

FEB 2024

ScandAsia



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COMMUNITY:

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Singapore Registration Number: S88FC3906E

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The “cooling down” debate in Southeast Asia

The escalating use of air conditioning in Southeast Asia is a natural response to the quest for relief from the region’s sweltering heat. While these cooling systems provide much-needed comfort, the region faces a dual challenge – coping with the environmental consequences of excessive air con use and addressing potential health risks associated with the constant shift between extreme outdoor heat and excessive artificially induced cold indoor temperatures. Balancing environmental sustainability and public health has become essential for the well-being of the region’s population.

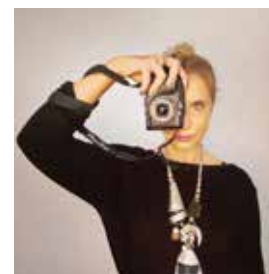
Southeast Asia’s rapid economic growth and urbanization have fueled a pervasive reliance on air conditioning throughout the region. Cooling systems are now omnipresent from homes to offices, shopping malls, and public transportation. The energy demands of air conditioning units, often reliant on fossil fuels, intensify the carbon footprint, worsening climate change and environmental degradation. As Southeast Asia grapples with the impacts of extreme weather events, it is paradoxical that the very devices meant to provide comfort may be fueling the climate crisis.

Simultaneously, the constant and abrupt transition between outdoor heat and indoor cold poses health risks for the region’s citizens. Prolonged exposure to these temperature extremes can lead to various health issues, including lung problems, dehydration, headaches, and worsening of existing conditions.

Moving frequently between these extremes may trigger respiratory illnesses, aggravate asthma, and pose risks for individuals with heart conditions. The abrupt temperature changes can also compromise the body’s ability to adapt, especially for vulnerable people such as the elderly and those with pre-existing health concerns.

Frequent transitions between hot and cold environments can also contribute to dehydration, as the body struggles to regulate its temperature. The sudden shift from outdoor heat to indoor chilliness may inhibit the body’s natural cooling mechanisms, leading to thermal stress. This stress can manifest in symptoms like fatigue, dizziness, and even heat-related illnesses when returning to the outdoor temperatures.

Due to these factors, there is an urgent need to address the excessive use of air con in Southeast Asia. Striking a balance between comfort, environmental sustainability and public health is crucial as Southeast Asia navigates the challenges posed by the climate changes. Governments, businesses, and individuals should be collaborating to implement measures that mitigate the environmental impact of cooling systems, while promoting responsible cooling practice for improved public health, and still make it comfortable for the residents. The path forward involves not only protecting the planet but also safeguarding the health and well-being of the region’s citizens by creating a more sustainable and comfortable future overall.



**Miabell
Mallikka Smedegaard**

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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Win-Win Digital Printing Co., Ltd.

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Frederik formally proclaimed King of Denmark



Denmark's Prime Minister officially declared Crown Prince Frederik as the new king, on Sunday, January 14, following the formal abdication of Queen Margrethe. The queen signed a declaration of abdication earlier in the day, officially passing the throne to her son.

The royal succession event drew thousands of onlookers outside the palace, celebrating the historic moment.

In her New Year's Eve address, Queen Margrethe had announced her decision to abdicate on January 14, citing a back operation she underwent in February as a contributing factor.

Frederik X has published a book only three days after becoming the king of Denmark

Just three days into his new role as the king of Denmark, Frederik X unveiled a surprising book that caught the nation's attention. The King's Word, released seemingly out of nowhere, has quickly become the center of attention in Denmark – with live-blogging of selected lines from the book unfolding hastily.

Co-authored with Jens Andersen, the book is said to be based on interviews conducted over the past year and a half. Adding to the complexity of this unforeseen publication is the sudden abdication of his mother, Margrethe II, and the revelation that King Frederik X supposedly only learned about his mother's ab-



dications a few days before she publicly announced it on New Year's Eve.

The surprise book has already surpassed last year's bestseller at the online bookstore Saxo. The book is reportedly selling 25 copies per

minute in the hours following its unexpected release. Priced at up to 250 DKK for a mere 110 pages, the book's sudden rise to popularity has left some questioning the motives behind its abrupt appearance.

Malaysian Royals congratulates King Frederik X of Denmark

Malaysia's King and Queen, Al-Sultan Abdullah and Tunku Azizah, extend congratulations to Denmark's newly proclaimed monarch, King Frederik X.

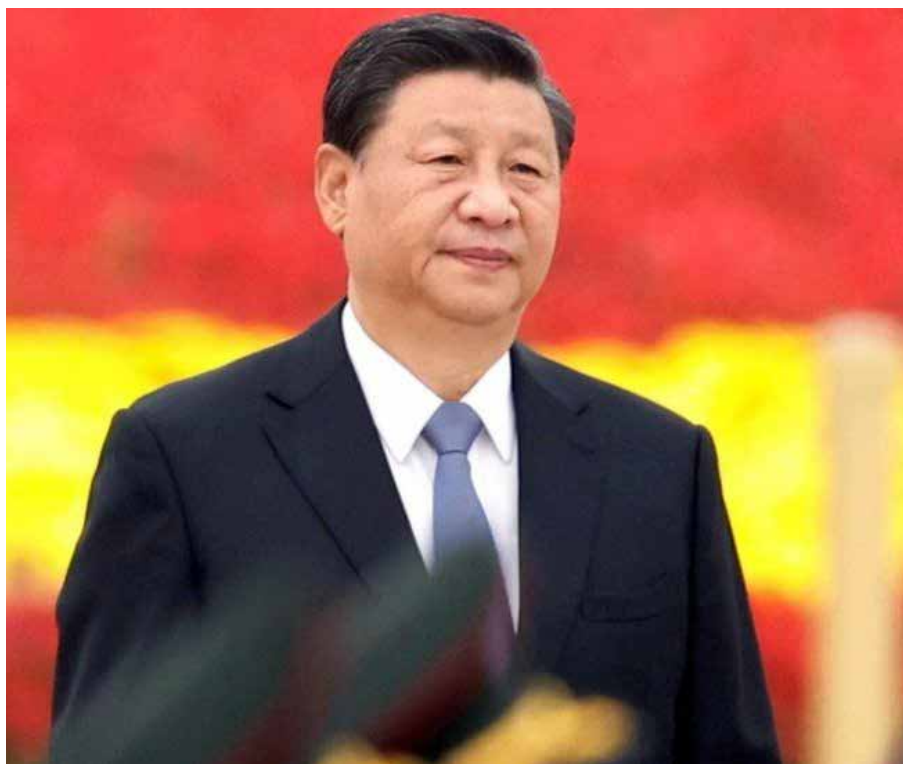
In a statement, they express optimism for continued relations between the two nations, emphasizing mutual respect and economic collaboration.

The royal couple wishes King Frederik X, Queen Mary, and the people of Denmark good health and success.

King Frederik X succeeded Queen Margrethe II, officially ending her 52-year reign as Denmark's longest-serving monarch.



President Xi congratulates Denmark's new King



Chinese President Xi Jinping has conveyed his well wishes to Denmark's newly crowned monarch, King Frederik X, on his ascension to the throne. In his congratulatory message on Sunday, he marked the progress in China-Denmark relations over the past 74 years since the establishment of diplomatic ties.

Expressing high regard for the trajectory of the China-Denmark relations, President Xi expressed his readiness to collaborate with King Frederik X in advancing the strategic partnership between their countries.

Additionally, President Xi extended warm regards and blessings to former Danish Queen Margrethe II, who officially abdicated on the same day.

Denmark ready to support Vietnam in green transition



Danish Ambassador to Vietnam, Nicolai Prytz, in an interview with Vietnam News Agency, expressed Denmark's commitment to assist Vietnam's green transition.

Praising Vietnam's resilience amid global economic challenges, Prytz highlighted the importance of addressing structural issues and improving the business environment. Prytz shared that he anticipates the Green Strategic Partnership (GSP) to elevate bilateral relations, with

a focus on high-level political dialogues and continued cooperation in key sectors.

The ambassador commended Vietnam's commitment to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. He then emphasized the need for clear policies to attract foreign investments, particularly in offshore wind projects.

Nordcham invites to discuss business implications after Indonesian election

Nordcham Indonesia and Mandala Consulting hosted a joint event in Jakarta where the business implications of the Indonesian elections in 2024 were discussed. High-level executives in Nordic companies and Nordic diplomats were invited for the 7 February 2024 event to discuss the subject.

The Indonesian President, Vice President and People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) will be elected in the general elections that are being held on 14 February 2024. Indonesia has the largest population and the biggest economy of the ten ASEAN countries, and the elections could have an important impact on the international business community.

The following four speakers will present at the event: Thomas T. Lembong, Vice Chair of Anies-Muhaimin National Campaign



Team, Ridwan Kamil, Chairman of Prabowo-Gibran Regional (West Java) Campaign Team, Arsjad Rasjid (TBC), Chairman of Ganjar-Mahfud National Campaign Team and Dicusant Dr. Philips J. Vermonto.

Indonesia aims to be the fourth largest economy by 2045, but foreign businesses are challenged by the country's bureaucratic system and lack of infrastructure. This could

be improved after the elections in two weeks, which is the world's biggest single day election.

A new group of voters have a big influence on the country's future, as over half of the Indonesian population is under 40 years old. International businesses view this young demographic as an attractive work force and consumer group.

The Philippines and Norway forge alliance for green maritime future

The Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) and Norway are partnering to enhance sustainability in the maritime sector, specifically targeting the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from ships.

The collaboration, involving the Royal Norwegian Embassy and the Norwegian Training Center, focuses on adopting emerging maritime technologies and alternative fuels to achieve GHG reduction goals.

The collaboration extends to joint projects addressing marine environmental protection, with a focus on issues like marine plastic litter and ballast water management. All fostering a greener and more sustainable future in the maritime domain.



Norwegian Ambassador Christian Lyster during his visit to Marina

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Finland keeps its border to Russia closed for another month



The Finnish government extended in January the closure of border checkpoints to Russia until February 11, 2024. Finland stated the ongoing national security concerns and as the cause for keeping the border closed.

“National security remains a critical issue for Finland,” said Finnish Interior Minister, Mari Rantanen.

The decision, made at a State Council meeting, follows the temporary reopening of two eastern border checkpoints on December 14, which were promptly closed again after over 100 asylum seekers arrived from Russia.

The Finnish Prime Minister acknowledged the need for a permanent solution amid the challenges posed by the situation.

Chinese balloons cross Taiwan Strait

Taiwan reported the presence of six Chinese balloons over the Taiwan Strait on Sunday, January 21. One of them crossed over the southern tip of Taiwan. The incident has been confirmed by the Ministry of National Defense.

Earlier this month, Taiwan accused China of posing a threat to aviation security and engaging in psychological warfare through the use of the balloons.

Concerns about China potentially employing balloons for espionage were raised after the United States claimed to have shot down a Chinese surveillance balloon in February last year. China argued that it was a civilian balloon that had simply strayed off course.



All six balloons on Sunday crossed the midline of the Taiwan Strait. The line is regarded as an unofficial maritime boundary be-

tween China and Taiwan. China does not acknowledge this boundary, and both Chinese aircraft and now balloons routinely cross it.



Norwegian Foreign Minister visited China



The Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Espen Barth Eide, visited China from 5 - 6 February 2024. He visited both Beijing and Shanghai where he had conversations about the cooperation between Norway and China.

The main subjects was the climate, the environment, human rights and to discuss current political events, such as the war in Ukraine and the situation in the Middle East.

Before the departure, Espen Barth Eide told Norwegian media that he finds it important to have an ongoing conversation with China about international politics and global economics, when China plays such a big role.

During the visit, he met with Wang Yi, the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs and Norwegian business manager as well as Norwegian students in Shanghai.

Executive Vice President for Space & Surveillance for Kongsberg Defence & Aerospace, Harald Aaro (left), receives the visit of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Minister Sakti Wahyu Trenggono to explore cooperation potential in technology. Photo: ANTARA/HO-KKP

Indonesia interested in Norwegian satellite services

Indonesia's Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Minister Sakti Wahyu Trenggono is interested in the services of the Norwegian company Kongsberg Satellite Service (KSAT). In a news released by the official Indonesian news agency, ANTARA, the minister points to KSAT's capacity and experience in earth observation satellite, development of hardware and software for maritime surveillance, as well as ship detection, to monitor illegal activities at sea.

He explained that the satellite technology capability that KSAT has can be used in various maritime and fisheries sub-sectors. Not only can they detect ships carrying out illegal activities, but they can also provide environmental surveillance services to be able to analyze data of early warning on marine pollution threats.

Harald Aaro, Executive Vice President for Space & Surveillance for Kongsberg Defence & Aerospace, who received the Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Minister Sakti Wahyu Trenggono, explained according to ANTARA that at least 21 countries already receives KSAT's services in the maritime and fisheries sector.

The KSAT Vessel Detection Service is designed to find ships and boats that are engaged in illegal activity, harm the environment and make the seas unsafe.

Next year, the Norwegian government-owned company Space Norway will launch a radar satellite named MicroSAR, planned to be the first of a larger constellation, which will greatly enhance KSAT's capabilities in providing even more detailed imaging and other services.

Denmark and Norway halt international adoptions amidst allegations of fraud and illegal practices

Denmark's sole international adoption agency, Danish International Adoption (DIA), has announced its decision to cease its facilitation of overseas adoptions. This follows rising concerns raised by a government agency regarding fabricated documents and questionable procedures surrounding the biological origins of adopted children abroad. The privately run DIA, which operated in countries such as the Philippines, Thailand and Taiwan (among others), faced suspension of its operations in South Africa last month due to doubts about its adherence to legal standards.

On the same day, Norway's top regulatory body recommended a two-year halt to all overseas adoptions. This was due to a pending investigation into several allegedly illegal cases. The move comes in response to longstanding concerns raised by adoptive families regarding fraudulent practices. These include false registration of babies as abandoned orphans, concealed backgrounds, and expedited transfers through falsified paperwork.

Must prioritize the best interest of the child

International laws, including those of Denmark, typically advocate for keeping children in their countries of origin whenever possible. The Danish Social Affairs Ministry described the discontinuation of DIA's operations as the most significant crisis in adoption in the past decade. The ministry emphasized the need for proper procedures to ensure the well-being of adopted children and transparency with biological parents.



Children awaiting adoption at child center on Popototan Island, Philippines

In Norway, Kjersti Toppe, the Minister for Children and Families, has called for further investigation. He expressed the belief that adoptions must prioritize the safety and best interests of the child. The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth, and Family Affairs emphasized the risk of illegalities in the adoption process.

Already a decline in international adoptions

International adoption in Denmark has witnessed a decline over the last decade. DIA has been handling about 20-40 adoptions annually in recent years. This is down from 400-500 per year in the 1970s. In Norway, where a majority of adopted children come from Taiwan, Thailand,

the Philippines, South Korea, and Colombia, three private adoption agencies are under scrutiny following media reports of potentially illegal adoptions. Norway's VG newspaper reported instances of children being sold in the Philippines and provided with false birth certificates.

In response to the developments, Sweden's sole adoption agency had already halted adoptions from South Korea back in November. This is prompted by growing concern over the fabrication of documents related to the heritage of adopted children from Asia.

Countries are closely examining international adoptions to ensure they are legal, transparent, and ethically conducted.

Japanese murderer of Norwegian in Laos soon to be sentenced



and joined forces with the Vientiane Provincial Police Command and the Vang Vieng District Police Command to investigate the crime.

In the early hours of 19 January 2020, Ogu Hiroyuki is seen in a crucial video evidence carrying the dead body of the Norwegian down the steep stair case of the guesthouse and placing her on his motorcycle before driving away with the corpse. The day before he was seen carrying some bamboo sticks up to their room on the third floor.

Having dumped the corpse in the jungle, he waited one day before checking out on 20 January 2020.

When Ogu Hiroyuki was arrested on 20 November 2021, the case started moving at a normal speed. The Supreme People's Prosecutor's Office ordered on 10 January 2022 that the case should be prosecuted by the Public Prosecutor of the capital Vientiane. When the case was handed over from the police, the Public Prosecutor started writing the indictment on 22 June 2022 and finished it within 3 months on 22 September 2022. The court in Vientiane accepted the case on 7 October 2022 – and on 24 October, the case was prosecuted in court.

It is not known why the sentencing is taking longer time than usual.



The court hearing in the case against the Japanese man, Ogu Hiroyuki, who in January 2020 caused the death of the Norwegian woman Nerid Ella Hoiness, has already taken place at the Court of the Laotian capital Vientiane. According to the Court Secretariat, the court hearing took place on 24 October 2022.

Since then, the judges have been evaluating the evidence provided by the public prosecutor and the statement of the accused and are currently deliberating the sentence to be read to the accused when they are ready.

Flipping through the pages of the file on her table, a fifteen centimeter pile of documents held together by a red folder cover, the court officer confirms that announcing the sentence could happen any-time soon since the court hearing took place already 15 months ago.

In the meantime, the Japanese man Ogu Hiroyuki remains detained in the Nakha Detention Camp north of Vientiane. This is the remand prison where he has been detained since he was arrested on 20 November 2021 after 22 months on the run.

When sentenced, the Japanese will be transferred to Phonhong

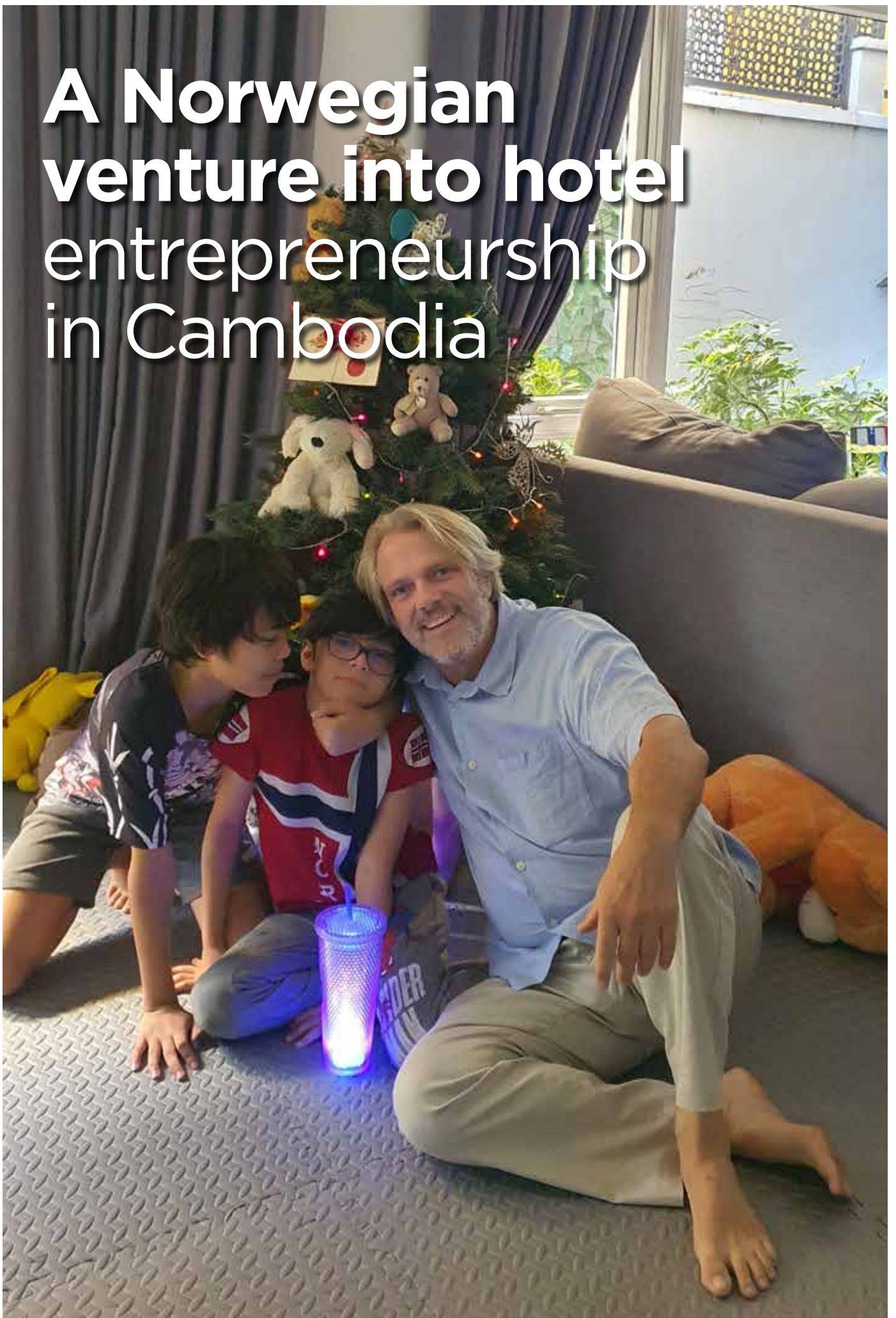
Prison in Vientiane, where the Laotian prison department detains all foreign prisoners serving prison sentences.

ScandAsia was not allowed to obtain copies of any of the documents in the court file, but the Public Prosecutor of Vientiane confirms that the prosecutor argued in the indictment that the death was a the result of excessive and deliberate violence inflicted by the accused upon the Norwegian woman as detailed by the forensic team.

The Japanese man has explained that her death was accidental following bruises that the Norwegian woman obtained in a fight between the couple in their room in a guesthouse in Vang Vieng 125 km north of the Laotian capital Vientiane. He claimed that she was alive when he fell asleep but when he woke up the next morning she was dead.

Nerid Hoiness' badly injured body was found on 22 January 2020. At that time the Norwegian had been dead between 5 to 7 days. The day after, on 23 January 2020, the Laotian Police Investigation Department, the Laotian Police Forensic Department and the Laotian Criminal Intelligence Police Department arrived from the capital at the scene

A Norwegian venture into hotel entrepreneurship in Cambodia





“

I've always wanted a hotel at the seafront with a sailboat and a restaurant

”

In 2003, Norwegian Karl Johan Remoy embarked on a journey. A journey that would take him from being a globetrotting consultant to becoming an entrepreneur in Cambodia's hotel industry.

Initially, Karl found himself traveling, while working as a consultant for various aid organizations such as USAID, AUSAID, the World Bank and UNICEF. But fate intervened, leading him to meet his future wife in Cambodia.

"Instead of finding myself, I found a wife. I'm still finding myself, I guess," Karl reflects on the unexpected turn of events, emphasizing the perpetual nature of life.

What started as a pursuit of self-discovery turned into a long-term commitment to raising a family, while navigating the intricate web of professional and personal life.

An unexpected turn

As Karl delves into his career shift from a consultant to managing a research agency in Phnom Penh, Laos and Vietnam, he shares how six years in this role left him feeling unfulfilled, prompting a decision to prioritize family over a demanding career. A chance encounter with local entrepreneurs and a venture into the hotel industry marked the beginning of a new chapter.

"I've always wanted a hotel at the seafront with a sailboat and a restaurant. That has always been my dream. That hasn't happened yet, but Monsoon Bassac is close to that," Karl shares about his long-standing aspiration for getting into the hotel industry.

Reflecting on the challenges of managing a hotel, Karl's story unfolds as he had to navigate the complexities of the hospitality industry, during setbacks like the impact of COVID-19.

"Ironically, we rented out Monsoon to a Chinese group right before the pandemic. This turned out to be

a stroke of luck, saving us from the dire consequences of COVID-19. It's a reminder that sometimes, unexpected paths can lead to unforeseen opportunities," Karl shares about the challenging period.

When work becomes your life

After taking back the daily management from the Chinese Group, the Monsoon Bassac Hotel received a lot of bad reviews due to the lack of maintenance of the hotel by the Chinese Group.

"After COVID we opened the hotel too early. We ignored the impact of the downgraded facilities and the difficulty of finding qualified staff." This caused Karl to move into the hotel, to help ensure customer service and improve the facilities.

"I don't really run it. I'm just there now to secure that Monsoon runs smoothly." His pragmatic approach to managing Monsoon Bassac reveals a hands-on commitment to its success.

"Many underestimate the impact of COVID, especially for developing economies like Cambodia. Before COVID we had no problem finding staff with a reasonable command of English. Nowadays this is a real problem. A lot of the youth has been affected by COVID. It has literally been two years without lectures and no follow up from the schools/universities. This has had a big effect on the learning process and affected the quality."

Still Karl has a clear vision for the hotel. A boutique establishment strategically positioned in the heart of Cambodia's bustling scenes.

"It's strategically positioned in the midst of where everything happens. So, you can basically walk out of the door of the hotel and be surrounded by Cambodia," Karl shares.



“

We don't want people to just come and stay with us. We want them to go and experience the country

”

More than just a hotel

In contemplating Monsoon Bassac's future, Karl's vision is clear. He sees the hotel as a dynamic hub for unique experiences, blending cultural immersion and sustainable tourism.

"It's supposed to be a kind of a boutique hotel, but we don't want people to just come and stay with us. We want them to go and experience the country," Karl says - showing that his vision for Monsoon Bassac as a gateway to experiencing the richness of Cambodia extends beyond the confines of the small boutique hotel's walls.

Collaborations with local sports clubs, tour organizers and a commitment to community engagement underline Karl's aspiration to elevate Monsoon beyond conventional hospitality. Karl's strategic foresight and passion promise a future where Monsoon Bassac not only thrives as a business but also becomes a catalyst for authentic Cambodian experiences. Karl wishes to showcase the country's diverse offerings beyond Siem Reap - from the Mekong River to beautiful islands and jungles. A desire that has become a focal point moving forward.

The vision extends to creating packages that cater to sports enthusiasts and explorers, turning the hotel into a hub for Khmer martial arts, kite boarding, motor cross and bicycle tours.





Thinking of introducing Scandinavian culinary delights

Another relatively new idea for the future of Monsoon Bassac is to infuse the Cambodia located hotel with the flavors of Scandinavia. Reflecting on past culinary endeavors, he contemplates the possibility of introducing Norwegian cuisine to the hotel's offerings.

With a nod to the diverse palette of his homeland, Karl envisions a culinary experience that marries the distinctive tastes of Norway with Cambodia's rich gastronomic heritage. The prospect of a Norwegian chef bringing a touch of the Nordic to Phnom Penh aligns seamlessly with Monsoon Bassac's commitment to providing guests with a uniquely memorable stay.

"I think that would be a success if we can find a good chef willing to take on the challenge. Someone who is willing to move here. Norwegians are not all that adventurous. They like to stay home. They don't like to travel and see the world. They're kind of happy where they are, so it might prove difficult," Karl adds, with an understanding smile.

From self-discovery to finding his home

What started out as a journey of self-discovery, has turned into a Nordic inspired, charming boutique hotel, located in the capital of Cambodia. From the challenges of finding the right cuisine, dealing with bad reviews, and managing partnerships, Karl's story unfolds with a blend of realism and determination, by offering a glimpse into the challenges, passions, and dreams that come with hotel management in a foreign land.



Navigating the corporate world in Indonesia: Seven Stones is there to help you boost your business



ScandAsia has met with Terje Holte Nilsen, the Norwegian owner of Seven Stones, a provider of market entry services based in Bali and Jakarta, for a talk about his insights into the challenges faced by foreigners, in starting and running a business in Indonesia.

Navigating Indonesian law can be challenging for foreign entrepreneurs. Seven Stones was founded due to the significance of understanding the cultural and legal nuances of the Indonesian legal system. During his talk with ScandAsia, Terje shed light on the complexities of doing business in this unique and vibrant Southeast Asian environment.

By Miabell Mallikka Smedegaard

Family founded

Seven Stones was founded in 2016 and is 100 percent owned by Terje, his daughters, and his half-sister. The family's connection with Indonesia dates back to 1970, and Terje has been a permanent resident since 1993. The family's ties to the country have evolved into a comprehensive market entry service, addressing legalities, investments, and advising on navigating the complex business landscape in general.

"The idea with Seven Stones is to provide advice on setups and structures. We are there to help handling all the necessary but perhaps less exciting aspects. However, what truly excites us is serving as representatives for our clients. We aim to find suitable partners and guide them through sensitive processes. We recognize that Indonesia prioritizes its own interests. Having a reliable local partner is crucial in navigating such procedures," Terje shares.

Assisting Scandinavian businesses

Seven Stones initially delved into real estate, constructing villas and complexes before transitioning into a market entry agency. Not finding reliable legal partners, the firm established an in-house legal team, which has evolved into a significant aspect of the business. While collaborating with various foreign companies, a substantial portion of the clientele comprises Scandinavian-founded companies.



“

The idea with Seven Stones is to provide advice on setups and structures. We are there to help handling all the necessary but perhaps less exciting aspect.

”

“We collaborate with clients from all backgrounds, but I would say nearly 30 percent of our clients are Scandinavians, with the remaining 70 percent comprising various nationalities. Although the Scandinavian market is expanding in Bali, it still doesn't constitute a significant percentage. This is mainly due to the presence of many Australians and Singaporeans.”

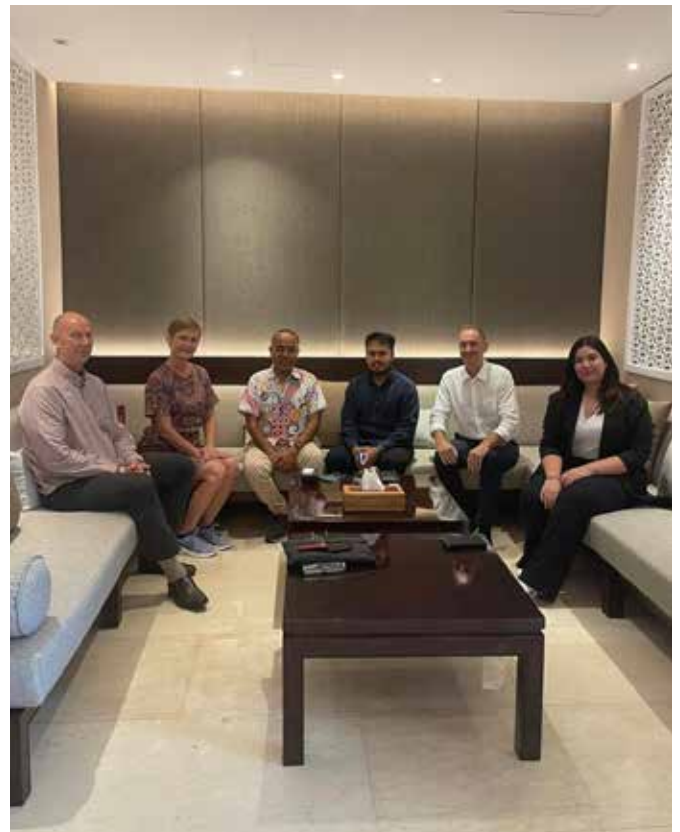
The company's association with organizations like Innovation Norway, has further solidified its role in assisting Scandinavian companies in their market entry into Indonesia.

“In practically all Norwegian embassies, you'll find Innovation Norway serving as the business representative for the Norwegian government. Due to a governmental restructuring, Innovation Norway had to retract to Singapore. The embassy then approached us to cover that role for Indonesia in collaboration with Norway Connect in Bangkok. Consequently, we set up an office in Jakarta, situated just across the street from the Nordic embassies,” Terje elaborates.

Business growth amidst pandemic challenges

Since establishing Seven Stones in 2016, Terje has witnessed substantial growth. Even amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the request for legal assistance has been steadily increasing.

“I think the influence of COVID has spurred a broader trend, where people seek a lifestyle change. They feel discontent with their situations. I observed a growing phenomenon during the pandemic. I call it “the lifestyle change.”





The company has become a go-to resource for expatriates and businesses seeking new opportunities. But it can be difficult to navigate the complex Indonesian regulatory landscape, which is where Seven Stones steps in.

“We now have approximately 50 employees split between Bali and Jakarta to help with everything from legal counselling, tax consultation, real estate and advisory services.

The appeal of Bali for business ventures

According to Terje, the appeal of Bali extends beyond its picturesque landscapes and vibrant culture. The island has become a hub for entrepreneurs seeking “the lifestyle change.”

Many individuals, not limited to Scandinavians, are drawn to Bali to escape the monotony of everyday life. Terje highlights the increasing trend of people selling their possessions back home to fund business ventures in Bali – ranging from property development to the flourishing food and beverage industry.

“People are selling inherited properties like parents’ or granny’s houses, using the proceeds to explore new paths, such as becoming developers in Bali. The numbers engaging in such transitions are on the rise,” Terje says.

Strategic business advises

While Bali offers a myriad of opportunities, Terje warns against the risks associated with hasty business decisions.

“I have seen a surge in business opportunities in Bali, but it’s crucial for entrepreneurs to approach them with caution. Risks, including challenges in property development, legal compliance, and the potential pitfalls of hasty business decisions, underscore the need for meticulous planning and strategic guidance in this dynamic market.”

With Seven Stones, Terje aims to mitigate these risks by offering comprehensive support for long-term success. Terje emphasizes the importance of strategic planning for individuals considering business ventures in Bali. Whether entrepreneurs plan to stay for a few years or make Bali their permanent home. Seven Stones advises on structuring businesses based on individual goals, providing insights into exit plans, growth strategies, and financial advice.

Scandinavian opportunities in sustainability

In line with Indonesia’s goal to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060, Terje sees significant opportunities for Nordic companies in renewable energy and waste management. Indonesia’s reliance on coal presents opportunities for transitioning to cleaner energy sources, and Terje expresses his passion for supporting initiatives that contribute to Indonesia’s sustainable development.

“With Indonesia’s growing focus on sustainable development, I can only encourage Nordic enterprises to explore and invest in renewable energy initiatives. Fostering both environmental responsibility and profitable ventures in this dynamic market.”

Terje’s insights offer foreign enterprises a valuable perspective on the evolving business landscape in Indonesia. As the country undergoes regulatory changes and embraces sustainable development, Nordic entrepreneurs are presented with unique opportunities.

By understanding the local nuances, collaborating with experienced professionals, and aligning with Indonesia’s goals, businesses can thrive in this dynamic and promising market. All with the help from Seven Stones.



Factory management - AIPF team

The Danish AIP Foundation's road safety project in Cambodia

Fourth from the left in the light blue T-shirt is Ratanawadee Winther, Chairwoman and founder of the Danish AIP Foundation. ►

The AIP Foundation is a devoted advocate for road safety and sustainable mobility across Southeast Asia. The organization is mainly working for a safer and more sustainable commuting environment for factory laborers.

ScandAsia met with Ratanawadee Winther, Chairwoman and founder of the Danish AIP Foundation, to hear more about their work to improve conditions for female factory workers in Cambodia, and discuss their focus on female workers and gender equity.

By Miabell Mallikka Smedegaard

Established in 1999, the AIP Foundation is a global leader in road safety advocacy. Working closely with relevant government and non-government stakeholders, it addresses road safety challenges worldwide, transcending borders for a collective impact.

The AIP Foundation in Denmark was formed in 2019. Its cross border initiatives, like the new project in Cambodia, addresses critical road safety issues. Funded with a one million DKK grant from CISU (Civil Society in Development), a Danish organization that coordinates and provides financial support to small NGOs on behalf of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the latest project has now been launched.

“With the project in Cambodia, our aim is not just to address the statistics. The goal is to make a real difference in the lives of individuals. Even a small improvement in their safety and comfort on the road can have a great impact. Our work is about more than numbers. It’s about creating a sustainable and positive change,” Ratanawadee says about the newly launched project.

The strategic focus on footwear factory workers

In the foundation’s pursuit of impactful development in Cambodia, it deliberately focuses on empowering garment and footwear factory workers. In the pursuit of change, the organization is leveraging existing collaborations with the AIP Foundation Cambodia and international organizations.

The garment and footwear industry is one of the biggest industries in Cambodia. Its predominance of female workers, who make up 85 percent of the workforce, aligns with the Danish government’s emphasis on gender inclusion. Recognizing the inherent socio-economic gaps, the project also seeks to uplift women, addressing inequalities and fostering transparency.

“I believe that empowering women is the key to impactful development. By including women in management and decision-making roles, we can create policies and practices that are inclusive and transparent,” Ratanawadee shares on the issue.



“

Acknowledging challenges is crucial for overcoming them. AIP Foundation confronts road safety challenges head-on.

”



The power of speaking up

The project’s primary objectives include building the capacity of local partners – specifically AIP Foundation Cambodia. Through training and support, the foundation ensures effective implementation of this second phase – the development of “Speak Up.”

“In our approach to empower the workers, we emphasize the importance of their voices. Workers are encouraged to speak up about their experiences and concerns. Their insights play an enormous role in shaping a safer and more equitable workplace, which also involves decent commuting conditions to and from work.”

Under the guidance of AIP Foundation, the workers undergo intensive training to become advocates for safer commuting practices. The foundation’s main focus is on fostering communication between workers, supervisors, factory management and transportation providers.

“One significant achievement is the empowerment of these “Speak Up Champions.” It is mainly women, displaying exceptional leadership skills. Through targeted training, they become the links between workers and

transportation providers. The project has led to noticeable changes, with at least one factory transitioning from unsafe flatbed trucks, where the workers had to stand during transportation, to safer buses where they get to sit during the transit,” Ratanawadee elaborates.

Road safety in Cambodia

Recent data on road safety in Southeast Asia paints a grim picture. With Thailand being the epicenter of alarming fatality rates, mainly due to the high number of high-speed motor bike accidents, the figures for Cambodia may not be just as comprehensive. Still, the available statistics underscore a concerning scenario that demands attention.

Cambodia registers an estimated 17 road deaths per 100,000 population (based on the latest report from Cambodian NSSF). Despite potential data collection challenges that might interfere with the figures, the gravity of the issue remains clear. A stark comparison with Denmark, where there are around two road deaths per 100,000 people, highlights the contrast and underscores the urgency of the problem.





With Deputy Minister of Transport

“Cambodia was chosen for the road safety project due to a combination of factors. While Thailand has been an integral part of our road safety initiatives, Cambodia presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities. The high prevalence of commuting-related risks among factory workers, particularly in the clothing and shoe industries, made Cambodia a priority. By addressing specific needs in Cambodia, we aim to create a model that can be replicated across different regions. We hope to contribute to a broader impact on road safety and sustainable commuting practices,” Ratanawadee explains.

The impact on individuals and economic implications

Beyond statistics, the heart of the project lies in the individuals whose lives are touched by AIP’s initiatives. Stories from project sites paint a vivid picture of women finding hope and communities experiencing tangible benefits.

“When I was working as AIP Foundation Country Director in Thailand, I once interviewed a grieving mother who lost her infant child in a motorbike ac-

cident. She believed holding the child tightly during a crash would protect the baby. Tragically, the impact still led to the child’s death. Stories like hers highlight the misconception about safety. Quality helmets, however, have been proven effective, with a recent study showing a 69 percent reduction in serious head injuries when worn properly. Advocating for proper safety measures is crucial to preventing such heartbreaking incidents,” Ratanawadee explains.

Challenges ahead

The road towards safer commuting conditions faces obstacles, including economic pressures on private transportation providers. A collaborative effort involving government agencies, businesses, and NGOs is needed for sustainable and impactful change. With the project continuing until January 2025, the AIP Foundation remains committed to transforming the commuting landscape for factory workers in Cambodia, advocating for the government’s transition to safer vehicles.

“Acknowledging challenges is crucial for overcoming them. AIP Foundation confronts road safety challenges head-on. In our organization, we envision a future where safe mobility is embedded in the workplace. As the project unfolds, we remain committed to addressing ongoing issues and continually improving road safety infrastructure.”

As Chairperson of AIP Foundation Denmark, Ratanawadee emphasizes the economic repercussions of road deaths and injuries. By doing so, she tries to make a compelling case for Southeast Asian governments to invest in comprehensive road safety initiatives. All in the hope of a better and safer future for people in Cambodia and the rest of Southeast Asia.



Speak up champion training



Norwegian is revolutionizing history education from Bali

Norwegian Ole Petter Høie, an experienced entrepreneur on his third startup, is currently exploring the intersection of gaming and education with gamified history lessons under the name “The History Challenge.”

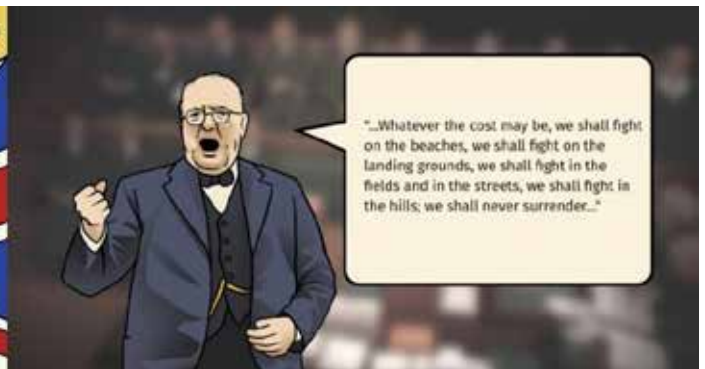
ScandAsia met with him in a very modern Balinese setting, for a chat about his innovative project.

By Miabell Mallikka Smedegaard

Gamifying lessons of history!



A natural next step to unleash history student engagement while saving time for teachers!



With a background that includes a period in his twenties as a Hare Krishna monk, Ole Petter Høie has previous experiences within health products, and prior success in the educational gaming industry. Now, he is leading a project that seeks to transform history education.

A concept inspired by shared experiences with his son

Ole's vision to use interactive storytelling for educational purposes began through shared screen experiences and remote-control gameplay with his autistic son.

"My son is struggling with autism. Having a normal conversation with him has always been challenging. Then back in 2013, when he was 13 years old, I found a game that I played myself because of the interesting challenges, and I asked my son if he wanted to play it. When he tried the game, what caught his interest was the storytelling, and we started interacting via the different game characters. Suddenly we had a universe where we could co-exist," Ole shares.

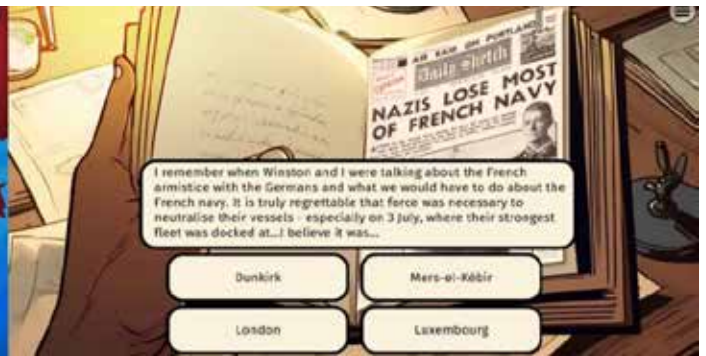
The realization that the same approach to storytelling might be harnessed for educational purposes later led to the creation of "The History Challenge." This set the stage for a unique blend of gaming and learning.

The core idea revolves around creating a virtual experience that will make history education more engaging and interactive, while stimulating curiosity and critical thinking skills. Students will navigate through historical narratives, while making choices that impact their learning journey. The inclusion of challenges, quizzes, mini essays, and interactive tasks ensures a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. The end result is not just a score that can be used for grading, but also a foundation for further learning.

Finding it difficult to connect with history

While initially aimed at teenage children, the platform is created to be used by students of all ages.





“
The primary challenge we've identified for students is that they find it difficult to connect with history.
 ”

Ole envisions the project expanding globally, with gamified lessons becoming a preferred tool for history education worldwide. The goal is not just to impart knowledge, but to make history a dynamic and enjoyable learning experience for students.

“The primary challenge we've identified for students is that they find it difficult to connect with history. They simply struggle to make it feel relevant. This challenge is aggravated by existing teaching methods and textbooks that often result in a lack of engagement. Essentially, students are finding it hard to see the relevance of historical content. We try to change that,” Ole says about the team's shared vision.

A carefully selected team

The project was kicked off with extensive research, ensuring high-quality historical content. A team, consisting of lesson designers, graphic designers, writers, and programmers, is collaborating to bring the concept to life. Their previous experience with another storytelling game has provided the carefully selected team with valuable insights into creating an engaging historical narrative.

“Currently, everyone on the team was also a part of the first storytelling game I did back in 2019. Two team members are dedicated to working on it full-time, while the others contribute on a part-time basis for flexibility. We've gained interest from several individuals who are eager to join us once we have established proof of concept. At this stage, our primary focus is on validating the market to confirm demand for the product,” Ole shares.

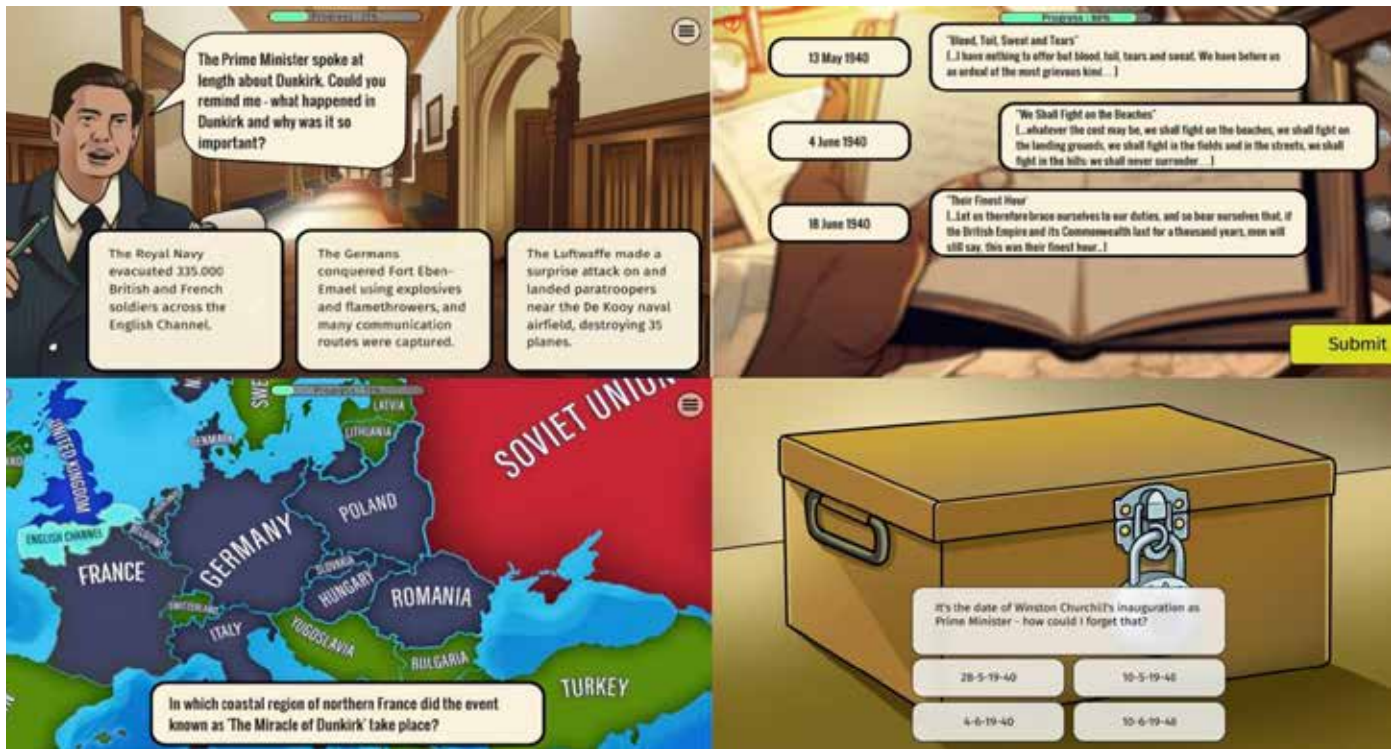
Game development in picturesque Bali

Ole first sat foot in Bali in 2011. Shortly interrupted by living two years in Germany, he returned to Bali in 2015.

“Struggling with the aftermath of the financial crisis, a friend invited me to come stay with him to Bali in 2011. On the second day, I decided to make it my home. Having explored 42 countries, Bali was the first place where I immediately found a sense of belonging,” Ole shares about his choice of location for his project. A project that differs from the usual ventures that unfolds on the tropical island.

Still, Bali also served as the backdrop for Ole's first endeavor into storytelling game development.

“The initial venture proved more challenging than anticipated. Despite an existing market for storytelling content, finding a publisher or partner proved difficult,” Ole says.



“Creating that first game is still an achievement I personally take pride in. Crafting that game was the most complex creative endeavor I’ve ever undertaken. Even though its success remains uncertain, it laid the foundation for creating The History Challenge,” he adds.

Still a work in progress

The history lesson game concept has evolved through surveys, tests, and teacher verification and advice. The constant focus has been on addressing the disconnect students feel towards history. The goal is to make a product with the potential to redefine how history is taught. The process has involved studying various curricula and spotting potential early adopters, including the Cambridge teaching method, and the EU Council’s principles and guidelines for teaching history in the 21st century.

“We’ve made sure to incorporate all the core principles and that we meet all key criteria with our concept. Our goal is to establish a new standard for the way history is taught. Essentially redefining the approach to historical education.”

History teachers and professors have played a crucial role in the development process. The team is currently on its fourth version of the first lesson. To improve they are actively seeking feedback from educators to refine the platform. Continuous collaboration with teachers ensures that the gamified lessons don’t just align with educational goals, but also effectively engage students.

Setting goals

The quest for a minimum viable product (MVP) led to the development of the first lesson - the Battle of Britain during World War II. The lesson is presented in a comic-style format with a blend of fictional storytell-

ing and factual content. With around 20 investors supporting the initiative, Ole emphasizes the importance of proving the concept’s viability before a full-scale implementation.

“Our current goal is to finalize the Battle of Britain trilogy and be prepared for offering it to the market by the start of the school year in August 2024. We anticipate a full-scale launch to take place during that academic year. But until that point, our focus will be on completing the first lesson series to have a high-quality product to sell, establishing proof of concept, and gradually expanding our initiative,” Ole explains.

What the future holds

As the first lesson nears completion, the company is participating in an incubator program with hopes of qualifying for grants and attracting further investment. The long-term vision includes finding a big investor to scale the project, enabling the creation of more teams to speed up the creation of further lessons.

“There are approximately 250 million potential users in schools alone, excluding countries with autocratic regimes. While I don’t have precise figures on how many of these students are also gamers or engage in gaming during their spare time, the number is estimated to be quite high. If we consider the whole target market, a substantial percentage – maybe as many as 70-80%, might prefer learning through this interactive approach. However, the exact percentage of those who will remain preferring traditional methods, such as reading books, remains uncertain. But it is still clear that there’s a huge potential market for a product like The History Challenge.”

Danes, use your cash before it becomes invalid



From 2025, all Danish banknotes issued before 2009, plus the 1000-kroner banknote will become invalid as a means of payment.

Embassy of Denmark in Singapore encourages Danes to pay with these banknotes before then – or to deposit them in one's bank. However, Danes have plenty of time to return the old banknotes, as they will only become invalid after May 31, 2025.

The decision was based on Danmarks Nationalbank who is issuing a new banknote series in 2028-2029. In preparation for this, older banknotes will be phased.

“To ensure that cash remains a

safe and efficient means of payment, the design and security features of banknotes must be at the forefront of technological development,” said Governor Christian Kettel Thomsen.

Danish banknotes have not been declared invalid before just based on the year it was made. This means that banknotes from even 1944 could still be used, alongside with the newer ones used today. However, store staff might not be comfortable accepting cash they don't recognize. So older notes are perhaps bound to become outdated at some point and thereby lose its value.

Indonesia sets sights on 14.3 million eco-conscious tourists in 2024

Indonesia is aggressively pursuing sustainable tourism, eyeing 14.3 million international visitors in 2024. Tourism Minister Sandiaga Uno emphasizes eco-friendly practices, including promoting electric vehicles and green energy accommodations.

The initiative aims not only to boost tourism but also to create jobs, aligning with Indonesia's goal of generating 4.4 million new employment opportunities.

Bali's success in surpassing 2023 targets showcases Indonesia's potential in sustainable travel. The nation is aspiring to make a significant impact on the global tourism landscape with its commitment to responsible and eco-conscious tourism.



Danish-Chinese artist in Eurovision contest 2024

Danish national broadcaster DR presented on 25 January 2024 the eight artists and songs that will participate in 'Melodi Grand Prix' in February, with the winner going on to represent Denmark in Malmö.

One of them is the Danish Chinese Camilla Chu Xu Bjørner, who goes by the artist name of CHU CHU and CXCX Chu Chu. This is how DR presents her among the lineup of participants:

"Camilla Chu grew up in Denmark and China. She is known for her explosive energy and unique musical style, which she is more than ready to bring to the big stage for Melodi Grand Prix in 2024."

"CHU CHU has a unique, powerful sound and a rebellious energy and attitude that, according to the artist herself, should rub off on the audience and give them the strength to be precisely who they are. With



The Chase (Zoom Zoom), CHU CHU is ready to deliver a show of pure power."

Finding something more in writing about Chu Chu is not easy, but there is plenty in the form of sound

On Saturday 17 February at

20:00 CET, you can tune in to DR1 to see the 2024 edition of Melodi Grand Prix, as it comes to us live from Koncertsalen in DR Koncerthuset. There, the eight artists will be performing the songs in contention to become Denmark's entry to the 68th Eurovision Song Contest.

Denmark wants to recruit health care staff from India and Philippines



Photo: Danish Health Minister, Sophie Lohde

Denmark's government announced on Wednesday, 10 January 2024, that it would initiate discussions with India and the Philippines to facilitate recruitment of healthcare professionals to work in Denmark.

The Ministry of Higher Education and Science released a statement expressing the government's commitment to "exploring opportunities for entering into agreements with countries such as India and the Philippines. The focus is on targeted training and recruitment of health professionals."

Persistent labor shortages, particularly in sectors like healthcare, have prompted Denmark to seek foreign expertise. Businesses have previously been advocating for increased foreign labor to address the shortage. Until now, the coalition government has shown wavering perspectives on the extent to which it should tap into international recruitment.

Malaysia returned to the MATKA Travel Fair in Helsinki



Malaysia made a comeback at the MATKA Travel Fair in Helsinki from 18 - 21 January 2024. The main focus was on promoting green tourism initia-

tives. Led by Tourism Malaysia, the delegation presented eco-friendly packages and different cultural experiences.

New offerings included Lang-

kawi Geopark Green Package and Malaysia Arche tourism packages. The Sarawak Tourism Board featured traditional dances and local instruments, along with a cooking demonstration.

Malaysia received over 8,100 visitors from Finland in 2023 marking a significant rise from the recorded 4,091 in 2022. The Southeast Asian country is optimistic about attracting Nordic travelers and has adjusted its 2024 international tourist forecast upward by 18 percent – targeting 19.1 million visitors. The Visit Malaysia Year in 2026 aims to attract 35.6 million international tourists.

Danish Chamber of Commerce in China (DCCC) invites to AGM

The Danish Chamber of Commerce in China (DCCC) invites members – and members only! – to attend the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and evaluate the work of 2023 and elect the Board of Directors for 2024. The AGM will take place in three different locations and on two different dates.

DCCC East, the AGM will take place on Tuesday, 12th March, 5pm-8pm, at the Royal Danish Consulate General in Shanghai. H.E. Mr. Mikael Winther, Ambassador Consul General of the Royal Danish Consulate in Shanghai, will speak on current Denmark-China relations and Ms. Dan Wang, PhD and Chief Economist, Hang Seng Bank China, will dissect critical questions surrounding the country's economic growth, the impact of policies, and the inherent risks and opportunities.

DCCC North, the AGM will take place on Tuesday, 26th March, 14:00 – 17:00 at the Embassy of the Kingdom of Denmark in Beijing. Speakers will be H.E. Mr. Thomas Østrup Møller, Ambassador, Embassy of the Kingdom of Denmark to China and Mr. Robert Xiao, Robert Xiao, Director of the Economist Intelligence Corporate Network (EICN) in Beijing, as he provides expert analysis on the challenges facing the Chinese economy. Against the backdrop of a dropping birth rate, real estate concerns, and a volatile stock market, Robert will shed light on the potential risks and opportunities for businesses and investors.

DCCC South, the AGM will take place on Friday, 29th March, 4:30pm-6pm, at the Royal Danish Consulate General in Guangzhou. Mr. Søren Bindsbøll, Consul Gen-



DCCC – Danish Chamber of Commerce in China kicked off the new year with a captivating event on Thursday, Jan 11 in Beijing: a visit to Microsoft in Beijing and a stimulating panel discussion on "Generative AI." The cutting-edge topic drew over 50 eager attendees, including corporate leaders, students, and AI enthusiasts.

eral of the Royal Danish Consulate in Guangzhou will give a speech, sharing current Denmark-China relations.



Photo: Na Uy, Phung Gia Phat and Pham Minh Quan

Vietnamese salt coffee conquers Finnish consumers

Three Vietnamese high school students studying in Sulkava, southern Finland, have gained popularity for introducing locals to the unique taste of Vietnamese salt coffee.

Na Uy, Phung Gia Phat, and Pham Minh Quan decided to start the venture not only to share Vietnamese culture but also to combat homesickness. With an initial capital of VND500,000, their coffee shop, established in October 2023, quickly attracted attention.

Operating from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., the shop offers salt coffee for 2 EUR, milk coffee for 1.8 EUR, and black coffee for 1.5 EUR. Despite a modest start with only six

or seven customers on the first day, the shop gained popularity rapidly, surprising Finnish customers with the sweet and flavorful salt coffee.

The story garnered attention in a local newspaper and went viral on TikTok, reaching millions of views.

The entrepreneurial trio plans to expand their menu next summer by introducing Vietnamese-style grilled meat sandwiches.

Danish Seamen's Church in Singapore temporarily closed

The Danish Seamen's Church in Singapore will be temporarily closed due to renovations. The renovations are expected to be finished by easter.

The sermons are still available, because the Danish Seamen's Church has borrowed rooms in other parts of the city, and it is still possible to get in touch with the priests.

You can follow the process on Facebook or in the Danish Seamen's church's newsletter

<https://www.facebook.com/DanishSeamensChurchSingapore>



The Norwegian singer-songwriter Aurora performed in Beijing



Renowned Norwegian singer-songwriter, Aurora Aksnes, celebrated for her mesmerizing vocals and commanding performances, graced the stage in Beijing for the first time.

The Songzhu Temple played host to a fan meet-up where Aurora captivated the audience.

Embracing the ancient setting of the city, she not only introduced her latest album to Chinese fans but also immersed herself in traditional Chinese music.

Aurora's musical repertoire seamlessly intertwines traditional, mystical, and contemporary elements that seems to resonate with the Chinese audiences. The Norwegian songstress thereby helped foster cultural connections through her music.

Quran desecration incident in Malaysia echoes burnings in Denmark and Sweden

Jalan Besar Palong, a 37-year-old Malaysian man, was reported for discarding torn pages of the al-Quran – mirroring the incidents in Denmark and Sweden last year, where Quran burnings garnered international attention.

The suspect confessed to the desecration and tested positive for methamphetamine. His past criminal record under the Dangerous Drugs Act and the Penal Code further amplifies the charges against him.

Malaysian authorities are pur-



suing a court remand for the suspect under the Criminal Procedure Code. The charges related to causing religious disharmony and mischief causing damage.

Last year, both Denmark and Sweden faced criticism from, among others, Malaysia and Indonesia after far-right activist Rasmus Paludan burned the Quran on several occasions. In response to these incidents, Denmark passed a law making it illegal to desecrate holy texts.

Several Bangkok flights increased to attract Scandinavian tourists

The surge in Scandinavian flights to Thailand, with Norse Atlantic Airways, Thai Airways and SAS, is to attract more Scandinavian tourists in 2024.

Orn Duangchan, Director of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) office in Stockholm, disclosed that Norse Atlantic Airways is set to broaden its Oslo-Bangkok route during both the summer and winter seasons of 2024-2025. Initially the direct flights were only scheduled until April 13, 2024. Presently operating two flights weekly, Norse Atlantic Airways plans to intensify its service.

Norse Atlantic Airways: In the summer of 2024 (May 29 to September 7), there will be two flights per week, on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Totalling in 30 flights, offering 8,700 seats. The winter season (October 31, 2024, to March 27, 2025), will also have two weekly flights on Thursdays and Saturdays. Between December 17, 2024 and January 18, 2025, an additional Tuesday flight will be introduced.

TAT anticipates that Norse At-



lantic Airways' increased flights will elevate the yearly total of direct flights between Norway and Thailand to 87 in 2024. The flights will provide a combined seating capacity of 25,230.

Thai Airways and SAS: Thai Airways International plans to recommence direct flights from Oslo to Bangkok in July 2024. Ticket sales will start in February.

Scandinavian Airlines (SAS) is contributing to the expanded connectivity by offering direct flights

between Copenhagen and Bangkok throughout the winter season of 2023-2024. These flights, occurring thrice a week from October 30, 2023, to April 2, 2024.

Duangchan emphasized the significance of the Scandinavian tourism market as a high-value long-haul travel segment for Thailand. In 2023, the region witnessed a substantial 80 percent increase, with a total of 375,668 Scandinavian tourists visiting Thailand compared to the corresponding period in 2022.

Thailand implements stricter passport control on domestic flights to find illegal overstayers

Thailand has implemented stricter measures to address illegal overstays by foreigners – particularly in popular tourist areas.

Starting January 16, 2024, foreign travelers on domestic flights must present their original passport matching the boarding pass. In case of passport loss, alternatives like an emergency passport, non-Thai ID, or

driving license are accepted.

The move aims to prevent visa overstays, which can lead to deportation and re-entry bans exceeding 90 days.

The measures reflect the government's commitment to immigration system integrity and a welcoming environment for legitimate travelers.



Norway assists Filipino farmers with solar-powered water pumps

Norway, in collaboration with Yara Fertilizers Philippines Inc., has allocated a grant of 4.0 million Philippine Pesos to introduce solar-powered water pumps in the Philippines.

The initiative aims to boost productivity for 55 farmers across

80 hectares of rice fields. The grant has helped buy and set up 16 solar-powered water pumps, replacing the old diesel pumps. Each solar-powered pump is capable of watering 5 hectares of land.

The project focuses on reducing irrigation costs, increasing profit-

ability, securing yields, and lowering carbon emissions.

The Royal Norwegian Embassy emphasized its commitment to the project – aligning with Norway's goal of promoting food security and renewable energy transition. The success in installing the pumps is seen as scalable across the Philippines.

Yara's Country Manager, Michael Ardieta, has highlighted the project's contribution to a nature-positive food future by reducing emissions, promoting regenerative agriculture, and enhancing prosperity for farmers.

The ongoing monitoring and evaluation aim to demonstrate the project's impact on productivity and profitability, setting a precedent for sustainable agriculture in the country.



Staff awarded for Norwegian mine clearing in Vietnam

Three staff members of Norwegian People's Aid in Quang Tri Province, Vietnam, were awarded individual Certificates of Merit on Friday, 26 January 2024.

The Awards were given to NPA/RENEW Provincial Operations Manager, Mr. Mai Van Viet, Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team Leader, Mr. Hoang Kim Chien, and Field Operator Ms. Nguyen Thi Thuy Linh and they were all honored to receive. The awards were presented by the Quang Tri Province Foreign Affairs Department Director.

The Norwegian People's Aid in Vietnam states that the recognition from the provincial authorities motivates the local staff members



to continue their dangerous, but important job of removing unexploded ordnance.

Norwegian People's Aid have been clearing mines in Vietnam and Cambodia for several years. Photo: Facebook

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