatly boost the chances of survival for breast cancer patients within the next five years, one of its senior medical experts said on January 9.

Dr Prasit Watanapa, dean and director of Mahidol University's Siriraj Medical School, said the faculty aimed to 'defeat' breast cancer completely for first stage cancer patients with a 100-per-cent survival rate.

"For second-stage and third-stage patients, the survival rates should exceed 90 per cent and 80 per cent respectively," he added. The dean spoke at a press conference held at the hospital.

He said that just like elsewhere in the world, breast cancer was most prevalent among women in Thailand, killing more than 10,000 pa-



The hospital aims to 'defeat' breast cancer completely for first-stage cancer patients. Photo: The Nation

tients each year.

The doctor said Siriraj Hospital had successfully improved its techniques for treating the cancer to meet international standards.

Dr Pornchai Ochareonrat, chief of the hospital's Department of Head, Neck and Breast Surgery, also said that Siriraj had achieved an average survival rate of 92.1 per cent for

patients treated over five years, and 85.6 per cent for those treated over 10 years.

According to Dr Pornchai, the United Kingdom has achieved a survival rate of 89.6

per cent for five years of treatment and 79 per cent for 10 years.

"This shows that Siriraj Hospital's success rate is comparable to international standards," he added.

Dr Pornchai added that the average survival rate for breast cancer patients in wealthy countries was 80 per cent, compared to 60 per cent for middle-income countries and 40 per cent for low-income countries.

The hospital conducted a study on 3,435 breast cancer patients treated at Siriraj Hospital between 2003 and 2011. The average age of the patients was 51, the youngest patient was 24 years old and the oldest patient was 86 years old, Dr Pornchai concluded.

- The Nation



# Comparing two great Thai monarchs

AN examination of the history of Thailand's monarchy reveals two monarchs who truly stand out in their noble efforts to serve the Thai nation and people – Their Majesties King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) and King Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama IX), grandfather and grandson by relation.

Although they ruled during different periods and under different circumstances, their reigns shared many common features.

Both embraced the value of education and pursued further studies in science and political science. Both inherited the throne at relatively young ages, but instead of immediately acceding to the throne, took time to travel overseas to learn about Western civilization, modern technology and systems of governance.

Adopting the vast knowledge and expertise from their travels, King Chulalongkorn and King Bhumibol were determined to modernize the nation in order to



Left: His Majesty King Chulalongkorn (Rama V). Photo: Bain News Service/ Public Domain. Right: His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama IX). Photo: Gazette file



keep up with the global standards of their respective eras.

King Chulalongkorn recognized the limitations of riverboats commonly used for transport by Thais and rapidly developed the country's railway system. This helped prepare the

nation to face the challenges of the early 20th century.

Similarly, King Bhumibol initiated projects to build roadways to the country's most remote and isolated regions.

King Chulalongkorn built the country's first hospital, whereas

King Bhumibol created the Kingdom's first medical school and established a national education system. Rama V established a number of royal projects to expand knowledge and innovation in health, welfare, and agriculture, where the late

King Bhumibol set up numerous scholarship programs, supported directly by his private funds.

Both used their wisdom and diplomatic skills to protect the country's sovereignty from negative external influences.

Rama V was careful in his dealings with foreign countries and used his knowledge, diplomacy and negotiation skills to avoid any form of colonization by foreign powers.

Likewise, King Bhumibol faced challenges posed by the spread of communism during the 1960s and 1970s. He helped to see Thailand through this difficult period, enabling it to reemerge stronger with its constitutional monarchy still intact.

There is no doubt that Rama V and Rama IX epitomize great leadership and demonstrate how benevolent but powerful heads of state can contribute to the betterment of their country and people.

– *The Nation*

## Teaching surpasses medicine as most popular career choice

MOST Thai children now want to become teachers when they finish their studies, according to the 8th Annual Career Survey of Thai Children conducted by Adecco Group, edging a career as a doctor into second spot after seven years at the top.

The 'coolest' job for youngsters is being a soldier, while parents remain their biggest idols.

Most children said they dreamed of becoming teachers because they wanted to educate youngsters and teach them to be good people.

A career as a doctor was knocked into second place for the first time, followed by soldier, athlete and police officer, the survey suggested.

Some children in the survey said they wanted to be farmers, having been inspired by the work and concepts of His Majesty the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej. They also said they would like to serve as a soldier for the King.

When asked about the best/coolest job they could imagine, being a soldier came out on top, followed by police officer, doctor, footballer and teacher.

Asked the first three things they would do if they were the prime minister of Thailand, most said they would develop the country, help people in general and those in need, and reform Thailand's education system.

Many children said they would provide free education and medical treatment for everyone.

According to the survey, mathematics is the most popular subject at school, with physical education, Thai language, computer studies and English also among the most-liked subjects.

"The survey reflects the thoughts of children that they want to educate others and have strong commitment to teach others to be good people," said Tidarat Kancha-nawat, regional director Thailand and Vietnam, Adecco Group Thailand.

"Therefore, both the public and private sector should work together to develop a better education system for our children, along with ethics, to ensure they grow up as intelligent and decent people."

– *The Nation*





— X —

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### Senior Marketing Manager (SMM) & Marketing Manager (MM)

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 Location: Bangkok or Phuket

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

The marketing department's mission is to create and manage a 360° marketing programme to enhance brand awareness, direct consumers to the company's digital platforms and increase sales at both the retail stores and e-com.

**Requirements:**

- SMM – have a minimum of 15 years relevant experience
- MM – have a minimum of 10 years relevant experience
- Must have a good understanding of the various online and off-line marketing platforms
- Should be creative, well organized and be comfortable in multi-tasking
- Be fluent in English – both written and spoken

**Job responsibilities:**

- Create and manage a 360° marketing programme
- Coordinate with the company's various external marketing agencies
- Be fully updated with competitors' activities
- Be in regular communication with and visit company stores
- Coordinate and keep company HO and retail team fully informed of planned marketing activities

### Senior Designer (SD) & Designer (DD)

Department: Graphic / Product Design  
 Salary: SD – up to THB100,000 and DD – up to THB60,000 per month  
 Location: Bangkok or Phuket

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

The designer's mission is to understand the brand DNA and create ongoing graphic work as needed by the brand, e.g. posters, etc., and designs for new fashion accessory products.

**Requirements:**

- SD – have a minimum of 10 years relevant experience
- DD – have a minimum of 7 years relevant experience
- Must have a good understanding of the various programs to create and develop such artwork
- Should be creative, well organized and be comfortable in multi-tasking
- Be fluent in English – both written and spoken

**Job responsibilities:** Create and manage all the design needs of the company

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# There's no place like home

By Sahar Aftab Paliwala

TARA Sudlow is a Perth native who moved to Phuket 22 years ago, and for the last 13 years, has been running her own real estate company in Phuket.

"I first visited Phuket in 1986 at the age of 14. I was a very shy kid back then, always hanging around my mother. Then, I met this amazing Thai family and instantly formed an intense connection with Thailand," says Tara.

"I met them through friends of my father and since the moment we met, they've taken me under their wing. I used to spend all my time with them when I visited Phuket, and they've been there whenever I needed them, asking for nothing in return."

After visiting Phuket a few more times with her family, Tara decided, at the end of four years of university, to accept a job at Laguna Phuket as a tennis instructor in 1996.

"I taught tennis at Laguna Beach Resort for six months. I'd finished my studies and be-

fore getting into a full time career, I wanted to try it out. I hadn't been to Phuket in five years at that point. My boyfriend at the time had asked me to marry him, so I was contemplating that and this seemed like a perfect opportunity to get some perspective. Like I said, I'd always had a special connection with Thailand and sure enough, once I came here, I just couldn't leave," she says.

Her personality, if you had to describe it in one word, is quirky.

"I have no filter to what I say, so I'm always getting myself in trouble," she smiles. "I call myself a 'Northwest snob'. I've lived in the area around Laguna and Bang Tao since I've been here. I lived in Kamala for a very short time, but Laguna is where I belong."

For someone who's been in Phuket as long as Tara has, she doesn't get around very much.

"It took me 10 years just to go to Phi Phi island and that too for some work. I first went to James Bond Island in 1986 – it was beautiful and pristine, but when I went back again in

1996, it had changed completely. Even back then, there were shells for sale and the area had already started to lose some of its beauty," says Tara.

Although she's been here for more than two decades, Tara admits that everything wasn't always smooth sailing, but she loves it just the same.

"At first, I had trouble adjusting to the weather. It was oppressively hot and I was tired all the time. For the first time in my life, I started taking afternoon naps. I've always hated the cold, but it took me some time to adjust to the heat," she says.

"I didn't even speak Thai for the first five years I was here. It was all very confusing and loud, until I learned the language. It took me a long time because I was embarrassed and scared of making a mistake. Even now, if I go to a new place, Thai people are always surprised to hear me speak their language."

After Laguna, Tara worked at a timeshare company, where she was running the administration department. After a brief

return to Australia, she was back at Laguna, this time working for the Kid's Club. Since setting up her own business, however, she has had more time to spend with her family in Australia, who also visit her quite often.

"I don't want to say 'I've had enough of Thailand' and I don't see myself moving back, but things have cer-

tainly changed. Last year, I lost some of my closest friends who moved back to Australia because of visa issues," says Tara.

"Now, I've got no one who's been here since the very beginning, but as for me – I just can't see myself severing any connections with Thailand."





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