

NOV 2024

# Scand Asia



## **BUSINESS:**

Assa Abloy opens factory in Vietnam

## **INTERNATIONAL:**

Nordic Ambassadors present credentials to the King of Malaysia

## **COMMUNITY**

EU study fair offers educational opportunities to Cambodian youth

SweCham's  
new Director

**Anna  
Olsson-Moore**



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# KEEPING FIT AND PREVENTING HEART FAILURE



Sudden cardiac arrest in sports as a tragic event is the leading cause of premature death in competitive athletes. During sports participation or exercise, sport-related cardiac sudden deaths have been occasionally reported despite low incidences worldwide. Sports-related sudden cardiac arrest can even cast a negative light on sports and exercise in general, therefore obscuring the health benefits of regular exercise. The answer remains unclear why this life-threatening condition could suddenly kill athletes who had never presented with any signs and symptoms of cardiac disease.



## Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)-Onsite life-saving devices

Automated external defibrillators (AEDs) are portable, life-saving devices designed to revive people from sudden cardiac arrest occurring when there is a disruption in the heart's electrical activity. AEDs analyze the heart rhythm and deliver a therapeutic electric shock to the heart, enabling the heart to return to its normal rhythm. If someone experiences sudden cardiac arrest, step-by-step instructions for prompt assistance include:

- 1. Assessment prior to assistance:** When a potential cardiac arrest patient is identified, the first step is to assess the surrounding environment whether it is safe and suitable for further resuscitation.
- 2. Calling emergency services for assistance.**
- 3. Providing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR):** CPR should be immediately provided once no response shown from the patient. CPR combining effective chest compressions with artificial ventilation in an effort to manually resuscitate the patient must constantly continue until AED or emergency service arrives at the scene.

## What are the causes of sports-related sudden cardiac arrest in athletes?

By recent US statistics, sudden cardiac death is one of the most common medical causes of death in athletes during participation in sports, with an incidence of approximately 1 in 50,000 athletes. The incidence seems to be higher, up to 1 in 5,000, during basketball competitions. The risks and causes of sudden cardiac death widely vary based primarily upon the athlete populations. Sudden cardiac arrest is more common in men than women. Athletes aged over 35 years pose a risk of death caused by sudden cardiac arrest up to 5%, depending on the individual's health conditions. Causes of sudden cardiac arrest during sports participation often include:



### Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy

Where the heart muscle becomes abnormally thick



### Myocarditis

An inflammation of the heart muscle



### Exercise-induced arrhythmia

A type of arrhythmia that is aggravated by exercise

## Getting fit before striking the games

Before a kick-off, pre-participation screening, including cardiac screening tests and physical fitness assessment, aims to identify cardiovascular diseases, musculoskeletal problems, and other exercise-aggravated medical conditions.

### Dr. Anusith Tunhasiriwet

Cardiologist at Bangkok Heart Hospital.

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QR Scan



# Contents



18

**SweCham's new Director  
Anna Olsson-Moore**



24

**New Beginnings at the  
Danish Church in Thailand**



28

**My favorite month  
in Thailand**



22

**Danish Students  
search for love  
and culture**



26

**Santa's Finnish  
hometown  
Rovaniemi**



30

**Will I ever make new  
friends?**

- 10 Temu accused of selling imitations of iconic Danish designs
- 14 Sweden funds study for new BRT system in Metro Iloilo
- 36 Finnish president Stubb strengthens ties during China visit
- 37 Norway & Philippines partner on Disarmament
- 39 The Global Fashion Summit moves to Shanghai



10



14



37



39

HEATING UP

# HOPE

**Sri Hollema, Grad'18,**  
developed MatZero, a heated mat powered  
by solar energy, designed to improve the lives  
of refugees living in dire conditions.

Read Sri's story



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# Trump?!

**W**e must brace ourselves for the potential consequences of Donald Trump's re-election as President of the United States. Unfortunately, it's unrealistic to imagine that, now in office for a second term, he won't carry out the promises he made during his campaign.

NATO, recently strengthened by the inclusion of Sweden and Finland, may have to contend with a return to Trump's unstable and non-committal approach to the alliance, which has underpinned 80 years of peace in Europe.

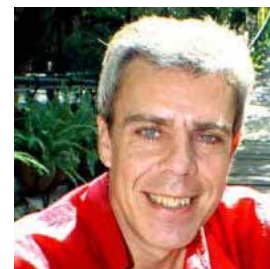
Asia should also prepare for Trump's proposed tariff barriers, which he's vowed to impose on all Chinese imports, and potentially on the rest of Asia's as well. Europe, too, could face new trade restrictions, given Trump's statement that the EU would have to "pay dearly" for access to the U.S. market.

Trump's vision of an isolated America will likely be felt globally. U.S. companies that rely on imported raw materials and semi-finished goods will have to push hard to ensure their needs are addressed.

The estimated 11 million undocumented foreign workers in the U.S. may face mass deportation unless they find refuge in states with Democratic leadership that could potentially resist federal directives. Meanwhile, the 60,000 refugees the U.S. typically accepts each year may need to be absorbed by other countries.

One of the most concerning aspects of Trump's leadership, evident from his TV days and his first term, is his belief that ruthlessness equates to decisiveness. His reliance on executive orders to sidestep Congress reflects his disregard for the democratic process. Moreover, his preference for loyalty over professional integrity suggests that key appointments in his administration may be based on personal connections rather than qualifications.

Finally, it's deeply worrying that a convicted felon could return to the highest office while ongoing legal cases against him remain. The fact that many U.S. voters believe Trump is pursuing re-election for their benefit, rather than his own, is astonishing.



**Gregers Moller**  
*Editor in Chief*

## ScandAsia

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

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# IKEA plans to open its fifth store in Chiang Mai by 2025



IKEA, the renowned Swedish furniture and home décor brand, is set to expand its presence in Thailand with the opening of a new branch in Chiang Mai, scheduled for 2025. This store will mirror the smaller format of the successful Phuket location, marking IKEA's fifth establishment in the country.

Additionally, reports suggest that the company is considering opening a potential store in Rangsit, where it already owns land. Leonie

Hoskin, retail manager of IKEA Thailand and Vietnam, highlighted that Chiang Mai holds significant growth potential for the northern region, with Rangsit also being a focal point for future expansion.

Having been in business for nearly 80 years and entering the Thai market 12 years ago, IKEA currently operates four branches in Thailand: Bangna, Phuket, Bangyai, and Sukhumvit. The company has experienced strong financial performance in Thailand, with a reported revenue of over 10 billion baht in fiscal year 2024, reflecting a 3.9% increase compared to the previous year, the highest growth rate among its regional operations.

Ikano Retail, the franchise hold-

er for IKEA in Thailand and several other countries, noted a revenue of approximately 40 billion baht for fiscal year 2024, indicating 1.3% growth. In 2024, IKEA Thailand plans to implement a major price reduction on over 2,400 products, 85% of which are essential or best-selling items, as well as reduced transportation fees for truck deliveries.

IKEA's growth in Thailand reflects its strategic approach, with the company prioritizing customer accessibility and product affordability. The first branch in Thailand opened in Bangna in 2011, and since then, the brand has steadily expanded its footprint in the country, catering to the rising demand for affordable and stylish home furnishings.

# LEGO launches campaign in Malaysia to encourage play

The LEGO Group has launched a new campaign in Malaysia to promote creative play and family bonding in response to concerns over declining playtime opportunities.

The campaign, titled “#LEGO-SerlahkanKreativitiAndaMY,” is part of LEGO's global “Play is Your Superpower” initiative, which encourages families to engage in more hands-on play.

A global study by the LEGO Group revealed that while 90% of children believe play is essential for learning and self-expression, 76% of parents feel that today's children have fewer opportunities to play compared to past generations. The study also highlighted the growing impact of screen time and digital



devices on reducing family playtime.

LEGO's campaign in Malaysia seeks to inspire families to use

LEGO bricks to creatively reimagine national icons, aiming to reignite the joy of shared play in the digital age.

# IKEA urges more stimulus support in China

Swedish furniture giant IKEA has called on the Chinese government to introduce additional stimulus measures amid a prolonged property crisis and ongoing economic challenges. The government recently announced a stimulus package to help revitalize the struggling economy.

IKEA reported a 5% drop in sales for the financial year ending August 31, highlighting the company's sensitivity to shifts in the property market and interest rates. Typically, when consumers move homes, they spend more on furniture, so downturns in these markets directly affect retail performance.

Jesper Brodin, CEO of Ingka Group, which operates most IKEA stores globally, including in China, acknowledged that consumer confi-

dence in China currently lags behind the global average. Nevertheless, Brodin remains optimistic about the potential impact of the government's stimulus package but emphasized the need for even more market stimulation to give the economy an additional boost.

China contributed 3.5% to Ingka Group's total global sales in the 2023-24 financial year, marking a slight decrease from the previous year. Despite this, IKEA is committed to expanding its presence in China. The company recently opened its fourth store in Shanghai's Changning District, bringing its total number of stores in the country to 39. Additionally, store visits in China increased by 11% compared to the previous year, signaling resilience in consumer interest.



In response to these economic challenges, China introduced its most aggressive monetary stimulus package since the COVID-19 pandemic, including significant support for the property market. The country's Finance Ministry is expected to outline further details of the stimulus plan in a press conference on Saturday. IKEA executives, including Tolga Oncu, the retail manager at Ingka Group, are closely monitoring the situation, particularly the potential effects on the Chinese economy and the home furnishings sector.

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# New partnership to combat biofouling in Asia

A new partnership between the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) TEST Biofouling Project and the Maritime Technology Cooperation Centre of Asia aims to improve biofouling management in Asia and limit the spread of invasive aquatic species, which pose a growing environmental threat.

Biofouling, the buildup of marine organisms such as microorganisms, plants, algae, and animals on ships, can introduce harmful species to new environments, threatening marine biodiversity and ecosystems. To address this, the partnership will focus on key countries, including Indonesia, the Philippines, China, and Malaysia, by offering training and sharing technology.

As part of the agreement, the Maritime Technology Cooperation Centre of Asia will organize workshops and training to enhance bio-



fouling management skills in the region. It will also help implement new technologies tailored to each country's specific needs, promoting best practices in the maritime industry.

This collaboration strengthens the Centre's capacity to promote sustainable biofouling management

across the region while encouraging long-term environmental protection efforts. The TEST Biofouling Project, funded by Norway, is dedicated to building capacity and piloting innovative solutions to manage biofouling and reduce related emissions.

# Chinese Temu accused of selling imitations of iconic Danish designs



Chinese online retailer Temu is facing criticism for allegedly selling imitations of Danish designs, including furniture and home décor items.

Danish design companies have identified items on Temu that closely

resemble original products from renowned brands like Montana and Louis Poulsen. Joakim Lassen, CEO of Montana, expressed frustration, stating, "These are pure copies." Ferm Living, another prominent Danish brand, has also voiced concerns, highlighting the considerable expense it incurs to protect its designs.

Although Temu claims to respect intellectual property rights, many in the design industry are calling for stronger measures against counterfeit goods. These imitations not only pose potential safety risks to consumers but also damage the

reputation of Danish design, leading to increased demands for stricter regulations against counterfeiters.

In August, Temu ranked as the second most popular online store among Danish consumers, according to data from Dansk Industri, the Confederation of Danish Industry. Despite warnings from the Danish Consumer Council and Environment Minister Magnus Heunicke regarding product safety and compliance with EU regulations, Temu has surpassed well-established Danish retailers such as Matas, Elgiganten, and H&M in popularity.

# Temu sellers avoid E-Waste payments, burdening Danish businesses

A recent report reveals that Chinese sellers on Temu are bypassing mandatory e-waste payments, placing an undue financial burden on compliant Danish businesses. As a result, these companies are left covering the costs for managing electronic waste.

Many Danish consumers are attracted to Temu's low prices, such as wireless glasses with a headset for just 45 kroner or a MacBook Pro at a fraction of its usual cost. However, concerns are growing over the fact that these sellers are reportedly not contributing to the costs of disposing of discarded electronics.

According to Danish business organizations, this lack of compliance allows many sellers on Temu to avoid their legal obligations. More



than 70,000 tons of electronic waste are processed annually at Danish recycling centers. Sellers are legally required to pay for the collection and handling of this waste, including foreign sellers on platforms like Temu.

Despite this, very few Chinese producers are registered with Dansk Producentansvar (Danish Producer Responsibility), the body responsible for enforcing e-waste management.

Currently, only six Chinese electronics sellers are registered, none of which sell on Temu. This means Danish companies adhering to the regulations are effectively subsidizing the costs for non-compliant foreign competitors.

In response, Temu has stated that they are working to understand and comply with local regulations, emphasizing their commitment to adhering to the laws in all their markets.

Danish organizations like Dansk Industri and Dansk Erhverv are calling for stronger enforcement, urging authorities to ensure that all sellers, including those on Temu, contribute fairly to e-waste management. This push reflects the need for a level playing field in the marketplace.

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# The Value of a Holistic Education: Preparing Students for the Future

*Cindy Adair, Cross Campus Principal, Bangkok Patana School*

In today's fast-paced and ever-evolving world, the importance of a holistic education cannot be overstated. As parents, educators and community members, we must recognise that the traditional approach of knowledge acquisition alone is no longer sufficient to equip our children for success. A well-rounded education, encompassing a broad range of extracurricular activities, access to world-class libraries, service opportunities, and community connections, is essential for fostering the soft skills and resilience necessary for the future job market and overall well-being.

## Extra-curricular Activities: Beyond Academics

Extra-curricular activities play a crucial role in a holistic education. They provide students with opportunities to explore their interests, develop new skills, and foster a sense of teamwork and leadership. Research has shown that students who participate in extracurricular activities are

more likely to exhibit higher levels of self-esteem, better time management skills, and improved academic performance. Did you know Bangkok Patana offers over 500 different activities each week?

Studies reveal that students engaged in extracurricular activities tend to have better attendance records and higher levels of academic achievement. These activities, whether they involve sports, music, drama, or outdoor education, teach students valuable life skills such as perseverance, communication, and problem-solving. As the renowned educator John Dewey once said, "Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself."

## Access to World-Class Libraries: A Gateway to Knowledge

A holistic education also includes access to world-class libraries, which serve as gateways to knowledge and intellectual growth. Libraries offer students a wealth of resources, from books and journals to digital

media and research databases. They provide a conducive environment for self-directed learning, critical thinking, and intellectual curiosity. Bangkok Patana is lucky to have two wonderful libraries with a collection of over 83,000 titles!

In his book "The Library: A Fragile History," Andrew Pettegree emphasises the transformative power of libraries, stating, "The library is not just a collection of books, but a place where minds meet, ideas are exchanged, and knowledge is shared." By exposing students to a diverse range of perspectives and ideas, libraries foster a love for learning that extends beyond the classroom. We are blessed with three wonderful libraries!

## Service Opportunities: Cultivating Empathy and Social Responsibility

Service opportunities are another integral component of a holistic education. Engaging in community service allows students to develop



a sense of empathy, social responsibility, and civic engagement. These experiences help students understand the importance of giving back to society, protecting the planet and the impact they can have on their communities.

Service opportunities also provide a platform for students to apply classroom knowledge to real-world situations, fostering a deeper understanding of societal issues and the importance of social justice. This means looking beyond Bangkok Patana out into local, regional and global communities.

### Community Connection: Building Relationships, Intercultural Understanding and Networks

A strong community connection is vital for a holistic education. Schools that foster a sense of belonging and community involvement provide students with a supportive network of peers, mentors, and role models. These connections help students develop people skills, emotional intelligence, and a sense of identity. In an International School setting there is also a unique opportunity to grow intercultural understanding by embracing the language and culture of the country in which your school

is based, in our case the Kingdom of Thailand. We can also celebrate the diverse and unique backgrounds of those families who make up our school community and learn from one another.

As the psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner once noted, “Every child needs at least one adult who is irrationally crazy about him or her.” A supportive community not only enhances students’ academic success but also contributes to their social and emotional well-being. By building relationships, intercultural understanding and networks, students learn the importance of collaboration, respect, and mutual support.

### Preparing for the Future Job Market

In the rapidly changing job market, soft skills such as communication, adaptability, and teamwork. A holistic education that integrates extracurricular activities, library access, service opportunities, and community connections equips students with these essential skills, making them more competitive in the workforce.

The World Economic Forum’s “Future of Jobs Report” highlights that by 2025, skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and emotional intelligence will be among the most sought-after by employ-

ers. A holistic education prepares students to navigate these demands by fostering creativity, resilience, and a growth mindset. As Brené Brown wisely states, “We need to teach our kids how to fail and get back up, how to be in relationships, and how to be vulnerable. This is the heart of a holistic education: preparing them for a full and brave life.”

In the rapidly changing job market, soft skills such as communication, adaptability, and teamwork. A holistic education that integrates extracurricular activities, library access, service opportunities, and community connections equips students with these essential skills, making them more competitive in the workforce. Yuval Noah Harari, the esteemed historian and author of *Sapiens*, emphasises, “In an age of rapid technological change, the ability to re-invent oneself is crucial. Holistic education builds adaptable, lifelong learners, not just people who can pass exams.”

# Sweden funds study for new BRT system in Metro Iloilo



Sweden is funding a study to explore the construction of a new bus rapid transit (BRT) system in Metro Iloilo, Philippines.

On October 29, Swedish Am-

bassador Harald Fries and Iloilo City Vice Mayor Jeffrey Ganzon signed the agreement, as Mayor Jerry Treñas was on medical leave. Officials from Sweden's embassy and Busi-

ness Sweden were also present at the signing.

The study follows a proposal presented by Business Sweden to the Metro Iloilo-Guimaras Economic Development Council (MIGEDC) a year ago. This council includes representatives from local governments and businesses across the region.

Ambassador Fries expressed pride in supporting Iloilo's goal of enhanced public transportation, stating, "We want to provide new solutions that enhance mobility and the quality of life for residents."

Swedfund International, Sweden's development finance institution, is funding the study. If approved, the proposed BRT system will complement the mini-bus service launched in June 2022 under the Public Transportation Modernization Program.

# Vietnamese Students Explored Study Opportunities at European Education Week in Hanoi

Vietnamese students recently explored study opportunities at the European Education Week 2024, held in Hanoi from October 20 to 26. The event, organized by the EU Delegation to Vietnam alongside various European embassies, showcased nearly 60 universities from across EU countries.

Denmark and Finland were highlighted for providing valuable insights on education systems and scholarship opportunities. Students



engaged with representatives to learn about a diverse array of academic programs available in Europe.

The event also offered consultations with EU alumni and discussions with European businesses, providing guidance on skills development and career prospects for students planning to return to Vietnam after studying abroad.

# EU study fair offers educational opportunities to Cambodian youth

The recent “Study in Europe Fair 2024,” held at Factory Phnom Penh, attracted over 1,500 attendees eager to explore educational options in Europe. With more than 30 booths, the event allowed students to connect directly with Cambodian alumni who shared their experiences studying abroad.

Held on October 24-25, the fair was free to attend and provided insights into a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate programs, exchange opportunities, and scholarship options. Representatives from countries including Belgium,

Finland, Germany, and Italy, as well as the Erasmus+ Programme, were available to guide students through educational pathways in Europe.

EU Ambassador to Cambodia Igor Driesmans and Cambodia’s Minister of Education, Hang Chuon Naron, inaugurated the fair, emphasizing Europe’s high-quality education and extensive scholarship offerings.

“European universities offer world-class education in vibrant cities known for quality of life,” Driesmans remarked, highlighting how studying in Europe can advance the



careers of Cambodian students.

The EU remains Cambodia’s largest education partner, fostering international collaboration and enhancing student mobility opportunities.

# Foreign students struggle with permit delays in Sweden



Foreign students in Sweden, particularly non-EU nationals, are experiencing significant delays in receiving their job-hunting permits after completing their studies. After graduating, these students may apply for a one-year residence permit to stay in Sweden and look for work. However, many are waiting for decisions that take much longer than anticipated.

For example, Nanda from Indonesia earned her master’s degree in business administration from Lund University and has been wait-

ing since early June for news on her permit application. Although graduates can stay in Sweden while the application is processed, the uncertainty creates stress as they seek employment. Many worry that lacking a permit could affect their job prospects and raise concerns about employer perceptions.

Furthermore, students cannot travel outside Sweden while their permit status remains undetermined. If they return home to receive permits, it could hinder their job hunts in Sweden and the EU. Some students have reported missing important events, such as graduations, because of the extended waiting period.

The Swedish Migration Agency notes that the median waiting time for job-seeking permits is around 225 days. This timeframe includes both successful and unsuccessful ap-

plications, leading to significant waiting times for many students. During peak periods, first-time student permit applications take priority, further delaying those seeking job-hunting permits.

Additionally, foreign graduates cannot obtain a Swedish personal ID number until they receive their permits. Without this ID, they lack access to essential services, including healthcare, and encounter complications in their job searches.

Overall, the challenges faced by foreign students highlight the need for a more efficient processing system. As Sweden continues to attract talent from around the world, streamlining the job-hunting permit process will be crucial in supporting international students in their transition to the workforce.

# Assa Abloy opens \$30 million factory in Vietnam

Swedish company Assa Abloy Group has launched a new \$30 million factory in Hai Phong, Vietnam. As a leader in entrance automation and door control,

the company plans to export its products to markets across Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Oceania, and the United States.

The new factory is expected to

create around 280 jobs for the local community, with an annual production capacity of two million door closers, equivalent to 2,800 tons.

This is Assa Abloy's second investment in Vietnam, following a \$25 million factory that started operations in Ba Thien II Industrial Park, Vinh Phuc, in 2020. That facility has a capacity of three million products per year.

In the first nine months of this year, Vietnam's registered foreign direct investment (FDI) reached \$24.78 billion, reflecting an 11.6% increase compared to last year, according to the Ministry of Planning and Investment.



# Swedish companies support Vietnam's green future

Leading Swedish companies such as Ericsson, H&M, and Hitachi Energy are showcasing eco-friendly solutions at the Green Economy Forum and Exhibition (GEFE) 2024 in Ho Chi Minh City. Their focus includes clean energy, reducing emissions, and promoting a circular economy to help Vietnam achieve its sustainability goals.

Swedish Ambassador Johan Ndisi highlighted the growing partnership between Sweden and Vietnam for a greener future:

"Honored to present the Sweden-Vietnam Business Footprint to H.E. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Bui Thanh Son and Vice-President of the European Commission (EC) Margaritis Schinas," the ambassador shared on his Facebook page.



Rita Mokbel, CEO of Ericsson Vietnam, explained how 5G technology can reduce emissions and improve energy efficiency. Ericsson is also collaborating with local telecom companies to expand 5G in Vietnam.

The Swedish Embassy also launched the "Sweden-Vietnam Business Footprint," highlighting the positive impact Swedish companies are making on Vietnam's journey toward sustainable development.



## DNB acquires Carnegie, expands globally

Den Norske Bank (DNB) has announced its acquisition of Carnegie Holding AB for approximately SEK 12 billion. This purchase will create DNB Carnegie, a new entity combining both banks' expertise in investment services and wealth management. DNB Carnegie will have a stronger presence in the Nordic countries and will expand internationally with offices in Singapore, London, and New York.

DNB's CEO, Kjerstin Braathen, stated that this deal will help the company offer better services to clients in the Nordics and globally. The acquisition is expected to be finalized by early 2025, pending regulatory approval. This move will enhance DNB's global standing in financial markets.

## Zeekr Makes Foray into Norway



Zeekr, the premium electric vehicle (EV) subsidiary of Geely, has announced its entry into Norway. The company will begin taking orders for the Zeekr 001 and Zeekr X later this month. Deliveries are expected by the end of the year. This entry into Norway aims to capitalize on the country's strong electric vehicle market, where more than 80% of new car sales are electric.

To provide a seamless experience, Zeekr has established a retailer network in Norway. Notably, its first partner, Premium Cars Stor-Oslo, will open in October, while additional dealerships are planned for major cities. Furthermore, the company has partnered with Plugsurfing, enabling customers to access over 800,000 charging points across Europe. This partnership enhances convenience for electric vehicle owners and supports Zeekr's growth strategy.

In September, Zeekr reached a significant milestone by delivering 21,333 vehicles, which surpassed its previous record. Year-to-date, the company delivered 142,873 vehicles, resulting in an impressive year-on-year growth of 80.79%. Additionally, their goal for 2024 is to reach a total of 230,000 vehicles sold.

The Zeekr 001 features a WLTP range of up to 620 kilometers and starts at 579,900 kroner (approximately \$54,000). Meanwhile, the Zeekr X SUV offers a range of up to 446 kilometers, starting at 424,900 kroner.

As Zeekr enters the Norwegian market, it positions itself as a key player in the growing electric vehicle sector. This move not only contributes to the region's ongoing push for sustainable transportation but also reinforces Zeekr's commitment to expanding its presence in Europe.



# SweCham's new Director Anna Olsson-Moore aims to strengthen business ties and drive innovative change

Swedish native Anna Olsson-Moore may just be finding her feet, but she already has a clear set of goals to drive the Thai-Swedish Chamber of Commerce into a brighter future, using her previous experiences with working internationally.

By Miriam Soukaina Nenni

“It was not like dipping my toe in, it was more jumping in right away,” Anna Olsson-Moore says of her first month as the new Director of the Thai-Swedish Chamber of Commerce (SweCham). A busy month, as she describes it. Diving right into everything – from the recent Sustainability Expo to planning the upcoming gala dinner for SweCham’s 35th anniversary.

“Luckily, I have a fantastic team, from my administrative officer and my event and marketing manager. They have been my rock since I started, and I’m so happy to have them,” she shares.

A lot of hands have been shaken, since Anna Olsson-Moore took on her new role, meeting different members of the chamber. On November 9, Thai-Swedish Chamber of Commerce is celebrating its 35th anniversary with a special Gala Dinner in Bangkok, inviting members and partners to celebrate this milestone. While the new Director is excited about the traditional Swedish food and ABBA music, she also highlights the opportunity to connect with chamber members. This event not only strengthens the community but also paves the way for future collaboration and innovation as Anna Olsson-Moore looks forward to building meaningful relationships that will enhance the chamber’s mission.

## Shaping SweCham’s future

It was the potential to make a difference—both for the members and in shaping the Chamber’s future direction—that caught Anna Olsson-Moore’s attention. To her, the position as Director felt like the ideal combination of challenge and impact, and that’s what sealed her decision.

“You come to a point where you want to see a new challenge. I wanted a different environment as well. When this job came up, I felt it would align with my personal skills, my own career goals, and how I want to develop. I also wanted to get back to working on enhancing Swedish opportunities in Thailand. And it feels nice to come home,” she says, smiling.

Highlighting innovation and sustainability as common goals for Sweden and Thailand, the new Director will focus on supporting initiatives around sustainability and innovation-driven projects that align with the future of business, as well as representing the Chamber’s members.

“I think I can drive this chamber into a brighter future with more diversity and more innovation together with the Swedish companies. I want to work on seminars and workshops that benefit and address the needs of our members and represent their interests on issues that impact their operations, such as regulatory changes, industry challenges, and new trade agreements.”



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*By blending a bit of Thai culture with Nordic, Swedish culture, we create a powerful working environment for a multicultural chamber.*

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The Swedish Chamber of Commerce was inaugurated in 1989 by Their Majesties HM King Carl XVI Gustaf and HM Queen Silvia of Sweden. For 35 years, the Chamber has been promoting and advocating for Swedish business interests in Thailand, representing companies of various sizes, from multinational corporations to small start-ups.

“It has deep roots. In a way, they’re big shoes to fill,” she notes.

In the future, Anna Olsson-Moore hopes to strengthen SweCham’s member engagement by deepening connections and creating clear value for new and existing members, making the Chamber a central resource for business support and opportunities. She envisions building more strategic partnerships that bridge key players in Sweden and Thailand, fostering government and industry connections to drive mutual growth.

“Ultimately, I want to build SweCham’s visibility as the premier business chamber for Swedish companies in Thailand,” she shares.

### Blending cultures

Anna Olsson-Moore has been living and working in Thailand for 13 years, where she’s developed a deep understanding of the country, its culture, and professional environment. When asked what attracted her to the country 13 years ago, her answer is simple.





"I always enjoyed travel, and I kind of felt that I wanted to do something more. I wanted to stretch my legs, so when I got the opportunity to work in Thailand, I jumped on it."

Before moving to Thailand, Anna Olsson-Moore held roles as a marketing manager, art director, and even a construction painter, always drawn to new experiences.

"I worked in construction for many years as a painter. I had my own working outfit, and I did wallpaper and plaster. It's a very hard job. I've never been so fit in my life!" she says, laughing.

It was a time in her life when she didn't really know what to do. She needed a job and didn't think much about it. Still, it gave her a diverse background, which she feels benefits her:

"It's good because I picked up a little of everything along the way, and then I blend it to take the knowledge from all these diverse jobs, and it kind of turned me into the person I am today and how I operate. It helps me communicate with all sorts of people. I feel I can connect with people in different environments."

Working internationally has also broadened Anna Olsson-Moore's perspective on business, challenging her to keep learning and adapt her approaches.

"I really, really like the international and global environment I'm working in now and worked in previously as well. It changes my worldview and approach to business. Sometimes you might stay in the same environment, in the same bubble, but working in such a multicultural, international environment, it kind of bursts bubbles, and you start looking with fresh eyes on new things and how you can approach them."

Anna Olsson-Moore's approach to life and her career has, for the most part, been driven by her natural energy and desire to learn new things. Working internationally for many years, she clearly sees differences in cultures. But she sees it more as an opportunity to learn from each other rather than an issue.

"I think Swedish people are very forward, and in the Nordics, our communication style is very different. We're quite transparent, and I think Thai people are adapting very well to this now. Especially with young people coming in who maybe studied abroad, change is coming. On the contrary, Thai people have a very strong work ethic. I'm quite impressed, and I've noticed it's way beyond any Nordic country when it comes to work ethic."

Over the years, she has learned a lot from Thai culture, picking up knowledge from different people. It's been challenging, but looking at it now, Anna Olsson-Moore is sure that blending different cultures and approaches can benefit multicultural workplaces, such as SweCham. This belief drives her commitment to fostering collaboration and innovation in her new role, and it encapsulates her vision for the Chamber moving forward.

"By blending a bit of Thai culture with Nordic, Swedish culture, we create a powerful working environment for a multicultural chamber," she reflects.

"When you adapt to the local culture and bring in your own, you build something very strong. That's how I approach most things today."



# Danish Students Search for Love and Culture in Bangkok

By Karoline Rosenkrantz Paasch

Amid the chaotic hustle and bustle of Bangkok's airport, Rebecca Schou and Liva Friis Agergaard embark on a cultural exploration in Thailand. They find themselves standing in a sea of tourists. The aroma of the warm, humid air and the buzz of myriad languages fill the airport as they wait for their luggage, marking the start of their two-week cultural exploration in this vibrant, dynamic city.

Outside the airport, they are greeted with warm smiles by Nicolaj Stubbe Hørlyck, the new Danish pastor in Bangkok, and his wife. The couple ushers them to the Danish Church House, their home for the duration of their research.

"I knew Nicolaj from back home. I saw that he was moving on from Brorsons Kirke, and when I reached out to see what he was up to next, we managed to arrange this stay. We had to submit a request to the church council, and they kindly allowed us to stay for free during the 14 days we are here," Liva explains about their choice of Thailand.

Originally, the two students considered conducting their study in India, where Liva had connections with several NGOs. However, communication and logistical challenges prompted them to shift their focus to Bangkok, where the Danish Church's support offered a unique setting for their cultural immersion.

## Cultural exploration abroad

As third-year students in Roskilde Gymnasium's International Line, Rebecca and Liva were eager to embrace field study opportunities abroad. Their classmates scattered to



diverse destinations, from Tokyo to Spain and Germany. Rebecca notes, “Only two stayed in Denmark because they couldn’t afford the travel,” reflecting the significant investment their research entails.

The self-funded nature of their journey makes them particularly grateful for the accommodation offered by the church. In return, they actively contribute to the community. “We’ve been helping out during services while also exploring aspects relevant to the church’s mission,” Liva notes, illustrating their dual role as researchers and active participants in the local Danish community.

Rebecca and Liva selected distinct yet complementary research focuses. Rebecca delved into the dynamics of intercultural marriages, investigating how diverse cultural backgrounds influence relationships in Thailand. Liva, on the other hand, was intrigued by the integration of Danish culture within this local context.

Their fieldwork involved engaging directly with the community through interviews and observations, driven by a desire to unravel the cultural interplay in a city as multifaceted as Bangkok. The richness of their experiences offered powerful lessons not just in anthropology but in personal growth and cultural appreciation.

## Cultural exchange and adaptation

Liva’s investigation into the integration of Danish culture in Thailand revealed a fluid exchange where both cultures blend and evolve. “The thing I was most surprised by was that people mentioned so many different aspects of Danish culture, even though Denmark is such a small country,” Liva remarked. One of the men Liva interviewed spoke passionately about Danish values. “It’s much more about how you treat other people,” he said. “I’ve tried to educate my Thai girlfriend about these values because I think they are important.” His efforts demonstrated a sincere desire to bridge cultural divides and highlighted how cultural exchange can foster understanding and connection.

## Embracing new traditions

Another participant in Liva’s research described feeling profoundly Danish when he ordered food at a Scandinavian restaurant. “Ordering the food at Stable Lodge means a lot to me. It reminds me of home,” he shared. Liva found his commitment to preserving Danish culture in a foreign land striking.

The men she spoke to also stated that they embrace Thai culture and events. Some even replaced Danish traditions with Thai ones. One participant had begun to celebrate Thai New Year, known for its vibrant water festival. “I don’t celebrate New Year’s on the 31st anymore. I like the Thai New Year much more. It’s amazing to participate in something so different. It’s a way to blend my past with my present,” he explains.

Intriguingly, while he embraced the celebrations of Thai culture, he also lamented some challenges. “It’s hard to enjoy Christmas when it’s 35 degrees outside,” he joked.

Liva found it fascinating how these expatriates retained their customs and adapted them, creating a hybrid culture. She learned that in places like Pattaya, some Thais set up Christmas trees and celebrated in their own unique ways. “They’d wear Santa hats, and sometimes you’d hear Søren Banjomus music blaring from speakers,” Liva explained, illustrating how cultural practices could morph and evolve through mutual interaction.

## Personal growth and cultural reflection

Rebecca and Liva’s experiences in Thailand catalyzed personal reflection and growth. Every encounter brought them new insights. They learned to embrace discomfort and uncertainty in a foreign land, which fostered resilience.

Moreover, their interactions with both Danes and Thais shattered their preconceptions. During their time in Bangkok, they gained a deeper understanding of the complexities of identity and cultural exchange. “It’s easy to assume things about people based on stereotypes,” Rebecca noted. “But everyone we met was simply regular people—just like us, trying to navigate life and love.”

As their journey concludes, Rebecca and Liva prepare to share their findings and personal reflections with their peers and educators. Their work offers insights into intercultural dynamics and serves as a testament to the transformative power of understanding and empathy. By challenging preconceived notions about cultural interactions, they highlight the potential for growth and connection in a globalized society.

The overarching purpose of their journey is evident: it goes beyond academic pursuit. It narrates personal transformation and the building of unexpected bridges through cultural exploration. As they return home, Rebecca and Liva carry a richer, more nuanced understanding of the world, eager to share the lessons learned and the connections made along the way.



# Raise a glass for the newly initiated Pastor Nicolaj Stubbe Hørlyck

By Karoline Rosenkrantz Paasch

**A** new beginning: The celebration of Pastor Nicolaj Stubbe Hørlyck initiation in Bangkok. In a vibrant celebration of faith and community, the Danish Church in Thailand recently welcomed its new pastor, Nicolaj Stubbe Hørlyck, during his initiation ceremony. The initiation service, held at the Danish Church House, was a heartwarming event filled with joy, reflection, and a strong sense of unity, marking a significant milestone for the congregation. The ceremony drew more than 30 participants, including Pastor Nicolaj's two sons, who were present for their autumn break.

From the moment one stepped into the Danish Church House, an atmosphere of excitement and *hygge* filled the room. The hymn books and the program for the evening were neatly arranged near the entrance, where everyone was welcomed with a smile.

This occasion was not only a celebration of Nicolaj's initiation; it also provided a delightful opportunity to unveil the church's new piano, adding an exciting musical element as the festivities were about to commence.

## A joyful initiation ceremony

To celebrate this pivotal moment, Overseas Provost Selma Ravn, representing the Danish Church Abroad,

officiated the service, articulating the joy surrounding Nicolaj's arrival. She shared that it is one of her most honored tasks to travel abroad and install priests in Danish congregations worldwide.

"It is always a joyful occasion when a new priest and a community take their first steps together. This partnership will pave the way for growth and exploration," she remarked.

Building upon Selma's heartfelt sentiments, the ceremony gained further significance as H.E. Danny Annan, the Ambassador of Denmark to Thailand, stepped forward to share his reflections. He underscored the occasion's importance by reading the confirmation letter from H.M. King Frederik X, the patron of the Danish Church Abroad. This royal endorsement emphasized the strong ties between Denmark and its expatriate community in Thailand.

## A meaningful service of reflection

Following the heartfelt initiation, Nicolaj led the congregation in the service, beginning with the hymn "Svimplende Skønhed" (translated as "Dazzling Beauty"). This hymn, written by Danish author Ida Auken during her stay at the Odsherred Therapievæsen in 2020, delves into themes of beauty, renewal, and the complexities of human experience—topics that Nicolaj emphasized in his sermon.



He invited the congregation to reflect on serenity and reconnect with oneself, and for those with faith, with the divine. He articulated:

***“The service is fundamentally a ritualized opportunity to do this periodically. A reminder that we are not always in control and that there is a possibility to start anew...”***

Nicolaj spoke poignantly about the importance of community, highlighting how the church serves as a welcoming space, regardless of one’s circumstances. “In our busy lives, we often forget the power of togetherness and the strength we can draw from one another,” he noted.

He illustrated how the rituals of faith provide respite from life’s challenges and inspire hope for new beginnings. “In a world where many feel isolated and disconnected, the church stands as a beacon of hope and love, reminding us that we are never alone,” he affirmed.

The ceremony concluded with heartfelt prayers for the congregation, particularly for those facing difficulties, urging everyone to:

***“Act as bearers of love and hope in a world that often feels dark.”***

As a lovely ending to the service and initiation, the familiar melody of “Matador” by Bent Fabricius-Bjerre played as the postlude, providing a warm and nostalgic close to this meaningful occasion.

With the service concluded, the atmosphere resonated with a spirit of togetherness and purpose as attendees prepared to celebrate further during the reception.

## A festive reception to remember

Once the service was completed, the chairs were moved aside, and guests began to mingle. Attendees were encouraged to indulge in delicious Danish-inspired dishes, including frikadellemadder, lakseroulade, and the traditional cake, kransekage. The enthusiasm for the food was unmistakable, as guests expressed their delight while the platters quickly emptied. Laughter and conversation flowed freely, with everyone savoring the delectable offerings. There was no shortage of food or drinks to enhance the celebratory atmosphere.

Amidst the laughter and chatter, several speeches

were made, including heartfelt acknowledgments from the Church Council Chairman. He stated, “As we welcome Nicolaj, we also embrace the vibrant future of our church, grounded in shared values and rich traditions.”

Before the attendees could lower their glasses again, Selma Ravn conveyed warm greetings from Christa, the former pastor in Bangkok, who expressed her enthusiasm for the new pastoral family. In her message, Christa congratulated Nicolaj and Anna, welcoming them to Bangkok with open arms:

***“Welcome to a wonderful place. In the Danish Church in Thailand, there is room for enthusiasm and innovation. I have no doubt that you will each leave your unique mark on the church in the years to come. With your solid experience from the Danish Folkekirke, social work in Denmark, and time spent in India, it can only lead to good things. May you flourish in your new life in Thailand,”*** she encouraged, promoting continuous growth and development for the church as a gathering point for Danes and their families.

## Embracing a bright future

As Nicolaj looks forward to his tenure in Thailand, this initiation service marks more than merely a new chapter for him and his family; it signifies a renewed commitment to serving the Danish community. His dedication to accessibility in faith and the promise of inclusion reflect what the church embodies—an open door where everyone is welcome to share their burdens.

With the support of the congregation, Nicolaj is poised to foster a vibrant community that embraces diversity and nurtures connections among its members. Through faith, fellowship, and compassion, he aims to create a welcoming space where individuals can grow spiritually and find solace in one another.

As the evening came to a close, the shared laughter and heartfelt connections forged during this special occasion left a lasting impression, reminding everyone of the significance of connection and the strength that comes from solidarity. With hopes for a bright and promising future, the Danish Church in Thailand is ready to embark on this exciting journey together, hand in hand with their new pastor.



# Santa's Finnish hometown expands its year-round attractions

At ITB Asia in Singapore - the largest regional tourism exhibition - ScandAsia talked to some of the stakeholders in the Finnish city of Rovaniemi which Finland claims to be the hometown of Santa Claus.

Rovaniemi is the city where Christmas is celebrated every day of the year. But the destination is working hard to broaden its appeal to Asian visitors by including the Aurora Borealis natural phenomenon as well as the midnight sun.

*By Joakim Persson*

**R**ovaniemi, the magical Finnish hometown of Santa Claus, once again captivated visitors at ITB Asia in Singapore, showcasing itself as a globally recognized winter wonderland — and now, also a growing summer tourism destination. This year, Rovaniemi's stand at the travel trade show highlighted its renowned Christmas spirit and Northern Lights experiences, while also underscoring its push to attract more visitors during the midnight sun season.

Since debuting at ITB Asia in 2011, Rovaniemi's presence has steadily expanded.

"The city's unique appeal has captured the Asian market," said Sanna Kärkkäinen, Managing Director at Visit Rovaniemi. She mentions the steady rise in both visitor interest and direct flights. Rovaniemi is today Finland's second most-visited destination after Helsinki.

"This year, with our own stand, we've seen great turnout, especially from travelers who are amazed to find a place where Christmas is celebrated daily."



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*Rovaniemi may not have invented Christmas, but it has certainly perfected the art of celebrating it all year round.*

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While Rovaniemi is famously popular in winter, efforts are now underway to draw in summer visitors to experience the midnight sun and Finland's pristine landscapes.

"Rovaniemi's goal is to balance tourism across the seasons," said Managing Director Sanna Kärkkäinen. The city's aim is to gradually shift toward sustainable, year-round tourism.

Rovaniemi hotels and resorts are supporting this plan.

Kaisa Heiskari from Apukka Resort attended ITB Asia for the first time and had a positive experience:

"We had great meetings with strong interest to start collaboration and sales. People just walked into this stand and really loved what they saw."

"We have Santa Claus, we've got winter, and the Northern lights - so people really want to visit us. We have all the in-demand activities in our resort, offering husky-, reindeer-, and horse tours, snowmobiling, ice fishing, snowshoeing - whatever you can imagine to do in snowy landscapes!"

New developments like fishing trips across Lapland's rivers and lakes are expected to boost tourism outside the traditional holiday season, with Apukka Resort planning to stay open year-round by 2024.

For the winter visitors, Apukka Resorts now have 100 glass igloos and six additional accommodation units, open during the autumn and winter, but now we are aiming at year round operations.

"The glass igloo is a different type of cabin with a glass roof, so you can lie on the bed and just watch the sky: you can see the starry or snowy sky or if you are lucky the northern lights directly from your bed. People love them; basically it's something unique that you can experience the nature inside of the igloo," explained Kaisa.

Another hotel chain in Rovaniemi is Santa's Hotels. This chain has taken an extra step to enhance the igloo experience. Eveliina Korhonen of Santa's Hotels shared that their igloos now are equipped with Northern Lights alarms. Never miss an appearance.

"Our hotel chain has longstanding partnerships in this region, with around 70% of our guests coming from international markets," Eveliina Korhonen explains.

Santa Hotels have launched a brand new design hotel called Santa's Hotel Rakka (in Kilpisjärvi), which offers to combine with a visit to Tromsø in Norway. The new hotel has one of their specialties: Panoramic window walls, enhancing a feeling of having checked into nature. Perfect for all year round visits.

Hotel manager Juhani Ikonen from Santa Claus Holiday Village said they are also supporting the shift.

"We're focusing on the midnight sun for summer, adding unique activities and cozy cottages with saunas for that authentic Finnish experience," Juhani Ikonen said.

Rovaniemi's basic attraction as the "Santa Capital" of the world has of course not changed. Rovaniemi's festive charm and array of winter activities have cemented its place as a global bucket list destination.

"We are proud to offer a place where families can meet Santa any day of the year," said Kärkkäinen.

"Rovaniemi may not have invented Christmas, but it has certainly perfected the art of celebrating it all year round."

For full version of story go to <https://scandasia.com/fin-land-of-santa-claus-rovaniemi-a-globally-recognised-destination-promoted-in-asia/>



# November - my favorite month in Thailand

Do you, like me, think that time passes too quickly? Today we have Christmas already around the corner. The Christmas trees are up outside the big shopping malls. In my opinion, it is far too early and you have time to get tired before Christmas arrives.

Lots of things were happening in Bangkok during September and October: Just a short while ago, the grand opening of "Bangkok One" took place. Sometimes I can't help wondering if we really need all those huge shopping malls. What do you think?

Indeed Bangkok is a city that never sleeps, new restaurants are popping up like mushrooms. I would like to take the opportunity to introduce "Coals Steakhouse & Bar" to you. If you sometimes have a craving for a good steak, this is an ideal place to visit.

Coals Steakhouse & Bar has recently opened its doors at 2 minutes walk from Asoke BTS station, on the

corner of Sukhumvit road and soi 17. This restaurant is following the success of its first location on Phuket Island. This is the ultimate spot for anyone longing for the perfect steak. The restaurant boasts a cozy, contemporary ambiance with a touch of New York flair. Featuring exposed brick walls, a small bar, and two floors of inviting seating, Coals also offers an intimate private room that accommodates 4-6 guests-ideal for a tete-a-tete dinner or an important business meeting. Enjoy live music every night, with a new band or performer selected weekly by the owner. The staff is ensuring a warm and welcoming experience.

The menu is a meat lover's paradise, showcasing



a variety of dishes prepared to perfection. There is an impressive selection of steaks including Tenderloin, which I can assure you tastes fantastic, Tomahawk, Sirloin etc.

Complement your meal with several options of potatoes, vegetables and sauces. If you are not a meat lover, of course, there are other options. If you also are craving for a cold beer, there is a variety of draft beers to choose from and an exquisite wine list. A visit to Coals Restaurant & Bar, after you have done your Christmas shopping and need a relaxing break, this is the place. I promise you will not regret it.

So what is going on in November month, my favourite month in Thailand and the least favourite in Scandinavia?

Well, on the 20th, the legendary steakhouse El Gaucho on Sukhumvit soi 19, is celebrating its 12th anniversary, a yearly happening for many meat lovers. The owner invites his frequent guests. It's always crowded, and on each floor, people are gathering to enjoy free wine/beer and excellent bites of different meat.

On November 23rd, the Swedish community comes together to celebrate Santa Lucia at the Swedish residence. This year, a lot of children of all ages are practicing the Christmas Chorales to make a grand performance after the Swedish priest has held a short service. This celebration has become a real happening among the Swedes in Bangkok.

I can also tell you that SWECHAM is celebrating its 35th anniversary with a gala dinner on Saturday, November 9th, but let me get back to tell you more about this celebration in December.

I have recently learned that every 3rd year, Bangkok is hosting a Chopin competition with young students. I had the pleasure to attend the Jurys' concert at the beautiful Tongsuang's Concert Salon & Gallery on October the 27th. This remarkable concert hall is located, in my opinion, far out in the bush, towards the airport Don Muang. Many young students from the age of 8 years up to 16 years competed.

It was a dream listening to all those talented young pianists accompanied by proud parents and teachers. The Jury came from the US and Hong Kong and they praised the young talents. The grand prize was a scholarship to study in Poland for a year.

I have, for a few years, had my eyes on a very beautiful, young girl with hair like the princess from the fairy tale Rapunzel and a story like Cinderella. I was very proud when I listened to her playing one of my favourite compositions Nocturne Op.9 No.2. She did not only impress me, but the jury, and earned a top position. You can hear her also playing classical Christmas chorales at several places in Bangkok.

As usual, November and December are for most people very busy months. It is like, if you haven't had time to plan a special dinner or any other event, you just have to do it during these two months.

The private Clubs are hosting recitals, wine tastings, Christmas lunches etc. You really have no chance to become bored in Bangkok.

Stay tuned for more news in December and don't stress, but enjoy every minute!



# Moving to Southeast Asia: Will I Ever Make New Friends?

Moving to Southeast Asia from the close-knit Nordic region can feel exciting yet intimidating.

For many Nordic expats, concerns about building friendships and finding a community can be among the biggest challenges. However, Southeast Asia offers numerous resources and social networks, from expat clubs and cultural organizations to churches that cater specifically to the Nordic community. This guide will explore the opportunities available in different countries and share practical advice for establishing a social network, making connections, and feeling at home.

## Nordic Associations and Churches

Establishing friendships in a new country takes time and effort, but with a range of clubs, churches, and organiza-

tions, Southeast Asia makes it easier to connect with others. Here is what you have to do.

**Join National and Expat Clubs:** Scandinavian chambers of commerce and national clubs are valuable for networking with people who share similar cultural backgrounds. The Thai-Nordic Association in Bangkok organizes events for all Nordic nationals, while SWEA (Swedish Women's Educational Association) and the Danish Women's Network in Bangkok host gatherings for women, providing both a social network and a support system for settling into Thai life. SWEA also offers language programs, which help ease communication barriers and foster connections.

**Attend Events at Nordic Churches:** Churches

are major social hubs for the Nordic community in Southeast Asia. Beyond their primary religious functions, they regularly host social events, holiday celebrations, and community gatherings. The Danish Seamen's Church in Singapore, the Norwegian Seamen's Church in Pattaya, and other Nordic churches in the region help expats connect through events such as traditional Christmas dinners, Easter gatherings, and even language support for those needing a familiar touchpoint in a foreign culture.

Here is what Nordic expats can expect across popular destinations in the region:

**Thailand:** Known as the "Land of Smiles," Thailand, particularly Bangkok and Chiang Mai, has a friendly atmosphere and a large expat community. Nordic expats often connect through organizations like the Thai-Nordic Association, which offers events, networking, and social gatherings for Danes, Swedes, Norwegians, Finns, and Icelanders. The Thai-Norwegian Chamber of Commerce, Thai-Finnish Chamber of Commerce, and Thai-Swedish Chamber of Commerce and Thai-Danish Chamber of Commerce provide both professional and social platforms.

**Vietnam:** In both Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, NordCham Vietnam is active, especially with events like the Nordic Business Awards, which celebrate achievements in the Nordic business community. This chamber encourages networking across sectors, fostering relationships for both personal and professional enrichment.

**Singapore:** With a cosmopolitan vibe and English as a primary language, Singapore is a top choice for Nordic expats. Here, churches like the Danish Seamen's Church and the Norwegian Seamen's Mission in Singapore serve as both religious and social centers, hosting events, gatherings, and cultural celebrations that bring together the Nordic community. In Singapore, the Nordic Chambers are Danish Business Association of Singapore (DABS), Swedish Chamber of Commerce Singapore (Swed-Cham), Finnish Business Council (FBC), and Norwegian Business Association Singapore (NBAS).

**Malaysia:** Kuala Lumpur has a sizable expat population, with a cultural blend of Malay, Chinese, and Indian influences. Expat clubs and the Chambers of Commerce



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*Expats frequently  
come and go,  
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for the four Nordic nationalities help newcomers adjust and meet fellow expats. In addition, international organizations and social networks support expats and offer activities like sports, art classes, and culinary experiences.

**Indonesia:** Bali's international vibe and vibrant co-working spaces attract digital nomads, while Jakarta's Nordic Club organizes regular events and outings for Nordic residents. The Nordic Club, in particular, is known for offering a strong network, helping expatriates navigate the local culture, and supporting newcomers in settling into Indonesian life.

**Hong Kong:** Home to both the Danish Seamen's Church and the Swedish Church, Hong Kong provides a supportive network for Scandinavians. space to meet other Nordic nationals and celebrate cultural holidays together. The business organizations here are the Danish Chamber of Commerce Hong Kong, Finnish Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong, Norwegian Chamber of Commerce Hong Kong and Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong.

**Use Social Media and Meetup Platforms:** Many expat groups organize meetups through social media and dedicated platforms like Meetup, Internations, and Facebook. Each of the associations and chambers mentioned above have their own Facebook groups. Apart from those, you may easily find more like "Nordic Expats in Thailand" or "Scandinavians in Singapore". They offer you to stay connected with events, receive local advice, and find out about impromptu gatherings. Social media also provides a way to find shared interest groups, whether for parents, young professionals, or adventure seekers.





*Establishing friendships in a new country takes time and effort, but with a range of clubs, churches, and organizations, Southeast Asia makes it easier to connect with others.*



## Make friends outside the Nordic communities

**Get Involved in Hobbies:** Joining a local class, sports team, or hobby group is an effective way to meet new people. In Singapore, the Nordic Sports Club organizes activities like soccer, running, and even golf, which attract participants from across the Nordic countries. In Bangkok and Bali, yoga and fitness classes are popular, drawing both expats and locals with similar interests. For those interested in the arts, taking part in local workshops can offer a great avenue to bond with people outside of work or traditional expat circles.

**Engage in Charitable Organizations:** Volunteering can introduce you to people who share your values and interests. Many international organizations, such as Habitat for Humanity or local NGOs, have operations in Southeast Asia and welcome expatriate volunteers. This is a great way to meet both locals and other expats who are eager to make a positive impact.

**Language classes:** Understanding and respecting cultural norms is key to fostering friendships. Southeast Asia is known for its emphasis on harmony, respect, and indirect communication, which may differ from the more direct style common in Nordic countries. Familiarizing yourself with local etiquette and customs can make social interactions smoother and more enjoyable.

While English is widely spoken in Singapore, the Philippines, and parts of Thailand, expats in Vietnam, Indonesia, and other regions may encounter language barriers. Enrolling in a language course is both practical and social—many schools organize events where students can practice together and meet other newcomers. Learning even a few phrases in the local language can go a long way in showing respect for the culture and breaking down social barriers.

## Practical Tips for Building Friendships

Here are some practical tips to help build and maintain friendships as you settle into your new home:

**Initiate Conversations:** Many expats are also new and open to making friends. A bit of initiative goes a long way, whether it's joining a group or striking up a conversation at an event.

**Find Shared Interests:** Passionate about art, sports, or food? Join a local drawing group in Ho Chi Minh City, a cooking class in Kuala Lumpur, or a hiking club in Chiang Mai. Shared interests are a natural way to bond with people from diverse backgrounds.

**Be Consistent:** Attend events regularly. Whether it's a weekly language class or a monthly networking event, consistent attendance makes you a familiar face and helps friendships deepen over time.

**Embrace Open-Mindedness:** Stay curious about the local culture and customs. Trying local foods, learning the language, and participating in traditional events are enjoyable ways to connect with both locals and fellow expats.

## Long-Term Friendships and a Richer Social Life

With time, what may start as casual acquaintances can grow into deep, long-term friendships. Southeast Asia's social scene can be transient, with expats frequently coming and going, but the friends you make along the way can become lifelong connections. Whether you're making friends within the Nordic community or venturing out into the local culture, embracing these diverse experiences can add lasting value to your Southeast Asian adventure.

# Nordic Ambassadors Present Credentials to the King of Malaysia

A significant moment for diplomatic relations occurred on October 21, 2024, as three Nordic ambassadors officially presented their Letters of Credence to His Majesty Sultan Ibrahim, the King of Malaysia, during a ceremony at Istana Negara, the royal palace.

H.E. Kirstine Vangkilde Berner, Denmark's Ambassador to Malaysia, led the ceremony, which included the formal handover of her Letter of Credence and a brief audience with His Majesty. She was accompanied by Deputy Head of Mission Merve Yalcin. Ambassador Berner's presentation officially marks her role and reinforces the strong ties between Denmark and Malaysia, symbolizing Denmark's commitment to enhancing collaboration in trade, culture, and sustainability.

H.E. Niklas Wiberg, Sweden's Ambassador to Malaysia, also pre-

sented his credentials, emphasizing Sweden's dedication to strengthening diplomatic relations in the region. First Secretary and Head of Chancery, Mr. William Vitikainen, represented the Swedish Embassy at the ceremony.

Additionally, H.E. Anne Vasara, Finland's Ambassador to Malaysia, participated in the event, with her recognition marking Finland's role in fostering bilateral dialogue. This important appointment signifies Finland's commitment to enhancing collaboration in multiple sectors and advancing mutual interests.

The Ambassador of the European Union also attended the ceremony, highlighting a shared focus on strengthening ties in the region and building sustainable partnerships.

These presentations mark a new chapter in Nordic diplomacy in Malaysia, with the ambassadors



expressing their commitment to promoting cooperation in trade, environmental sustainability, and cultural exchange. This milestone underlines the importance of strong international partnerships among Nordic countries and deepening engagement with key stakeholders in Malaysia.

# Norway and Finland showcase innovations at Eco Expo Asia 2024

Norway and Finland are key participants at this year's Eco Expo Asia, held from

October 30 to November 2 at Hong Kong's Asia World-Expo. The event, featuring over 300 exhibitors

from 11 countries, focuses on green innovations, waste management, and the circular economy, all aimed at supporting global carbon reduction efforts.

Norway, supported by Innovation Norway, is showcasing advanced technologies for water quality management and waste treatment. Finland, known for its leadership in sustainability, is also presenting innovative solutions in these areas.

The Expo brings together government officials, business leaders, and industry experts from around the world to exchange ideas and foster collaborations, driving the global push for carbon neutrality.



# Finland strengthens trade ties with Vietnam and promotes sustainable development



Finland's Minister for Foreign Trade and Development, Ville Tavio, led a delegation to Vietnam from 21 to 23 October to strengthen bilateral trade and promote Finnish expertise in key sectors that support Vietnam's sustainable development goals. The focus areas included renewable energy, digitalization, and sustainable construction.

Tavio delivered the opening speech at the Green Economy Forum & Exhibition (GEFE) in Ho Chi Minh City, where Finland showcased its contributions to green transition

efforts. He also met with Vietnam's Deputy Prime Minister Bui Thanh Son and Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade Phan Thi Thang to discuss enhancing trade relations, particularly in support of Vietnam's goal of net-zero emissions by 2050.

Tavio engaged with business leaders and local officials, reaffirming Finland's commitment to aiding Ho Chi Minh City's development into a sustainable regional hub. The visit was part of Finland's broader strategy to strengthen partnerships across Southeast Asia, with a subsequent stop in the Philippines.

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# EU plastic waste exports to Malaysia surge despite Government pledge

EU plastic waste exports to Malaysia have surged, making the country the second-largest destination for EU waste, despite the Malaysian government's promise to stop this influx. In 2023, Malaysia received 283,000 tonnes of plastic waste, a 35% increase from the previous year.

This increase contradicts Environment Minister Nik Nazmi's pledge to halt the flow of foreign waste, which has overwhelmed the country. Although the EU plans to ban plastic waste exports to non-OECD countries like Malaysia by mid-2026, the issue remains unresolved for now.

Danish Member of the European Parliament Pernille Weiss, who led the push for the new EU law,

stated, "The EU will finally assume responsibility for its plastic waste by banning its export to non-OECD countries."



# CIP secures landmark approval for offshore wind project in the Philippines

Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners (CIP) has become the first company to obtain a pre-development Environmental Compliance Certificate for an offshore wind project in the Philippines. The certificate, granted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, allows CIP to begin surveys for its 1-gigawatt San Miguel Bay Offshore Wind Project in Camarines Sur.

This approval follows a recent agreement between the En-



ergy and Environment Secretaries aimed at streamlining the approval process for wind projects. Danish Ambassador Franz-Michael Mellbin

expressed pride in this significant milestone.

CIP's project has also been recognized as an Energy Project of National Significance, which will help accelerate the development of the necessary grid infrastructure with the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines. The company is continuing to collaborate with government agencies and local partners, aiming to support the launch of a Green Energy Auction Program for offshore wind by mid-2025.

# Copenhagen Energy secures certification for wind projects in the Philippines

Copenhagen Energy has received Green Lane Certification from the Philippine Board of Investments. This certification allows the company to accelerate its BuhaWind projects, reducing the approval process and enabling faster construction of wind farms along the coast.

These projects are essential to the Philippines' transition to renewable energy. By harnessing the country's strong winds, Copenhagen Energy aims to help reduce reliance on fossil fuels and support the goal of achieving 50% renewable energy by 2040.

The certification also enhances investor confidence, making it easier to attract support for additional green energy projects in the Philippines.



# Finnish president Stubb strengthens ties during China visit

Finnish President Alexander Stubb arrived in China on Monday for a four-day state visit. His goal is to strengthen relations between Finland and China amid global security concerns. Invited by Chinese President Xi Jinping, Stubb will discuss security issues, international conflicts, and opportunities for bilateral cooperation.

On Tuesday, he met Xi at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. They focused on expanding trade, investment, and collaboration in technology and sustainable development. Stubb's delegation included key Finnish officials, highlighting the



significance of this diplomatic outreach.

A top priority is the ongoing war in Ukraine. This visit allows Stubb to communicate Finland's security stance directly to Chinese leaders. He will also speak at Fudan University in Shanghai about the "Transformation of the Multilateral Order."

The trip emphasizes Finland's commitment to strengthening educational and technological partnerships, including a business summit to explore investment opportunities between Finnish and Chinese companies.

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# Vietnam-Sweden development cooperation: Vice President meets Swedish Ambassador

Vietnam's Vice President Vo Thi Anh Xuan met with Swedish Ambassador Johan Ndisi in Hanoi to discuss Vietnam-Sweden development cooperation and ways to share sustainable development experiences. The meeting underscores the longstanding partnership between Vietnam and Sweden, forged over 55 years of diplomatic relations.

During their discussion, Vice President Xuan highlighted the achievements of Vietnam-Sweden development cooperation, acknowledging Sweden's substantial support during Vietnam's fight for independence and its ongoing assistance in national reform and development. Since 1969, Sweden has provided nearly \$3 billion in non-refundable



aid to Vietnam, with key projects, such as the Bai Bang paper mill and the Vietnam National Children's Hospital, making significant contributions to socio-economic progress.

Xuan also noted that bilateral

trade reached approximately \$1.3 billion in 2023. She expressed optimism for future collaboration, emphasizing the importance of new technologies—particularly in the circular economy—to foster sustainable development.

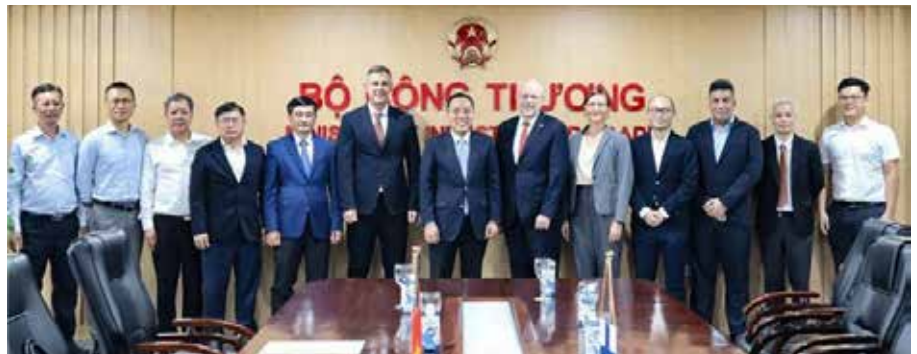
Ambassador Ndisi acknowledged the potential for strengthening trade and investment partnerships and proposed closer collaboration in areas like the green transition and digital transformation. He reaffirmed Sweden's commitment to supporting Vietnam's innovation initiatives.

Both officials expressed a readiness to deepen connections between the two nations in sectors such as education, technology, and tourism, aiming to further strengthen bilateral relations.

# Finnish company Wartsila to support Vietnam's green energy transition

Finnish company Wartsila is prepared to assist Vietnam in its energy transition through innovative internal combustion engine (ICE) technology. According to Wartsila's Vice President, Frederic Carron, this flexible ICE system will help stabilize electricity generated from renewable sources like solar and wind. The discussion took place during a meeting with Vietnam's Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade, Nguyen Hoang Long.

Wartsila's technology could also support Vietnam's shift from LNG-fired power to green hydrogen, contributing to the country's goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. LNG-powered systems currently rely on liquefied natural gas (LNG) for energy production.



During the same meeting, Wartsila and EVNGENCO3, a subsidiary of Vietnam Electricity, discussed using ICE technology at a thermal power plant in Ninh Binh. This project aims to accelerate Vietnam's green transition, stimulate economic growth, and create 400 jobs.

Additionally, Deputy Minister

Long spoke with Finnish Ambassador Keijo Norvanto about Finland's potential role in supporting Vietnam's energy initiatives under the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP). Despite international commitments of \$15.5 billion to support Vietnam's green transition, the country has yet to receive any loans under the JETP program.

# Norwegian People's Aid and the Philippine Navy partner for disarmament



Norwegian People's Aid and the Philippine Navy signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) focused on specialized training in disarmament and non-proliferation on October 15, 2024, at the Arms Management and Destruction Conference held in Manila. The agreement aims to enhance

regional security through targeted risk reduction efforts.

The partnership is set to address critical issues, including reducing the risk of unplanned explosions, curbing the illicit spread of small arms, and supporting ongoing peace initiatives in the region. By promoting safer arms and explosives man-

agement practices, both organizations seek to foster a more secure environment and advance stability.

Co-hosted by the Philippine Navy, Norwegian People's Aid, and the Norwegian Embassy, the conference highlighted the commitment of all parties to effective arms control. The event brought together experts, policymakers, and security officials to share best practices and explore collaborative solutions.

This partnership reinforces the broader global effort toward sustainable peace by addressing arms control challenges in the Philippines and neighboring areas, contributing to long-term security and development across the region.

# Swedish journalists in Vietnam honored for contributions to media



On October 27, 2024, the Vietnamese Ministry of Information and Communications honored ten Swedish journalists for their significant contributions to Vietnamese journalism. The journalists' support is part of the "Enhancing Vietnamese Journalism" project, which Sweden has backed since its inception, training thousands of Vietnamese journalists in modern practices and ethical standards.

This event celebrated the long-term partnership between Vietnam and Sweden, highlighting the lasting influence of Swedish expertise on Vietnamese journalism. Deputy Minister Nguyễn Thanh Lâm expressed deep gratitude to the Swedish journalists, acknowledging their roles as mentors and partners. Marie-Louise Thaning, Head of Trade Promotion at the Swedish Embassy in Vietnam, reaffirmed Sweden's commitment to bolstering Vietnam's media land-

scape, especially during challenging times.

The recognition of these Swedish journalists aligns with efforts by other Nordic countries—Denmark, Finland, and Norway—to support essential sectors in Vietnam, including media and education. As Vietnam continues to develop its journalistic practices, contributions from international partners remain critical to achieving higher standards and fostering a free press.

Overall, the event underscored the importance of international cooperation and the shared commitment to advancing media professionalism. It also reaffirmed the strong ties between Vietnam and Sweden, paving the way for continued collaboration in journalism and beyond.

# Swedish nationals arrested in Pattaya for transnational crime

Two Swedish nationals have been apprehended in Pattaya, accused of call center fraud defrauding victims of over 50 million baht and overstaying their visas. This arrest took place on October 29, following a targeted raid by the Immigration Bureau 3 police.

The National Police Office arrested the individuals as part of a significant crackdown on transnational crime, aligning with the police's renewed commitment to combating illegal activities involving foreign nationals. Recently, the Immigration Investigation Division 3 intensified its efforts to intercept foreign criminal operations, leading to the detention of members of a Swedish call center scam gang whose activities resulted in substantial financial damages.



Officers, tracking leads in Pattaya, identified a suspicious foreigner outside a condominium in Bang Lamung District. After identifying themselves as immigration police, they requested the individual's passport and discovered Mr. John (alias), a 24-year-old Swedish national who had overstayed his visa. A search of his room subsequently led to the arrest of Mr. Vladis (alias), a 25-year-old Swedish national, also found to be overstaying. Both men were taken to

Pattaya City Police Station for legal proceedings.

Swedish authorities later confirmed that Mr. John and Mr. Vladis held criminal records in Sweden linked to similar call center scams. This operation is part of the ongoing collaboration among Thai law enforcement agencies aimed at enhancing public safety by curbing transnational crime.

Additionally, Thai officials remain vigilant to ensure a safer environment for both locals and visitors. Monitoring inappropriate behavior and bolstering inter-agency efforts to apprehend transnational criminals reflect Thailand's commitment to protecting communities from exploitation and illegal activities nationwide.

# The Global Fashion Summit moves to Shanghai

The Global Fashion Summit, a major international forum for sustainable fashion that originated in Copenhagen, is set to take place in China next month. The special event is scheduled for November 7, 2024, during the China International Import Expo.

Organized by the Danish-rooted Global Fashion Agenda and Chinamind NEXT, the gala will bring together local and international leaders from the fashion industry for discussions and a dinner focused on sustainability. This year's theme, "Unlocking The Next Level," highlights the importance of collaboration and innovation to meet key sustainability goals.

"We are excited to bring our established Global Fashion Summit to Shanghai with the goal of inspiring action on sustainability and fostering more alliances across the global



fashion ecosystem," said Federica Marchionni, CEO of Global Fashion Agenda.

The summit aims to address critical environmental and social

challenges in the fashion industry while encouraging partnerships across the sector.

# Norwegian national arrested in Indonesia for alleged cult activities

A Norwegian national and six British citizens were arrested on Thursday in West Suma-

tra, Indonesia, for allegedly promoting deviant religious beliefs centered around the Mahdi, a messianic figure

in Islam.

The Norwegian, identified as Osama, 35, also known as Muhammad Bin Abdullah, claimed to have traveled to Indonesia to pledge allegiance to Muhammad Qosim, whom the group believes to be the Mahdi.

Local authorities detained the group, and they have since been handed over to immigration officers. Indonesian officials condemned their activities and issued warnings to the public about the dangers of following such beliefs.



# Danish cannabis farm in Thailand featured in new tv program



Danish national Andreas Petersen, 33, cultivates cannabis on his farm in Thailand and shares his unique journey in a new Danish TV2 program about people with dwarfism.

Describing himself as a “cannabis enthusiast,” Petersen explains in the program that he is living his dream in Thailand:

“A couple of years ago, I started a cannabis farm in Thailand. We produce cannabis for both medical and recreational use. It’s 100 percent legal, and I’ve invested my entire savings into this project.”

For Andreas Petersen, cannabis has helped alleviate pain related to his condition, and when Thailand legalized its cultivation, he decided to take the leap.

Thailand became the first country in Asia to fully decriminalize cannabis in June 2022.

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# Denmark supports Indonesia’s fight against food loss and waste

Denmark is bolstering Indonesia’s efforts to tackle food loss and waste, a significant issue impacting the Southeast Asian nation’s food security and economy. The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration recently committed to aiding Indonesia with strategic cooperation and expert guidance.

In a statement, Nita Yulianis of Indonesia’s National Food Agency (Bapanas) emphasized the importance of Denmark’s support in developing action plans to reduce

food loss and waste. Bilateral talks between Bapanas and the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration took place in Jakarta, focusing on data collection and incentives to combat food waste.

Denmark’s assistance comes as Indonesia faces substantial food waste, amounting to 23-48 million tons annually. The collaboration aims to slash FLW by 75% by 2045, benefiting both nations’ sustainability goals.



# Ginger powder from China recalled in Denmark

Specialty stores across Denmark are recalling ginger powder due to high levels of PAH compounds found in the products, according to the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration (Fødevarerstyrelsen).

PAH (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons) are tar-like substances that can contaminate food during processing, often as a result of production errors.

Studies indicate that PAH compounds may be carcinogenic. With elevated levels detected in the ginger powder, there may be a health risk.

Consumers are advised to discard the product or return it to the store where it was purchased.



# National Geographic to visit Malaysia, Sweden, and Thailand in 2025



National Geographic has unveiled 25 travel destinations to explore in the coming year, featuring locations like Malaysia, Stockholm, and Bangkok.

Following the long pandemic-induced pause, travelers can once again enjoy luxury in Malaysia with

the “Wild Malaysia” train journey. This experience, created in collaboration with the conservation group Save Wild Tigers, includes a visit to Taman Negara National Park, where guests can learn about critically endangered Malayan tigers and take part in a wildlife photography class.

Thailand also made the list, with a special spotlight on its capital, Bangkok. The city offers a unique mix of ancient tradition and modern design:

“While the city is an art and design hot spot in its own right, it’s also a hub from which tourists can access Thailand’s rich cultural heritage,” National Geographic notes.

In the northern hemisphere, island-hopping in Sweden’s Stockholm Archipelago is a must for 2025. Travelers can now hike across 21 of the islands along the newly opened 168-mile Stockholm Archipelago Trail, with overnight stays at cozy inns like Utö Vårdshus, famously frequented by Greta Garbo.

Greenland, another Nordic destination, is expected to draw more travelers with the opening of an international airport in Nuuk. National Geographic highlights Greenland’s awe-inspiring natural wonders, including colossal icebergs in Ilulissat and the rich Inuit culture in Kulusuk.

# Dansk Industri warns of trade war risk amid EU-China tariff dispute



**D**ansk Industri (DI), Denmark's largest business organization and employers' association, has emphasized the critical importance of avoiding a potential trade war between the EU and China.

This comes after the European Commission's announcement of possible additional tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles due to concerns about unfair state subsidies. Despite these measures, negotiations with China will continue, according to

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

Peter Bay Kirkegaard, a senior consultant at DI's Global Trade and Investment Department, expressed concern about the impact on Denmark, stating, "For a small, open economy like Denmark's, it is crucial to avoid a trade war between the EU and China."

DI hopes for a peaceful resolution, stressing the importance of stable trade relations for Denmark's economic interests.

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# Stricter family reunification rules hit foreign workers in Finland

**S**tricter family reunification rules in Finland are expected to hit foreign workers from several countries, including the Philippines and Vietnam. Critics argue for more flexible policies for workers in some areas.

Starting November 1, Finland will introduce stricter family reunification rules, making it harder for low-income foreign workers, including many healthcare workers, to bring their families to the country. The Finnish Immigration Service (Migri) has raised the income requirements, affecting workers like practical nurses from countries such as the Philippines.

Under the new rules, a family with one adult and two children must have a net monthly income of 2,300 euros, up from the current 1,900 euros. Practical nurses, who often earn around 1,860 euros after taxes, will struggle to meet this new



requirement, preventing them from reuniting with their families.

While there are exceptions for cases involving children's welfare, critics argue these rules create obstacles for essential foreign workers. Finland continues to recruit from

countries like the Philippines, Vietnam, India, and Brazil to fill labor shortages, especially in healthcare. Advocates are urging for more flexible policies to support international workers who contribute to Finland's economy.



## The real Santa Claus is coming to Thailand!

Exciting news emerged during the launch of “The World’s Great Celebration” campaign by Central Pattana: the original Santa Claus from Rovaniemi, Finland, will visit Thailand at the end of November 2024.

During the launch, the Finnish Ambassador to Thailand, Kristiina Kuvaja, shared insights about traditional Christmas celebrations in Finland. She noted unique customs, including the declaration of Christmas peace, the importance of sauna rituals, and the abundance of food enjoyed with friends and family. Additionally, Ambassador Kuvaja mentioned that Santa Claus, along with elves, visits to bring gifts, creating a magical experience for children.

As part of Central Pattana’s festive campaign, a lucky draw will offer

winners a chance to travel to Finland via Finnair. This opportunity allows winners to explore the beauty of Lapland and visit Rovaniemi, known as the Official Hometown of Santa Claus, with experiences provided by Visit Rovaniemi and SantaPark Arctic World Professionals.

### Catch the holiday spirit!

The “World’s Great Celebration” runs from November 1, 2024, to January 5, 2025, across all Central shopping centers nationwide.

Moreover, Central Pattana has partnered with TTE and J.P. TOYS GALLERY to introduce “The First Art Toy Christmas Decorations in the World.” This feature will showcase 23 iconic characters, created by renowned artists, standing up to 4 meters tall.

Additionally, the event includes a special appearance by Jessica Ng, creator of the Estelle art toy, who will unveil a secret art toy during the lighting ceremony of SEA’s tallest Christmas tree at CentralWorld.

Overall, the campaign has seen collaboration from various partners, including PROXIE, which created a catchy new Christmas song to spread holiday cheer.

The launch event marks another step in bringing the Christmas spirit to Thailand. Participants are eager to embrace the joy of the season, which is so cherished in Finland. As the festive period approaches, excitement continues to grow for Santa Claus’s arrival and the celebrations that await.



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