

FEB 2023

ScandAsia



Ambassador
Franz-Michael Mellbin:

**“The Philippines is
key to Denmark’s
relationships in the
Asia-Pacific!”**

BUSINESS:

Alefarm and Acne Studios
open in Singapore

INTERNATIONAL:

Sweden and Thailand sign MOU
on military equipment

COMMUNITY:

Danish prisoner in Indonesia
passed away



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Ramp Up The Health

- Work less. Let your family or friends help you.
- If you notice a change or feel unwell, it is important to visit your doctor.
- Avoid strenuous exercise or extreme sports.
- Eat healthy. Regularly exercise. Get enough sleep.

Be Happy And Keep Networking

- Get enough sleep. Relieve stress.
- Accept changes. Nothing is certain.
- Engaging with friends and family.
- Having an active role in the community. Find fun things to do with your family and friends.
- Having friends of all ages. It is good to exchange ideas.
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- Join senior community.
- Write a will.

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Longevity
Check Up Program

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Could #IStandWithUkraine be a manipulation?

A research team at the Australian University of Adelaide analyzed shortly after the Russian invasion of Ukraine more than 5 million tweets and found that 90.2 percent came from accounts that were pro-Ukraine, with fewer than 7 percent of the accounts being pro-Russian.

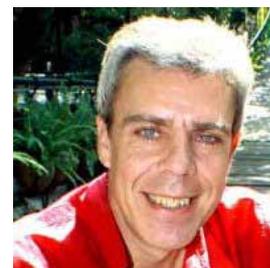
The tweets were part of a covert propaganda campaign originating from automated fake “bot” accounts that on the first day of the invasion fired as many as 38,000 tweets each hour with the #IStandWithUkraine hashtag rising to 50,000 tweets an hour by day three of the war.

The results were published in August 2022 in a research paper, titled “#IStandWithPutin versus #IStandWithUkraine: The interaction of bots and humans in discussion of the Russia/Ukraine war,” by the University of Adelaide’s School of Mathematical Science. The report was largely ignored by Western establishment media whose media professionals were probably uncomfortable with the finding that the vast majority of the bot tweets were pushing the #IStandWithUkraine hashtag.

With the rise of the internet and the social media giants, propaganda as a weapon in war and armed conflict will never be the same. We are already well into a new digital era where military, political and economic conflicts are being waged and manipulated by AI generals and armies of bots and fake accounts.

The nature of social media is to enhance each of us in our attitudes. This has created a new environment where public opinion can be manipulated at a very large scale. We are all carrying in our pockets a powerful weapon that is firing relentlessly at our brains and emotions from AI driven manipulator engines created to deceive. Even the most critical human beings will not be able to defend themselves against cyber-attacks and digital information and disinformation campaigns on such a massive scale.

It is a scary thought that also this editorial could just be an example of how I have been manipulated into creating “angst” among the public for the ability of these AI generals to wage their digital warfare campaigns against us.



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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Vietnamese people in Sweden and Latvia celebrate Lunar New Year

Nearly 120 Vietnamese people in Sweden and Latvia and a number of Swedish friends joined the Vietnamese Lunar New Year Celebration held by the Embassy of Vietnam in Stockholm on January 28th, 2023, reported Quoc Te Newspaper.

Speaking at the event, Vietnamese Ambassador to Sweden Phan Dang Duong sent to all Vietnamese people in Sweden, Latvia and international guests happy new year wishes. Ambassador Duong highlighted the outstanding achievements that Vietnam registered in 2022, especially becoming one of the few countries in the world to achieve very high economic growth with GDP reaching 8.02%, the highest in the past 11 years.

That achievement has the important contribution of 5.3 million overseas Vietnamese living abroad, including more than 20,000 Vietnamese people in Sweden and Latvia, he noted.

Mr. Duong also praised the important role of the Union of Vietnamese Associations in Sweden. Although it was only established in early 2022, the Union has implemented many activities to promote trade, cultural, educational exchange between Vietnam and Sweden, contributing to strengthening the friendship and cooperation between the two countries.

On this occasion, the Vietnamese community in Sweden also held a ceremony to launch the Association of Vietnamese Women in Swe-

den. Ambassador Duong expressed his belief that the Association will help preserve and promote the traditional cultural identity of the Vietnamese nation in Sweden.

Indonesian Muslims protest Quran burning

Hundreds of Indonesian Muslims marched to the Swedish Embassy in Jakarta to condemn the recent burnings of the Quran by the far-right activists Rasmus Paludan.

More than 300 protesters packed a major road in downtown Jakarta, waving white flags with the Islamic declaration of faith, while setting portraits of the Danish-Swedish activist on fire along with the flags of Sweden and Denmark.

Around 200 police officers and soldiers were deployed in and around the embassy, that was barricaded with razor wire, while authorities tried to block the streets leading to the building.

Protest organizer Marwan Batubara told the crowd that Paludan is being extremely hostile towards Islam and called on Sweden and



Denmark to punish those who violates the Quran and apologize to the Muslim community.

The Indonesian government has previously condemned the burning of the Quran and said they are taking action to prevent problems, due to the recent events in the Scandinavian countries.

The Swedish Embassy in Jakarta said in a statement that “the Islamophobic act committed by a far-right extremist in Sweden is strongly rejected by the Swedish government.”

“This act does not in any way reflect the opinions of the Swedish government,” the statement added.

Burning of the Quran is condemned



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim announced by the end of January 2023 that Malaysia would immediately distribute one million copies of the Quran around the world. This comes as a response to the burning of the holy book by the far-right activist Rasmus Paludan in front of the Turkish embassy in Stockholm, Sweden, on January 21.

This happens only a few days

after Rasmus Paludan, who holds both Danish and Swedish citizenship, chose to burn another copy of the Quran outside a mosque and the Turkish embassy in the Danish capital Copenhagen to further enrage Muslims worldwide. A protest the extremist has declared to continue every Friday until Sweden is admitted into NATO.

Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar condemned the actions of the Danish-Swedish politician, as well as showed his support to Turkish President Erdogan for his aggressive remarks about the burning. He has later added, that he considers the move to distribute copies of the Quran globally to be the most beneficial way to respond to the careless and brazen act against the holy book.

Scandinavian NATO membership in jeopardy

Sweden and Finland have abandoned their long-standing policies of nonmilitary-alignment and applied for NATO membership after Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine back in February last year.

Paludan’s actions have caused fury in Muslim countries around the world including Turkey, which has criticized the Swedish authorities for allowing the demonstration in Stockholm to take place outside their embassy. Turkey’s foreign minister Mevlut Cavusoglu has accused Sweden of being complicit in a hate and racist crime. He has later confirmed, that the meeting to discuss the Scandinavian countries NATO membership has been postponed indefinitely.

Thailand and Sweden agree to sign MoU on military equipment

The representative of the Royal Thai Air Force (RTAF), Deputy Defence Minister Gen

Chaicharn Changmongkol, met with the Swedish Ambassador, HE Jon Astrom Grondahl, and CEO of Saab

AB, Micael Johansson, to discuss a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for military equipment.

According to the Bangkok Post, Deputy spokesman for the Defence Ministry, Col Jittanat Punnothok, said that Thailand and Sweden agreed to conduct joint Cobra Gold military exercises and sign an MoU on military equipment maintenance to enhance the Thai army's capability.

Following the recent agreement, there were speculations that RTAF could potentially renew the Erieye radar system soon and purchase Gripen combat aircraft from Saab AB if the United States refuses to sell F-35 fighter jets to Thailand.



Warning of high cost to Thai berry-pickers going to Finland

The Embassy of Thailand in Helsinki, Finland, recently posted a warning to Thai berry-pickers of the high cost in traveling to Finland to work, saying that "calculate carefully or you may return home with debt."

According to the embassy's Facebook post, a Thai language infographic says, "Public Announcement: People intending to collect wild berries in Finland should be aware of the costs and debt involved prior to travel as well as the risks of seasonal price fluctuations."

With concerns on airfare, seasonal work visas, travel insurance, working hours, and other daily living costs, the total cost was estimated to be over 150,000 baht.

Therefore, a well-solid plan is necessary before making decisions



whether berry-picking in Finland is the true calling.

Consulting about issues related to berry-picking in Finland, please

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Swedish brand Acne Studios opens first store in Singapore

The Sweden-based luxury brand, Acne Studios, recently opened its first store in Singapore. With the opening, the brand also made their debut in the South-east Asia region.

Acne Studios collaborated with the Swedish design studio, Halleröd, to conceptualize the store. It was built almost entirely in glass, which reflected the contemporary style of the brand.

The store is located at the South wing at Marina Bay Sands and currently presenting a preview of its SS23 collection through its display.

The full SS23 collection will be available in the store from March 2023.

Acne Studios has opened over sixty stores, globally. It was founded in 1996 in Stockholm, Sweden.



Norway funds program “Safe & Sound” in Vietnam to enhance quality of education



Photo by the Norwegian Embassy in Hanoi.

The “Safe & Sound” program was organized at the campus of the Vietnam National University (VNU) in Hoa Lac, Vietnam to enhance the quality of education in Norway and selected partner countries.

The program was focusing on cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary knowledge on gender based violence, psychological trauma, adverse and adaptive conditions of child-

hood, and the impact on health and well-being.

According to Norwegian Embassy in Hanoi, “Safe & Sound” is a 5-year cooperation program (2019-2024) between VNU University of Education, Innland Norway University of Applied Sciences (INN), and University of Bergen (UiB) within the framework of Norwegian Partnership Program for Global Academic Cooperation (NORPART),

funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Attending the event were Professor Nguyen Quy Thanh, Rector of VNU University of Education, the Norwegian Deputy Head of Mission, Mette Moglestue, Professor Kestin Söderström from INN, Professor Arne Magnus, Director of Center of Crisis Psychology, as well as UiB and several Norwegian lecturers.

Mette Moglestue said:

“Academic cooperation furthers the production of new knowledge through joint research, builds capacity through education, and also provides opportunities for lasting bonds and friendship. The friendships are not only between individuals, but between the institutions you represent and our two countries.”

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/norwayinhanoi/>

Philippines discusses digital cooperation with Denmark



The Philippines's Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) issued a statement on Monday, 23 January 2023, saying that the country would implement digitization by learning from and collaborating with Denmark.

"[We] can learn a lot from Denmark's approaches on cybersecurity, e-governance, digital health, and maritime digital transition," said DICT Undersecretary Anna Mae Lamentillo.

In addition, according to the Manila Bulletin, "Denmark is also a pioneer in digital shipping registries and digital certificates for seafarers on Danish flagged ships."

"These solutions have helped reduce administrative burdens, lower costs, and easier access to data. We hope to learn much from them in these areas," Lamentillo added.

Parts of the Philippines' goals are to make the country more competitive as well as "truly digital."

Spotify announces to cut 6 percent of its employees

The Swedish music-streaming platform, Spotify, announced to reduce 6 percent of its employees.

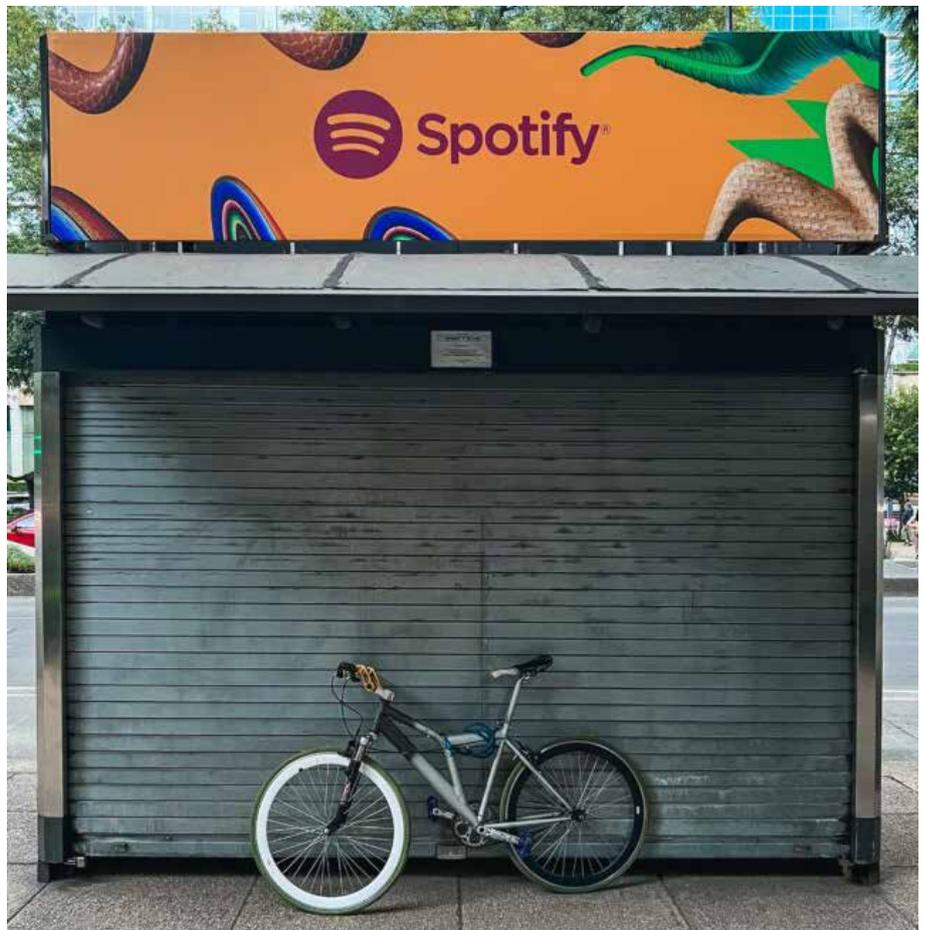
"In hindsight, I was too ambitious in investing ahead of our revenue growth. And for this reason, today, we are reducing our employee base by about six percent across the company," Spotify chief executive Daniel Ek said on Spotify's official blog.

"I take full accountability for the moves that got us here today," he added.

Previously in October 2022, the company had said it would slow down hiring for the rest of the year and into 2023, reported BBC.

It had about 9,800 full-time employees by the end of last year.

Source: <https://newsroom.spotify.com/>





Danish foundation launches biodiversity investment in Southeast Asia

The Copenhagen-based Hempel Foundation launched an impactful investment, initially for biodiversity. It made its first investment in two funds backing up sustainable plantation – including one in Southeast Asia.

“This investment aims to contribute to the preservation and restoration of tropical forest,” Hempel said in a statement Monday.

The announcement did not specify the amount that the initiative will administer, though it stated, that the investments will be made in funds involved in tropical forest and biodiversity protection.

“These investments do not only address the biodiversity crisis, but also helps reducing the impact of the climate crisis, by lowering CO2 emissions, absorbing CO2 from the atmosphere, and helping vulnerable communities to adapt to the climate change,” Hempel further stated.

The Southeast Asian investment will go to New Forests’ Tropical Asia Forest Fund 2 (TAFF2). Its purpose was to capitalize on long-term sustainable forestry in the region.

Launching the TAFF2 fund, New Forest said, it wanted to establish a diversified portfolio of assets in

Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam.

Hempel’s executive director, Anders Holm, specified that the foundation screened more than 40 funds before choosing which one to back.

H&M presents new sports wear collection



The Swedish fashion brand, H&M, launched a new collection of H&M Move to “empower everyone to get moving.” The “Empower Collection”

features a variety of seamless products, from jumpsuits to tights, bras and tees, to give the movers extra support and comfort. To make the launch more spe-

cial, H&M Move brought together Global Brand Movers Jane Fonda, Zlatan Ibrahimović, JaQuel Knight, and the Afghan-Danish refugee turned professional footballer and medical doctor, Nadia Nadim.

“Bringing all four Brand Movers together for this campaign feels very special. We all share the same mission to get the whole world and everybody moving. Showing our Brand Movers having fun in our new Empower Collection we hope will inspire others to join us in starting the new year trying new ways to move,” states Simon Brown, General Manager of H&M Move in a press release.

The Empower Collection is now available in 2,400 stores worldwide and on the brand’s website.

IKEA to launch VARMBLIXT collection highlighting unique possibility of light

The Swedish furniture retailer, IKEA, together with Rotterdam based designer Sabine Marcelis will launch the VARMBLIXT collection that explores the emotional possibilities of light at home in Spring 2023.

The collection will feature different items such as sculptural lighting objects, serve wares, rugs, and more.

“Together, IKEA and Sabine Marcelis have created emotional designs. These products create a positive experience in the home, amplified by light,” Chiara Ripalti, IKEA Product Design Developer said.



According to IKEA’s site, Sabine Marcelis has been experimenting with her point of view on design from making sculptural lamps or exploring how sunlight moves through glass.

“It’s about showcasing what a material or combinations of materials can be, so that it grabs your attention, and you want to take a closer look,” she added.

Thailand ranks first in Sustainable Development Report among other ASEAN countries

The Sustainable Development Report of 2022 by the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (UN-SDSN) showed that Thailand was ranked first among other ASEAN countries in progressing toward achieving all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

According to The Bangkok Post, Thipanan Sirichana, Deputy Government spokeswoman, said the country scored 74.13% in the assessment of its progress.

Followings in the list were Viet-

nam (72.76%), Singapore (71.72%), Malaysia (70.38%), Indonesia (69.16%), Brunei (67.10%), Philippines (66.64%), Myanmar (64.27%), Cambodia (63.75%) and Laos (63.39%).

Thailand performed best in the area of poverty eradication while the quality of education still remained challenging, reported ThaiPBS World.

However, the area of "Partnerships for the goals," said Thipanan, was which needs improvement.

Globally, Thailand ranked 44th



while Finland ranked first, at 86.51%, followed by Denmark (85.63%), Sweden (85.19%), Norway (82.35%) and Austria (82.32%).

Thailand to resume Free Trade Agreement discussion with EU



Photo of the capital city of Thailand, Bangkok, by Martin Péchy.

Director General Auramon Supthaweethum from Thailand's Trade Negotiations Department shared that the discussion of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Thailand and the European Union (EU) will soon be resumed, after it was put on hold since the

2014 coup.

At the time, the EU protested against the seizure of power and considered it to be the suspension of democracy.

While the next general election is on the way, the country will "pursue free trade agreement ne-

gotiations, recently agreed upon by Thailand and the EU," said Ms Auramon, "the Commerce Ministry is scheduled to ask for the cabinet's consent to go ahead with the FTA plan at a meeting on Feb 7, 2023" she added.

In addition, the department also aimed to complete the discussion with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), Canada, Turkey and Sri Lanka within 2024, reported the Bangkok Post.

The EU countries include Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden.

The EFTA comprises Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.



“The Philippines is key to Denmark’s relationships in the Asia-Pacific!”

“Denmark needs to upgrade and intensify its relationships in the Asia Pacific, and I believe we will see Denmark more active in this region,” says new Danish Ambassador to the Philippines, Franz-Michael Skjold Mellbin.

By Joakim Persson

Before leaving for Southeast Asia, the Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen told the new Danish Ambassador to the Philippines, Franz-Michael Skjold Mellbin that “while the eyes of Europe are to our East, the future lies in the Far East.” This is very much in line with the Ambassador’s own beliefs.

“My personal belief is that this is the timely moment where the Philippines can really take off,” the ambassador says.

The shifting strategic situation in this region is also affecting the relationships.

“Denmark has a very strong economic relationship with China. But we also want to diversify by having a factory in China and another in a country in Southeast Asia. We call that a ‘China Plus One’ strategy.”

Ambassador Mellbin says that Denmark has identified six priority sectors which he will focus on during his time in the Philippines. These include 1) agriculture, 2) energy, 3) sustainability, 4) maritime 5) defense, and 6) digitalisation.

“Regarding the maritime sector, this is an area where we have lots of connections, with Denmark as one of the leading shipping nations in the world, employing thousands of Filipino maritime professionals. So we see an opportunity for cooperation on that. I know this is a high priority for the Filipino government, and likewise for the Danish government.”

A relating sector is the security and geostrategic side of the Philippines.

“There is great interest in freedom of the high seas in Denmark and, no doubt, it is absolutely critical also towards our economies. The Philippines sits in a very critical strategic location and naturally attracts a lot of attention from stakeholders right now, so Denmark needs to help the Philippines deal with what’s going on within its territorial waters and help defend its interest in the maritime space.”

Energy is another important sector:

“There’s an energy crisis in the Philippines and its President has made it one of his administration’s priorities. Filipinos suffer from limited access to electricity, unstable power supply, and high electricity prices makes the energy sector an area of interest for Danish investors who want to invest in the Philippines.”

The Danish Embassy in Manila has just launched ‘SusDANEable’ – an energy campaign to showcase Denmark’s energy success story and to highlight opportunities for collaboration with the Philippines in its own green transition.

“

I believe I had my largest diplomatic success in Afghanistan because I was fortunate to be able to facilitate the first peace deal in Afghanistan for over 30 years.

”

Ambassador Mellbin joined the Danish Foreign Service in 1985 and has previously served in China and as Ambassador of Denmark to the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Japan and Afghanistan, as well as being the European Union Special Representative (EUSR) for Afghanistan and Pakistan and Head of the EU Delegation to Afghanistan.

Ambassador Mellbin knows the Philippines in-depth as he was previously Asia Director and an alternate Governor for the Asian Development Bank (ADB). He describes the region as “one of the most interesting areas in the world”.





“

*We enjoy diving a lot
and the Philippines
is the best place in the
world to dive in.*

”

“I’ve really been dealing a lot with this region and specifically with the Philippines in various ways previously, including disputes in the South China Sea. It’s fascinating that I now get to see it also from a third perspective, having served in China, Japan and now the Philippines.”

“I believe I had my largest diplomatic success in Afghanistan because I was fortunate to be able to facilitate the first peace deal in Afghanistan for over 30 years.” Peace was achieved between the Government of Afghanistan and Hezbi Islami (an Islamist organization).

“This peace deal showed to the Afghan people that peace is possible, and a lot of people were very sceptical and believed that it was not going to work out, but it did. Peace is not easy; it’s about creating something new. It’s not just about the absence of violence, but also to create social peace.”

From peace-making efforts in Afghanistan, Ambassador Mellbin learnt a “very important lesson” that he is also seeing in the Philippines, namely the crucial need for structural change.

“I believe its government understands that structural change is needed to unleash the full potential of the Philippines. But structural change is difficult; there are lots of countries around the world where everybody knows what the right thing to do is, but it doesn’t happen because you can’t build enough political and social consensuses around structural change. Structural change could unleash huge benefits and the Philippines could become not only a modern economy but also a high income economy even in the next decade or fifteen years.”

Ambassador Mellbin will be driving this agenda during his tenure in the country.

“I’m very passionate about this. It’s at the core of diplomacy to make the world work – even in difficult circumstances such as now. Because it’s better for people who face problems in their lives. There are lots of issues, and growing the economy would strengthen the resilience of the Philippines and contribute tremendously to improving the lives of people which – at the end of the day – is what matters,” thinks the ambassador.



Ambassador Mellbin presented his credentials as Ambassador of the Kingdom of Denmark to His Excellency President Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos Jr. on 13 October 2022. Earlier in the year he moved to Manila with his wife Eva Fischer-Mellbin, while their two sons are currently working and studying in Copenhagen.

Both are keen on using the opportunity to dive during their time in the Philippines.

Danish Ambassador to the Philippines, Franz-Michael Skjold Mellbin with his wife Eva Fischer-Mellbin

"We enjoy diving a lot and the Philippines is the best place in the world to dive in, so we had the chance to come previously for diving trips to various places," explains Franz-Michael and points out the country as one of 17 mega-biodiverse countries of the world. It ranks fifth in the number of plant species and maintains 5% of the world's flora: "It's amazing when it comes to biodiversity."

With an interest in photography, Ambassador Mellbin is drawn to Filipino sceneries and lifestyle. "I love taking pictures and videos, and Philippines is also an amazing place to take drone shots in."

"If our time plan allows it, my wife and I will try to go out on vacations and travel the Philippines. For example, connecting to a recent visit to Palawan for a business seminar with officials from Denmark, we spent the weekend there on one of the islands. So I think it's a country that easily lends itself for some vacation time too," said Ambassador Mellbin.

During the weekends, the couple also likes going outside of the capital Manila.

"I like biking in the hills outside the city and so does my wife," he says.

"During office days I'm very much restricted to the car – unfortunately. I would like to bicycle more also officially, but the conditions for biking could be better here in Manila so it's difficult. Back in Copenhagen I would bike to the office every day."

In fact, Franz-Michael has personally been advocating biking actively for many years.

"I have an international cycling blog and have done lots of photography to promote cycling. I have a Flickr page and some of my pictures are also for sale, where the proceeds from the sales of pictures go to Afghan charities."

Denmark is known for cycling and there is even a new online cycling knowledge sharing platform: Cycling – Danish Solutions to counter the environmental and sustainability challenges faced by many cities all over the world in promoting active mobility.

The ambassador hopes that conditions for biking could improve in general in the Philippines.



Expatriate spouses - the unpaid support function

By Kia Reimer
www.expataadvising.com

Would you apply for an unpaid job?
A job that requires you to be on call 24/7.
A job that is not defined, and a job that you do not really know the impact of.

A job with terms that you cannot re-negotiate, and a job where you do not even have a place at the table when decisions, that influences you big time, are made.

Mind you that this job is a job that ensures that your living costs, savings, pension and holidays are paid for.

The answer is no.

Then why do we take on the role?

I'll get back to that.

IN A CORPORATE LINGO

Let us look at the job in a corporate lingo. The highlights of the job description for an expat spouse would look something like this:

Multi skilled, self-driven, all-round employee needed.

Job title: Expatriate spouse

Location: Where we want you to be

Terms: On call 24/7. Health insurance and housing provided

Salary: Fixed (Zero \$). No pension. A lump sum for education or outplacement. (Maybe) Other requirements/info: No opportunity to re-negotiate your contract. No training provided

Job requirements.

- Admin savvy
- Budgeting
- Kids management. Practical and emotional
- Cultural interest and knowledge
- Driver's license. Depending on where we send you, pls expect min. 2-3 hours of driving per day
- Compliance skills
- Cooking skills
- Bid management skills
- PA skills
- Travel coordination
- Overall project coordination
- Self-driven and solution orientated
- Ad hoc tasks

Clearly the role requires a lot and the lack of preparation and training makes the odds of failure high. The lack of preparation is critical, as the role is considerably the single most important support function to make the goals, set for an expatriation, a success.



WHY DO WE ACCEPT ON THESE TERMS?

In short, we do not know the extend or the impact. Nor the short, or the long-term consequences. Nor the emotional or the practical ones. Whether good or bad.

How should we know them? We live life forwards. Not backwards. Very few of us have a peer in our immediate proximity to give us the low down.

The starting point for most, is filled with excitement and the opportunity to venture into a new country is intriguing. For some it is scary and requires more planning, consideration and time. For some it ends up being a “no”. This article is focusing on the ones that takes on the spouse role – regardless of being excited or concerned.

So, to answer the question “why do we take on the role?”

We say yes and accept the terms, because no one puts the deal in front of us in a tangible way, explains the terms or helps us ask questions. Period.

WOULD IT CHANGE ANYTHING IF WE KNEW FOLLOWING

Imagine that you are considering being an expat spouse and someone said to you:

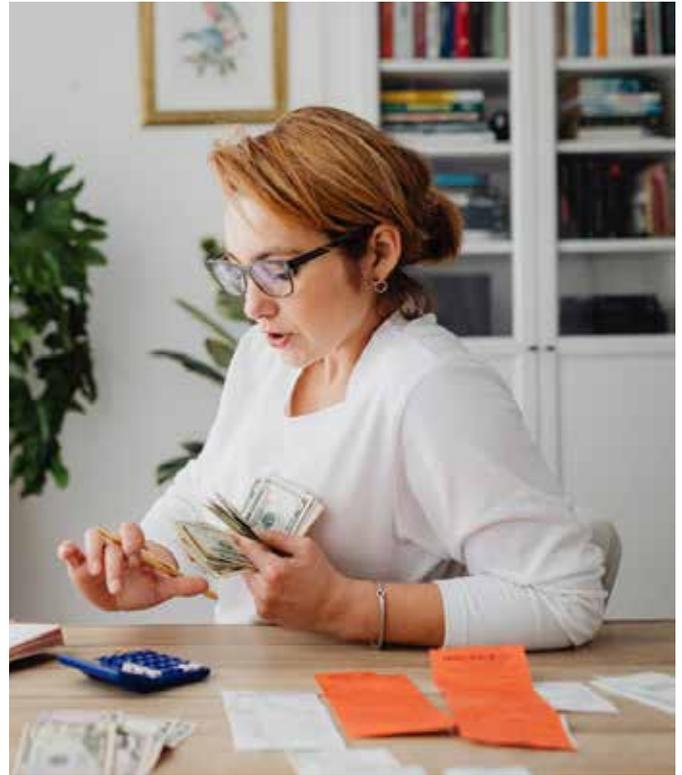
1. Take note of the loss of income. Do the math.
2. It is an awesome opportunity to learn a language.
3. Calculate the loss of pension.
4. Think of the cultural skills you will acquire.
5. The time you have to spend to get everything up and running is at least 9-12 months in which you cannot take on very much of your own.
6. You will be given a splendid opportunity to get friends that are as close as family.
7. Keep at the forefront of your mind, that there is no such thing as free ride. Mentally, financially and work-wise the price is high, if you do not plan ahead and steer clear of the pitfalls.



“

I believe that a minimum payout should match the pension loss, and yes, I also believe that this should be provided by the company.

”



8. Your understanding and tolerance towards differences will be increased.

9. All the new will exhaust you eventually and from time to time.

10. You will change.

11. Be aware that your working spouse will climb the career ladder while you will not.

12. Remember to find a purpose and/keep educating yourself.

13. If you get divorced during your expatriation you may find yourself in a very vulnerable situation. 14. Have a look at your testament and prenup. Is it valid where you are going?

15. Are you aware of what can be added to your CV from the spouse role alone – and how else do you plan to stay relevant in your industry of work?

16. Are you aware of, and ready for, the change in the dynamics in your marriage when you stay at home and your spouse is the sole breadwinner?

17. You may not be able to work, as you will be on a dependent pass, considered a housewife or the like.

Looking at the above, those questions will certainly spark some conversations, reflections, and a different kind of perspective all together.

All of them are critical for your thriving in this job and they will help put the spotlight on your role and spark counter questions to the company.

IS IT IN FACT A JOB?

Yes! It is a job!

A job equally important to the working spouse's job. One part, in an expat marriage, cannot do what s(he) does without the other, and the job as a spouse is what will make the family thrive. It is also a job that comes

without human resource access, meaning that everything you encounter that needs discussion, support, and solution finding are to be raised and dealt with, together with your partner.

Your job consists of tying all loose ends, establishing a network for you, your family, and for your children while holding on to your own traditions while at the same time tapping into traditions in your country of residence. Arranging all doctor's appointments and vaccinations, doing celebrations, language learning, supporting your children, moving in/out, making a home, teaching your children skills they need as their identity changes and on top – YOU must do you. Make sure you do not let one day eat the next without having meaning and purpose for yourself.

I must highlight that the above is nowhere near exhaustive, as to what your expat spouse job consists of. A spouse job is more than full time and controlled by the agenda of your children and the coming and going of your working spouse. You have to step in when and where needed, because there is no one else to call on.

It might sound like a cliché, but it is pivotal that you put on your own oxygen mask before helping your spouse and children. We may be able to pour out all our attention, energy, and care for everyone else for a shorter period, but it cannot sustain you and your thriving, to keep doing that.

Companies do not (yet) consider an expat spouse as one who has a job. They do not validate that if you are not around, their expatriated employee cannot do and deliver on goals.



WHAT TO DO AND WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE THRIVING?

That is the million-dollar question. Actually no. It is the billion-dollar question.

Looking at a conservative piece of math the 40% failure rate in expatriations, will amount to an industry loss of 3,3 billion USD.

Ouch.

How did I get to that number?

I took half of the lowest number of expats (estimate is 86 million but number go as low as 56 million) and multiplied it by the lowest cost for an expatriation. Of that number I took 40%.

On that conservative math, it is highly likely that the 3,3, billion loss on failed expatriation is too low.

Having established that the industry loses a lot of money and that many expats are not thriving – and even more so, the link between the two, something needs to change. For all parties involved. Factoring in, that the spouse is a critical element in the investment is a key action.

The change is however, not only a responsibility of the companies. It is also on us as expats. We need to be better at planning for ourselves, as spouses, and we need to be willing to stick to that plan. An expatriation is a big deal and the line between what a company provides in terms of spousal support and what you have to own up to is currently defined in policies and contracts.

Those policies and contracts do however not mention or define your responsibility, but solely outlines what the company will deliver. Referring to the lack of preparation and not knowing what questions to ask, this is all together linking to a bottlenecked challenge and issue. In

first instance this is a challenge that a company must take on or outsource.

In no way am I suggesting that expats take on a victim role but as long as no one is saying out loud what we need to prepare for we are simply in the “not knowing”.

SHOULD SPOUSES GET PAID?

Yes. You do get a spousal amount, some point out.

And yes, we do. But a one-time lump sum for education will not sustain or compare to the loss of income and pension over years. You can educate yourself from hereon and forever, but if you as a spouse cannot take on a job, and apply your skills where you are living, that is not a sustainable solution. The lump sum can certainly be part of the solution and is a super support that many of us are beyond grateful for.

All in all, I believe that a minimum payout should match the pension loss, and yes, I also believe that this should be provided by the company. Not only will it provide peace of mind for the spouse, it will also make the spouse feel recognized, seen and respected for what (s) he has given up and is supplying on the home turf.

I have yet to come across a spouse that has been offered this. However, I have come across countless spouses that do not sleep at night, because they feel unseen, worried about pension, and highly frustrated that they are in this situation, have nowhere to go with their worries or to negotiate.

Until this changes, Expat spouses – remain the unpaid, and worried, support function.

Get more information about our services revolving around making expats thrive on www.expataadvising.com

You may also send us a mail with questions, workshop and speaking inquiries, or ideas: kia@expataadvising.com

“

*You must have free time,
a passport, disposable
income, and a body
that allows it.*

”

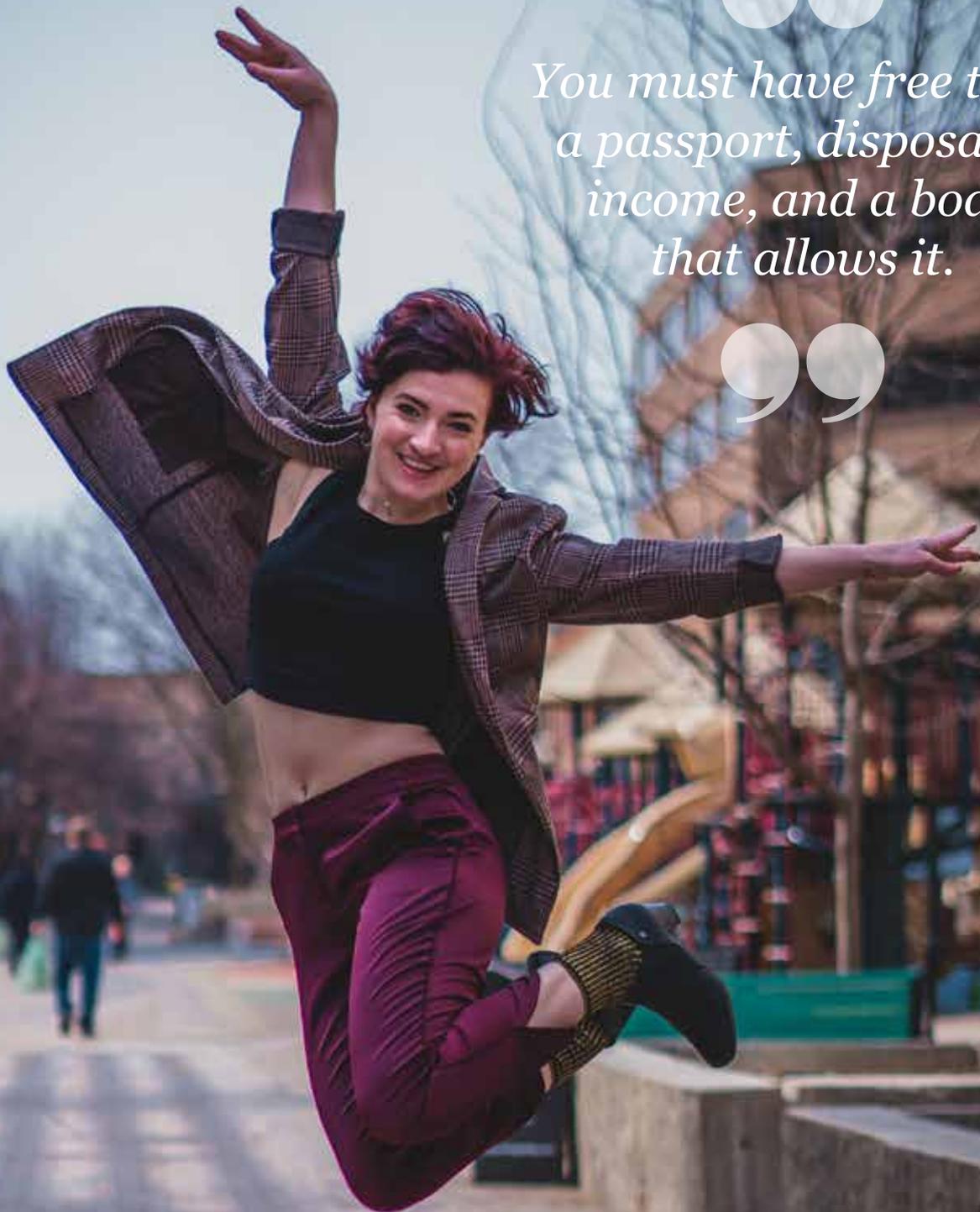


Photo by Chase Stine: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/selective-focus-photography-of-jumping-woman-on-pathway-2918180/>



Photo by Anastasia Shuraeva: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/woman-in-white-sweater-thinking-4091205/>

Women solo traveling: “Just me will be just fine”

The rise of solo adventures among women has significantly grown over the past years, some people might say, “it’s more than a trend, it’s a movement.”

By Kanlayakorn Pengrattana

Women from different ages have been drawn to step out of their comfort zone to see the world, experience life, and make sense of it because going on holidays by oneself is now a sign of “female wealth, independence, and freedom,” not the social identity of loner anymore.

Citing the book written by Kate Wills, “A Trip of One’s Own: Hope, Heartbreak, and Why Traveling Solo Could Change Your Life,” Wills shares that “the freedom to travel is a privilege... You must have free time, a passport, disposable income, and a body that allows it.” She highlights the importance of breaking away from the routine and habit to arrive in a new environment and meet new people in order to broaden one’s perspectives.

Traveling alone for women could be an opportunity for them to reconnect with who they are, discover their values and passion, learn more about others as well as learn how to trust themselves.

According to “Out of Place: Gender, Identity, and the Experiences of Solo Women Travelers,” by Melanie McArthur:

“A qualitative study based on interviews with 35 contemporary women who travel solo, discovered that ‘getting to know how other people think,’ ‘how they live their lives’ and ‘exploring other cultures’ were very important factors when they traveled alone.”

“This study (McArthur’s findings) found that females take solo trips not only to see different places, but also to explore new experiences, gain new knowledge and

understand different ways of thinking and being in the world,” stated in research titled “Why Do Women Travel Solo for Purposes of Leisure?” conducted by Chu-Yin Chiang and Giri Jogaratnam.

In the research, it explores motivations of solo female pleasure travelers using a factor analysis approach by surveying 194 women who had solo travel experiences for pleasure.

The results revealed five distinct motivation dimensions of solo women travelers: Experience, Escape, Relax, Social, and Self-Esteem and indicated that generally the travel motivations follow a similar pattern.

The most important dimension, ‘Experience,’ including six cultural and traveling oriented statements, had the highest overall mean as “it can allow them (women) to explore the world and learn new things.”

The ‘Escape’ was the second important dimension, ‘Relax’ the third, ‘Social’ the fourth, and ‘Self-Esteem’ revealed the least important overall mean rating to the respondents in this study.

These factors would be differentiated based on when the solo female travelers’ trips occurred, the length of their solo trips, marital status, and the income levels.

In addition to reviewing some previous studies and keeping the inspiration of us, women, burning; to dream of and design holidays alongside a beach or a peaceful camping in the middle of a national forest, here are ten safest destinations around the world for female solo travelers to begin with.



According to World Population Review's Women Danger Index 2023, Spain is the safest country for solo female travelers with 212.04, while the highest score is 771.82 in South Africa.

Next comes Singapore, with a 245.26 score while the third safest country is Ireland, 247.31 points.

The fourth safest country is Austria (251.63 points), followed by Switzerland (252.78 points), Norway (259.92 points), Portugal (277.58 points), Croatia (286.53 points), Canada (290.83 points), and Poland (291.23 points) respectively.

Up until this point, there seems to be some possibility in Wills' words that, "the meaning to life could be found in a well-packed suitcase and a freshly printed boarding pass," doesn't it?

If you are someone who has been thinking about going on a trip by yourself for a long while, but have been swimming in a pool of questions including the "What if I don't like the place? Or "What if I haven't planned everything well enough," the only way to find out is simply going on "that trip."

The answer could be "yes" or "no" starting from your first step: "to book the flight and show up for checking-in."

Who knows?, you might be a breath away from discovering one of the most memorable puzzle pieces of being alive.



Photo by Tranmautritam: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/view-of-a-woman-on-city-street-1197771>



Photo by Anastasia Shuraeva: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/woman-in-gray-blazer-sitting-on-tree-trunk-87960541>

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Finland and Denmark rank top list of passports allowing holders to access most countries

Danish newspaper, CPH Post, reported that Finland and Denmark were ranked joint fourth and fifth, respectively, in the World of passports opening the doors to more countries than other passports.

This was based on results of the 2023 Henley Passport Index measuring number of destinations passport holders could access without requiring a visa.

With 193 destinations, Japan was the first on the list, followed by both Singapore and South Korea, in which their passport holders could access 192 countries.

Subsequently, Germany and Spain took the third place (190 countries), Finland, Italy and Luxembourg fourth place (189 countries),

and Denmark, Austria and Sweden fifth place.

The list continued with the UK (187), Norway and the US (186), Canada and Australia (185), Brazil and Argentina (170), Mexico (159), Ukraine (144), Russia (118), South Africa (106), China (80), Indonesia (71) and India (59).

With granting visa-free access to only 27 countries, Afghanistan took the list's bottom preceded by Pakistan, Yemen, Syria and Iraq.

Investment expert, Jeff D. Opdyke, explained to CHP Post that it was not only greater freedom of movement that determined a strong passport, but also greater financial freedom in terms of investing and entrepreneurial opportunities.

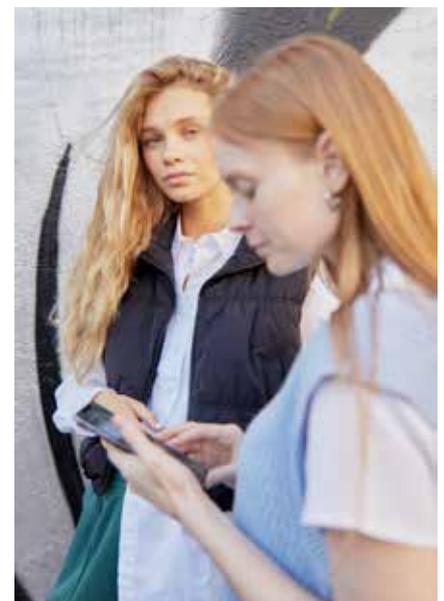


Photo by Darina Belonogova: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/two-young-women-standing-near-to-each-other-9179065/>

Blue space: Tune in with your natural heritage

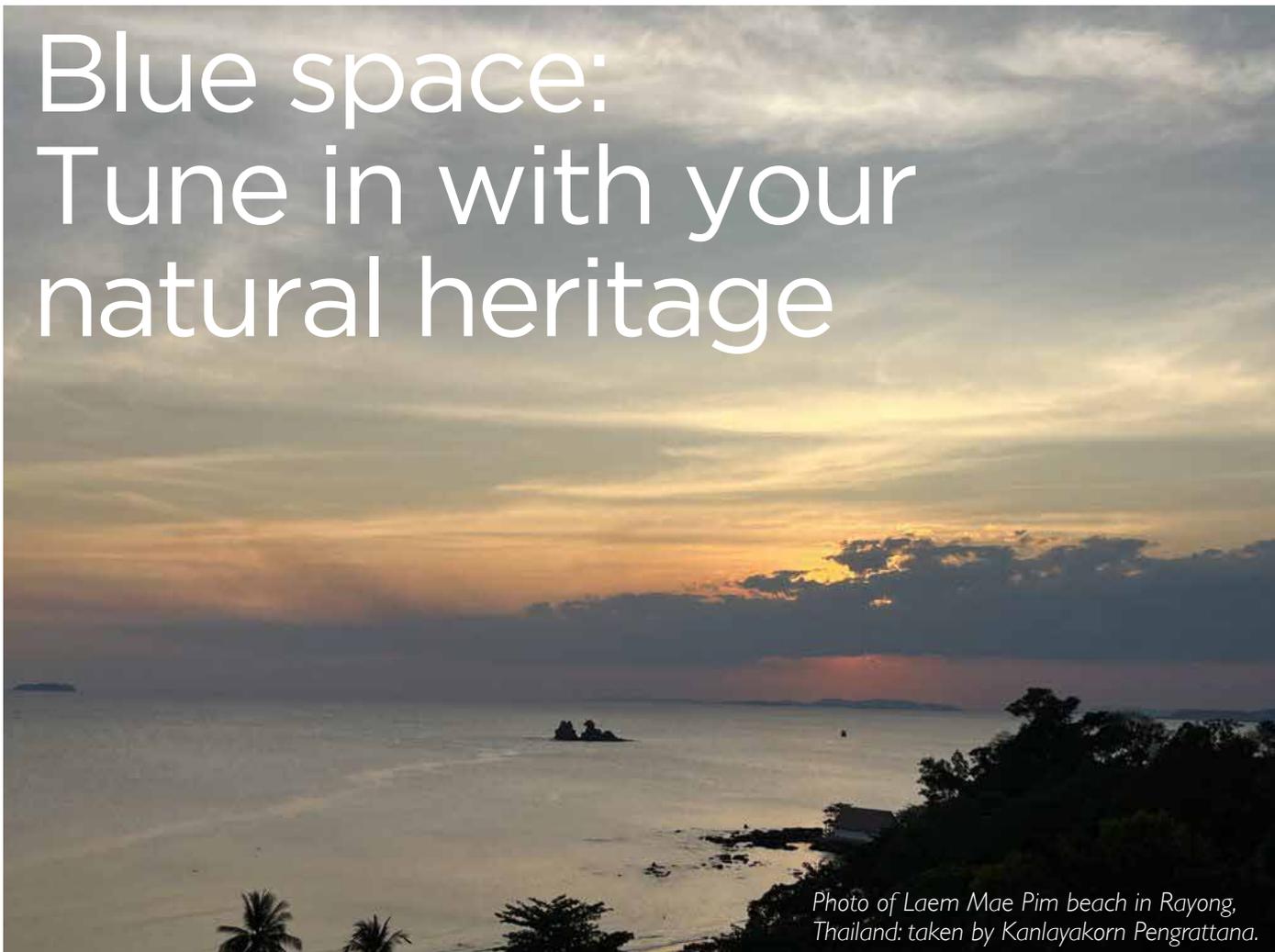


Photo of Laem Mae Pim beach in Rayong, Thailand: taken by Kanlayakorn Pengrattana.

By Kanlayakorn Pengrattana

By sitting along the ocean, burying your toes in the sand, listening to the waves, breathing in the salty air, and wishing to find an exotic seashell, one tends to lose sense of time as well as let go of whatever hung heavy in their mind and heart.

For 300,000 years before we became the majority-urban species, living in natural environments like forests and near rivers was how we survived, were safe, and found comfort.

Therefore, spending time in blue space could make one feel like “returning home,” said Kate Campbell, a health psychology researcher at Te Herenga Waka-Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

The reason humans reacted as mentioned is because aquatic environments or “blue space” are related to humans’ health, well-being, and happiness. The blue space includes the sea and coastline, rivers, lakes, canals, waterfalls, and fountains.

According to “Blue Space: The Importance of Water for Preference, Affect, and Restorativeness Ratings of Natural and Built Scenes,” it shows that the presence of water allows us to be in a less polluted air and more sunlight environment; benefits our physical health through

activities like water sports, walking, and cycling, as well as created psychologically restorative effect which helps improving our mood and reducing stress.

Moreover, the research highlights three principles that suggest why aquatic environments could be good for well-being.

The first principle is certain visual properties of blue space. “Our images of water, by contrast, may have offered a greater range of interesting and potentially restorative light patterns and reflections.”

Second, aquatic environments may be associated with more restorative sounds like the ocean waves while the final principle is “immersion.”

“The potential to bathe and swim in water allows a very different interaction with the natural environment than can be achieved on land.” It can reduce both physiological and psychological indicators of stress and mentally stimulate positive perceptions.

Even Bjornstjerne Bjornson, the Norwegian writer, could not argue on this matter; he expressed his strong feelings on the love of nature, ocean particularly, in the poem, “The Ocean” from the collection “Poems and Songs” published in 1870 and translated into English by Arthur Hubbell Palmer in 1915.



Aquatic environments or “blue space” are related to humans’ health, well-being, and happiness. The blue space includes the sea and coastline, rivers, lakes, canals, waterfalls, and fountains.



*I feel, vast Ocean, thy solemn sadness,
To thee abandon my weak devices,
To thee let fly all my anxious longings:
May thy cool breath to my heart bring healing!*
— Bjornstjerne Bjornson

All in all, the concept of tuning in with our natural heritage like the blue space (or other natural environments) from times to times is essential because it grants us, humans, with priceless opportunities to be nurtured, to find pleasure and inspirations, reconnect with creativity, as well as put our life in perspectives.

Also, being nearer to blue space may become irresistible, or addictive even. In this case, it happens with Kya Clark, the protagonist from Delia Owens’s book “Where the Crawdads Sing,” as, “at some unclaimed moment, the heart-pain seeped away like water into sand. Still there, but deep. Kya laid her hand upon the breathing, wet earth, and the marsh became her mother.” And —

... all she could think of now was getting back into the space of grass and sky and water.
— Delia Owens

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International tourists expect visa relaxation for traveling to Vietnam

Since 2023 has begun, many international tourists are planning their trip to visit several

cities of Vietnam. Regions like Hanoi, Ha Long Bay, Ninh Binh, Mui Ne are some of their to-go destinations.



Mui Ne Beach, Vietnam. Photo by TripAdvisor.

“I want to experience kiteboarding in Mui Ne in February... and I've already seen more of Vietnam than my home country,” said Jesper Korsgaard from Sweden.

In addition, tourists shared with VN Express International that they hope the Vietnamese government will consider necessary policies on the visa relaxation as well as improve the quality of tourist services.

“Vietnam is a beautiful country and I need a longer visa to explore remote parts of the country where I have never been,” Thompson from the United States said.

The visa aspect also was supported by local tourism businesses as Vietnam's tourism industry revealed 2023's target to be eight million foreign tourists.

Though, in 2022, the country only received 3.6 million tourists or 70% of its target.

Sweden approves Binance as official financial institution

The Swedish Financial Supervisory Authority (Finansinspektionen/Swedish FSA) approved and registered the crypto exchange, Binance, as an official financial institution.

According to Reuters, the registration allows Binance to launch a website in Swedish and in other ways market itself directly to consumers in the Nordic country, said Per Nordkvist, deputy head of the Financial Supervisory Authority's banks division.

Richard Teng, Head of Europe and MENA at Binance said:

“We are deeply grateful for the support from the Swedish Financial Supervisory Authority throughout

the application process and for the approval. Sweden is now amongst the growing list of global jurisdictions that have granted regulatory approval to Binance.”

Sweden is considered the seventh country in the European Union (EU) that allowed the crypto exchange regulatory permissions after France, Italy, Lithuania, Spain, Cyprus, and Poland.

Binance was founded by CEO Changpeng Zhao in Shanghai in 2017, though where the exchange is based is unrevealed.

In 2022, Binance.com exchange processed trades worth over \$22 trillion.



Photo by Binance.com

China suspicious as Stoltenberg seeks stronger alliance with Asia



cific matters for Europe and NATO and vice versa," he said, adding that though NATO remains focused on Europe and North America, its members are still affected by issues transpiring globally.

"China poses a challenge to our values, to our interests and to our security," Stoltenberg said at the CHEY Institute in Seoul on Monday, according to a transcript on NATO's website.

Earlier he has been stating, that NATO needs to address the global threats and challenges, including the challenges coming from China, and a way to do that, is by working with countries in the region.

In response, the Chinese Foreign Ministry's spokesperson, Mao Ning, told reporters Monday, that NATO has constantly gone beyond its traditional areas of defense and strengthened military and security ties with Asia-Pacific countries.

"Such development call for high vigilance among regional countries," Mao Ning added.

NATO secretary general Jens Stoltenberg is currently in Japan as part of his Asian tour. A tour, that has sparked suspicion in China.

Stoltenberg first arrived in Seoul Jan. 29. His goal has been to increase the ties with South Korea and Japan in the face of the war in Ukraine and the rising competition with China. A trip that has caused concern in Beijing.

Since Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine, China has blamed NATO for provoking Russia, and accused the US for seeking to orchestrate an alliance in the Asia-Pacific.

During an interview, Jens Stoltenberg told Yonhap News agency that he strongly believes that it's important to strengthen the partnership between Korea, Japan and NATO for security reasons.

"What happens in the Asia-Pa-

Women4Women and Sweden in Singapore offers documentary screening

To mark the International Women's Day 2023, Swed-Cham's Women4Women Committee and the Embassy of Sweden in Singapore invite you to a screening of the movie "She Said" at The Projector on 1 March 2023.

In 2017, New York Times journalists, Megan Twohey and Jodi Kantor, published a report on sexual abuse allegations against Hollywood

producer Harvey Weinstein. The shocking story served as a launching pad for the #MeToo movement, shattering decades of silence around the subject of sexual assault and harassment.

The event will include a 30-minute open discussion on what the #MeToo movement has taught us and where we stand today moderated by Policy Expert, Neha Thakkar.



Before and after the screening, there will be time for guests to network. You must register.

Nokia to be considered as second 5G vendor in Malaysia



A report by UOB-Kay Hian indicates, that Digital Nasional Berhad (DNB) might be introducing a second network provider to deploy 5G in Malaysia along with Swedish Ericsson.

According to DNB, appointing a second 5G vendor will potentially reduce costs and speed up the roll-out of 5G nationwide.

The report revealed that DNB isn't exclusively tied to Ericsson. The

Swedish tele company was appointed to build the national 5G network back in July 2021.

Evidently, there's a prearrangement in the contract with Ericsson that makes it possible to introduce a second network provider. This opens up the possibility of getting Huawei, ZTE or Finnish Nokia involved in the instalment.

Ericsson is currently the only 5G equipment vendor in Malaysia. The company offers energy-efficient solutions, including a software for wide-area 5G coverage.

Danish microbrewery expands to Singapore

The Danish brewery Alefarm has entered an agreement with one of the leading Singaporean distributors of special beer to bars, cafes and restaurants in Singapore City. The agreement was announced in a written statement through the Firstnorth stock exchange, where the brewery is listed.

"Entering the Singaporean market is in line with our strategy to expand our exports to markets where the focus is on high quality and where the purchasing power follows," said Kasper Tidemann, the CEO of Alefarm in the written announcement.



Danish Crown cuts jobs due to low Chinese pork demand

China's pork consumption remains low and normalization could take up to six months, according to Danish Crown's CEO, Jais Valeur.

This is one of the main reasons why the company is cutting several positions. Among them is 100 job cuts in Denmark, according to a press release.

Despite China's less strict COVID-19 restrictions, the Chinese pork demand is still low. This is most likely because, many people continue to avoid restaurants, said Jais Valeur.

China's imports of pork have halved in the last 18 months. This is due to a rise in domestic production, low prices, and moderate demand.

Pork production in China rose last year, as a result of farmers being encouraged to fatten up pigs more than usual, but earlier this month, China's agriculture ministry urged

farmers to reduce excess pork production.

Danish Crown, which produces nearly 20 million pigs per year, opened a processing factory outside Shanghai in 2019. The factory is currently running at around one-third of its capacity, which is basically the

same as during the lockdown.

Over the next six months Danish Crown will try to simplify the company structure, either by merging or closing down sales departments outside Denmark.

The goal is to reduce costs by 400 million DKK annually.



Sweden extends COVID-19 entry restrictions on travelers from China



The Swedish government has decided to extend Coronavirus entry restrictions on travelers from China until February 18, due to the fact that the infection rate in the country remains high.

The decision has been announced through a joint statement by the Swedish Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Social Affairs.

According to the statement, travelers from China will have to present a negative COVID-19 test result upon arrival in Sweden, regardless of their vaccination status.

FBC looking for board members



The Finnish Business Council in Singapore is looking for board candidates for the term of March 2023 – March 2024. All members of FBC, who have paid their membership in 2023, are eligible candidates. The new board will be elected at FBC's Annual General Meeting (AGM) to be held on March 15, 2023.

Candidates interested in a seat on the board can let FBC know by contacting Minna Hyvari at: fbcsg@fbcsg.org

Norwegian fund drops Chinese firm for selling aircrafts to Myanmar

According to the Norwegian central bank, Norway's biggest wealth fund has excluded a company from China for selling weapons to Myanmar.

The fund states, that they have cut all ties to AviChina Industry & Technology due to the "unacceptable risk that the company is selling weapons to a state that uses these weapons in ways that represents serious violations of the rules of international humanitarian law".

AviChina is said to have delivered airplanes to Myanmar in December 2021, despite the fact, that the country has been in turmoil since the government was deposed in an army coup around two years ago.

The decision to exclude the company was made by Norway's central bank, based on a recommendation by an ethics board.

The fund was valued at 13.2 trillion kroner (\$1.3 trillion) on



Wednesday (Jan. 25) and owned 0.37 per cent of the Chinese group at the end of 2021.

The fund, in which the Norwegian state's oil revenues are placed, is one of the biggest investors in the world with shares in more than 9,000 companies.

It is governed by rules that prohibit it from investing in companies involved in serious human rights violations, and as a result, it has previously dissociated itself from a number of companies, including Airbus, Boeing, Glencore, Lockheed Martin and Philip Morris.



Norwegian metals might make Europe less dependent on China

A Norwegian study has found an extensive amount of metals and minerals ranging from copper to rare earths, authorities said on Friday.

These resources are in high demand due to their role transitioning in to a greener economy.

Norway is now considering whether to open its offshore areas to deep-sea mining. A process that requires parliament's approval and has sparked environmental concerns, but could make Europe less dependent on China.

As China's mining capacity expanded, rare earth producers moved their production to China. This makes China the largest manu-

facturer of rare earth metals. The country is occupying 80% of the global supply that is essential to much of today's high-end tech.

"Rare minerals are extremely important for magnets in wind turbines and the engines in electric vehicles," said the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate (NPD), which conducted the study.

Several of the metals found, including rare earth minerals, are on the European Commission's list of critical minerals, according to the NPD.

Environmental groups have called on Norway to suspend its mineral exploration until more studies have been conducted. Meanwhile,

The International Seabed Authority, that oversees the deep-sea mining sector, is expected to announce regulations for the industry in July.

Many scientists have warned that mining the deep sea could have huge and irreversible consequences for the fragile ecosystem.

3 things Finnish never do — Make Finland happiest country in the world

The Finnish philosopher and psychology researcher, Frank Martela, revealed the latest information on “3 things we

never do,” in which they are parts of the influences that make Finland the happiest country in the world for five years in a row, according to the World Happiness Report.

The three things Finnish people never do to maintain a high quality of life include:

1. Never comparing themselves to their neighbors

Martela writes that Finns live up to “Kell’ onni on, se onnen kätkeköön,” which could be translated as “Don’t compare or brag about your happiness.”

In Finland, people focus more on happiness over success. “The first step to true happiness is to set your own standards, instead of comparing yourself to others,” he writes.

2. Don’t overlook the benefits of nature

Another Finns’ secret to happiness is immersing themselves in nature. Martela cited a 2021 survey which shows that 87% of Finns feel that nature is important to them as it grants them peace of mind, energy and relaxation.

He also added that, “Spending time in nature increases our vitality, well-being and a gives us a sense of personal growth.”

3. Don’t break the community circle of trust

The final tip to happiness is that “Finnish people tend to trust each other and value honesty.”

According to New Evidence on Trust and Well-being, the higher levels of trust within a country, the happier its citizens are. “Small acts like opening doors for strangers or giving up a seat on the train makes a difference, too,” writes Martela.



Photo by Oleksandr Pidvalnyi: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/female-cyclist-resting-under-a-tree-in-a-forest-12932826/>



Thai-Norwegian actress Matt Peranee to open ice-cream shop in Khao Yai

The Thai-Norwegian actress, Matt Peranee Kongthai, updated the latest progress of her ice-cream shop in Khao Yai, Nakhon Ratchasima Province, Thailand.

She has named the place “Koss,” which is inspired by the Norwegian word “Koselig” that means coziness. But spelled it Kuss like the German word for kiss.

Via her Instagram account, Peranee posted pictures of different areas of her shop that were designed and built in bright, simple tones like white, benign, black, and gray.

Also, she wrote “Anyone in Khao Yai should not miss this... Coming soon @koss.khaoyai, @mattperanee,” on her Instagram story.

All sweet teeth, cafe hoppers, and nature lovers could follow koss.khaoyai and Peranee’s personal Instagram accounts for more updates.



Body of dead Danish prisoner will not return home



Danish media Ekstra Bladet visited in 2017 Anker Hansen in his prison in Indonesia. Foto: Rasmus Flindt Pedersen

Anker Hansen, a Danish long-term prisoner in Indonesia, died in his cell on January 14, 2023. The Dane served eight years for a drug conviction – a sentence the 63-year-old pleaded not guilty to.

Denmark does not have an extradition agreement with Indonesia. This means, that Anker Hansen had to serve his sentence in the Indonesian prison Lapas Klas I in Jakarta.

The Dane dreamed of going home to Denmark, but even in death, it seems that Anker's dream of going back to his hometown in Jutland, will not come true.

Tricked by a fake African gold company
Anker Hansen was arrested in June 2014 at the airport in Jakarta with 1.48 kilos of methamphetamine stuffed into the back of his suitcase.

The Dane had apparently allowed himself to be tricked into importing the luggage for a fake African gold company. He himself denied any knowledge of the suitcase's illegal contents.

The now deceased Dane faced the death penalty but received a final sentence of 18 years in prison. This was due to the fact, that the prosecutor could not prove that Anker Hansen had deliberately tried to smuggle drugs.

Throughout the process, the Indonesian authorities rejected all requests to have the Dane transferred to serve his sentence in Denmark.

The Family cannot afford to bring him home
Since his death, his family has fought to have his body returned to Denmark.

According to the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it would cost somewhere between 30.000-70.000 DKK to transport the body of the late Dane, and there is no authority in the legislation to finance the transport with public funds.

The Danish news podcast Genstart, has submitted the family's criticism to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Ministry replied, that they provide consular assistance in criminal cases, but they cannot get into personal cases and therefore have no further comments.

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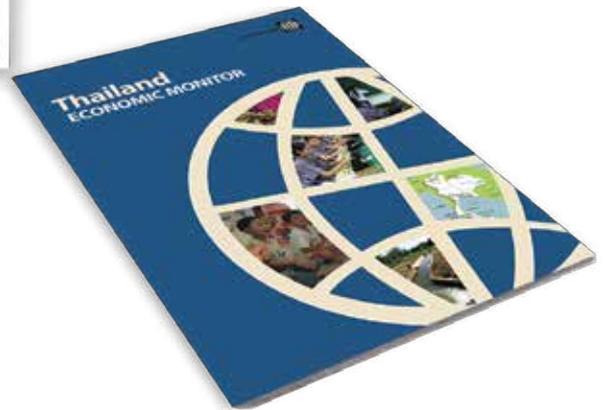
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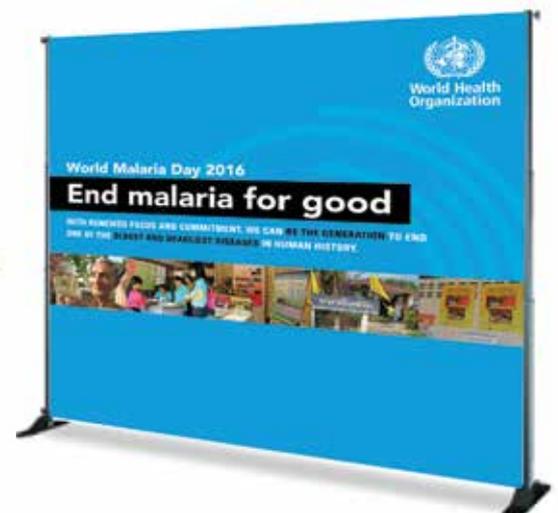
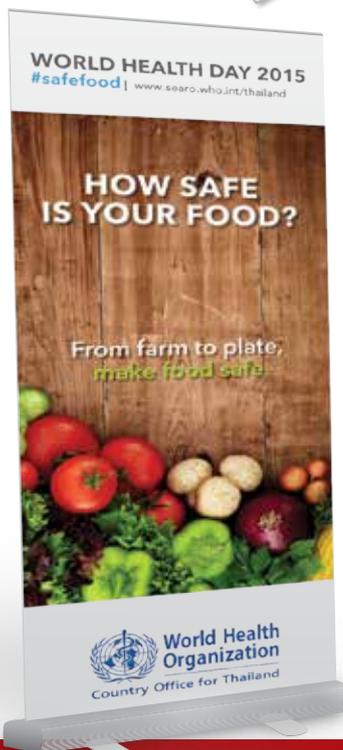
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