

## September Update

Contributed by Apple  
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The Thai political impasse has no obvious solution

{tab=News}

I'm counting down the weeks to my holidays now. Looks like I may be getting the 3 weeks I was hoping for.

Weather has been awful recently - major floods and just downright miserable most of the time. It's definitely true that bad weather effects moods and personalities.

What's also been interesting to note is people's attitudes towards money and spending.

The other evening I dropped into the local Spar supermarket on the way home and it was packed! I've never seen so many people there and as I queued up to pay I noticed that everyone was carrying toilet paper - and exactly the same brand of toilet paper. As I looked closer I could see that many people were also buying eggs, chicken and potatoes.

When I got to the cashier I asked her why it was so busy. She showed me a leaflet of special offers available from 4pm to 8pm. Times really are tough now that we have to queue for cheap toilet roll!!! What really surprised me is that there was a real mix of people there - including people in their BMWs and Mercs! Seems like this credit crunch is hitting everyone!

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{tab=Politics & Biz}

Things are not getting better in Ireland. Property prices continue to drop, inflation is still high, salaries are levelling off and even dropping and the number of unemployed continues to rise. I think we will reach rock bottom in the next 6 months but it will be a rocky road.

Thailand is another story. Politics in Thailand is really interesting and my previous post on the merits of democracy in

Thailand was very insightful. In fact, the PAD who claim to be supporting Democracy are in fact against Democracy. They want to appoint people to parliament rather than elect them in the belief that poor people cannot be counted on to vote correctly (meaning that they aren't educated enough to vote!!!).

I have been following all the developments online for the last few weeks and have been enthralled.

Thaksin has done a runner and Samak is clinging onto power. Sondhi and his PAD mob stormed and invaded government buildings. Arrest warrants were issued for PAD leaders but they have not been enforced as they are hiding behind the mob in government buildings. After almost a week of a stand-off, some pro government supporters started their own rally and both sides clashed. At least 1 person has died and there are photos of many others being beaten!

I don't see an easy solution to all this. The whole issue is based on class. The so-called elite and academics are represented by a very militant PAD. They don't want to talk, compromise or discuss options. Their stated objective is to remove Samak from power but I don't think that will be enough for them. All that will mean is another PM with similar intentions. Next option would be another election but its quite probable that PPP would be elected back into power as part of another coalition. So what they are really after is the end of democracy and to be replaced by some other authoritarian brand of government. At this stage it isn't exactly clear but it is certainly right-wing and a backwards step for Thailand.

HM the King has met Samak in Hua Hin but hasn't said anything publically. Due to less majeste laws it is not permitted to discuss the Kings views or actions in relation to these events. But I would love to know what he is thinking!

This will probably negatively effect investor confidence in Thailand and also on the lucrative tourism sector. High season is approaching fast and if this issue isn't quickly addressed it will add further misery on the deteriorating economy.

More updates and discussions online:

<http://www.cha-cha-am.com/phpbb/viewtopic.php?t=389>

{tab=Sport}

Finally United have landed Berbatov. It was a long hard struggle but it should be all worth it in the end. I think he is a class player and he will suit the United style of playing. I think Rooney will be under serious pressure now as I don't think he has been performing for the last few months if not a year! Tevez has had a great start to the season and definitely shouldn't be dropped!

Thaksin has also sold his stake in Manchester City to the Abu Dhabi Group and they immediately starting throwing money around like wild men. They snatched Robinho right from under the eyes of Chelsea!!!

The whole Kevin Keegan saga at Newcastle also deserves a mention. Ashley has made a big blunder and I doubt if he will ever be able to sit with the fans again. I think he undermined Keegan by bringing in Wise (who is a divisive character anyway!).. I wouldn't be surprised if fans boycotted future games.

I cant believe that Faldo didn't pick Clarke. It's a ludicrous decision and there is no sense to it at all. Clarke has

performed better recently even winning just 2 weeks ago. Poulter hasn't even made the last 2 cuts and even snubbed the Euro tour on the last week to play in the States. On top of all that, Westwood and Clarke are the perfect pair and love playing with each other. Hopefully this won't split the camp but I will not be supporting Faldo. I will cheer for the team but will not cheer for Faldo!!!

Kerry made it through to their 5th final in a row and they are looking now to win 3 in a row. They played well but need to learn how to kill off a game. They seem to take the pressure off when they gain a lead but only wake up again when the other team are back on level terms!!! It does make for some fascinating and enthralling games though!

{tab=Techie}

I am playing the Wii more regularly now and I am looking forward to buying the Wii Fit when I am over in Thailand.

I bought a new digital camera at the weekend. It's only a cheap Agfa model but it does the job. I think I will buy a better one in the next few months but at least Nang will be able to take photos to bring back to her family.

{tab=Ents}

Last weekend we headed down to Limerick to Dads and Helens house warming. It turned out to be a great night and everyone was in top form. Food was excellent, plenty of booze flowing and the music and crack was buzzing. For old people it was a good show!

Big Brother final is on tonight and I am looking forward to it. I hope that Mikey wins it and I would be pretty confident that he will. Still not sure why Lisa was voted out and how Rex has managed to survive this long.

I've also been making my way through the box set of Sopranos over the last few weeks and have thoroughly enjoyed it. Only problem is that I have become more aggressive as I start to take on some character traits from Tony Soprano "which aren't that good at all!

{tab=IMHO}

Things are still not great in general but they have improved slightly over the last few weeks. I am not too sure if that is down to the fact that my holidays are getting closer or if there has been a general improvement on things.

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