

Phuket Gazette

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‘MORE ROADS WON’T EASE TRAFFIC WITHOUT PROPER MANAGEMENT’

TRAFFIC TALKS

Phuket to receive B71bn to tackle its burgeoning traffic woes, improve roads

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

PHUKET is slated to receive 71 billion baht in infrastructure funding, with an emphasis on improving traffic management and chalking out effective solutions for the island's growing traffic woes, the Ministry of Transport announced on March 20.

Transport Minister Arkhom Termpittay-apisith held a meeting at Phuket Boat Lagoon with relevant officers to discuss details of the plan.

“Phuket has one of the highest economic growth rates, mostly from tourism, which brings more visitors to the island. However, there is only one main road to enter and exit, namely Thepkasattri Road. Public transport is not good enough, so most people use their own private vehicles. This causes frequent traffic jams and exacerbates traffic congestion in Phuket,” said Mr Arkhom.

“We are aware of these problems and are actively working to help improve Phuket. A few of the mega-projects that we have undertaken in the past include the Samkong and Darasamuth underpasses, as well as the Khlong Koh Pee Bridge. Additionally, Bang Koo underpass will be ready by August this year – Chalong and airport underpasses will also be completed soon.

“We also have plans for two flyovers – one at Mud Dok Khao junction near Phuket International airport and another at Baan Yee Teng in Koh Kaew. In total, there will be five underpasses and two flyovers in Phuket,” he added.

However, Mr Arkhom pointed out that with the exponential growth of locals, tourists and long-term residents in Phuket, even these projects would not be enough to sustain Phuket traffic.

“As you can see, even though Samkong and Darasamuth underpasses are already fully functional, the traffic situation is still terrible,” he said.



Mr Arkhom said that regardless of how much money is invested in infrastructure, the traffic situation will not improve if there is a lack of proper management. Photo: Gazette file

Nearly 44 per cent of the budget, or 31bn baht, is to be utilized for the long-awaited, multi-billion baht light rail project. Mr Arkhom said that a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) proposal would be ready for submission by the end of this year.

About 18 per cent of the budget, or 13bn baht, will go toward the construction of the Sakoo-Koh Kaew Road. Construction of this 22-kilometer long thoroughfare is under consideration, with a proposal to be submitted to cabinet by next year.

About 12bn baht is to be set aside for airport development, including construction and improvement of a parking area for taxis.

The rest of the funds – about 15bn baht – will be invested in the Patong tunnel (also known as the Kathu-Patong expressway). The Expressway Authority of Thailand is studying the project and working on a proposal for the project's EIA at the moment, which is expected to be ready for submission by next year.

“It is worth spending this money to improve infrastructure in Phuket, especially

if we compare it to how much the province earns each year, which is about 300-400bn baht,” said Mr Arkhom.

“However, most importantly, we wish to emphasize improvement in the traffic management system. Regardless of how much money we invest in infrastructure, the traffic situation will not improve if there is a lack of proper management. Building more roads does not mean that the traffic issue will automatically be resolved,” he added.

Mr Arkhom urged local officials to come up with better traffic management strategies, especially while construction of the new projects is ongoing.

“This is especially important. Commuters will face a lot of inconvenience, so we have to discuss the problems beforehand and find a solution to ease the flow of traffic during rush hours,” he said.

“We are open to suggestions for improvement and are always ready to support Phuket in any capacity, as it is a world-renowned tourist destination and upholds the reputation of Thailand.”

Live coral planted at artificial reef off Phuket

LIVE natural coral was added to an artificial coral reef in Koh Mai Thon by the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources, following a marine expert's announcement about the success of the coral restoration project there.

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BUSINESS



Banyan Tree clinches seven accolades at ‘Travel & Leisure’ awards held in China.

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LIFE&STYLE



Xterra and AMA present ‘Xterra Off Road Triathlon and Trail Run’ 2017.

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LIFE&STYLE



A group of 12 artists display a collection of 60 black and white film-based photographs in Phuket.

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LOCAL NEWS

Briefly

Canadian man found dead in condo room

A 49-YEAR-OLD Canadian tourist was found dead in a condo in Kathu on March 21. The deceased, Dean Kelsey Chapman, is believed to have been dead for at least two days before his body was discovered.

Capt Wichoti Meephop of Kathu Police received a report of the incident at about 11am from 'Plus Condo 1'. He said that there was a peculiar smell outside the room. Officers found the victim lying face up on the bed.

Police also found a cellphone on his chest, together with a list of hospital emergency numbers. A 'Tripadvisor Travel Correspondent' ID card was also found in his room, in addition to medicines and vitamins.

"There was blood on Mr Chapman's face, but we found no sign of a struggle on his body," Capt Wichoti said.

A travel agent told police that Mr Chapman had arrived late last year and was due to return to Alberta on March 31. He was reportedly suffering from cancer.

A security guard said that he had not seen him for 2 days.

Police have yet to learn the cause of death as the body is being examined by doctors at Vachira Phuket Hospital. At this stage, they believe that it was due to health issues.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

Much needed rain brings unwanted destruction



Police partially closed Cherng Talay's Srisoonthorn Road last week as power poles fell onto the road following heavy rains in the area. They were tentatively fixed. No damage to vehicles or injuries were reported. The incident, however, caused an area-wide blackout. Although power was soon restored, some people complained about not having any electricity for as long as six hours. Photo: Winai Sarot

Partygoers flip SUV near local gas station

YET another 'drowsy' driver and his two passengers were injured on March 19 when their vehicle overturned near a Koh Kaew gas station.

"We found an upside down Honda CRV stuck to a power

pole near the PTT station on Thepkrasattri Road. All three occupants were trapped inside the car and rescue workers had to use Jaws of Life to cut them loose," said Capt Udom Petcharat of Phuket City Police.

After the SUV was lifted from the footpath, police discovered a flattened saleng (motorbike with a sidecar) that had been parked at the spot.

Witnesses saw the SUV speeding on the right lane. It suddenly cut to the left, jumped the curb and crashed into the saleng and power pole.

The 37-year-old driver, Prawit Prakanpai, was returning from a staff party with two friends.

– *Winai Sarot*

Ukrainian totals car, lands in intensive care

A UKRAINIAN woman was critically injured in a horrific car crash in Kathu on March 16.

"The accident occurred at about 6:30pm on Phra Phuket Kaew Road, near Bang Jak gas station. At the scene, we found a severely damaged black Toyota Vios with the roof almost entirely blown off," said Capt Watthana Bamrunghin of Kathu Police.

"Kateryna Mizerniuk, 26, was stuck in the driver's seat. She was unconscious and drenched in blood," he added.

Ms Mizerniuk was later transferred to Bangkok Hospital Phuket where she remains in the Intensive Care Unit.

"According to witness, she was heading back from Patong and was driving at high speed. She lost control of her vehicle at a bend in the road, hitting the median, a bike and an electric pole," said Capt Watthana.

The motorcyclist, Anongat Thongsorn, 30, sustained minor injuries and was taken to Vachira Phuket Hospital.

Four other vehicles were also slightly damaged, but no other injuries were reported.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

Provinces join hands for mutual benefit

PHUKET and Nakhon Sri Thammarat signed a Memorandum of Understanding on March 17, titled 'Imagine Nakhon Sri Thammarat & Phuket 2017: A new Economic and Tourism Co-operation Development'.

The MOU was signed at Provincial Hall by Phuket Gov-

ernor Chokchai Dejamornthan and Nakhon Sri Thammarat Governor Chamroen Tipayapongtada, with government and private sector officials.

"The purpose of this cooperation is to improve the economy and tourism of both provinces. Each has their own unique strengths and weakness," said Gov Chokchai.

"By entering into a partnership, we can improve our overall image as tourist destinations. In addition, we will exchange OTOP products, which will boost the local economies of both provinces," he added.

– *Kongleaphy Keam*

Man dies as tailgating van runs him over

POLICE are trying to identify a Thai man died after he fell from his bike and was hit by a van in Karon on March 16.

"The accident took place on the uphill road from Chalong to Karon. At the scene, we found a man aged 30-35 years, lying in the middle of the road, with no identification documents on him," said Capt Channarong Prakongkua of Karon Police.

The victim was pronounced dead at Chalong Hospital.

"Witnesses said that the victim was driving very fast when he suddenly fell off his bike. They said it seemed like he lost control due to slippery road conditions," said Capt Channarong.

"The van driver was behind him, but could not brake in time and ended up hitting him right after he fell," Capt Channarong added.

– *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

Two-headed calf brings luck in lottery

A TWO-headed calf born in Krabi on March 17 has risen to fame after the owner said the animal brought her luck while in the womb, reported Sanook.

The conjoined twins were stillborn with two heads, six legs and two tails at the house of Ms Samrong, who resides in Klong Thom district.

Ms Samrong said that she had already won prizes in the lottery three times. She also said she will have it stuffed, treated with formalin and put in a glass box to be kept at Wat Tru Toey.

– *Phuket Gazette*

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More coral added to reef as growth plans succeed

By Kongleaphy Keam

MORE than 250 pieces of live natural coral (*coralline algae*) were added to an artificial coral reef in Koh Mai Thon by the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR) on the weekend of March 18.

The event was chaired by Kasem Sukwaree, chief of the Phuket office of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE). More than 150 people attended the ceremony, including DMCR and Navy officers, tourism operators on Koh Mai Thon, volunteer divers and students.

Last week, an expert from the Phuket Marine Biological Center stated that a decades-long coral restoration project at Koh Mai Thon had yielded significant improvements in marine life in the area.

"The coral we used is about a year old. We took it from places where it grew naturally, mainly ports. For instance, this lot is mostly from Ao Po Grand Marina,"



Over 250 pieces of coral were added to the artificial reef in Koh Mai Thon. Photo: Department of Marine and Coastal Resources

said Suchat Rattanuengsri of the DMCR Region 6.

"We only used those that were ready for breeding, so they can grow more," Mr Suchat added.

Mr Suchat added that natural *coralline algae* is becoming rarer, as it sells for a high price and people often cut it off for

their own profit.

"It's illegal to touch or harm coral, which is a protected species. We are asking for the public's cooperation in this matter – please inform us if you see anyone cutting or damaging coral, so we can all work together to preserve nature," said Mr Suchat.

Defunct travel company assets all sold off at last



The auction was held at Phuket City Municipality. Photo: Phuket PR

THE Anti-Money Laundering Office (AMLO) has sold all of Tranlee Travel Co's assets, 151 items in all, after four auctions yielded total revenue of only 204 million baht (approx US\$6 million).

The last auction was held on March 20 at Phuket City Municipality, where the company's last 15 buses priced from 420,000 baht to 1,250,000 baht were sold off.

Pawornan Thamanyatanan of the AMLO led the auction, and was joined by other relevant officers.

The buses were valued at about 15 million baht, but sold

for a profit at 18.47mn baht.

"All the company's assets sold out within six months and brought in a combined 'profit' of about 30mn," said Mr Pawornan. However, the definition of 'profit' remains unclear.

Tranlee was an established, full-function tour service provider in Phuket until July last year when police arrested a senior director and shareholder for allegedly faking two Thai national ID cards used to register the business. The company was also found guilty of offering zero baht tours.

– Kongleaphy Keam

Hotel, tour operators display wares in Berlin

ABOUT 28 hotel and tourism operators from the Andaman region participated in the 'International Tourism Bourse (ITB) 2017' event held from March 1-12 in Berlin, Germany.

Phuket Governor Chokchai Dejamornthan, Phuket Tourist Association (PTA) President Sathirapong Na Takuatoong, *OrBorJor* Phuket and Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) officials attended the event.

Her Royal Highness Princess Ubolratana also visited the Phuket booth at the event.

The team displayed tourism related products and services from all parts of Thailand. They also emphasized tourism-related facilities, such as airports and hospitals.

Phuket, Krabi and Phang Nga also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) titled 'Andaman One for All' to broaden their appeal to the European market.

"The special thing about this year's event is the MOU. Phuket is the top market for European tourists already, and

I think this cooperation will generate an even greater response from tourists," said PTA President Sathirapong.

"They will know that they have more choices and destinations to travel to. They will enjoy full-option tourism, including beaches, nature, culture, food and the like. This will increase their length of stay, leading to more money flowing into the Andaman area," he added.

TAT estimates that Russians and Germans are among the top five visitors to Phuket.

"Our strategy is to focus on the 'luxury groups', such as married couples as well as marina and sport enthusiasts. I think they spend considerable amounts," said Anoma Wongyai, director of TAT Phuket.

European operators, in turn, suggested areas for improvement to Phuket officials. One of the major concerns for their tourists, they said, is a viable public transport system, as opposed to expensive taxis and tuk-tuks.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

Police hunt for jewelry thief

POLICE are hunting for a suspect who stole gold from at least two jewelry stores in Wichit and Phuket Town earlier this month.

The woman's face was captured by CCTV cameras at both stores. She is believed to be about 30 years old and at least 150cm tall.

The footage was shared on various social media forums, including LINE groups, in order to warn other store owners to be careful.

The latest incident took place on March 18, when she entered a gold shop named 'Yong Dee' in Wichit.

CCTV footage showed her browsing around the shop, looking at various items of jewelry. As soon as the store attendant turned away, she swiped a 15g gold necklace and put it in her pocket before leaving the store.

The store attendant only learnt about the missing necklace that evening, when she was counting inventory before closing the shop for the night.

She then filed an official complaint and submitted the



The suspect's face was captured by CCTV cameras at both the stores she stole from. Photo: Wichit Police

CCTV footage as evidence to Wichit Police Station.

The owner of another store, 'Ying Jaroen', in Talad Nue also filed a complaint against her at Phuket City Police Station on March 17. This time too, the suspect's face was captured on CCTV.

Col Sermpan Sirikong, deputy commander of Phuket Provincial Police, called officers from both police stations to discuss the issue.

"We will check CCTV foot-

age from nearby public areas to find out where she went. We already know her face and vehicle licence plate number, so we are sure we'll find her soon. We have also provided her description and information to officers at Tah Chat Chai checkpoint, so they can arrest her in case she tries to leave Phuket," said Col Sermpan.

"If anyone sees her, please call 191 to inform us immediately," he added.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

Teacher turns herself in after killing partner

A FEMALE teacher turned herself in to police at midnight on March 19 after she allegedly strangled her tomboy partner in a fit of jealousy in Chiang Mai.

After her surrender, Chanpen Chartkulwanit was taken to reenact the killing of partner Chanasnon Thongbamrung.

Ms Chanpen told police she was a teacher and travelled to Chiang Mai the previous day to take an exam. She stayed there with her partner, Ms Chanasnon.

However, she quarrelled with Ms Chanasnon out of suspicion that her partner had a relationship with another woman.

She jumped on Ms Chanasnon and attempted to strangle her. She said she didn't realize her partner had died when she stopped struggling.

Ms Chanpen left the house to consult a friend and turned herself in at midnight.

Vets unable to save sea turtle

THERE was no miracle for Ormsin, the sea turtle that became world-famous after operations by Thai veterinarians to try to save her. The 25-year-old turtle died 'peacefully' on March 21, having never woken from a coma after a



second round of surgery last weekend.

"At 10:10am, she went in peace," said a tearful Dr Nantarika Chansue, chief surgeon of the team that removed 915 coins from the turtle. The discovery of so many coins in her stomach led to her being called "Ormsin", or 'Piggy bank' in Thai.

"She is my friend, teacher and patient. Thank you for being my friend," she said in a press briefing to announce Ormsin's death. The turtle died due to complications from the operations, she said.

The doctor's Facebook



page, which featured constant updates on Ormsin's condition from the start of her medical care, was flooded with condolence notes from animal lovers who expressed moral support to Dr Nantarika and her team. One user, Poy Poy, wrote: "Ormsin will not longer be in pain. Thanks to the team that provided care and love for her."

'Minor joke' about bomb threat causes major delays

SUVARNABHUMI International Airport officials have filed charges with police against a 14-year-old boy for "joking" that he was carrying a bomb while boarding a Thai Smile flight to Chiang Rai on March 19.

His remark caused long delays for both his flight and the return flight from Chiang Rai, resulting in hundreds of passengers being left stranded at Suvarnabhumi Airport and Chiang Rai International Airport.

When he was about to board the Bangkok-Chiang Rai flight, he said he was carrying the bomb, causing security officials to search the plane.

The boy was returning from the Philippines with a group of 31 students and teachers under a cultural exchange project.

He was carrying his belongings in both hands and his boarding pass was in the right pocket of his jacket. When a flight attendant offered to remove the boarding pass from his

pocket he said: "Please be careful. There's a bomb inside."

The flight attendant, Manasnan Dongriengkaj, immediately informed the captain, who in turn alerted the security centre of Suvarnabhumi Airport. The boarding process was suspended immediately.

Passengers who had boarded the plane were evacuated and all bags were checked for explosives. The plane took off at 11:20pm, whereas it was originally scheduled to leave at 6:45pm.

North engulfed in haze

FOREST fires and unauthorized outdoor burning continued to create health-affecting haze in Northern Thailand on March 20.

According to a Pollution Control Department report, Mae Hong Son province had the highest level of small particulate matter of up to 10 microns in diameter (PM10) at 178 micrograms per cubic meter followed by Lampang's Mae Mo district at 123mcg. The safe level of PM10 is under 120mcg.

Chiang Mai reported 37 locations as fire hotspots while Mae Hong Son reported 31, Tak 26, Nan 20 and Phrae 17.

Russian nabbed for drug crimes

A RUSSIAN man, wanted for a drug case in his home country under an Interpol warrant, is in police custody following a recent crackdown on Eastern European gangsters and other 'shady' figures at eastern tourist destinations – particularly Pattaya.

As the suspect Mikhail Kriventsov's passport had already been cancelled and he was likely overstaying his Thai visa, Interpol contacted Thai police and asked them to locate and arrest him – initially for the overstaying offence – and keep him in custody, a police source at the Immigration Bureau said on March 20.





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Banyan Tree wins accolades

THE Banyan Tree group clinched seven awards at the recent 'Travel & Leisure China Annual Travel Awards 2016', adding to a growing list of accolades for the Banyan Tree brand.

The luxury lifestyle magazine named Banyan Tree Phuket as the winner in the 'Best Spa Resorts' category, while also recognizing Laguna Golf Phuket as one of 2016's top 10 golf courses.

In China, three other hotels and spas under the group were awarded 'Best Resort Hotel', 'Best Newly-opened Spa' and 'Best Spa Resort'.

Travel & Leisure magazine also named Banyan Tree Spa as the 'Best Spa Brand', while Banyan Tree Hotels & Resorts won in the 'Best Hotel Group' category.

Travel & Leisure is the only magazine of its type with a bilingual version published in China. It caters to readers with an interest in travel and luxury products.

Travel & Leisure Golf plays a leading role in covering the golf industry, and the two magazines have a combined circulation of 850,000. This year's awards ceremony was held on March 2 in Shanghai, with Des Pugson, managing director of Banyan Tree Hotels & Resorts, on stage to receive the awards on



Banyan Tree Phuket was named as the winner in the 'Best Spa Resorts' category. Photo: Supplied

behalf of the group.

The Travel & Leisure Annual Travel Awards reflect recommendations from tourism industry executives, business travellers, journalists and editors.

The awards for Banyan Tree Phuket and Laguna Golf Phuket come just months after they were hailed as 'Thailand's Best Golf Hotel in 2016' and 'Asia's Best Golf Course' by the World Golf Awards.

Set alongside Bang Tao Bay, Banyan Tree Phuket offers an 18-hole course at Laguna Golf Phuket, blending tropical scenery, natural water features and native plants with their award-winning golf courses.

Long fairways and strategically-placed bunkers bring an extra element of challenge for players.

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advantage of its landscape to deliver a memorable professional golf experience in Thailand.

Together with the spa and golf course, Banyan Tree Phuket also offers a selection of gourmet restaurants, sports facilities, and tropical pool villas for guests.

For more information, email phuket@banyantree.com or call 076-372400.

- *Phuket Gazette*

Sahapat to invest B650 million

CONSUMER goods distributor Sahapat will invest about 650 million baht to set up a new central warehouse and data center as it targets revenue of 33 billion baht this year. The company says it will also come out with new products.

Boonchai Chokwatana, chairman of Sahapat, said the new central warehouse would enhance its stock and logistics management. The warehouse in Chonburi Province will have an area of around 50,000 sqm.

Sahapat will also invest about 50 million baht to set up a data center and servers to facilitate the company's information-technology expansion, and it will be able to provide cloud-computing services to the private sector next month.

The company will set up 20 Beyond multi-brand shops to distribute sportswear such as Under Armour and Adidas products. It opened its first Beyond shop, in Ubon Ratchathani Province, this month. The company expects revenue from multi-brand shops to approach 500 million baht this year.

Mr Boonchai said that in the current quarter, Sahapat had received new customers for a number of its products.

- *The Nation*

Uber president leaves company after 6 months

RIDESHARING giant Uber took another hit with the departure of its president, Jeff Jones, after just six months, US media reported.

The company is a transportation network company headquartered in the United States, operating in 528 cities worldwide.

Mr Jones' departure comes after a series of difficulties at Uber, *Recode* and *The Wall Street Journal* reported. According to *Recode*, Mr Jones had voiced dissatisfaction with the company's management strategies.

"It is now clear, however, that the beliefs and approach to leadership that have guided my career are inconsistent with what I saw and experienced at Uber, and I can no longer continue as president of the ridesharing business," he said

in a statement to *Recode*.

Uber chief executive Trevor Kalanick had asked for his resignation.

San Francisco-based Uber has also been rocked by disclosures about a culture of sexism and its covert use of law enforcement-evading software.

Mr Kalanick also made a hasty exit from a business advisory panel for President Donald Trump after a consumer boycott campaign fuelled by concerns that he was aiding a leader with divergent values.

Uber, which is not publicly traded, is worth about US\$70 billion or 2.4 trillion baht and operates in dozens of countries.

According to *Forbes* magazine, Uber's lofty value gives Mr Kalanick a personal net worth of US\$6.3 billion.

- *The Nation*



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Salvaging coral

THE success of a coral reef restoration project off Mai Thon Island is encouraging, but also serves as a reminder of the need to protect coral from the huge array of threats it faces from man's activities.

These threats range from global-scale effects, such as global warming, all the way down to the most local phenomena, such as ignorant snorkelers and 'sea walkers' trampling coral formations.

A small fraction of our readership might recall the days when there were impressive coral formations at the south end of Patong Bay, an area now more closely associated with such phenomena as brown algae, jet-ski cowboys and the beach lounge mafia.

Yet, beneath the surface, the lifeless remains of the coral formations that thrived there for millennia remain as a reminder to anyone who takes the time to look.

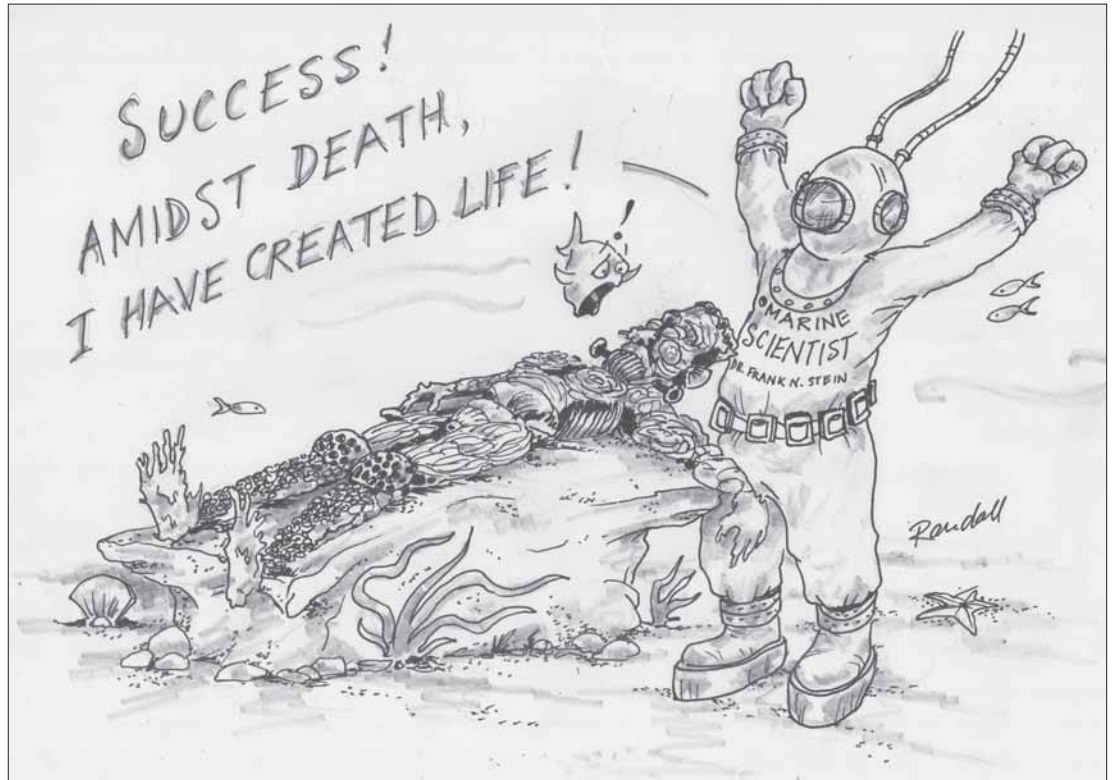
Unfortunately, it is not just Patong that has lost so much coral; the effect is widespread not only in the waters off Phuket, but the entire region and world. Even Australia's Great Barrier Reef has lost more than half of its coral due to bleaching, an effect most researchers agree is related to global warming.

As most readers probably already know, coral comes in many species and is the key building block of healthy marine ecosystems. The Phuket dive industry has, over the years, played a huge role in raising awareness about the need to preserve these ecosystems. Indeed, most divers view coral with the kind of reverence usually reserved for religious idolatry.

Unfortunately, informing new divers of the need to protect coral is not unlike preaching to the converted. Ignorant divers are only a small part of the problem. Poor fishermen do far more damage while eking out a living at sea, simply to survive and provide the rest of us with seafood.

Coral restoration projects are suitable for some locations, but we should not fail to remember the lessons we have learnt from some less successful projects, especially the 'coral reef squadron' that wasted millions of baht in taxpayers' money and charitable donations due to a very basic design flaw that ignored basic principles of fluid mechanics.

In the end, however, it is better to direct our resources to protecting what remains of our natural coral formations rather than trying to build artificial replacements after the fact.



Big thanks to marine experts

Re: *Phuket marine expert says coral restoration 'successful'*, Mar 16

Very exciting work. Thank you and live long.

Paul Venne
Gazette forum

As long as the speed boats and snorkelers stay away then it will continue to improve, but as soon as the snorkelers start walking all over it, feeding the fish and the speed boats start dropping litter and anchors then it will all be destroyed just as quickly.

Simon Lomas
Facebook

Death of innocent creatures not lucky

Re: *Two-headed Krabi calf hailed lucky*, Mar 18

Not so lucky for the calves, though, was it. Still, at least lots of people think they'll win the lottery because of the death of these two innocent creatures.

CaptainJack
Gazette forum

Maintain a safe distance on the roads

Re: *'Slippery roads' claim yet another victim in Phuket*, Mar 16

If the victim was driving "very fast" as claimed by witnesses, then so was the truck that hit him. If the truck was slower than the bike then there would have been plenty of space to stop unless the truck was directly behind the bike.

Too close, as so many truck

Letters to the Editor

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

The bike may have been going fast but the truck driver must have been doing the same, and was also too close, therefore dangerous driving as no stopping distance.

Simon
Gazette forum

Phuket does not need these ranges

Re: *Korean tourist shoots himself at Phuket gun range*, Mar 14

Does a tourist destination like Phuket really need shooting ranges for tourists anyway?

I can understand that locals or residents may want to join or become members of a shooting club as a hobby, but allowing unvetted people off the street to go and shoot is, as we've seen, dangerous.

Sharky
Gazette forum

Offer quality to get quality in return

Re: *Phuket tourism operators display their wares in Berlin*, Mar 18

"Phuket is the top market for European tourists already." Wishful thinking. "The TAT estimates Russians and Ger-

mans among the top five visitors to Phuket." Germans? Wishful thinking.

Those times are over. If you forget about wild estimates and do a bit of research, you know that Germans ranked number 9 in 2016.

If you want to have quality European tourists back, you have to offer quality. Walk the inner 'road' between Surin and Cherng Talay and you'll know what I mean.

Georg the Viking
Gazette forum

Teach people, don't punish them

Re: *Three arrested for stealing from German tourist in Phuket*, Mar 14

We live in a wonderful country, but where the gap between rich and poor is huge, like most. And whilst it is wrong and I do not condone violence or crime, if you are hungry, you have to do whatever it takes to survive.

This country is not poor. Some redistribution of wealth, better taxation of the wealthy to reduce the wealth gap and a better education system so people are not reliant on old industries, may help the poor.

I am not holding my breath. These guys do need to be taught a lesson, yes, but we are no longer beheld to the ways of my forefathers where you would be transported to the other side of the world for stealing a loaf of bread. Instead, teach them.

Graeme Cornthomp
Facebook

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Athletes gear up for Xterra Phuket

TRAIL runners and off road triathletes in Phuket and all over Thailand are gearing up to participate in the 'Xterra Off Road Triathlon and Trail Run' to be held on April 1, 2017 at Layan Beach, Phuket.

Organized by Active Management Asia (AMA) and Xterra, 'Xterra Phuket 2017' will offer two events on the same day.

The first of these is the 'Xterra Off Road Triathlon and Duathlon' (part of the Xterra Off Road Triathlon World and Asia Pacific Series). The triathlon includes swimming, mountain biking and trail running, whereas the duathlon includes trail running, mountain biking and then back to trail running.

The second event is the trail run (part of the Xterra Trail Running World Championship 2017). This features 30km, 13km and 3km runs for families and children.

Winners of all categories will be given free tickets to participate in the Xterra World Championship finals to be held in Hawaii at the end of the year.

"Xterra Phuket 2017 is ex-



Xterra Samui, held in September 2016, drew a positive response from the athletic community. Photo: Supplied

pected to attract about 500 athletes from all over the world with US\$7,500 in the prize money purse," says Serge Henkens, director of event organization at AMA-Events.

Countries participating in the Xterra Asia Pacific World Tour Championship include the Philippines, Korea, Japan, Spain, New Zealand, Australia,

Malaysia and Thailand.

Event partners include the Tourism Authority of Thailand, Bangkok Airways and Singha Corporation.

"We are proud to bring such a prestigious international label to Thailand, particularly to Phuket," says Mr Henkens.

"Phuket is mostly well known for its beaches and night

life. However, during the race, participants are sure to discover another, lesser known side of the island – covered forests and rural communities where Muslims and Buddhists are living together in harmony."

Off road racing and trail running have, in the last decade or so, gained immense popularity throughout Asia and particu-

larly in Thailand. AMA is a leading name in bringing that trend to Thailand. Some of its most recognized events include 'Amazing Adventure Race Series' and 'Thailand Trail Running Series.'

Now in its tenth year of operation, AMA has established an international reputation for solid logistics and challenging race courses.

Xterra Phuket 2017 offers both shorter and longer distances to suit the needs of beginners and experienced athletes alike.

"Anyone can join in the events and be a part of the Xterra family," says Mr Henkens, who is a key contributor in bringing the 'Xterra Off Road Triathlon and Trail Run' to Phuket.

Interested participants can register at www.ama-events.com/events/xterra-phuket/ for the triathlon and duathlon, or www.ama-events.com/events/xterra-phuket-trail-run/ for the trail run.

This event is proudly sponsored by the *Phuket Gazette* and *The Nation*.

– *Phuket Gazette*



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Weight loss is one of the benefits of consuming Apple Cider vinegar. Photo: pexels

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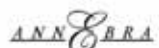
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(Jungceylon beach hat)



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Kelly Tanapat (07.00 pm show time only).

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Seeing beauty in black and white

By Kongleaphy Keam

In today's fast-paced digital world, where anyone can take thousands of photos with their smartphones, there are still those who see the value of spending time in a darkroom and processing photos using a technique known as 'gelatin silver printing'.

It may be unheard of in Phuket, but a group of 12 photographers, together with the Phuket Darkroom Club (PDC), are doing just that. They are holding an exhibition of darkroom photographs in Phuket Town from April 1-30.

With more than 60 photographs on display, the exhibition, titled 'Quiet Beauty', will be held at Naung (Sue) 2521 or Bookemien 2521 coffee shop on Thalang Road. Entry to the event is free.

"Photographs don't have sound, but they tell us stories to reveal the true beauty of any situation. That's why the exhibition is called 'Quiet Beauty'," says Achirawit Churmung, one of the 12 artists who will be displaying their work.

"The exhibition is not only

about the aesthetic beauty of the photo itself, but also about the feeling behind it and the process of capturing it."

Darkroom photos require a much lengthier process to produce than digital pictures.

"Only people who really like this kind of photography will spend their time and effort on it. As a result, the photo itself has more meaning and context," says Mr Achirawit.

"Comparing this with a normal photograph, taking photos nowadays is fast and convenient. You just have to click, post on social media or print

them out immediately. However, after a while, the photos will be forgotten. It is natural that if something comes easily, people tend to take it for

than digitally printed photographs. They can even last for hundreds of years.

"Without color, the possibility of storytelling becomes even

wider. The photos become timeless," says Mr Achirawit.

"People in developed countries still do it, so why not in Thailand? It's time to show the world that Thai people also excel at it."

Mr Achirawit says that the purpose of this exhibition is not to make money.

"We want

to educate the public that film photography still exists. We believe there are a lot of people out there interested in this art form, but

they have no outlet to express themselves. We hope to create an avenue or hub where people can come together for this," he says.

Mr Achirawit says he chose Phuket as the first venue for this exhibition due to the diversity of visitors and locals on the island.

"We see great potential in Phuket. Despite being diverse, it is small enough for everyone to be able to reach us. Additionally, we have PDC here in Phuket to support us," he says.

"Once we have feedback from the Phuket show, we will plan the next show in Bangkok."

At the grand opening, the artists will open the show by talking about their life and experience, and open the floor for questions to interested participants.

On day two, a special guest speaker, National Artist Decho Buranabanpot, will talk about his life and experience. The event will be held at Blu Monkey Hotel in Phuket Town.

For further information, follow 'Quiet Beauty' on Facebook.





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