

Thai gamblers head to safer Burma casinos

Chiang Rai: As Thai and Cambodian villagers living near the border conflict zone have fled the area, Thai gamblers too have escaped to safer casinos _ in Burma. In the aftermath of Wednesday's clash between Thai and Cambodian soldiers in the border area of Si Sa Ket province, gamblers are switching from casinos in Cambodia to those in Burma.

Bookings are reportedly up at luxury casino resorts like the Allure Resort and Regina Hotel & Golf Club in Burma's Tachilek opposite Mae Sai district.

There were few parking spaces available in Ban Sob Ruak village of tambon Wiang in Chiang Saen district yesterday as Thais crossed the border to another casino resort, the Golden Triangle Paradise Resort.

Pol Col Surachai Thienchai, Chiang Saen district police chief, believed the arrival of gamblers in the North was a result of the border clash with Cambodia.

Chiang Rai police have been instructed to keep a close watch on the influx of gamblers, he added.

Col Chalongchai Chaiyakham, commander of the third unit of the Pha Muang Task Force, which supervises the Thai-Burmese border, said the hostilities on the frontier with Cambodia would not increase the amount of drugs smuggled into Thailand through its northern border.

He ruled out the possibility that drug smugglers would shift their trafficking routes from the eastern border to the North, saying anti-narcotics operations would prevent this happening.