

Phuket Gazette

March 18 - 24, 2017

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‘UNTIL AN OFFICIAL DECISION IS MADE, SURIN WILL REMAIN A VIRGIN BEACH’

‘WHINGING AGAIN’

Beach vendors at Surin demand 10 per cent zones, same as other Phuket beaches

By Kongleaphy Keam

A NUMBER of vendors working in the vicinity of Surin submitted a letter to the Cherng Talay *OrBorTor* on March 10, demanding a 10-percent zone to operate in, similar to the arrangement at other Phuket beaches (except Laem Singh, which is now apparently private).

For years, beach vendors and Phuket officials have been engaged in a tug-of-war over provision of services. In December 2014, then-Phuket Governor Nisit Jansomwong allowed vendors on all Phuket beaches, including Surin, but laid down a stringent set of rules, including ten per cent zones; uniforms for all vendors; no cooking or smoking on beaches; and only one operator per service on a beach at any time. Gov Nisit did, however, ban all umbrellas and beach loungers.

Nearly a year later, Ma-ann Samran, president of Cherng Talay *OrBorTor*, banned even the remaining vendors from Surin and announced that it was being converted to a ‘virgin beach’. He cited the vendors’ failure to follow rules as the reason behind the change.

In the wake of the ban, then-Phuket Vice Governor Chokdee Amornwat vowed to have all beach businesses on the Surin boardwalk demolished. This led to yet another battle between beach businesses and Phuket officials, which went on for nearly five months, until the first wrecking ball descended on Surin on April 20 last year.

V/Gov Chokdee, Mr Ma-ann and military personnel were on site as a backhoe digger began pulling apart buildings that once housed beachfront shops, bars and restaurants.

“These buildings are illegal, as they were built on public beachfront land. We are reclaiming the land to restore the natural beauty to Surin,” V/Gov Chokdee said at the time.

Grand re-opening plans for the beach



Since the end of 2015, Surin has been a ‘virgin’ beach, which means that no sun loungers, umbrellas or vendors are allowed on its sands. Photo: Kongleaphy Keam

were announced a month after the mass demolition of businesses on Surin’s shores. These included dubbing it as a ‘Beach of Honor’ or ‘Rajabhakti Park’ and building a botanical garden, exhibition center of projects initiated by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej and a photo exhibition center of royal duties, among others. However, in January this year, Phuket Governor Chokchai Dejamornthan announced that plans to build the 800 million baht Rajabhakti Park were now scrapped and that a lower budget public park was to replace it.

Despite their terrible track record of following beach management rules, which led to their exclusion from the 10-per cent zone category in the first place, Surin vendors are reportedly “very upset” that sun loungers are now allowed at other beaches, including Patong. Patong Beach itself has seen its fair share of drama, with the mayor, Army and Navy all stepping in to reverse

and re-reverse the decision to allow beach loungers on the sand.

“The vendors had agreed to the virgin beach concept, which means no umbrellas, loungers or mattresses. Since the beginning of the high season, however, some of them have been disobeying the rules again, for which we have arrested and duly punished them,” said Mr Ma-ann.

“They kept asking why other beaches have 10-percent zones, so I told them to write a letter explaining their reasons and how they would plan to manage it, if implemented. All I can do is bring the matter to the attention of the committee, but until an official decision is made, Surin will remain a virgin beach,” added Mr Ma-ann.

Mr Ma-ann accepted the letter of complaint from the vendors and said that he would bring the issue to the attention of the beach management committee as soon as possible.

Rising temps pose risk of heatstroke in Thailand

THE Public Health Ministry has warned that rising temperatures have raised the risk of heatstroke in Phuket and all over Thailand. Temperatures are predicted to soar as high as 43°C (109.4°F) over the next seven weeks.

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BUSINESS



A step by step guide to enhancing the social media presence of your business.

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PROPERTY



How to buy property in Thailand without taking on more risk and burden.

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LIFE&STYLE



Reptiles in your garden that, however venomous they might be, do not mean to harm you.

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LOCAL NEWS

Briefly

Nation, Wall Street Journal in ed-revamp

PHUKET Gazette national media partner *The Nation* has announced a global partnership, editorial and commercial, with the *Wall Street Journal*.

In making the announcement on March 13, *The Nation* noted that rapid changes in technology and consumer behavior had deepened connections between its readers in Thailand and the world.

Editorial content in *The Nation*, both hard-copy and digital, is thus expected to undergo significant changes in composition and style. *The Nation* will redefine its stories and news analyses, linking them more frequently to complementary editorials.

News selections will include more 'longer read' items; stories from the *Wall Street Journal*; extended coverage of geo-political issues and other developments impacting Thailand. There will also be increased use of info-graphics.

New to the hard-copy newspaper will be a 'Thailand Roundup' page covering news across the country, including plenty about Phuket through use of *Gazette* stories and ongoing insertion of the full *Gazette* newspaper in *The Nation* every Saturday.

For discounted subscriptions to WSJ.com and home delivery of the *Phuket Gazette* (Phuket only), contact by email on subscriptions @phuketgazette.net.

Whales bathe in Phuket waters once again



A pod of false killer whales was spotted on March 9 by Phuket-bound tourists around the Mu Koh Similan area. At least 30 whales were spotted on the way to Phuket. Kongkiat Kittiwattanawong, head of the Marine Endangered Species Unit at the Phuket Marine Biological Center, said that based on the pictures they did look like false killer whales. He said that they eat fish and squid and are on the list of protected animals. He added that when spotted, view them from afar. The quality of the Andaman's waters may have improved as there were several sightings during the past several days. Photo: Winai Sarot

Russian tourist dies soon after landing

A RUSSIAN tourist died hours after landing at Phuket International Airport for a holiday with his wife on March 9.

"Shortly after landing, he told his wife that he had a headache," said Lt Suporn Muangkai of the Thalung Police.

"The couple checked into a Cherg Talay hotel at about 2:30pm. There, the man fell unconscious and his wife called the front desk for help," he added.

The hotel contacted rescue workers who rushed the man to Thalung Hospital, where he was later pronounced dead.

"We have yet to learn the cause of death and are waiting for an official report from the hospital. We believe he might have had a preexisting medical condition, although his wife says she is unaware of any prior health issues," said Lt Suporn.

– Winai Sarot

ALRO locked in lengthy land dispute

THE Agricultural Land Reform Office (ALRO) is engaged in a legal feud with the occupant of 22 rai of land near Paradise Beach.

A land ownership dispute between the ALRO and defendant Sompong Sakulthap was decided in favor of the former by a Phuket court last month. ALRO officers and other officials visited the property on March 9 in order to place a notice of eviction.

"The land is located between Tri Trang and Paradise beaches. It is part of a larger piece of 69 rai previously owned by Banlue Tantiwit many years ago. About ten years ago, it was seized by

ALRO and Mr Banlue was ordered to leave," said Suthawat Naksawat of ALRO.

The ALRO has said that was not the case, and the property fell into dispute again. After a long legal battle, the court last year ruled in their favor. Mr Sompong appealed, but lost again.

Although they lost the initial case as well as the appeal, the lawyer said that they would enter into further 'negotiations' with the ALRO.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

Cruise ships 'stop-by' and insert millions

THE island welcomed two cruise ships from Singapore with almost 8,000 passengers on March 8 at Patong, injecting an estimated 31 million baht per day.

Phuket Vice Governor Sanit Sriwihok, representatives from the Tourism Authority of Thailand Phuket Office and Phuket Marine officers welcomed the international cruise liners *Ovation of the Seas* and *Mariner of the Seas*.

The ships dropped anchor in the morning and left the shore at about 9pm. Tourists from the

ships crowded the beach and used local vendor services as well as taxi services in Patong.

"The arrival of these two ships for just one day was very beneficial for Phuket. As per our initial calculations, each passenger spent around 4,000 baht here, totaling about 31.2 million baht in revenue," V/Gov Sanit told *Gazette* reporters.

– Winai Sarot

900 kilos of krathom found in pick-up

POLICE arrested a man with 900 kilograms of the illicit drug *krathom*, worth about 450,000 baht, at the Tah Chat Chai checkpoint on March 11.

"We were doing random checks following the policy of keeping an eye on vehicles entering Phuket. So we stopped and searched the pick-up," said Tah Chat Chai Police superintendent Col Prawit Sutthirueangrun.

The driver, Sumet Lamoot, 35, confessed that the *krathom* belonged to him.

"He said he bought the leaves, from the Sadao district in Songkhla, for 290 baht/kg and sold them to Burmese workers in Pa Khlok for 500 baht/kg," he added.

Mr Sumet was charged with possession of a category 5 drug with intent to sell, and was taken to Tah Chat Chai Police Station for further legal processing.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong

Seafood thief arrested in town

A SERIAL seafood thief was arrested on March 8 in Phuket Town, claiming that he had to steal to pay daily expenses.

The suspect's latest seafood heist, from Baan Kalim, a seafood restaurant in Patong, yielded 15 lobsters, tiger prawns, fish, crabs and shellfish.

"We have been following this case since February 27. The owner of the restaurant had filed a complaint at Patong Police Station," said Lt Col Prawit Engchuan of Region 8 Police. "We checked CCTV footage and managed to identify the suspect as Kanchana Maneemai.

The 44-year-old Krabi native had previously been charged for stealing several times and was released in April 2015.

The suspect confessed, saying that he mainly focused on expensive seafood items.

– Kritsada Mueanhawong



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Korean tourist shoots himself at gun range

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

A KOREAN tourist was seriously injured after he shot himself in the face at Patong Hill Shooting Range on March 13.

The victim, Dong Ok Yun, 42, was rushed to Patong Hospital by rescue workers.

“Mr Dong sustained a bullet wound under his chin and is now under doctors’ care,” said Maj Pattapee Srichai of Patong Police.

The weapon used in the incident was a Smith & Wesson .44. The victim was later transferred to Vachira Phuket Hospital.

“According to staff members at the shooting range, the gun was loaded with six bullets. After shooting the first four at the target, he suddenly pointed it at his chin,” said Maj Pattapee.

“The staff member tried to stop him and take possession of the gun, but failed. Mr Dong then fired a shot in the air, before pointing the



A number of similar incidents have taken place at Phuket's gun ranges over the years. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

weapon at the staff member, who ran out,” he added.

Mr Dong then proceeded to shoot himself in the chin.

“At this stage, we have yet to learn the reason behind this. We are waiting to question him when he recovers,” said

Maj Pattapee.

Last year, a foreigner was killed after he shot himself in the head at the same range and the year before, a 21-year-old British national turned a gun on himself at Thalang Shooting Range.

Government warns of high temperatures



The risk of heatstroke is higher among people who have been out in the sun for a long time. Photo: The Nation

RISING temperatures have raised the risk of heatstroke, the Public Health Ministry warned on March 12.

It is predicted that temperatures may soar as high as 43 degrees Celsius (109.4 F) over the next seven weeks.

The ministry's permanent secretary, Dr Sapon Mekthon, advised people to drink two liters of water a day during summer to lower the risk of heatstroke and dehydration.

According to the Disease Control Department, at least 21

people succumbed to heatstroke in Thailand between March 1 and April 17 last year. The victims were between 29 and 72 years old. Most of them died in public places.

The risk of heatstroke is higher among people who have carried out activities under the sun for a long time; young children; the elderly; people with chronic diseases such as hypertension; obese people; those who have not had enough sleep; and heavy drinkers.

– The Nation

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Donation plea for tuition fees questioned

A SUCCESSFUL plea for donations has turned into a drama after questions were asked about whether a would-be engineering student is really strapped for money to pay for his education.

Atiwat Witpichitchai has already received more than 1.6 million baht in donations after his aunt went on social media to lament that he was going to miss his chance to study at Kasetsart University's Engineering Faculty because he could not afford tuition fees.

It costs about 36,000 baht to study at the institute in the first semester, and the new academic year will start soon.

Asked about his financial situation, Mr Atiwat said he would forgive people who had defamed him.

Shin Corp sale to be taxed 16 million baht

The Prime Minister has pledged to use 'normal laws' to collect billions from 2006 sale – if tax is not collected this month, the case will go to court.

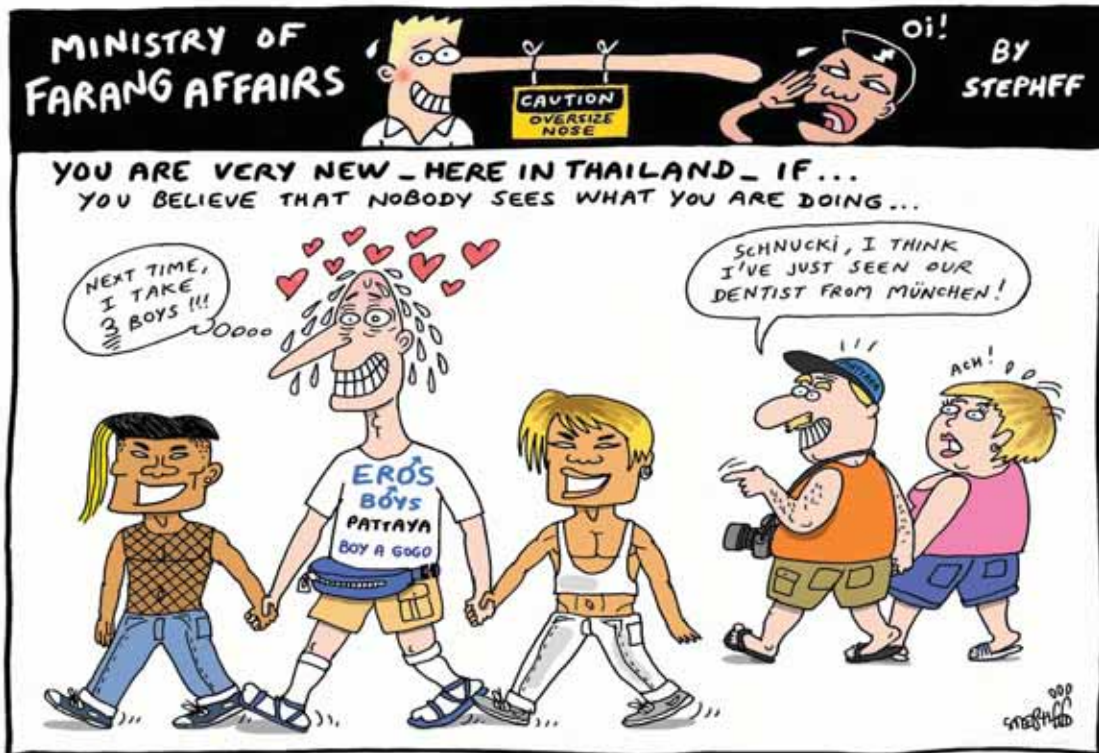
The Cabinet has asked the Revenue Department to collect tax, which could amount to 16 billion baht, from former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra over the controversial sale of Shin Corp.

Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-o-cha said after the March 14 Cabinet meeting that he would not use his special powers under Article 44 of the interim constitution to meddle in the Shin Corp case.

Involved state agencies had agreed on March 13 that normal legal procedure would be applied to this tax case, he said, referring to a meeting of representatives from the Auditor General's Office, the Finance Ministry, the Council of State and the Anti-Money Laundering Office.

Dhammakaya monks report to face charges

TEN monks from Dhammakaya Temple went to hear the charge of resisting an order by the junta



at the Thanyaburi Provincial Court's Public Prosecutors' Office on March 14.

They were escorted by Lt Colonel Uthai Waewthaisong, a Klong 5 Police investigator, and temple lawyer Panya Thawornakaranin.

The 10 were among 14 monks summoned to present themselves to Department of Special Investigation officers, but had failed to do so.

The four monks who have yet to face the charge include former abbot Phra Dhammachayo, Phra Thatthacheevo who claimed to be too ill to come, and two others – Phra Maha Somchai Thanawuttho and Phra Khru Baideeka Amnuaysak Muni-sako, who said they were preoccupied with monastic errands.

Officer's son confesses to student murder

THE SON of a Kalasin police deputy superintendent has reportedly confessed to fatally stabbing Silpakorn University student Thirapong Thitatharn, 24, during an attack last month in the victim's dormitory room in Phetchaburi, a police source said on March 14.

The young man, whose name was withheld, was among 16 suspects – 14 men and two women – handed over by Cham police to the Crime Suppression Division, which is now handling the investigation.

Deputy national police chief Srivara Ransibrahmanakul said the suspects would face additional charges of racketeering, bringing the number of criminal

NATIONAL NEWS Briefly

charges against them to five – murder, attempted murder, home intrusion with use of a weapon, assault and racketeering.

Monk put on travel ban

IMMIGRATION police have been ordered to prevent Phra Dhammachayo, the former abbot of Dhammakaya Temple, from fleeing to neighboring countries, Immigration Police Bureau commissioner Lt General Nuttathorn Proesunthon said on March 12.

"The 'modern' system and technology of the bureau, which is linked to all exit points, will help block the fugitive monk from leaving the country," he added.

The monk was stripped of his patriarch rank by His Majesty The King a week ago.

"It's impossible that he will be able to flee via legitimate channels. Authorities concerned are instructed to keep a close watch on travelers by land, water and air to stop the monk from getting out," Gen Nuttathorn said.

The fugitive monk, who faces several arrest warrants, has been out of the public eye for months. The government issued an order for Dhammakaya Temple in Pathum Thani to be a 'controlled zone' to facilitate a search, but the former abbot has yet to be located.

UN questions human rights in Thailand

THAILAND'S 46-member delegation at the United Nations human rights body faced a barrage of questions on March 14 that focused on the junta maintaining the death penalty and restrictions on freedom of expression.

Representatives from various government agencies were grilled in Geneva at the 119th session of the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

In Bangkok, Prime Minister General Prayuth Chan-o-cha said he had heard initial reports that the delegation faced some difficulties explaining human rights practices in Thailand, including in relation to the death penalty.

"Some may question why the death penalty still exists in our country. On the other hand, some Thais also question why some [wrongdoings] are not punishable by death. There is really a fine line in defining legal violations," he said.

Gen Prayuth added that the UN review process proceeded in a "reasonable and academic" way.

Swiss child rapist arrested

SWISS authorities on March 10 confirmed that a man suspected of sexually abusing more than 80 boys in Thailand will be going on trial to face numerous allegations including molestation.

It was reported that some of his victims were as young as nine years old.

"The unnamed man has admitted to taking thousands of pornographic pictures of the boys, but denied allegations that he molested any of them or pushed some into prostitution," said prosecutors in a statement in the western Swiss canton of Fribourg. The abuse is alleged to have taken place between 2001 and 2014.

The man had previously been convicted of sexually abusing children in Switzerland – in Fribourg in 1980, and in the southern canton of Valais in 1991. He had moved to Thailand in 1991, and only returned to Switzerland in 2014.

"The man will go before the Gruyere criminal court later this month on charges of human trafficking, encouraging prostitution, sexual acts with children and child pornography," the statement read. "Most of the victims were young adolescents, and a number of the boys had been abused over the course of several years."

Russian uses fake dollar bill

POLICE are searching for an unidentified Russian woman who used fake currency to swindle a Krabi shop owner on March 5.

Capt Sarawut Kittiruangrayab of Ao Nang Police received the report the next day after the owner of the herbal shop, Sanchai Khaonoi, 25, tried to exchange a 100-dollar bill and was told it was fake.

"Mr Sanchai described the suspect as a thin, tanned and blond Russian woman aged 35-40 years and about 160cm tall. He also said she was wearing a purple dress," said Capt Sarawut.

The woman reportedly walked into the shop in Ao Nang to buy a herbal perfume costing 650 baht.

"She told Mr Sanchai that she didn't have enough Thai baht and asked him to accept the amount in US dollars. He accepted as he was busy with other customers and didn't want to waste time. Mr Sanchai gave her 2,650 baht in return for the 100 dollars minus the price of the perfume," he added.

Capt Sarawut said that so far, only one complaint regarding fake bill exchanges has been filed. He urged other victims to come forward. As of March 15, police had still not caught up with the suspect. The captain also warned vendors from accepting foreign currency.

Blueprint to start from scratch



MANY people have asked me how to get started with an online presence, so I have put together a quick overview assuming I was starting from scratch (but knowing what I do now).

FACEBOOK PAGE

The very first thing you could do is start a Facebook fan page. This can easily be set up without any skill, cost or time delays and you can connect with a few billion people instantly.

You could pay someone on fiverr.com to design a cover photo and profile picture and set it up as a local business. An early priority would be to quickly get some content up, and invite all your Facebook friends to like and share the page.

Where possible, get testimonials from satisfied customers, and later post these on other forms of media (videos are best for this purpose).

WEBSITE

The next step would be to get a website. If budget is a concern, do it on Google Sites, or a platform like Wix or Weebly.

If you have enough funding, it is also a good idea to hire a professional company to make the website.

Your main priority would be branding, providing informative content, and most importantly,



Using the right tools is important to get your business started on the right foot. Photo: Pexels

lead generation. So, you would want it to look professional, cover important information and brand your business as an expert in the relevant field.

Ensure that you have a lead generation capture tool, which would double as a Client Management System and auto responder (sends automated messages to all of your interested leads). There are several suitable off-the-shelf options available.

You should also make sure that Google Analytics is added to the site by someone who knows what they are doing, and have someone do a once over for security, SEO and functionality.

FACEBOOK PPC

To get the word out to potential clients immediately, start some ads and post boosts to your target audience.

You could do a full day's course about audience selection and strategy, but the important thing is to get started with a small amount and learn as you go, or if the budget allows just outsource it.

INSTAGRAM

Instagram is a great visual platform, so make sure that content is going out there. For high quality content, hire a freelancer if your skills are not that great.

GOOGLE MY BUSINESS

This gets you listed in Google Search and Google Maps, and given that this is the tool auto-

matically included on most Android and Apple devices, you would not want to miss out.

YOUTUBE

Depending on the business, a YouTube site could be helpful. Video is very powerful, and the first thing to do is get video testimonials about your product or service, focusing on the best-selling points of the business.

AUTOMATION

The final thing is automate as much as possible, not because you are lazy, but because your time is better spent on your core business.

However, marketing is a necessary evil, so daily content is key, and you either outsource it or make it as easy for yourself as possible. There are great software, apps and tools available to make this easy.

This is a quick and high level article to get you started. Good luck in your endeavors.

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



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Phuket Gazette

Not killers at all

THE sighting of false killer whales by a group of lucky marine tourists to Phuket last week (see page 2) should serve as a reminder that despite mankind's demonstrated ability to shape our environment, there is still a lot going on around us that we understand poorly – or not at all.

The 'aliens among us' theme has served as a fertile plot device for many a successful Hollywood film, from the insightful Star Trek franchise to action comedies like Mars Attacks and Men in Black.

But as impressive as these creative works might be, the fact remains: truth is stranger than fiction.

Given the recent sighting, there has no doubt been a spike in web searches of the term 'false killer whale'.

If ever a creature existed with a more confusingly unfortunate English-language appellation, we would like to be made aware of it. Even the Latin term *pseudorca crassidens* is frustratingly inaccurate.

As Wikipedia informs us, the so-called false killer whale is not only not a whale, let alone a killer whale (also not a whale, by the way), it is among the most elusive yet widespread species of deep sea dolphins.

Given all these facts, for us to continue calling these fascinating creatures 'false killer whales' makes about as much sense as the nonsensical, yet linguistically entrenched, tradition of referring to Native Americans as 'Indians'.

From another perspective, however, such a confounding name is perhaps apt for a species about which we know so little. What little research has been conducted on the ways of *pseudorca crassidens* has revealed some amazing findings, however.

For a start, they are known to sometimes offer their catch to swimmers and divers they encounter during rare chance encounters – an act of interspecies generosity seldom seen in nature.

Individuals are also known to pair up and make lifelong friends with bottlenose dolphins, with whom they are known to cooperate in hunting.

These bonds appear to be individual-to-individual friendships, much like relationships between so many of us and *canis lupus familiaris*, aka 'the domestic dog'.

Hopefully the rare sighting of this pod will serve not only as a reminder of the need to better conserve the marine environment that makes up most of our biosphere, but also to the fact that we are not the only sentient creatures in this realm.



Regulate rather than raze restaurants

Re: Surin vendors upset over exclusion from 10-percent zone, Mar 13

In Surin the restaurants used to keep the beach clean. Now it's filthy.

The area behind the beach is an ugly car park. There's sewage. A teeming mass of tuk-tuks and vans selling food.

The back is lined with chairs and stalls. Nobody cares how it all looks. The original policy was a disaster.

The government cleared the restaurants and created this mess. What they needed to do was to regulate the restaurants.

Bob
Gazette forum

Tourists don't heed shooting range staff

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

I was at that range last year and several overseas teenagers were pointing loaded hand guns at each other and laughing, the staff asked them to stop but allowed them to keep shooting.

Chris Moore
Facebook

A change in anti-tourist policies

Re: Across the Land: Latest trends in Phuket hospitality, Mar 10

The Phuket tourism industry

Letters to the Editor

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

declined mainly because of the anti-tourist approach of the governors over the past three years. They eliminated the loungers and umbrellas, beach side restaurants, nightclubs, vendors and marriage ceremonies.

Tourists went elsewhere where they were welcomed. The current government leaders have seen the decline and are attempting to improve things.

Foot
Gazette forum

Drivers need to be more considerate

Re: Taxi flips on main Phuket thoroughfare, Mar 14

That's the trouble with these Honda Jazz cars – they come out onto the road and cross over to the outside lane giving you no chance at all to pass on the left while you are doing 120kph. Totally inconsiderate.

Chas
Gazette forum

Parents just as important as teachers

Re: Law, life and Society: Re-assessing the Thai education system, Mar 11

Many, many factors are in-

involved.

In my opinion, one of the most serious factors is current student/teacher ratios.

Until class sizes are reduced to a maximum of 25 or 30 students in a class, it will be almost impossible to implement serious educational reforms.

Additionally, parents must become much more actively engaged in their children's education, especially fathers.

We also need to remember that children's basic values and attitudes are formed at home before they enter the education system.

Glen Dunkley
Facebook

Meaningful change to enhance safety

Re: Six killed in bus accident tied to school budget issues, Mar 10

When will the Thai officials grow tired of all these unnecessary deaths on the roads day in and day out?

Safety seems to be a foreign word to those in charge.

Now is the time to stop worrying about lounge chairs on the beach and instead concentrate on road safety, enforcement of traffic violations, inspection of vehicles, and more than a slap on the wrist to those who violate the rules.

What will it take? How many deaths of innocent people until enough is enough?

Tim
Gazette forum

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Process of buying property in Thailand



By The Book
Kevin Hodges

BUYING property in Thailand is not straight forward, so you will need professional sound advice which acts in your best interest. It can be a confusing experience due to laws, regulations, language barrier and choice.

Real estate brokers in Phuket have the largest selection of property, land and long-term rentals – they have sales teams that are both foreign and Thai and can speak a variety of languages.

With a vast array of properties available, it is important to short list to maximize the use of your time and avoid viewing unsuitable properties by narrowing down choices.

Brokers act as a liaison between the buyer and seller, and the good news is that the buyer pays no broker fee – it is paid for by the seller in Thailand. Here's how it works.

RESEARCH

Brokers will work closely with buyers to compile a focused and



Brokers have a large selection of property and act as a liaison between buyer and seller. Photo: Paul Brennan

realistic brief, which takes into account a buyer's requirements and preferences relating to the budget, style, condition, size and location of the property. They can advise on different locations and options available.

SHORT LIST

A broker will preview and shortlist suitable properties - this saves a buyer valuable time as they will only show proper-

ties that they have first previewed and that meet their requirements.

PROPERTY TOUR

Brokers accompany buyers on viewings to show the short-listed properties. Once a suitable property has been identified, they provide an objective overview so that you are equipped with the knowledge to make an informed decision.

NEGOTIATION

When the right property is found, the broker will assist both buyer and seller in negotiating favorable price and terms.

PAYMENT

A reservation agreement and nonrefundable reservation deposit of usually between 2 per cent to 5 per cent is deposited with the broker in their client's

account. This removes the property from the market, so no one else can buy it prior to the signing of the Sale & Purchase Agreement (SPA). Upon signing the SPA, 30-50 per cent of the price is usually required with the outstanding amount to be paid up on transfer of ownership.

The buyer should, at this time, ask how the seller wishes payment – inside or outside of Thailand to avoid bringing in funds when payment is required elsewhere. If funds are required in Thailand, a TT3 form must be completed for the amount required.

CONVEYANCE

Once the price is agreed and reservation deposit is put down, brokers introduce you to a reputable lawyer who has experience in property conveyance. They use that expertise to ensure that the process runs as smoothly and quickly as possible.

For more information about this article contact Kevin Hodges, Siam Real Estate (SRE) Tel: 076-324 042 Email: kevin@siamrealestate.com; www.siamrealestate.com.

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Jeffer opens flagship store in Patong

By Kongleaphy Keam

JEFFER Steak & Seafood has upgraded their outlet at Jungceylon mall in Patong into a flagship store.

On March 10, the restaurant relocated from a small shop inside the Robinson complex into a larger outlet at the port area. The eatery has also added a new menu, but the most noticeable upgrade is a new cafe.

“The Jungceylon outlet is now a flagship store with modern decor and ambiance, in response to the modern lifestyles of our customers,” said Kanchit Maneesuwan, managing director of Jeffer Steak & Seafood, who added that the company spent 10 million baht on the upgrade.

“The attractive feature of the flagship store is that we provide the full Jeffer menu here. For a more special Phuket and Andaman feel, we have added a seafood menu along with the



The flagship store at Jungceylon now features a cafe along with the steakhouse. Photo: Supplied

steak menu, so that both tourists and Thai people can enjoy it. With regards to the Western menu, we have added pizza and several more spaghetti items,” he added.

The added space at the new outlet is one of the main advantages for the new cafe.

“As we have more space at the flagship store, we have added a cafe as part of our of-

ferings. Instead of coming here only for steak, customers can now enjoy coffee and cake as well. This is the perfect mix to complement different lifestyles of our customers. Additionally,

coffee shops also serve as meeting points and appointment venues for many people, so we can successfully broaden our market for different groups,” said Mr Kanchit.

Despite the upgrade, Jeffer still remains a reasonably priced option for eating out.

“We have kept our prices the same, apart from a small adjustment in seafood prices. However, we provide high quality seafood, so the price is more than justified,” said Mr Kanchit.

Over a span of 13 years, Jeffer has upgraded itself gradually, from a small shop for university students into a popular steakhouse.

At present, there are 80 Jeffer outlets in Thailand; more than 10 in the south and three in Phuket alone. The flagship outlet is ranked among the top five nationwide.

Jeffer is also offering a “buy one, get one free” promotion on coffee until March 24.

Thai females top advancement index

THAILAND is among the countries with the highest opportunity for women in the workforce, according to the MasterCard Index of Women Entrepreneurs.

The survey ranks 20 countries with the highest scores for female entrepreneurship. Thailand is among the top 10 and is the only upper-middle-income country to make it to the list.

Thailand scored 62.7, second only to the Philippines with a 2.8-point difference. It suggests that Thai women are considered to be efficiency-driven. This could be inferred by the fact that women in Thailand are responsible for a full-time job while holding the role of a mother and/or wife.

Overall, developed markets top the index, led by New Zealand (74.4), Canada (72.4) and the United States (69.9).

These countries feature conditions that support women’s business ownership, a high quality of governance and ease of doing business.

High-income economies tend to perform better in terms of women’s advancement, knowledge and financial assets.

“The prevalence of ambitious, resourceful women should be regarded as a prime business

opportunity. As society addresses existing cultural bias, we will do our part to help create those conditions that will strengthen and fuel the foundation for personal and economic growth,” said Martina Hund-Mejean, chief financial officer of MasterCard.

Ann Cairns, president for international markets at MasterCard, said: “By enhancing access to critical networks, women are better positioned to recognize their full potential and accelerate more inclusive growth. It’s imperative that the public and private sectors work together to address cultural and organizational issues and further empower women leaders.”

Female entrepreneurship develops at different rates and in different ways around the world. Singapore, New Zealand and South Africa have the greatest gender equality when it comes to access to financial services and products.

Less developed markets such as Vietnam, the Philippines and Indonesia have surprisingly high scores in this category, driven by a high tendency to borrow or save for business purposes and access to financial services and products.

– *The Nation*

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Serpents wander the garden of Eden



A FRIEND discovered a snake on his balcony the other day and asked me what it was. With alternate broad bands of yellow and black and with a triangular-shaped body, it could only have been a banded krait. Fortunately, he stood well back and allowed the creature to slither away into the garden. I say fortunately because all kraits are extremely venomous. Snakes like to live near water, but the recent torrential downpours may have left this one seeking higher ground.

But let's not get too alarmist. I'm sure that all you readers out there have had encounters of the serpentine kind, but remember that snakes normally only attack when cornered or threatened.

Most varieties in your flower beds and shrubs will be harmless – rat snakes, kukris, wolf,



Many harmless varieties of snakes, including rat snakes, can be found in Phuket gardens. Photo: The Nature Box

rat and cat snakes, racers, or slender whip snakes – and the one I see most often on my patch – golden tree snakes. These beautifully patterned bright green reptiles can actually 'fly' from tree to tree by flattening their slender bodies.

There are downsides apart from the venom. I happen to like snakes, but they are voracious predators, and just one in your garden will rapidly denude your personal paradise of its agamid and garden fence lizards, its ground-hugging sun skinks. A

snake that resides unseen inside my roof space gobbles up any straying geckos, and even my resident tokay gecko, a fierce creature in its own right, has stopped calling out "Tok-kay" to announce his evening presence.

At the other end of the scale are the heavyweights of the reptile kingdom. Several times, I have had to stop my pick-up while a water monitor crossed the road. One of the largest lizards in the world – up to nine feet in length – it inhabits watery areas all over Phuket. A denizen of mangrove as well as inland swamps, it can have a delicately patterned skin, but more often the adults are grey. Particularly fond of carrion, it is attracted to garbage tips. Sadly, and as with snakes, monitors are easy pickings: killed both for their meat and for their valuable hides.

As for the real monsters, Phuket has its share. I am thinking of huge, iridescent reticulated pythons – one measur-

ing more than twenty feet in length was recently captured and subsequently released by the Kusoldharm foundation. Needless to say, it had gobbled up all the local chickens. But they will tackle much larger fare including wild pigs.

And let's not forget the cobras and king cobras, the latter being by far the largest venomous snake in the world. Not to worry. They are nocturnal and shy, hiding by day and very unlikely to invade your patch.

And they are more threatened by us than we by them. Loss of habitat is a major problem for them. A friend residing at Phuket Royal Marina was in the habit of daily visiting a lagoon nearby to watch the waders and especially a massive water monitor. All too soon, the lagoon was filled in. Why? For 'development' – to the consequent exodus of all the wildlife.

Snakes or no snakes – soon there will be no Eden anyway.

AMA and Xterra to host Phuket triathlon



More than 500 athletes are expected to compete this year. Photo: AMA

XTERRA Thailand and Active Management Asia (AMA) have partnered up to organize the 'Xterra Off Road Triathlon and Trail Run' on April 1 in Phuket. Following the success of Xterra Samui last year, the company is now hosting its debut event in the 'Asia Pacific Tour 2017 – Road to Hawaii'.

The 'Trail Run' event features 30km, 13km and 3 km runs for families and children.

The Off Road Triathlon features swimming, followed by mountain biking and then trail running. The Off Road Duathlon includes trail running, followed by mountain biking and then back to trail running.

All events will be held on the same day. Winners of all events will receive free tickets to participate in the Xterra World Championship finals to be held

in Hawaii at the end of the year.

Xterra is a global leader in off-road sports, known worldwide for their cross triathlons and trail running races, with over 300 races held annually worldwide.

"Xterra Phuket will attract 500 athletes from all around the world with US\$7,500 in the prize money purse. It will also stimulate tourism in Phuket during the lower season," says Serge Henkens, director of event organizer AMA-Events.

Interested participants can register online at www.xterra-thailand.com or in person at B&L Bike service in Thalang. For more information, call 084-845 1291.

This event is proudly sponsored by the *Phuket Gazette* and *The Nation* as national media partners.

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