

JUNE 2024

# ScandAsia



**BUSINESS:**

AstraZeneca builds cancer drug factory in Singapore

**INTERNATIONAL:**

China and Norway talked on the phone about Gaza

**COMMUNITY:**

Danish book about menstruation translated to Thai

Swedish kickboxer Smilla

**“The Hurricane”**

Sundell

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# MINIMALLY INVASIVE SCREWS CEMENT AUGMENTATION IN PEDICLE TECHNIQUE (MIS CAPT)

Seniors often have spine injuries, osteoporosis, and other conditions that require spine surgery. If screws support the vertebrae, loose screws are a lesser-known obstacle. Pain and other issues may result from improper bone fusion. Current minimally invasive surgery reduces blood loss, pain, and complications, but loose screws are still a risk. Minimally Invasive Screws Cement Augmentation in Pedicle Technique (MIS CAPT) solves this problem when screws stabilize the spine in elderly patients.



## Bone Fractures in Seniors

Elderly patients may experience multilevel compression fractures due to neglecting vitamin D and calcium supplements, which can cause osteopenia, osteoporosis, and fractures. Lifting heavy objects, poor posture, or falls can also cause spine injury. For elderly patients with brittle bones, these can cause severe backache and hunchback. Thus, patients should seek medical attention for spine injury diagnosis and treatment.

## What is MIS CAPT?

**Minimally Invasive Screws Cement Augmentation in Pedicle Technique** or **MIS CAPT** is an integration of standard screw pedicle surgery and cement injection to stabilize the bone. It requires a stack of two needles with a hole on the side. However, the incision is small, thereby reducing blood loss and complications. The cement will help stabilize the screw-bone interface to effectively prevent screws from becoming loose.

## Benefits of MIS CAPT

- ◆ Any screws can be used for MIS CAPT. For strong fusion, cement can be placed 360 degrees around the screws.
- ◆ Any minimally invasive spine surgery can benefit from MIS CAPT to reduce trauma and increase efficacy.
- ◆ Osteoporosis, fractures, compression, and degenerative bone disease patients can reduce pain and return to normal activities quicker without complications. MIS CAPT can also prevent another loose screw surgery.



## Who Should Get MIS CAPT



Patients with spine fracture



Patients with osteopenia



Patients with brittle bones



Patients suffering from osteoporosis



Patients who broke their back or have hunchback



Patients with spondylolisthesis



Patients with scoliosis

## Height Decline Indicates Compression Fracture

Elderly people lose height for many reasons. Fluid loss between vertebrae can cause elderly adults to lose 2-3 centimeters. Age-related osteopenia and osteoporosis can cause brittleness. Thalassaemia, a bone or bone marrow tumor, can shorten adults. Your loved ones should be monitored if they lose more than 5 centimeters and slouch quickly. It is best to consult a specialist as soon as possible.



**Spine Surgeon Specialized in MIS CAPT**  
**Gp. Capt. Dr. Tayard Buranakarl**

- ◆ The founder of Bangkok Spine Center.
- ◆ Leading spine surgeon and faculty of Thai Spine Society.
- ◆ The first surgeon in Thailand who performed ALIF, MAST TLIF, DLIF, OLIF, SIJ Fusion and MIS CAPT.



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# Transfer Immigration Detention to Department of Correction

I am registered with the judiciary of Thailand as a translator between Danish and Thai. A few times a year I am requested to translate in court hearings involving a Danish citizen. That has brought me in closer contact with the judicial system and the penal systems in Thailand than most other expats.

It began back in 2006, when I was thrown into a case about a Danish man, James Christensen, who was accused of attempted murder by arsoning. As part of the case, which took eight years, the prison in Langsuan north of Suratthani invited me in to see the conditions inside and although different from a Nordic prison I got a positive impression.

Still, I have always steered well clear of writing about conditions in Thai prisons. I find it cheap to point out the obvious differences between our Nordic and the Thai penal system. Any society needs a way to punish a citizen and the saying that the level of a country's civilization can be judged by entering its prisons is only true to a certain extent.

Then recently I came in close contact with two Danes - again starting out as the interpreter - who were imprisoned first in a regular Thai prison under the Department of Correction and then secondly in a detention center under the Immigration Bureau of the Royal Thai Police. Their recollections of what they witnessed while detained here made me search for others who have told about their experiences.

These authors and other victims of detention interviewed by the media are often accused of exaggerating their experience for the sake of selling their books or getting sympathy, but I have come to believe more and more that their description of the conditions in the two detention centers in Bangkok, where they spent time, reflects the truth.

While the Kingdom surely grapples with other more serious systemic problems, I still dare to wish that someone somewhere in Thailand's Ministry of Interior would look into the possibility of wresting these immigration detention centers out from the grip of the police and transfer them to the Department of Correction where their handling of prisoners reflects much better the level of civilization in the Thai society.



**Gregers Moller**  
*Editor in Chief*

## ScandAsia

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

**Editor-in-Chief :**  
Gregers A.W. Møller  
[gregers@scandasia.com](mailto:gregers@scandasia.com)

**Advertising :**  
Finn Balslev  
[finn@scandmedia.com](mailto:finn@scandmedia.com)  
MB: +66 81 866 2577

**Graphic Designer :**  
Peerapol Meesuwat  
[Peerapol@scandmedia.com](mailto:Peerapol@scandmedia.com)

**Production Manager:**  
Sopida Yatprom

**Printing :**  
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Tel: +66 2943 7166-8 Fax: +66 2943 7169 website: [www.scandmedia.com](http://www.scandmedia.com)  
[patcharee.scandmedia@gmail.com](mailto:patcharee.scandmedia@gmail.com)  
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# AISL Harrow Schools Host Inaugural International Education Development Conference with ASEAN Partners

## Shape Brighter Future for Innovative & Integrated Education

Asia International School Limited (AISL) Group, the operator of Harrow International Schools, Harrow LiDe Schools, Harrow Hong Kong Children School, and Harrow Little Lions, recently held the 2024 International Education Development Conference at Harrow LiDe School Nanning in China. AISL is a leading provider of educational services in Asia. The conference was supported by the Asia Pacific Entrepreneurs Association (APEA).

Thought leaders from China and ASEAN countries, including educators, education group representatives and consulate generals, gathered to explore innovative and integrated approaches to education. The conference aimed to foster regional cooperation and pave the way for a brighter future in the field.

Following the conference on 30 March 2024, a group of over 30 conference participants visited on 2 April 2024 Harrow International School Bangkok, alongside two other celebrated educational institutions in Bangkok for further exchange of experience.

## 300 Education Leaders Convene to Share Regional Best Practices

Nearly 300 participants within the education field gathered and shared insights and best practices. Diplomats from consulates based in Nanning and South East Asia, together with representatives from various Chinese government departments and institutions engaged in thought-provoking keynote speeches and panel discussions on various topics, speeches and panel discussions on such as overseas education pro-



grams, research partnerships, joint curriculum development, and talent cultivation.

Several of the speakers focused on how international schools in China and the ASEAN countries could further internationalise their education and integrate regionally. Among them was Mr. Dianjun Wang, National Inspector, Chairman of the International Specialised Schools Branch of the China Private Education Association who talked about how educational cooperation could promote regional integration and cooperation between China and ASEAN countries.

Another prominent speaker was Mr. Hendro Widjaya, President, Indonesian Association of State and Private Schools, who focused on deepening collaboration through teacher and student exchanges, joint education programmes, research cooperation and more.

## Harrow Bangkok Welcomes Participants, Fostering Ideas Exchange

A significant aspect of the conference was the visit to a few selected educational institutions in Thailand on 2nd April 2024. Led by senior management of Nanning Harrow LiDe School, a group of over 30 conference participants visited Samchaiwitaedsuksa School, Assumption University and Harrow International School Bangkok.

Harrow Bangkok, the first AISL Harrow School with a 25-year history, warmly welcomed the group as a co-organiser of the conference. The group visited the campus, experienced the seamless integration of Harrow's traditions with local culture and engaged in fruitful exchanges with the School Head. This visit facilitated the exchange of ideas and experiences, further strengthening

ties between AISL Group and the educational community in ASEAN countries.

## Reaffirms Commitment to Educational Excellence in Diverse Community

The success of the 2024 International Education Development Conference underscores AISL Group's commitment to educational excellence and making a positive impact in the education industry in China and ASEAN countries. By embracing innovation, fostering collaboration, and exploring new horizons in education, AISL Group strives to shape the future of education and provide students with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in a rapidly changing world.

Today, the AISL Harrow International Schools in Bangkok, Beijing, Hong Kong and Shanghai are highly regarded, with Nanning joining the family in 2021 all offering exceptional education to prepare students with diverse backgrounds and abilities for a life of learning, leadership, service and personal fulfillment.

AISL Harrow International Schools are independent day and boarding schools for students aged 18 months to 18 years. This international diversity creates a dynamic learning environment. Helping to shape the character of all students regardless of age and nationality are the Harrow Values of Courage, Honour, Humility and Fellowship. These Values anchor the holistic educational approach that focuses on individual care and support to develop the whole person.

AISL Harrow International Schools are equally renowned for academic excellence, the House System, and enrichment and service activities that produce high-achievers with the leadership attributes and experiences that will serve them well throughout their lives and benefit the wider community tomorrow.



# Arctic property for sale in Norway

A piece of property in the arctic region of Svalbard Norway has come on the market for sale. The owners wish to have the opportunity to sell to Chinese buyers, but the Norwegian government isn't thrilled with this option.

The property is for sale at 300 million euros and is the size of about 60 square kilometers. The owners, represented by Per Kyllingstad, states that there have been some interest from Chinese buyers:

"The Chinese are natural potential buyers since they've been showing a real interest in the Arctic and Svalbard for a long time," he told AFP.

However the Norwegian government isn't as thrilled about the prospect of China owning land in the Norwegian arctic. The hesitation from the government's side is due to a statement from Norway's intelligence services who says that China is the second biggest threat to the Scandinavian countries after Russia.

Therefore the Norwegian At-



torney General has put the breaks on the sale:

"The land can't be sold without the Norwegian authorities' approval," Trade and Industry Minister Cecilie Myrseth told AFP, and continues: "Nor is it possible to hold negotiations about the property".

This decision is grounded in

a treaty from 1919. However, the owners believe that this treaty has reached its statute of limitations and that Norway is missing out on a great investment opportunity.

"Imagine if Norway now adopted rules limiting the activities of Russian holdings," Per Kyllingstad said. "It would be World War Three."

## Finland helps Vietnam predict extreme weather



The Finnish Minister of Climate and Environment, Kai Mykkänen, states that the Finnish funded projects are doing quite well in Vietnam.

The projects focus on modernization of air quality, monitoring and management systems in urban areas, and hydro-meteorological services. According to the Minister this has contributed to significantly improving the National Center for Hydro-Meteorological Forecasting in early signs of extreme weather.

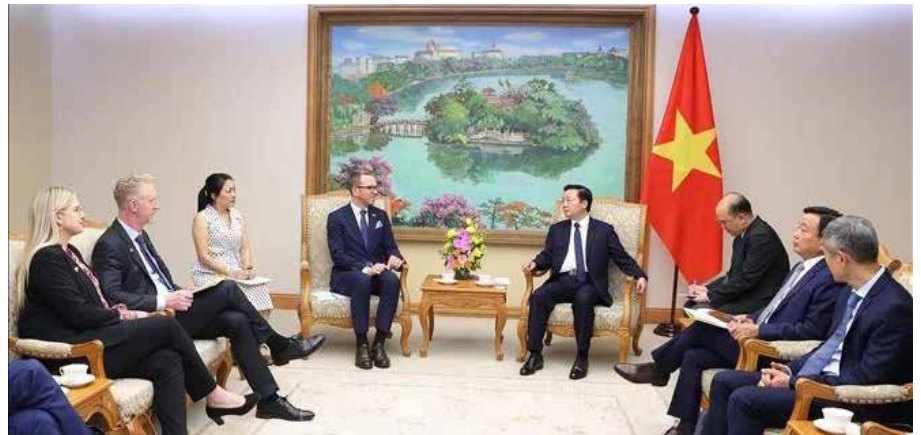
According to the minister, the Northern Center for Environmental Monitoring under the Vietnam Environment Administration, has a focus on expanding with a vision for 2050.

# Vietnamese Deputy PM meets Swedish Minister of Infrastructure and Housing

The Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister Tran Hong Ha met with the Swedish Minister of Infrastructure and Housing, Andreas Carlson, on 15 May 2024 in Hanoi. At the meeting both countries expressed their wishes for future cooperation.

The Norwegian minister said that Swedish firms are interested in business opportunities within fields of smart cities and smart transportation. He also underlined that an increasing number of Swedes are traveling to Vietnam. He mentioned that both governmental business and activities that promote cultural exchange should contribute positively to Norway-Vietnam relations.

Tran Tong Ha mentioned that Norwegian firms could possibly find



Vietnamese partners within telecommunications, information technology, green energy conversion, human resource training for the semiconductor chip industry and smart infrastructure.

The Vietnamese Deputy PM said that the bilateral collaboration

of the two countries have been sustainable and fruitful in various areas. He underlined how the partnership has become equal and mutually beneficial and that Sweden is among the 10 major trading partners within the European Union.

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# Man sentenced for attempted rape on Swedish woman



A South Korean man named Cho Tae Kwon violated and attempted to rape a 25-year-old Swedish woman in Singapore in September 2022. On May 13, 2024, the case went to court, and the now 51-year-old man was sentenced to eight years and four and a half months in jail.

Back in 2022, when the crime was committed, Mr. Cho Tae Kwon had been out with colleagues for dinner and drinks. Upon returning to his building, he saw the young Swedish woman asleep by the pool of the residential building they both lived in. She had been out clubbing with

friends, consuming alcohol, and had stepped out to the pool to call her boyfriend. After finishing the conversation, she felt tired and drifted off to sleep.

The incident was partially captured by a surveillance camera. This showed how Mr. Cho Tae Kwon tried touching her, and when she didn't have any response he took it further. He removed her shorts and attempted to rape the woman. She woke up twice. The first time she was groggy, and didn't have the strength to push Mr. Cho Tae Kwon away. Due to the alcohol in her blood she fell back asleep.

However, the second time she woke up, she managed to push Mr. Cho Tae Kwon off of her. As they both fell off the beach sofa by the pool, she grabbed her belongings and ran to her apartment. Accidentally, she also took Mr. Cho Tae Kwon's shorts.

The Swedish woman reported the attack the next morning, and Mr. Cho Tae Kwon was quickly arrested after security reviewed the video footage.

On Monday, 13 May 2024, Mr. Cho Tae Kwon pleaded guilty to charges of attempted rape and outrage of modesty.

The Deputy Public Prosecutors, Claire Poh and Natalie Chu, stated their opinions during the sentencing:

"It is tragic that a young woman was senselessly violated in a place where she should have felt safe and secure."

The names of the Swedish woman and her friends have not been released to the public for privacy reasons.

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## The Embassy of the Philippines in Denmark hosts exhibition

To kick off the National Heritage Month the Philippine Embassy in Denmark launched a Gangsa Exhibition. The exhibition focuses on the musical instrument from the Cordilleras, and is presented in the halls of the Philippine Embassy.

The exhibition has been created in cooperation with the Filipino

organization BIMAAK-Denmark.

At the opening of the exhibition there was a lecture about the instrument of the Gangsa. Primarily about its origin, cultural significance, its symbolism, and its contemporary perspectives.

The exhibition is available for viewing until 31 May 2024.



# Norwegian officials sees opportunities at Chinese expo

Multiple Norwegian officials urged Norwegian businesses to consider participating in the China International Import Expo (CIIE), seeing it as a great opportunity to showcase new products and technologies and to foster further cooperation and exchange.

These sentiments were expressed on 13 May 2024 at the 7th CIIE Promotion Conference in Oslo.

“Shanghai, one of China’s key gateways to the global market, is a vital hub for business, trade, and finance,” states Ole Henæs, the regional director for Asia and the Middle East at Innovation Norway.

He also adds that if businesses are interested in participating, then it is possible to seek financial and



logistical support from Innovation Norway.

Elise Chen, managing director at the Norwegian-Chinese Chamber of Commerce, also encourages businesses to attend:

“The CIIE provides a unique platform for Norwegian businesses to demonstrate their products, ser-

vices, and innovations to the Chinese market,” she stated to the media Xinhua.

The China International Import Expo will take place from November 5, 2024, to November 10, 2024.

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# New Finnish studies criticize Northern energy sector



Professor of Global Development Studies, Anja Nygren, from Helsinki has published a project, which focuses on the aftermath of energy plants in the south, and where the responsibility lies.

According to her studies, the northern part of the world has a tendency to seek labor in the southern regions, in countries such as Cambodia, Indonesia, Mexico, and others, to benefit from cheap labor. However, she argues that the long-

term aftermath of ruined ecosystems left behind is blissfully forgotten by the northern employers. She emphasizes that it is important to consider how the changes caused by an oil plant or a dam affect the local residents.

Her project, titled “Repair and Responsibility in Ruined Environments,” was released on May 17, 2024.

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# China and Norway talked on the phone about Gaza

Special Envoy Zhai Jun of the Chinese Government on the Middle East Issues had a phone call with the Norwegian Special Representative to the Middle East Peace Process Hilde Haraldstad on 15 May 2024. The phone call was at the request of Hilde Haraldstad and the two sides exchanged their views on the conflict in Gaza.

Zhen Jun said that the ongoing conflict in Gaza has created great concern in the international community and that China is ready to work together in order to end the conflict. Furthermore, Zhen Jun said that a ceasefire is the key solution and that ensuring humanitarian rescue is the top priority. The ultimate goal is a full implementation of the “two-state solution” and a peaceful coexistence between Palestine and Israel and Arab and Jewish nations.

Hilde Haraldstad said that Norway has worked actively on various parties in order to defuse tensions



She appointed the promotion of a ceasefire, cessation of hostilities and ensuring unimpeded humanitarian assistance as the most pressing tasks. She also said that Norway appreciates China’s constructive role and is ready to maintain communication

and coordination with China. Concluding, she said that Norway firmly supports the political settlement of the Palestinian question.

# Sweden uncertain on Tariffs on Chinese cars

The Swedish Prime Minister, Ulf Kristersson, is hesitant to follow the US's example and add European tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles:

Sweden does not stand alone in its hesitation. The German Chancellor, Olaf Scholz, isn't convinced either:

"As far as tariffs are concerned, we agree that it is a bad idea to dismantle global trade," stated Ulf Kristersson during Olaf Scholz's visit to Sweden.

Olaf Scholz also pointed out that half of the EVs imported from China have been produced by Western manufacturers.



# Nordic embassies express condolences to deceased activist



The Ambassadors from Denmark, Sweden, the EU, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and the US Embassies in Thailand have all expressed condolences for the family, friends and loved ones of the political activist Netiporn "Bung" Sanesangkhom, who passed away in a Thai prison on Tuesday morning 14 May 2024.

The Ambassador of Denmark in Thailand, Jon Thorgaard, wrote the following on X, former Twitter:

"Saddened by the passing of Ms. Netiporn "Bung" Sanesangkhom. Our thoughts and condolences are with her family and loved ones."

And the Embassy of Sweden wrote on X:

"Saddened by the news today that political activist Ms Netiporn Sanesangkhom has passed away after a long hunger strike. Our thoughts and condolences to her family, friends and loved ones."

The Thai activist has been on a months-long hunger strike while in detention in a Thai prison. Officials have said that the 28-year old woman died as her heart stopped suddenly. She was part of a youth movement, which called for royal reforms and has been detained since 26 January 2024. Her hunger strike began the day after she was de-

tained and she only accepted water once again in late February and food from April.

She faced seven separate charges including two of insulting the monarchy. One of her political demands include reform of the Thai justice system, to demand the right to bail and changing the lese majeste law, which makes critical comments on the royal family illegal.

Member of Thai Parliament Rukchanok Srinork from the reformist Move Forward Party also turned to X to pay tribute to the activist. Furthermore, she wrote:

"How many more times will the courts allow deaths like these to happen until they're satisfied?"

The politician is facing a six year sentence for convictions herself, which include a lese-majeste.

# Swedish Smilla “The Hurricane” Sundell is taking Muay Thai by storm

By Charlotte Nike Albrechtsen

**T**he stadium was packed with people. “Smilla – the Hurricane – Sundell”, the announcer yelled in the microphone and his enthusiastic voice filled the stadium. In the second round of intense fighting, the young Swedish girl pushed her opponent to the corner of the boxing ring. Her fists rained down on Natalia Diachkova’s body, who stood bent over protecting her face. Smilla placed her hands on Diachkova’s back and rammed her knee into the Russian fighter’s side. Diachkova swiveled out of the ring, out between the ropes that frame the fighting ground.

The judge put his arm in between the female fighters and raised his hands over his head to announce that the fight was over. Smilla ran to the other side of the ring, making small jumps of joy as she went. Her father, mouth wide open in a scream of excitement, jumped over the fence into his daughter’s arms. Father and daughter held each other tight and screamed – the hard work had finally paid off.

That Saturday morning Smilla won the fight in the infamous Lumpinee Stadium in Bangkok, but she lost her title as a world champion.

## Taking Thai-boxing by storm

Swedish Smilla Sundell was only 12 years old, when her family moved from Sundbyberg in Sweden to the sunshine island of Koh Samui in southern Thailand. She quickly got a bag for Muay Thai boxing, the only sport available on the island.

When Smilla was 15, her family returned to Sweden. Her little sister had to finish her schooling and covid had made life abroad difficult. But Smilla stayed. Thai-boxing was too important to let go. She moved to the Fairtex Gym in Pattaya, where she still trains today.

Smilla became the youngest person to ever win a Muay Thai world title in April 2022 at only 17 years old. She was the ONE Championship Women’s Strawweight Muay Thai World Champion until the weigh-in on Thursday 2 May 2024.

The young Thai-boxer weighed 126,5lbs or 57,4kg. The allowed maximum weight for the strawweight fight category for women is 125 lbs or 56,7kg. Smilla lost her world title on the scales by weighing less than a kilo too much. A video recorded Smilla’s reaction just after the weigh-in. Tears rolled down her cheeks, as she buried her







“

*Thailand is my home.  
But for me I would  
say that home is where  
my family is.*

”



Boxer Smilla Sundell

“

*I think I have already done the coolest thing within Muay Thai boxing – winning the belt at 17.*

”

YouTube

face in her hands. But despite the disappointment Smilla's opponent agreed to a fight. Smilla fought and won, but because she weighed too much for her weight group, she couldn't take home the belt.

## Losing weight

The so-called “cutting” phase is the most difficult thing about fighting, according to Smilla. Smilla and many other combat fighters partake in extreme weight-loss activities just before they get weighed. On the last day, the fighters spend some hours in a sauna to sweat out extra water. Others may use diuretics and laxatives or do cardio. On average a fighter will “cut” around 7 percent of their body weight before they step on the scale.

“The day before weigh-in you basically don't eat anything and I usually run. It is the whole week before the fight, which is very intense,” according to Smilla.

In the period between the weigh-in and the fight, the fighter will then gain weight again to regain their strength. Basically, the aim is to lose as much weight as possible, so the fighters can compete at a lower weight group than what they actually weigh.

“I feel like it is a bit difficult to have a healthy relationship with my body in a cutting phase. You can definitely end up in very dark places, but when you get into a fight maybe you can get out of it,” Smilla said.

Smilla's trainers even considered cutting her long blonde hair in order to make her weigh the right amount for the fight. But the hair only weighed a quarter pound, and therefore it didn't make enough of a difference.

In 2015 a ONE Championship star called Yang Jian Bing died, when his heart stopped after an especially harsh weight-cut. The tragedy prompted ONE to impose hydration tests in the week of the weigh-in. Smilla has also noticed a difference between men and women when it comes to cutting.

“Women don't lose as much water and the weight is also dependent on the menstrual cycle. I just need to try my best all the time. I have nutritionists who take care of me and make sure I am healthy. That helps a lot,” Smilla said.



## A girl from Sundbyberg

The birthplace of Smilla's passion has become her home as well.

"Thailand is my home. But for me I would say that home is where my family is," Smilla said.

The 19-year-old Muay Thai boxer has been living on her own for four years now and is more than 8000 kilometers away from her family.

"I haven't seen my mom in over one and a half years, and yeah it was hard. But I have FacetTime, which helped a lot. I think I may have missed out on some teenage stuff, but I'm doing what I love right now, so I am happy about that."

Even though it is unusual for young people to be alone in a foreign country at that age, Smilla is very proud of what she has accomplished.

"I think I have already done the coolest thing within Muay Thai boxing – winning the belt at 17. I think if I had grown up in Sweden, I wouldn't be doing this. I'd be working a normal job, and, yeah, not see the world I do now," Smilla said.

## New opportunities

Even though Smilla lost her title, she hasn't lost her spirit. Her team and her have pushed ONE Championship for a heavier weight group, the so-called flyweight's division, so she can continue fighting. But she also is not sure if she could go for the strawweight once more if she maybe gets an extra month for losing weight.

And their efforts might bear fruit sooner rather than later as the ONE Championship's director Chatri Sityodtong said publicly, that he considers opening a new 135lbs women's Muay Thai division in light of Smilla's loss.

Smilla is also considering trying out Mixed Martial Arts – maybe even in Sweden, where she knows a good gym. Right now, Smilla is looking forward to a tour around the US, where she will do seminars and teach other fighters her techniques.



# Queens of Sweden and Thailand participate in Child Protection Summit

By Charlotte Nike Albrechtsen

Queen Silvia of Sweden and Queen Suthida of Thailand today took part in the Child Protection Summit Bangkok 2024, where politicians, experts and the royals themselves gave speeches on committing to the UN goal of ending violence towards children in 2030. At the summit speakers celebrated the Swedish Queen's commitment to the World Childhood Foundation, which she founded in 1999 in order to end abuse against children.

The event took place in the United Nations Conference Center in Bangkok and was visited by prominent decision makers such as the President of the Supreme Court Mrs. Anocha Chevitsophon, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Mr. Anutin Charnvirakul, the Minister of Justice Pol. Col Thawee Sodsong, the Minister of Social Development and Human Security of

Thailand Mr. Varawut Silpa-archa and the Chief of Sustainability and Strategic Development Officer Dr. Teerapon Tanomsakyut.

The star-specked lineup did not go unnoticed by the Swedish royalty. She praised the attendants for their high spirits and used the Swedish term "ildsjæl" or "fire soul" in English, to describe how much energy they put into their work. In her closing remarks, Queen Silvia said: "I have never been to a conference where so many important people have gathered. Usually one Minister takes part, but in Thailand simply everyone is involved. And everyone talked about the children. I am humble, I am proud and I am happy."

The Queens oversaw the three Ministries represented at the summit sign a MOU, which aims to set new standards and foster zero tolerance of child exploitation. Furthermore, the Child Choral Group performed a



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*We have work to do. It starts with the children, we need to show the children, that we see them and that we listen.*

”

choir performance for the royals and the Queens visited exhibitions by local organizations mapping the state of violence against children in Thailand.

All speakers at the summit took special notice of how abuse and exploitation of children is moving to the internet, which prompts the need for new ways to catch the perpetrators and safeguard children.

“Ladies and Gentlemen, we have work to do. It starts with the children, we need to show the children, that we see them and that we listen. And the perpetrators need to know that they cannot hide. Child sexual abuse is a borderless crime and we need to collaborate internationally,” Queen Silvia said in her opening speech.

Queen Suthida of Thailand praised Queen Silvia in her speech and said that the Swedish Queen is well-known in Thailand for her fight for children. She also

commented on the role of the internet and what should be done to keep the children safe.

“How can we safeguard our children, when the dangers are out of arm’s reach? Sexual abuse of children is a complex issue. We need holistic solutions, we need financial support for vulnerable children, we need public awareness, we need local communities to learn about the dangers. Her Majesty Queen Silvia should be an inspiration to us all,” Queen Suthida said.

Chairman of the Safeguard Kids organization Mr. Schlee Wood-Thanan, also praised the efforts of the Swedish Queen and highlighted how her trip to Thailand only lasted 16 hours, compared to the 24 hours of flying it takes to fly back and forth.

“You must be tired,” Mr. Schlee Wood-Thanan said to the Queen, “We now need to help the Queen fulfill her wish of shutting down her foundation as soon as possible,” he finished his speech.

Another recurring talking point was the law to make child pornography illegal, which was passed in Thailand in 2015 and is seen as a great victory. Mr. Suriyon Sriorathakul of the Safeguardkids Foundation said the following on the topic in the event’s closing remark:

“From 2004 to 2015 I worked on the law to make child pornography illegal. Back then we received guidance from the Swedish King and Queen. It took eleven years and five governments passed. Now even more years have passed and the law needs an update and more articles should be added. Articles which safeguard children from sexting, grooming and sextortion. This time it should not take so long.”

Other important speakers were Swedish Paula Guillet de Monthoux, who is the Secretary General of the Queen’s organization World Childhood Foundation and two panel discussions were held with speakers from human rights groups, Thai Police units, UNICEF and government officials.



# We can do a lot in Singapore

## Diplomat Juha Markkanen is Finland's new Ambassador to Singapore

By Joakim Persson

**H**is Excellency Mr. Juha Markkanen handed over his credentials to become Finland's new Ambassador to Singapore in October last year. This is his first posting as Ambassador.

ScandAsia met him at the Finnish Embassy.

Ambassador Markkanen immediately makes one feel warmly welcomed, and his enthusiasm about being in Singapore shines through. He thinks the balmy tropical climate has initially been slightly challenging to get used to, but, despite that, this was a posting he had applied for and very much wanted to have.

"I think a decisive factor was that I have been focusing on trade promotion ever since my posting as Consul General in Los Angeles back in 2013. Singapore is known as a business and financial hub and one of Southeast Asia's most important places for companies," the Ambassador reflects.

### Diplomat for over three decades

The ambassador is a lawyer by profession. For three years he worked within banking before joining Finland's Foreign Service. He explains how that shift happened:

"In the early 1990's the case with Finnish SME's and export was totally different compared to for example Denmark or Sweden where they have long industrial and exporting traditions. In Finland there were not that many companies active abroad. I thought that I would like to work in foreign countries and travel. Then I saw an advertisement about the next diplomatic course starting in 1991, so I applied and was accepted. And I'm still here after more than three decades!" he smiles.

His diplomatic career then began in Germany, followed by Tokyo as the second posting abroad and then back to Helsinki. So, previous Asian experience mainly entails being posted in Japan.

"When our children were small – 3 and 5 respectively – we left Helsinki and moved to Tokyo. That was in 2000. I was number three in ranking at the Finnish

embassy. After that I spent a pretty long time in the ministry in various positions, before going to Sweden in 2010 as the deputy to the ambassador, having the very nice title 'Minister', which one can have, as deputy, at Finland's largest embassies. From Sweden we went to the USA, which was the first posting for me to be head of a Finnish mission – at the Finnish Consulate General in Los Angeles."

"I returned back to Finland from Los Angeles at the end of 2016 to play a heavy part within trade promotion. And before coming to Singapore I was a Director of the Finnish Foreign Ministry's new trade promotion unit, which we established three years ago. Now I think the biggest priority for the Finnish embassy – like for the other Nordic embassies here – is the trade promotion and working a lot with companies and trying to help them in many ways," Juha reflects.

## Identifying the priorities

"I know from the outset that Singapore will be quite challenging, and where our team is comparatively limited and this is a very bustling town and city state and hub, with a lot occupying us. But I have, from the beginning, networked with our nearest and dearest colleagues – the Nordic ambassadors – and been very happy to get some useful information and advice from them. So there's already great co-operation and we have unity between the Nordic ambassadors, including the New Nordics."

"I have of course also received excellent briefings, actually from not only one but two previous Singapore ambassadors – my predecessor Antti Vänskä and also previous ambassador Paula Parviainen. Antti also hosted a pre-visit for me last year, including networking."

When it comes to Finland's focus areas and countries within Asia the ambassador believes that the government in Helsinki is more likely to look towards Beijing, Seoul or Tokyo, as well as Indonesia as an important player due to their larger populations.

"But there is a lot we can do, relating to very important shared Nordic clusters we have – digitalisation and IT, for example. Then, there are these green energy challenges, with possibilities, because there we possess huge knowledge and have great companies. I would also like to raise the health and welfare sector, as people are aging also here in Singapore."

On that front some Finnish entrepreneurs have recently established the Finnish Hovi Club, an elderly care activity centre in Singapore, where Juha attended the inauguration.

"I also think that in particular Denmark but also Sweden are much better than Finnish companies when it comes to food export from the Nordics. Here in Singapore many people consume Norwegian salmon, or Danish pork and chicken and I have already bought Oatly's oat milk due to my lactose intolerance. So we are evaluating if there could be chances also for Finnish food export, even if it might be marginal," he observes.



## Trade promotion and facilitation

In his embassy team Juha also has a trade specialist as extra resource (replacing Riku Mäkelä), who is now Irma Ylikangas, Counsellor of Innovation and Trade Affairs, an ideal person given that she has been engaged with Singapore via trade relations during a number of years also in her previous capacity working for the city of Helsinki.

"Irma's contract is for three years at least but I wish that she will continue. Irma's predecessor worked here for more than five years and that continuation is very important in order to build long-term relationships, and even more so in our case, since we are somewhat limited in our personnel. I'll also try to highlight back to Helsinki that enhanced resources would be very much welcomed for us."

There is also joint Nordic collaboration taking place through the Nordic Innovation House, which will continue with Finland's involvement. Crucially, the Finnish national airline Finnair – as the only Nordic airline – also connects Helsinki and Singapore with direct flights. In this regard Juha has also witnessed the city of Rovaniemi and Visit Finland, along with Finnair, exhibiting at the annual travel trade show ITB Asia, and being very successful in attracting Asian tourists to visit Finland, especially during the winter season.

When Finnair celebrated 100 years in 2023 this was also celebrated with an event in Singapore, which ambassador Juha attended, and in company with also the ambassadors from Estonia and Lithuania that have recently opened up their respective embassies in Singapore.

Regarding facilitating Finnish companies and start-ups to enter Singapore the ambassador reflects:

"It is particularly about opening doors and networks for them. We have knowledge of and are in contact with key decision-makers that we can connect them with, to make it easier for them to start negotiating and cooperating with their counterparts here in Singapore. For Finnish companies this assistance is free of charge," he adds.

There is also ongoing collaboration with Business Finland's Regional Head for the APAC (based in Kuala Lumpur), Mr. Pekka Laitinen: "We must ensure that we are rowing in the same direction all the time so that they know what we are doing and we know what they are up to."



Agneta's  
World

Agneta de Bekassy

“

*See you at Take Eat Easy  
– the ultimate place just  
to sit and take it easy!*

”



# Take Eat Easy in Soi Yenakat 19

By Agneta de Bekassy

**D**ear readers, I am excited to introduce you to a recently opened restaurant in Soi Yenakat 19, Sathorn. Yenakat has emerged as quite a culinary street area with a string of exquisite restaurants.

In a previous issue, I had the pleasure of introducing you to the Swedish fine dining experience of Villa Frantzen and its charismatic Chef Nilas. Today, I am thrilled to continue this gastronomic journey to Take Eat Easy, the latest addition to Yenakat's culinary landscape.

Take Eat Easy is a restaurant built of mostly wood. It has a huge, beautiful terrace with many different green plants and orchids. You can dine on the terrace or inside in the contemporary dining room. There is also a bar if you just wish to drop by for a cocktail.

The food is Californian style, lots of smoked dishes. You can come for a healthy breakfast, a light lunch or a delicious dinner.

There is something for all tastes. I had the great pleasure to be invited to taste the food and beverage shortly

after the soft opening that took place in the beginning of April 2024.

For many years, I happen to know and be a friend of the Swedish Entrepreneur Johan Per Simon Davidsson. Many of you may have heard about and some even met this creative, dynamic young man here in Bangkok before. He was the one who started his hotel career at Hotel Fenix with the Rooftop bar The Nest, on Sukhumvit Soi 11, followed by the Muse Hotel. Among others.

If I should write about all the projects Johan has been in charge of, the magazine will be far too thick. I do have to mention though, that Johan for years was in control of and managed well known places like the Iron Fairies, Maggie Chou, The Flow bar, the Six degrees at Silom Road, just to mention a few. All popular places then as well as now.

Johan has also experience from previous jobs in Australia, Brisbane, The Valley and of course in his home country Sweden.

It is easier to tell what this hyperactive man has





done. His head is working 24 hours, always new ideas, some possible to realize, some maybe not.

Even if Johan seems to have many irons in the fire, he takes time for his Thai wife Caliana, who also works with him, and their two young, adorable children, a son and a daughter.

The restaurant belongs to a Russian company and Johan is responsible for food and beverage, he calls himself “the Group chef”.

On my first evening at Take Eat Easy I tried raw tuna in a delicious sauce as a starter, followed by lamb chops, which is my favorite meat.

I don't lie if I tell you, it was to die for, so tender and juicy.

The wine list is also something special. We started with a bottle that had a kind of weird label name “You fuck my wine?”

A very easily drinking wine that tastes like more.

If you are not a big wine lover, I'm happy to tell you that you can order draft dark beer Laos, which is one of

the best dark beers I know, in the good company of the Belgian Leffe.

It's amazing that so many really good restaurants have popped up more or less next to each other on Yenakat e.g., Mamma Dolores, a more casual open-air restaurant, the Fine dining Workshop, the Gagette and Villa Frantzen.

If you, like me, live on Sukhumvit, you might think it is too complicated to travel to Sathorn, but believe me, it is worth it.

I am, for sure, going back in the very near future as I also have the pleasure finding my Goddaughter working there. All good things come in a three pack, food, Johan and Goddaughter.

See you at Take Eat Easy – the ultimate place just to sit and take it easy!



# An Exchange in the Greenest city in Asia

Many young people decide to do a semester abroad when they are in their studies. It is a known fact that it might be more the country itself that draws the students than the courses in the country. However, ScandAsia has talked to an exchange student in Singapore, and he has more to add.

*By Lærke Kobberup*

Vegard Voss is 25 years old and from Norway. He studies international management and Finance. Earlier this month he finished a semester at the National University of Singapore. He recognizes many of the presumptions when it comes to taking a semester abroad:

"The courses weren't really a high priority when I decided to go abroad. Of course I wanted a good school, but I mainly wanted to live abroad and meet different cultures," he says.

However, gradually he has grown fond of Singapore, and when an opportunity to stay presented itself, he didn't hesitate to take it.

**Falling in Love with the Singapore**  
Singapore was third on Vegard Voss's list of countries he wanted to go to. However, he was not disappointed. He had never been to Asia before and quickly discovered all it had to offer.



*It has the perfect geographical placement for traveling around, but you always come back to its cleanliness and feel safe.*



Singapore with its green leaves creeping along the city's buildings. The dense heat that is only released when the rain starts to pour. The city is organized and safe. Everything has a system, and this appeals to Vegard Voss. He especially loves its structure, when it comes to having a base and traveling the region:

"It has the perfect geographical placement for traveling around, but you always come back to its cleanliness and feel safe."

Vegard Voss has been in Singapore four and a half months now and he understands why it has become such a hub for business and trade:

"It might all look a bit like the same when you are looking in from the outside. But, when you are studying finance or trade, you realize that there are so many opportunities here."

He definitely enjoyed his exchange in this organized city. So much that he started to look at options.

## Staying long-term?

The exchange quickly turned into an idea of staying in Singapore:

"When I was in the middle of my exchange, I realized that this might be the perfect place to do my internship as well," Vegard Voss explained as he needs to do an internship abroad to complete his degree in International Management as well.

So, he mingled with many Norwegian businesses until he got an internship at DNB Bank:

"I was very lucky that they accepted me, as they don't usually do summer internships. They just had so much to do this summer that they agreed."

This also allowed Vegard to mix up his social circle. When he was doing the exchange program the international students were in different classes than the local ones. This meant that he didn't socialize that much with local Singaporeans. With the internship he has the opportunity to meet more of the locals and experience more of their culture

Vegard Voss also especially started to appreciate the city after he has started to work:

"I am here to work and to learn now, and it is just nice that everything else just runs smoothly."

## However, home is still home

Even though there is definitely love for the region and Singapore, Vegard Voss isn't convinced that Singapore is his long-term home.

"I love Singapore, but I also have my girlfriend at home, and whatever happens moving forward she has to be factored in," He explains.

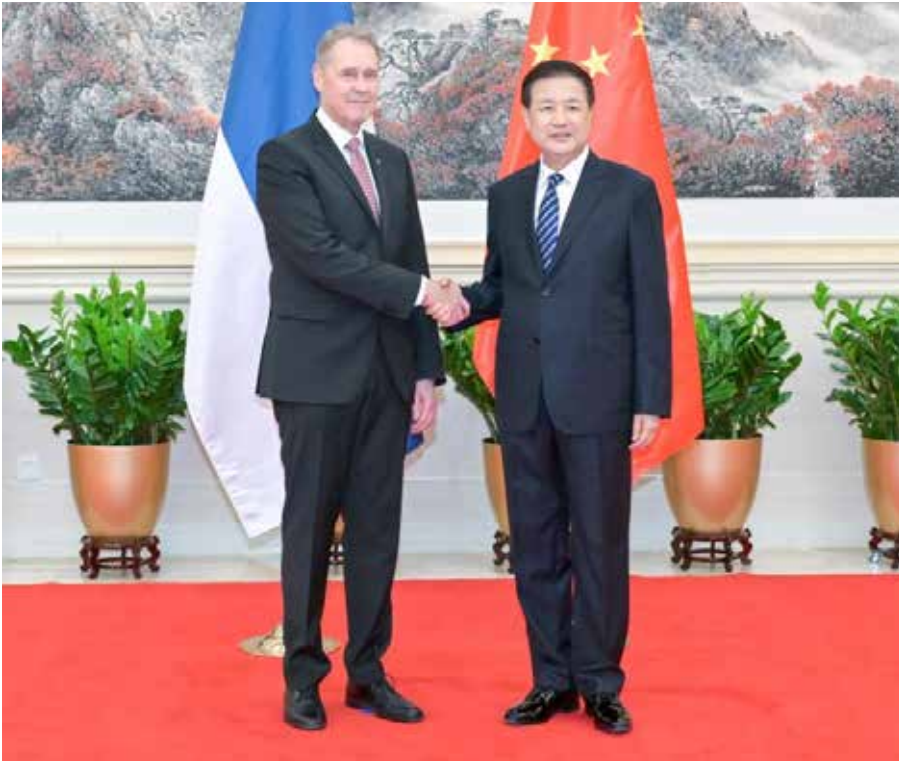
He would love to go abroad again, but his curiosity isn't limited to only Asia. He could see himself in many different countries, but he would like it if the company he works for is Norwegian.

"There is just a different kind of hierarchy, or rather lack of hierarchy in the Norwegian businesses, that I am not sure you can find anywhere else."

"Also, I want my kids to grow up in Norway."

Vegard Voss states this with no hesitation. Maybe it relates to his connectedness with the Norwegian business system, but he is definitely not ready to let go of Norway, what it represents, and all that it has to offer.

# Chinese police chief meets Finnish police commissioner



The Chinese State Councilor and Minister of Public Security, Wang Xiaohong, met with the Finnish National Police Commissioner, Seppo Kolehmainen, on 8 May 2024, in Beijing.

According to Wang, China is ready to work with Finland to further develop their bilateral law enforcement and security cooperation, also mentioning the importance of the consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries.

There are many fields in which China would like to cooperate with Finland, both in current areas and in creating long-term plans.

Kolehmainen expressed that Finland is willing to deepen practical cooperation with China, particularly in the field of law enforcement and security.

# Danish Embassy Philippines warns against travel fee fraud

The Embassy of Denmark in the Philippines warns against fraudulent eTravel websites that charge registration fees for travelers wishing to visit the Philippines. The Embassy states that Philippine eTravel registration is free of charge.

The eTravel site and other relevant information can be found on the official website of the Philippines' Bureau of Immigration (BI).

The BI published a similar warning in March of this year, stating reports of passengers who have been scammed by a fake eTravel website and ended up losing between PHP 3,000 and PHP 5,000, which amounts to around 50 to 90 US dollars. Furthermore, the BI encouraged travelers who encoun-



tered fraudulent websites to report them to the Cybercrime Investiga-

tion and Coordinating Center on the hotline 1326.

# Sweden launches digital passport check for work permits

Sweden launches a new digital passport check for Swedish work or student permits for 23 countries in a pilot project. This means that the applicants can scan their passport on an app instead of having to make in some cases long and expensive journeys to a Swedish embassy.

The scheme is expected to benefit around 19,000 work permit applicants and 5,000 students from the following countries:

Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, USA, Canada, Brazil, Mexico, Australia, UK, New Zealand, Chile, North Mace-



donia, Georgia, Ukraine, Argentina, Colombia, Peru, Albania, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Residents of these countries

have in common that they don't need a visa to travel to Sweden and it is yet unknown whether the pilot will be extended to other countries.

# China-linked hackers target Norwegian commercial vessel



A China-linked hacking and espionage group called Mustang Panda has allegedly introduced malware in the last five months targeting commercial shipping companies based in Norway, Greece, and the Netherlands. The malware enables remote access to computer systems.

The information was published

by the Slovakia-based cybersecurity firm ESET, and the threat was assessed amidst warnings from both UK and US officials, who have stated that cybersecurity threats from China are significant, particularly aimed at critical infrastructure.

It is the first time evidence of attacking commercial shipping has been leaked. According to a

researcher at ESET, Robert Lipovsky, the attacks demonstrate a clear interest in this sector, as they were aimed at unrelated organizations and were not a one-time occurrence.

The Chinese Embassy in Washington told NBC that they strongly deny the allegations and that China does not condone or support cyber attacks. Instead, they stated that China is a major victim of cyber attacks.

The espionage group Mustang Panda has previously been accused of espionage against governments and organizations in both Europe and Asia. The type of malware they use, known as "remote access trojan," allows them to gain full access to the device and issue commands. Access can be gained after breaking in through an email, a malicious website, vulnerable software, or an unprotected machine.

# Finnish Minister attended World Water Forum in Indonesia



Finland's Minister for Foreign Trade and Development, Ville Tavio, attended the World Water Forum in Indonesia from 19 to 22 May 2024. The forum aims to strengthen progress in international water issues initiated by the UN Water Conference in 2023.

Ville Tavio leads a delegation of experts from the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Environment, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Furthermore, the delegation includes the Finnish Water Forum (FWF), which represents stakeholders in the Finnish water sector, and water sector

companies. The Finnish Minister will also have meetings with his Indonesian counterparts.

According to Tavio, Indonesia is an important trading partner for Finland. Trading opportunities especially exist in the fields of digitalization, forestry, education, energy, and clean transition.

The World Water Forum, or WWF, is the world's largest water sector event. It is organized every three years with a rotating host country. The WWF 2024 is the tenth ever held and the first to be held in Southeast Asia.

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# Carlsberg wants to protect wetlands

The Danish brewery Carlsberg has partnered with WWF to protect wetlands in China and Laos. Carlsberg owns brewing facilities in four wetland areas in China and Laos that are classified as vulnerable.

While WWF acknowledges that Carlsberg's primary motivation for partnering with them may be to ensure beer production, they still view it as a positive development. They see it as a win for the local Mekong habitats because, as WWF states,

"Nature is in trouble."

Carlsberg has been collaborating with WWF since 2023, but this new partnership holds greater strategic importance. This is because the four Carlsberg plants are directly affected by declining water quality and degrading ecosystems. Simon Boas Hoffmeyer, Head of Sustainability and ESG at Carlsberg Group, em-



phasizes the environmental aspect of the issue:

"The challenges of rebuilding local water resources are becoming increasingly prominent as climate change takes effect. This partnership will play a decisive role in protect-

ing and restoring water resources, vulnerable ecosystems, and preserving biodiversity," he said in a press release.

# EU and Vietnam joins hands for the environment

“Vietnam – EU joining hands for a clean environment”, this was the theme of an event in Ha Long city on 12 May 2024. The event was held to create awareness of the work that has been done so far, and to ensure that it continues.

The event was hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Vietnam, the Quang Ninh provincial People's Committee, the EU Delegation to Vietnam, and the Sun group.

One of the main themes was awareness of the marine environment, so stated the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Le Thi Hang. She underlined the work that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have done so far and thanked the EU-nations who have helped greatly in making it possible. She hopes that the co-operation between Vietnam and the EU will continue.



The head of the EU Delegation to Vietnam, Julien Guerrier, responded by highlighting the importance of events such as the “Vietnam – EU joining hands for a

clean environment”-event to secure a sustainable future.

After the opening ceremony all the guests went down to the beach and engaged in waste collection.

# Bluewater showcases water refill station at World Water Forum



Swedish Bluewater showcased its advanced purification refill stations at the 10th World Water Forum 2024 in Bali. The Bluewater refill station will provide purified

mineral-enriched water to the forum's guests – including delegates, global leaders and environmental experts.

The Swedish company claims

to be able to remove all known water contaminants from toxic chemicals such as PFAS to microplastics and viruses. Furthermore, the company hopes to be able to end the need for single-use plastic and is currently advocating for a ban on plastic bottles.

Bluewater also launched the campaign “REFILL INDONESIA” which aims at promoting water refill infrastructure in Indonesia. On the opening day of the event 3,494 liters of purified and mineralized Bluewater was dispensed from the machines, which saved the use of around 7,000 half-liter plastic bottles.

# AstraZeneca builds 1.5 billion cancer drug factory in Singapore



The Anglo-Swedish pharmaceutical concern AstraZeneca plans to build a \$1.5 billion manufacturing facility in Singapore. It will produce a promising category of drugs against cancer called antibody-drug conjugates or ADCs.

The facility is AstraZeneca's

first end-to-end ADC production, which means that the full development of the drug from start to final delivery will be managed at the facility. The Singapore Economic Development Board supports the facility, but the company has not yet provided details on the possible

financial incentives from the Singaporean government.

In recent years AstraZeneca has expanded in the region to countries such as China, Indonesia and India to widen its supply chain. Constructions are set to start by the end of 2024 and the facility is expected to be operational from 2029. The company claimed that the factory will have zero carbon emissions from day one of operations.

ADCs are engineered antibodies which bind to the tumour cells and afterwards release chemicals that kill the cells. The production of the drug involves producing the antibody, synthesizing the chemotherapy drug and its linker, conjugating these elements and filling of the completed ADC substance.

## Marimekko's net sales increase in Asia Pacific

Finnish Marimekko's net sales increased 7 percent to €37,7 million in the first quarter of 2024. The major growth is thanks to wholesale sales in the company's home country Finland and internationally. The company's initiatives in the Asia Pacific area pushed the net sales to rise 22 percent during that period.

The company noticed wholesale sales increased in Asia Pacific and North America. During the quarter Marimekko launched a new digital channel in China and opened online stores in both Vietnam and Malaysia. The company has the aim to open 10 to 15 new Marimekko stores and shop-in-shops throughout the year and most of them will



be in Asia.

Furthermore, the company opened two stores in Japan and two pop-up stores in Australia this quarter. Japan is expectedly the most significant market for the full year.

Historically Finland made up around half of the company's net sales, but due to a general weak economy and low consumer confidence have impacted the sales in Finland in the first quarter.



# Philippines and Norway sign pact to recognize seafarers' certificates

The Philippines and Norway signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) on the mutual recognition of seafarers' certificates. The goal is to maintain a higher standard of safety, competence, and professionalism within the global maritime industry. It was signed by the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) of the Philippines and the Norwegian Maritime Authority (NMA).

The Philippine Embassy of Norway said the signing of the MOA should result in 25,000 more Filipino seafarers to be employed on Norwegian-flagged ships. Furthermore, the embassy underlined that the MOA is an important step towards a closer cooperation between the



Philippines and Norway in the maritime area.

More specifically the MOA called for the countries to adhere to the Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping for

Seafarers, 1978 (STCW) standards. Moreover, the agreement includes a mechanism of quality assurance, which would allow for periodic inspections of the facilities and the procedures.

# Price adjustment on Chinese cars in Denmark



The price of the Chinese electric SUV Voyah Free has been significantly adjusted due to poor sales in Denmark. So far, only 40 cars have been sold.

The Electric SUV Voyah Free Platinum edition now has a starting price at 399.990DKK. According to

K.W Bruun this is an adjustment of 200.000DKK. However there was a 100.000 DKK discount on the first hundred cars that was sold, so one could argue that the price adjustment is just 100.000DKK.

"I have difficulty finding a car of the same size having the same

horsepower and equipment as us. Both when it comes to buying and private leasing," says Alexander Bachmann, head of product at Voyah Denmark.

He continues to explain that the new price adjustment is a strategy to just get the car out on the roads for people to experience them.

However, Ilyas Dogry, a consumer economist at FDM, isn't convinced that the adjustment will have the desired effect, as the market in the new price range is tough.

"The price adjustment however makes it clear that Voyah, as another Chinese brand Hongqi, has missed completely when pricing the cars for the Danish market," says Ilyas Dogry.

# Danish-Icelandic artist kicks off SE Asia tour



The exhibition called “Your Curious Journey” began its journey on 10 May 2024. It was created by the Danish-Icelandic

artist Olafur Eliasson.

Some of Olafur Eliasson’s main themes are embodiment, experience, perception, and a special focus

on climate action and the importance of perspectives beyond humans.

The exhibition opened its doors on Friday, 10 May 2024, at the Singapore Art Museum. After Singapore, the exhibition will continue to New Zealand, Taiwan, Jakarta, and Manila.

This is the first major solo exhibition in Southeast Asia by Olafur Eliasson. To offset the carbon footprint, there has been a special focus on using lightweight materials. Transportation has also been a priority. Therefore, many artworks already in the area have been selected for the exhibition.

# Nordic cyclists in Malaysian race

More than 3000 local and international cyclists set off from the starting line at the first West Coast Expressway race in Malaysia. The international riders were from many different countries including Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Hong Kong, Indonesia, China, Singapore and the Philippines.

There were four different routes to choose from. A 160 km, 90 km, 28 km and 14 km route along the West Coast Expressway E32. Over 830 rides participated in the 160 km century route.

The cycling route took the riders along the new highway WCE alignment and the recently opened Taiping Selatan WCE Section 11. The event aimed at supporting local tourism as part of the new “The Visit Perak Year 2024” tourism campaign.



# Travelling villages inspired by a Danish trend

The two Danish entrepreneurs, Nikolaj Astrup and Michelle Rødgaard Jessen, have launched an experiment called “The Travelling Village.” It is a community of digital nomads living together abroad while moving from country to country. The first experiment took place in Vietnam and Thailand and will end in Japan.

The experiment started on 15 January 2024, and has unfolded over four months. The idea was born out of a personal need from Nikolaj Astrup and Michelle Rødgaard Jessen. Both of them had travelled and worked as digital nomads. The plan was to continue the lifestyle when they had a family, but a different kind of loneliness emerged.

They decided to try and create a community of families, a rendition of the Danish concept of “bofællesskaber,” where families live and occasionally eat together. In Denmark, it varies how much the families are involved in each other’s lives.

Nikolaj Astrup and Michelle



Rødgaard Jessen decided to try and create something similar for international nomad families. Many families applied, and 19 families were chosen. The families came from Denmark, the US, India, Ireland, Italy, and the Netherlands.

Now that the experiment is nearing its end, the families are reflecting on both the pros and cons of the experience.

“In the past, when our daugh-

ter didn’t want to join us for activities, one of us had to stay back. Now, she can reach out to other adults in the community. This gives my husband and me more freedom to do things together or independently,” says Irene Genelin, highlighting a true pro of the experiment.

However, moving around so quickly turned out to be an issue for multiple parents, who wished for a slower-paced travel style.

# Vietnam supports Danish children’s fund



Vietnam participated in the second fair to raise funds disabled children in Denmark hosted by the Ambassadors’ Spouses Group. The event took place in Copenhagen, and also had a focus on social cultural exchange.

The spouse of the Vietnamese Ambassador to Denmark, Nguyen Thi Thu Hong, had arranged a booth with the rest of the staff from the Vietnamese Embassy. The booth presented cultural images, handicrafts, and tourism products of Vietnam as well as Vietnamese cuisine for international friends.

Vietnam also contributed with a performance by an overseas Vietnamese artist. This was allegedly well received by the audience.

# Delegation from Indonesia visits Sweden

A delegation from the Indonesian House of Representatives has wrapped up a

visit to Stockholm in Sweden. The delegation was led by Chairman Budhy Setiawan and Vice Chairman

Budisatrio Djiwandono, and the visit was from 19-22 May 2024. The intention of the visit was to lay the groundwork for the Indonesian free lunch program.

Furthermore the visit was an opportunity to further cooperation with Sweden and to possibly get more support for the initiative.

“This visit presents significant opportunities for Indonesia and Sweden to enhance collaboration in the food sector. We see immense potential in sharing knowledge and technology between our nations,” stated Indonesian Ambassador to Sweden, Kamapradipta Isnomo.

The delegation also managed to have several conversations with Swedish Officials and toured key sites in the farming and fishing industry in Sweden.



# Danish book about menstruation translated to Thai

The Danish book “Det Er Bare Blod” or “It’s Just Blood” in English has now been translated to Thai and will be launched in Bangkok on 1 June at Hardcover: The Art Book Shop. The book talks about menstruation and illustrates and describes the process to young girls.

The translation aims to reach a new generation of Thai women and men, who might not know everything about the topic. The author of the book, Louise T. Sjørvad, will be joining the launch in person to talk about her book and sign copies.

“Det Er Bare Blod” won the award for the best non-fiction book

of the year by the Libraries of Copenhagen in 2023. The Thai version is published by the Thai publishing house Barefoot Banana, who specialize in high quality children’s picture books.

The Embassy of Denmark in Thailand posted about the launch on their Facebook page and highlighted how sex education is introduced to children from a young age in the Danish school system. The Embassy hopes the book will spark similar open conversations on health, body and gender in Thailand.



# Finland and Indonesia extend collaborations

Indonesia and Finland have enjoyed bilateral relations for the last 70 years. Now Finland has suggested to take the cooperation even further. They have three fields in which they desire to further their bilateral cooperation with Indonesia:

“The Finnish Government wants to cooperate with the Indonesian Government for three things. The first is digitalization, second is National Data Center, and third is PPDR, or Public Protection for Disaster Relief,” noted Communication and Informatics Minister Budi Arie Setiadi of Indonesia in a statement from his ministry on Wednesday.

Indonesia is very keen to work together with Finland.

The invitation for this new partnership was presented during a meeting between Communication



and Informatics Minister Budi Arie Setiadi and the Finnish Minister for Foreign Trade and Development, Ville Tavio. The meeting was held on Monday, 20 May 2024, in Bali.

# Taiwan contributes to Norwegian seed vault



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Taiwan announced on 22 May 2024, that Taiwan would contribute 17 millet species samples to the so-called “Doomsday Vault” in Svalbard, Norway.

The millet seeds are, according to Taipei Times, the first series of crop seeds to be sent to the vault. Having the seeds in the vault in Norway would serve as a backup for the domestic seed bank in Taiwan, states the Ministry.

A Taiwanese delegation will travel to Svalbard Global Seed Vault to deliver the samples. It is expected that the seeds will arrive in Svalbard by next Wednesday.

# Vietnam & Finland discuss labour cooperation



The Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs Le Tan Dung and the Finnish Ambassador to Vietnam Keijo Norvanto met in Hanoi on 23 May 2024 to discuss how to further promote cooperation in vocational education

and assisting Vietnamese workers to go to Finland.

Dung encouraged Norvanto to keep coordinating and increasing cooperation activities in vocational education such as building and development training institutions in Finland. Furthermore, he wishes to establish a quality assessment system, which meets the international standards and is able to connect Vietnamese vocational education institutions with Finnish businesses in Vietnam.

Dung also acknowledged that there isn't a formal labour cooperation agreement between the two countries, but he highlighted how Finland in recent years has received many guest workers from Finland.

Ambassador Norvanto spoke

on the Finnish labour shortage as the population is aging and the birth rate is low. He mentioned the Finnish Government's pilot Talent Boost Programme to attract workers, experts and entrepreneurs to draw 50,000 immigrants for employment to Finland by 2030 and 250,000 by 2050. Vietnam, Brazil, India and Turkey have been key sources for the initiative.

Norvanto also urged Dung and his ministry to prioritise strengthening bilateral labour cooperation by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

In light of the Finnish Minister of Employment's upcoming visit to Vietnam in January 2025, Norvanto expressed the wish for close cooperation to strengthen the cooperation plans.

# Funding opportunity from DERF for drought in PH

The Embassy of Denmark in Manila calls for applicants for the Danish Emergency Relief Fund (DERF). Applicants are expected to be Danish CSO's working with local partners to address drought in the Philippines.

Areas that are prioritized are food security and seeds for livelihood rehabilitation and protection of vulnerable people. Furthermore, WASH is being prioritized, meaning clean water for drinking and hygiene, water sources for household use and farm production.

DERF allocates a total of DKK 2,1 million and applicants can apply for a maximum of DKK 700.000 each. The deadline of the applications is on 4 June 2024 at 12 o'clock

noon CET.

In the past months extreme temperatures have caused agricultural damage and water shortages in some regions of the Philippines.

The United Nations have called for an increased support of the Philippines, because of the gravity of the situation.



# Swedish man arrested for 972 days overstay in Thailand

A 33-year-old Swedish national identified as Mr. Francesco was arrested for overstaying his visa for 972 days in Phuket, Thailand on 22 May 2024. The police became aware of him, as a Phuket resident had posted about him on the “Phuket Residents Seek Help” Facebook group.

The post stated that the Swedish man had broken into a rental house, where the homeowner had no longer allowed the man to rent. The man had then allegedly threatened to return and kill the homeowner. After seeing the post, the immigration police along with tourist

police investigated the man.

The officers went undercover and found the Swede driving in the area. They revealed their identity and invited him for questioning. At first the Swede refused to step out of the car and he also didn't have his passport with him.

The Swedish national had entered Thailand on a visa for business purposes on 12 February 2020, which allowed him to stay in the country until 23 September 2021. After the arrest he was sent to the inquiry officer at Chalong Police Station.



# Cambodian rice gains ground in Nordic market



Cambodian rice producer Amru Rice ramps up export of its premium and sustainably produced rice to the European market in light of success in Scandinavia. The brand has been present in the EU market for years, but now

Amru Rice has reached the top selling point in Finnish supermarkets.

CEO of Amru Rice, Song Saran highlighted that the Nordic countries appreciate the aroma and taste of Cambodian rice. Saran stated that Europe presents a significant

opportunity for Cambodian rice and added that this will cement the company's long-term presence in the market.

Amru Rice has invested heavily in infrastructure in order to meet the strict food safety standards of the EU, including processing facilities and quality control implementations.

According to the Cambodia Rice Federation (CRF), the industry is trying to become more climate resilient in order to compete on the international market. Numbers from the CRF concluded an export of 246,683 tonnes of milled rice to the EU in 2023. That makes the EU the biggest market, followed by China and ASEAN countries.

The rice company aims to expand exports to the US in light of an increase in demand from specifically Long Beach in California.

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Monash University  
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The University of Sydney (2)  
University of Melbourne (2)  
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Webster University Vienna

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Carleton University (3)  
Dalhousie University (7)  
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Grant Macewan University  
Humber College (4)  
Huron University College At Western (2)  
International College of Manitoba  
King's University College - Western University  
McGill University (2)  
McMaster University (2)  
Ontario Tech University (2)  
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Simon Fraser University  
St. Francis Xavier University  
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The University of British Columbia - Okanagan (2)  
Trent University  
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University of Ottawa (2)  
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Newcastle University (2)  
Northeastern University London (4)  
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Queen Mary University of London (2)  
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Screen and Film School  
The University of Edinburgh (2)  
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University of Kent (5)  
University of Leeds (6)  
University of Manchester (8)  
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University of Sheffield (3)  
University of Southampton  
University of St Andrews (2)  
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Binghamton University  
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Bryant University  
Bucknell University  
Butler University (2)  
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California Lutheran University (6)  
California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo  
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Colorado School of Mines  
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Concordia University-Irvine  
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Daemen University  
Daytona State College  
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Elon University  
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University-Daytona Beach  
Emerson College  
Fashion Institute of Technology  
Florida International University  
Florida Southwestern State College  
Florida State University  
Fordham University (4)  
Franklin and Marshall College  
George Mason University (3)  
George Washington University (5)  
Gonzaga University  
Goucher College  
Haverford College  
Hesston College (3)  
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Purdue University (7)  
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Rochester Institute of Technology  
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Seattle University  
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Southern Methodist University  
St Francis College  
St Olaf College (2)  
Stanford University  
Stevens Institute of Technology  
Suffolk University  
Sweet Briar College  
Syracuse University (4)  
Texas A & M University-College Station (2)  
Texas Tech University  
The College of Wooster (3)  
The New School (2)  
The University of Montana  
The University of Tampa  
The University of Texas At Austin  
The University of West Florida  
Transylvania University  
Trinity University  
Tufts University  
United States Military Academy  
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University of California-Davis (9)  
University of California-Irvine (9)  
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University of California-Merced (3)  
University of California-Riverside (4)  
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