

Phuket Gazette

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‘WE CAN’T STAND TO WATCH PEOPLE DYING ON OUR BEACHES’

BUDGET SLASHED

Concerns aired by local and international community regarding the PLC budget cut

By Kongleaphy Keam

THE quality and number of lifeguards in Phuket will remain unaffected in the new contract despite a 10 per cent cut in the budget, the president of the Phuket Lifeguard Club (PLC) told the *Gazette* on January 16.

Public concern about the budget cut for Phuket’s lifeguards has been voiced by both the local and international communities here, with the California-based ‘International Surf Lifesaving Association’ (ISLA) sending a letter to Prime Minister Gen Prayuth Chan-o-cha earlier this month, stating that the budget cut will cost Phuket hundreds of lives.

“The ISLA is aware that the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (PPAO) has, for the last 14 years, provided money for lifesaving services at many of Phuket’s beaches. However, our initial review indicates the services delivered do not meet international standards. In addition, the private tender model for providing this essential public safety service has resulted in numerous gaps of Lifeguard coverage over the last seven years,” the letter reads.

“The time periods without lifesaving services have ranged from a few weeks in some years, to months in others. These lapses in service leave Phuket’s dangerous ocean waters unguarded, and subjects Thai citizens and visitors to an even higher risk of drowning.

“ISLA wishes to voice strong opposition to the PPAO’s plan to reduce funding for Phuket’s lifeguards, when in reality much more needs to be done to bring Phuket’s lifeguarding service up to international standards.

“ISLA stands ready to assist in the development and advancement of professional lifesaving in Thailand. We can provide additional training and rescue equipment free of charge to help reduce the high number of preventable drowning cases in Phuket, but we (and the Thai Life-



PLC Chief says there will be no delay in signing the contract this year, thus no gap will occur between expiration of the old contract and enforcement of the new one. Photo: Gazette file

guards) also need your support.”

PLC President Prathaiyut Chuayuan addressed both concerns, saying that they had solved the issue of accepting a lower amount of money, for doing the same job, by acquiring outside sponsors for the purpose.

“I have been doing this for five years. Last year, the PPAO suddenly reduced the budget from 22 million baht to 19.8mn baht. Although they have the right to do that, it was still a shock for us. Since no one else took action, we had to do it ourselves,” Mr Prathaiyut said. “We can’t stand to watch people dying on our beaches – money is important, but lives are more important.”

He added that although they had not officially been offered any help from ISLA, they would be happy to accept it if provided.

“As far as the gap between expiration of the old contract and signing of the new one is concerned, we have already submit-

ted all the documents and are waiting for the PPAO to approve them,” PLC President Prathaiyut told *Gazette* reporters.

Nararit Touyon from the Tourist Department of the PPAO said that the process is nearing conclusion, and barring any unexpected events, they foresee no gap between the expiration of the old contract on January 19 and the new one taking effect the next day.

The gap between old and new contracts has been a problem for many years, as Phuket’s beaches are left unmanned during the transition period. The latest contract was signed in March 2016, for a period of 10 months.

The year before, contract signing was delayed due to disagreement between the PLC and PPAO over the requirement for bidders on the contract to put down a 5 per cent deposit, and before that, Phuket’s beaches went unguarded for almost a month, following lifeguards walking off due to disagreement about contract terms.

Czech pedo arrested for HIV-infected sexual crimes

A nationwide search for a man wanted by Interpol led to a rented apartment in Cherng Talay. He was being hunted for allegedly having sex with a minor and dissipating his disease to Thai women and homosexuals.

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BUSINESS



The future of business lies in the ‘secret’ workings of the social media.

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PROPERTY



Make sure your property sells with as few complications as possible.

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LIFE&STYLE



If natural forests still existed in Thailand, perhaps the floods would not been as severe.

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LOCAL NEWS

Briefly

Brit couple say they were raped on New Year's

A BRITISH couple have alleged that they were robbed and raped while visiting Phuket during the Christmas and New Year's holidays.

The couple, who were named by *Belfast Live* as Gerald Drumgoole and Michael Burnett, said they were attacked and robbed of 400 pounds and their iPhones after their drinks were spiked at a Phuket bar on New Year's Eve.

The couple also added that "Police in Phuket just laughed when we reported our attack. It seems that kind of thing happens regularly," but they have not provided details of where and when the complaint was filed.

"So far, no report of the incident has reached us, but we will 'look into it' further," Phuket Provincial Police Deputy Commander Peerayuth Karajedee told the *Gazette* on January 14.

Belfast Live additionally reported that when the couple returned home their doctor confirmed they had been raped.

"On the night of the attack, Michael and I decided to go out for some drinks to celebrate New Year's Eve. We had a beer in one bar and then moved on to another. It was in the second bar that our drinks were spiked with a date-rape drug.

"After that we can't remember anything. It was only well after the attack that we realized we had been attacked and raped.

"We went to our own doctor in Belfast who confirmed we had been raped. It has just been a very traumatic time for both of us. We have had to be tested for HIV and given an HPV vaccine and tested for syphilis."

The couple added that their insurance provider "abandoned them" during their holiday.

"They said we had to contact the insurance company before deciding on which hospital to go to in Phuket. We phoned OUL Direct for five days and they kept telling us they would send an email and call us," Mr Drumgoole said.

The UK-based insurance company has 'responded' to the claims and said they are investigating the matter.

– Zohaib Sikander

Tri-Trang Beach marred by construction waste



A building contractor, KMIT Construction, was let off with a warning for discharging murky brown rainwater onto Tri Trang Beach on January 13. The waste was coming from a construction project being undertaken in the area, confirmed the Patong Mayor. Photo: Gazette file

Yet another biker killed by taxi driver

A MOTORCYCLIST was killed late night of January 15 in a head-on collision with a taxi in Cherng Talay.

Lt Col Rassada Kluengwong of Cherng Talay Police received reports of the incident at about 1:50am.

"We arrived to find the body of Sarayuth Duangjan lying face down on the road," said Col Rassada. "Rescue workers confirmed his right arm was broken from the impact that landed him about 15 meters from the crash site."

The taxi driver, named as Jarun Kritsun, waited for police at the scene.

"Mr Jarun said he was driving from Cherng Talay to Surin Beach when Mr Sarayuth, coming from the opposite direction, lost control of his motorbike and smashed into his taxi. He told us that the victim was thrown off the motorbike following the impact."

Police took Mr Jarun to the station for further questioning, and both vehicles were impounded as evidence.

– Winai Sarot

Machine thieves caught red-handed

TWO cellphone top-up machine thieves were charged in Thalang on January 11 after they confessed to committing the act at least six times in order to obtain money to buy the locally illicit drug krathom.

A 22-year-old suspect named by police as Attaphol Panyasak, accompanied by a minor, were seen stealing the machines on CCTV.

"By checking video footage of these areas, we identified the thieves after receiving several complaints," said Lt Col Prasan Toworn of Thalang Police.

"They stole a machine from Pa Khlok the night before and took it to a rubber plantation nearby. About 3am the following morning, they were trying to pry it open when we arrived and caught them red-handed," said the colonel.

"We also seized one machine, a motorbike, the knife used to cut the electric wire, a chisel used to pry the machine open, and 1,682 baht in cash. Both men were charged with theft. Additionally, they confessed to stealing about 1,000

baht from each machine in order to buy krathom."

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

Officers dress as postmen to nab drug dealer

A SUSPECTED dealer was busted with drugs worth about half a million baht by undercover police officers in Phuket Town on January 15.

A tip from another dealer, who had surrendered himself on Saturday, led Phuket City Police officials to the post office behind Provincial Hall.

"The dealer told us that a man named Korapat Thipasak, 33, would come to claim a parcel at that location," said Lt Col Ritthichai Chumchuay of Phuket City Police.

The drug bust yielded 2,020 *ya bah* (methamphetamine) pills, 20 pills of ecstasy, drug paraphernalia and a mobile phone.

"We dressed up as EMS staff and waited for him to show up and sign for the package," Col Ritthichai told the *Gazette*. "As soon as he did, we arrested him."

Mr Korapat was charged for possession of a category 5 drug with intent to sell, but he main-

tained his innocence.

Nevertheless, he was taken to Phuket City Police Station for further questioning and legal processing.

– Winai Sarot

Supercheap offers freedom after theft

A PHANG Nga girl was arrested on January 17 in Phuket after she was caught shoplifting from a Supercheap store near the Heroines' Monument.

"Staff told us that she had entered the store with a bag, but they paid no heed to it. However, the door alarms started beeping when she attempted to make off with a bagful of items worth about 1,200 baht," said Capt Suporn Muangkairong of Thalang Police.

Staff told police that they had not originally planned to involve them in the matter, due to their own "store policy regarding theft".

"The company has a policy that comprises multiplying the total value of the stolen goods by a hundred and asking a thief to pay up. Staff said they called her family over the phone, who replied that they didn't have that kind of money – approximately 122,100 baht."

The girl was charged with theft and taken to Thalang Police Station for further processing.

– Winai Sarot

Burmese woman shot in ya bah incident

A WOMAN was shot during a *ya bah* (methamphetamine) 'exchange' at a Burmese workers' camp on January 15.

Capt Kraisor Boonprasob of Thalang Police received reports of the incident from Mongkol Wongpradit, the caretaker of the camp located in Thalang.

"Chan, a worker at the camp, told us that two Thai men on a white motorbike approached him and 'insisted' that he buy *ya bah* from them. Mr Chan says he refused, so one of them attempted to shoot him, but missed," Capt Kraisor told the *Gazette*.

The stray bullet, that allegedly came from a pen-gun, hit a woman named Waisin.

"We have radioed in to search the area for the suspects, but they seem to have disappeared.

– Winai Sarot

Interpol-wanted HIV infected sexpat arrested

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

ROYAL Thai Police on January 17 apprehended a Czech Interpol fugitive wanted for allegedly spreading HIV in his home country and in Thailand.

Zdenek Pfeifer, 49, was arrested at Sila apartments in Cherg Talay. He was initially charged with overstaying his visa, but is due to be taken to Bangkok to process other charges filed against him.

Mr Pfeifer was reportedly seeking unprotected sex with women and homosexuals in Thailand, spreading HIV since 2014, reported *The Nation*.

Mr Pfeifer, aka 'Frye Ferrari', is wanted by Interpol for allegedly sexually violating a minor and also spreading the virus in his country.

Travel records show that he flew to Thailand three years ago, after which he was spotted in various tourist cities, including Phuket and Chiang Mai.

Czech authorities have said that after Mr Pfeifer tested posi-



Mr Pfeifer was arrested in Phuket. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

tive for HIV in 2010, he had unprotected sex with at least 10 people in the Czech Republic. He even allegedly had sexual intercourse with a minor, which he recorded on video.

On its website, Interpol warned that Mr Pfeifer may be infectious and pointed out that he is also liable to commit sexual crimes involving minors.

In the days before the arrest, Royal Thai Police issued an appeal for help in catching the alleged pedophile. He was described as a "good-looking

sweet talker", who first entered Thailand via Phuket International Airport on February 13, 2014. He left a few months later, but returned in 2015.

A joint task force of Royal Thai Police and military officials finally apprehended him.

"We first spotted him at Tesco Lotus Thalang. When he left on his motorbike, our team followed him," said Maj Tienchai Chomphu of Phuket Immigration. "Another team was waiting for him at the apartment, where we arrested him."

Drainage issues go 'round and 'round



Untreated wastewater being discharged near Surin. Photo: Winai Sarot

CHERNG Talay officials have asked hotels and vendors to stop the discharge of wastewater onto Surin Beach.

The request was issued after locals voiced concern on January 15 over trash-bearing wastewater flowing from a sewage pipe near the beach.

"We filed complaints with relevant officers, but were told countless times to wait," said a vendor who wished to remain unnamed. "Problem is we don't know how to do it ourselves."

Cherng Talay Tambon Administration Organization (*OrBorTor*) President Ma-ann

Samran says he has long known about the problem and that his officers are still working on "a temporary solution".

"At this stage, all we can do is to ask hotels and vendors to control their waste."

Mr Ma-ann confirmed he has been working to "find a permanent solution".

"The project is expected to be completed in six months. Please be patient, as everyone needs to understand how budget appeals work in Thailand. We have to go through a lot of procedures and paperwork," said Mr Ma-ann.

- Winai Sarot



Baan Kata Arts Fest

Monday 23rd January, 2017

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His Majesty's
love of Music & Arts

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Tasana Nagavajara : Violin
Worapon Kanweerayothin : Flute

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concert : 19.00 hrs.

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Change of plans to arrest fugitive monk

THE Department of Special Investigation (DSI) is ready to change its previous action plan to launch a joint DSI-police-Army operation to arrest fugitive Phra Dhammachayo, the former abbot of Wat Dhammakaya in Pathum Thani, DSI chief Colonel Paisit Wongmuang said on January 18.

The monk, believed to be hiding in the temple, is wanted for money-laundering charges linked to a high-profile embezzlement case as well as separate land-encroachment cases.

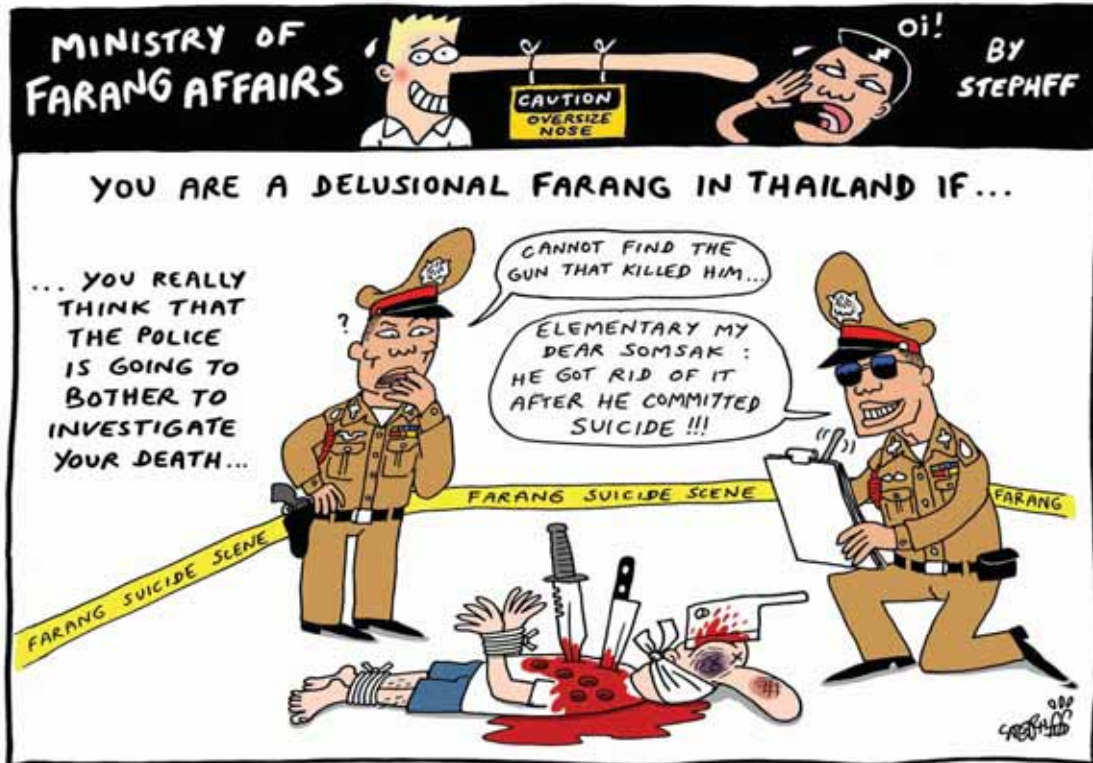
Col Paisit said the vast temple currently had up to 3,000 disciples on site.

Justice Minister Suwaphan Tanyuwardhana's has instructed the agency to begin negotiations to secure the monk's surrender or arrange other legal actions to bring the monk to trial.

Police to reapply for 100 arrest warrants

POLICE are gathering more evidence to reapply for arrest warrants for 100 police force applicants who allegedly cheated by copying answers in the police entrance examination last month, deputy Bangkok police chief Maj General Adul Narongsak said on January 18.

Gen Adul said he needed a week to screen for culpable applicants before a list of innocent successful candidates would be passed for criminal background checks before the test results are announced on January 30.



Out of 52 wanted persons in the case, 37 students have testified to police investigators while five asked for postponements due to being preoccupied with university exams or trips abroad. Another 10 failed to show up.

Gen Adul said that Bangkok city regulation enforcement officer Jiraphot Plaidoung, who surrendered earlier this month and allegedly confessed to arranging exam cheating in exchange for hefty fees, was released on bail of 150,000 baht.

Haze drive for Chiang Mai underway

THE Warm Heart Foundation is seeking donations for a one million project to eliminate 9,640 kilograms of smoke from the air over Chiang Mai during the agriculture fire season.

The *Stop the Smoke!* campaign is the first step in the Warm Heart Foundation's five-

NATIONAL NEWS Briefly

year plan to eliminate 50 per cent of the smoke. It is also challenging the Chiang Mai community to do its bit in eliminating the remaining 50 per cent.

The project will remove the equivalent of smoke from 688,575,560 cigarettes.

Dr Michael Shafer, the foundation's director, said that though the campaign will remove "just a puff of smoke from our air, it is a first concrete step in the right direction".

Thai Airways launches probe on bribery case

THAI AIRWAYS International (THAI) on January 17 decided to set up a committee to probe allegations of bribery in the purchase of engines from British engineering giant Rolls-Royce.

Flight lieutenant Kanok Thong-purk, a THAI executive vice president, said the result of the investigation would be known within 30 days.

Thailand is among seven countries named by the United Kingdom's Serious Fraud Office (SFO), which found conspiracy to corrupt or failure to prevent bribery by Rolls-Royce, involving pay-

ment of US\$18.8 million (663 million baht) to regional intermediaries.

"Some of the money was for individuals who were 'agents of the State of Thailand and employees of Thai Airways,'" the SFO said. These agents "were expected to act in Rolls-Royce's favour with respect to a purchase by Thai Airways of T800 engines", the *BBC* reported.

British daily *The Guardian* reported that the firm paid more than US\$36 million between 1991 and 2005 to agents to help it secure three separate contracts to supply Trent aero engines to Thai Airways.

Rolls-Royce (Thailand) refused to comment on the accusations.

The SFO revealed 12 counts of conspiracy to corrupt or failure to prevent bribery also in six other countries – Indonesia, India, Russia, Nigeria, China and Malaysia. Rolls-Royce employees allegedly paid bribes to middlemen and foreign officials to win bids from 1989 to 2013.

The aerospace company made the admission on Tuesday at the high court in London, a day after it was revealed that it would pay 671 million pounds in penalties to settle nearly 25 years of corruption allegations.

The payment will comprise 479 million pounds (29.1 billion baht) plus cost to the UK's SFO, 141 million pounds to the US Justice Department, and another 21.5 million pounds to Brazilian regulators.

The long-running corruption case is considered the biggest individual investigation conducted by the SFO.

Former MP to speak 'truth' on TV show

OUTSPOKEN FORMER MP Chuwit Kamolvit announced on January 17 that he had called a halt to his political career and would embark on a new career in the media.

Mr Chuwit, 55, made his promise by swearing before the Tiger God Shrine, a famous Chinese temple within the walls of Rattanakosin Island. He said he aimed to tell the truth to people on a television channel, but declined to say which one. His program will be aired Monday to Friday from 8:30pm, starting on January 30, he said.

Mr Chuwit was freed from prison last month and was among the first batch of 30,000 inmates released under an amnesty granted to mark HM King Maha Vajiralongkorn's accession to the throne.

He was jailed in January last year over the illegal demolition of bars and shops at Bangkok's Sukhumvit Square night entertainment area in 2003, when he was known as a massage-parlor tycoon.

Mr Chuwit, a former Rak Prathet Thai Party leader, said he was willing to hand over his party to anyone who wanted to run it.

PM orders flood damage survey, offers compensations

PRIME MINISTER Gen Prayuth Chan-o-cha has instructed authorities to conduct comprehensive surveys of the southern flood damage so that effective rehabilitation measures can be taken.

"The Prime Minister has issued the order out of concern for the flood victims," Chatchai Promlert, director-general of the Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Department, said on January 18.

This year's extreme storms have left 12 provinces underwater and more than 1.6 million people in distress while being blamed for more 40 deaths.

PM's Office Minister Ormsin Chivapruck said the government would pay 50,000 baht to each of the families of those who lost their lives.



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Social media tips to boost business



AS WE begin another new year, it is a timely opportunity to consider what we should look out for in 2017. It is always important to reevaluate your digital footprint on a regular basis.

Here are my 2017 tips to have a successful year in social media and beat your competition, increase your revenues and improve customer loyalty.

Remember, an efficient sales funnel is critical, especially combined with a good product and a customer-friendly approach. Use these techniques to build your database, and consider splitting that between a local and tourist market if relevant.

STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD

Dare to be different. A lot of social media is people being sheep, following what others do without any real thought or application. Avoid this trap – find your voice, but don't be afraid to do something different or untried. At the end of the day, the goal is to be seen and remembered. This will put money in the bank account – but just be careful about being to risqué.

Floods could cause losses of up to B120bn

THE Southern flooding could cost the economy between 85-120 billion baht if it lasts two to three months, the Board of Trade of Thailand and Thai Chamber of Commerce estimates.

Vichai Assarasakorn, vice chairman of the TCC, said that if the floods subsided within the next week or two, the cost would be only about 10-15 billion, or 0.1 per cent of the country's gross domestic product. However, if the inundation lasts for two to three months, the cost will be 0.5-0.7 per cent of GDP because of the time needed to repair the damage and rehabilitate affected sectors of the economy.

The highest losses are in agriculture, whereas no serious damage was done to tourism.

– The Nation



As people's social media attention spans get shorter, the critical advantage for businesses will be building real relationships with their clients and partners. Photo: Amanda Paul

RELATIONSHIPS WILL BE KEY

There is no doubt that as people's social media attention spans get shorter and shorter with more voluminous online marketing coming their way, the critical factor will be through building real relationships. There is a fine line between selling and marketing – people love to buy but hate to be

sold to, so build the relationship better than the rest and your sale will happen.

USE SYSTEMS AND AUTOMATION

There are so many fantastic digital products out there at the moment that you would be crazy not to be using them. Often they are free or very cheap,

and the benefits are golden. Why do the hard work when an app can do it all for you.

FACEBOOK LIVE, INSTAGRAM

Videos and pictures will be used more in 2017. Imagine showing off your hotel rooms or new housing display live on Facebook with a limited time

offer of availability, a dining experience at your restaurant, a live band at your bar... the list goes on. This will create engagement, interaction and a following.

GOOGLE PLACES

Google and its takeover of everything internet means that if you are not plugged in you are missing out. Google Maps is now on almost every smart phone, and for zero cost your business could be showcased to your local clients. Make sure you get listed today.

CREATE A CONNECTED DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

Make sure that you have a cohesive, integrated online footprint. Decide what presence you want, then have them interconnect and work with each other. In my next column I am going to suggest what I would do if I had to start from scratch knowing what I know, but for the time being, think website, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter.

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



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Phuket Gazette

Re-examining beach safety

IT IS reassuring to know that lifeguard services will continue uninterrupted at popular Phuket beaches this year [see cover page], but we still need to do a better job at publicizing beach safety risks.

The pending contract agreement between the Phuket Lifeguard Club (PLC) and the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (PPAO) will continue to minimize the number of preventable drowning deaths of the kind that are reported far too frequently here each monsoon season.

It is not clear why the PPAO insists on cutting expenditure to the PLC, but it is nice to see a government body insist on getting the most for its investment of taxpayer money for a change. Many local administrative bodies on the island squander public funds on frivolous projects that have more to do with self-promotion than public safety.

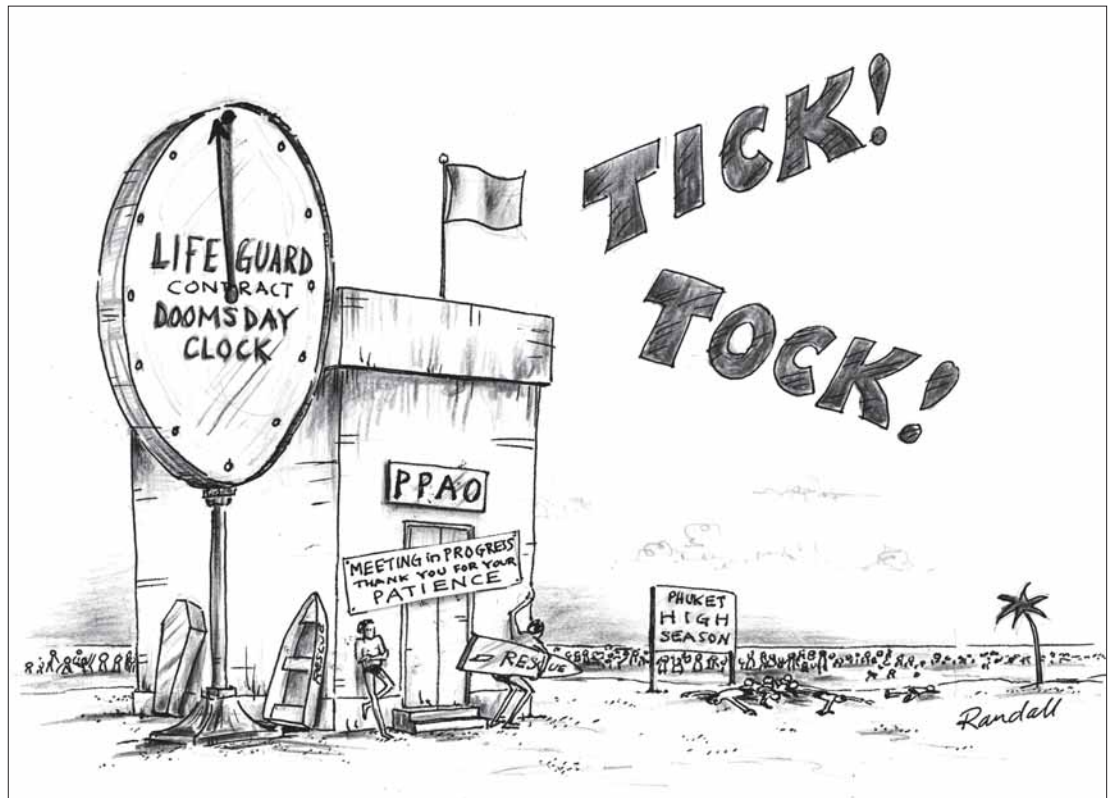
If provision of lifeguard services were left to them, one can rest assured that the beach safety situation would rapidly deteriorate into the same type of embarrassment that we have seen in public transport, the illegal divvying up of beach land for commercial purposes, and so on.

Of course, no number of lifeguards will ever be able reduce the number of drowning deaths to zero when overconfidence and a lack of awareness to the dangers posed by rip-currents persist, especially among foreign tourists.

Much needs to be done to bring the island's lifeguarding services up to international standards, but it might not be so easy given that lifeguards' monthly salaries start at just 12,000 baht, forcing many to seek alternative income streams just to get by.

Another area that needs to be considered is investing in more water craft to help guards get to drowning victims before it is too late. While the island's notorious jet-ski syndicates have done so much to harm the island's reputation, the *Gazette* recognizes that they have rescued many distressed swimmers over the years.

Despite years of futile editorializing this space, it appears that jet-skis are here to stay in Phuket. Given that fact, perhaps it is time to train them and give them a more formal role in the beach safety effort.



Officials need to take more notice

Re: Construction company 'warned' for discharging wastewater, Jan 13

What a shame no one in the government is interested in the filthy wastewater being pumped into the Klong at the North end of Kamala Beach, where construction has destroyed a beautiful Casurina grove.

Nelsonian eyes seem to be at work. Mind you, they seem not to notice the plethora of beach umbrellas in front of the police station either – covering far more than 10 per cent of the beach. Profit conquers all.

*Mister Ree
Gazette forum*

Officials should issue orders, not requests

Re: Phuket officials request hotels, vendors to curb flow of wastewater, Jan 16

What is this 'request' nonsense? Tell them obey the law or hammer them with severe financial penalty or even temporary closure till they fix the problem. They want tourists to come to pristine beaches & clean seas, so stop polluting both.

*James H Miller
Facebook*

Tourists need to be more aware

Re: Drunk foreigner hits parked car and runs off into the woods, Jan 13

The tip of the iceberg, drunk

Letters to the Editor

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

drivers. Everyday, I see a fair number of sober drivers who drive recklessly on the roads of Phuket. Pick-up trucks are largely the main culprits, but motorbike drivers as well do not care at all about what they might do to other people on these roads. The extremely noisy motorbikes are becoming more and more common as well. Laws that are not enforced are the same as no law at all.

*Andy
Gazette forum*

No more rentals without licence

Re: Chinese national dead in Phuket after motorbike crash, Jan 11

Only one thing can stop this madness - stop renting motorbikes to foreigners with no licence, and totally stop renting to Chinese tourists – I see them on motorbikes everyday, with no clue about how to drive them.

*Peter Top
Facebook*

Still many delays at Phuket airport

Re: Across the Land: What the new airport means for Phang Nga, Jan 15

The 'new' Phuket airport is already overstretched – poor foresight n poor project management. Arriving passengers face more than one-hour immigration queues – and another long line at the scanners (whilst scanner staff are happily chatting on their mobiles).

The outside arrival area is just the same mess as before. Several of my friends from Europe told me this is the last straw. The most expensive taxis in Thailand, the never ending roadworks, the list goes on.

The solutions are obvious and relatively simple – if only...

*Michael Pohl
Facebook*

Why are the suspects' faces blurred

Re: Phuket's serial top-up machine thieves caught red-handed, Jan 12

Ok, so you have caught the young men and one is a minor. What is classified as minor when we have school boys and girls riding motorbikes to and from school.

Some of them are nothing but thieves, so why block out their faces?

Nothing better than disclosing their faces to shame them – then perhaps it won't happen again.

The same applies to anyone caught committing a crime. No head cover – I want to see them, not police faces.

*Bazza
Gazette forum*

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Preparing your property for sale



IN THE previous article, we talked about things house owners can do to prepare their property to go on the market for sale and ensure a good price. Here are some more things you can do to make your property attractive to potential buyers.

INCENTIVES

To make your property stand out from others, it is a good idea to offer some enticement. These can include advance rental bookings, flexible payment options such as vendor financing, or a discount on the asking price.

SELLING TIPS

Here are some tips to increase likelihood of a sale:

1. Your property should always be available at short notice for viewings. If that's inconvenient, leave a key with the agent. Remember, the buyer has little time and lots of other properties to see, so you must



First impressions are important, so make sure that the exterior of the property is up to standard and the garden is neat; gutters cleaned, windows sparkling and so on. Photo: mynemesis2011

cooperate or potentially lose a sale.

2. It's best not to be at home or make yourself scarce when the agent visits with the buyer, otherwise the buyer feels as if they are intruding and won't be able to visualize living there themselves. If you are asked to show them around, ensure you give them some privacy afterward so they can talk together

and look around.

3. First impressions are important, so make sure the exterior of the property is up to standard and the garden is neat; gutters cleaned, windows sparkling and so on.

4. Tidy up inside. Ensure the house is spotless, all personal belongings are stored away and everything looks shipshape. Put away toys, clothes, magazines

and shoes.

5. Air the rooms that are not used regularly. Use some potpourri or something natural to take away any bad smells.

6. Lock up pets before any visit and do not involve the buyer with them. Not everyone is a pet lover and they are a distraction. Also remove pet food bowls and any visible sign of habitation where possible, es-

pecially smells.

7. Turn on all the interior lights, even during daytime, as this makes everything appear bigger and more appealing. Open the curtains too.

8. A lick of paint can work wonders and it pays to refresh the look of the property before reselling, as well as mending any cracks and putting the property in the same condition as when it was new.

9. Remove rubbish from the bathroom and kitchen to avoid lingering smells.

10. Make yourself available to answer any further questions the potential buyer might have.

11. Have professional photos taken of your property. Listings with high-quality photos generate an average of 139 per cent more clicks than those without.

12. Keep your broker updated. Let them know if you have made improvements to the property, reduced your asking price or can offer flexible payment options.

For more information about this article contact Kevin Hodges, Siam Real Estate (SRE) at 076-383646 or email kevin@siamrealestate.com; siamrealestate.com



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Phuket's finally coming home



PHUKET'S marine destination reputation was, to a large part, built by the sailing fraternity. That statement is perhaps a red rag to some bulls, but in my opinion, the industry was built on the back of initial efforts by the sailing fraternity and for this, they should be grateful.

Thirty years ago, back in 1987, the Phuket King's Cup Regatta shone the brightest light on the island's marine scene, and has continued to take word of Phuket's sailing credentials globally every year since.

Over time, however, the pendulum has swung to power boats. From small to large, and now superyachts, brokers have placed an emphasis on selling power boats of all brands from all corners of the world, presumably in response to customer demand.

As Phuket's tourism industry has grown, so have the number of boats. In a recent seminar presentation by Matthew Na Nagara, President of the Thailand Marine Business Association, he highlighted the clear correlation between the number of marina berths in Phuket and the number of boats here. In brief, as more berths have been built, more boats have based themselves here.

While the power boat scene



The Hanse 315, that won four awards last year, pictured moored here in Phuket. Photo: Scott Murray

thrives, it's encouraging to see a resurgence of the sail boat scene also. This resurgence has been led by the island's home-grown boat building industry. However, in the last few weeks – what with all the back-to-back marine industry activities – it's been very clear to all willing to wake up from their post-festive season slumber that

sailing yachts are back.

The first sign was at the Asia Superyacht Rendezvous which this year welcomed one of the biggest superyacht sailing fleets they have seen in recent years.

There were further signs of sail boat popularity at the island's two boat shows – Thailand Yacht Show and Phuket International Boat

Show – where a growth in the number of sailing yachts displayed at each was clear for all to see. Sure, power boats still dominated and delivered the 'wow', and sail yachts were still few in number at the shows. However, yachts of all sizes, from small trailerable trimarans to luxurious multi-hulls and superyachts were showing off their lines

proudly.

Simpson Marine were showcasing the Lagoon and Beneteau brands at the recent shows, with the brand new Lagoon 420 sailing catamaran and Beneteau Oceanis 55 both turning heads.

Further along the dock were two smaller yachts from Hanse, represented by the local dealership SouthEast Asia Yacht Sales & Services (SEA Yacht Sales).

Having won four awards in 2016, the first Hanse 315 in Asia was on display, moored next to its big sister the Hanse 415, and caused quite a stir.

Speaking with Rob Williams of SEA Yacht Sales, he said "When people see the 415 they say "what a lovely boat". Then when they see the 315 they say "wow, what a great boat".

"It's a really beautiful design and sails well. It's easy to sail single-handed and has a very high quality finish. It's ideal for couples and families – a good all-round boat that is very competitively priced," says Mr Williams. Having sold three Hanse in 2016, Phuket's sail boat resurgence looks set to continue.

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

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Gazette Radio Producer Simon J Hand celebrates Children's Day with Phuket Boat Lagoon's resident mermaid and friends. Festivities and fun activities were held all over Phuket and Thailand to mark the annual Children's Day, which is held on the second Saturday of January every year.

Open the floodgates to a watery embrace

Keep It Green
By Patrick Campbell

SOUTHERN Thailand has recently been in the watery embrace of floods that are unprecedented in their severity.

A few statistics to clarify the situation: the inundation has affected 13 provinces in Southern Thailand, with Songkhla being the worst affected one – 14 out of 16 districts have been declared disaster areas. There have been more than 40 recorded fatalities, while more than a million people have been affected.

Floodwaters reaching the roofs of houses have been commonplace. In Trang, my partner's daughter and her young family have twice been forced to leave their house. Everything gone except the pick-up. Many holidays in Koh Samui and Koh Pha Ngan have been cancelled.

Why? The reasons are both



More than a million people have been affected by the floods, and many rendered homeless. Photo: The Nation

global and local. On a global level, the main culprit is global warming. Rain and snow – or precipitation – basically come from two sources: 60 per cent from the world's oceans and 40 per cent as moisture 'recycled' over land masses. But the amount of moisture in the heavens is largely determined by the

warmth of the atmosphere. And it is getting warmer up there – consider the melting of polar icecaps, and the rising temperature of the world's seas.

The amount of water in suspension, at least in certain conditions, is greater – hence more and heavier rain. Cyclones have increased measurably in

intensity since 1981. Torrential rain, as we gardeners in Phuket know from recent experience, is not beneficial: it has a leaching effect on the soil's nutrients and, by saturating plant roots, lessens its capacity to absorb and then exhale all that excess moisture – a process known as evapotranspiration.

Closer to home, an example of the impact of warm air is provided by the continuing presence of the North Eastern monsoon over the Gulf of Thailand. It should have dissipated by now, bringing drier weather, but the rain persisted, much to the chagrin of tourists wandering around in plastic waterproofs.

Why is the planet experiencing climate change? There are many reasons, including increased levels of carbon dioxide, mostly from fossil fuels spewed out by coal-burning factories, and vehicles running on gasoline. Methane and nitrous oxide emissions from agricultural practices

and decaying waste are hastening the process of ozone depletion. The plankton explosion due to warming seas has contributed to oxygen loss.

So is Thailand, and particularly Phuket, more or less culpable? Yes and no. Thailand is an inevitable victim of all these global factors. But one stands out – deforestation. The loss of tropical rainforest is both cause and effect. Cause because trees are one of the crucial suppliers of oxygen and absorbers of carbon dioxide, pivotal players in the battle against global warming. Effect because once heavy precipitation does arrive, they act as giant sponges. Rain on the leaves evaporates into the air, while the roots both retain surplus moisture and hold the soil in place.

I am prepared to wager that if Thailand still possessed all those ancient rainforests, this epidemic of flash flooding would have been avoided.

Century-old Kathu distillery restored



Top: A 100-year-old abandoned Sino-Portuguese style distillery in Kathu. Bottom: The restored and repainted building after completion of the repair work by Kathu Municipality. The area around the building was turned into a public park. Kathu Mayor Chaianan Sutthikul says that the rich heritage, architecture and culture of Kathu will help promote tourism in the area.

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Vanderbilt International Group Co., Ltd.

Vanderbilt International Group Co., Ltd., a member of The Murjani Group, designs, imports, and retails, men's fashion accessories in Thailand, under their international designer heritage brand – "Vanderbilt New York".

Vanderbilt New York provides an offering of luxury designs and high quality products, at affordable prices, that fit an urban, but contemporary lifestyle. The range of fashion accessory products include watches, sunglasses, pens, small leather goods, bags and belts.

The company manages all aspects of the supply chain, from design, to import, to selling the products directly to consumers, at both company owned retail shops and e-commerce.

We are looking for an enthusiastic, creative, well organised and highly qualified individual, who wishes to enhance their career and be part of a major, exciting, international heritage brand, in Thailand.

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

Department: Marketing
 Salary: SMM – up to THB150,000 and MM – up to THB100,000 per month
 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: Marketing
 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

Further information:

Applicants can visit the following platforms to gather further information about the group and Vanderbilt New York.

Facebook – [VanderbiltNY](#) | Instagram – [VanderbiltNY](#) | Brand website – [www.VanderbiltNY.com](#)
 Corporate website – [www.MurjaniGroup.com](#)

Interested applicants are invited to send their CV/resume, with a recent photograph and expected salary to hr@vdbny.com

Vanderbilt International Group Co., Ltd. (Head Office)
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A musical feast for the soul

By Sahar Aftab Paliwala

BANGKOK native Tasana Nagavajara is the artistic director of Pro Musica and is currently performing a series of classical concerts as the violinist for Pro Musica Ensemble. The trio is touring Phuket, Chiang Mai, Hua Hin and Bangkok this month, with the Phuket performance slated to be held at Mom Tri Villa Royale on January 23. Mr Tasana has been pursuing music since the age of nine, drawing inspiration from his parents who are both music lovers and studied music in Europe.

“My father plays the violin with Cambridge University Student Orchestra. I grew up listening to all kinds of music and attended lots of concerts from a very young age,” says Mr Tasana.

He has studied the violin with many prominent teachers, such as Supot Chomboon, Sutin Srinarong and Choochart Pitaksakorn at the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Chulalongkorn University.

“Nowadays, there are lots of

young, talented kids playing music, but talent is not everything. Young musicians need proper training and discipline. Anyway, music making in Thailand is much better than when I grew up 40 years ago,” he says.

He continued his music studies at the International Menuhin Music Academy (IMMA) in Switzerland and the Vorarlberg Conservatory in Austria, where he was trained in chamber music and extensively toured with the Camerata Lysy Gstaad throughout major European cities, as well as in the US, Canada and South America.

Mr Tasana also studied the violin with Kathryn Lucktenberg at the University of Oregon, where he was a Graduate Teaching Fellow, Concert Master of the University Symphony Orchestra as well as 1st violinist with the Eugene Symphony Orchestra, the Oregon Mozart Players and the Collegium Musicum Ensemble. He graduated with a Master of Music degree and received the Outstanding Graduate Performer Award.

He also received a scholarship from the Classical Music Education Supporting Fund under the patronage of HRH Princess Galyani Vadhana to attend a master-class at the Crescendo Violin School for professional musicians in Germany.

Upon returning home, Mr Tasana became a founding member of the Faculty of Music at Silpakorn University, and has also served as Director of the Silpakorn Summer Music School (SSMS) since 2005. As a professional musician, he has performed major violin concerti with Thailand’s leading orchestras, and served as Concertmaster of the Bangkok Symphony Orchestra under Hikotaro Yazaki for 10 consecutive seasons.

In recent years he has concentrated his efforts on chamber music by introducing a repertoire hitherto unfamiliar to Thai audiences. He has been intensifying his international career with his involvement as faculty member and chamber performer in the Estate Musicale Frentana in Lanciano, Italy,

since 2011.

He has also twice given recitals at the historic Mendelssohn House in Leipzig, Germany, one of which he recalls as one of the most challenging performances of his life.

“I performed a Felix Mendelssohn violin sonata there. The concert was in the music room where Mendelssohn composed the piece – just a few meters away from his death bed,” Mr Tasana recalls.

Despite his numerous involvements and accomplishments, Mr Tasana loves to travel and spent a week driving around Tuscany in a bright red Fiat 500 last summer.

“I admire all professional musicians who love their job, which is not easy. When music making becomes a repetitive and routine job, it is not a healthy place

for a musician to be. As a musician, I can tell if a person loves their career and their image more than the music itself.”





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