

JUL-AUG 2024

# ScandAsia



**BUSINESS:**

Norway won't follow EU's car tariffs on Chinese cars

**INTERNATIONAL:**

Indonesia encourages Finland to recognize Palestine

**COMMUNITY**

How Danes can be more inclusive towards foreigners

**Højskoleøen:**  
The Dream of Dreamers

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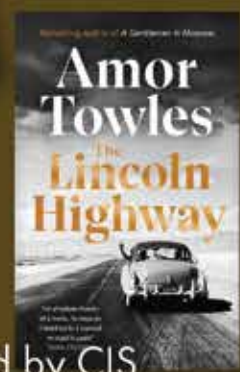
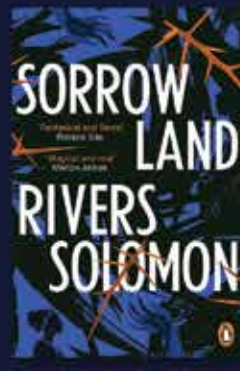
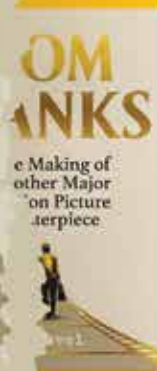


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**SEB**

# Dear Reader,

Watching the presidential debate between Donald Trump and Joe Biden was painful. One issued crazy statements that had no foundation in reality; the other was clearly too old to remember what he was trying to say.

How is it possible that the most powerful nation on the planet is not capable of selecting the best and brightest people to lead their government, I thought. Then I realized that actually, we are no better in Asia, except maybe Singapore.

Economic and social factors complicate the selection process. Wealthy individuals and interest groups wield disproportionate influence through campaign contributions and lobbying, skewing the selection of leaders toward those who cater to their interests. Deep social divisions, such as those based on class, race, or religion, lead to polarized electorates, making consensus on what constitutes the "best and brightest" difficult.

Once elected, politicians are often prone to delude themselves about their own greatness, sometimes even believing their children are better successors than the best and brightest of the country.

Media influence also plays a crucial role. This often results in the election of more telegenic figures rather than the most qualified. Populist movements capitalize on this by elevating leaders who appeal to emotions and identity politics, sidelining more thoughtful candidates.

Cultural factors influence leadership selection as well. Different cultures prioritize varying qualities in leaders; some value traditionalism and conformity over innovation and intelligence.

In countries like Thailand, the educational system emphasizes rote learning and conformity over critical thinking. In communist countries, loyalty, seniority, and ideological alignment within the party, as well as the ability to outmaneuver competitors, are often rewarded more than competency.

Addressing these challenges requires reforms to electoral processes, education, media practices, and institutional structures, alongside efforts to combat corruption and foster a more informed and engaged electorate.

While our Nordic home countries are facing the same challenges as described above, in my opinion we have moved closer to overcoming the obstacles and in general elect better leaders than in Asia, and then we have robust checks and balances structures in place that helps us compensate for the few mistakes we also make.



**Gregers Moller**  
*Editor in Chief*

## ScandAsia

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# Lawyer argues with Norway over sale of land to China



Norwegian lawyer Per Kyllingstad is planning an auction for anyone interested in buying a 60 square kilometer piece of land owned by his client,

a company owned by a Norwegian of Russian descent. The property is located in the geopolitical important archipelago of Svalbard.

However, the legality of the

auction is challenged by the Norwegian authorities who says that “there is no permission to start negotiations regarding the transfer of the property without the consent of the Norwegian Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fishing”.

The government is alarmed by information from the lawyer that he is talking to Chinese interested buyers who are focused on the long-term benefits of the investment, as it might be the only opportunity for a long time to obtain land in the so-called High Arctic region.

The selling price of the area starts at 326 million dollars.

Analysts have allegedly stated that China is interested in the untapped natural resources in the Arctic, as well as a possible military positioning made even more advantageous by new sea lanes created by melting ice.

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# Same sex marriage in Thailand

The marriage equality bill passed its final reading in Thailand's upper house of parliament on Tuesday, June 18, 2024, making Thailand the third country in Asia to legalize same-sex marriage.

The other two countries in Asia that have legalized same-sex marriage are Taiwan and Nepal. Thailand has long been known for its acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community in the region. It has also attracted many LGBTQ+ travelers.

Among other countries, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Finland have also legalized same-sex marriage.





# Swedish and Filipino companies to collaborate on antenna building

The Swedish company Radio Innovation Sweden announced a collaboration with the Filipino telecommunication solutions provider TELKHA. Together they will introduce high-gain antennas in Southeast Asia, with an initial launch in the Philippines and Indonesia.

The high-gain antennas are designed to optimise energy efficiency, high coverage and fast data transmissions. The antennas are made with aircraft-grade aluminium and therefore very durable in different environments.

The CEO of TELKHA Khalid Khalil commented on the collaboration, saying the combined knowledge



and experience will bring affordable ways of connecting to the continent.

“I am delighted to see this vision coming to fruition, and this

team working together will be highly effective in bridging the digital divide in Southeast Asia affordably and quickly,” Khalid Khalil said.



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# Danish Ambassador says farewell to King and Queen of Thailand



The Ambassador of Denmark to Thailand, Jon Thorgaard was granted audience by King Maha Vajiralongkorn Phra Vajiraklaochaoyuhua (Rama X) of Thailand and Queen Suthida Bajra-

sudhabimalalakshana on 6 June. The ambassador used the occasion to say farewell to the Royals as he is completing his diplomatic mission in Thailand.

Ambassador Jon Thorgaard

was accompanied by his wife Camilla Thorgaard, and the couple expressed their gratitude for the warm hospitality they received from the people of Thailand. They also talked about the strong and long-standing historic relations between Denmark and Thailand, that span more than 400 years.

The current Ambassador of Denmark Jon Thorgaard will end his mission on 31 July 2024 and the new Ambassador Danny Annan will take over the position from 1 August 2024.

Danny Annan was nominated to be the new Ambassador in late April. Currently he is the Danish Ambassador of Denmark in Turkey (accredited for Azerbaijan) and before that, he was Ambassador of Denmark in Iran.

# EU to impose multi billion-euro tariffs on Chinese EVs

The European Commission has notified car makers that additional tariffs of up to 25 percent will be imposed on Chinese EVs starting in July. The tariffs are expected to generate more than two billion euros a year for the EU budget.

China has warned the EU that a tariff on Chinese EVs would prompt China to impose a similar tariff on European EVs, in addition to the current tariff of 15 percent. The current EU tariff is 10 percent. Sweden, Germany, and Hungary have expressed opposition to the tariff due to fears of China's potential countermeasures.



Danish politician and European Commissioner for Competition, Margrethe Vestager, criticized how China outperformed the European solar power industry.

"China attracted foreign investments, often with a requirement for joint ventures. Afterwards, China acquired the technology. They gave massive government subsidies to their own producers and closed off the Chinese market to foreign companies," Vestager said.

According to the EU, the reason for the tariff is that European carmakers are being challenged by cheaper EVs from their Chinese rivals. The Chinese carmakers receive state funding, creating an unfair advantage over their European counterparts. In 2023, China exported 10 billion euros worth of electric cars to the EU.

# Expats in Thailand to be taxed

Foreign expats in Thailand will have to file income tax for the year 2024 by the end of March 2025. It is estimated that retired expats will have to pay a minimum of 71,000 Thai Baht in tax.

The new regulation is an effort of the Thai tax authorities to widen the kingdom's tax base in order to address the growing older population. The tax will be based on the base income level specified by the Immigration Bureau.

Foreigners are encouraged to seek advice to understand the different agreements regarding double-taxation of their respective home countries. The new rule applies to all income from 1 January 2024. Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland all have tax treaties with Thailand.

In October 2023 PM Srettha Thavisin announced the new regime and said that the taxation



was aimed at reducing inequality and strengthening the country economically to prepare for future challenges.

The new rule was introduced after a legal loophole was abolished

in September 2023, which had allowed expats to not pay income tax in Thailand since 1985. If the foreigner declared that the income was not earned in the same year, the income was tax-free.

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## Thailand creates more options to extend stay

The Thai government has announced that they have made some adjustments to the visa rules, hoping to boost the country's tourism sector. Especially when it comes to the categories of visitors, students and so called 'digital nomads'.

It will now be possible for students to extend their stay for up to a year after graduating. The validity of the digital nomad visas will also be extended to five years, from the current 60 days, however with each stay limited to 180 days.

Furthermore, Thailand will also allow travelers from 93 countries to stay for a 60 days period. Earlier this was only an option for 57 nations. More countries will also be viewed as eligible for visas on arrival, stated government spokesperson, Chai Wacharonke, to reporters.

The new rules were announced by the Thai Government on 28 May 2024, and effective from June 2024.

## Philippines short of nurses as many go abroad



The Philippines is short of around 190,000 health workers as many decide to work overseas. This was announced by Philippine Health Secretary Teodoro Herbosa at a press briefing at the presidential palace. Herbosa said that 20 universities and colleges will now offer medical courses.

The Nordic countries are a popular destination for Filipino nurses due to high salaries and better working conditions. The Danish Minister of Foreign Affairs Lars Løkke Rasmussen last year announced ambitions to educate and import nurses from the Philippines and India in order to make up for the lack of Danish nurses. The Danish Council of Nurses was very critical of the proposal as they deemed it unethical to "steal" qualified personnel from other countries.

The Department of Health of the Philippines is now considering offering other benefits to nurses in addition to the basic salaries in order to make the nurses want to stay in the Philippines. The benefits could include housing and car assistance, healthcare insurance and higher education and learning assistance.

The lack of professional health-care workers is a result of many of the educated nurses going abroad. Almost 700 nursing graduates took the exam to get a US license in the first three months of 2024 alone.

Last year the Philippines allowed unlicensed nurses to work as "critical care associates" in hospitals in order to fight the shortage of staff.

# Myanmar-based tech startup funded by Swedish capital

The Myanmar-based human resources tech startup Better HR has raised an undisclosed amount of funding from Swedish Blibros Capital Partners, an investment company based in Singapore and Stockholm. The startup also received funding from Singapore-based Satori Giants.

The funding will help the startup with expanding its operations across Southeast Asia by opening additional offices. Better HR is already operating in Singapore, Vietnam, Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Myanmar.

Better HR offers a cloud-based enterprise solution to streamline HR processes for small and medium-sized companies. The processes include tracking attendance, leave,



overtime and managing payroll.

The company has in the past experienced hardships, as the Yangon office was temporarily closed due to the civil unrest in Myanmar. However, Better HR has announced a growth in active clients from 78 to

over 380 as a result of the reopening of the office in March 2022.

Blibros Capital Partners invests in growth companies that are part of the digital transformation or change established business logics.

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## Finnish factory produces protein from air

Solar Foods, a food factory in Finland, grow protein from cells using nothing more than air and electricity. The company's product hasn't been cleared for distribution in EU countries yet, but they are selling to vendors in Singapore.

Solar Foods factory creates the substance using only carbon dioxide, hydrogen, and some minerals. By adding electricity from renewable sources, the factory creates a powder that contains a large amount of protein, making it a good substitute for dairy products and eggs.

There are other companies attempting to create substitutes for traditional agriculture, but they have often been accused of being a bigger drain on the carbon footprint than the agricultural system they are trying to replace.

Pasi Vainikka, the chief executive of Solar Foods, told AFP that to make any kind of difference environmentally, the company has to build factories ten times the size of the current one.



## Philippines and Sweden sign pact on fighter jet purchase



The Philippines and Sweden have signed an agreement for the planned sale of the Swedish multi-role fighter (MRF) Gripen to the Philippine Air Force (PAF). The agreement was signed by Joakim Wallin the Swedish defense materiel head of exports and Joselito Ramos the Philippines' assistant secretary for logistics, acquisitions and self-reliant defense posture of the Department of National Defense.

The Swedish Defense Materiel Administration has said that the Philippines has expressed great interest in Swedish systems, which include fighter aircraft, command systems and airborne early-warning aircrafts.

The agreement is titled "Implementing Arrangement Concerning the Procurement of Defense Material and Equipment" and it provides the framework for the purchase. In June 2023 the two countries had

signed an MoU on the same topic, and it was ratified again in September 2023.

The purchase would be part of the final stage of the three-phase Revised Armed Forces of the Philippines Modernization Program, a military capability upgrade plan, which started in 2013.

The efforts of upgrading the Philippine military forces are amidst increasing tensions between the Philippines and China regarding control over parts of the South China sea.

# Norway, EU sign statement voicing concern for Myanmar

The EU, Norway, the United States, and other countries have jointly expressed alarm at the worsening conflict in Myanmar and the increasing harm to civilians. They call for all armed parties to ensure the protection of civilians and stressed that there must be accountability for all atrocities committed in Myanmar.

Specifically, the statement expressed concern over reports of thousands of civilians having to flee their homes in Rakhine State, where the Rohingya minority lives. The reports also mention the targeting and torture of civilians, the use of civilians as human shields, and sexual violence against both women and children.

The statement mentioned the humanitarian crisis and blamed the government for the shortage of food and water, as well as for cutting off access to medical and other aid.

The countries behind the statement called for an immediate end to the violence and urged all other nations to stop sending military supplies and aviation fuel. Furthermore, the statement called for the release of allegedly falsely imprisoned individuals and for dialogue to restore democracy in Myanmar.

The statement was published shortly after the United Nations issued a warning stating that around 45,000 Rohingyas were forced to flee amid allegations of property burning and killings.



The joint statement was signed by the EU, Norway, the United States, Australia, Britain, Canada, South Korea, New Zealand and Switzerland.



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## Fall in Norwegian king crab export to Asia



The Norwegian Seafood Council for May 2024 has recorded a fall in the export of king crab but an increase in demand of snow crab in Asia. The value of king crab fell by 16 percent and the volume dropped by 14 percent when compared to the same month last year.

The largest market for the Norwegian king crab were Hong Kong, the US and Denmark. Despite a decline compared to May last year, May 2024 is still strong compared to previous years.

On the other hand the value of Norwegian snow crab increased by 97 percent and in volume by 34 when compared to the same month last year. South Korea, Japan and the US were the largest markets in May.

The rise in snow crab was surprising, as almost all Russian crab is exported to Asian markets due to the sanctions of the West on Russia.

## Norway's Ambassador to Malaysia comments on recognition of Palestine

Norway's Ambassador to Malaysia Morten Paulsen commented on Norway's recent recognition of Palestine as an independent state at the Nordic Day 2024 event in Kuala Lumpur. Paulsen highlighted the history of Norway engaging with the Palestinian movement for 30 years and the attempts from Norway to create a two-state-solution.

He told the press that Norway believes now is the right moment to recognise the Palestinian state. Furthermore, he pointed to the recent intent of Saudi Arabia to recognise Israel in a two-state-solution.

Paulsen said that the Norwegian initiative is hopefully going to further strengthen the idea of a

two-state-solution as the only solution. He underlined, that he hopes the Norwegian recognition of Palestine can help create momentum which may push other states to do the same

The Norwegian Government made it known earlier this week that Norway will recognise Palestine as a state. The decision was made in the midst of the war in Gaza, where tens of thousand have been killed and injured. According to Norway's Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre, the only political solution for Israelis and Palestinians is a two-state-solution, where the two states can coexist side by side, in peace and security.





# Thailand’s high-skill visa attracts 56,000 foreign nationals

The spokesperson for the Thai PM’s Office revealed that Thailand now has 56,000 foreign nationals with approved visas and work permits. That includes about 50,000 foreign executives and experts working under investment promotion projects.

According to the spokesperson, the trend is a result of PM Srettha Thavisin’s effort to boost Thailand’s competitiveness. The approved visas include Long-Term Resident Visas (LTR visas) and Smart Visas, which are aimed at so-called high-skilled personnel.

Furthermore, a new visa will be introduced in June. The new visa is called Destination Thailand Visa (DTV) and is aimed at foreign na-



tionals to do remote work or work as digital nomads. The goal for this visa is also to attract more skilled foreign workers.

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*It was quite impressive, as it was mainly spread by recommendations in the beginning.*

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# Højskoleøen: The Dream of Dreamers

By Lærke Kobberup

In the middle of the South China Sea, there is an Indonesian archipelago called Anambas. One of these islands is Nongkat, also known as ‘Højskoleøen’, as it has been rented by three Danes to create a school. The island is not very big, but it hosts a small oasis of Danish culture in an absurdly remote corner of the world. How did this school come to be? To answer that question, one must understand the three characters who founded the school: Jannick Siebert, Rigmor Schwarz Bose, and Diana Marckmann Hansen.

Jannick Siebert has been interested in water since he was a kid. However, he recalls when the desire to explore the world by boat began:

“I was on a family vacation in Thailand, and I was trying to swim to a nearby sailboat. While I swam to it, I realized that it was sailing under a Danish flag. I just remember being amazed by the fact that this ship had sailed all the way from Denmark to Thailand,” Jannick explains.

He shakes his head as he elaborates: “Of course, it was mostly a childish dream at that point, but that was the moment I decided that I had to sail around the world at some point in my life.”

Jannick spent years learning about sailboats. He bought his first boat when he was fifteen years old. With the true curiosity of a child, he learned as much as he could about it while restoring it. He then realized that the boat was worth much more than when he bought it. He sold his first boat for almost double the amount he had paid. This was the beginning of his first business. Over time, as he gained more experience, he began restoring better and bigger boats.

Many Danes think back on the time when they were twenty years old as the time they graduated high school and maybe moved out of their parents house. For Jannick Siebert the age of twenty became the time in his life where he had a big enough sailboat to begin his journey around the world. Making his childhood dream a reality.





## The importance of community

However, at this time in Jannick's life, he had also discovered the importance of living with others and wondered if there was a way he could incorporate this into his sailing plans. He knew the concept of being a 'gast' on a ship, a term for people who sail with ships for short periods. When Jannick Siebert was about to set sail, this concept was mainly popular within the sailing community. Nevertheless, he decided to see if some of his friends would be interested in it as a way to travel.

"It began with me including some friends on the trip, just for a couple of months, and then they pitched in to make it economically viable. Then, when they went home, other people, friends of friends, reached out. Suddenly, the concept just took off," Jannick states.

He soon had hundreds of messages from people he didn't know who wanted to join the sailing. The concept of being a 'gast,' as a way to travel, was definitely something people responded to.

"It was quite impressive, as it was mainly spread by recommendations in the beginning," Jannick explains proudly.

As demand rose, Jannick bought his second and third boats to expand the experience for more people. He emphasizes, however, that the decision to invest in additional boats wasn't solely to accommodate more people. It also ensured greater safety for the sailors when two or three boats sailed alongside each other.

Two boats eventually turned into seven. However, the seeds for Højskoleøen had already begun to sprout

on his first boat when Jannick met two girls who arrived as gasts but would be a part of his life for much longer than the planned three months.

## A six month pause from reality

Rigmor Schwarz Bose had planned to take a six-month break before starting her Master's. She had just finished a Bachelor's in Building Design when she left to join one of Jannick Siebert's boats.

Her dad had sailed with her when she was a kid, but she had only just gotten back into sailing when she applied to sail with Jannick for three months.

"I remember I applied on a gray autumn morning back home in Denmark. You know, one of those days where life just isn't that fun. I saw a post by Jannick, and I spontaneously sent him a message," Rigmor explains. She continues, "It wasn't a well-thought-out message, and I didn't expect to get a spot, but then I did."

Rigmor was excited but also uncertain about what to expect. She had traveled quite a lot earlier and had experienced both the positive and negative aspects of it.

"I was happy that I was only agreeing to three months on the boat. Then I could leave afterward," she says, as she felt agreeing to more time at that point would have been too much.

However, whatever concerns Rigmor Schwarz Bose had beforehand faded once life on the water began:

"It was just so relaxing. I don't think I realized how much I needed to get away from the world until I was on this boat off the coast of Australia," Rigmor says, smiling.



She quickly jumped at the opportunity to extend her stay on the boat by another month, and then suddenly Covid-19 swept over the world.

“You kind of had to decide to either stick it out or go home immediately. I decided to stay,” she states.

And that is how the comfortable three months turned into seven months. Rigmor Schwarz Bose arrived back in Copenhagen the day before she had to start working because she wanted to stay on the boat as long as possible.

### “I needed to get completely off grid”

That is how Diana Marckmann Hansen describes her state of mind before leaving to be a ‘Gast’ on one of Jannick Siebert’s boats.

Earlier in her life, she had done a lot of musicals and acting but had decided to give physiotherapy a go. However, it didn’t seem to be the right fit for her either. She had been on sick leave for six months from her studies when she decided that she needed to get away for a while.

Diana had no sailing experience. She had grown up on the small Danish island of Bornholm, so she was used to the water, but she had never actually sailed before.

“I never had a doubt in my mind that it would be something I would enjoy. Of course, I got really seasick in the beginning, but it passed,” she says and pauses. “It was just a perfect fit, you know.”

In sailing, Diana found the sense of belonging she had been searching for.

“

*You can’t travel in a different country and culture without recognizing and respecting that culture.*

”

Much like Rigmor Schwarz Bose, Diana never had a doubt in her mind about first extending her stay and later also staying through Covid-19.

Diana was on the same boat as Rigmor Schwarz Bose, and a friendship quickly blossomed.

“The girls started this YouTube video thing while we were sailing,” says Jannick Siebert. “I am not good on camera, but they really went all out on showing what life was like on the boats.”

These seven months were the beginning of several years together for Jannick Siebert, Rigmor Schwarz Bose, and Diana Marckmann Hansen.

### Seven months were far from enough

“I think I was home for four months when Jannick called and asked if Diana and I wanted to be co-captains on one of his boats. Of course, it was a big decision, but I also really missed life on the water when I came home,” says Rigmor Schwarz Bose.

Diana Marckmann Hansen underlines that it was truly comforting to take that leap together with Rigmor. They were both leaving a life behind at home—family, friends, and education. After the decision was made, Rigmor, Diana, and Jannick began sailing all over the world together.

“It is weird to look back at. I mean, if we had never met each other, we might have been in three completely different places in our lives today,” Diana Marckmann Hansen reflects.



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*I just love that we have created this opportunity for young people to see something completely different.*

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The girls agreed to sail as co-captains for two years, but after about a year and a half, a new idea started to blossom.

Having spent more than four years sailing the world, Jannick Siebert was ready to try something different.

“I had seen how much these unique experiences of being on the water and seeing new parts of the world meant to the travelers we had on the boat. I wanted to expand on that concept. I might have too many ideas sometimes, but then the girls are good at catching the truly good ones and leaving the rest,” Jannick Siebert explains.

Diana Marckmann Hansen also recalls their initial attempts to create the school on the water:

“Luckily, we moved away from that,” she states while laughing.

The Danish concept of a ‘Højskole’

The idea of creating a school was present from the beginning. They decided to adopt the Danish concept of a ‘Højskole’.

A Danish Højskole is traditionally an opportunity for adults to go back to school. Today, it is very common for young people between the ages of 18-30 to spend approximately half a year at a Højskole before they start their studies or before they begin a Master’s degree. It is normal for the students to live at the school while attending. Usually, a Højskole also has a specific focus on creating a community within the student body.

The trio juggled with the specifics of the concept in the beginning, but three things were certain:

It had to be abroad, it had to involve the water, and it had to engage with the local community.

“In our opinion, you can’t travel in a different coun-

try and culture without recognizing and respecting that culture,” Rigmor Schwarz Bose states.

The idea of renting an island played a significant role in deciding where to locate the school geographically.

“I have sailed to many places in the world, but I have never seen anywhere as remote and naturally beautiful as here in Anambas,” says Jannick Siebert.

The Anambas archipelago consists of 255 islands, with only 26 of them inhabited. A few islands have deserted resorts, and the owner of Nongkat was open to renting the island to the Danes on a yearly basis. All that remained was to make the decision.

## Taking the final leap

Actually deciding to fully commit was a significant step for both Diana Marckmann Hansen and Rigmor Schwarz Bose.

“It was difficult to explain to some people back home why I didn’t want to return and finish my studies, but instead wanted to open a school abroad,” Rigmor explains.

Diana also had her concerns initially:

“Presenting the story today might make it sound all rosy, but there were definitely many difficult and challenging conversations we had to navigate,” she says.

Ultimately, it boiled down to the fact that the girls were wrapping up their time as co-captains. Would they call it quits and move on, or would they dive headfirst into a new adventure?

Despite having no assurance that anyone would attend their school, they decided to take the leap. The next six months were spent on restoration, finding teachers, and promoting the experience back home.



"We decided to offer the first round of students at half price just to ensure that we had participants," Rigmor Schwarz Bose says with a smile, adding that it also allowed them room to make mistakes, given the students were paying less for their semester. This was crucial as the founders were still learning how to operate everything smoothly.

### A well oiled machine – almost

"It was very much learning by doing in the beginning," Jannick Siebert says.

Fortunately, many of the students understood that it was a new concept, so they took it lightly when something didn't work out as planned.

The school was named Højskoleøen, Danish for 'Højskole' Island, and was officially established in 2023. It accommodates up to 30 students per session, which varies between 8-12 weeks. They offer classes in various water sports and sailing, as well as Indonesian language and culture lessons, including visits to local schools.

"We just finished up our first year," Diana Marckmann exclaims. "I am so happy with how it is going."

Rigmor emphasizes that in the long run, they wish to have more collaboration with the locals, but it is a bit difficult and demands a lot of attention to create relationships.

"Right now, we only have happy students leaving the island, so that seems like a good sign," Jannick states.

In the future, the founders are considering expanding the number of students to 60 people:

"The island can't host more than that anyway," states Rigmor.

Eventually, the plan is for Jannick Siebert to oversee

the seven boats he currently owns that continue to sail around the world, while Rigmor Schwarz Bose and Diana Marckmann Hansen will take turns staying at the school to ensure everything runs smoothly.

"I just love that we have created this opportunity for young people to see something completely different," Jannick says with a proud look in his eyes.

### What does the future look like?

Jannick Siebert has always been a restless person, never striving to do the expected but rather pursuing what he truly enjoys. That's what he plans to continue doing going forward:

"I guess I might go home to Denmark if I ever have a family, but right now I love that home is more a feeling than a place."

He envisions dividing his time between traveling and being in Denmark. Rigmor Schwarz Bose shares a similar sentiment when discussing the future:

"I really love what we have created here, and I am excited to see where it goes, but oh, I miss Copenhagen," she states.

Højskoleøen has clearly become a sort of home for the trio. At the same time, it's evident that none of them are certain about what the future holds. While they have many travel plans and thoughts about what's to come, ultimately, only time will tell. They had different plans before they met each other, and who knows whom they might encounter in the future that could once again change their plans.

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*Stepping on board this ferry, I quickly realized that this trip was going to be long and tough.*

”





# Slow Boat to Nowhere

The ferry was full to its brim with passengers. Sitting on the seats, sitting on the stairs, laying on the floor. Everywhere you looked people were trying to make themselves comfortable.

*Text and photos by Laerke Kobberup*



**M**y trip to the middle of nowhere started out from Batam where I had arrived the night before from Singapore. It was early morning, but I was already covered in sweat after a mere 10 minutes waiting for a taxi outside the hotel when it finally arrived.

The air condition inside was a rescue from the hammering sun. I both cursed and praised my long pants and long sleeved t-shirt. They made it difficult to cool down, but they also protected me from unwanted attention. At least to a certain extent as I couldn't hide my light skin and blonde hair.

After a night in my small hotel room, which had no windows, I was happy to be back on the move. I was on my way to the ferry with snacks and loads of water in my bag. Preparing myself for a journey of more than 11 hours ahead of me. I had never spent that many hours on a boat before.

My destination was a small island called Nongkat. It is a part of a small Indonesian island group called Anambas. The island is privately owned by a small group of Danes, and I had been allowed to come and visit. Not many people make their way there, but on this journey another Danish girl was making her way as well.

I spotted her as the only other blonde among the local crowd when I stumbled into the ferry terminal, balancing my freshly bought coffee and my backpack. She was going to the same island as me to visit a friend.

In the beginning I was happy to have company, but also concerned about whether this would make me miss out on part of the experience. I had assured my boss that this was a long and dreary trip which was just begging to be experienced and written about. A big part of that was "you are on your own".

There has always been a part of me that envied the backpackers in the 80's and 90's. The way that they had the opportunity to travel completely local with no internet connection to save them when something went wrong. Essentially to be forced to talk to people around you and integrate. On my trip to the island Nongkat in Indonesia, I was hoping to get a taste of what I have been craving.

It turned out that I didn't need to worry at all about not being alone and on my own, because stepping on board this ferry, I quickly realized that this trip was going to be long and tough, and any kind of company would definitely be appreciated.



“  
*Outside the deck  
was full of locals  
smoking,  
enjoying the breeze  
and the view.  
We melted.*  
”



## Our home for ten hours

The ferry was full to its brim with passengers. Sitting on the seats, sitting on the stairs, laying on the floor. Everywhere you looked people were trying to make themselves comfortable. And so were we. We had a ticket that included a seat, but figuring out what seat it was, turned out to be quite a struggle. After being relocated the second time I caved and let the crew take my backpack to the rest of the luggage. My camera and my laptop. I could feel the anxiousness not to have it near me. We then embarked from the harbor of Batam in the ferry with at least 50 people if not more.

I had been worried that I would get seasick, and the sight of free bags hanging everywhere on the ferry did not make me more relaxed. I had bought some pills for motion sickness beforehand, but I didn't want to take them unless I really needed to.

Luckily it didn't seem like the boat was going to rock that much on the trip, and I settled into my seat. Starting to snack and listen to some music.

After a short while my curious neighbor started asking questions about where I was from. I wasn't surprised, as we were the only non-locals on the ferry and had already turned quite a few heads. After a bit back and forth, he started to offer us some of his snacks. In the beginning we thought that he just wanted us to try them, but suddenly I had the entire bag in my lap, and I had to be a bit firmer in my answer when he tried to offer me his lunch. He was also a bit worried about the trip he told me, as he easily gets seasick. He worked for an oil-company, and the last four years he had been flying to Terempa to avoid the ferry.

## A whole world outside

Two hours in I had started to grow restless. With the many people in the ferry the temperature had started to rise. With my headphones on I was staring ahead slowly feeling the sweat starting to appear everywhere on my body.

I had also quickly developed a love-hate relationship with the two-year-old sitting in the row in front of me as he kept swinging between being exceptionally cute and crying loudly. I looked at my fellow traveler in agony. So many hours ahead of us, and we had already discovered that we couldn't get outside on the back of the boat.

Something had to be done. We had realized that someone was selling coffee in the front of the boat, so we decided to wake up our three sleeping neighbors to go in that direction of the boat. Then we made our way through the sleeping children and adults laying on the floor and reached the door to the deck. There we saw the sign "no exit" on the door. The disappointment must have been obvious on our faces, because one of the men looked at us and the door, and then defied the sign by opening it for us.

Clearly the sign was meant to be ignored. Outside the deck was full of locals smoking, enjoying the breeze and the view. We melted. Sliding down, so that we could sit and enjoy the wind. There still wasn't much room, but there was air. We stayed there for hours. Acquiring a decent sunburn, but also so much more energy.



## Temperature rising a bit more

The ferry had one stop on the route to Terempa. This stop was in Letong. For refreshments we had heard. We had returned to our seats, so that no one took them, when the pure chaos began.

The following 30 minutes was occupied with what can only be described as a bazaar-like vibe on the ferry. At least 30 salesmen made their way through the ship. The temperature quickly rose as the voices yelled of snacks and coconut water. Once again, we had to assure our neighbor that we did not need more food as he wanted to buy us all that the salesmen had to offer.

As soon as the salesmen left the ship, we discovered the amount of trash scattered across the floor. We escaped once again to the outside deck, this time on the shaded side, and stayed there while the sun went down, and we arrived in Terempa.

## Ready, set and go

A message bipped in, as we arrived in Terempa:

“You have to leave the harbor, walk 100 meters, and then turn left to a mini harbor.”

Apparently, there would be a speedboat with a driver called Mr. Hinh. He wouldn't be able to speak a word of English, but he would take us to the island called Nongkat. This was where the Danish “Højskoleøen” was located.

After a few wrong turns in what was a much larger city than we expected, we found the mini harbor. However, after talking to a few of the sailors they told us that Mr. Hinh was sleeping.

We just kind of paused and sat down. This was the moment that I realized that I really didn't have a direct number for the school. Luckily my travel companion had for the friend she was going to visit, so at about 8 in the night we embarked on yet another trip. This time on a motorboat for 45 minutes with Mr. Hinh steering.

Going through the darkness with the wind in my hair and a massive amount of stars above me, I started to mentally prepare myself for meeting the people at the school where I would stay for a full week.

The trip on the speedboat was intense, as we had to slow down, and Mr. Hinh had to shine his light into the sea to see where the reefs were. I was amazed. I don't think I have ever seen such clear water in my life. We passed both sea turtles and machinery the night before we saw the twinkly lights of our destination. After more than 11 hours on the move, we had arrived at the island of Nongkat. Højskoleøen.



# I make a difference

Carl Bjarkam is the pastor at the Danish Seamen's Church in Singapore. He has been in Singapore for four years, and he loves his job. However, he acknowledges that the position has changed a lot over the years.

*By Lærke Kobberup*

**T**he Danish Seamen's Church in Singapore is an old building, which seems fitting as it hosts such an old organization as the Danish Seamen's Church. Pastor Carl Bjarkam imagines that the tradition of priests involved with sailors goes back to the missionary days in the mid-19th century.

The church isn't cluttered, and there is almost an echo as I sit in front of Carl Bjarkam to talk about the relevance of his position. He sips his coffee as he starts to tell me why he believes his presence is important in Singapore, especially on the Danish-flagged ships arriving at Singapore's main port just a few kilometers away in the harbor.

## An unexpected opportunity

Carl Bjarkam is a Danish priest, but he has lived in many different countries while working as one. He lived in France and Dubai before arriving in Singapore.

He has a degree in Theology but had no experience in the maritime world when he accepted the position as both the local Danish priest for the Danish community in Singapore and Port Chaplain – priest for the seafarers.

"It just sounded very interesting. I had never lived in this part of the world before, and I was fascinated by the history of the Danish Seamen's Church in Singapore."

"Living abroad gives you a different perspective on the world," Carl Bjarkam states. "However," he continues, "I also believe it is quite common that people who live abroad sometimes need that place that feels like back home."

This is essentially what the Danish Seamen's Church is supposed to provide for the Danes abroad: a little piece of home where you can speak Danish, sing Danish songs, and celebrate Danish rituals. However, it began as a solution to a whole different kind of problem.

## A practical beginning of a movement

"In the beginning, the Seamen's Church was designed as a place where seafarers could go, so they wouldn't blow all of their salary on gambling and brothels when they came to shore," Carl Bjarkam explains while laughing.

However, in all seriousness, Carl Bjarkam continues to explain how it was obvious that there was a very specific need for the churches back in the day. Not only to keep the minds and money of the sailors from disappearing in the lustrous activities of the cities but also for other purposes. The Seamen's Church offered an opportunity to get updated on news from the motherland. From the Danish perspective, the Seamen's Church became a place where one could read a Danish newspaper and send a letter home.

Later, it became a place with a phone, so the seafarers who had been on the water for weeks or months at a time could make a call home.

Today, the Danish Seamen's Church is very lucky if the seafarers have enough time to just visit the church, as they have a tight schedule when they are in port.

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*I believe it is quite common that people who live abroad sometimes need that place that feels like back home.*

”

## To stay in touch

As mentioned earlier, the Danish Seamen's Church abroad quickly became a means to stay in touch with the world and life back home. Today, the sailors just need to open their phones to accomplish this need.

"It is definitely a challenge," Carl Bjarkam exclaims as I ask whether or not social media has made his job as a port chaplain more difficult. "We don't represent a direct connection to home anymore, but maybe we have started to fill a different need."

Even though cell phones and social media continue to be an issue for the original purpose of the church, it is, in Carl Bjarkam's opinion, still clear that there is a desire for the pastor to visit the ships. Due to the tight schedule of the sailors as the ships are in port, they rarely leave the ships. This is where Carl Bjarkam sees an opening.

"I always try to go and visit the ships sailing under a Danish flag. The seafarers are very busy, but sometimes they have time to have a conversation, and it seems like they really enjoy talking to someone from 'the outside,'" Carl Bjarkam explains.

He elaborates that the seafarers might not have the time to seek out someone to talk to, but if he is there, just having dinner, then it seems easier for the seafarers to discuss what's on their mind with him.

"Mostly it is just conversations between two people, but once in a while it becomes more spiritual. Mostly if someone has experienced a death in the family or something like that," he says.

Mainly, Carl Bjarkam experiences the enjoyment from the sailors when they get to talk to someone who isn't a part of the daily routine on the ship, especially with someone who is bound by confidentiality.

## Why a priest and not for instance a psychiatrist?

Carl Bjarkam smiles and shakes his head at my question.



"In theory, I guess you could send a psychiatrist instead, but I just don't believe that it has the same sense about it," he explains.

I asked the question as I wondered whether it was primarily the confidentiality that seemed appealing to the seafarers.

He also adds that there are a lot of international sailors on the ships, many from the Philippines, Ukraine, etc. A priest, or any kind of man of religion, might just be a bit more universal. Some could say that the role calls for some sort of respect and understanding. And then, of course, there is the connection to the religious and spiritual world.

"I doubt that a psychiatrist could perform an exorcism if there was a need," he states with an odd kind of pride.

He has never performed one, he confides, but he has talked to colleagues who have been asked to perform them on the ships. And I have to agree that on this point a psychiatrist wouldn't be of much help.

## Making a difference through one's work

Carl Bjarkam believes in the work he does. He believes that he makes a difference for his congregation, both the ones living on the ships and the ones more permanently in Singapore.

"You have to believe that the work you do makes a difference. Otherwise, it wouldn't make sense for me to do it. Of course, you always wish for more members, but the more permanent expats in Singapore support us, and when it comes to the seafarers, I believe that it makes a difference for them. I can feel that they appreciate our visits," he explains.

Carl Bjarkam doesn't know how long he will stay in Singapore, but for now, he loves it and will continue to carry on the work of the Danish Seamen's Church.



Agneta's  
World

*Agneta de Bekassy*



# Summer in Sweden!

This time my column will be about Sweden and Midsummer celebrations in the archipelago with a completely different temperature than in Bangkok.



After having spent a very nice National Day and Midsummer in Bangkok, it was time to celebrate in Sweden. It seems like I will never learn to pack the right outfits for summer in Scandinavia. I should know by now, that thin summer dresses are completely wrong.

Since I arrived in Sweden, begin of June, I have been freezing. The cold wind and a temperature of 13 to 17 degrees are killing you.

The day before Midsummer, I went with an old friend, who I got to know in Bangkok, to Smögen, where she has a very nice apartment. I remember Smögen from my childhood, a place that always was more than crowded during the Midsummer weekend. The luxury yachts were lining up one after the other by the bridge. If you happened to get space as the last boat, you sometimes had to jump over 3 to 5 other boats to reach the bridge.

The air was charged and the mood high.

Already at lunch time people started to drink beer and Aquavit and you could hear the classic snaps songs all over the place. The shops had been emptied of herring and the, for the Swedes, so special new potatoes, were sold out quickly. Towards the afternoon, you saw the people swaying towards the midsummer pole to take part in the traditional dances. In the evening every restaurant and bar were packed with well refreshed guests and the atmosphere was on fire.

My friend and I were very surprised to see how relatively quiet everything was this year. Not at all as many yachts as you expected, no drunk people, nicely dressed people, from a very young age to elderly, dancing "The small frogs are funny to see" and most participants wearing nice flower wreaths on their heads. At this time,



*We went to bed in a good mood after much delicious wine and lots of singing and dancing.*

around 3 pm, even the sun came out and contributed with its warm rays to the celebration.

Dancing around the pole is probably one of the most Swedish traditions and it's nice to see how both the young people and the elderly participate.

Some people had brought a blanket and prepared for a picnic on the lawn. It was a very nice sight and despite both beer and bubbles, people managed to keep quite sober.

In the evening the real parties started, there were queues to almost all restaurants and bars and some of them started as piano bars, but later on turned into discos.

My friend and I decided to have a really nice herring lunch at home and a delicious dinner in the evening, also at home, but later on we were ready to explore the night life. Arm in arm we went to a piano bar and enjoyed the guy playing and singing. On the way, we realized that more security guards and policemen were present than normally, they seemed almost to be in majority compared to guests.

Luckily they didn't have much to do as it was a calm, civilized atmosphere on the whole place.

It is hard to go home and return to bed as it is light most of the night. We were asking ourselves how it came, that the whole midsummer day and night could be so pleasant and calm, if it had something with the previous Covid to do or if people just were more cautious and behaving more properly and had realized that getting drunk and waking up the next day with a hangover, isn't really that nice?

We went to bed in a good mood after much delicious wine and lots of singing and dancing.



Midsummer day, we woke up to heavy rain and very chilly air. A dip in the sea wasn't to think about. We had real brownish water caused by an early Mareld (Milky seas) that almost looked like lobster bisques.

It's a phenomenon whereby the surface of the sea sometimes lights up or glows in varying shades of blue, but this time an old inhabitant told us there were kind of bacteria making the color brownish/red instead of extremely bluish. Not dangerous, but unappetizing.

Sunday morning was also wet and grey but around lunchtime the sun came out and it was possible to go for a walk.

As I'm not really used to cold weather anymore, I of course, caught a light summer cold, but it was worth it as Midsummer was a great success.

# Indonesia encourages Finland to recognize Palestine



The Indonesian Foreign Affairs Minister Retno Marsudi met with the Finnish President Alexander Stubb in Helsinki and encouraged him to recognize Palestinian statehood.

Earlier in June, Marsudi announced she would meet European

leaders with the goal of getting them to recognize Palestine. She hadn't yet announced what countries she intended to visit, but Finland seems to be the first in line.

Marsudi claimed the exchange was fruitful. At an online press statement in Helsinki she said:

"Finland has stated that its recognition is a matter of if rather than when, meaning it is just a matter of time before it announces the recognition."

She also said that Indonesia is paying close attention to Finland on the matter and that she eagerly awaits the president's statement. He allegedly told her that Finland is planning to recognize Palestinian statehood "at some point in the future".

The two state leaders agreed on the urgency of an immediate and lasting ceasefire in Gaza, as well as the importance of a two-state solution.

"We share the same view of the importance of implementing UN Security Council Resolution 2735 at the earliest. We hope that all countries will exert their influence to urge the warring parties to willingly implement the resolution," she said.

# Norway won't follow EU's car tariffs on Chinese cars

Norway will not follow the EU in regards to tariffs on Chinese electric cars. This was announced by the Norwegian Finance Minister Trygve Slagsvold Vedum and he underlined that tariffs would be neither relevant nor desirable for the Norwegian government.

Norway has the highest density of electric vehicles worldwide and more than 80 percent of the cars sold in Norway in 2022 were EVs. More than 12 percent of the EVs that are imported into Norway are made in China.



The Norwegian statement follows the European Commission announcement yesterday, which stated that 25 percent tariffs would be

applied to Chinese EVs in Europe. This would potentially lead to multi-billion Euro earnings. The European Commission says that the aim is to prevent unfair competition and market distortion as Chinese car manufacturers are largely supported by the Chinese state.

Some European carmakers have criticized the decision as China has threatened EV with a similar tariff on the import of European cars with large engines, which could hurt the businesses of Porsche, Mercedes, BMW and others.



# Nordic Ambassadors support the Philippines fight against digital predators

The Ambassadors from Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland to the Philippines have announced their collaboration with the Philippine Government to protect children and bring sexual perpetrators to justice, both within the country and abroad.

The Philippines has ranked second highest in child sexual abuse cyber tip reports, based on almost 2.8 million reports from the US-based National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

This issue is important to the Filipino Government, and the NLO Manila and its Philippine counterparts are especially focused on key areas such as prevention and advocacy, prosecution and law enforce-

ment, protection and reintegration of children, and partnership and networking.

The Nordic Embassies want to support this development and help strengthen the process, particularly since the establishment of the NLO Manila office in March 2020. There have been 185 sexual offense cases involving the Nordic countries and the Philippines.

The Nordic Embassies aim to stand united with the Philippine government in streamlining law enforcement agencies and strengthening collaboration with the private sector and non-government organizations.

All the ambassadors support this collaboration: The Ambassador of Denmark, Franz-Michael Mellbin,



The Ambassador of Finland, Juha Pyykkö, the Ambassador of Norway, Christian Halaas Lyster, and the Ambassador of Sweden, Annika Thunborg.

# China to probe EU pork trade in response to EV tariff



Chinese firms have formally applied for an anti-dumping probe into pork import from the European Union, according to Chinese state media. The move has escalated tension after the EU imposed tariffs on Chinese-made electric vehicles.

The probe would be an issue for Denmark as the country exported pork worth \$556.1 million in 2023. Other countries affected include Spain, which is China's top supplier and the Netherlands and France.

In 2023 China imported \$6

billion worth of pork in total, and imports from the EU make up more than half, according to customs data. The report did not make clear what pork products would be targeted.

The Chinese market is important for European manufacturers as products such as pigs feet, ears and offal are popular among Chinese consumers and not Europeans.

An anti-dumping probe is a tariff which can be put on foreign imports if the government believes foreign prices are below the fair market value.

# Volvo moves production from China to Belgium



Volvo Cars has begun moving the production of its electric car manufacturing from China to Ghent in Belgium. It is happening at the same time as the EU is investigating new import rules on electric cars from China.

For now it is the EX30 production, but it is expected for models for the UK market to be moved to Belgium as well. The global PR manager for Volvo has stated that it is too early to speculate on the consequences.

Volvo Cars is owned by Chinese Geely, and is estimated to be one of the Western vehicle manufacturers that would be hit hardest by increase in Chinese tariffs.

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# Indonesian deposits seeds in Norwegian seed bank

New Indonesian seeds were added to the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, raising the total number of seed samples to 1.29 million. In total, seed samples from 15 gene banks were added, including two gene banks in Benin and one seed bank in Armenia that also deposited seeds at the same time. A total of 20,683 seeds were added to the vault.

This was the first time that the specific Indonesian bank deposited seeds, and Indonesia made its inaugural contribution in February of this year. The vault has only been opened on these two occasions this year.

The Svalbard Global Seed Vault

is operated by the non-profit organization Crop Trust in collaboration with Norwegian authorities. The vault aims to preserve the genetic diversity of food crops from around the world and is the largest seed vault in the world.

The vault has a capacity of 4.5 million distinct seed varieties and can accommodate duplicates of every seed variant stored in global gene banks. It was established in 2008 with the goal of safeguarding agricultural and industrial crops against war, terrorism, natural disasters, and other threats. For this reason, the vault also has the nickname "Doomsday Vault."



# Neste transfer SAF to Singaporean airport

The Finnish fuel company Neste now supplies sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) for Emirates flights departing from Singapore Changi Airport.

This new deal makes Emirates the first international visiting carrier to use sustainable aviation fuel supplied at the airport from Neste's Singapore refinery.

Emirates has a need for a large amount of aviation fuel. Therefore, over 2,600 tons of blended sustainable aviation fuel have been transferred into the fueling system at Changi Airport in the last few weeks.



The collaboration between Emirates and Neste began in October 2023.

# How Danes can be more inclusive towards foreigners



The media outlet The Local Denmark conducted a survey on how Denmark, or the Danish system, could be more inclusive for foreigners living in the country, and they received numerous responses.

The survey was distributed among The Local's readers, and here

are some of the main themes that emerged from the answers. One woman in Copenhagen suggested increasing inclusion by perhaps celebrating other cultures' holidays:

"Melting pot countries like Singapore celebrate Chinese, Malaysian, Christian and Indian holidays," she noted

She believes that this would enable people from different communities to better understand each other's cultures.

Language was mentioned frequently. Firstly, newcomers find it frustrating that there is a timeline for when they must attend the free Danish classes offered by the Danish state. The Danish state offers Danish lessons for adults moving to Denmark within their first five years in the country.

Secondly, there were comments about the availability of news in English:

"Denmark should have a TV channel and radio in English, so we can follow the news," stated an expat from Brazil.

In addition to inclusiveness and language, readers also highlighted equality in job opportunities, embracing differences, and the structure of the Danish school system.

# Ikano in Malaysia celebrates Midsummer

The Ikano Centres in Malaysia has decided to celebrate their Swedish roots and incorpo-

rate the Swedish Midsummer festival in a new campaign.

The new campaign is called

'Midsummer Sunsation', and was introduced by the executive creative director of the Clan, Yow Kuan Wai:

"With Malaysia being right on the Equator, our daylight hours are pretty consistent. So, we introduced a concept that would be completely alien to Malaysians and therefore a real attention-grabber: perpetual sunlight".

"Inspired by the popularity of Bon Odori and other foreign celebrations that are widely embraced here, we realized that Swedish culture is a treasure trove waiting to be discovered," said the head of copy at The Clan, Teh Sue May.



# Many Filipino nurses finish study program in Norway

In Norway it is required that foreigners from outside the European Union complete theoretical and practical courses to be able to work as nurses in Norway. Recently sixty-eight Filipino nurses completed these courses, according to the Philippine Embassy in Norway.

There were 72 graduates from the program at Oslo Metropolitan University, 68 of these graduates were from the Philippines. To celebrate the new graduates there was a graduation ceremony at Oslo Rådhus, city hall, on 6 June 2024.

The Ambassador of the Philippines to Norway, Enrico Fos, attended the ceremony and spent time congratulating each of the Filipino nurses on their achievement. He also thanked the Oslo Metropolitan



University and the city government of Oslo for supporting the program and allowing the Philippine Embassy in Norway to increase the amount of slots at the program.

Enrico Fos underlines how important the program is for making it easier for Filipino nurses to work in Norway.

# New Chinese drug can challenge Novo Nordisk's Wegovy in China

Just as Novo Nordisk's weight loss drug Wegovy has been allowed on the Chinese market, the company's Chinese rivals Innovent Biologics and Eli Lilly have published news about their own medicine Mazdutide.

Mazdutide has just been tested in a study with a sample of 610 individuals from the Chinese population. The test results showed that the drug can achieve a weight loss of 15 percent in 48 weeks.

Innovent is planning to apply for approval of Mazdutide in China. Bloomberg Intelligence has estimated that the drug can reach sales amounting to US \$1,3 billion in China alone and even reach a little over US \$9 billion in 2030.

The drug is also being tested in the middle of clinical development phase 2 in the US.



# New Danish pastor to Thailand



Nicolaj Stubbe Hørlyck will be new pastor at the Danish Church Thailand starting from 1. September 2024. He replaces previous pastor Christa Lund Herum who has already left for Denmark.

Nicolaj, who is today pastor at Brorsons Church in Copenhagen, is accompanied by his wife Anna Kirstine Stubbe Hørlyck.

"I am looking forward to being a pastor for the Danes in Thailand in the future," says Nicolaj Stubbe Hørlyck about his new challenges.

"In addition to being part of the Danish embassy's emergency services as a social attaché, and thereby meeting Danes in many different life situations, I look forward to being involved in the development of the Danish Church House in Bangkok together with the church council," he adds.

"It will be exciting and challenging to live in one of Asia's big hectic metropolises, and at the same time I am looking forward to getting out into the country and meeting both permanent residents and tourists and finding out which offers from the Danish Church Thailand may be

relevant to them."

"There has only been one Danish priest in Thailand for seven years, so there is still a lot that is being built, and I am really looking forward to being part of it already from 1 September."

Chairman of the Church Council of the Danish Church Thailand, Jacob Brodal says that the selection and employment of Nicolaj as the new Pastor has been done by the Church Council in Thailand in cooperation with the DSUK in Denmark, which is the Headquarters of the combined Danish Church Abroad and Danish Seamen's Church.

# Beer prices to rise in Vietnam



The Finance Ministry of Vietnam has proposed a hike in the special consumption tax on alcoholic drinks to 100 percent by 2030. This might affect the beer industry in Vietnam, where the Danish brand Carlsberg is among the top five.

The tax is supposed to be implemented gradually, with a raise of 70-80 percent in 2026, and then increasing to 100 percent by 2030.

“Levying high tax rates is necessary to help reduce the consumption of alcoholic drinks,” the Finance Ministry explains.

The four major brands in the Vietnamese beer industry are the Danish Carlsberg, Dutch Heineken, and the local Sabeco and Habeco. Many of these brands were already hit by the country’s strict drink and driving law, which was implemented in 2019.

The only brand that did not have a decline in consumption due to this law was the Danish brand Carlsberg.

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# Swedish company’s games featured in illegal online casino

Games from the Swedish company Evolution have been found on a number of sites for illegal online casinos in Southeast Asia, according to an investigation by Swedish Radio News. Some of the casinos have ties to money laundering and fraud. Therefore, Evolution risks assisting criminal organizations by providing their games.

The games in question are roulette, baccarat, and blackjack. Swedish Radio News has obtained proof that these games have been used by a number of online casinos deemed illegal by local authorities, as most Southeast Asian countries have outlawed gambling.

In late 2023, the Thai police seized 34 million Swedish Crowns in a raid on two illegal online casino sites. The money was partially obtained by exploiting elderly Thai people in cryptocurrency scams, but the website’s owners are also suspected of illegal gambling, fraud, and money laundering. Further inves-



tigations revealed that Evolution’s games were featured on the site.

Fifty other casino sites that use Evolution’s games were discovered in Cambodia. Evolution’s games have also been featured on a casino site in the Philippines. While it is not illegal in the Philippines, this specific casino had its license revoked last autumn due to suspicions of cryptocurrency fraud.

The Thai authorities have urged Evolution to take more responsibility for their product, and experts have

told Swedish Radio News that the company risks assisting the criminal organizations behind the sites.

Swedish Radio News did not receive permission to interview Evolution, but the company stated that none of the sites mentioned were customers of Evolution. Furthermore, they explained that they vet their customers and the customers of their customers, but acknowledged that there can be a long supply chain.

# Indonesian President urge Norway not to discriminate the palm oil industry



The Indonesian President, Joko Widodo, has requested that the Norwegian government avoid discriminatory practices towards the Indonesian palm oil industry.

He made this request during a meeting with Norway's Minister of Climate and Environment, Andreas Bjelland Erikson, on Sunday, 2 June 2024. The Norwegian minister was accompanied by Indonesia's Environment and Forestry Minister, Siti Nurbaya Bakar, and Finance Minister, Sri Mulyani.

This request follows Indonesia's protests against the EU Deforestation-Free Regulation, which In-

donesia perceives as discriminatory towards the palm oil industry.

The EU Deforestation-Free Regulation mandates that operators or traders must prove that their products do not come from deforested land. If this is not possible, the product will not be allowed into the EU market.

"In the meeting, the President requested that Norway ensure accurate understanding and perceptions to prevent discrimination against palm oil," stated Indonesia's Environment and Forestry Minister, Siti Nurbaya Bakar. She continued: "Indonesia is also scrutinizing the land inventory method, and we are

continuously working on this."

The Norwegian Minister of Climate and Environment, Andreas Bjelland Erikson, responded by acknowledging the efforts the Indonesian government has already achieved, such as reducing deforestation by 90%.

However, the EU Deforestation-Free Regulation is set to apply from 30 December 2024. Besides Indonesia, the regulation has been criticized by Malaysia and Thailand, among others.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADUATES ON THEIR ACCEPTANCES TO **UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES AROUND THE WORLD**

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Monash University  
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Webster University Vienna

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Humber College (4)  
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King's University College - Western University  
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McMaster University (2)  
Ontario Tech University (2)  
Queen's University (3)  
Simon Fraser University  
St. Francis Xavier University  
The University of British Columbia (12)  
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Trent University  
University of Alberta (3)  
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University of Guelph (2)  
University of New Brunswick  
University of Ottawa (2)  
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Istituto Marangoni London  
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Lancaster University  
London Metropolitan University  
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Loughborough University (2)  
Manchester Metropolitan University (4)  
MeffFilm  
Middlesex University  
Newcastle University (2)  
Northwestern University London (4)  
Norwich University of the Arts  
Queen Mary University of London (2)  
Regent's University London (3)  
Royal Holloway, University of London (2)  
Screen and Film School  
The University of Edinburgh (2)  
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University of Exeter (2)  
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University of Kent (5)  
University of Leeds (6)  
University of Manchester (8)  
University of Portsmouth  
University of Sheffield (3)  
University of Southampton  
University of St Andrews (2)  
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Barnard College

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Belmont University  
Bentley University  
Berklee College of Music (2)  
Bethany Lutheran College  
Binghamton University  
Boston University (2)  
Bowie State University  
Brandeis University  
Bridgewater College  
Bryant University  
Bucknell University  
Butler University (2)  
California Baptist University  
California Lutheran University (6)  
California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo  
California State University-Northridge  
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Carnegie Mellon University  
Case Western Reserve University  
Chapman University  
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Clemson University  
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Colorado School of Mines  
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Columbia University  
Concordia College At Moorhead (2)  
Concordia University-Irvine  
Connecticut College  
Cornell University  
CUNY Queens College (5)  
Daemen University  
Daytona State College  
Eastern Michigan University (2)  
Elon University  
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University-Daytona Beach  
Emerson College  
Fashion Institute of Technology  
Florida International University  
Florida Southwestern State College  
Florida State University  
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Franklin and Marshall College  
George Mason University (3)  
George Washington University (5)  
Gonzaga University  
Goucher College  
Haverford College  
Hesston College (3)  
Houston Christian University  
Illinois College  
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Nazareth College (2)  
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Seattle Central College  
Seattle University  
Shoreline Community College  
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St Francis College  
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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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