

JUL-AUG 2025

Scand Asia



BUSINESS:

Nordic Embassies share circular economy insights with Philippine leaders

INTERNATIONAL:

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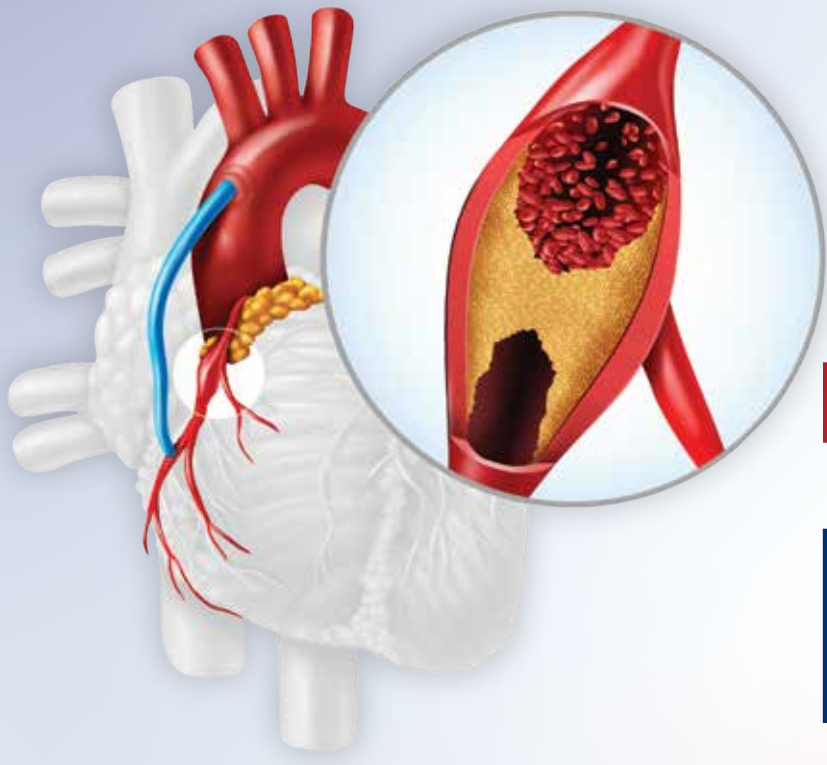
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Contents



16

Fast Lane to Old Furniture



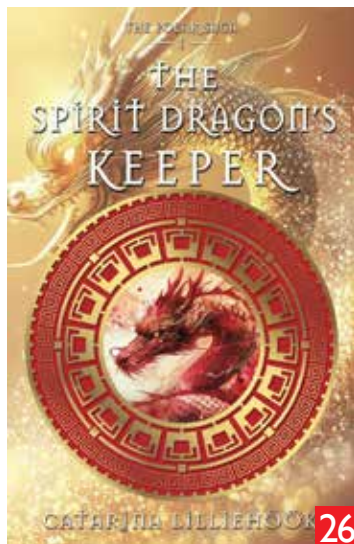
24

My Sweden's National Day



20

Emil Akander



26

The Spirit Dragon's Keeper



28

The Rock Bottom Project

ScandAsia stories

- 11 Swedish Embassy in Bangkok to stop issuing seven types of certificates.
- 14 Sweden invests in Filipino talent to advance sustainable development.
- 35 Vietnam Airlines launches direct flights between Vietnam and Denmark.
- 41 Myanmar Red Cross collaborates with Singapore and Norway on earthquake relief.



11



14



35



41

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Dear Readers,

I often quote Charlie Brown from Peanuts for the wise words: "No problem is so big or so complicated that it cannot be run away from." A little research corrected me — it was actually Linus who said it. Still, it always brings a smile.

The quote came to my mind as ScandAsia Magazine now takes its summer break. This is our July–August issue, and we'll return in September with fresh stories and new perspectives.

But what do we do in the meantime? Can we really "run away" from the world's problems for a while? If not, could we perhaps step back from them.

There are enough big and complicated challenges to make that idea appealing: wars still raging, political unpredictability, economic pressures, and a rapidly changing world shaped by technology, climate shifts, and power realignments. These won't disappear over the summer, but taking a pause might help us return with clearer eyes and steadier minds.

If my health were failing, that would top my list of worries, but thankfully, a recent checkup gave me a clean bill. My family is well too. For that, I'm deeply grateful. When I count my blessings - naming them one by one - many of those looming problems feel a little more manageable.

So what might I take a break from during the summer?

Unpredictable news triggered by something the American president has said or done. That would be somewhere on the top. Predictable news about how China is filling in the power vacuum left by the USA and the seismic effect this has on both South East Asia and the Nordic countries.

My worries about what AI might do to the future of young people who are spending increasingly more time in the digital world than the real one. That would also be up there on top of the list.

Will any of these issues be gone by September? Likely not. But stepping back may let me re-engage with them later with renewed focus — or perhaps with different questions altogether.

What's on your list? What could you pause for a while this summer — not to ignore, but to gain a little space from?

We wish all our readers a refreshing and peaceful summer. May your break offer perspective, rest, and maybe even a smile from a Peanuts comic strip.

See you in September.



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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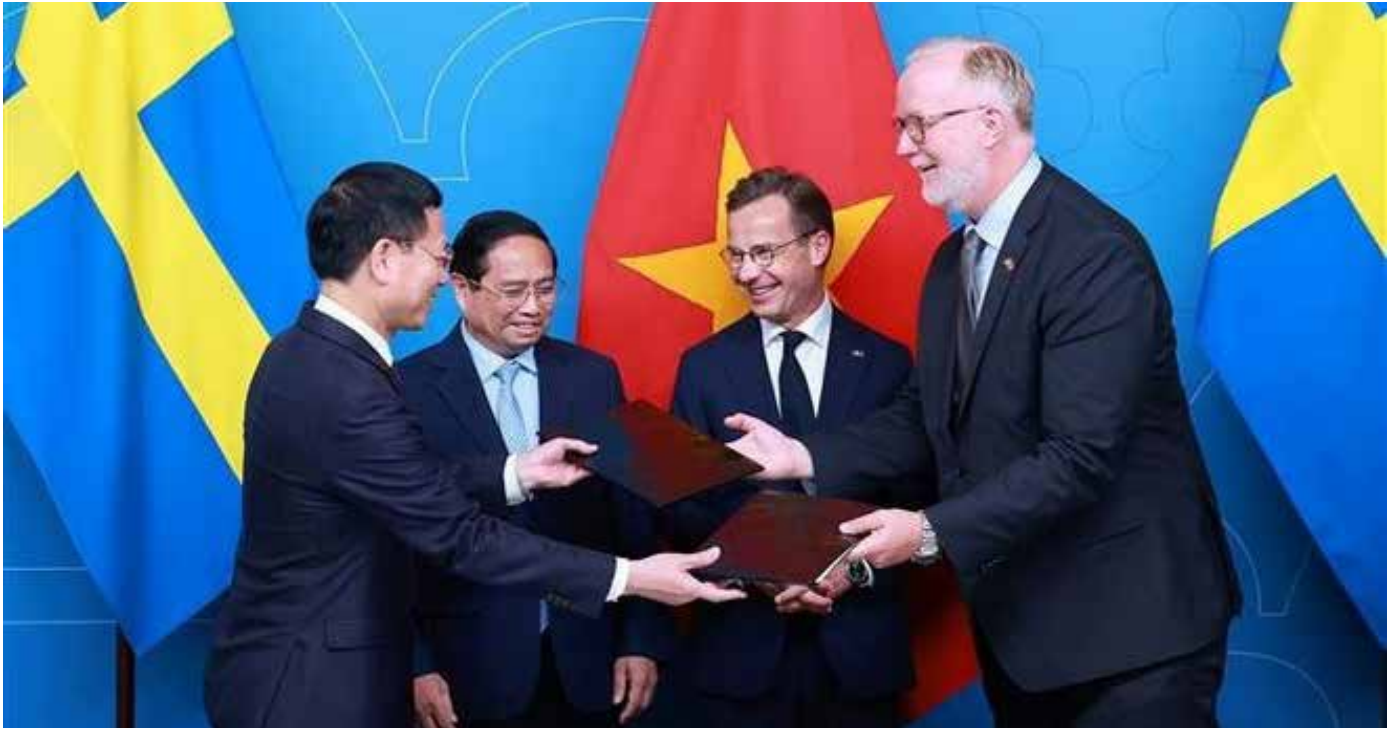
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Vietnamese Prime Minister's busy visit to Sweden



Vietnamese Prime Minister Phạm Minh Chính paid an official visit to Sweden from 11 to 13 June 2025. The visit included meetings with Swedish government leaders, members of the royal family, academic institutions, and business representatives.

During the visit, Vietnam and Sweden signed a bilateral strategic partnership agreement in science, technology, innovation, and digital

transformation. The agreement was signed between Vietnam's Ministry of Science and Technology and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Prime Minister Phạm Minh Chính also met Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson, Crown Princess Victoria, and Prince Daniel. Crown Princess Victoria and Prince Daniel recalled their previous visit to Vietnam in 2019 and expressed interest in returning.

A number of cooperation agreements and memoranda were signed between Vietnamese and Swedish companies and institutions. These included:

- **Syre**: agreement to develop a polyester recycling facility in Bình Định province.
- **Vietnam Airlines and SAS (Scandinavian Airlines)**: code-share agreement to enhance air connectivity between Vietnam and Scandinavia.
- **FPT Software and WARA M&L**: cooperation in artificial intelligence development.
- **Swedfund and VATM (Vietnam Air Traffic Management Corporation)**: feasibility study on implementing remote air traffic control and information management systems.
- **Vietnam Maritime University and the World Maritime University**: academic exchange agreement.
- **AI for Vietnam and WASP (Wallenberg AI, Autonomous Systems and Software Program)**:

collaboration on AI and language technology.

- **SotaTek and Key Solutions AB:** joint development of AI sales solutions.

Prime Minister Phạm Minh Chính visited Karolinska Institutet, where he met university leaders to discuss expanded cooperation in neonatal care, clinical research, hospital innovation, and digital health-care. He noted that 64 Vietnamese researchers had completed PhDs at Karolinska Institutet.

At Ericsson, the Prime Minister discussed future collaboration in areas including 6G, AI infrastructure, and digital transformation.

During a meeting with leaders from Swedish firms including Atlas Copco, Ericsson, Hitachi Energy, EQT Partners, Nordstjernan, and SEB Group, investment opportunities in energy, technology, finance, and telecommunications were discussed.

The delegation also visited



Blykalla, a startup linked to the KTH Royal Institute of Technology, to discuss the potential application of small modular nuclear reactors (SMRs) in Vietnam.

The visit concluded at Uppsala University, where the Prime Minister met Vice-Rector Professor Joakim Palme and representa-

tives of the university. He also met Professor Ulf Danielsson from the Nobel Committee for Physics and toured research facilities, including labs in semiconductor technology. Vietnam's first satellite, launched in 2011, was noted as a product of cooperation between Uppsala University and FPT University.

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Malaysia signs free trade pact with Norway, Iceland and other EFTA countries

Malaysia has signed a comprehensive economic partnership agreement with the four member states of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA): Norway, Iceland, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein. The signing ceremony took place in Tromsø, Norway.

A photo from the event shows Malaysia's Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry, Tengku Zafrul Aziz, exchanging documents with Norway's Minister of Trade and Industry, Cecilie Terese Myrseth. Iceland's Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, Daoi Mar Kristofersson, was also present.

Tengku Zafrul said the Malaysia-EFTA Economic Partnership Agreement (Meepa) marks a new chapter in Malaysia's trade relations with Europe and reflects the

country's efforts to diversify export markets amid rising geopolitical and economic uncertainties.

The agreement is Malaysia's first free trade deal with several European countries and its 18th free trade agreement overall. Tengku Zafrul also noted that Meepa could pave the way for renewed negotiations on a broader Malaysia-EU free trade agreement.

- The partnership covers a wide range of areas, including trade in goods and services, investment, intellectual property, government procurement, competition, sustainable development, and sanitary standards. More than 90% of Malaysia's exports to EFTA countries will enjoy long-term duty-free access.

Malaysia's total trade with EFTA reached RM14.4 billion in 2024, with Switzerland accounting for the largest share (RM12.2 billion), followed by Norway (RM2.1 billion). Major Malaysian exports include electrical and electronic products, scientific instruments, rubber-based goods, and plastics.

In the services sector, the agreement is expected to improve access for Malaysian professionals—such as accountants, teachers, lawyers, and healthcare workers—to work across the EFTA region.

The signing was accompanied by a memorandum of understanding on capacity-building cooperation and a joint statement on sustainable palm oil.

Swedish Embassy in Bangkok to stop issuing seven types of certificates

From 1 September 2025, the Embassy of Sweden in Bangkok will no longer issue several certificates that many Swedes in Thailand have previously relied on for administrative purposes.

The embassy announced the discontinuation of seven specific types of certificates, including:

- Certificate of family relationship for visa applications for spouse or children
- Certificate for registration in Thailand (yellow house book)
- Certificate of name or surname change in Sweden
- Certificate of divorce from Sweden
- Certificate of Swedish marriage for notification to Thai authorities
- Certificate of cohabitation (samboförhållande)



- Certificate of death

According to the embassy, these services will be discontinued permanently as part of changes to the consular service framework.

For Swedes in Thailand who may require such documentation, more information is available on the embassy's official website: <https://bit.ly/4kLjme>

ly/4kLjme

Inquiries can also be directed by email to: ambassaden.bangkok-konsular@gov.se

The embassy encourages those affected to consult the website for alternative procedures and recommendations depending on the type of certificate needed.

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The Challenge of Shared Humanity in a Digital World

By Chris Sammons, Head of School, Bangkok Patana School

The idea of being a 'global citizen' is infused with international education due to our locations, curriculum and diverse stakeholders. In this age of rapidly changing tech, however, it is no longer enough. Accreditation partners are asking their communities to reframe approaches schools take to emphasise the action of 'socially responsible leadership'.

The good news is that Bangkok Patana children, parents, staff, alumni and partners are no strangers. The IB world conference held in Singapore in March was opened by Paul Lee of Plastify (Patana '12). Sri Hollema (Grad '18) visited us in May to talk about Mat Zero and Yoochan Hwang (Grad '26) led the only project in Thailand to be featured on UNEP Zero Waste Day Global Map in 2025.

It begs the question why the world out there feels less humane?

Our next generation of socially responsible leaders will be like our alumni, created in the family home and shaped in our school. There is, however, a further call for action to guard against the potential effects of tech and media which left unchecked can get in the way of social responsibility.

Media is bombarding society in more ways than we are capable of consuming. Increasingly, channels have to fight for attention and so permit unfiltered content under the label of free speech. Strong emotion—especially anger or outrage which divides—is necessary for tech firms to keep people coming back.

How Do Children Experience This Challenge?

Infants as young as two can interpret background content on monitors and screens to spot environmental patterns.

Our Primary School children often see things in polar opposites—right or wrong, good or bad. Online media can simplify complex issues into short posts or videos and reinforce harmful ways of thinking.

Older teenagers are at a stage where they are forming their identities and trying things out to see what feels like a fit.

Online spaces can offer a sense of community and experimentation, but they can also be dark places which pressure teens to take positions without exploring consequences.



How Do Adults Experience This Challenge?

The algorithm of news and speedy media feeds through the tech in our hands amplifies noise with the result that people think the loudest voice represents the majority, or that a different thinker is an enemy.

Adults have biases that gets them caught up in online arguments just as easily as children. They can post extreme opinions which fail to see the irony of their own strongly held thinking. They can earn notoriety from division that is much easier to receive than the hard work of building consensus.

What Can We Do?

Teaching critical thinking is increasingly complex when our children can access a wider range of unfiltered and unchecked sources which are not grounded in the same beliefs about shared humanity. Never confuse free speech with hate speech.

At home, take a check on the information sources available to your children through your routers or the data package you pay for. Have they been approved by you, are they well balanced, and do they undermine your own beliefs about tolerance and humanity.

Model the power of pause. Whether you're a child reading a comment online or a parent watching the news, take a moment before you speak out loud or respond. Always ask: Is this the full picture? Could there be another side to this story? Is it necessary or kind?

Recognise that nothing is neutral. Algorithms show us content that keeps us engaged, not necessarily content that is balanced. Question what you think you know.

Talk about emotions. Strong feelings like anger, frustration, or even excitement can make it harder to think clearly. Practice responding and not reacting by slowing down emotion, then asking questions like what makes it feel that way for myself and others around me?

Look for common values. Even when we disagree, we often care about similar things—fairness, kindness, family, and safety. Find the common elements to being human and direct your attention to the positives in that.

Being a socially responsible leader can be about the big projects we are driven to such as those led by our graduates: the money they raise and the lives they influence are really important. Heroes also attend to being socially responsible minute to minute through awareness of their own thinking and how this drives beliefs, attention and actions.



Katrina's Journey to Space Starts in Sweden

Sweden Invests in Filipino Talent to Advance Sustainable Development.

By Athena Cartagena

The newly launched Pioneering Women in STEM scholarship aims to empower women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics by enhancing their participation, leadership, and performance in these critical fields.

Katrina Baladjay, one of the recipients of the Pioneering Women in STEM scholarship, is headed to Luleå University of Technology to pursue a master's degree in Space Science and Technology. After her studies, she aspires to work towards the advancement of space industries to serve the environment and future generations.

"I'm eager to deepen my understanding of space physics, answer fundamental questions about the universe, and inspire the next generation of young female scientists in physics," said Ms. Baladjay.

"This is possible in Sweden, a country with a strong space research background and a deep commitment to gender equality."



Eleven fully Funded Scholarships

The Swedish Institute (SI) currently offers two flagship scholarship programs for master's studies: the SI Scholarship for Global Professionals and Pioneering Women in STEM.

The SI Scholarship for Global Professionals supports future global leaders committed to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in their home countries.

A total of 54 Filipinos have been accepted into Swedish universities for the upcoming fall semester, with 11 receiving fully funded scholarships from SI. These students will pursue master's degrees in fields such as public health, sustainable engineering, and space science.

"Sweden is known for its culture of collaboration and the 'quadruple helix' model, where government, the private sector, civil society, and academia work together to address the world's most pressing challenges," said Ambassador Anna Ferry. "Filipino students, with their unique perspectives, creativity, and resilience, make significant contributions to Sweden's sustainability and research and development efforts."

Become Part of a Global Family

After returning home, many of the Philippine scholars choose to join the Swedish Alumni Network, to celebrate their experience and maintain ties to Sweden.

"Sweden is a fantastic destination for studying abroad, offering world-class education with a strong emphasis on innovation and research. Stunning landscapes, vibrant city life, and a culture that encourages creativity and independent thinking," said Mr. Chris Eugenio, Chairperson of the Swedish Alumni Network – Philippines and a recipient of the SI Management Programme in Sustainability.

"Completing a scholarship in Sweden connects you to a global family of changemakers through the Swedish Alumni Network, fostering lifelong professional and cultural ties worldwide," he added.

Sweden is home to nearly 50 universities and university colleges, many of which offer English-taught programs. Institutions such as Lund University, Uppsala University, Chalmers University of Technology, Karolinska Institute and the Stockholm School of Economics consistently rank among the world's best.

Since 1997, approximately 630 Filipinos have pursued higher education in Sweden. Between 2019 and 2025, 49 Filipinos have been awarded the SI Scholarship for Global Professionals — 45% of whom are women. Including other scholarship programs and short-term leadership training, a total of 117 Filipinos have received offers from SI.

Renowned for its commitment to innovation, Sweden invests around 3.5% of its GDP in research and development — one of the highest rates globally. This long-term focus has positioned the country as a leader in fields such as environmental technology, life sciences, and nanotechnology. With 70% of research privately

“

This is possible in Sweden, a country with a strong space research background and a deep commitment to gender equality.

”



funded, Swedish companies like ABB, AstraZeneca, Ericsson, Sandvik, and Volvo Group continue to drive research and development.

About the Swedish Institute:

The Swedish Institute is a public agency that builds interest and trust in Sweden around the world. It works with Sweden promotion, cooperation in the Baltic Sea region and global development.

About the Embassy of Sweden in Manila

Sweden has had diplomatic relations with the Philippines since 1947. The Embassy's main task is to represent Sweden in the Philippines and to strengthen the relations between the two countries. Its focus is on promoting trade and investment and building partnerships including security policy.



“

I wrote more than 80 applications for jobs and not once was I called in for an interview.

”

Fast Lane to Old Furniture

This is the inspiring story of how Kirati “Tom” Wannathan – who came to Denmark as an immigrant at 12 years of age – has now found his way back to Thailand importing old Danish furniture and home decoration items.

By Gregers Møller

Tom moved from Prachinburi in Thailand to Denmark when he was 12 years old. His mother had married a Danish man and, after two years of living in Denmark, she was granted permission to bring over her three sons — Tom, his older brother, and his younger brother.



The family settled in Tikøb, a small town in North Zealand. For his first year in Denmark, Tom had to attend a special class for immigrant children in Helsingør, where students still couldn't speak, read, and write enough Danish to attend regular school. After that year, he transferred to Tikøb Skole. Later, when his mother divorced and remarried, the family moved again — this time to Espergærde, still in the same northern region outside Copenhagen.

“I had an OK relationship with my stepfather. Unlike my brothers, we got along fine,” Tom recalls.

After completing 9th grade, Tom moved to Jutland to attend Technical College in Skive, where he trained to become a værktøjsmager — a toolmaker. The program included learning to build molds for the plastic industry and other precision work.

All through his school years, Tom had a strong passion for sports, especially handball. He eventually rose to play in Denmark's 2nd division. But his athletic career was cut short by a serious shoulder injury that required surgery. During his recovery, Tom returned to Zealand and settled in Nørrebro, Copenhagen. There, he pursued further studies to become a production technician with a specialty in machine construction.

But something was missing.

Tom began to feel disconnected from his Thai roots. His Thai language skills were fading, and he missed the sense of community. So he started frequenting Thai music clubs in Copenhagen — places like Bangkok Café on Vesterbro and ThaiByNight.

“One of the things I like about the Thai places is that the guys there don't want to fight all the time,” Tom says.

“Whenever I went to Danish bars, there would always be some Danish idiot who wanted to fight me. They usually ended up regretting it,” he laughs.

With his education completed, Tom began applying for jobs. Lots of them.



“

In respect for her and that trust she placed in me, I went straight home and flushed the last of my drugs down the toilet.

”



“I wrote more than 80 applications for jobs and not once was I called in for an interview,” he says. Even when he applied for a basic machine operator job — far below his qualifications — he was rejected.

Meanwhile, his younger brother, who was educated as a painter, and his older brother, a carpenter, had no trouble finding work. “They had plenty of jobs. I had two educations and couldn’t get anything!”

So Tom started helping his brothers out. He worked hard — never calling in sick, putting in weekend shifts when needed — and soon he was earning more than the regular staff, even without formal qualifications in the field.

But his nights were still spent in the Thai clubs — and the crowd he began to associate with led him into deeper trouble.

“I was hanging out with the wrong kind of guys. I started taking cocaine, and then I started helping sell it too. It was ten crazy years in the fast lane.”

The turning point came when one of his Thai friends was caught. It turned out the friend had far more drugs at home than Tom had realized. He was sentenced to six years and deported to Thailand.

“That really shook me. I knew I had to get out.”

Tom signed up for a taxi driver’s license and started working night shifts. Around that time, a Thai friend asked for help repairing an apartment. Thanks to the experience he had working alongside his brothers, Tom was able to do a professional job.

Then, one day, a Thai woman passed by while he was working. She told him about her unusual job — clearing out homes in Copenhagen after people had died. Some

of the furniture that she salvaged, she sent back to Thailand to sell.

A week later, she called him again. She needed help modifying a built-in kitchen unit.

“We got to talking,” Tom says. “I told her I had applied for so many jobs but was now just driving a taxi.”

She explained how she’d taken over the furniture-clearing business after her husband nearly died and went into a coma. Then she handed him the key to her mini-truck.

“I need a driver,” she said. “You can start tomorrow.”

Tom was stunned.

“In respect for her and that trust she placed in me, I went straight home and flushed the last of my drugs down the toilet.”

At that time, Tom was carrying a personal debt of nearly 400,000 Danish kroner — unpaid bills, alimony, collection letters he hadn’t dared open. He co-owned a summerhouse with his mother, and together they sold it to clear the debt. There was even a little left over.

Now clean and debt-free, Tom began collecting used furniture himself. He didn’t have storage space, but a Danish friend let him stack items in his apartment. Some items he picked up for free, others he bought. Inspired by his mentor, Tom filled a container and shipped it to Pathum Thani, where a relative lived.

But the business didn’t go as planned.

“It was hard to sell. The furniture started to deteriorate in the humid storage, and I couldn’t move the pieces like that woman could.”

He relocated the items to Saraburi, where conditions were better, but sales still didn’t take off. Eventually,



he moved the remaining furniture to a townhouse in Udon Thani. He carried everything up to the second floor, decorating part of the space as a showroom above a neighbor's noodle shop.

"One day, a lawyer friend brought a woman who ended up buying everything — at a bargain price. I was just happy to get rid of it."

Tom returned to Denmark to work again. But soon, he was collecting for another shipment. This time the container went to Prachin Buri, to a half-finished building originally meant to be a B-Quick garage.

He sold that stock, returned to Denmark, and filled yet another container. But then COVID-19 hit.

"It got complicated," Tom says. "Every time I traveled between Denmark and Thailand, I had to do 15 days of quarantine."

By then, he had moved his operations to a double townhouse in Chonburi. He had also learned a key lesson: furniture wasn't the most profitable cargo.

"I realized I could make more selling a box of kitchen tools, glasses, plates, even used workshop tools — than a big old table that took up the same space in the container."

That was when he found his niche.

Today, Tom rents a large warehouse and showroom in Chum Phae, Khon Kaen. Next door is Tandawaen, a music restaurant managed by his parents-in-law. That connection also helps with charity.

"They know people who need crutches, walkers, wheelchairs — we can fit them in the container. We even use old clothes as padding and donate them for charity later."

His showroom is now fully stocked with items moved from his Chonburi location. On 1 June, his next container will arrive, and he expects buyers from shops all over the region to come and sift through all the wonderful stuff he has collected back in Denmark.

"It doesn't matter that I'm based in Chum Phae. By now I know a good many buyers and they will come to me because I have what they need," Tom says confidently.

The furniture cannot be from anywhere in Europe, Tom explains.

"It has a special value, that they are Danish, that they are well-known Danish designer names," he says, mentioning quickly the ten most prominent Danish furniture designers and designers of Danish interior design items like lamps, glassware, etc.

"I don't see myself as an entrepreneur. When I start thinking about setting something up properly, it tires me. But this — being a sort of wholesaler — this works for me."

Tom has established a registered company in Denmark that pays taxes there. In Thailand, the containers are officially imported by his wife.

And so, after a long and winding journey — through rejection, risk, and recovery — Tom, today 48 years old, has found a business that fits his life with roots in his two cultures. Denmark and Thailand.

"I always make sure that I am in Denmark a minimum of 180 days per year. I would never risk my permanent residency in Denmark."



*Emil Akander, Vice President and Head of Region
for the Asia-Pacific – Business Sweden.
(Photo: Joakim Persson)*

Emil Akander helms Business Sweden in the Asia-Pacific

Sweden's biggest economic growth potential at the crossroads of emerging economies and the world's major economies

By Joakim Persson

In the region he has already called home for the past decade, Emil Akander was in early 2025 appointed by Business Sweden (BuS) as Vice President and Head of Region for the Asia-Pacific. Emil reflects on this significant career step that keeps him in the region and elaborates on several initiatives conducted by BuS and 'Team Sweden' to increase Sweden's export and trade. Sweden's recent State Visit to Singapore has also brought renewed attention to the region and strengthened bilateral collaboration.

Aside from the VP appointment, the main difference for Emil is the expanded geographic area; having started as Country Manager for Singapore in 2014, he now leads the entire Asia-Pacific. Up to 2025 he had focused on Southeast Asia and South Asia, as VP and Head of Region since 2022.

"Now, covering the entire region, and where we have in total 18 offices in 13 of those markets, you need to balance very large markets and economies such as China, India and Japan with emerging and smaller markets for the Swedish industry. So, it's obviously a more complex region to navigate, but it also opens up for good understanding of how Sweden should trade and invest in it, and be invested in relating to all those different markets," begins the Head of Region.

"My new appointment was, and still is, an incredible honour – and a huge vote of confidence. My immediate thought was the immense opportunity and responsibility it represented, especially given Asia's critical role in our global strategy, since it's by far the biggest region in revenue and headcount."

"What I appreciate most about being in Asia in this key role is the sheer dynamism and its diversity. Every market brings unique market characteristics, cultures, and challenges, which keeps things incredibly engaging and pushes us to constantly innovate. The pace of growth here is unmatched, and being able to contribute to that, to build strong local teams and drive significant impact across such a vast geographical coverage area – is truly rewarding. It's a continuous learning journey, and I value the chance to navigate both the rapid growth and the rich complexities that define Asia," reflects Emil.

To support the intensified focus on the region, BuS established a new Strategy and Business Development team of four people in Singapore. "In that team we very much focus on delivering on the Swedish government's 'Strategy for Sweden's trade, investment and global competitiveness', with its special focus on Asia."

First ever State Visit

To advance that strategy, the first ever Swedish State Visit to Singapore took place on 19–21 November 2024, aiming to strengthen long-lasting ties and forge new ones. His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden led what he remembered as one of the biggest business delegations ever.

"The depth, seniority and the amount of people in the delegation impressed the King. And I felt that also the local counterparts were present with many ministers, the highest level of their private enterprises and so on, signalling that it was a big thing."





His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden and the delegates during Sweden's State Visit to Singapore, Nov. 2024. (Photo: Jonas Ekströmer, TT)

"One of its main aims was to strengthen our bilateral business and trade ties; in addition to the political- and security agendas. We concluded more than ten business MoUs, with the intention to collaborate and do more in certain areas – many of those being quite concrete also concerning what activities, and – importantly – between active counterparts."

As a result, work is ongoing on these MoUs, especially within energy, healthcare, defence, and transport including civil aviation.

"For example, within energy, we are engaging very closely with the Swedish ministry back home and our agencies, like the Swedish Energy Agency, who is looking to be more present here as it also funds and facilitates collaborations on projects in Asia within for instance renewables, transmission and distribution. The MOU will also facilitate knowledge exchange on regional interconnectivity, ammonia and hydrogen, nuclear safety, as well as cooperation at multilateral fora to accelerate Singapore's decarbonisation pathways."

The main focus lies in the green transition, particularly regarding power generation, as Singapore remains heavily reliant on fossil fuels. With rising electricity demand driven by manufacturing and transport electrification, the opportunities for Sweden span land transportation, electrified buses, airport expansion, and shipping ports.

"So, since the State Visit, we have seen follow-on trips taking place from both sides, including the establishing of new collaborations."

Emil notes the long-term benefit: "It's a good thing that opens new doors, but also expands existing cooperations and partnerships."

Singapore's global and regional hub importance

Singapore's role as one of the world's leading hubs for international trade is of strategic importance for Sweden.

Says the regional head: "It's really a watchtower to what happens in the global economy. It's not only home to a very big port, an airport hub, and a strategic location between east and west when it comes to trading – including the infrastructure for both physical and digital trade, as well as all the services needed. But Singapore today also represents one of only a handful of those truly global hubs – hubs that are open for global trade, but that are also kind of at the crossroads of different major economies in the world. It is a safe harbour to expand out from."

"And today, we see the big majority of at least Swedish companies having their regional headquarters here in Singapore. And some have regional- or headquarters functions in larger markets, such as Thailand or Malaysia, due to the fact that they may have manufacturing there or other operations – or find it more cost-efficient to operate from. Hong Kong remains an important hub as well, not the least for China. But also, in areas related to finance, supply chain and services. For Singapore, I think it comes down to its strategic location and openness for trade and talent, but also the fact that you can feel both the east and the west in terms of business and economies," continues Emil.

Swedish businesses can leverage Singapore's position by building partnerships there and branching out to other regional markets.

"I think you have many entities and companies here who actually covers the region and have a good regional



His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden, State visit to Singapore 2024. (Photo: Business Sweden)

understanding of operating in different larger economies, such as Indonesia, Thailand or Vietnam. For example, Singapore's government-controlled investment company Temasek has a large portfolio of companies, who actually build and invest a lot in the region. And I think there's a possibility to partner up with those. And it might be an easier route – than to enter the local countries directly. Quite a few of them are active in infrastructure, transport, energy and so on."

"Singapore is often also underestimated as a financial hub. You have a lot of capital here to tap into as a Swedish company, being co-founded or co-invested together through different setups and going with different arms relating to Singapore in the region. And if you can get capital from here, it's also smart capital that can help you operate better in the region with a trusted partner," he recommends.

Infrastructure Asia vehicle

In the context of regional development, Singapore's government also established Infrastructure Asia to support sustainable infrastructure growth across Asia.

"From Sweden, companies have lots to offer as sub-suppliers to infrastructure and construction, and then obviously within transport, energy and more. So, it's important for the Swedish industry to identify and collaborate with construction companies. Also, players like Infrastructure Asia offer significant financing – so we often engage with them to see how we can get financial cooperation with Swedish institutions, banks, funds or even government-controlled export financing institutions."

"Infrastructure Asia plays a crucial role as a key vehicle for facilitation and market access, especially for

“
*Singapore today
 also represents one of
 only a handful of those
 truly global hubs...
 It is a safe harbour to
 expand out from.*
 ”

companies from countries like Sweden that are leaders in sustainable infrastructure. Their strong focus on sustainability, innovation, and long-term value creation aligns perfectly with Asia's evolving infrastructure needs," continues Emil.

BuS' role is to ensure Swedish firms are equipped with the right connections and contextual knowledge to succeed in these competitive markets.

Region of great opportunities

As part of BuS' new initiative 'FocusAsia', a report titled 100 Business Opportunities has been released. It highlights prospects across seven industries and 13 markets, sourced from more than 150 BuS business developers in the region.

"In this region there are a lot of challenges within the developing and emerging economies; relating to sustainability, financing, business conduct and so on. But we wanted to highlight all the great opportunities that we are seeing along with the growth."

For example, the 'Malaysian Ports Initiative' promotes workshops between Swedish solution providers and Malaysian port operators, where Swedish companies known for innovation and reliability are already in discussions.

With Sweden currently exporting only 14% to a region projected to grow from 37% to 50% of the world economy, the stakes are high.

"To that end, we need to have an even higher ambition; in exporting, investing, trading, and not the least selling, in this region – looking at the economic growth expected to happen," states Emil.

Editor's note: A more detailed version of this article is available at ScandAsia.com.



Agneta's
World

Agneta de Bekassy



My Sweden's National Day

Sweden's National Day began with a visit to Talat Dokmai Flower Market.

Three of us—members of SWEA Bangkok—had been given the lovely task of selecting flowers and greenery for SWECHAM's joint celebration of National Day on June 6th and Midsummer, taking place on June 7th. In Sweden, Midsummer is celebrated on June 20th this year.

Visiting the flower market is a delight every time. The sea of blooms in every color and shape never fails to fascinate. These days, it's also quite easy to get there by MRT. When we had bought the flowers, we took a break and visited the Flower Art & Floral Café—a truly unique little café filled with flowers everywhere and a collection of vases, cups, and much more. Their motto, written on a mirror, spoke to the three of us: "Just living is not enough, one must have sunshine, freedom and a little flower." Very true.

It has become something of a tradition for us SWEA members to volunteer and help make floral wreaths for

the lunch guests—excited women, little girls, and even the occasional man. It's a true feast for the eyes to watch the cheerful crowd, full of delicious Midsummer food and drink, dancing around the midsummer pole and singing at the top of their lungs.

Just like last year, the celebration took place at the Westin Hotel Asoke. The tables were beautifully set, traditional delicacies were laid out, and the bartender had not forgotten to chill the snaps—a must at a Midsummer lunch.

I often wonder what non-Swedes think when they, for the first time, see a group of adults hopping around a flower-covered pole, pretending to be little frogs—without ears or tails, no less?

It often seems like the adults are having more fun than the children, while the teenagers, who've been dragged along, look nothing but embarrassed by their half-crazy parents.

“

It often seems like the adults are having more fun than the children, while the teenagers, who've been dragged along, look nothing but embarrassed by their half-crazy parents.

”



I remember the first time I saw grown-up Chinese men running around as dragons—I couldn't help but smile.

Different cultures, different traditions—but isn't that exactly what makes life interesting and enriching?

Back to our celebration.

SWECHAM's president, Mr. Peter Björk, warmly welcomed guests of all ages. As in previous years, many companies had generously sponsored fantastic prizes. The General Manager of the Westin Hotel, Mr. Robert Wittebrood, presented a voucher for overnight stays, which was well received. Our Ambassador, Mrs. Anna Hammargren, was among the many lucky winners. TPV contributed vouchers and brought along a selection of clothing from their latest collection, which attracted many buyers.

URBAN Flowers had crafted beautiful flower crowns for SWECHAM's energetic staff—just to name a few of the sponsors.

SWEA Bangkok contributed with flowers and helped with wreath-making, and the youngest enjoyed fishing candy bags from the “Treat Fishing Booth,” donated by SOFTA.

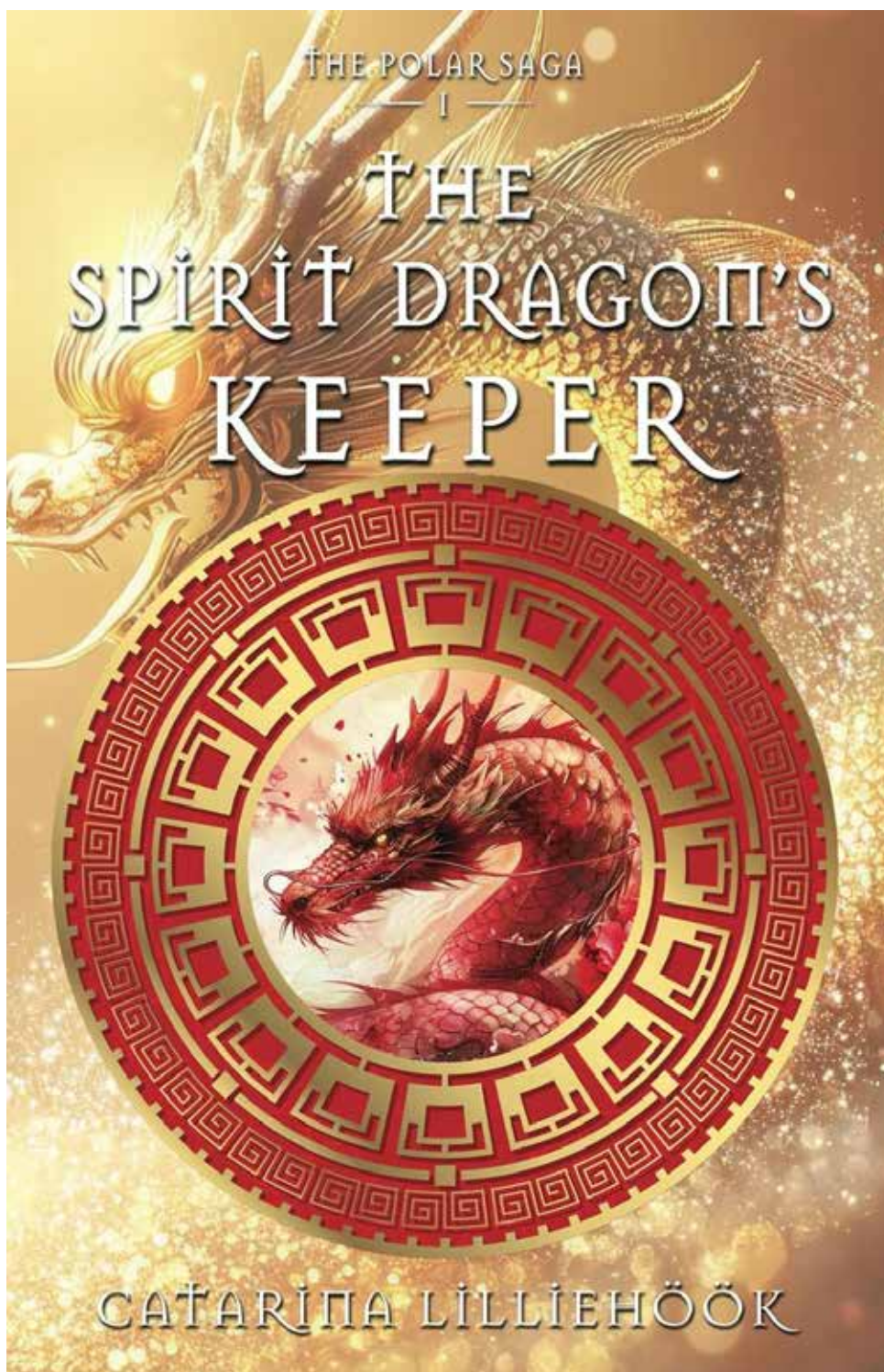
It was an all-around successful lunch, excellently organized by Anna Olsson Moore, SWECHAM's very own “general,” together with her dedicated team.

Many of us are now saying goodbye to Thailand for a while, heading off to Sweden for a cooler Swedish summer—or to other destinations—to enjoy a well-deserved summer break.

Wishing you all the best, and see you in the autumn!



Review: The Spirit Dragon's Keeper – An Epic Start to The Polar Saga



As a Swede with over two decades spent in China, Catarina Lilliehöök's debut novel *The Spirit Dragon's Keeper* offers a breathtaking start to her epic vision, *The Polar Saga*.

By Ingrid Reinli



“
This tale gripped me from the first page, partly because of its unique and unexplored blend of the Nordic ethnic minority, the Sámi, combined with one of ancient China’s most classic heritages: gong fu, Chinese martial arts.
”

By blending the cultural heritage of the Sámi—the People of the Arctic—with ancient Chinese martial arts, dragons, and magic, this spellbinding novel takes fantasy in a new direction. A book that brings cultures together, bridges worlds, and promises a truly original take on a genre that keeps growing in popularity.

What hit me most in this intriguing and unusual story was Mila’s strong voice. The main protagonist, a young reindeer herder who is brutally abducted and swept into a prestigious martial arts temple in southern China, is a girl whose world shatters the day bad men come to her village. As life takes this unexpected turn, Mila has to do whatever it takes to survive: change, adapt, learn. For a lone girl in a foreign and boy-infested world, this is a massive challenge told with strength and raw intimacy—a writing style that brings the reader along on a truly immersive experience.

This tale gripped me from the first page, partly because of its unique and unexplored blend of the Nordic ethnic minority, the Sámi, combined with one of ancient China’s most classic heritages: gong fu, Chinese martial arts. The richly depicted settings kept creating endless images in my mind, and I found myself wishing I could have witnessed it all on a big screen. The merging of disparate worlds, where Mila is the given underdog who claws her

way up through cleverness and determination, paints a journey of self-discovery that feels real and genuine. An outsider trying to belong is a theme that brings—and delivers—a vision of courage and transformation.

The mix of character-driven narrative, rich world-building, and the draw on ancient traditions is expertly done. The author’s solid knowledge of Chinese customs, language, and history, combined with a creative magical touch, offers a unique and deeply thoughtful fusion of the real world and fantasy. The storytelling is fuelled by a skilful, slow-burning determination that seeps through everything from well-developed characters to the striking balance of nature, lore, magic, and brutal inner strength. Mila is a main protagonist you want to connect with. This is a story for all ages. The pacing is excellent, and five stars are well deserved for this skilfully crafted debut novel!

Where to buy the book?

The Spirit Dragon’s Keeper is available on Amazon in most countries, both in paperback and Kindle editions. If it’s not listed on your local Amazon site in Southeast Asia, try the US or UK Amazon stores instead.

For more information, visit the author’s website:
<https://www.lilliehookbooks.com/>



Thai-Danish sisters awarded for Community Empowerment

Thai-Danish sisters Anika (17) and Annetta Jagota (15) have been recognised by Rotary International for their student-led social enterprise, the Rock Bottom Project, which supports deaf communities in Thailand through skill-building and creative expression.

The award was presented 14 June 2025 at the Rotary District 3350 Governor's Salute & Recognition Awards 2025, where the project was given first-place honours in the 'Growing Local Economy' category. The recognition highlights the project's role in creating social impact by addressing employment barriers and promoting inclusion through local initiatives.



Founded after the sisters encountered a marginalised deaf community living under Bangkok's Rama 9 bridge, the Rock Bottom Project began with small-scale art therapy sessions. Over time, it evolved into a community-based platform offering training in embroidery and crafts, with support from local volunteers and schools.

Backed by Rotary Club Sukhumvit, the initiative reflects Rotary's values of service and empowerment. The project stands out for its personal, hands-on approach and its commitment to long-term support for deaf artisans.

The Rock Bottom Project was among several initiatives featured during the awards ceremony, part of a broader program encouraging grassroots solutions to local challenges. Through their efforts, Anika and Annetta have contributed to a growing movement of youth-led action that strengthens communities from the ground up.



Swedish Midsummer celebrated with joy and nostalgia in Vietnam



endless daylight,” he said, recalling one year when festivities kept him up until 7:30 the next morning.

According to SANV president Nguyen Minh Chau, the event aims to promote cultural exchange and foster alumni connections.

“Sweden has been a trusted friend of Vietnam since 1969,” Chau said. “But Swedish culture is still unfamiliar to many. Events like these help build understanding and friendship.”

Founded in 2017, SANV connects Vietnamese who have studied, researched, or lived in Sweden. In collaboration with the embassy and other partners, the group promotes educational and cultural exchange,

The spirit of Swedish summer came alive in Vietnam as alumni and friends gathered in Ho Chi Minh City in late May to celebrate Midsummer – one of Sweden’s most cherished traditions – as reported by Tuoi Tre News.

Organized by the Sweden Alumni Network Vietnam (SANV) with support from the Embassy of Sweden in Hanoi, the 2025 Midsummer Festival featured classic Swedish activities such as maypole dancing, flower garland making, and traditional treats like cinnamon buns and strawberry cake.

For 39-year-old Vo Thi My Thu-an, who studied in Umeå between 2008 and 2010, the event was a heartfelt return to memories of long summer nights in Sweden.

“It’s been 15 years since I last experienced that feeling,” she said. “I’m excited for my children to learn about the festival.”

Fellow alumna Ha Trang Van, who studied in Sweden from 2016 to 2018, also returned for the celebration.



“This re-creation felt truly nostalgic—from dancing around the maypole to wearing flower crowns,” she shared. “These simple traditions bring back the joyful spirit of a Swedish summer.”

This was the sixth time the event has been held in Vietnam—four times in Hanoi and now twice in Ho Chi Minh City. Cultural officer Christofer Fredriksson from the Swedish Embassy in Hanoi explained the significance of Midsummer in Sweden.

“It’s a day when even the most reserved Swedes let loose—dancing, singing, and enjoying the almost



sustainability, and alumni networking across Vietnam.

Past Midsummer celebrations have even inspired new interest in studying in Sweden.

“Many first-time attendees left the event curious to learn more about Swedish culture—and some even considered pursuing studies there,” Chau noted.

Chinese Delegation Visited Norway to Strengthen Bilateral Ties

A senior delegation from the Communist Party of China (CPC), led by Liu Jianchao, head of the CPC's International Department, visited Norway to

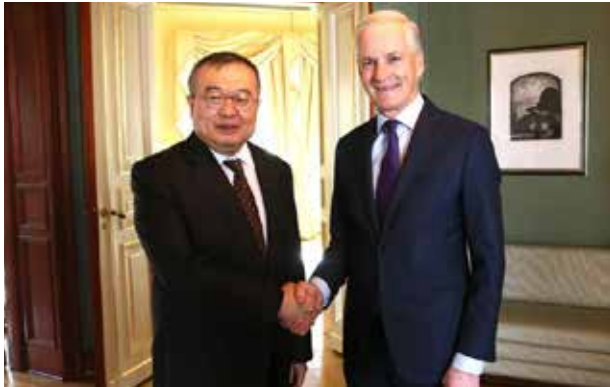
strengthen political ties and explore new areas of cooperation.

During the visit, the delegation met with Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre and Foreign Minister Espen

Barth Eide, reaffirming the importance of advancing bilateral relations. Discussions focused on economic collaboration, maritime affairs, the green transition, and people-to-people exchanges.

Both the CPC and Norway's Labour Party emphasized the value of interparty dialogue as a means to foster greater mutual understanding and trust.

Liu also took part in the China Session of the Oslo Forum, where he shared China's current domestic and foreign policy priorities and engaged with international representatives.



Liu Jianchao, head of the International Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, meets with Norwegian Prime Minister and Labour Party leader Jonas Gahr Støre in Oslo, Norway, June 12, 2025. (Xinhua/Zhang Yuliang)

Thailand and Sweden reaffirm ties, eye Strategic Partnership and FTA support

Thailand and Sweden reaffirmed their long-standing bilateral relations during a meeting between Thai Foreign Minister Maris Sangiampongsa and Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade Benjamin Dousa on Tuesday 3 June 2025 in Paris.

The ministers met on the sidelines of the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting to discuss regional developments and matters of mutual interest. Both sides expressed support for elevating relations to a Strategic Partnership and agreed to revive the Thailand–Sweden Joint Plan of Action as a framework for monitoring cooperation across key sectors.



According to a Facebook post by Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Thai side thanked Sweden for supporting Thailand's accession to the OECD and requested further support in the ongoing negotiations for a Thailand–EU Free Trade Agree-

ment. Sweden confirmed its backing and acknowledged Thailand's constructive role in Southeast and South Asia, as well as its potential as a bridge between the OECD and Asian countries.

Taiwan and Finland conclude trade talks in Helsinki

Taiwan and Finland concluded their eighth round of bilateral trade talks in Helsinki on Wednesday, 5 June 2025, committing to expand cooperation in areas including circular economy, digital health, quantum technology, renewable energy, satellites, and telecommunications.

The meeting was led by Taiwan's Deputy Minister Cynthia Kiang and Finland's Under-Secretary of State Petri Peltonen from the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment.

Kiang highlighted Taiwan's role in global supply chains and proposed deeper collaboration by combining Taiwan's expertise in information and communications technology with Finland's strengths in wireless communications and software R&D.

Peltonen echoed her remarks, emphasizing the importance of building resilient supply chains amid global uncertainties.

The two officials also took part in the 12th Taiwan-Finland Joint Business Council Meeting, where Kiang reaffirmed Taiwan's intention to strengthen international cooperation to support innovation and entrepreneurship.

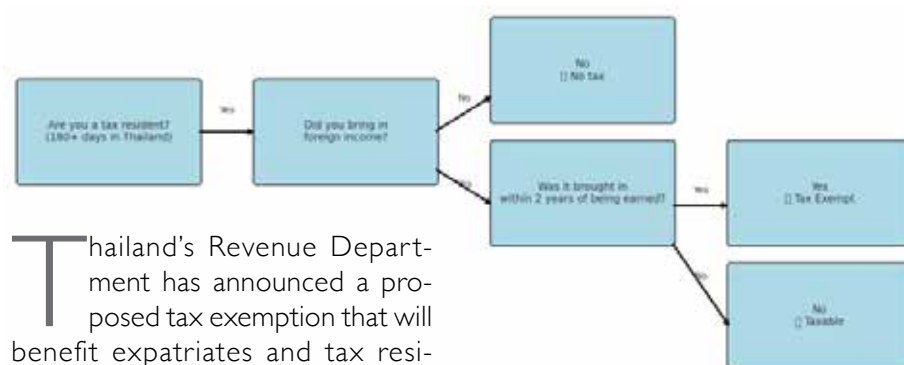
While in Finland, Kiang visited local startup IQM Quantum Computers to review advances in quantum computing, and held meetings at Nokia to discuss 5G/6G technologies, internet infrastructure, and cybersecurity solutions.

In 2024, bilateral trade between Taiwan and Finland reached US\$14 million. As of March 2025, Finland's cumulative investment in



Taiwan stood at US\$5.92 million, while Taiwan's investment in Finland totaled US\$15.86 million, according to Taiwan's Ministry of Economic Affairs.

Thailand to exempt foreign income remitted within two years



Thailand's Revenue Department has announced a proposed tax exemption that will benefit expatriates and tax residents: foreign income remitted to Thailand within two years of being earned will not be taxed.

The change is expected to take effect later this year through a royal decree, but will not apply retroactively. That means foreign income remitted in 2024 remains taxable

under current rules, which tax any income brought into Thailand by tax residents—those staying at least 180 days in a year—regardless of when it was earned.

Under the new regulation, only foreign income (such as dividends,

interest, and capital gains) brought in more than two years after being earned will be taxed. Capital transfers, such as the original amount invested abroad, will remain exempt.

The reform is part of Thailand's effort to align with OECD tax standards and attract foreign capital. According to Revenue Department Director-General Pinsai Suraswadi, Thai and foreign residents hold over ฿2 trillion in overseas assets, and even partial repatriation could boost the domestic economy.

The new rule is not in force yet. The final approval is expected by the end of 2025.

Norwegian seafood exporters showcased at THAIFEX 2025 in Bangkok



Norway made a strong appearance at this year's THAIFEX – Asia's leading food and beverage trade show – with several top seafood exporters promoting sustainable, premium-quality Norwegian seafood.

Throughout the week-long event, the Norwegian Seafood Council worked in collaboration with exporters and the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Bangkok to highlight Norway's strengths in the global seafood market.

The week began with a seafood seminar and an opening reception early in the week, followed by Norway's participation in the exhibition's official opening, where Norwegian seafood attracted interest from regional buyers and industry leaders.

Later in the week, Ambassador Astrid Emilie Helle hosted a dinner at her residence, bringing together representatives from Norwegian seafood companies to strengthen industry ties and celebrate shared values of quality and innovation.

On its Facebook page, the Embassy expressed appreciation to all partners involved in making the week a success and reaffirmed its support for promoting Norwegian seafood in Thailand and the broader region.

Denmark inspects ships in China to promote green shipping safety

A delegation from the Danish Maritime Authority recently conducted a Port State Control (PSC) visit to China, focusing on safety procedures for ships using alternative fuels such as methanol and ammonia.

During the visit, Danish inspectors carried out ship inspections and hosted seminars emphasizing the importance of crew training, safety management plans, and proper handling procedures for low-emission



fuels used in the new generation of green vessels.

According to the Embassy of Denmark in China, the PSC visit is part of Denmark's ongoing cooperation with China in maritime affairs. Embassy staff supported the Danish Maritime Authority throughout the 10-day program.

The initiative aligns with Denmark's broader efforts to advance global maritime safety and sustainability.

Nordic visitor numbers to Vietnam surge in early 2025

Vietnam recorded a significant increase in tourist arrivals from the Nordic countries in the first five months of 2025, according to new figures from the Vietnam National Authority of Tourism.

Sweden led the growth with a 15.1% rise in visitors compared to the same period in 2024, followed by Norway at 14.3% and Denmark at 10.9%. The increases came as Vietnam welcomed over 9.2 million international tourists between January and May 2025—marking a 21.3% year-on-year rise overall.

The boost in Nordic arrivals is attributed to Vietnam's expanded

air connectivity, relaxed visa policies, and active promotion campaigns in European markets. France, the UK, Germany, and Italy also saw double-digit growth in arrivals.

Vietnam's tourism authority

has announced further campaigns across Europe in June, including in Poland, the Czech Republic, and Germany, as it seeks to maintain momentum throughout the rest of the year.



CIP and ACEN Partner on Offshore Wind Project in the Philippines

Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners (CIP), through its Growth Markets Fund II, has signed an agreement with ACEN, the Ayala Group's listed energy platform, to sell a 25% stake in the planned San Miguel Bay offshore wind project in Camarines Sur.

With a potential capacity of up to 1GW, the project is set to be one

of the Philippines' first large-scale offshore wind farms. It is currently in the pre-development stage and will participate in the Department of Energy's 5th Green Energy Auction.

Located in San Miguel Bay, the site benefits from shallow waters, strong wind resources, and proximity to grid infrastructure. Its in-bay position is expected to reduce ty-

phoon risk and improve operational stability.

CIP and ACEN aim for the project to be among the first operational offshore wind developments in the Philippines. The venture supports the country's renewable energy goals and the stability of the Luzon power grid.

CIP previously secured a Wind Energy Service Contract in 2023. The project has since received Green Lane status, a Certificate of Energy Project of National Significance, and a grid connection agreement with the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines.

CIP is a Denmark-based fund manager focused on greenfield energy investments. ACEN operates around 7GW of renewable capacity across Asia Pacific and targets 100% renewable energy by 2025.



Novo Nordisk and HSRI partner to raise Thailand's clinical research standards



Novo Nordisk Thailand has signed an MoU with HSRI – and the Health Systems Research Institute – to strengthen Thailand's clinical research infrastructure and foster healthcare innovation. The agreement, witnessed by

Danish Ambassador Danny Annan on 29 May 2025, aims to enhance training, unify research standards, and improve data systems for more efficient drug development.

Dr Supakij Sirilak, Director of HSRI, highlighted the country's

strong hospital network and universal healthcare as key assets, but stressed the need for improved support systems, including personnel training and unified ethics frameworks. Novo Nordisk's General Manager, Enrico Cañal Bruland, noted the company's rising R&D investment in Thailand—THB 370 million over 2019–2023—and said the partnership aligns with the global theme of "Leading, Collaborating, Innovating."

The initiative is expected to boost Thailand's competitiveness in global clinical trials and deliver long-term benefits to the health system and economy.

Thammasat Hospital and Novo Nordisk partner to fight obesity and diabetes

Thammasat University Hospital and Novo Nordisk Pharma (Thailand) Ltd. have launched a new collaboration titled "Partnership Project for the Transition into the Fourth Decade of Thammasat University Hospital: Beat Obesity, Beat Diabetes." to address Thailand's growing burden of non-communicable diseases. The public-private partnership focuses on prevention, education, and equitable access to treatment for obesity and diabetes nationwide.

With over 40% of Thais considered overweight or obese and an estimated 6.4 million living with diabetes, the two conditions pose



serious public health and economic challenges. The collaboration aims to improve care through a holistic approach, combining Thammasat's medical expertise with Novo Nordisk's global innovation.

"As we enter our fourth decade, we remain committed to pro-

viding care that treats the whole person," said Dr. Dilok Piyayotai, Director of Thammasat University Hospital. "This partnership moves us closer to that goal."

Enrico Cañal Bruland, General Manager of Novo Nordisk Thailand, said the partnership will help develop sustainable and effective care models rooted in the realities of Thai healthcare.

A key feature is the integration of digital tools that support two-way communication, providing patients with accessible, reliable health information to better manage their conditions and take an active role in their care.

Volvo Cars expands partnership with Google AI integration

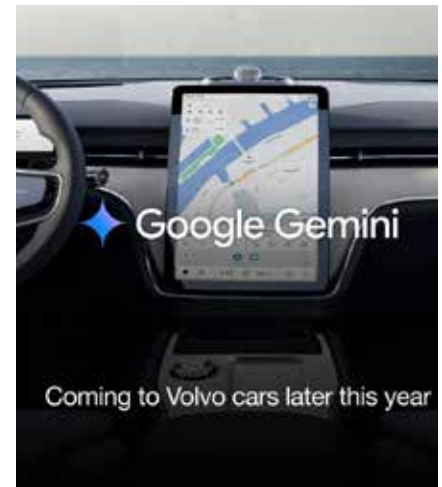
Volvo Cars has expanded its partnership with Google to integrate Gemini, Google's new conversational AI, into its vehicles. The announcement was made at Google I/O 2025, where Gemini was showcased in the all-electric Volvo EX90.

Volvo models with Google built-in will be among the first to feature Gemini, offering enhanced voice interaction for tasks like message composition, translation, and accessing vehicle information—aimed at reducing driver distraction. The AI will replace Google Assistant in Volvo's Android-powered cars later this year.

Volvo will also serve as one of Google's reference hardware platforms for Android development in cars, allowing new features to be tested on Volvo vehicles before broader rollout.

"We're excited to deepen this partnership," said Patrick Brady, Google's VP of Android for Cars. "It will accelerate innovation and enhance the driving experience."

Alwin Bakkenes, Volvo's Head of Global Software Engineering, added, "We're collaborating on cutting-edge solutions that shape the future of connected cars."



Vietnam Airlines to launch direct flights between Vietnam and Denmark



Vietnam Airlines will introduce its first-ever nonstop flights between Vietnam and Denmark on 15 December 2025, linking Ho Chi Minh City and Copenhagen with three weekly flights operated by Boeing 787-9 aircraft. The route

will operate year-round and marks a significant addition to the airline's expanding European network.

In 2024, around 74,800 passengers travelled between the two countries via connecting flights, typically through Doha, Paris, or Istanbul.

The direct route is expected to improve connectivity and support growing economic ties. Vietnam was Denmark's 50th-largest trading partner in 2023, with bilateral trade reaching DKK10 billion, according to the Danish Foreign Affairs Ministry.

Copenhagen becomes Vietnam Airlines' seventh destination in Europe, following new routes to Munich and Milan, and the recent resumption of service to Moscow. The new route also strengthens the SkyTeam alliance's presence in Northern Europe, following Scandinavian Airlines (SAS) joining the alliance. While no codeshare exists yet between Vietnam Airlines and SAS, the new service may pave the way for future cooperation.

Finland Supports Thailand-EU FTA in High-Level Talks

Thailand's Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, Russ Jalichandra, held bilateral talks with Finland's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Elina Valtonen, during an official visit to Helsinki on Tuesday 17 June 2025.

The meeting focused on enhancing cooperation between the two countries, with an emphasis on trade, investment, green innovation, and startup development. The Finnish side reiterated its support for the Thailand–EU Free Trade Agreement currently under negotiation and welcomed Thailand's upcoming participation in Slush 2025, the global startup event scheduled for November.



Thailand's presence at Slush was seen as a significant opportunity to showcase Thai startup entrepreneurs and deepen commercial collaboration between Thailand and Finland.

The two ministers also discussed regional issues within the ASEAN framework and shared views on global developments, particularly the situations in Ukraine and Myanmar. Minister Valtonen praised Thailand for its humanitarian assistance and development cooperation in Myanmar.

Sweden and the Philippines step up defense cooperation



Sweden has appointed Lieutenant Colonel Anders Nikanorsson as its new non-resident defense attaché to the Philippines, following the Philippines' recent des-

ignation of a non-resident attaché to Stockholm. Based in Bangkok, LtCol Nikanorsson will serve as a key liaison in advancing Sweden's strategic engagement in the Indo-Pacific.

"The Philippines is a natural partner for Sweden in promoting a rules-based global order and enhancing security cooperation," said LtCol Nikanorsson.

Ambassador H.E. Anna Ferry welcomed the appointment, highlighting his extensive defense experience as a boost to Sweden's capacity to engage on security issues in the region.

On 31 May 2025, Philippine Secretary of National Defense Gilberto Teodoro Jr. met with Swedish Defense Minister Dr. Pål Jonson during the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore. Minister Jonson reaffirmed Sweden's commitment to international law, joint exercises, and strategic cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.

Sweden continues to expand its defense posture globally, particularly in the Indo-Pacific.

Vietnamese community in Denmark reaffirms strong ties to homeland

The Vietnamese community in Denmark recently gathered at the Vietnamese Embassy in Copenhagen to meet newly appointed Ambassador Nguyễn Lê Thanh and reaffirm their bond with their homeland.

Ambassador Thanh praised overseas Vietnamese (OVs) for preserving Vietnamese culture and contributing to Danish society. She emphasized the embassy's commitment to supporting the community and strengthening Vietnam–Denmark relations.

She also highlighted Vietnam's development priorities, including administrative reforms, innovation, digital transformation, and international integration, as part of the country's 2045 vision.



Addressing a key concern, the ambassador assured that Vietnam is working to simplify procedures for regaining Vietnamese citizenship. She reaffirmed that the Party and State view overseas Vietnamese as an essential part of the nation and welcome their participation in national development.

Community members expressed their commitment to maintaining Vietnamese language and traditions among younger generations. They also voiced support for stronger Vietnam–Denmark ties ahead of the two countries' 55th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2026.

Danish Fish Tech Cluster to help Philippines develop sustainable fishing

A delegation from the Danish Fish Tech Cluster has returned to the Philippines to continue work on a collaborative

midwater trawl fishing project, aiming to improve the country's food security through sustainable fishing practices.

According to the Embassy of Denmark in the Philippines, the visit included meetings with the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR), where discussions focused on identifying strategic fishing zones, enhancing maritime visibility of Philippine fishing vessels, and supporting national food sufficiency goals.

The Danish side reaffirmed its commitment to the partnership and expressed support for the Philippines' broader efforts to strengthen its food security through sustainable and innovative approaches in the fisheries sector.



Anna Lin Yip steps down as Secretary General of the Danish Chamber of Commerce in China



Anna Lin Yip has concluded her tenure as Secretary General of the Danish Chamber of Commerce in China (DCCC) and is relocating with her family back to Copenhagen after 17 years abroad.

During her leadership, DCCC unified its previously independent

regional chapters into a single, coordinated organisation and launched a full rebranding. The Chamber introduced the All-China Membership model, strengthened ties with Danish and Chinese institutions, and implemented modern systems across operations.

“We rebranded, introduced the All-China Membership category to support our advocacy efforts, and quietly rebuilt the foundation: a new website, visual identity, CRM, cloud system, and standard operating procedures for almost everything we do,” Anna Lin Yip wrote in her farewell message.

“Most of all, we worked to unite three formerly independent chapters into one aligned organisation, with one voice, one direction, and one shared purpose.”

Her departure comes as the Chamber recently received a letter from Chinese President Xi Jinping and hosted Denmark’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Lars Løkke Rasmussen, celebrating 75 years of diplomatic relations between Denmark and China.

Leadership now transitions to Belinda Bai, Xingling Wei, and Rocky Liu.

Mikael Hemniti Winther named new Danish Ambassador to South Korea

Mikael Hemniti Winther, Denmark’s Consul General in Shanghai since 2018, will take up a new posting as Ambassador of Denmark to South Korea from 1 August 2025. He will also be side-accredited to North Korea.

During his six years in Shanghai, Mikael Winther has played a key role in strengthening Danish-Chinese relations, with a strong focus on trade, sustainability, and green transition. He has been an active and visible



representative of Denmark in one of the country’s most strategically important diplomatic missions in Asia.

Mikael is also well known in Thailand, where he previously served as Danish Ambassador and earlier at the Royal Danish EMabssy. His wife, Ratanawadee Hemniti Winther, continues her long-standing commitment to traffic safety through her role as Chairperson of the Asia Injury Prevention Foundation (AIP) in both Thailand and Denmark.

New Danes Worldwide representative appointed in Thailand

Maria Müller Uhrskov Pedersen has been appointed as the new Danes Worldwide representative in Thailand, taking over from Marianne, who returns to Denmark at the end of May.

Maria moved to Bangkok in February 2024 with her husband, who works in finance at Pandora. Their son, Vilhelm, was born in Thailand in April last year and is now 13 months old.

With a decade of experience

in the fashion and lifestyle industry, Maria previously worked in wholesale sales across various countries. Most recently, she was responsible for the womenswear business at HUGO BOSS in Scandinavia and the Baltics.

After finishing her maternity leave in January, she was ready to take on a new challenge and is now excited to support Danish expatriates in Thailand as the Thailand Representative for Danes Worldwide.



New Executive Director at NordCham Philippines

NordCham Philippines has appointed Axel Fries as its new Executive Director. A Swedish-Filipino with experience in

startups and venture capital across Sweden, the U.S., and the Philippines, Fries brings a fresh, entrepreneurial approach to the role.

Relocating to Manila in March 2024, Fries sees his move to NordCham as a chance to merge data-driven thinking with efforts to strengthen Nordic-Philippine business ties. In his early weeks, he has represented NordCham at key events, including the Management Association of the Philippines' General Meeting, the launch of the Ease of Doing Business Guidebook by ARTA, and the 3rd Philippines Wind Energy Forum.

Fries has also welcomed a Lithuanian delegation exploring partnerships and highlighted NordCham's ongoing engagement in sustainability and gender diversity in the maritime sector. He emphasized agility and innovation in shaping the Chamber's future programs.

Members are invited to connect with him directly at axel.fries@nordcham.com.ph or via LinkedIn.



Nordic Embassies share circular economy insights with Philippine leaders



The Nordic Embassies in the Philippines recently hosted a debriefing session for representatives from the Pasig City Government, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST Philippines) to reflect on a recent Nordic study visit focused on circular economy practices.

Supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers, the visit introduced Philippine delegates to Nordic innovations and policies that contribute to sustainable waste and resource management. Key examples included state-of-the-art systems for waste-to-energy, wastewater treatment, deposit return schemes, extended producer responsibility, and circular design.

According to the Embassy of Denmark in the Philippines, the visiting delegates identified three key factors behind the Nordics' circularity success:

- **Cross-sector collaboration** between government, private sector, and civil society that strategically combines investment, innovation, and expertise.
- **Education and culture** of sustainability, instilled from an early age through school curricula and public campaigns.
- **Incentivization** of sustainable practices, making circular habits more rewarding and accessible.

The Nordic embassies expressed hope that the exchange would help inspire scalable initiatives in the Philippines and strengthen Nordic–Philippine cooperation on environmental sustainability.

Icelandic-Danish artist Olafur Eliasson opens first major exhibition in Taiwan

Acclaimed Icelandic-Danish artist Olafur Eliasson has opened his first major solo exhibition in Taiwan at the Taipei Fine Arts Museum.

Titled *Your Curious Journey*, the exhibition runs until 21 September 2025 and showcases 17 works spanning Eliasson's three-decade career, including installations, sculptures, paintings, and photography.

The exhibition is part of a five-city tour that began in 2024, previously shown in Singapore and Auckland, and will travel to Jakarta and Manila after Taipei.



Highlights include *Beauty*, an early work featuring a rainbow created by mist and light, and *The Last*

Seven Days of Glacial Ice, a climate-focused piece made of seven bronze blocks modeled on melting ice from Iceland's Diamond Beach, paired with glass spheres representing the equivalent melted water.

Eliasson's works emphasize perception and invite visitor interaction. Known for integrating natural elements and scientific phenomena, his art encourages awareness of sensory experience.

Eliasson founded Studio Olafur Eliasson in Berlin in 1995 and is a UNDP Goodwill Ambassador for Climate Action.

Nordic embassies joined Bangkok Pride celebrations

The embassies of Norway, Denmark, Finland, and Sweden in Bangkok proudly took part in this year's Bangkok Pride celebrations, marking a significant moment for LGBTI rights in the region.

In a Facebook statement, the Norwegian Embassy emphasized the historic context, noting that Thailand became the first country in Southeast Asia to legalize same-sex marriage earlier this year.

"Pride is more than a colorful parade, it's a celebration of human rights, equality, and freedom for all, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation," the embassy stated.

While the Norwegian Embassy and the Finnish Embassy shared its participation publicly, the Danish and Swedish embassies also joined the celebration, reinforcing the shared Nordic commitment to diversity, equality, and human rights.



Myanmar Red Cross collaborates with Singapore and Norway on earthquake relief



The Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) is working with the Singapore Red Cross and the Norwegian Red Cross to deliver technical and humanitarian support to communities affected by recent earthquakes in central Myanmar.

Officials from the Singapore Red Cross visited a temporary relief

camp in Thalayswa Village, Amarapura Township, Mandalay Region, on 27 May. The visit focused on assessing the use of water filters, distribution of drinking water, and hygiene training provided to volunteers by the Amarapura Township Red Cross Society.

A delegation from the Nor-

wegian Red Cross visited the region earlier. On 22 May, Director of International Programmes and Preparedness Jorgen Haldorsen, Regional Representative for Asia Vinay Sadavarte, and Country Representative Erwin Lloyd Guillergan observed relief activities in Amarapura Township, including the distribution of supplies and clean water.

The following day, the Norwegian team visited Kyaukta Village in Sagaing Township, Sagaing Region. There, they inspected temporary relief camps, a child-friendly centre, a mobile primary healthcare clinic, and a water distribution site. Discussions were held with local teams at each location.

According to MRCS headquarters, the collaboration aims to strengthen the coordination of technical and humanitarian assistance in the ongoing earthquake response.

Royal Side Run gathers Danish community in Singapore



The Danish Seamen's Church in Singapore hosted the Royal Side Run on Sunday 25 May 2025, bringing together members of the Danish community for a day of exercise, togetherness and royal spirit.

Held in scenic surroundings, the event featured a run followed by social time and refreshments. Participants of all ages took part, with smiles and Danish flags adding to the festive atmosphere. Among those present, the Danish Ambassador, Jakob Brix Tange, even updated the church's official portrait to feature the current King Frederik X and Queen Mary.

Sweden celebrates 80 years of Pippi Longstocking in Bangkok

Sweden marked the 80th anniversary of Pippi Longstocking—the world's strongest girl—with a series of events in Bangkok highlighting children's rights, gender equality, literature, and family empowerment.

The celebrations were held from Saturday, 18 May, to Saturday, 1 June, at the Open House Bookshop, Level 6 of Central Embassy. The program included the launch of the Thai-language edition of Pippi Longstocking by local publisher Barefoot Banana, along with storytelling sessions, creative workshops, and exhibitions designed to immerse children and families in Pippi's whimsical world.

Dr. Jiraporn Arunakul, also known as Dr. Oh, was a featured speaker on the "Be More Like Pippi" panel. She shared insights on posi-



tive parenting, focusing on fostering courage, resilience, and independence in children—values embodied by the iconic character.

According to the Embassy of

Sweden in Bangkok, the event was made possible through partnerships with Barefoot Banana, Open House Bookshop by Hardcover, and Learning Fest Bangkok.



Norwegian Ambassador joins campaign against child labor

Norwegian Ambassador to the Philippines, Christian Halaas Lyster, took part in Quezon City's observance of the 2025 World Day Against Child Labor, held at the QC M.I.C.E. Center on Tuesday 11 June.

About 400 young people and their parents gathered for the event, along with representatives from local and national government, partner organizations, and diplomatic missions.

In her speech, Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte underlined the importance of joint action across sectors to eradicate child labor.

"Child labor should not be part of the future of any child in Quezon

City," she said.

She emphasized that cooperation between the local government, national authorities, communities, and NGOs is vital to address the issue.

Ambassador Lyster joined other international and local figures in expressing support for the initiative, including the Norwegian Karin Riska, Country Director of Mission Alliance, Philippine Children's Ministries Network National Director Fe Foronda, and World Vision Development Foundation National Director Dr. Herbert Quilon Carpio. Officials from the Department of Labor and Employment were also present.

The event featured a service caravan organized by the city's Public Employment Service Office (PESO), offering assistance to youth and their parents.

This year's campaign carries the theme: **"Sa Bagong Pilipinas: Mag-aaral ang Bata, Hindi Manggagawa"** (In the New Philippines: The Child Will Study, Not Work).

ISB International School Bangkok

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR CLASS OF 2025 GRADUATES ON THEIR ACCEPTANCES TO UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES AROUND THE WORLD.

AUSTRALIA

Deakin University (2)
Griffith University (2)
Monash University (4)
Queensland University of Technology
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
University of Queensland
University of Sydney

BELGIUM

Free University of Brussels

CANADA

Brock University
Carleton University
Humber College
Lakehead University
McGill University
McMaster University
Saint Mary's University
Simon Fraser University
St. Thomas University
Toronto Metropolitan University (2)
Trent University
University of Alberta
University of British Columbia (2)
University of Calgary (3)
University of Ottawa (2)
University of Toronto (5)
University of Victoria
University of Windsor
Western University (4)
York University

CZECHIA

University of New York in Prague

FRANCE

American University of Paris
EDHEC Business School
ESCP Business School
ESSEC Business School

GERMANY

Constructor University

HONG KONG

University of Hong Kong (2)

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Royal College of Surgeons
University College Cork
University of Galway (2)

ITALY

Istituto Marangoni
Nuova Accademia Di Belle Arti Milano

JAPAN

Rikkyo University
Ritsumeikan University (2)
Temple University, Japan Campus
Waseda University (3)
Yamanashi Gakuin University

NETHERLANDS

HZ University of Applied Sciences
Technical University of Eindhoven
University of Twente

QATAR

Georgetown University

SINGAPORE

Lasalle College of the Arts

SPAIN

IE University, Madrid (2)
IE University, Segovia (2)
Saint Louis University, Madrid
Universidad Europea de Madrid

SWITZERLAND

Franklin University Switzerland
Webster University, Geneva

THAILAND

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Chulabhorn International College of Medicine (2)
King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang (2)
Princess Chulabhorn College of Medicine
Thammasat University (7)

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Bristol, University of the West of England
City, University of London
Coventry University
Durham University
Edinburgh Napier University (2)
Hartpury University
Heriot-Watt University (2)
Liverpool Hope University
London South Bank University
Loughborough University
Manchester Metropolitan University (2)
Nottingham Trent University
Queen Mary University of London
Royal Holloway, University of London
UCL (University College London)
University of Bath (2)
University of Brighton
University of Bristol
University of Dundee (2)
University of Edinburgh (2)
University of Exeter (3)
University of Huddersfield
University of Kent
University of Leeds (2)
University of Manchester
University of Northampton
University of Plymouth (2)
University of Portsmouth
University of Sheffield (2)
University of Stirling
University of Surrey

University of the West of Scotland
University of Warwick

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Alfred University
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Babson College
Barnard College
Baylor University
Bentley University
Binghamton University (4)
Boise State University
Boston College
Boston University (5)
Brigham Young University, Idaho
Brown University
Bryant University
California Lutheran University (2)
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo (4)
Case Western Reserve University (2)
Chapman University
Christopher Newport University (2)
Clark University (4)
Clemson University
College of William & Mary (2)
Colorado State University (3)
Columbia College Chicago
Cornell University
Denison University
DePaul University
DePauw University
Drexel University (2)
Duke University
Elon University
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
Florida International University
Foothill-De Anza Community College
Fordham University (8)
Franklin W Olin College of Engineering
George Mason University
George Washington University (6)
Georgia College & State University
Haverford College
Hesston College (2)
High Point University (2)
Hollins University
Illinois College
Indiana University, Bloomington (5)
James Madison University
Juniata College (2)
Kent State University
Lewis University
Loyola Marymount University
Loyola University New Orleans
Lycoming College
Macalester College
Maine Maritime Academy

Maryland Institute College of Art

Massachusetts Maritime Academy
Michigan State University (3)
Missouri Southern State University
North Carolina State University at Raleigh
Northeastern University (8)
Northwest Missouri State University (3)
Ohio Northern University
Ohio State University (3)
Ohio Wesleyan University
Oklahoma State University
Oregon State University (2)
Oregon State University, Cascades
Pace University
Pennsylvania State University, University Park (11)
Pepperdine University (5)
Pratt Institute (4)
Purdue University, Northwest (2)
Purdue University (7)
Quinnipiac University (2)
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Rice University
Rochester Institute of Technology (3)
Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology
Rutgers University, New Brunswick
San Diego State University (6)
Santa Clara University (7)
Savannah College of Art and Design
School of the Art Institute of Chicago (2)
School of Visual Arts (2)
Scripps College (2)
Seattle University (2)
Southern Utah University
St Lawrence University
St Olaf College (3)
Stanford University
Stetson University
Stevens Institute of Technology
Stony Brook University (2)
SUNY College at Geneseo
Syracuse University (7)
Temple University
Texas A&M University, College Station
The College of Wooster
The New School (7)
Trinity College
Trinity University
Tufts University (2)
Union College
United States Naval Academy
University at Buffalo (2)
University of Arizona
University of California, Berkeley (2)
University of California, Davis (14)
University of California, Irvine (10)

University of California, Los Angeles (5)
University of California, Merced (2)
University of California, Riverside (5)
University of California, San Diego (18)
University of California, Santa Barbara (8)
University of California, Santa Cruz (11)
University of Colorado, Boulder (3)
University of Dayton
University of Hawaii at Manoa (3)
University of Illinois, Chicago (2)
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (10)
University of Maryland, College Park
University of Massachusetts, Amherst (6)
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
University of Michigan, Dearborn
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities (3)
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University of North Carolina, Charlotte
University of North Dakota
University of North Florida
University of North Georgia
University of Oregon (3)
University of Pittsburgh (5)
University of Rochester
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University of Southern California (7)
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University of Texas, Austin
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University of Virginia (3)
University of Washington (17)
University of Wisconsin, Madison (10)
Villanova University
Virginia Commonwealth University (2)
Virginia Polytechnic Institute (6)
Virginia State University
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Washington College (3)
Washington State University
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Western Michigan University
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