

JUNE 2022

ScandAsia

72 year old Johnny's Grand Thailand Tour

Traversing the Kingdom
1,600 km, 11 provinces,
10,000 Curves

BUSINESS:

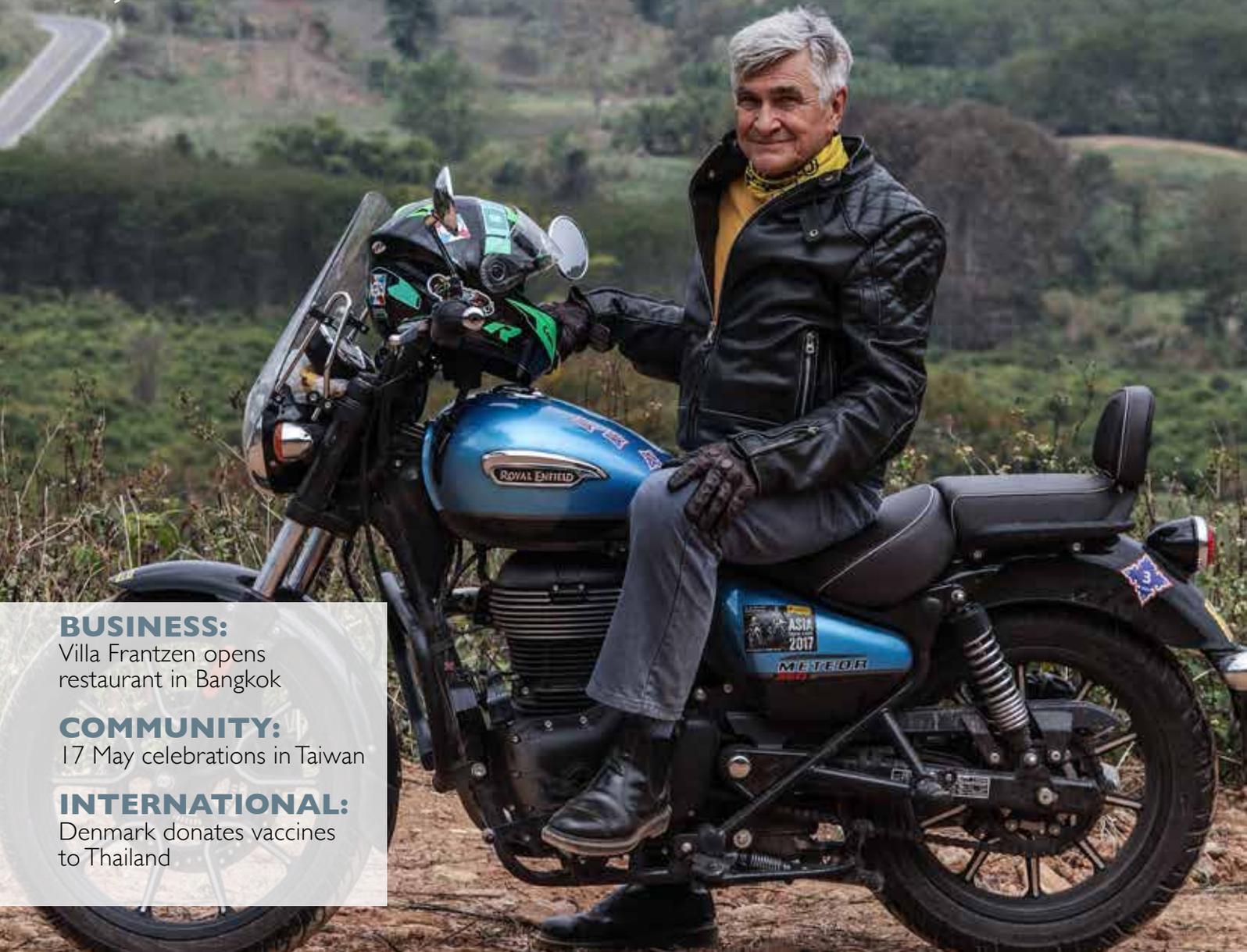
Villa Frantzen opens
restaurant in Bangkok

COMMUNITY:

17 May celebrations in Taiwan

INTERNATIONAL:

Denmark donates vaccines
to Thailand





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GET TO KNOW MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS –A NEUROLOGICAL DISEASE AFFECTING THE BRAIN AND SPINAL CORD

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is defined as a neurological disease which is typically chronic and progressive involving damages to the protective sheaths of nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord as well as optic nerve (central nervous system). Multiple sclerosis develops when the immune system malfunction destroys the protective sheath (known as myelin) that covers nerve fibers in the central nervous system. As a result, it leads to permanent damage or deterioration of the affected nerves.

Causes of Multiple Sclerosis

The exact cause of multiple sclerosis remains unknown. However, it is considered an autoimmune disease in which the body's immune system attacks its own tissues. Contributing factors to multiple sclerosis often involve: genetic alternations or family history of multiple sclerosis, environment or climate, certain viral infections such as Epstein-Barr virus (EBV), low vitamin D levels and some autoimmune diseases.



Signs and Symptoms Of Multiple Sclerosis

Neuron is made up of a cell body and an axon which is the extension of the cell body. Most of the axons in the central nervous system are wrapped in myelin, a fatty substance rich in lipids and proteins. Myelin insulates and protects the axon, allowing for appropriate nerve transmission. Although myelin is present in the central nervous system and peripheral nervous system, only the central nervous system is affected by multiple sclerosis. When the protective myelin is destroyed by the immune system, the nerve fiber becomes exposed. As a result, the messages that travel along that nerve fiber during nerve transmission are blocked, causing a wide range of abnormal signs and symptoms. Common symptoms include:

- Unsteady gait, tremor, mobility problems, muscle spasms, stiffness and weakness
- Numbness or weakness in one or more limbs, tingling sensation or pain in parts of the body
- Electric-shock sensations in the neck and back while bending the neck forward
- Vision problems, sudden blurry vision, prolonged double vision and color-vision deficit
- Balance difficulties and lack of coordination, usually spontaneous and self-limiting

Treatment of Multiple Sclerosis

There is currently no cure for multiple sclerosis. Treatment goals aim at managing relevant symptoms and speeding recovery from attacks as well as preventing relapses and slowing disease progression.

Depending on presenting symptoms, disease severity and relapsing-remitting disease course, several treatment options are available. Treatments during attacks include corticosteroids and plasma exchange which is often considered when symptoms are severe without adequate responses to given corticosteroids. Treatments for progression modification include oral and injectable disease-modifying therapies, including interferon beta and humanized monoclonal antibody medication. Due to advances in novel drug development, newer medications have emerged attempting to target specific parts of the immune system that play a major role in multiple sclerosis. Selecting the appropriate therapy principally depends upon careful consideration of various factors, including duration and severity, outcomes of previous treatments and other health issues.

Since manifestation multiple sclerosis may overlap with other neurological disorders, if any warning sign arises, immediate medical attention must be sought in order to receive timely and effective treatments before condition progresses.

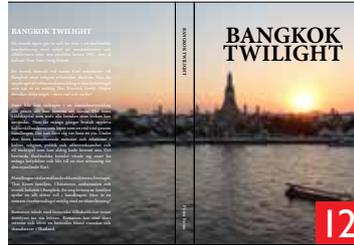
Reference:

Dr. Chanjira Satukijchai Neurologist,
Neuroscience Center, Bangkok International Hospital.

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Thai Nordic Association is here!

Thai Nordic Association was successfully established on 4 March 2022 after a protracted communication between Thailand's Department of Provincial Administration and the law firm Wissen & Co. that also assisted with the first creation of the legally registered Scandinavian Society Siam.

The playful style of the leadership of Chairman Lasse Staalung helped carry the enthusiasm of the board through the many disheartening twists and turns and seemingly never ending bureaucratic obstacles which the law firm quietly, but stubbornly encountered with a patience of a magnitude you probably only find in Thailand.

TNA's creation is a major move forward for the Nordic community in Thailand only to be compared to the creation of the Nordic business chambers in Thailand from 1989 to 1996. The potential for the TNA to grow into an overarching, all Nordic non-governmental organisation is now there with a legal framework that may even lead to the establishment of a Nordic House in Bangkok.

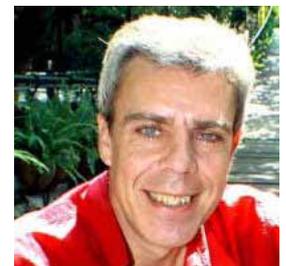
The change not only wipes away the dust from the 102 years old association, but more importantly reflects that TNA now also officially covers the whole of the Nordic region, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Iceland as well as the autonomous areas Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Åland in line with the Nordic Council.

The purpose of the Society remains to act as a union between people from the Nordic area living in Thailand. To organize social activities and sports- and leisure activities and give advice and guidance to people from the Nordic region living in Thailand and support and cooperate with the other Nordic Associations and Commercial Chambers and Nordic churches and the diplomatic representations of the Nordic countries in Thailand as an independent, nonprofit, nonpolitical association.

That is an ambitious vision!

Congratulations to the Board of Directors of the TNA, which consists of the same group of people who in 2020 - a week before the Covid lockdown would have made it impossible - threw a grand reception to celebrate the establishment 100 years ago of Dansk Samfund Siam which later became Scandinavian Society Siam.

Now! Pop that bottle of Champagne!



Gregers Moller
Editor in Chief

ScandAsia

ScandAsia is a printed magazine and online media covering the people and businesses of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland living and working in China, Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar.

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Publisher :

Scandinavian Publishing Co., Ltd.
211 Soi Prasert Manukitch 29
Prasert Manukitch Road
Bangkok 10230, Thailand
Tel. +66 2 943 7166-8
Fax: +66 2 943 7169
E-mail: news@scandasia.com

Editor-in-Chief :

Gregers A.W. Møller
gregers@scandmedia.com

Advertising :

Finn Balslev
finn@scandmedia.com
MB: +66 81 866 2577

Graphic Designer :

Peerapol Meesuwan
Peerapol@scandmedia.com

Production Manager:

Sopida Yatprom

Printing :

Thanathorn Print and
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A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITY

Piers Illing, Grad '15, said that some of his fondest memories at Bangkok Patana School happened through experimentation within the school's well-resourced Drama Department. After leaving Bangkok Patana, Piers earned a degree in Theatre Production from the Guildford School of Acting. Nowadays you can find him running the set electrics, lighting or video at some of the UK's top productions such as Back to the Future: The Musical, Matilda and Rod Stewart's UK tour.



Read Piers' 'Life After Patana' story:



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Danish fashion brand Selected to close all 1300 shops in China

The Danish owned fashion brand "Selected" will close all its 1300 stores in China before the end of July, the company has announced.

The stores are owned by Bestseller Fashion Group China which has become one of China's leading fashion retailers operating more than 7,000 stores in over 500 cities throughout China. The other Bestseller store brands in China are Only, which was launched in China in 1996 and today operates 1,932 stores, JACK & JONES which was launched in March 2000 and today operates 1,986 stores and VERO MODA which was launched in August 2001 and today operates 1,942 stores.

Although there is a cooperation between Bestseller in Europe and Bestseller in China, most of the designs for the Chinese market are

made in China and adjusted to the taste and requirements of the Chinese consumers. Over 90% of the products sold in China are also produced in China.

Bestseller Fashion Group China is an independent company established in 1996 and is 50% owned

by Anders Holch Povlsen and 50% by Dan Friis and Allan Warburg who also runs the business on a daily basis.

The brand said, the pandemic has led to huge changes in consumer demand, affecting China's traditional retail industry.



Denmark and Vietnam in people-to-people exchange



Vietnamese Ambassador to Denmark Luong Thanh Nghi receives the Chairman of the Denmark-Vietnam Friendship Association. (Photo: VNA)

Vietnam's Ambassador to Denmark, Luong Thanh Nghi has suggested that Denmark-Vietnam Friendship Association (DAVIFO) co-ordinate with relevant agencies to organize forums for young people of both countries to serve as a nucleus for bilateral ties.

Areas where this would make a big impact would be in activities such as cuisine festivals, photo exhibitions and dialogues between prestigious writers and artist and audiences to promote the Vietnamese and Danish cultures, he said at meeting on 17 May with DAVIFO President, Trine Glue Doan.

The DAVIFO president had briefed the Ambassador on a number of DAVIFO projects in Vietnam, covering the supply of medical equipment to local hospitals and support to disadvantaged children.

Norwegians in Taiwan celebrated 17 May



Norwegians celebrated all over the world Norway's National Day on 17 May in true style after three years of lockdowns.

In Taiwan, the National Day parade was held in front of Lin An Tai's historic house on Sunday 15 May and the 17 May celebration was highlighted by a Norwegian flag flown from the top of mount Yushan, the highest mountain in Taiwan.



Sweden's 3-Michelin-starred Villa Frantzen opens in Bangkok



Bangkokians are bracing themselves in anticipation as big names start flocking back to the city and its fine-dining scene starts to recover after the pandemic.

One of those 'big names', reports Coconuts Bangkok, is Swedish 3-Michelin-starred restaurant brand, Villa Frantzen, which is due to open early in June inside a 400sqm villa in

Soi Yen Akat 3.

The restaurant will feature an open kitchen and enough space to accommodate 60 people, not to mention an outdoor patio, and a Nordic-style bar.

Swedish owner and chef Bjorn Frantzen said Villa Frantzen will follow a modern Nordic theme, just like the original Frantzén in Stockholm, but will have some added Asian touches. the news article said.

ScandAsia will feature the restaurant in the coming magazine for July-August.



Denmark donates 1,266,000 Moderna-Spikevax vaccines to Thailand

The first batch of a delivery of more than 1.2 million Moderna vaccines from Denmark arrived in Thailand on 26 May 2022. With this delivery, Denmark has reached its goal of donating more than 10 million vaccines worldwide.

The delivery stands as a continuation of the strong historical collaboration between Denmark and Thailand and are to be used in the vaccination program of Thailand.

Attending the delivery was Ambassador of Denmark to Thailand, HE Jon Thorgaard, Dr. Sapon Lamsirithaworn, Deputy Director General, Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health and MR. Krai Mahasandana, Deputy Director General, Department of European Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

On the Facebook page of the Embassy, Denmark thanks Thailand for the good cooperation and looks forward to continued Thai-Danish collaboration in the future.

The delivery on 26th of May was the first of three installments. The rest were to be delivered over the following two weeks. After the third and final delivery, more than 10.3 million excess Danish COVID-19 vaccines have been donated to the world's developing countries – both bilaterally and through COVAX. The government's total goal of donating DKK 10 million excess vaccines will thus be obtained.

Denmark's Minister for Development Aid, Flemming Møller Mortensen states:

"I am extremely pleased that we can support Thailand with vaccines, and proud that we have reached our goal of donating 10 million vaccines to developing countries in need. It is a great achievement, especially in light of the increasing challenges that we – together with many other countries and COVAX – are experiencing with the donation of vaccines."

The Danish Minister of Health,

Magnus Heunicke states:

"It has been a clear ambition for the government that Denmark should both cover its own need for COVID-19 vaccines and support international pandemic control. We have now donated 10 million doses, at the same time as more than 3.6 million Danes have received 3rd jabs, and we also have enough vaccines for a program with the 4th jab, if the health authorities should recommend that. We continue our efforts, both at home and abroad."



Indonesian CO2 capturing aprons tested in Stockholm

The Indonesian-based H & M textile company has produced aprons for the food and beverage industry that capture CO2 and a Stockholm restaurant crew are testing it out, a news report said recently.

The textile industry has a large carbon footprint and fashion companies find themselves under increasing pressure to find ways to limit the environmental impact as global temperatures continue to rise.

This pilot project in Indonesia holds great importance for climate change and sustainability although projects to develop CO2 absorbing textiles are at an early stage, H&M

did say that the success of it could be a game changer in the reduction of global CO2 emissions.

At the same time, also with the aim of achieving the successful absorption of CO2 into various textiles, the Hong Kong Research Institute of Textiles and Apparel (HKRITA) has developed an amine-containing solution with which to treat cotton – fiber, yarn or fabric – making the cotton pull carbon dioxide gas towards it and capture it, to thereafter stabilize and store it on the surface of the textile.

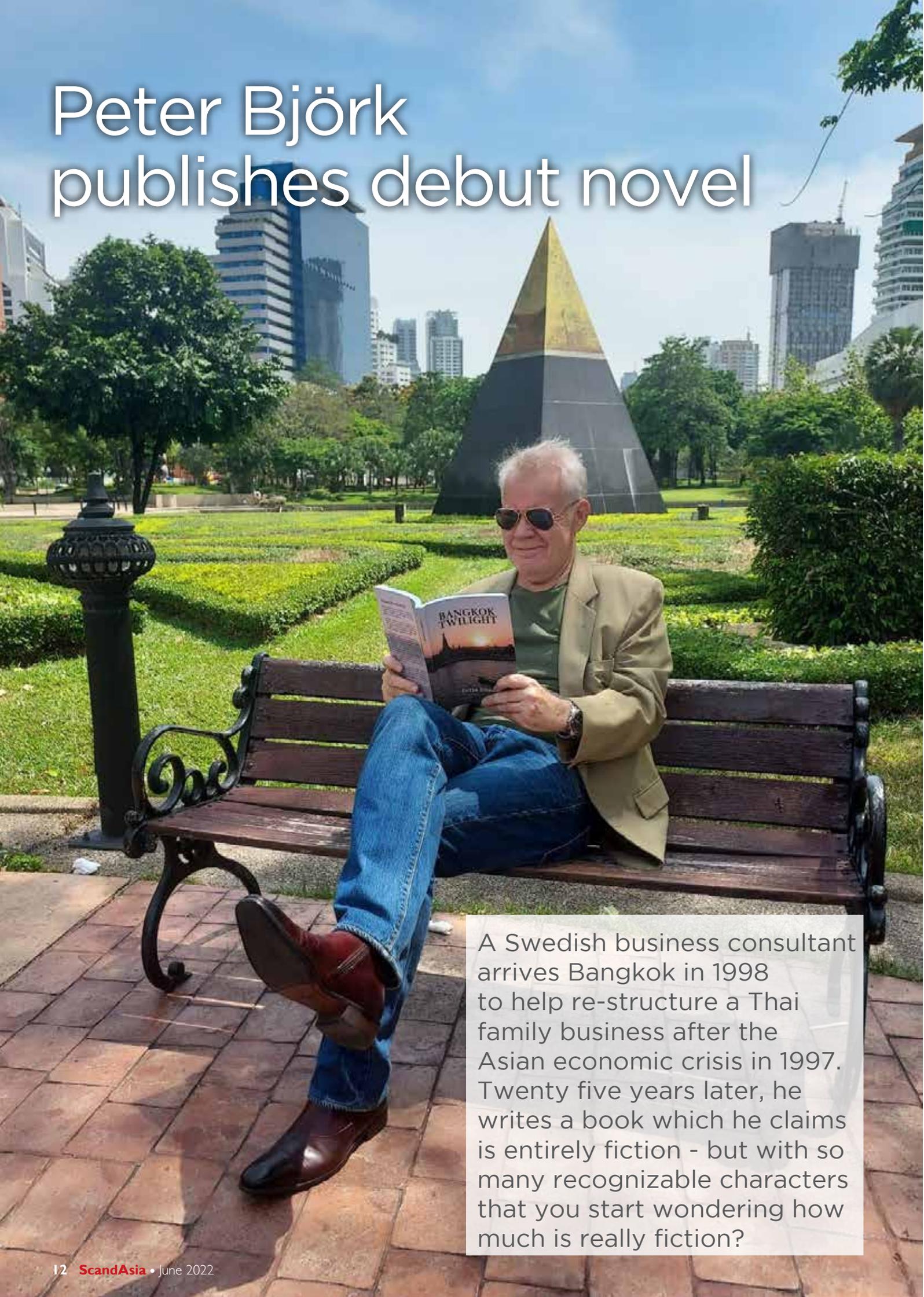


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Peter Björk publishes debut novel



A Swedish business consultant arrives Bangkok in 1998 to help re-structure a Thai family business after the Asian economic crisis in 1997. Twenty five years later, he writes a book which he claims is entirely fiction - but with so many recognizable characters that you start wondering how much is really fiction?

By Agneta Bekassy

Meet the blond Swede Peter Björk, who grew up in Värmland, in his regional and resident city of Karlstad. There is a famous expression in Swedish saying "The sun always shines in Karlstad". True or not, it is here that Peter attended school and where he spent most of his youth.

"It was a very pleasant upbringing," Peter says.

After finishing school, the Military Service was waiting and Peter joined Värmland's Regiment and later on the Professional Officers Education Program. He attended the Military Academy in Halmstad. He later on moved to the - in Sweden - well-respected Krigshögskolan Karlsberg, (the War College at Karlsberg in Sweden).

After his years within the military sector, he asked for leave and enrolled at the University of Uppsala.

While there, Peter decided to study "Human Resource Management". Peter also made it to Chalmers Tekniska Högskola (Chalmers University of Technology) in Gothenburg, a very prestigious university, later on to study "Change Management".

In between the studies at Uppsala and Chalmers Universities, he found a job at Stena Line, the ferry boat company with ferries to Denmark, Norway and Germany.

Gothenburg became his base and it was convenient as Peter had a brother living there and a residence in Bohuslän (the coast). Peter became responsible for the service staff on the ferries to Denmark and Norway.

After a couple of years, he and some researchers and students from Chalmers and Handelshögskolan decided to form a company together. They worked as consultants within the public sector and industry, hospitals, schools and car industry. This business continued through almost the 1990s.

Well, how did Peter then end up in Bangkok, Thailand?

A Swedish friend of Peter, moved to Bangkok at the end of the 1980s, married a Thai woman and opened a tailor business. Peter went to visit them as a tourist several times. When the big crisis came in 1997, Peter got the idea of starting the same kind of company here as he had had in Sweden, and still has, in Thailand.

He contacted the Swedish Embassy, the Export Council and the 3 Swedes Anders Lundqvist, Håkan Skoglund and Johan Winlöf at Connector Asia. Together they rented an office at the One Pacific Place, which also was/is the location of the Swedish Embassy. We are now talking about year 1998. It was, like most of us have experienced, not so easy to get started, requiring lots of research which had to be done, with companies to visit, seminars to organize, etc. During this period, Sweden had

a female ambassador H.E.Mrs. Inga Eriksson-Fogh who helped and supported them, although she was relocated to Sweden 1998.

For some years, Peter stood with one foot still in Sweden and one in Bangkok.

Peter has also worked for the Thai Swedish Chamber of Commerce, as its Executive Director for 4 years and later on in the same position with the European Chamber of Commerce (EABC). Today he is back as President for the Swedish Thai Chamber of Commerce, SWECHAM.

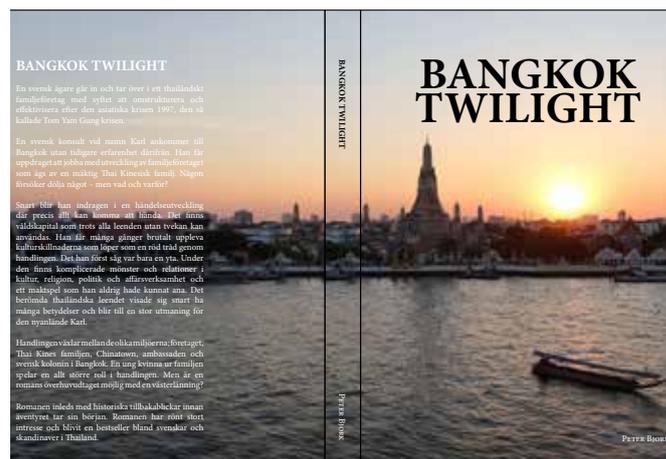
He also experienced a year in Cambodia, but went back and forth between Thailand and Cambodia, as he did not want to relocate from his beloved Bangkok.

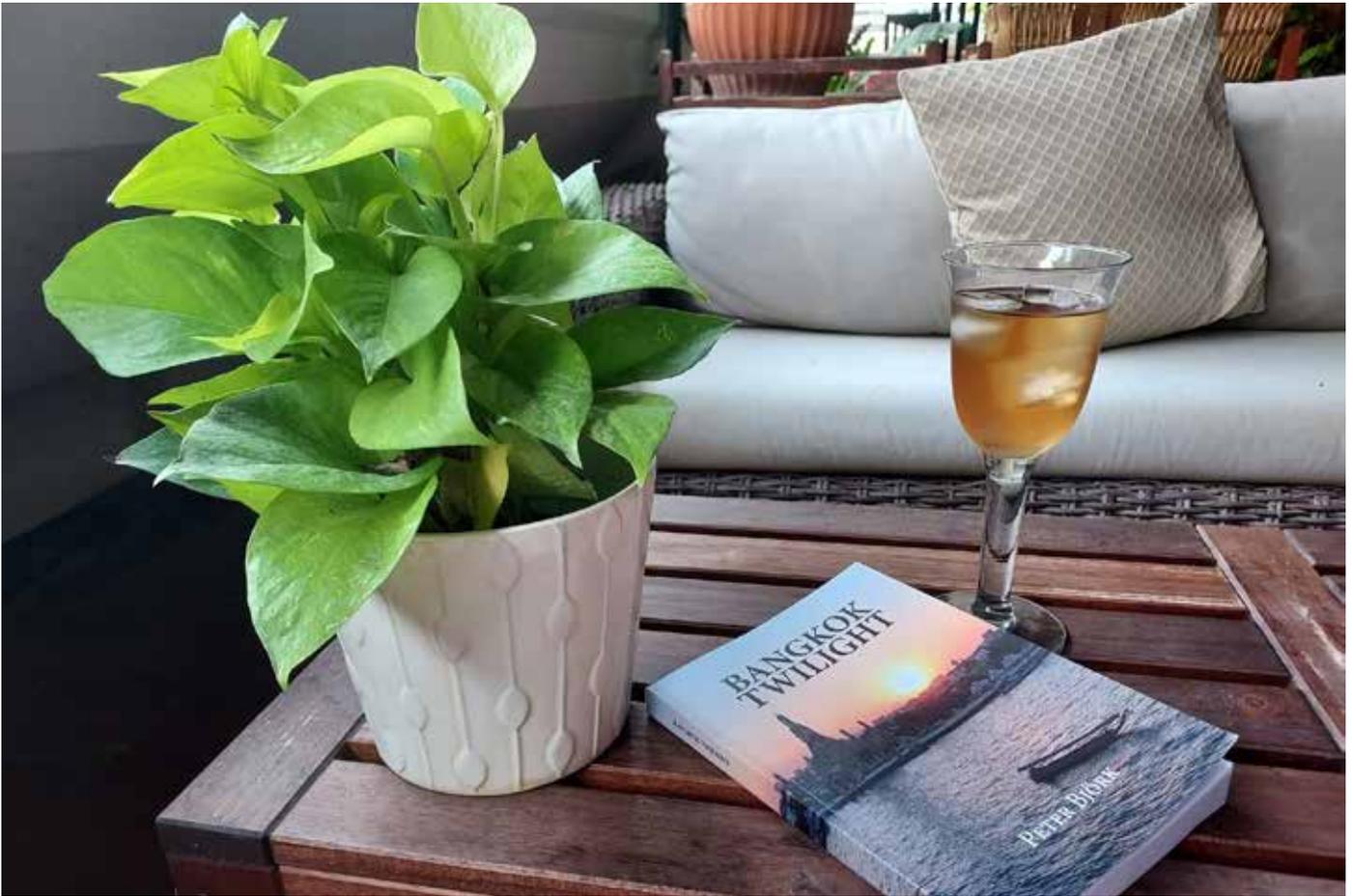
About 10-15 years ago, he started to think about writing a book. He had it quite clear in his mind what the book was to be about and he made an early first start. It rested for quite a while, but after approximately 3 years later, he restarted the writing and to him Covid made it possible to spend a lot of time writing on this project.

To write a book by oneself without any help, it's an impossible task. Peter was happy to get some good advisers, among them a friend's wife, Camilla Söderlund who is a linguist and who gave him some very important advice. This, in addition with the help Peter received from the publisher, Gregers Möller and his wife Disraporn made it possible to finally get the book printed and published

"This is a kind of "Novel of Adventure" (Äventyrsroman) Peter says. The name Bangkok Twilight stands for dusk, nightfall, but can also reflect the differences we live and experience in the Land of Smiles, as it also means a period or state of obscurity, ambiguity, or gradual decline.

Asking Peter what he likes and dislikes about Thailand he answers: "I am most fascinated by this country, especially by Bangkok; it works like a magnet on me. You





always discover new things; it has a high pulse and that attracts me. The people are friendly even if you cannot always understand them or their logic. I don't think I ever will really understand the culture here, but I like the Buddhist way of thinking. People are mostly humble."

"I also love the climate, even if April and May are a bit too humid and warm. I love the Thai food and I manage to eat and like it as spicy as the Thais themselves. We are spoiled with so many great restaurants here and it always happens something. Bangkok, was before Covid, a city that never sleeps. Also, Thai hospitality is truly world class."

"Negative to me is only that they often say one thing, but mean something else," he adds.

Wanting to know if Peter has found a place in Thailand that he really loves and returns to, his answer comes quickly, River Kwai.

Asking Peter about his future plans, he smiles.

"Well, I'm planning to make a trilogy and the next books will take place the years after the Millennium. They will reflect the authentic historical context at that period, but as with Bangkok Twilight it will be a mix of fantasy and reality."

Now we know that we have two more books to look forward to.

Congratulations Peter on your first public book release!

"If you have been living here for quite some years, it's most possible that you will recognize some of the characters," Peter concludes with a blink in his eye.

Bangkok Twilight

A Swedish owner takes over a Thai family business with the aim of restructuring the operation after the Asian crisis of 1997. A Swedish consultant named Karl is assigned to work with the development of the family business established by a powerful Thai Chinese family. He has never been to Asia before and soon gets the feeling that someone is trying to hide something - but what and why?

Karl also realizes that what he first saw was just a surface. The famous Thai smile turns out to have many meanings and becomes a great challenge for the newly arrived Swede. Behind this there are complicated patterns and relationships in culture, religion, politics and business and a game of power he could never have imagined.

The plot alternates between the different environments; the company, the Thai Chinese family, Chinatown, the Swedish Embassy and the Swedish colony in Bangkok. A young woman from the family plays an increasing role in the plot, but is a romance with a westerner at all possible?



Before the three day long swim.
(Photo: Ocean View Dock)

Three Scandinavians did a marathon swim in Indonesia

In an activity as part of an environmental hygiene campaign, with a focus on preserving the marine environment, three Scandinavian swimmers – two Swedes and a Danish citizen – took on the challenge of swimming for 5 kilometres in turn, covering an estimated 80 kilometres in 50 hours.

The three swimmers were Gentiel Gielen and Lorenz Gielen who are Swedish nationals, and Jan Khaled who is a Danish citizen. They started their journey on Friday 6th May 2022 at 2pm local time/WIB and arrived at the beach in front of hotel Ocean View in Tegalsambi Village, Tahunan District, Jepara Sunday morning the 8th May.

The co-ordinator of the event, Farah Elfirajun, said:

“There was no competition, this is special for us because we are lovers of a clean environment. We

are holding this event to educate the people of Jepara and also increase tourism in Central Java and in Jepara.”

An escort ship also accompanies the swimmers for the duration of the event.

Arriving at Jeppara, Jan Khaled told reporters that the three had been preparing for five months to cross the sea of Jepara, training every day and maintaining a strict diet.

“For five months from the end of December we have had a full program twice a day, food, exercise, many programs. Every day there is a coach for swimming, a lot of yoga,” he explained to the local media <https://www.detik.com/>

Jan Khaled is now looking forward to do a swimming event in Denmark in July 2022 where he plans to swim 14 kilometers non-stop.



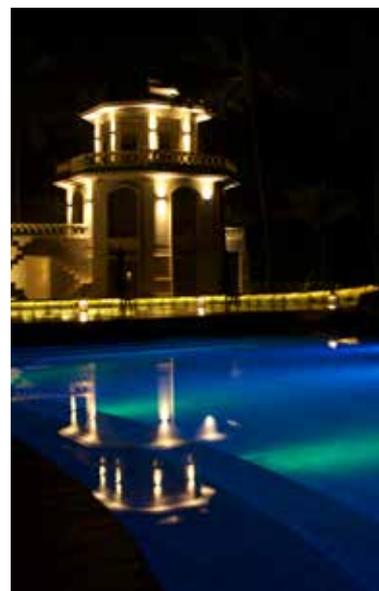
The Nordic swimmers arrived at Tegalsambi, Tahunan District, Sunday 8 May at noon.
(Photo: Dian Utoro Ajil/detikjateng)



Khao Lak has more luxury to offer than ever

The much loved destination of Khao Lak has been hit hard by the pandemic, but soon everyone will once again return to this exceptional seaside paradise. More international hospitality brands have come on board and you are today spoiled with choice on this wonderful location.

Khao Lak is appreciated for its very laidback vacation mode and the nearly endless beach stretching tens of kilometers, offering plenty of space for everyone by the turquoise water. Here is a selection of some of its finest vacation accommodation choices and what they have to offer.



By Joakim Persson

Devasom Khao Lak Beach Resort & Villas

With its second luxury boutique resort of the finest pedigree in Thailand Devasom has made its mark on the Khao Lak holiday destination scene with a distinct nod to the region's ancient history and by-albeit with some local competition-raising the bar there for design, exclusiveness and hospitality excellence.

The 69 units resort is ranked among Thailand's best small luxury resort because of its distinguished architecture and overall attention to detail concerning everything from the accommodation to the Thai hospitality – including butler service!

The relaxing and cultural getaway boasts spacious, fully equipped and thoughtfully designed pool suites and pool villas.

The design sets this resort apart, where the architecture is also dominated by wood; featuring handcraft, wood carvings by artisans and furnishings representing Southeast Asia's rich heritage

Red richly-veined white marble also dominates as material on the premises, including the entire main pool, as well as for all private pools, bathrooms, large parts of the spa and other features.

The resort features elements of this ancient Takola (Khao Lak's name back then), culture as well as South-east Asia-Thai heritage flairs, art, artefacts, architecture and charm of bygone times, intricately incorporated in contemporary design that truly makes this resort a fine example of hospitality celebrating heritage! It is also reminiscent of the area's Sino-Portuguese architecture. In addition, certain features have drawn inspiration from India's stepwells!

The dinner restaurant Devasom Beach Grill Bar offers comfy semi-private dining with semicircular sofas and round tables as well as al-fresco seating. From the main courses the 'Grill & Chill' section is extra appealing. A five-star breakfast is served at the second restaurant, Takola Restaurant Wine Bar.

On offer is also wellness in the form of the spa treatments at Devasom Spa Wellness and its fabulous marble surroundings. Otherwise try the immersive '7-days 7-activities' programme





Ramada Resort by Wyndham Khao Lak

Situated along Khao Lak proper's Bang Niang beach this resort haven presents a green garden with an oval pool enclosed by three low-slung buildings and some villas, with the Andaman Sea panorama as backdrop. The pool takes centre stage, decorated with a fountain artwork of curved copper metal art pieces.

The pool also has several inflatable toys in sizes both for the smaller family members as well as grown-ups. Other diversions are water sports, with surf boards and canoes available for guests. Children can have fun at 'Playland'.

Deluxe Lanai room comes with terrace and direct access to the resort's garden. Deluxe types come with a light palette of blond wood and bright, clean-lined interior. Ocean Front villas have both garden seats with foot stools and also sun beds on the lawn outside! From here the view is unobstructed of the setting sun.

Romance and relaxation is in focus; with private villas fitted out with outdoor plunge pools, the option to have a private dinner setup on the postcard-perfect beach, or double treatment rooms and outdoor Jacuzzi

for two at 'the Spa'. The high quality spa, situated only steps from the pool garden, offers a comprehensive selection of packages and treatments to high standard, including the 'Romantic Getaway' for couples.

Sassi's Beach Club offers sunset Happy Hour. Its food selection and taste of the dishes is exceptionally good, including the western dishes. Fritto misto, Spicy mixed seafood Salad, and Pineapple fried rice are recommended Thai dishes.

And don't miss out on trying this one: the 'Anywhere Anytime Breakfast' offer. Having it on the beach is a delight when the morning sun is still slightly behind the resort.



JW Marriott Khao Lak Resort & Spa

The combination of a tropical paradise with a makeover befitting a legendary brand makes for a very appealing proposition. Guest rooms and suites have been extensively refurbished.

A grandiose open-air lobby, adorned with beautiful and bespoke furniture: light-blue and mustard-coloured, oversized sofas, armchairs, and pillows, and antique Thai wood carved statues of dancers welcomes guests. Brown veneered as well as bespoke waterjet marble that comes with beige-brown floral design cover the floors. The resort distinctly resembles a traditional Thai village with the expansive water flanked by gardens and traditional buildings with a Buddhist temple-inspired roofline.

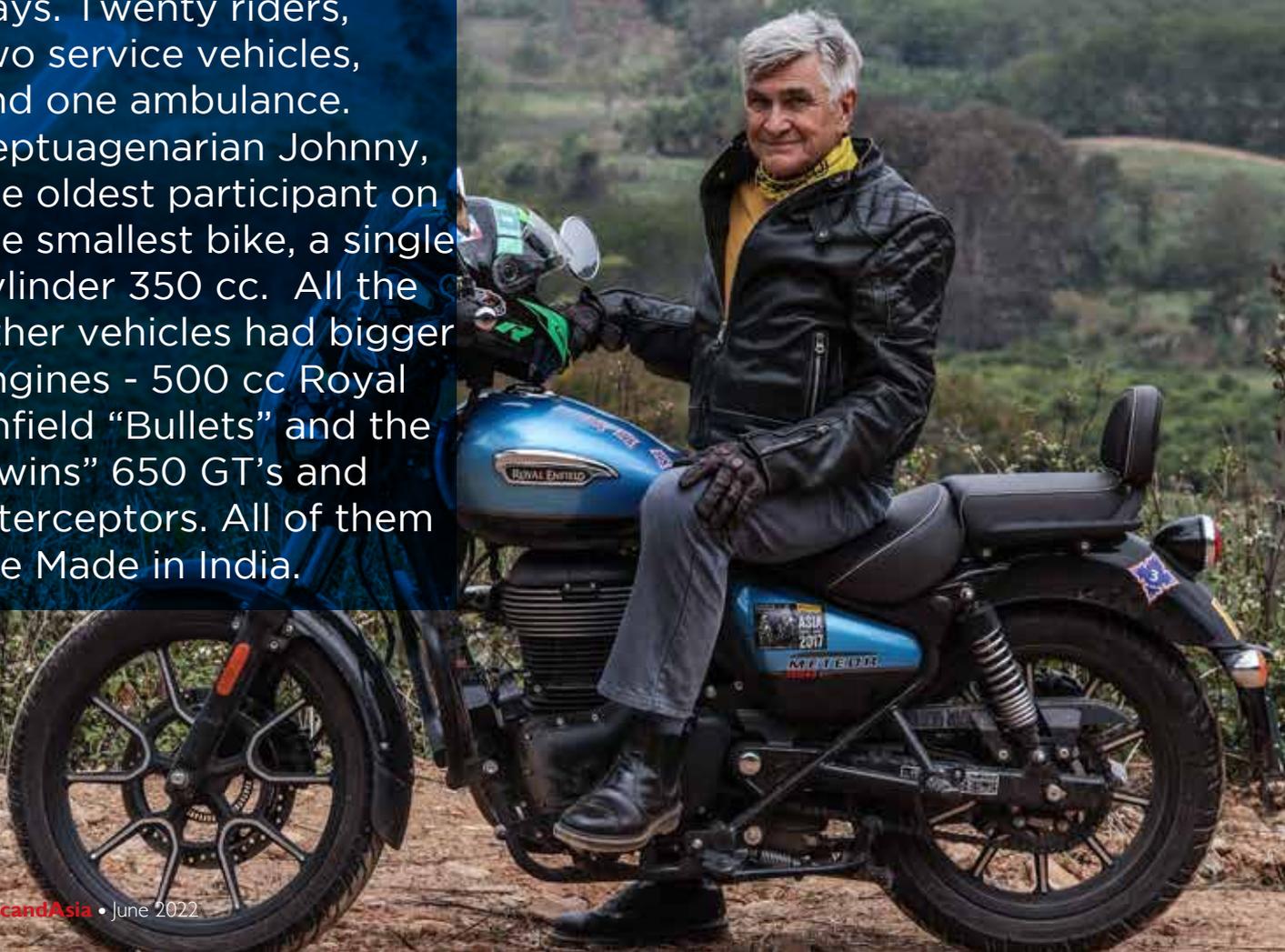
Deluxe Lagoon Pool rooms (many with direct pool access) and suites spread out in multiple wings, separated by pool waterways or lush full-grown vegetation. Bright rooms and exquisite furniture are complemented with some dark timber woodworks. Slide doors are a modern take on classic wooden screens, inlaid with elaborate golden screens. With these newly renovated guest rooms classic Thai details now meet a casual contemporary living style.

The impressive interconnected lagoon pool system is vast, snaking along the gardens and around the different wings. Poolside pursuits include a variety of settings, where to hang around, soak in the sun, relax and play. The 'adult' pool (for guests above 12) offers semi-private sun chair pairs, surrounded by fully grown vegetation. On-water sun beds flanking the Infinity Bar at the same adult pool are other attractive spots. Opt for two swim-up bars (and elsewhere also a Jacuzzi area within the vast lagoon) or the Beach Bar at the palm-studded beach, a prime destination for sundowners, with bar chairs facing the sea. Or grab a highly attracted sun bed with marine blue mattresses underneath sun-shading parasols and coconut trees.

Dining at Italian 'Olive' restaurant you can encounter Italian chef Enzo – a splendid host who not only is part of the action in the open kitchen, but also interacts with guests. The Marriott property frequently also serves buffets, including at the Japanese Sakura restaurant. More dining outlets to open during 2021.

72 year old Johnny's Grand Thailand Tour Traversing the Kingdom 1,600 km, 11 provinces, 10,000 Curves

Double knee implant, multiple surgery survivor Swedish-Finnish Koistinen-Lindgren motorcycled recently from Bangkok all the way to the northern Golden Triangle. Seven days. Twenty riders, two service vehicles, and one ambulance. Septuagenarian Johnny, the oldest participant on the smallest bike, a single cylinder 350 cc. All the other vehicles had bigger engines - 500 cc Royal Enfield "Bullets" and the "twins" 650 GT's and Interceptors. All of them are Made in India.





By John K. Lindgren

“Get Your Motor Running...” The open road, the wind and the blue skies. Foggy mountain tops, occasional warm tropical rain showers and shifting lush, verdant landscapes.

Cornucopia of sultry scents and smells. Highways, byways and endless northern mountain curves. The bikers, we love them and call them the “twisties”. Johnny elaborates: “After all my operations and revisions in Finland, Sweden and Thailand; orthopedic surgeries all because of that damn, horrific ski jumping accident in Finland back in the 60s.

Finally I am rehabilitated. I can't run, I can't dance. But I can walk forwards and backwards and I can ride a bike.

So, I got to get out of Bangkok! Discover mountain provinces I have yet not seen. Thailand has 77 and I'm and I'm 70 - plus. Tempus Fugit!

“Please allow me to introduce myself...” like Sir Mick Jagger sang in the 70s. Jagger, still fit as a fiddle. Today he is 78 and runs backwards every day to stay in shape for the coming European summer, stadium concerts.

As my passport states: Johannes Lindgren aka John K. Lindgren C'est moi! I was born in Suomi-Finland Virdois (Virrat in Finnish). Finland is officially bilingual Finnish and Swedish. Like Canada. You know Justin! Not Bieber. But, Justin Trudeau! And we play ice hockey.

Back to where I am currently, Thailand. Here, where I am a long time resident and consider myself a Bangkokian. “Bangkok-Wallah” to my Indian friends.

After years as motoring/lifestyle editor and when print media was dying Johnny decided to kickstart the old www.carsanook.com youtube channel, which expanded into motorcar and motorcycle reviews on YouTube together with videographer, off-road, trail biker Kari Rajartalo, a taciturn Finn from the vast Finnish Lapland, Kemijärvi town north of the polar circle.

Year 2021 Covid 19. Annus Horribilis. September and Madame Sue Bunnag, my wife, surprised me with a spanking new blue Royal Enfield Meteor 350 Supernova motorcycle on my 72nd anniversary. I had fallen in love with the easy-peasy single cylinder retro cruiser during a previous BikeSanook YouTube review.

Following year Khun Kasem, Royal Enfield Marketing Manager Thailand, called me for the =RE= Grand Thailand Tour 2022. “Would You like to join? And then... You think you can manage at your age?”. WHAT?? Age discrimination!! I thought and I said “YES, of course! Bring it on.” I had already been riding long distances. Three times to our Dacha in northern Kamphaeng Phet province 380 km from Bangkok. Including three days of challenging, steep potholed filled mountain roads in Chiang Mai highlands in Dec 2021.

Royal Enfield Grand Thailand Tour 2022. Seven days of pure motorcycle riding 1,600 km from Chao Phraya river in Bangkok to the banks of the mighty, mystic Mekong river opposite People's Democratic Republic of Laos.

Ladies and Gentlemen. Start your engines...

Day 1. Bangkok - Phetchabun. Departure 08:00 on a balmy February, Monday morning from riverside Bangkok, Phra Arthit road in the famous backpacker Khao San neighbourhood.

Our official escorts two big, white Honda 900 cc police motorcycles. Vroom! The rumbling sound of twenty bikes. We are off. Round Victory Monument, Phaloyotin, Viphavadee road, Rangsit, Saraburi. A couple of refueling stops. Coffee & water for the riders at the PTT filling stations. A long line of Royal Enfield motorcycles on the move.

This is the longest daily ride. 420 kilometers from Bangkok to the hills and mountains of Phetchabun, “The Switzerland of Thailand” We are climbing up to cooler elevations, more bends. Left and right. “the twisties” as we motorcyclists like to call mountain roads.

We arrive at Khao Kho mountain. What a breathtaking vista! Twentyfour white sturdy, towering wind turbines, endless strawberry fields and cabbage plantations on the hill slopes at Khao Kho.

The General Electric turbines supply 140 million units of power, or about twenty percent of the total provincial demand. Muu Ka-Tah (pan pork) al-fresco dinner and delectable big, juicy strawberries for dessert. In the night. Trying to sleep I hear the swoosh swoosh, swoosh of the heavy, long turbine blades.





Day 2. Early morning wake up call. Cold shower. Bloody refreshing! Outside our camp the smell of Khao Tomm Thai rice soup and instant, sweet coffee fills the air. Start your engines. Flag-off! The Marshal raising his hand. Gravel!!! Careful with the front brake! Focus! We have two marshals in high visibility vests in the lead on their sturdy, powerful 650 cc Royal Enfield Interceptors. One more marshal called the “sweeper” at the back followed the service vans and the ambulance.

* The Marshal's duty is to ensure the safety of the group to which they are assigned.

En Route to Uttaradit 308 km. The Thai highlands. This is what motorcycling should be. Serpentine roads. Misty mountains and cool winds. But, after a rough night in my blue tent, fresh, strong morning coffee is needed. No sugar! Headache remedy, par excellence. Everyone craves for COFFEE! And suddenly covered in the light morning mist on top of the mountain Pino Latte Hotel & Resort, Phetchabun with a trendy high ceiling coffee shop and a panorama view. Perfect hot cappuccino/espresso break with balcony. “Don't forget the water!” says “AK” the assistant tour leader from the Royal Enfield factory in Chennai, India. We call him “AK-47”. Time 20 minutes! Still 200 km to Uttaradit town on the banks of the Nan river.

Arrival at dusk in light rain. ARAYA hotel 3-star rating. Dull grey, parking lot view, but a hot shower and a real bed. Heaven after an uncomfortable night in a tent. Dinner at Lan Pho Cafe. Garden restaurant with rustic but dated goofy wooden design. A variety of dishes, fish & chicken/pork mostly spicy and sour. But a surprise in the refrigerator German Warsteiner beer. For dessert with ice cream! Back to the hotel a shower and sleep!

Day 3. Uttaradit - Nan endless cornering. Now the real twisties. Up & down. Distance 240 km. First stop the Sirikit Dam, an embankment dam on the Nan River, a tributary of the Chao Phraya waterway. The reservoir and power station opened in 1974. One of the 14 dams in Thailand with a storage capacity 9,510 million cubic meters of water. Onwards to the ferry crossing at Ban Pak Nai sleepy, fishing village. The man-made lake is one of the largest in northern Thailand. The rickety ferryboat looks like an African barge I saw in rural Zambia. It carries two cars or pickups, motorbikes and passengers. No time schedule for the ferry. Just tell the locals. “FERRYYY” and wait. The crossing takes about 20 min.

Late afternoon ride on leafy one lane forest roads. Refueling stop. Full tank, please (Temm Tann, Kap) Gasohol 91 at yet another PTT filling station with clean restrooms and the AMAZON Coffee shop and 7-Eleven on the side. “Amazon is spreading like wildfire,” says one of the riders, Khun Eek, dressed in black riding the =RE= Bullet 500 cc with panniers.

Our caravan arrives in Nan. Late afternoon. Beautiful soft light. Straight to Wat Phumin Nan's most famous wat (temple) is renowned for its cruciform ubosot which was constructed in 1596 and restored during the reign of Chao Ananta Vora Ritthi Det (1867-1875).

We check in at the Impress Nan. Upscale resort & convention hotel 128 rooms. Late 90s design with a large circular shaped swimming pool. Deep enough for five of us to do high daring somersaults over and over, again. Al fresco poolside dinner. Dessert, fruit platter and... No worries. There's a 7-Eleven next to the parking lot. Thank you very much!

Day 4. Nan - Pua 140 km. The famous Nan bends and twisties. Tons of picture postcard panorama views.

Next, we arrive at the tiny village of Bo Kluea located in a quiet valley close to the Lao border - remote and picturesque. “Bo Kluea” means salt well, also as the name of the village which is located around two natural salt-water wells used for centuries. Next to the salt pits, right along the small river the ubiquitous coffee and souvenir shops. Here I buy a small bag of salt (NaCl) for my wife.

From Bo Kluea we hit road # 1256 to Pua. This is a 50 km stretch full of tight turns. Up the hilltops and down the valleys. On and on it goes. The blacktop, the tarmac offers us a smooth texture and clear road markings.

More turns now we're on Highway Road # 1081. One of the most epic and photographed roads in Northern Thailand. Especially the number “three” slope because it's curved like the number “3” and visible on the mountain side.

This is Nan province, Thailand encompassing numerous national parks, waterfalls, limestone mountains





and Cumulus clouds in the blue sky. Endless ascents and descents and of course, a smorgasbord of tropical scents and smells. Sniff, sniff the pine trees up on the hills and the organic stench of manure in the valleys and fried pork in the villages.

From Bo Klua to Pua. Onwards. The line of Royal Enfield twenty motorbike caravan reaches Pua Town and Green Hill Resort. Two and half stars. WiFi, A/C and a balcony. Park the bike unpack. Hot shower and off to dinner in two vans. Krua Linda (Linda's kitchen) Thai omelette, one of the best I've tasted. Looking like a cake, very fluffy, so delectable. Back to the hotel Hit the sack. What else do a bunch of tired bikers need? Head on the hotel pillow and I realize that forgot my own private home-pillow? By the way if you ever go to Pua, try the Krua Linda restaurant. And bring your own pillow!

Day 5. Pua to Chiang Khong 238 km. On the road, again. National road # 1148 yet road another super scenic route with tons of curves left and right. A must-ride-and-see experience for motorcycle aficionados and experienced novices. Here we use low gears, again. Downshifting, engine braking in the steep hairpin turns. And shifting up as the next mountain approaches.

Lunch on the hillside Phu Lang Cottage resort. Timber and stone architecture with water buffalo skulls and horns on the walls. Northern Thai spicy cuisine and sticky rice. Khun recommends "Lek" Red Bull. I chose to rehydrate without chemicals. One liter (1,000 ml) of pure Singha Water.

Next 1715 view point on highway # 1148. Claimed to be the best motorcycle route in Thailand. The highest point 1,750 meters above the sea level. Big photo opportunity. Facebook and Instagram. Pixels flying into cyberspace. This is part of the amazing Phu Khao Sky Road. Like a snake on top the of the mountains with verdant, lush vegetation on both sides.

Onwards down from mountains. Keep riding! Last leg to the Mekong river. Boring ride in drizzle rain all the way to Chiang Khong. Road work, gravel and detours. Potholes and more detours. Our two female passengers Khun Amittada and Khun Narumon must be tired riding pillion (billion?!). Passenger, pillion as the Brits and Indians say.

Our hotel Fortune Riverview Hotel, four-star luxury. Swimming pool & spa. All rooms with balcony and Me-

kong view across to the seemingly quiet Lao People's Democratic Republic.

A sumptuous hotel buffet dinner. After dinner four of the younger riders decide to check out the Chiang Khong night night life. Discotheque? I chose the bed, headphone and YouTube documentaries about Laos, the landlocked socialist country that I can see from my balcony.

Day 6. Chiang Khong - Chiang Rai. 210 km. Riverside route. Check the bikes and check-out from the hotel. Golden Triangle next. What's in a name? Some say CIA coined the term "Golden Triangle" many decades ago when opium business was booming. Others say "Golden" because only gold was used in the transactions, no banknotes! These days the trade is methamphetamine (yaba) with clandestine jungle meth labs in Myanmar hinterlands.

This riverside geographic triangle encompasses three countries: Thailand, Laos and Myanmar formerly known as Burma. We pass the Opium museum on the way to our riverside luncheon. Photos taken, food eaten and views seen. Start your engines.

Couple of hours ride. Time for a tea break! Choui Fong Tea Plantation & Tea Cafe. Garden in Maechan, Chiang Rai. Rolling green hills with Assam, Green, Oolong and Black tea farms surrounding us as we arrive. Altitude 500 to 1,200 meters above sea level. In the Tea Cafe no tea for Johnny! But strong black, hot tea. Yes. No milk!

Final attraction on the Royal Enfield Grand Thailand Tour. Wat Rong Khun "The White Temple of Chiang Rai". A kooky, mesmerizing almost surrealistic private Buddhist temple with murals depicting Mickey Mouse, Kung Fu Panda. Including a peace sign and fire arms. A most unforgettable temple! Entrance fee 100 THB.

Back on our steeds. Chiang Rai Town. Intersections, traffic lights and u-turns. We park our bikes at Phufa Waree Resort Chiang Rai. Here all our motorcycles are loaded on to two ten-wheel trucks bound for BKK, as we get ready for our farewell party.

At the event Royal Enfield Thailand presents us with with certificates to celebrate our Grand Thailand Tour completion. Certificates received, mouthwatering Eastern and Western dishes arrive. Speeches were delivered and we carried on partying into the night with free-flow of draft beer.

Next morning. DEP to Chiang Rai airport. Suvarnabhumi Bangkok by Vietjet. Afternoon we pick up our motorcycles at the BKK international Airport parking.

We all bid farewell. Sawadee Kap, Good-bye, See you, again. Safe ride!

Author's note: John K. Lindgren participated in the Royal Enfield Grand Tour of Thailand 2022 as paying guest.

Cost 15,000 THB Inclusive: accommodation, meals and flight Chiang Rai-Bangkok. Exclusive: Fuel and personal expenses



Philippines takes inspiration from Finland in educating youth beyond textbooks

In an opinion piece in *The Inquirer*, author Inez Ponce De Leon points out how the Philippines can literally take another page from Finland's proverbial book when it comes to educating Philippine youth.

Here is Inez Ponce De Leon's article:

Our school standards have once again been questioned these last few months. There was "Pinoy Big Brother" and "Ma-JoHa"; a module that targeted opposition personalities; the twisted history and misunderstandings of science online. Then, there are the troll farms that even our brightest graduates lead,

perhaps prompting Twitter user @HotOfftheBoat to propose the idea of "truth farms" to counter the tide of disinformation.

To critique our schools, however, we have to go beyond asking, "What facts are students being given?" and examine the problem of education as a system born of assumptions about the nature of learning.

Take, for instance, the module that ridiculed Vice President Leni Robredo. It supposedly teaches the "Philosophy of the Human Person," but it was assessed using multiple-choice questions—all for a topic that demands deep thinking, discernment, and discussion. Research shows that for many school subjects, including history and science, multiple-choice exams actually hinder critical thinking: The format provides the illusion that only one answer is true for all time, which then prevents students from engaging the material, asking more questions, and clarifying what certain facts mean in a specific context.

This brings us to the assumption that all we need to do is convey the facts. Facts are important, yes; but if

our education is simply tasked to feed students information, then we reduce learning to the absorption of trivia. Instead, we might need strategies to help students see that knowledge is a framework to understand the world, with all fields overlapping and equal.

Our schools have to engender, among others, a love of learning that will last a lifetime, rather than teach to tests that will eventually be forgotten. Students have to appreciate, and early on, that they must meaningfully comment on and engage with current affairs, but only after they have explored and understood legitimate sources that cover the many facets of an issue. They have to value interdisciplinary approaches, be open to new learning, and cross-check so-called facts. They need to recognize that a truly well-educated, well-mannered citizen understands that headlines, quote cards, videos, and memes barely scratch the surface of knowledge.

To illustrate how students can be prepared for this brand of thinking, let us examine the case of Finland, which has captured the headlines recently because of its school-based response to fake news.

In Finland, young students are required to interact with each other through 15 minutes of play for every 45 minutes of classroom work. When done alongside the

stressful task of studying, interaction makes children associate the idea of school with exploration rather than obligation.

Apart from a senior-year exam, there are no standardized tests; instead, students collaborate on projects. Notice the difference: The competition is about who has the best project that can address a problem in the most efficient way, not who has the highest test scores in an examination that does not reflect real-world applications of knowledge.

There are also no rigid lines drawn between school subjects. Learning occurs around topics: Students look at how different fields of knowledge can be used to understand, critique, and solve issues related to these topics. The idea of misinformation, therefore, is taught as part of art, history, and the social sciences. As a result, students learn how to integrate learning into real life. They are excited to learn more on their own. They are not taught what to know; they are taught how to learn.

Their mindset is not “let’s get this over with.” Rather, it’s “we must spend the rest of our lives learning more.”

Singaporean Minister tested positive for Covid-19 in Denmark



Grace Fu, the Singaporean Minister for Sustainability and the Environment, tested positive for Covid-19 while in Denmark in mid-May, news report said.

According to her own post, Ms Fu said she had mild flu-like symptoms such as a fever and a runny nose but that she was “quite well” otherwise.

To cope with her Covid-19 symptoms, the minister said she was practicing yoga and that it was helpful for her breathing and lung capacity.

Ms Fu managed to attend the Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change via Zoom, although her voice was a bit strained.



Danish man recalls being sexually abused for a week in Phuket

Screenshot from the documentary where Danish Mathias Søby Kristensen tells about his sexual abuse in Phuket five years ago.

Mathias Søby Kristensen recalls in a Danish TV documentary how he was drugged and sexually abused by a Thai man during a weeklong nightmare vacation on Phuket. The 27-year-old is one of four participants in the documentary, which has been aired in Denmark over the past couple of weeks. All four men open up and talk about different incidents that have left them impotent and uninterested in having sexual relationships ever again.

Mathias Søby Kristensen told in an interview with the Danish media BT, how he was drugged during a night out in the nightlife in Phuket. He woke up again, when a Thai man picked him up from the

pavement and took him with him to a location, where he was sexually abused for days. Every time he was coming out of his intoxication, he was given more pills which he eventually started taking out of his own free will in order to deal with being forced to have sex with the Thai man.

Today, he struggles to sleep at night. It still happens that he gets nightmares or flashbacks to what happened to him almost five years ago.

"I'm badly affected by nightmares. The last few weeks it has been quite often. I can not sleep without taking a lot of sleeping pills. If I do not take it, I sleep an hour and a half because I drive myself com-

pletely up. I'm afraid of waking up somewhere else or out in that bath tub again."

Fortunately, Mathias no longer has suicidal thoughts and he wants to live most of the time.

Source: <https://www.bt.dk/samfund/mathias-blev-seksuelt-udnyttet-i-fem-dage-paa-ferie-jeg-frygter-jeg-doeralene>

Play: <https://play.tv2.dk/programmer/dokumentar/serier/giv-mig-manddommen-tilbage/badet-i-traumer-268193>



IKEA names shopping center in Penang 'Klippa'

'Klippa' is a new retail hub that has opened in Batu Kawan, Penang. It belongs to Ikano Retail which owns IKEA stores in five countries as well as shopping malls anchored by IKEA.

Klippa in Swedish means "Rock" and is the perfect word-play to describe the center in Batu Kawan, according to Adrian Mirea, Ikano Centres' shopping centre and mixed-use director.

"With Klippa, we aim to be the rock in this growing community and to transform Batu Kawan into a successful commercial and leisure hub in Penang," he said after the unveiling yesterday.

Klippa will offer a unique retail experience with over 300 brands in the shopping center spanning across 1.6 million sq. ft. of Gross Leasable Area. The center already has agree-

ments with TMG Plus Supermarket, Mr DIY, Mr TOY, Zus Coffee, Kenny Rogers and Chicago Chicken City among others, while its food and beverage section will feature KFC, TeaLive drive-thru, A&W drive-thru, Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf as well as a petrol station with an integrated drive-thru Starbucks.

Klippa will offer a unique retail experience with an integrated shopping mall covering 1.6 million sq ft of gross leasable area (GLA) and housing over 300 brands, conveniently placed with direct access to the Second Penang Bridge and seamless link to IKEA.



Norwegian skiing coach extends China contract



Photo: Heiko Junge / NTB

Norwegian Bernhard Rønning, who has been coaching the Chinese cross-country skiing team, has extended

his contract with another four years. Initially he had planned to step down after the Winter Olympics in Beijing. His co-coaches Ole-Marius Bach,

Terje Langli and Lars Christian Aabol have likewise to extend their contract.

The reason for the change of heart is that the team will be based in Scandinavia throughout the coming year. This means less travel and more control over the program.

"When we are in Europe, we control the training ourselves a little more," says Rønning to NRK.

When in China, the Chinese authorities want to control most of what happens. It can even be details like how the athletes should train, where we should train and how we should best achieve the goals, Rønning says. Chinese cross-country skiing made a small breakthrough when Wang Qiang finished second in the World Cup sprint in Drammen in March this year.

Volvo signs charging points deal for EVs in China

Volvo Cars recently signed agreements with China's three leading charging point operators Star Charge, State Grid and TELD. According to Volvo, they cover more than 75 per cent of all public charging points in China.

Customers can now find a station and start charging by scanning a QR code and paying directly in the Volvo Cars app. Payment is powered by leading payment services, including WeChat Pay and Alipay and V Point.

As it moves toward becoming a fully electric car maker by 2030, Volvo Cars is turning its app into a "one-stop-shop" for drivers of Volvo Recharge vehicles.



Chinese electric carmaker Nio starts battery swap in Norway

Nio, the Chinese carmaker has been hailed in the press as coming up with the latest technology to swap batteries in electric vehicles and is now doing the same in Norway.

Instead of pulling into a charging station and waiting for ages for your electric vehicle (EV) to charge up, a fully charged and ready battery can be plugged straight into your car.

The 'Power Swap Station' is already common in China and now as the first in Europe, Nio drivers can book a slot on the company's app where after the old battery will be removed by a team and replaced with a new one at the station.

This process only takes around



5-10 minutes to do and is about 30 minutes faster than the average time it takes to change a battery.

The Norwegian site can alleg-

edly deal with 240 battery swaps each day and Nio aims to deploy 20 in Norway, a news report said.

Pandora to build \$100 million jewelry crafting facility in Vietnam

Danish jewelry group Pandora plans to build a \$100 million jewelry crafting facility in Vietnam, a news report said last week.

This will be the company's third manufacturing site and the first outside of Thailand, the report said. The new facility hopes to create jobs for more than 6000 craftspeople and

also aims to create 60 million pieces of jewelry.

The factory will be located in the Vietnam Singapore Industrial Park 3 in Binh Duong Province, near Ho Chi Minh City. Construction is set to begin in early 2023 and production is due to start by the end of 2024.

Furthermore, The new facility will be built according to the LEED Gold standard, a green building certification, and be powered by 100 percent renewable energy.

The Danish private equity group Axcel bought a 60% stake in the company from the Enevoldsen family in 2008.



Hong Kong digital entertainment and game development companies visited Scandinavia

Digital entertainment and game development companies from Hong Kong visited in May renowned Finnish, Swedish and Danish game companies to explore collaboration opportunities between Nordic and Hong Kong companies.

“Scaling Hong Kong to the Nordics”, was the name of the project co-organised by Cyberport and the Finnish Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong (FinnCham Hong Kong) and sponsored by Create Hong Kong (CreateHK) of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Hong Kong SAR).

The delegation visited Helsinki, Finland; Malmö, Sweden and Copenhagen, Denmark between 15 and 20 May 2022. They visited well-known, large-scale Finnish game developers Supercell and Rovio, and joined the tours of Arcade 5, a Finnish co-working campus designed for digital entertainment and game development start-ups, as well as Game Habitat DevHub, Sweden’s co-working community for game developers, exchanging views with representatives of the game studios in the community.

The delegates also participated in a series of seminars and matching activities and in Sweden’s Nordic

Game, an annual major event for the global game industry, in order to help the Hong Kong game industry tap into the Nordic markets.

The delegates showcased their games and digital entertainment solutions at the Nordic Game conference in order to meet potential business partners and investors in the region.



Swedes urged to invest more in Cambodia



In Cambodia, the Commerce Ministry has encouraged Swedish businessmen and investors to expand investment opportunities in Cambodia, and also expressed the readiness of the country to cooperate with Sweden for mutual economic purposes, said a report in the Khmer Times.

In a working discussion last Tuesday 24 May 2022, Ok Bung, Acting Minister of Commerce, encouraged the Swedish Ambassador to Cambodia, Jon Astrom Grondahl, to help increase imports to Sweden of agricultural and manufactured goods from Cambodia. Moreover, Cambodia urged the Swedish companies to invest more in the electric car sector and explore the possibility of establishing a Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Cambodia.

The acting minister welcomed and congratulated the newly-appointed ambassador on his diplo-

matic mission to Cambodia and praised the good relations between the two countries during the previous term of the ambassador in the field of economy and trade.

He added that the government had made efforts to diversify trade by establishing free trade agreements under the multilateral, regional and bilateral frameworks, in line with legal and regulatory reforms to improve the business and investment environment in Cambodia.

Cambodia closely co-operated in the implementation of the International Labor Organisation's Better Factories Cambodia programmes, which helps to improve the work environment, eliminate child labour, improve compliance with international norms and standards, and provide welfare and confidence in employees and employers.

According to the report in Khmer Times, Grondahl said that

the Swedish Government would further strengthen the economic and trade co-operation between the two countries and expressed his firm commitment to encouraging Swedish businessmen and investors to examine the potential of trade, investment and tourism in Cambodia.

In the field of trade, both countries can help economic recovery and increase the volume of bilateral trade between Cambodia and Sweden to reach its full potential.

Indonesia connected to the EU's Digital COVID Certificate system



Vaccinated citizens from Indonesia can now travel to European Union Member Countries, the media has reported, without additional entry restrictions. The EU now recognizes vaccination certificates issued by Indonesian authorities as equivalent to those issued by the member states.

Denmark, Finland and Sweden are three EU Member Countries that Indonesian travelers can visit once again. When entering the EU or travelling between the EU Mem-

ber States, holders of the Indonesian vaccine certificate can use it under the same conditions as people holding the EU Digital COVID Certificate (EUDCC).

People holding the EU Digital COVID Certificate can also enter Indonesia restriction-free.

Philippines' implement labor market partnership the Danish way

The Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) concluded its implementation of a project on "Strengthening Bipartite Relations at the National and Enterprise Levels" in partnership with its counterpart organization in Denmark, the Confederation of Danish Industry (DI).

The project, which started in 2018, sought to institutionalize a functioning bipartite mechanism for joint policy positions at the national level and further enhance labor-management relations among unionized companies. A Leaders Forum (LF), consisting of the heads of the country's largest labor federations and business organizations, was established for this purpose.

In addition to ECOP, the other business organizations in the LF are the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) and the



Philippine Exporters Confederation (PHILEXPORT).

According to a news report, a spokesman said that providing a voice for workers has helped in giving them confidence and reassurance that they can return to work

safely and their welfare is prioritized by their employers. In turn, businesses are rewarded with a productive workforce despite the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.



Wind farm key structure sailing to Norway from Thailand

The offshore substation topside for the huge Dogger Bank Wind Farm between Norway and England left Aibel's yard in Thailand in May and is now on its way to Haugesund in Norway, where it will undergo further work.

An offshore substation is a key element for exporting energy production from the wind farm. The topsides will include the main electrical equipment for connecting the wind farm to the onshore grid.

Dogger Bank Wind Farm is an offshore wind farm being developed in three phases – Dogger Bank A, B and C – located between 130km

and 190km from the North East coast of England at their nearest points. Collectively they will become the world's largest offshore wind farm.

The topside is expected to arrive at the yard in Haugesund in the latter half of June, according to Aibel.

In Norway, the topside will be placed on an upgraded rig quay, where it will be equipped with transformers, slings, and lifting equipment through several large lifting operations with big and small floating cranes.

The majority of Aibel's work on the Dogger Bank A topside will



be completed by mechanical completion in November, the company said, with commissioning work then remaining to be completed until the expected sailaway in early spring 2023.



In the front row to the left is Petronas Chemicals Group's CEO Mohd Yusri Mohamed Yusof, shaking hands with PAI Partner Frabrice Fouletier. Jan Secher of Perstorp Group is standing in the center.

Perstorp to be sold to Petronas Chemicals for €2.3bn

Private equity firm, PAI Partners, announced on 17 May that it had reached an agreement to sell Perstorp Holding to Petronas Chemicals Group Berhad (PCG) for €2.3bn (US\$2.42bn) on a cash and debt free basis.

The acquisition values Perstorp Group at an enterprise value of EUR 2,300.0 million. All shares in Perstorp will be bought from European private equity firm Financière Forêt S.à.r.l for 1.54 billion euros in cash and take on Perstorp's existing debt of 762 million euros.

"We are excited to become part of the PETRONAS family," Jan Secher, President and CEO of Perstorp said.

"I see a strong commonality in values and priorities for how to take our respective businesses forward, meeting the challenges and opportunities of the future."



Mohd Yusri Mohamed Yusof, managing director and CEO of the Malaysian company, said in a statement that he was equally pleased with the agreement.

"We find Perstorp attractive for their expansive range of products, established customer base as well as their market leadership in selected chemicals, which are complementary to PCG. It is our intention to make Perstorp our growth platform into the Specialty chemicals field," he said.

Established more than 140

years ago, Perstorp is a leading niche specialty chemicals player that develops sustainable solutions with focus on the Resins & Coatings, Engineered Fluids and Animal Nutrition markets. The company has a global sales presence, seven state-of-the-art manufacturing sites in Europe, US and China (the 8th plant will be ready in India in 2023) and three research and development (R&D) centres worldwide with approximately 1,500 employees serving more than 2,600 customers globally. Perstorp is highly regarded among its customers for its product quality and application expertise, supply reliability, customer centricity and Pro-Environment products and solutions.

The completion of the acquisition is subject to relevant regulatory and shareholders' approvals and expected to be finalized in second half of 2022.

Swedish towns cancel twin-city agreements with China

Swedish municipalities and regions terminate twinning agreements and other collaborations with Chinese counterparts at a rapid pace. In five years, almost half of all collaborations have been terminated or paused.

"It is unique in the world. No other country has terminated so many agreements in such a short time," says Frida Lindberg, analyst at the National Knowledge Center on China to Swedish media Dagens Nyheter.

Swedish municipalities and regions have undergone a total change in their view of China. From rapidly deepening relations with parties in China during the 1990s until 2016, they are now turning their backs on the country. Town twinning agree-



ments and other cooperation agreements are terminated or paused at a rapid pace, shows a new report from the National Knowledge Center on China.

In 2016, Swedish municipalities

and regions had 49 twinning partnerships with Chinese counterparts. Since then, 21 of these collaborations have been terminated and another five paused.

Tiananmen memorial statue in Oslo



*This is the location, in the University Garden in Oslo, at the Faculty of Law, where the "pillar of shame" will be displayed for around one month.
Photo: Hakon Marius Brustad / NRK*

The "Pillar of Shame"-sculpture by the Danish artist Jens Galschiøt, was on May 25 erected outside the Faculty of Law in Oslo, where it will stand for a around one month. The display of the memorial in Oslo is a collaboration between Amnesty International Norway, the Hong Kong Committee in Norway and the Danish artist Jens Galschiøt.

The "Pillar of Shame" statue was erected outside the University of Hong Kong in 1997. The eight-meter-high monument was a memorial to the Tiananmen Square massacre on June 4, 1989. In December last year, the statue was removed by the university at the request of the Chinese authorities.

When a version of the statue was erected in Copenhagen, the Chinese embassy demanded that it be removed. The embassy said the statue would offend Chinese tourists in the city and create a bad relationship between Denmark and China.

Secretary General John Peder Egenæs of Amnesty Norway believes that China will also dislike the display in Oslo, but adds: "In our society we have freedom of expression so they will have to live with it."

Sarawak wants a wealth fund like Norfund

Sarawak, the largest state in Malaysia, will engage seriously with Norway in an earnest effort towards the successful formation and management of its own sovereign wealth fund, Sarawak Premier Tan Sri Abang Johari Tun Openg said in a news report.

Given the widely acclaimed success of Norway's sovereign wealth fund that had been managed with the highest standard of governance since its inception in 1996, it was a standard Sarawak needed to benchmark on, he pointed out.

"Given the many parallels between Sarawak and Norway, Sarawak is particularly interested in the lessons to be learnt from Norway, given that it has around 25 years of experience in developing the fund," he said in a statement issued from Oslo during his visit to Europe in early May.

Norway's sovereign wealth fund has been managed with the highest standard of governance since its inception in 1996 and the premier pointed out that it is a standard Sarawak needed to benchmark itself on.

Abang Johari was on a two-day visit to Norway as part of his week-long itinerary to Europe that saw him being given the honour to deliver a keynote address at the World Hydrogen 2022 Summit and Exhibition in Rotterdam, Holland earlier in May.

Norfund is a development finance institution established by the Norwegian Storting in 1997 and owned by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The fund receives its investment capital from the state budget and from profits from its world wide investments.

Norfund helps to build sus-

tainable businesses that would not otherwise be developed because of the high risks involved. It prioritises investments in four investment areas that are aligned with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, but stresses that "Profitability is a Pre-condition."

"Companies only survive if they are profitable," it says on its website.

"This means that profitability is essential for the creation of sustainable jobs and lasting development effects. Norfund enhance profitability and development effects through active ownership and business development support."

By the end of 2019, Norfund's Internal Rate of Return (IRR) has over the years since it was established been 6% per year.



Sarawak Premier Tan Sri Abang Johari Tun Openg is serious in his wish to establish a parallel to Norfund in Sarawak.



Sustainable Ocean Economy and Climate Change Adaption

The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs co-organised together with Vietnam's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment an International Conference on 'Sustainable Ocean Economy and Climate Change Adaption' on 12 and 13 May 2022 in Hanoi, Vietnam.

The conference was also supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Vietnam.

Norwegian Foreign Minister Anniken Huitfeldt and Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister Le Van Thanh opened the Conference which was chaired by the State Secretary of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Bjørng Sandkjær and Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of Vietnam Le Minh Ngan.

Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Anniken Huitfeldt said that the conference addressed "some of the most important issues of our time".

"Norway and Vietnam's objective is to push the climate and ocean agenda forward. We live in a time of global turbulence. Global cooperation is more important than ever. We need consequential and immediate action. And it is our responsibility to keep building the momentum."

In his address, the Deputy Prime Minister Le Van Thanh said all countries needed to make stronger commitments and to take more drastic and effective measures to demonstrate their responsibility for the sustainable development of the ocean economy.

Marine pollution and ocean



plastic waste are urgent global issues, he said. Countries should establish a global system to monitor, share data, and provide a scientific basis for eliminating ocean plastic waste.

Swedish cosmetics Foreo back in Changi Airport



Foreo, the Swedish beauty and tech brand, reopened multiple counters at Singapore's Changi Airport and have multiple promotions lined up to continue through June, highlighting several key products.

Global Travel Retail Director, Gary Leong, said "We are thrilled to welcome back tourists to Southeast Asia, and we can't wait to get back into the groove of things.

"Promotions are ongoing to make sure that tourists are able to get the best of Foreo on their travels, and we're grateful to our long-term and new partners for supporting our endeavors to get back on our feet in the region."

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suchaya.scandmedia@gmail.com

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Special edition Carlsberg cans evokes a sense of pride in Malaysia's Sabah community

Sabahans in Malaysia feel a renewed sense of pride as they are brought together by Danish beer brand Carlsberg with the introduction of special edition beer cans to mark the widely-anticipated Kaamatan festival.

These beer cans celebrate the pride of the state's heritage, traditions and its natural wonders through its "Raikan Kebanggaan Sabah & Sarawak" campaign.

Carlsberg threw a culture-rich social fair at Riverson, The Walk from 12 to 15 May, decked with interactive game stations and an iconic atap bar that served Carlsberg cocktails fused with Tapai (local rice wine) as well as native dance performances.

The Carlsberg Smooth Draught special-edition cans for Gawai and

Kaamatan, featuring icons such as Sabah's Orangutan, Mount Kinabalu, and Rafflesia flower, were widely spotted being displayed and held by people enjoying the celebration.

"I want Sabahans to feel proud of the State's natural beauty, their arts and fantastic surroundings, and also feel happy that there is a brand that celebrates this. We want to be part of this journey of Sabah pride and belonging," Carlsberg Malaysia Managing Director Stefano Clini told a local newspaper during the event.





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