



Jock-ularity

A TIGHTER GRIP, A SILLY DIP, AND A VERY SORE BUM

Immigration is tightening its grip on people regularly travelling in and out Thailand.

As I reported a couple of issues back, it is to become less easy for people, especially those on a Tourist Visa to gain regular access to Thailand.

It was recently revealed by POL.COL. Chalermpong Vadhanasukha, who is Deputy Superintendent, Immigration, Division 3 Bangkok that although new rules had been passed in May of 2000 it was only to be enforced as at 1st. October 2004.

These rules require foreigners to specify a minimum amount of "cash" or equivalent when applying for a Visa or re-stamp into Thailand.

eg: -

30 day on arrival 10k Baht (20k for families)

60 day tourist non-immigration 20k Baht (40k for families)

Kids under 12 years are exempted from this.

Col. Chalermpong commented that not every checkpoint strictly enforces the rules and added that it was up to each office as to how to enforce regulations. Stating that genuine people touring Thailand need not worry, as it was 30-60 day Visa holders who regularly enter Thailand that we will be putting under scrutiny. He added, however, that any officer who refused to accept valid travellers cheques as proof of financial status would be subject to prosecution.

Pol.Capt. Krissarat Nuesen of Phuket Provincial Immigration was recorded as saying "we have not strictly enforced these rules as doing so would cause long queues and delays which would be criticised". He added, however, that his officers would not rule out using the new rules in cases where foreigners were using Tourist Visas to gain regular and long stays in Thailand.

Pol. Col. Chawalit Busayarat, Superintendent at Ranong office held a

similar view stating that in general only blacklisted people were mainly checked. He added, however, that foreigners on Tourist Visa's repeatedly extending their stay would be examined and if their documents caused concern, they would be sent to Bangkok for further checks.

My advice to all of you out there on Tourist Visas, regularly travelling in and out is You Have been warned!! Be aware or else.

You no doubt have noticed that Thailand's rainy season is well and truly with us, unfortunately for those on holiday right now. Well, yes, it is an



annoyance but it can also be a very dangerous time to be out and about.

Consider the cases of 2 people very dear to this publication.

The weekend of the 10th October and Patong had experienced its worst flooding in 2 years this after being assured that no such situation would occur again.

Nevertheless, our hardy residents would not be kept from every day business and continued through the rising water line on Patong's highways to conduct the day's affairs.

One gentleman (and I will be surprised if he prints this, hint hint!) decided that due to the now impossible state of the roads, to take a short cut through waste ground in an attempt to get home more quickly.

The short cut as he soon found out was no less flooded than the road system with about 1 meter of water standing thereupon. However, now having made his decision he decided to press on as best he could. Sadly, his efforts lasted only meters as he missed

the track (which was flooded) that he was travelling on and drove his bike into the now swollen and very fast moving klong (river). His bike together with the rider was quickly enveloped by the swell and dragged down to the murky depths.

Only by good fortune and the quick thinking of a couple of local Thai lads was he grabbed from what might have been a very nasty and untimely end.

The other story revolves around a lad who for reasons best known to himself decided to go Shopping at the height of the deluge. As you can imagine his bike did not get too far and gave up on Bangla Road. Clutching his wares, he decided to wade home but was offered a lift by a kind Thai lad in a truck.

So, sitting on the tail gate of the truck they set off for home only to find the lad due to being completely wet through, slipping off the back and being dragged some 100 meters at the back of the truck before being rescued by passers by.

Both were lucky as no serious injuries were sustained by either party and yes although amusing it should be pointed out that in this season, if it's really wet and you don't need to go out **STAY AT HOME!**

Continued on Page 9