

# Phuket Gazette

May 13 - 19, 2017

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'GAZETTE TO QUIT STANDALONE NEWSPAPER DISTRIBUTION IN PHUKET'

# PG decides to land

Print output to be reduced to a 'Gazette Lite' and play to wider market in The Nation every Saturday

By John Magee

IT'S like Grandma's little drinking problem. Everyone knows, but people don't much talk about it. And so it goes with the publishers of hard-copy newspapers these days - worldwide. We know where print is headed, so the only real choices are whether to get out now, or say two years from now.

We've opted for the former, meaning that the paper you're holding in your hands won't be here next month. The Gazette - the paper, not the company - is closing down with its issue of May 27, a full 23 years from its launch back in May of 1994.

But readers will find a 'Gazette Lite' going out to a vastly larger audience as a supplement in The Nation every weekend.

With rising revenues in the Gazette Online and irreversible flatulence in small-scale hard-copy newspapers (those with print runs of less than 10,000), the decision to channel our resources out of local print and into a broader readership has not been difficult.

Advertisers in the Gazette with print preferences will continue to be well catered for amid our Phuket pages in The Nation, giving that content an audience roughly eight times what is possible in Phuket and the Andaman. Our advertisers will of course also retain their presence aboard the 12 major international airlines into and out of Thailand (both Bangkok and Phuket airports).

Marketers gone digital (who hasn't?) already know the power of the Gazette Online, the island's top rated English-language web and mobi platforms for both traffic and page views (source: Google Analytics). They also know that our stories aboard these platforms appear in our Facebook, the island's largest by far for En-

**Phuket Gazette**  
Volume 1 Issue 1 May 1994 10 Baht

## Pilot Issue hits the Street

MAIDEN FLIGHT WREAKS HAVOC!

**INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL MOVES TO NEW BUILDING**  
The Phuket International School has just moved to its new purpose-designed building. This new school, costing over 4 million baht, is conveniently situated on the bypass road close to the Thai Nuan restaurant at the junction with the main road to Patong. Headmistress Agnes Hebler said that with the sixteen classrooms, they would now be able to develop a much fuller curriculum. Classes could now be held in a much better environment. She said that the school has grown from a few pioneering pupils to its present level of over seventy in just three years. With this sort of growth and with children ranging in age from three to fifteen, it was essential to increase the classrooms available. The costs were met by a special levy from parents and some donations.

**SEA GYPSIES ARRESTED**  
In the latest incident in an ongoing conflict over control of resources in the waters around Phuket, six boat-loads of fishermen from the Sea Gypsy community at Rawai Beach were arrested for fishing in restricted areas and using a type of net which has been banned by the Fisheries Department. In the first incident on March 4, four boats were con-

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**SPECIAL OFFERS**

An extract from the front page of Vol 1 Issue 1 of the Gazette, launched 23 years ago in May 1994. Phuket was bliss but hardly a maker of news, so the paper remained monthly in its first four years.

glish language, with 168,000 followers.

We do not celebrate the departure of a masthead that has been a part of Phuket for nearly a quarter of a century, but sentimental we must not be. Indeed, our editors and reporters are more than pleased. Free of the chains of the ancient and tedious grinds of hard-copy layout, they will now be spending far less time with their mice and more as journalists - 'out there' getting stories, writing 'em up and interacting more closely with the community.

For myself, what a great ride it has been, watching the island morph from village para-

dise (as seen by a refugee from New York/Hong Kong) to genuine international tourist destination offering just about anything one might ever want on a holiday.

The scar tissue of Phuket's development is acknowledged and has given us plenty to write about, but without the candor of such reports alongside all the positives, it's not difficult to imagine that the negatives could have gained the upper hand here. They've not, but they'll keep trying, so we will continue to do our bit, with increasing digital firepower and some new media alliances going forward.

## Foreigners fined B500 for indecency in public

PHUKET police fined a Russian couple 500 baht each after a video clip of them appearing to have sex in the back of a tuk-tuk went viral. The incident was closely followed by a similar occurrence on Koh Samui.

Story on Page 3

## BUSINESS



Pullbacks are great opportunities to see where the strongest stocks are.

Page 5

## PROPERTY



Phuket-based Siam Real Estate to go head to head in Full Metal Dojo.

Page 7

## LIFE & STYLE



The so-called progress of mankind has taken a heavy toll on sea gypsies, the oldest inhabitants of Phuket.

Page 9



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## LOCAL NEWS

## Briefly

Aussie crew  
rescue three  
fishermen

CREW members of an Australian tourist's yacht on May 7 rescued three fishermen from a sinking boat in Vichit.

Lt Wirach Pudpuang of the Marine Police received reports of the incident at about 4pm.

"Two Thai fishermen, Adisak Kaewbamrung and 'Phy', and Burmese fisherman 'Din' were fishing at Koh Tapao Noi off Ao Makham when their boat started leaking and filling up with water," said Lt Wirach.

Before authorities could act, the three men were picked up and safely taken ashore on the yacht that had been passing by.

— *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

Ya bah drug  
mule arrested

POLICE arrested a Phuket-bound man for transporting *ya bah* (methamphetamine) worth 800,000 baht at Tah Chat Chai checkpoint on May 5.

Lt Col Tawach Tansakul of Tah Chat Chai Police apprehended Anan Navarat.

"Mr Anan was travelling by bus from Nakhon Sri Thammarat and looked suspicious to us during a routine check," the colonel told the *Gazette*.

About 4,000 pills were found in his possession.

"The suspect told us that he picked up the drugs from an unidentified man in Nakhon Sri Thammarat and was instructed

Jazz concert to feature  
His Majesty's tunes

A free jazz concert sponsored by the *Gazette* will be held at Loma Park in Patong on May 20. The concert, hosted by the Andaman Natural Resources Conservation Foundation, has been named 'Jazz for King 2 - Andaman Jazz by the sea' and will be held from 7-10pm. The Foundation Chief, Yossanan Raicharoen, said that the festival is crucial to all Thais as it will provide an opportunity to honor King Rama IX for his musical talent and also celebrate the era of King Rama X. Photo: Jimmy Baikovicus

to drop them off in a trash can near the Heroines' Monument. He was promised 15,000 baht to complete the transaction," said Col Tawach.

Mr Anan was charged with possession of a category 1 drug with intent to sell.

— *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

Thai couple  
find lost wallet,  
British passport

AN ELDERLY couple on May 5 returned a wallet containing

a British passport, bank book and cash totalling more than 150,000 baht at Pakbang Beach in Rawai.

Prayong Sukkaew, 79, and his wife were collecting bottles at about 6am to sell for money when they spotted the wallet, picked it up and handed it over to Rawai Police officers.

"We found Richardson Paul Robert's passport, a Siam Commercial Bank book, and 4,944 baht in cash," said Rawai Mayor Aroon Solos.

"I admire the honesty of the couple for returning Mr Robert's possessions to us," he added.

Mr Robert later arrived at the station and showed his appreciation to the couple by giving them 1,000 baht for their troubles.

— *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

Security guard  
charged for  
assault, theft

AN EX-SECURITY guard at a hotel in Pa Khlok was arrested and charged for assault as well as theft and possession of an illegal firearm and drugs on May 2, after he brutally beat up and robbed a hotel staff member.

Thalang Police apprehended

the suspect, Panya Jara, 28, at his rental house in Pa Khlok where they confiscated an Iphone, Ipad, two ATM cards, hotel keys, the illicit drug *krathom* and a firearm.

Police have withheld the name of the hotel where the victim, Chinese national Poon Yi Ting, was working as an intern.

Ms Ting told police that she was sleeping in the staff dormitory when Mr Panya made his way in and attempted to steal her possessions.

She woke up and tried to stop him, so he assaulted her and made off with her belongings, including a cellphone, a laptop and cash (1,600 Hong Kong dollars and 200 baht). Only the cellphone was recovered at the suspect's house.

"Mr Panya confessed to robbing and assaulting Ms Ting and also implicated an accomplice, who he named only as Somporn," Phuket Provincial Police Commander Maj Gen Teerapol Thipjaroen told the *Gazette*.

"Mr Panya used to work as a security guard at the hotel and therefore knew his way around the premises quite well," Gen Teerapol noted.

Police are now looking for Mr Somporn, who had not yet been found as at press time.

— *Kritsada Mueanhawong*

British woman  
dies in truck  
collision

A PREGNANT British woman was killed in a hit and run collision with an 18-wheeled truck in Thalang on May 8.

"Sophie Emma Rose was riding on a motorbike with her partner Danny Glass, when they changed lanes to avoid a vehicle parked and blocking their path in the motorbike lane of the road. As they did this, the truck hit them from behind," said Lt Col Sanit Nukhong of Thalang Police after taking statements from witnesses.

"Ms Rose was then run over by the truck and sustained fatal head injuries," he added.

Mr Glass's statement, however, was different. He said in a video on YouTube that a car in front of their motorbike suddenly braked, and he also braked as fast as he could but lost control of the bike. He then said that he tried to keep the vehicle under control right before the truck ran over Ms Rose.

Mr Glass, also a British national, was not injured. Both were taken to Thalang Hospital.

The truck driver, who had earlier fled the scene, surrendered himself to police. Mr Glass wrote on his Facebook page that authorities have told him that either he or the truck driver will be charged for Ms Rose's death.

*Additional reporting by Zohaib Sikander.*

— *Winai Sarot*

Girl narrowly  
escapes Saphan  
Hin drowning

A GIRL narrowly escaped drowning on May 4 after she walked into the sea at Saphan Hin following an argument with her girlfriend.

Lt Col Pongpichan Chayanonpiriya of Phuket City Police received reports of the incident at about 6:30am.

"After searching the area for 30 minutes, rescue workers found the young woman named 'Jip' on a broken old boat nearby," said Col Pongpichan.

Ms Jip's girlfriend, whose name was withheld by police, said that the two of them had driven up to Saphan Hin and parked nearby to talk.

They argued, after which Ms Jip got out of the car and ran into the sea.

— *Kritsada Mueanhawong*



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# Foreign couples get 'schooled'



The couple involved in the tuk-tuk episode in Karon arrive at the police station with their interpreter (left). Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

DURING the course of last week, two separate foreign couples were caught on camera having sex in public. A Russian couple was engaged in sexual misdemeanor in the back of a tuk-tuk in Karon on May 5, while a Spanish man was video taped having sex with a Russian woman by the beachside in Koh Samui on May 8.

Lt Gen Naruewat Puthawiro of the Tourist Police told *Gazette* reporters that officers located the couple and fined them 500 baht each for conducting an indecent act in public.

The driver of the tuk-tuk, however, told police that the couple was not having sex, but were "rocking their bodies to the music" he was playing. The couple also insisted on the

same statement as the tuk-tuk driver.

As for the couple in Samui, only the Spaniard was apprehended, who told authorities that the woman in the video was Russian. The video of this couple went viral on social media, in which they could be seen having sex openly on a beach road as motorists and pedestrians passed by. The man was made to apologize to authorities as well as the public, on camera.

"I am so sorry. I apologize to everybody in Thailand. I know it's not good [sic], but I drank too much. I'm so sorry, really. I like you, I love you, I respect you," said the man as he performed a Wai.

*Additional reporting by The Nation.*

- Suchat Hankij

# Tourist apologizes for taking 'starfish selfie'

A THAI tourist apologized on May 5 via social media for taking selfies with a starfish at a national park in Trang province, while her tour guide was ordered to pay a fine.

Earlier on the previous day, the tourist's pictures with the starfish went viral. She was widely condemned, as there is a ban on removing marine animals from the sea. Netizens called on authorities to take action.

Later, the girl who uses the Facebook name Ohaee Nutch, apologized for her actions and said that she was not aware of the rule. She also explained on her post that the pictures were taken in Trang and that her guide had told her she could take a starfish from the sea to snap selfies.

A number of Facebook users commented with disgust over the ruling, saying that it is unfair for local tourists to not be charged and heavily fined, since a number of foreign tourists have had to pay hefty fines for similar 'crimes' and even serve time behind bars.

A Chinese tourist was detained for two days without bail for capturing two fish, and had to pay a 100,000 baht fine, while a middle aged-Russian tourist spent two nights in jail for feeding fish.

Wittaya Khunsan, Krabi Marine and Coastal Resources Preservation Center chief, stated that investigation had



The tour guide (left) was fined 500 baht, while the tourist merely posted an apology on social media. Photo: The Nation

showed that the current incident had taken place in Trang's Had Chao Mai National Park.

Mr Wittaya said catching marine animals in the national park area is illegal. He urged every tourist to comply with the rule and help preserve marine resources for others.

Had Chao Mai National Park chief Manoj Wongsureerat revealed said that the tour guide who caught the starfish had been arrested and fined 500 baht.

"We have strict rules on tourism in the national park area, and this is a 'rare' case of a tour guide violating the rule and catching a marine animal to entertain tourists," Mr Manoj said.

"The park will step up monitoring of tourism activities in the park to ensure no incidents like this ever happen again in future," he added.

Trang Provincial Marine Resource Preservation Division director Prachuap Mokarat said that the Marine and Coastal Resources Department would strengthen surveillance of the tourism business and try to increase awareness among people to protect marine resources.

"Most of the tour boats in Trang are traditional fishing boats that local people use to serve tourists during the high season, so it is quite difficult to regulate them properly," Mr Prachuap said.

"However, we are trying to educate the people to save our marine resources and promote sustainable tourism, because there are not enough officers to guard the big sea. We are sure that if the people realize the importance of marine life, they will preserve it dearly."

*Additional reporting by Zohaib Sikander.*

- The Nation

# One suspect arrested, charged in rape case

A WOMAN who jumped off a Phuket Town building on May 5 after having an argument with her girlfriend told police that she was raped.

The 21-year-old, named by police as 'Rat', wrote a letter prior to the incident, in which she incriminated a man named 'Ton' in the alleged rape.

"Upon questioning, Ms Rat gave us details of the suspect, who has now been identified as Narong Pinta, 25. We issued an arrest warrant for him and apprehended him on May 6," said Phuket City Police Superintendent Komol Osiri.

It was earlier believed that

Ms Rat had jumped because she was having relationship problems with her girlfriend.

Rescue workers at the scene had tried to convince her to come down, but to no avail. Staff at the apartment building told police that she had had an argument with her girlfriend earlier that day.

Ms Rat is now stable and under observation at Vachira Phuket Hospital.

Mr Narong admitted that he and the victim had had sex, but insisted that it was consensual.

Nevertheless, police charged him with rape.

- Kritsada Mueanhawong

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## Prostitution ring suspects 'pile up'

POLICE are preparing to summon at least 20 more suspects in connection with the child-prostitution ring in Mae Hong Son province, a source said on May 7.

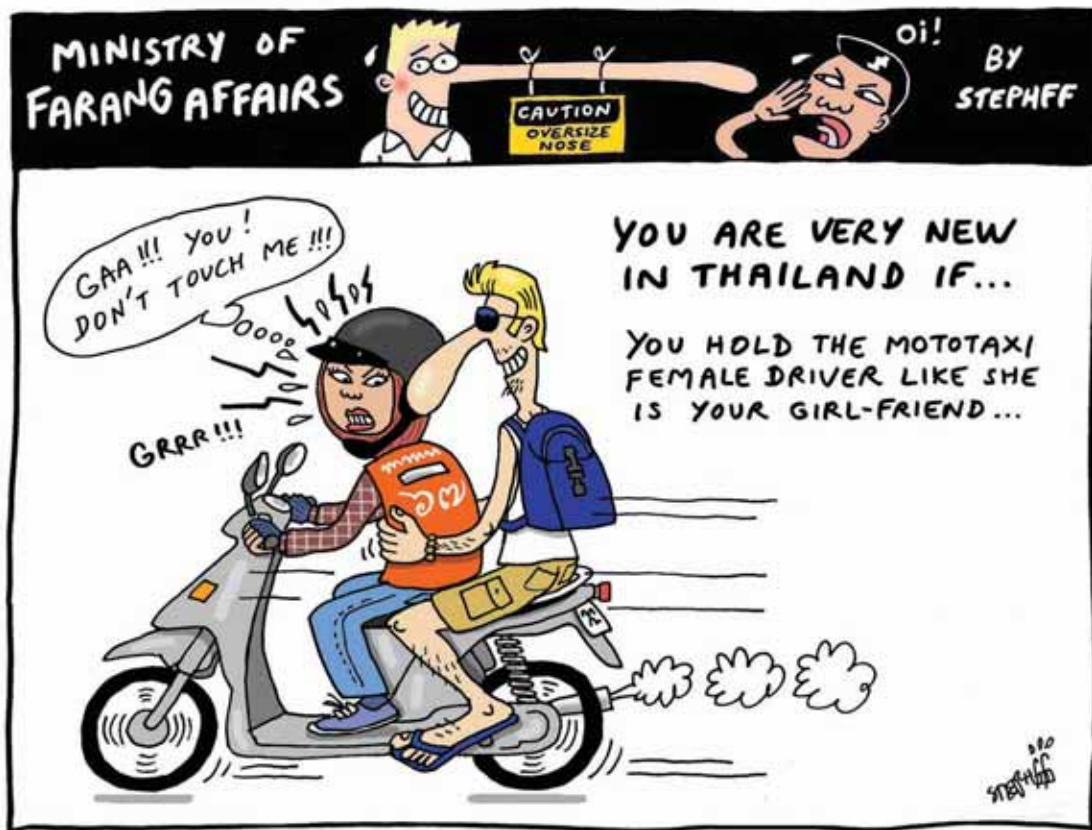
It added that five summons would be issued very soon, most of them for policemen.

At present, at least nine policemen have already been dismissed from the service for their alleged roles in the scandal. The results of the ongoing investigation will determine whether they can rejoin the police force. There are also seven civilians being detained over the scandal.

The same source said an elderly man seen in a picture next to a girl with an owl tattoo on her breasts worked for a cement-delivery firm in Mae Hong Son and, contrary to initial speculation, he was not a senior government official.

## Healthcare to be tabled for deliberation

TWO major reform topics – healthcare scheme and rice industry – were tabled for the National Reform Steering Assembly (NRSA) for deliberation on



May 8.

Kamnoon Sidhisamarn, spokesperson for the NRSA whip, said the healthcare reform committee had suggested that a "National Health Policy Committee" be appointed to oversee health benefits and medical services provided to the general public and state officers.

The aim was to ensure social equality, he said.

Regarding rice industry reform, he said the NRSA would discuss the possibility of establishing a community enterprise to help farmers with unresolved debts, increase productivity,



add value to rice products, eliminate middlemen and match supply with demand.

## Education review ordered

PRIME Minister Prayuth Chan-o-cha instructed the Edu-

cation Ministry to review education curriculum to ensure that students respond well to it, the ministry's permanent secretary Chaiyapruerk Serirak has said.

Speaking in a meeting of the strategic administration committee chaired by PM Prayuth on May 8, the premier asked the Education Ministry to review the country's curriculum to ensure that it can increase students' knowledge, improve society and enhance the country's potential, said Mr Chaiyapruerk.

In the meeting, the Education Ministry presented its plans for national strategic education management, constitutional education management and support for private schools.

The PM also said English was important and could reduce disparities, so it was necessary to improve English teaching.

## Government lures Chinese investment

DEPUTY Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak said on May 8 that the government plans to connect its new Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) development project with the Chinese government's 'One Belt, One Road' initiative.

"The connection will be through a high-speed railway and other linkage infrastructure," Dep PM Somkid told hundreds of investors from Hong Kong and Shanghai interested in doing business and investing with Thai partners.

Addressing the forum "Thai-

land-Hong Kong-Shanghai Strategic Partnership on 'One Belt, One Road' in Bangkok, Dep PM Somkid said he was upbeat about future economic cooperation between Thailand, Hong Kong and mainland China.

He said that foreign direct investment in the EEC from Hong Kong and China reached US\$14 billion and US\$16 billion (485.2 billion baht and 554.2 billion baht) respectively by the end of last year. Many of the investments were in small and medium-sized enterprises.

Dep PM Somkid said he expected Thai businesses would benefit from Hong Kong investment including technology transfers since Hong Kong's small and medium-sized enterprises were very competitive. Hong Kong also wants free trade agreements with Asean countries, he added.

## Illegal fishing group runs off

ONE suspect was arrested while four others escaped after police charged them with harming marine life and using fishing equipment in a national park area. The incident unfolded at Mu Koh Lanta National Park.

"Last week, we received reports from divers that there was a yacht anchored at Koh Ha and that the people on board were suspected of shooting fish," said Kankasem Meesook, chief of the park.

"At Koh Ha, we found an anchored yacht named *Is A Kind Of Magic*. Nearby, we found two men diving, shooting fish with spears and taking photographs. We found two other men and a child on the boat," he added.

Officers seized all the equipment, including spears, a GoPro camera, diving equipment and accessories, two buoyancy control devices (BCD), a radio communication device and about 10 kilograms of fish.

"We charged them and ordered them to move the boat ashore to the Klong Sai Conservation Office for further legal processing. We took one of the men with us on our boat and asked the rest to follow us," said Mr Kankasem.

"Initially, the others followed us on their yacht, but then they suddenly maneuvered away and escaped. We chased them, but they were able to get away," he added.

Waritnan Pronanon, 45, the only suspect in police custody, has refused to provide any further information so far.





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# Pullbacks are great opportunities

**Finance**  
By Don Freeman

PULLBACKS are great opportunities to see where the strongest stocks are and allowing investors to make a watch list of potential leadership stocks or sector ETFs that are holding up in the face of bad news.

Since early March, we have been seeing the S&P 500 (which had a big run up after the elections) undergo some consolidation involving a pullback. A 2-8 per cent pullback is perfectly healthy and normal, with anything higher being more unusual, but nothing to panic about.

This time around, we saw financial stocks (which rallied the most after Trump won) getting hit the most, while several stocks both in my clients' and my own portfolios have been sold as key support levels were triggered. This brings us to about 30-35 per cent cash for clients' long-term growth accounts.

Despite the increasingly scary news (such as North Koreans with nukes), we are still seeing individual leadership stocks stay-



T-Mobile is holding up well throughout the pullback. Photo: Mike Mozart

ing strong, while weaker stocks are leading the pullback. For instance, the tech laden NASDAQ-100 index has barely budged downward since March and many of our core portfolio holdings such as Apple, Netflix and Priceline Group have continued to perform well.

Small cap biotech Theravance Biopharma is showing strength as shares have closed above their IPO level for retail investors and hit all-time highs. It also moved up 20 per cent during the March-April pullback as the 'smart money' continues to look for and invest

in strong stocks.

Large cap Celgene Corporation is another biopharmaceutical that's been bucking the S&P 500 downtrend by moving strongly in the opposite direction. It's also well positioned to take out an old high from 2015.

Mid cap life-sciences cloud-computing stock Veeva Systems has not even budged downward during the pullback. Not only has it closed back above its IPO level, shares keep hitting all-time highs.

China-based online behemoth Alibaba Group Holding is up

strong and trying to break out of a cup and handle base on the technical charts. The stock is just waiting for some sort of catalyst (perhaps the next earnings report) to break even higher.

Large cap T-Mobile US is one that I am watching to buy as shares are holding up well throughout the pullback.

The iShares MSCI South Korea Index Fund ETF is also holding up surprisingly well in the face of North Korean nuclear threats. Now would be a good time for any investor with a strong stomach for geopolitical risk to consider buying it.

What I am waiting for is confirmation that the S&P 500 pullback will reverse itself (and break back above early March highs) as what we saw before the US elections was a two to three month pullback and then a breakout once the uncertainty about those elections were out of the way.

On the other hand, if early March was in fact some sort of market top, our stocks will likely be stopped out one by one and fall below stop loss levels to be automatically sold.

Keep in mind that Trump has proven to be unpredictable -

something the media loves, but the markets continue to hate. Irrespective of that, we will be investing in any strong leadership stocks that have presented themselves during the pullback when the market tide inevitably reverses into a breakout.

And if the market is unable to find support in the near term, then we will likely raise more cash, as I always ensure there are proactive stop loss levels in place where stocks will be sold if a key support level on the downside is breached.

Watch the shares of Google and Amazon; their quarterly earning reports show they are moving upward to new highs. The week after the French elections saw the 8-week correction ending and the uptrend continuing higher.

*Don Freeman, the president of Freeman Capital Management, is a fee-only Phuket based Registered Investment Adviser with the US Securities Exchange Commission. He has 20 years of experience providing financial planning and wealth management advice with an emphasis on investing in low-cost ETFs to both working and retired expatriates.*

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## Phuket Gazette

# Hold tour guides responsible

THE recent fine levied on a tour guide for removing a starfish from the sea in a marine national park has once again drawn international attention to how erratic Thai law enforcement appears to be when it comes to issues involving mass tourism, environmental conservation and foreign guests.

The latest uproar in social media came after a Thai tourist posted pictures of herself with a starfish on her head on Facebook. The creature was reportedly obtained by, or with the help of, the tour guide.

The guide was subsequently fined 500 baht. The tourist later apologized over the incident, saying she had been unaware of rules protecting marine wildlife inside national parks. She was never fined or otherwise punished.

The temporary removal of a starfish from the sea hardly constitutes an egregious environmental crime, especially when compared with the overwhelming and relentless onslaught against nature posed by humankind at every level. But part of the resulting uproar over this incident stemmed from the fact that the tourist got off scot-free, unlike some foreign tourists who had their holidays ruined over similar breaches.

In those cases, the foreign "criminal's" pleas of ignorance made little difference to authorities, who also failed to charge the real culprits: their Thai tour guides. Such incidents only further consolidate negative perceptions that the Thai criminal justice system is rigged in favor of rich Thai nationals. It also reinforces negative perceptions relating to unfair double-pricing strategies in the tourism industry that have gone unaddressed by numerous administrations.

The incident will probably go some way in raising public awareness about how tourists and guides should conduct themselves in our national parks. We certainly have a long way to educate people about the fact that wildlife needs to be protected and preserved, not used as a source of selfie props.

That the incident occurred not long before two Russian tourists were fined for 'getting it on' in the back of a moving tuk-tuk also indicates a trend that law enforcement is actually monitoring and taking action on 'viral' social media reports.

This is a worrying trend in our new millennium world that is already reeling in confusion from a preponderance of propaganda, 'fake news' and 'alternative facts'.



## Regulate the behavior of vans, tuk-tuks

*Re: Pregnant British woman killed in Phuket crash, May 8*

Very sad but until the police start to take control of the roads this will continue every day. The vans and tuk-tuks are the worst for this.

Just parking two vans blocks half the road. The minivans just park in the middle of the street, open their doors and let passengers out in the middle of the road.

But the police do nothing. It's only a matter of hours till the next death.

*Simon01  
Gazette forum*

## Time to start using covered vehicles

*Re: Drug suspects escape police custody in Phuket, May 4*

A good reason to ban people sitting on the back of a pick up truck. Police have to set the example and start to transport suspects in closed cars.

*Robert Lagas  
Facebook*

## Speeding motorists need to learn lesson

*Re: Four injured as speeding car ploughs through motorists in Phuket, May 4*

"We intend to charge the car driver with reckless driving causing injury"... and driving without a seat belt presumably.

You don't get thrown out of a Camry, one of the safest cars in the world, if you're wearing

## Letters to the Editor

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

your seat belt.

Maybe two broken legs will make him think about it next time.

*CaptainJack  
Gazette forum*

## Tour guides should be heavily fined

*Re: Thai tourist apologizes for starfish selfie, tour guide fined, May 6*

So, 10k for a foreign tourist, nothing for a Thai tourist and 500 baht for a tour guide – what a joke. Should be the other way around – tour guides to be heavily fined and have their licence revoked.

*Mister Ree  
Gazette forum*

## Accurate depiction of Thai lifestyle

*Re: Ministry of Farang Affairs: Farang is always wrong, May 7*

These cartoons are absolutely spot on! It's exactly like this... once you understand the Thai language, culture, mannerisms and beliefs and once you have a disagreement with a Thai you will very quickly realize how correct these comics are. If not, it shows that you are a walking ignoramus who

is naive.

The mindset of "they're lovely island people who are naive and good hearted etc" is not only condescending, but I also believe insulting to Thai people.

*Aidan Montano  
Facebook*

## Phuket can be modeled as Singapore

*Re: Phuket gov launches clean-up campaign, May 2*

Wow, not a day too late. If they also could impose a fine for throwing garbage in the streets, maybe could try to copy Singapore a little bit.

I hope they keep on and speed up their efforts. Well done!

*4wins  
Gazette forum*

## A huge admirer of His Majesty's work

*Re: His Majesty's tunes to be played at jazz concert in his honor, May 5*

I have long admired His Majesty and thought about what an amazing man he was, and I was pleased to see he was also an excellent musician.

He was one person in the whole world that I would have loved to see in person. Unfortunately he died when I was in Phuket last October.

He was an excellent King for Thailand.

*Shawn  
Gazette forum*

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# Realtors go head to head in FMD



**By The Book**  
**Kevin Hodges**

KINGDOM Co Ltd, drivers of Full Metal Dojo (FMD), a favorite Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) promotion, has announced an innovative new sponsorship deal that pits two rival real estate firms against each other in the world of MMA.

Competing agencies Siam Real Estate (SRE) from Phuket and BKK BestLife will fight it out on FMD's Facebook page in a series of posts where online fans will vote on the most 'baller' property in various Bangkok hotspots, as represented by the two agencies. The winners will receive points for each round won, as the online battle intensifies.

Kingdom Co will also make their own selfie videos at both agencies' properties, hosted by FMD President and Fox Sports Asia pundit Jon Nutt.

This innovative approach to real estate PR is sure to attract interest from FMD's core live audience of high-earning locals and expats in the Thai capital,



Phuket-based realtor Siam Real Estate is now representing several large projects in Bangkok. Seen above is the Philippe Starck designed KHUN by Yoo. Photo: Siam Real Estate

which is currently enjoying what is said to be a 'booming' condominium market.

Bangkok last year reestablished itself as the most visited city in the world and an affordable hub for expats and property investors alike. Over 16,000 condo units were launched in Bangkok in Q4 2016, the highest in three years.

The deal will also expand the two firms' market reach through FMD's huge international following, with more than 150,000 fans tuning in to their last event

via Facebook Live.

"We at Siam Real Estate have been very impressed with the professionalism and enthusiasm that FMD have brought to their industry, and to promoting Thailand and all local businesses as a whole. We are delighted to be given the opportunity to team up and look forward to facing off against the spirited BKK BestLife," says Patrick Lusted of Siam Real Estate.

BKK BestLife Real Estate founder Blake Sibbit said of the deal, "I've been a huge fan of

FMD since their inception and the work they've put in to promote Bangkok and Thailand to the world. We're extremely honored to join the ranks alongside their other amazing sponsors. SRE has been a leading name in Thailand for over a decade. We hope they prove to be a worthy opponent."

FMD has carved a name for itself in the MMA world, with its innovative branding, its Fightclub-esque events in Bangkok nightclubs, constant video and graphic content cre-

ations and original approach to PR and sponsorship.

Kingdom Co pioneered the concept of rival brands sponsoring the red and blue corners last year with two of Bangkok's leading hotel chains, Moven-pick and Four Points by Sheraton. The deal was shortlisted for 'Best Sponsorship of a Sport, Team or Event of the Year in Thailand' at the Sports Industry Awards Asia 2016.

FMD is Thailand's top MMA promotion, featuring the best up-and-coming Thai and international fighters in the region. Their previous event saw red and blue corner sponsorship from competing MMA apparel firms, Amnig and Kongwear. The concept is against the usual sponsorship code of exclusivity, but goes straight to the very ethos of respectful sporting competition, mirroring the respect shown by MMA artists at the end of their bouts.

For more information about this article, contact Kevin Hodges, Siam Real Estate (SRE) – Tel: 076-324042; Email: kevin@siamrealestate.com; Web: siamrealestate.com.



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# Going deep down into the sea



IF YOU missed the headlines in recent weeks, then let me tell you that submarines are a hot topic in Thailand right now. These hulking underwater “monsters” have been top of the Royal Thai Navy’s shopping list for a long time – longer than most care to remember – and now, finally, they have been given the green light to buy.

There’s been plenty of debate, particularly in the last couple of years, as the Royal Thai Navy have increased their intense desire to have a sub or few, and previous attempts were ultimately shot down. The two main sticking points have always been the cost of buying (and operating) submarines, and the need for Thailand to have submarines in the first place.

Regarding the former, the current military-led Thai Government has given the OK to purchasing three Yuan Class S26T submarines from China at a total price of 36 billion baht, with the first purchase contract set to be signed soon and the first submarine (13.5 billion baht) to be bought by a payment plan. The delivery of the submarine is expected to be made in 2023.

Regarding the latter, the



The AURORA-4 is a private submarine which allows a group of friends to extensively explore the underwater world at the depth of 330 meters. Photo: Supplied

need for a submarine is rather subjective. Reasons ranging from ‘defence’, ‘security’ as well as the fact that Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam and Indonesia all have submarines and therefore Thailand also should obtain them. Those in opposition of acquiring the submarines claim that the Gulf of Thailand isn’t deep enough and the country has no regional enemies nor is it likely to have any.

Commentators who are on the ‘against’ side have also reasoned that previous grand

military purchases have proven to be a “waste of money”, the most obvious example being the aircraft carrier HTMS *Chakri Naruebet* which was commissioned in 1997, which spends more time at port than at sea and does not have an operating aircraft fleet for it. It is today more a ‘living’ museum than military asset.

Talks of the Royal Thai Navy submarines aside, I thought it was the right time to take a look at what is available in the market for the

average Joe.

## TRITON 7500/2

Ideal for the adventurer, this two-seater submersible from Triton is capable of diving to depths of almost a mile and a half. In complete comfort, the driver and passenger of this diving machine can discover parts of the ocean unexplored by man and witness the incredible lives of the inhabitants of the deep. Weighing in at 6,500kg, the Triton 7500/2 has a 12-hour endurance.

## AURORA-4

If you would like to take a group of friends into the deep blue, then perhaps the 4-person ‘AURORA-4’ private submarine is for you. The spherical cabin, unobstructed by top hatches and side pontoons, maximizes the field of vision. A pilot can take up to three passengers to enjoy the wonders of the underwater world to depths of 330 meters (1,100 feet). With a dry weight of 6,690kg the AURORA-4 has a maximum speed of 4 knots.

## DEEPFLIGHT SUPER FALCON 3S

A new model from DeepFlight, the Super Falcon 3S will be launched later this year and is billed as the ideal submarine for resort operations. A pilot can take two passengers on an incredible underwater excursion and the design ensures 360 degree views with increased maneuverability. Weighing just 2,860kg and with an operating depth of 100 meters (330 feet), it has a maximum speed of 4 knots.

*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*

## Disney appoints country manager

THE Walt Disney Company South East Asia has announced the appointment of country managers in three Asean countries to further strengthen its focus in high-growth markets.

Herry Salim, Veronica Espinosa-Cabalina and Subharn Rathanamongkolmas (Soupy) have been appointed country managers for Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand respectively and will report to the company’s managing director Robert Gilby.

According to the press release, this country level focus will further support Disney’s in-market partnerships, create localized creative content and accelerate fast learning of local trends and opportunities to serve fans of Disney, Marvel, Star Wars and Pixar. The new lead-

ers will focus on building brand affinity through fan engagement and drive monetization with a compelling portfolio of content across all Disney businesses.

“This new market-led organization will strengthen our local relevance, deepen key partnerships, and accelerate Disney’s digital footprint with some of the world’s most mobile and social consumers in these three countries,” Mr Gilby stated.

“Herry, Veronica and Soupy bring a deep understanding of our key growth markets in this region. With their experience and leadership, we will further enrich Disney fan engagement with our stories, brands and characters, and drive continued growth across our businesses,” he added.

Ms Soupy is a senior executive in the studio’s entertainment business with more than two decades of experience in Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos. Prior to this role, she was the managing director of the joint venture entity of Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures and Sony Pictures Releasing International in Thailand where she held various roles since joining in 2003.

“I have enjoyed a long connection with Disney over the past two decades and am proud to lead the integrated team in Thailand. We look forward to serving Thai fans with unique local creative inspirations and experiences of Marvel, Star Wars, Pixar and most importantly, Disney,” she says.

– The Nation

## Skin cancer research breakthrough achieved

A PAPER written by Malaysian physics researcher Su Tuan Min, 29, has been published in a science journal called ‘Nature Research’. His research can be used to understand the cause of skin cancer and cure cancer.

The paper, published last month, has been regarded as a breakthrough in research, challenging Darwin’s theory of evolution.

Mr Su said his field of research is Mechanobiology on how physical forces and changes in the mechanical properties of cells and tissues contribute to development, cell differentiation, physiology and disease.

His research team studies how cells die and regenerate in

epithelium. The significance of the research is to understand the formation of skin cancer and how to cure it.

Although he is the author of the paper, he said a total of 10 people were involved.

He hopes the outcome of the research promotes research transcending biology and physics.

Mr Su received a scholarship from National University of Singapore and studied physics. He spent two years in France and completed a double degree both in NUS and Ecole.

Mr Su is currently obtaining his doctorate degree in NUS and conducting research under the Mechanobiology Institute.

– The Nation



# Sea gypsies: victims of so-called progress



Sea gypsies' skin is lined from exposure to nature. Photo: Gazette file

THE sea gypsies (also known as *Moken* or *Chao Le*) are the oldest inhabitants of Phuket – they have probably been living around these shores for 2,000 years. In common with nomadic seafaring groups the world over, they settled in one area and only moved on when the natural resources were depleted.

With changing circumstances, they too adapted, built ramshackle homes and settled. The three 'permanent' Moken communities are at Laem Tukkae at Ko Sirai (the largest has 1,900 people), a second at Saphan Hin, and the third and oldest at Rawai Beach.

Small and spare, the sea gypsies are bronzed and lined from incessant exposure to the elements. Moken men still use traditional long tail boats, setting their large, netted cylindrical traps with frames fashioned from mangrove wood. Sometimes they free dive to spear fish, or use an antiquated system of air compressors and garden hoses to extend their time below the sur-

face. This is a hazardous business, but they enjoy one natural advantage – they are able to see underwater without masks because their eyes have adapted to submarine conditions.

If you visit their village east of Rawai Beach, you will be struck by the fish available on each family-run stall. No farmed fish here, the catch is mostly reef feeders, netted close to the coral. These stalls are a kaleidoscope of brilliant color: iridescent turquoise and yellow parrotfish and wrasse; olive-skinned peacock groupers with blue spots; coral rock

cod with vibrant red bodies; polka-dotted barramundis and many more. If you prefer ultra-fresh sea-food, there are aerated tanks of rock lobster, crab and crayfish.

My Thai partner distrusts the algal-feeding parrots and wrasses, but I know from experience that they are delicious. So we choose a rock cod and

take it to one of the many restaurants on the other side of the tracks where it can be steamed or fried, and served up with a delectable tamarind sauce.

Though there are Buddhist elements in their culture, sea gypsies have their own distinctive Malay-influenced language, and a religion which contains elements of animism, a belief which surmises that natural objects, as well as humans, possess souls. Moken folklore tells tales of ancestors bringing their dead to death islands where their souls could live on.

Their own floating festival, called Loy Ruea, entails the release of small wooden boats bearing gifts and personal mementos such as nails and hair clippings to placate the souls of the departed and the spirits of the sea. They also revere turtles as soul-sisters – a species threatened with extirpation by so-called 'civilized' man. They only hunt them during their festivals.

This is not the only area where there is a clash of cultures, where their traditional way of life, both on land and at sea, is imperiled. Commercial fishing techniques, such as bottom trawling, have largely destroyed the bountiful fishing grounds on which they have always depended for their livelihood. And fishing restrictions in marine national parks have not helped.

Furthermore, because the Moken occupy prime real estate and because they have little or no knowledge of legal protocol, they are constantly harassed by private developers who claim to hold title to their land. Right now, there is an ongoing legal dispute involving Baron World Trade Company. It seems to cut no ice that the sea gypsies have lived here since time immemorial.

So much for progress. My sympathies are entirely with the gypsies.

## Masking shyness and battling cancer

INSPIRED by "The Mask Singer" TV show, a hospital in Kamphaeng Phet province has found a creative way to help women feel comfortable about undergoing screening tests for cervical and breast cancers.

"We have prepared masks for them. They are welcome to cover their full face before they turn up at the hospital to get the tests," Tambon Sa Kaew Administrative Organization's chief executive Suwan Supakijcharoen said on May 7.

He said the mask idea came up during a meeting with relevant officials, including the director of the Tambon Nong Klod Health Promotion Hospital in Kamphaeng Phet.

"The doctors who administer the tests do not see their face," he said, "We have even let women wear masks back to their homes. They can assign anyone else to return the masks to us later on."

Medical staff also wore masks to make the women feel

more comfortable when registering for the tests.

The results of the Mask Papsmear were impressive. This year, up to 50 female mask-wearers turned up for the free screening tests offered through the Health Security Fund.

In previous years, fewer than 20 women took the tests.

Many women in Thailand feel too shy to check whether they have breast or cervical cancer, as the process will require them to be partially naked.

Because of embarrassment involved, women do not seek the free tests even when the risks are high.

Statistics show breast and cervical cancer are top killers of women, with cervical cancer claiming seven lives a day.

Mr Suwan said women aged 35 or older should be screened for cervical and breast cancers. If these diseases are detected at an early stage, the patient can make a full recovery.

– *The Nation*

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