

# Phuket Gazette

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OFFICIALS URGE PUBLIC TO BE CAUTIOUS WHEN USING SOCIAL MEDIA

## ARE YOU SECURE?

■ Gov warns public to be careful on social media after his own fake profile surfaces

By **Kritsada Mueanhawong**

CYBER security and Facebook seem to be the hot topics this week as Phuket police hunt for a Facebook user who made a fake profile with a name closely resembling the Phuket Governor's and used his picture to pose as him.

The suspect also asked several high-ranking Phuket officials to transfer money to his account.

The Facebook account was set up under the name Nopparat Nonthong, which is similar to the governor's name Norrapaht Plodthong. The user also added many local officers and some media outlets to his profile.

On May 9, the user added Srisoonthorn Mayor Worrawut Songyot and asked to 'borrow' 25,000 baht for his daughter's friend, provided an account number and promised to pay the money back later.

The mayor got suspicious and called the Phuket Governor to confirm, which is when he found out about the fake profile.

"Even though the user did not end up getting any money, we cannot ignore this kind of case," said Governor Norrapaht.

"This person is using my name for a scam, which is very risky for me as well as the other party. We are doing everything in our power to find them," he added.

The governor ordered his representative, Suthee Kiridej, to file a complaint at Phuket City Police Station.

"Beside taking action on my case, I have asked police to keep a closer eye on all such cases. I also urge the public to be careful when using social media," said Gov Norrapaht.

Lt Col Somchai Nooboon of the Phuket City Police accepted the case and vowed to do his best to find the suspect.

"We are now checking the bank account number that the user sent, the IP and every detail that we can get from Facebook. We will also called Mayor Worrawut to ques-



Col Somchai of Phuket City Police inspects documents showing a fake Facebook profile of a user posing as Phuket Governor Norrapaht Plodthong. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

tion him further," said Col Somchai.

Phuket City Police Superintendent Komol Osiri also warned the public to be careful when using social media.

"Make sure that the person you are talking to is really who he or she says they are, especially when money is involved," said Col Komol.

"We can always help you if you file a complaint, but the best thing to do it to prevent such incidents from happening by being smart and vigilant when using social media," he added.

Facebook has made the headlines in Thailand lately as the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications authority (NBTC) last week gave Facebook Thailand until 10am on May 13 to take down 131 URLs with content deemed insulting to the monarchy or threatening national security.

Prime Minister Gen Prayuth Chan-o-cha later said that his government had no authority to suspend the operation of

Facebook in Thailand and that the only thing they could do was to seek court orders addressing the specific URLs and have social media providers cooperate by blocking those web addresses.

So far, the URLs have not been taken down and Facebook remains accessible to Thai users.

Additionally, a global cyber security threat that affected 200 computers in Thailand has also impacted more than 200,000 users in 150 countries worldwide. Europol revealed that the ransomware, named 'WannaCry', presented a cyberattack that was 'unprecedented'.

Surangkana Wayuparb, chief executive officer of the Electronic Transactions Development Agency said that the basic problem on all the infected computers had been fixed and all were functioning normally after technicians followed the advice provided by the Thailand Computer Emergency Response Team.

*Additional reporting by The Nation.*

### Treatment not denied to injured Brit, says hospital

Phuket International Hospital representatives denied reports that they refused to treat an injured Brit unless payment was confirmed, as claimed by the victim's mother in interviews with British newspapers.

*Story on Page 3*

### BUSINESS



Watch for market signals rather than 'news' when investing in stocks.

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### PROPERTY



Boon Yongsakul chosen as the new president of Phuket Real Estate Association.

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### LIFE&STYLE



A detailed step by step guide on how to collect unpaid debt from another party in Thailand.

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## LOCAL NEWS

# Briefly

### Foreigner seen beating minor on CCTV

A FACEBOOK user offered a reward of 5,000 baht to anyone who could help him find a foreigner who fought with a toilet attendant and refused to pay a 10 baht fee to use a toilet on Bangla road.

Videos and photographs of six foreigners – three men and three women – were recorded on CCTV cameras installed at the facility. They were posted by a user named 'Tohee Seesa' earlier this month.

In the video, one of the men is repeatedly seen hitting and shoving a young boy into the wall.

Facebook user Tohee says the attendant is 10 years old, while the foreigner seemed to be between 30 to 40 years old.

Another attendant came to the first one's aid, but the foreigners ran off.

"Please help me find this man. If you see him, please contact me at 081-082 6456 or 085-888 5572," the user stated on their Facebook page..

– *Kongleaphy Keam*

### Police hunt for ATM skimmer

POLICE are hunting for an ATM skimmer after at least 15 people filed complaints again about unauthorized withdrawals from their Siam Commercial Bank accounts.

The complaints were lodged at Thung Thong Police Station last week about ATM withdrawals made in Songkhla from Phuket-based accounts.

"The amounts withdrawn range from 900 baht up to 63,000 baht. We are coordinat-

## Kusoldharm Foundation helps Phuket's neediest



The Kusoldharm Phuket Foundation held a ceremony to award scholarships to 200 deserving students in Phuket. The ceremony was held at the Kusoldharm Center on May 13 and presided over by the Phuket Governor. Food and necessities were distributed to more than 1,500 needy families. Rations including bags of rice were also supplied to several Phuket schools. Photo: Kritisada Mueanhawong

ing with Sadao Police to inspect CCTV footage in order to help identify the suspect, as most of the withdrawals were made at an ATM located at the Sadao SCB branch," said Lt Col Ampolwat Saengrueng of Thung Thong Police.

Police believe the suspect might have escaped into Malaysia via the Sadao border.

Several victims have also voiced their complaints on social media to warn others to be wary of ATM skimmers.

– *Kritisada Mueanhawong*

### B100k damage in Thalang fire

FIRE-FIGHTERS rushed to put out a fire at a Kiwi expat's house in Thalang on May 12, after he left an electric appli-

ance switched on and forgot about it.

The New Zealander's carelessness had reportedly caused the fire. However, his associate nearby saw the blaze and alerted the authorities.

"By about 5pm, two fire trucks had arrived at the home in Permsup Villas in Baan Manik, Cherrngtalay. It took them about 15 minutes to put out the fire, which had luckily affected only one room," said Capt Kraisor Boonprasob of Thalang Police.

Apart from the blackened ceiling, floor and walls of the room, and the destruction of furniture and other personal property, the fire did not spread anywhere else in the two-storey building. However, by the time it was finally extinguished, the floors were covered in soot, sludge and water.

The loss was estimated at about 100,000 baht.

– *Winai Sarot*

### Tourists avoid fine for taking coral out of sea

TWO Chinese tourists were let off with a warning after they were found taking coral out of

the sea on the evening of May 10 at Chalong Pier.

"While passengers were coming ashore from a boat on the way back from Coral Island, I noticed that two Chinese tourists were carrying pieces of cloth wrapped around something that looked like coral. So, I asked to check what it was," said Kanchit Klingklip, president of 'Healthy Reefs Club', a reef conservation 'society' operating in Phuket.

"We found pieces of coral and shells inside, which we seized. We then asked the tour guide, but he said he did not know that the two had stolen coral from the island during their trip," he added.

Mr Kanchit let all parties, including the tour guide, off the hook. He issued a warning to all three as this was their first offence of this nature.

"We would like to warn everybody that it is illegal to take coral or any other marine creatures from the sea. You may be able to get past officers at the pier, but you will certainly be caught at the airport. It is a waste of time and will ruin your holiday if you have to face legal charges during your stay," said Mr Kanchit.

Other tourists in the past have not been as lucky. In Feb-

ruary this year, a Russian tourist spent two nights in jail for feeding fish at Koh Racha before paying 100,000 baht bail to be released.

– *Kritisada Mueanhawong*

### Company land under question

A WALLED, 100-rai tract of land on Koh Lanta Noi is under investigation after the title holders ordered that hundreds of trees be cut down.

More than 30 officials from the Wetland Development Office (WDO) inspected the site on May 11.

"Poom Srijan, who works on site, told us that for the past six months he had been employed by a large pharmaceutical manufacturer to guard the land," said WDO chief Laywisit Baripan.

Mr Poom told officials that the company has six *Nor Sor 3 Kor* titles for the land which show that there is no evidence of encroachment on preserved forest area.

However, Mr Laywisit said that at least two tracts of land totaling 33 rai have been under inspection since last year and that the Forest Protection Office (FPO) is awaiting further evidence of ownership from the company.

A month ago, the FPO also contacted the company to examine their ownership documents for other, as yet undisclosed areas of the property.

– *Kritisada Mueanhawong*

### Two injured in early morning Patong crash

TWO people were severely injured after their motorbike crashed into a pick-up truck on Patong Hill on May 15.

A police car travelling behind the riders captured a video of the collision with a dash cam, which showed the motorbike speeding down the hill, crossing over into the oncoming traffic lane and colliding with the truck, which was travelling uphill toward Patong.

The crash victims were both ladyboys riding from Patong toward Phuket Town, Kathu Police officers told the *Gazette*.

Rescue workers transported them to Patong Hospital. The more severely injured of the two was later transferred to Vachira Phuket Hospital.

– *Kritisada Mueanhawong*

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# Serial cable thieves arrested via CCTV

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

A NINE-MEMBER gang was arrested with 500kg of stolen copper cables and cutting tools at a construction site in Phuket on May 15.

The suspects included three minors, while the rest ranged in age from 28 to 46.

The leader of the gang was named by police as Suriya Talad, 28, chief of the construction site in Pa Khlok where the suspects were apprehended.

“Last week, we received reports from Issarane Wangsukkasem of TOT Public Company Limited about several cable thefts by a local gang,” said Col Akanit Danpitaksat of the Phuket Provincial Police.

Since then, we have been on the lookout for them and were finally able to catch them,” he added.

Officers caught the suspects on CCTV footage, which also showed them escaping into the construction site where Mr Suirya worked.

“Mr Suriya told us that he was hired by a construction company to install cables at the site. Thus, he knew exactly which ones had good value for



The suspects admitted to stealing wires and burning the sheaths to extract the copper inside. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

resale,” said Col Akanit, “He told us that they chose the unused ones, burned their sheaths to extract the copper wires inside, and sold them for 150 baht per kg,” he added.

The policeman added that the gang had also hit several

other areas in Phuket, including Cherng Talay and Phuket Town, as well as some parts of Phang Nga.

Police also took into custody two vehicles which the suspects used to transport the stolen cables.

# Land owner claims agent scammed her



Ms Peetharat at the press conference. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

A ‘DISGRUNTLED’ land owner claiming to have been cheated out of 150 million baht in the sale of land at Freedom Beach is now calling on authorities to resolve the matter.

Peetharat Hootchai, 38, with her lawyer Pradit Chuaythani, held a press conference at the Phuket Merlin Hotel on May 14, explaining to the media that she was never paid in the transaction.

“The two plots of land in question measure up to 65 rai. The chanote for the land has already been issued to the buyer without us having received any money for it. In fact, I have been threatened to leave the area. I want to either to have my land back, or to see it become public,” said Ms Peetharat.

Ms Peetharat explained that a middleman had expressed interest in buying the land from her mother several years ago. He had reportedly told her that she could get a better price if she could get a chanote issued in her name.

“The man then offered my mother to get it done and sell it for her. My mother is simple-minded and doesn’t know the laws, so she agreed to give him signed permission to act on her behalf. However, on April 12, 2011, she went to check the progress at the land office and discovered that the chanote had already been issued under the names Ekkachai Saeiew and Wirot Kongkaew,” she added.

Ms Peetharat filed a complaint against the two men, the case of which is now in process.

“We have owned this land since 1942,” said Ms Peetharat.

– Kongleaphy Keam

# Hospital denies refusing treatment to injured Brit

THE management of Phuket International Hospital (PIH) has denied reports that they refused treatment to a British national injured in a motorbike accident after the victim’s mother claimed they denied assistance until payment had been guaranteed by the insurance provider.

The hospital held a press conference on May 11 to clarify that even though the insurance company did not guarantee payment, Jacob Tonkin was provided medical care since the moment he was admitted to the hospital on May 8.

Mr Tonkin’s mother, Jane, who lives in Cheshire, UK, spoke to several UK-based newspapers, including the *Daily Mirror* and *Manchester Evening News* about her son’s accident.

“[Mr Tonkin’s] family claim

doctors at the hospital refused to treat any of his injuries until payment had been guaranteed,” the *Daily Mirror* reported.

“The accident occurred late at night on May 7 and Mr Tonkin arrived at the hospital just after midnight,” said PIH Director Dr Dun Damrongsak.

“The truth is that we started treating him immediately even though we did not receive any guarantee of payment from the insurance company,” Dr Dun added.

He said that the total cost of the treatment at this stage was about 300,000 baht and that the hospital has already contacted Mr Tonkin’s family.

He also said that the hospital had not discussed any matters regarding payment with his family, but that Ms Jane was due to arrive in Phuket soon.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong



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## All WannaCry threats now neutralized

TWO hundred computers in Thailand were hit by the global ransomware attack but all had been fixed and could be used normally again, an official from the Electronic Transactions Development Agency (ETDA) said on May 14.

Surangkana Wayuparb, chief executive officer of ETDA and head of the Thailand Computer Emergency Response Team (ThaiCERT), said owners of the 200 computers infected by the WannaCry bug had not paid ransoms demanded to decode data encrypted by the hackers.

The basic problem on all the infected computers had been fixed and all were functioning normally after technicians followed the advice provided by ThaiCERT, she said, without elaborating on details.

On May 14, Europol revealed that the WannaCry ransomware had affected 200,000 victims in 150 countries and described the cyberattack as "unprecedented".

Maj Gen Siripong Timula, commander of the IT Support Division at the Office of Information and Communication Technology, advised people hit by WannaCry to not pay the ransoms demanded but instead collect evidence and file a complaint with the Technology Crime Suppression Division.

Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-o-cha said on May 15 that government agencies had not been affected by the malware but a few big companies had.

The Bank of Thailand has been alerted to watch for signs of WannaCry infections but there were not any reports that bank computers in Thailand had been affected.

## Exchange shop raided over drug ties

A CURRENCY-EXCHANGE shop in the heart of Bangkok has allegedly laundered the ill-gotten gains of several drug-trafficking networks, according to a senior adviser of the National Police Office.

"Among these networks is the one led by alleged Lao drug kingpin Puxana Singnawong," Pol General Dr Suwira Songmetta said on May 17. He was speaking after he led a raid on the Power Exchange shop



in Pathumwan district.

The operation, which found two large safety boxes and several computers, was conducted under a search warrant approved by the Criminal Court.

Dr Suwira said the raid took place after evidence suggested Sirikarn Kullawat, who was arrested with her husband Yossawat Weerachaiaphaksiri earlier this month, had operated a currency-exchange business as a front to facilitate financial transfers for drug suspects. "Available evidence shows she had allegedly taken orders to transfer drug suspects' money via social media and got the commission equivalent of 0.8 per cent of the transferred amount," he said.

He said that Ms Sirikarn, who owns a wholesale fruit and vegetable business, had taken over the currency exchange business in February.

## Build roads, not arsenal, says ex-WTO chief

FORMER World Trade Organization chief Supachai Panitchpakdi said on May 17 he is concerned about an escalating global arms race, with many countries including Thailand spending vast amounts of money on weaponry and military hardware.

He made the remarks in a speech at a seminar hosted by the Neighbouring Countries Economic Development Cooperation Agency (NEDA).

"Not just Thailand, but the richer countries are buying more arms," he said. Thailand

## NATIONAL NEWS Briefly

is in the process of purchasing submarines from China, a costly move that has sparked controversy, although Supachai made no direct reference to that deal.

Mr Supachai said he strongly supported NEDA projects in Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Timor-Leste. Development projects such as the building of roads benefit many people, he said.

## Maya Bay to remain open this year

The latest announcement by the National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation Department concerning Maya Bay is a good news for tourists, but maybe not so great for the ecology of the picturesque bay on Phi Phi Island.

The department's director Nattapon Rattanapun said he did not have the authority to close Maya Bay, which is south of Phuket off Krabi province, this year, as previously announced, due to fears it would hit tourism.

"We decided to delay the closure – although an examination underwater and on the shore of the bay revealed that they were badly affected by tourism.

"The corals were damaged

by ships throwing their anchors into the sea," he said.

The delay was agreed on because of concern that tourism in the area would be affected as tour packages had already been sold in advance. Also, other tourist attractions in the Andaman Sea had already closed.

However, Mr Nattapon said Maya Bay would definitely close during the monsoon period next year so that its marine ecology could recover.

The bay was used as a backdrop for a Hollywood movie, *The Beach*, with actor Leonardo DiCaprio, in 2000.

## New media ombudsmen introduced

IN-HOUSE MEDIA ombudsmen were officially introduced for the first time on May 17 by the National Press Council of Thailand (NPCT) to improve effective self-regulation of the industry.

The move came as the state has attempted to introduce a new media regulation bill that media groups oppose, citing possible state interference and infringements on press freedom.

The ombudsman body is primarily aimed at expediting the process to handle complaints, which would allow outsiders to influence decisions regarding the media's performance.

NPCT President Chavarong Limpattamapanee said each committee would include media owners, editors and journalists, but also outside experts in the media, legal and

consumer-protection fields.

They will act as a direct point of contact for public complaints or questions about the press and online media. Panels would have 30 days to consider and proceed on the complaints.

While the presence of journalists on the committees would help ensure that consumers are in direct touch with the media, outside experts will help give legitimacy to the ombudsman's performance and ensure that decisions are not heavily biased towards the media.

Consumer complainants, if dissatisfied with the ombudsman's decision, could also contact the NPCT for further consideration, he said.

A similar body would also be established at a regional level, covering local press and online media in Thailand, the president added.

Confederation of Thai Journalists president Thepchai Yong said the ombudsman body would mark a milestone for media self-regulation amid public concerns about media ethics and codes of conduct.

## No authority on Facebook ban, says PM

PRIME Minister General Prayuth Chan-o-cha said on May 16 that his government had no authority to suspend the operation of Facebook in Thailand following its refusal to block access to 131 URLs with content deemed illegal.

Gen Prayuth said the only thing the government could do was to seek court orders addressing specific URLs and have social media providers cooperate by blocking those web addresses.

"All we can do is ask for cooperation from foreign countries, the private sector and Internet service providers," the premier said.

"It's because we have no better options."

The 131 web addresses in question were found to have content deemed insulting to the monarchy or threatening national security.

The National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission last week gave Facebook Thailand a deadline – until 10am on May 16 to take down the 131 offending URLs, a deadline which they missed.

Thailand is the most active country on Facebook in Asia. The social media platform still remains accessible to Thai users.

# Factors that power stocks higher



AS I AM writing this, I haven't turned on a TV in more than 10 days. So I am not getting any news from a verbal source about French election worries, nuclear confrontations with North Korea, Trump uncertainty or whatever else is going on in the world. However, I have been reading the news and it's different when you read about news versus just listening to people on the TV talk or panic about it.

What I am also watching for is the price action of the market, key indices and stocks – not what the talking heads are telling me that I should be scared about in the world. What I am seeing is that despite all of the scary news and uncertainty out there, the market appears to be coiled with many key indices or stocks about to uncoil or spring forward.

Instead of dwelling on the negative, just consider the following signs about what is going right.

Track the iShares North American Tech-Software ETF (NYSEARCA: IGV) performance. This particular ETF focuses on a high growth sector and its performance gives us a better indicator about stocks



Looking at technical charts of leadership stocks such as Apple shows no evidence that the so-called 'smart money' investors are selling shares or taking profits off the table. Photo: Kavin030897

than anything we would get from watching CNN, CNBC or any other 'news' channel. IGV is where the big strong growth companies and leadership stocks exist and it's hitting all-time highs as of the end of April. If IGV were to break down, then I would be raising cash.

Secondly, Alibaba Group Holding Ltd (NYSE: BABA) has broken out. While China-based Alibaba is increasingly a global Internet behemoth, right now it has one of the most bullish charts in the market as compared to just before the US

elections (before shares broke out). BABA then pulled back a bit only to hit a yearly high and now sits just below all-time highs and is above its IPO debut for retail investors.

Observe how other stocks have powered higher. Despite news about the threat of nuclear war or fears over populist Euroskeptics winning elections in Europe, many other stocks have healthy price action. For instance, stocks such as online travel giant Priceline Group (NASDAQ: PCLN) and life sciences cloud computing stock

Veeva Systems (NYSE: VEEV) have continued to act well with PCLN up 25 per cent since the start of the year and VEEV up 31 per cent (as of the end of April).

Look for tight lines on technical charts. Looking over the technical charts for leadership stocks such as Alibaba, Priceline Group, Alphabet (NASDAQ: GOOG) and Apple (NASDAQ: AAPL), we see no evidence that 'smart money' investors are selling shares or taking profits off the table.

Observe the Netflix

(NASDAQ: NFLX) technical chart. Netflix is a good example of a stock hitting all-time highs and yet, not many investors are cashing out by selling shares. This means most investors believe its run up is not over.

Amazon.com (NASDAQ: AMZN) looks resilient. Amazon is a juggernaut and since the US elections, it's steadily powered higher as more traditional brick and mortar retailers continue to struggle to compete with it. AMZN's chart also looks similar to Netflix as it steadily moves higher.

I am keeping an eye out for the overall S&P 500 index to finally break out of a two to three year bottoming formation to (more than likely) stair step to higher levels. If that were to happen, even weaker non-leadership stocks would likely be taken along for the ride upwards.

*Don Freeman, BSME is president of Freeman Capital Management, a Registered Investment Advisor with the US Securities Exchange Commission (SEC), based in Phuket. He has over 20 years of experience working with expatriates, specializing in portfolio management, US tax preparation, financial planning and UK pension transfers. Call for a free portfolio review. Don can be reached at 089-970 5795 or email: freeman capital@gmail.com.*

## AoT decides to quit outsourcing main functions

AIRPORTS of Thailand (AOT) will stop outsourcing contracts for its main businesses, while planning to set up subsidiaries to take over the currently outsourced operations.

AOT is also under pressure to terminate its duty-free contract with King Power.

AOT President Nitinai Sirismatthakarn said that previously, work done by several partners under the outsourcing contracts had problems that affected AOT operations. Therefore, the AOT board of directors decided not to extend outsourcing contracts for operation of its main businesses.

AOT will establish two subsidiaries, one for safety services and the other for apron and ground equipment services, to operate main businesses such as safety, aerobridges and baggage loading at the six airports

under its jurisdiction.

These subsidiaries will be established in July with certain holding. Then they will be capitalised and their boards will be set up on expectation for business operations to begin next year.

Once the contracts between AOT and its subcontractors end, the subsidiaries will replace them, starting with safety business. The safety outsourcing contracts will end in fiscal year 2018 or by September 2019.

In regard to baggage-loading services at Suvarnabhumi, AOT has no plan to end the contracts with Thai Airways International and Bangkok Flight Services. If any subcontractors break conditions of their contracts before they end, AOT will have a subsidiary take over that business.

– The Nation

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## Phuket Gazette

# Hospital deserves credit, not censure

RECENT reports in the British media over the plight of British motorbike crash victim Jacob Tonkin here in Phuket once again paint the Thai medical industry in an unfair light.

Although it is common around the globe, the British tabloids are particularly notorious for running sensationalist headlines that pull at the heartstrings, sometimes without so much concern for getting all the facts straight or "getting the other side of the story". Even as this goes to press, it remains unreported whether Mr Tonkin was wearing a helmet at the time of the crash – or if he or his unnamed rider had been drinking alcohol, as just two examples.

Mr Tonkin's sad misfortune certainly provided rich editorial fodder for these outlets, serving up a useful narrative with a host of compelling characters: the young traveller in search of exciting, new experiences; the distraught mom, incapable of helping her son as he lay writhing in agony on a hospital bed half a world away; the wicked driver who hit them, then fled the scene; and the cold, heartless insurance company, whose mindless minions care only about the bottom line and are completely indifferent to human suffering.

Phuket International Hospital (PIH) was correct to call a press conference to set the record straight regarding the case of Mr Tonkin, whose life may well have been saved by the actions of doctors there.

While much of the ensuing debate in the social media focused on Mr Tonkin's insurance provider and their failure to cover him, there has been far less discussion about how the tabloids misrepresented the actions of PIH medical staff, who deserve credit and not disgrace.

Mr Tonkin is just one of the latest victims of the endless mayhem that exists on Thai roadways, statistically among the most dangerous in the world.

It is fair enough for the British tabloids to harp on the dangers tourist face on Thai roads, but they should be careful not to not misrepresent the way the Thai medical practitioners deal with all the resulting carnage.

This writer can say from first-hand experience that Thai doctors in both the private and government sectors maintain strong medical ethics and still prioritize saving lives over the nasty business of trying to get paid for their often heroic efforts.



## Children should not have to work

*Re: Foreigner seen beating young child after dispute over 10-baht fee, May 16*

A 10-year-old toilet attendant? And there was me thinking child labour was illegal in this country. Go figure. As for the fully grown male beating him up... I hope he gets what's coming to him.

Captain Jack  
Gazette forum

## Can't trust just one party's story

*Re: Phuket hospital denies refusing treatment to injured British traveller, May 12*

Having been a patient at Phuket International Hospital, which is where this story arose, I would very much doubt that things unfolded as reported by the mother and published by the infamously sensationalist and hyper-low end Manchester Evening News.

Ron Crawford  
Gazette forum

## Phuket Gazette to be online as usual

*Re: Phuket Gazette to stop print edition of newspaper locally, reorienting hard-copy production for wider market in The Nation, May 14*

Such a big disappointment. PG has provided the only means for expats to have an opinion and a voice on local issues.

Perhaps PG could charge a subscription to frequent online readers?

## Letters to the Editor

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

Anyway, a big thank you for years of publication that will be missed.

Harry  
Gazette forum

Thank you very much, Harry, for kind words, but no need to lament the loss of the printed Gazette as a standalone publication in Phuket.

Virtually everything we publish will continue to be on line here, so your opportunity to flame, praise or ignore us will not be going away anytime soon.

Thanks for your support!  
Editor, Gazette Online

## Guides to be reminded repeatedly

*Re: Opinion: Tour guides must be fined, May 14*

Guide and company are responsible for the customers.

That should not just be a quick mention.

They need to be told again and again. Then watched closely to make sure they obey the rules.

It's the guides' job to make sure their customers are safe and don't break the law.

But worse is law enforcement. 500 baht for locals and 100,000 for farang.

These days you hear tourists

talking and it's not good when Phuket is getting a reputation as a very racist place.

Simon01  
Gazette forum

## Roads are to blame

*Re: One injured in single-vehicle Phuket crash, May 12*

Jail the road – it is a notorious serial offender and has no place in society. Some people seem to think that when the road has less traffic due to the rain, it is a licence to drive faster.

Mister Ree  
Gazette forum

## Why replace it at all

*Re: Marine officials return confiscated coral to the ocean, May 11*

What good is it to put back coral that has been out of the water since April 2016? Didn't know that dead coral can suddenly come back to life. Guess it will blend in with all the other dead coral still under water there.

John C  
Gazette forum

## Dash cams are legal

*Re: One hospitalized, another injured in early morning Phuket crash, May 16*

Well at least that contradicts much earlier stories about dash-cam legality in Thailand. Must be ok and legal if the police use them.

Brent Cowey  
Facebook

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# New P-REA president talks real estate

By Sukawin Tanthavanich

BOON Yongsakul, Phuket-born businessman and Deputy Managing Director of the Boat Development Company, was chosen as the new president of Phuket Real Estate Association (P-REA) in a ceremony held at Phuket Boat Lagoon on May 8. Mr Boon will hold this position for two years.

“It is a great honor to be chosen as the president of the P-REA. My first priority will be to enhance the standard of this association and bring it on par with other international organizations,” said Mr Boon. “It is vital to bring in foreign investors in order to strengthen the future of Phuket real estate.”

He also revealed plans to introduce a special curriculum for those interested in learning more about Phuket property and provide them with the knowledge and ability to develop sustainable real estate.

“We must only rely on professional and experienced entrepreneurs. There are various chains of international hotels and big property companies from Bangkok that have invested in Phuket, which leads to tough



Left: Boon Yongsakul (right) was chosen as the new president of P-REA. Right: Members of P-REA with the new president at Phuket Boat Lagoon. Photos: Phuket Real Estate Association

competition,” said Mr Boon.

He urged developers to adhere to the highest quality standards in order to strengthen the Phuket property market.

“Condominiums, for instance, must be close to tourist attractions, but must not simply rely on offering ‘sea views’. They have to be equipped with everything that medium to high end customers might want. At the moment, prices for condo-

miniums are in the range to 1-2 million baht because of oversupply,” said Mr Boon.

He added that the market for single and townhouses was strong in areas like Thalang and Chalong because people prefer to live away from the city center. He expressed a particular interest in developments along the Bypass Road, as it offers a wide range of choices for department stores, with several upcoming

projects planned there.

“Villas and pool villas sell for US\$1-10 mn. Compared to a place like Hong Kong or Singapore, you can only get a penthouse in this price range,” noted Mr Boon.

He also spoke about some of the vital factors in the development of Phuket real estate.

“One of the main factors is tourism. In a tourist city like Phuket, the market depends

mainly on the number of visitors. This also includes Thais, as many people from other provinces come to Phuket to work and start businesses. This encourages the market overall,” said Mr Boon.

Another factor that he named as important in real estate development was public transport. He said that even though it had not yet become a reality, he admired the government’s efforts to bring stability, which would boost all sectors, include private investment.

As far as the light rail project is concerned, Mr Boon said that it would be beneficial for property and retail markets as it would encourage entrepreneurs and developers to initiate new projects in the areas covered by the light rail.

Mr Boon explained that even though the retail boom in Phuket was good for economic growth, it also increased property developers’ capital cost, .

“The absorption rate (the rate at which available homes are sold during a given period of time) has remained stagnant between the first quarter of this year and the same period in 2016,” he noted.

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# Spread of Islam in Southeast Asia

## Looking Back

By Anand Singh

THE Islamic faith began its expansion in Southeast Asia during the 13th century AD. Prior to this, the Malay Peninsula was already united culturally, sharing the same Javanese-Malay language. The common language in the region helped the spread of Islam.

The first Islamic sultanate in the region may have been established in Pasai and Aceh as early as the 13th century AD. The king of Pasai was recognized as the first Islamic ruler of the kingdom. He died in 1297. A few years earlier, the explorer Marco Polo, on his way back from Mongol China travelled through the Strait of Malacca. He wrote that the people of eastern Sumatra, especially in the city of Perak, had converted to Islam, a new religion brought to their cities by Muslim merchants from the west.

From then on, Islam spread quickly throughout Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula.

In a history of Patani, written by Ibrahim Suki, it was written that Kedah was the first state on the peninsula to convert to Islam after King Parameswara of Malacca accepted the faith in 1403.

In Patani, Muslim influence arrived when Muslim refugees from Pasai, fleeing religious persecution in Sumatra, settled in Patani. They began preaching Islam to the locals and later



Predominantly Muslim Malacca embraced Islam during the 15th century. Photo: CEphoto, Uwe Aranas

the ruler converted as well.

During the 15th century, Malacca had grown into a major trading hub. Prior to its submission to Islam, Malacca was a Siamese vassal state. Weak and unable to defend itself, its embrace of Islam opened the city's doors to Moorish and Indian traders from the west. Trade soon brought wealth and prosperity, making Malacca the most powerful city in the Malay peninsula.

Siam, noticing that its vassal had grown too powerful, sent its armies south several times in order to force the city-state back into its hegemony. The first time Siam attacked Malacca was during the early reign of Sultan Muzaffar Shah, in 1445. The two armies clashed near Muar, outside of Malacca. After a fierce battle, the Siamese were forced

to retreat. It was an astonishing victory. The powerful Siamese army, rarely ever challenged in the Malay Peninsula, had been beaten for the first time.

Emboldened by its victory, Malacca, under Sultan Muzaffar, immediately began further preparations to strengthen the city's defenses and its army. He realized that it would be only a matter of time before the Siamese returned. Return they did, in 1456.

During this second war with Malacca, the Siamese sent a naval armada through the Strait of Malacca with plans to invade by sea. This time the attack came with a vengeance, but every time it was beaten back. Malacca sent its navy to intercept the Siamese fleet. The two naval forces met off the coast of Batu Pahat, south

of Malacca. In the battle that followed, Malacca managed to destroy much of the Siamese fleet. The surviving ships sailed back to Siamese territory and never threatened Malacca again.

It was a significant victory that secured Malacca's freedom. The city continued to thrive as a regional trading hub. After its victory over Siam, Malacca managed to seize Pahang and Johor, which at the time were Siamese vassal states on the peninsula.

Malacca continued to expand. By the mid 15th century, it was an empire in its own right. In 1460, its territories had expanded to include Patani as well. The rulers were devout Muslims. As their empire expanded, they promoted the preaching of Islam to their subjects. A lot of people liv-

ing in the territories that were conquered by Malacca soon came to regard the religion of their rulers. They too converted to Islam.

Malacca's influence in the region ended during the early 16th century. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive in Southeast Asia. Establishing their naval base in Goa, India, the Portuguese wanted to establish trading links with Malacca.

A letter was written to Sultan Mahmud Shah stating the Portuguese's intentions to trade. Some of the influential men in the Sultan's court however did not trust the foreign 'infidels'. They urged the Sultan to arrest the Portuguese and seize their ships.

Scores of Portuguese men were arrested and held captive. Furious at Malacca's hostile actions, the new Portuguese viceroy of Goa, Alfonso de Albuquerque decided to capture Malacca in 1511. The Portuguese navy sailed from Goa with 18 ships and 1,400 men. They arrived off the coast of Malacca a month later and started negotiating for the exchange of prisoners. The city's rulers refused to negotiate.

The Portuguese managed to bribe a treacherous officer into opening the fortress's gates, the which is when the Portuguese army rushed in and attacked. The army of Malacca was completely taken by surprise. The Portuguese quickly captured the city and swept aside all resistance. Sultan Mahmud Shah fled the city and never returned to power.

## Banyan Tree Group wins international property accolade

BANYAN Tree's Grand Residences at Bang Tao Beach received the award for the 'Best Residential Property in Thailand' at the International Property Award 2017-2018.

Appreciating the significance of this globally recognized accolade, Banyan Tree Group Executive Chairman Ho Kwon Ping said, "Everyone in The Banyan Tree Group involved with this extraordinary project can be immensely proud of what they have contributed. Our Grand Residences epitomize our dedication to designing hotels and residences of style, sophistication and integrity that truly enhance their naturally beautiful surroundings."

One of the latest additions to



The Grand Residences include a selection of Thai inspired 5-bedroom villas in a gated estate near Bang Tao Beach. Photo: Banyan Tree Group

Banyan Tree's global property portfolio, the Grand Residences include a selection of

Thai inspired five-bedroom villas set in a secure gated estate just a few meters from the

beach.

Built to capitalize on the sweeping lagoon views, the villas feature vaulted ceilings, an entertainment room, a dining room and a fully equipped designer kitchen. Each of the five bedrooms has its own en suite bathroom. The living space encompasses an outdoor entertainment deck flowing to a private infinity pool with its own integrated Jacuzzi with views overlooking a natural lagoon.

Construction of the villas, with a land area between 1,310 to 2,170sqm each, is underway.

Ownership privileges also include a 24-hour concierge and an array of services and amenities through private access to the flagship Banyan

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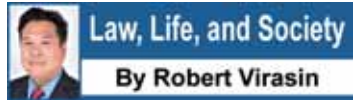
This encompasses a range of holiday experiences across 40 resorts and hotels, 60 spas and 80 retail galleries and three championship level golf courses.

The owners have the option of renting their villas on a short or long-term basis.

For more information, visit [www.banyantreeresidences.com](http://www.banyantreeresidences.com), contact 076-362333 or email [residences@banyantree.com](mailto:residences@banyantree.com)



# How to get a debt repaid in Thailand



Law, Life, and Society

By Robert Virasin

WITH the Thai economy stagnating, household debt is reaching record levels on an annual basis. According to the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, the average household debt reached nearly 300,000 baht in 2016.

This amount is higher than the annual income of the average Thai family. About 74 per cent of families in debt have defaulted on a loan.

The high default rate is a concern for people or businesses that have loaned money. If someone has stopped paying on a debt, what should the creditor do? The first thing is to ensure that their loan is enforceable.

Title IX, Chapter II of the Civil and Commercial Code outlines the requirements for consumer loans. A loan exceeding 2,000 baht must be written and signed by the borrower. Repayment or cancellation of a loan exceeding 2,000 baht can only be proven with a document signed by the borrower.

A loan for a movable property (non-fixed property) is covered by Title XIII, Chapter I of the Civil and Commercial Code. These loans require a written agreement which outlines the obligation for performance of the loan with interest, compensation in case of non-performance, and requirements to preserve the pledged property. If the debtor defaults on the loan, the creditor must first notify the debtor in writing to perform their obligation within a reasonable period.

The Thai Civil and Commercial code does not require a written agreement for contractors. Under the law, if the contractor has completed any part of the work, the employer is liable for the completed part. While a contract is not required, it is recommended that the parties have a paper agreement outlining the rights and obligations of each party. Without a contract term stating otherwise, an employer can cancel the job as long as the employer compensates the contractor for loss.

The Thai Civil and Commercial Code covers multiple types of relationships. It is important to review the type



When collecting debt, it is important to ensure that it is enforceable. Photo: Staff Sgt. Steven R. Doty

of relationship to ensure that the documentary requirements are met. In addition, the creditor should review statute of limitations on attempting to collect a debt. Different types of debts have different time limitations.

Most debts have a statute of limitation of 10 years but some debt claims are limited to five or two years. After the time limit has passed, the debtor can legally refuse to pay the debt.

If the debtor has defaulted on a loan, the creditor should try to mitigate the losses before filing a lawsuit. A lawsuit can be expensive and time consuming without an assured outcome. It might be in the best interest to attempt to negotiate a partial payment or an extended payment plan to avoid litigation. A good negotiated settlement might be able to save the relationship.

If negotiation has not produced an agreement, the creditor can choose to move forward with potential litigation. Some claims require that the creditor serve the debtor with a demand letter outlining the claim and requesting payment with a reasonable time period to comply with the demand.

If the demand letter is ignored, the creditor can move forward with filing a lawsuit. The attorney needs to review the information and history of the dispute to ensure that a lawsuit is plausible and reasonable. If the debtor has the ability to pay or owns property that can be held in lieu of financial payment, then it may be reasonable to pursue litigation. However, if the debtor does not have a job or property, a court ordered judgment will be difficult or impossible to collect.

The lawsuit begins with the filing of a claim with a court. The place of filing will depend on the value of the debt or the type of debt. After filing the claim, the court will generally require the parties to go to mediation. A mediator who will

attempt to push the parties to come to an agreement.

If mediation fails, the parties will have to make their arguments in court. The court will consider the evidence and make a judgment. If the debtor does not comply with the court judg-

ment, the creditor can request a writ of execution to force the seizure of the debtor's property and the auctioning of the property to collect repayment on the debt.

The process of filing a lawsuit to collect on a debt is time consuming and expensive. It is better for a creditor to attempt to negotiate with the debtor to avoid litigation. The creditor should consider the value of litigation in respect to the possible gain. A good attorney will discuss the matter with the creditor so that they will have reasonable expectations and can make an informed decision. Spending money and time on a lawsuit then losing the case is worse than not filing the case at all.

Robert R Virasin is a licenced US Attorney and managing director of Virasin & Partners. Yutthachai Sangsirisap is a licensed Thai Attorney. They can be reached at [info@virasin.com](mailto:info@virasin.com) or at their website [www.virasin.com](http://www.virasin.com).

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Presenting....



# Jazz for King2

## Andaman Jazz by the Sea

### 20 May 2017

Loma Park, Patong, Phuket

เวลา 19.00-22.00 น.

### “มหัศจรรย์อันดามัน กับบทเพลงแจ๊สของพ่อ”

นำโดย ดร.เด่น อยู่ประเสริฐ  
Denny Euprasert Jazz Quintet

ร่วมด้วยนักดนตรีชั้นนำ

ของวงการเพลงแจ๊ส พร้อมแขกรับเชิญพิเศษ

อ้อย-รวีวรรณ จินดา , ธนิสร์ ศรีกลิ่นดี , จิรศักดิ์ ปานพุ่ม , ลุลา กัญยรัตน์

และ Steve Cannon มือทรัมเป็ตจากสหรัฐอเมริกา

ร่วมสร้างความสุขด้วยบทเพลงพระราชนิพนธ์ ของในหลวงรัชกาลที่ 9  
และเพลงฮิตอีกมากมายบนเวที

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