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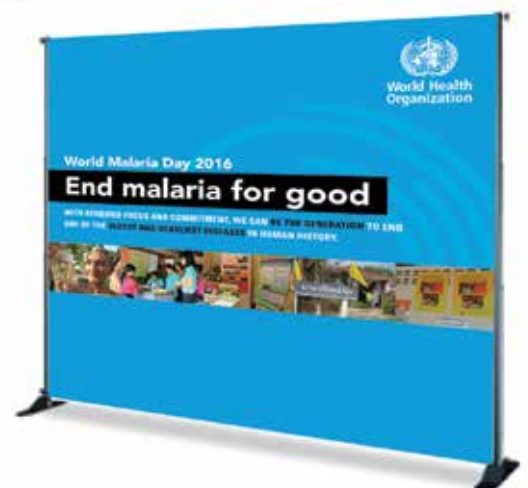
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Nordic countries: Please prepare for a war in Asia!

While Europe remains rightly focused on the war in Ukraine, another crisis is taking shape in Asia — and this one risks erupting with far less warning. Beijing has long insisted that Taiwan will be “reunited” with China, but the tone and tempo of its statements have sharpened. What is emerging now is not rhetoric, but preparation.

Unlike Vladimir Putin, who launched his invasion of Ukraine with only part of Russia’s military machine, China appears determined not to make the same mistake. If Beijing moves on Taiwan, it will move with overwhelming force: a full air- and sea-lockdown, missile strikes, cyber paralysis and a blockade designed to keep Japan, the United States and their partners far from the island. For Taiwan, the window to strengthen its defenses is closing.

That urgency was reflected this week when President Lai Ching-te unveiled a special USD 40 billion defense package — the largest in Taiwan’s history — to push military spending above 3% of GDP next year, on its way to 5% by 2030. Lai put it simply: peace depends on strength. The plan includes advanced air defense, asymmetric technologies such as sea drones, AI-enhanced systems and closer cooperation with the United States, all aimed at achieving “high combat readiness” by 2027. That year is not arbitrary; it aligns with the PLA’s own frequently cited readiness timeline.

Yet Taiwan’s politics remain divided. The opposition questions the scale and speed of the buildup, risking delays that the island may not be able to afford. Meanwhile, China has reacted with fury to comments by Japan’s new Prime Minister, who warned that an attack on Taiwan would pose a “survival-threatening situation” for Japan.

Beijing’s diplomatic protests, economic retaliation and threats to “crush” foreign interference show how sensitive—and determined—it has become.

Europe, however, is barely paying attention. The consequences of a Taiwan conflict would be immediate and severe: a shock to semiconductor supply that would cripple European industry, disruption to Asia-Pacific trade routes, and a direct test of Europe’s own principle that borders cannot be changed by force. Yet the continent remains largely absorbed by Ukraine.

The uncomfortable truth is that the world may be sleepwalking toward a second major war. Taiwan is scrambling to prepare, the United States is urging speed, Japan is sounding the alarm — and China is responding with rising hostility. If Beijing acts, the operation will be sudden, comprehensive and designed to overwhelm Taiwan before the world can react.

Ignoring the signals is no longer an option — not for Asia, and not for Europe.



Gregers A.W. Møller
Editor-in-Chief, ScandAsia

ScandAsia

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Philippines and Denmark launch seminar to revitalise shipbuilding sector



The Philippine government and the Royal Danish Embassy in Manila recently launched a two-day seminar to support the revival of the country's shipbuilding

and ship repair industry.

The event, held in mid-November at The Manila Hotel, was co-organised by the Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA), the Maritime Industry Authority and the Department of Transportation.

ARTA Secretary Ernesto V. Perez stressed that the focus is now shifting from analysis to implementation, noting that international collaboration is essential for progress.

Denmark, a major maritime nation known for ship design and marine technology, sees strong potential for cooperation with the Philippines. Danish companies have expressed interest in technical part-

nerships and joint design projects.

The Philippines remains the world's fifth-largest shipbuilding nation, with more than 130 registered shipyards and around 11,000 skilled workers. DOTr Assistant Secretary for Maritime Villamor Ventura Plan highlighted the importance of the workforce, emphasising the skills and dedication of local shipbuilders and seafarers.

The government aims to attract more foreign investment through recent reforms and initiatives aligned with the Maritime Industry Development Program (MIDP-2028), the national roadmap for strengthening shipbuilding, repair and recycling.

Norwegian foreign minister meets Chinese vice premier in Beijing

Chinese Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang and Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide in Beijing in mid-November, where both sides pledged to deepen political dialogue and expand cooperation in trade, green transition, and innovation.

According to the Global Times, Ding said China and Norway share a long-standing friendship and called for deeper political trust, stronger communication, and enhanced cooperation in the economy, investment, and climate response.

Eide praised China's progress in green development and reaffirmed Norway's adherence to the one-China policy. He noted that Norway, as a European leader in the green transition, maintains an open market for Chinese electric vehicles under a zero-tariff policy. He added

that Norwegian companies remain optimistic about opportunities in China.

In a separate meeting, Wang Yi said China views Norway as an important and stable partner in Europe

and hopes to advance pragmatic, mutually beneficial cooperation. Both sides agreed to align development strategies and strengthen collaboration in maritime affairs, renewable energy, and trade.



Danish ambassador explores new cooperation opportunities in An Giang



The Chairman of the An Giang Provincial People's Committee, Ho Van Mung, met with Denmark's Ambassador to Vietnam, Nicolai Prytz, in mid-November to discuss expanding cooperation between the province and Danish partners.

Ho Van Mung outlined An Giang's recent socio-economic development. The newly merged province now covers nearly 10,000 square kilometres and has close to five million residents, making it one of Vietnam's largest. In the first half of the year, An Giang recorded economic growth of more than 8 per cent.

He highlighted tourism, agriculture, fisheries and processing industries as key sectors, noting opportunities for Danish collaboration in green transition, renewable energy, circular economy solutions and advanced processing.

The chairman also expressed interest in cooperation in tourism

promotion, the maritime economy, shipbuilding and transport. He reaffirmed the province's commitment to combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and called for continued Danish support as Vietnam works to have the EU yellow card lifted.

Ambassador Prytz said An Giang could play a strategic role in regional connectivity and pointed to the Spectre An Giang Garment Technology Factory — inaugurated in 2022 — as a successful example of Danish investment. He added that the province's support remains important for Danish companies looking to expand projects such as Spectre An Giang.

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What type of coach do you have?

By Ana Bolakoso, Bangkok Patana School, Year 11

We all know players come in every shape and size from the powerhouse to the prankster, from the cool head to the chaos merchant. But coaches? They're just as brilliantly diverse. Whether they've got a stopwatch, a stash of snacks, or a whiteboard covered in arrows, every coach brings something different to the pitch, court, pool or gym. So, here's a fun guide to help you figure out what kind of coach you're playing for.



1. The Clipboard Commander

This coach lives for structure. Sessions start precisely on time, and every minute has a purpose. Warm-ups are choreographed, drills are colour-coded and cones are positioned with military precision. They may have a spreadsheet tracking who remembered their kit. But when match day rolls around, you'll be the best-prepared team in town.

2. The Human Highlighter

You can hear them before you see them. They're bursting with encouragement and enthusiasm, shouting things like, "Nice idea!" and "That was nearly brilliant!" even when you've just fallen over the ball. These coaches believe in you more than you believe in yourself, and leave you feeling like you've just won Olympic gold, even after a draw.

3. The Silent Assassin

This coach says very little, but every word counts. They don't shout or panic. They just give a small nod and

suddenly everyone lifts their game. Their calm is infectious, and somehow their silence makes you want to work twice as hard. If you've ever trained in total quiet but come away more focused than ever, you've met one.

4. The Old School Drill Sergeant

They've seen it all. Socks up, shirts tucked, no excuses. They believe in discipline, respect and the value of hard work. Mistimed passes might earn you a few laps, but good effort gets genuine praise. If they start a sentence with "Back in my day," you know a great story is coming, followed by push-ups.

5. The Tech Guru

You thought you were just doing sprints? Wrong. This coach has your heart rate, speed, recovery time and acceleration all tracked on a dashboard. They bring a GoPro to training and call team meetings to analyse slow-motion footage. They love a gadget and probably own a drone named after their pet.



6. The Parent Coach

Not your actual parent, but it's easy to forget. They care just as much about how you're doing at school and whether you've eaten lunch as they do about your form. They check in if you seem quiet, they cheer the loudest, and they're the most likely to offer you a banana and a pep talk.

7. The Tactical Genius

This coach dreams in formations. They carry a whiteboard and a marker at all times. They refer to spaces as Zones and treat corner kicks like chess. When they get really excited, they draw diagrams on napkins. You may not always understand the plan, but you know they've got one.

Every coach has their own style, their own quirks and their own way of making a team better. Some fire you up with passion. Some fine-tune your skills. Some see your potential before you do. The best ones? They leave a lasting impact far beyond the scoreboard.

Arla intensifies focus on innovation and local nutrition in China



Danish dairy cooperative Arla Foods is strengthening its focus on innovation, premium nutrition, and localized product development as it marks its continued participation at the China International Import Expo (CIIE) in Shanghai, according to China Daily.

Arla's infant nutrition segment continues to perform well, led by its Arla Baby & Me brand and its cross-border Human Milk Oligosaccharides (HMO) portfolio. Its organic A2 milk line is also growing faster than the wider market. The company's Cocio chocolate milk

remains a consumer favourite, and a new coconut flavour made its global debut at CIIE, reflecting Arla's strategy to tailor innovation to evolving Chinese preferences.

Arla has also expanded its cheese range with upgraded flavours and refreshed packaging designed to balance indulgence and nutrition, in response to rising demand for high-quality dairy products.

"China represents a strategically important market within Arla's global growth agenda, particularly in early life nutrition," says Frede Juulsen, head of early life nutrition at Arla Foods. He adds that Arla will continue using CIIE as a platform to showcase innovation, expand distribution, and invest in research and development in China.

Indonesia and Finland strengthen climate cooperation at COP30

Indonesia and Finland have agreed to deepen cooperation on sustainable lake management, forest rehabilitation and climate finance during a bilateral meeting held on Tuesday 18 November, 2025 on the sidelines of COP30 in Belém, Brazil.

Indonesia's Minister of Environment, Hanif Faisol Nurofiq, met with Finland's Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Sari Multala, to discuss how Finnish environmental expertise can support Indonesia's climate resilience. Minister Nurofiq highlighted Finland's strong track record in lake and water-resource management, noting that Indonesia aims to apply similar approaches to strengthen its own lake systems.

The ministers also discussed forest rehabilitation, an area where



Finland has developed advanced restoration methods. Both sides reaffirmed their long-standing partnership and their intention to expand cooperation.

Indonesia additionally invited Finland to collaborate on carbon governance and carbon-market de-

velopment, emphasising the need for international support to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement. The Indonesian delegation also raised potential cooperation on methane-capture initiatives in the biofuel sector, particularly linked to palm oil production.

Indonesia and Norway advance Article 6.2 carbon trade framework at COP30

Indonesia's state-owned electricity firm PLN and the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) have signed a Mutual Expression of Interest to advance a bilateral carbon trading initiative with Norway under Article 6.2 of the Paris Agreement.

The agreement targets 12 million tonnes of CO₂ reductions from renewable energy projects and was signed during the Seller Meet Buyer session at the Indonesia Pavilion at COP30 in Belém. The cooperation builds on an MoU signed earlier this year during London Climate Week.

Indonesia's Minister of Environment Hanif Faisol Nurofiq said the new framework strengthens both countries' commitment to advancing



technology-based carbon trading and demonstrates Indonesia's capability to deliver beyond nature-based schemes.

The Mitigation Outcome Purchase Agreement is expected to be finalised by late 2025 and will support new renewable energy carbon trading opportunities, including floating solar projects.

Norway's Minister of Climate

and Environment Andreas Bjelland Eriksen said the initiative broadens long-standing cooperation. He noted that Norway's Global Emission Reduction Initiative manages US\$800 million in funding, with plans to expand, and expects the programme to cut 12 million tonnes of CO₂e over the next decade while drawing significant private investment.

Swedish engineering company highlights China as key market



At the 8th China International Import Expo (CIIE) in Shanghai, Swedish engineering and service company Alfa Laval reaffirmed its strong commitment to China, describing it as the company's most important market.

CEO Tom Erixon and CFO

Fredrik Ekstrom told China Central Television (CCTV) that China remains essential to Alfa Laval's business growth and its role in the global energy transition. Erixon noted that visiting the expo helps the leadership team gain shared insight into developments in a market that con-

tinues to shape the company's long-term direction.

Ekstrom said CIIE provides opportunities to meet government officials, customers and partners, and offers a clear view of China's relevance to global industry. He added that China accounts for around 20 percent of Alfa Laval's turnover and is viewed as a key future market, particularly as the country advances its energy transition.

Erixon also highlighted how China's Five-Year Plans have guided Alfa Laval's strategic planning, while Ekstrom said China's rapid investment in green development strengthens the company's confidence in its continued presence in the country.

Denmark conducts consular outreach visit in Cambodia

The Danish Embassy in Bangkok recently completed a consular outreach visit to Cambodia, led by Ambassador Danny Annan together with the

Consular and Visa team.

During the visit, the delegation met with Danish citizens, provided consular services and chaired a consular meeting at the EU Delegation

in Phnom Penh as part of Denmark's ongoing presidency of the EU in Cambodia. The team also held discussions with the Cambodian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where both sides exchanged views on bilateral relations and regional developments.

The Embassy additionally met with the Danish organisation Danmission to learn more about its projects and focus areas in the country.

According to the Embassy, the visit offered an important opportunity to maintain close contact with Danish nationals in Cambodia and strengthen cooperation with local partners.



Singapore and Norway's DNV extend cooperation on remote-control vessel testing

Singapore's Maritime and Port Authority (MPA) has extended its memorandum of understanding with the Norwegian classification society DNV, paving the way for new trials of remote-controlled vessel technologies.

The renewed MoU continues the partners' collaboration on maritime digitalisation, innovation, sustainability and talent development. It includes joint research, test beds for remote vessel operations, and efforts to promote near-zero-emission fuels, decarbonisation technologies and smart-ship systems.

"Renewal of this MoU underscores the shared commitment of MPA and DNV to co-create solutions that will shape the future of shipping," says MPA chief executive



Ang Wee Keong.

The extension builds on earlier partnerships between MPA and DNV established in 2019 and 2022.

"By strengthening our collaboration with the MPA through this MoU, we aim to accelerate the development and adoption of green and digital maritime solutions, while

nurturing the next generation of maritime professionals," says DNV Maritime chief executive Knut Ørbeck-Nilssen.

Singapore has in recent years backed several remote and autonomous vessel projects and is positioning itself as a hub for testing low-emission marine fuels.

Laos hostel linked to fatal methanol incident prepares to reopen

The Nana Backpackers Hostel in Vang Vieng, Laos — where six travellers died from suspected methanol poisoning in November 2024, including two Danish women — is preparing to reopen under a new name, according to a report by ABC News.

The victims included Anne-Sofie Orkild Coyman and Freja Vennerwald Sørensen from Denmark. More than ten other travellers were hospitalised after consuming contaminated alcohol, prompting Lao authorities to shut down the hostel and detain several staff members. All were later released, and no charges

have been filed.

The Lao government pledged to investigate and bring those responsible to justice, but families of the victims say there has been little transparency or progress. Australian officials, who are supporting several of the bereaved families, have also urged Laos to ensure accountability.

ABC News reports that renovation work has been carried out at the hostel and that plans for reopening are underway despite the ongoing concerns. Local police and provincial authorities have not commented publicly on the status of the investigation.



Methanol-related poisoning incidents continue to pose risks across parts of Southeast Asia, where unregulated alcohol remains a challenge for local authorities.

Sweden supports Vietnam's green and digital transformation

Sweden has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting Vietnam's green and digital transition through innovation, sustainable infrastructure, and technology cooperation.

During a recent visit to Hanoi, State Secretary Sara Modig of

Sweden's Ministry of Climate and Enterprise met with Vietnamese officials to discuss cooperation on the North–South high-speed railway and greener seaports, according to VOV World.

"Swedish companies such as ABB, Atlas Copco, Ericsson, Volvo,

SKF, and many others are already contributing to Vietnam's industrial modernization and port infrastructure. And I think, by building these partnerships together, we can help Vietnam develop a low-carbon, digitally connected, globally competitive transport system that can support the green transition," says Sara Modig.

She added that Swedish companies view Vietnam as a long-term partner in sustainability and innovation. "Your skilled workforce and expanding industrial base make it a dynamic environment for green and high-tech investments," she said.

Sweden and Vietnam have worked closely in recent years on green innovation and sustainable development, with Sweden ready to share its expertise and support Vietnam's climate goals.





Giving hope to stateless kids in Sangkhla Buri

The Danish Women’s Network Christmas Bazaar in Bangkok raises vital funds for Children of the Forest School in Sangkhla Buri. The money raised provides education, healthcare, and protection for stateless Karen and Mon children. This story visits the school and shows how support from the Christmas Bazaar translates into real opportunities and hope for stateless kids.

By Alexander Vittrup



It's 8 a.m., and the morning sun warms the hillside by Lake Vajiralongkorn in Thailand's Sangkhla Buri district. The chirps from myna birds in the treetops blend with the patter of hundreds of small sandals hurrying over dirt roads. A collection of squared bamboo huts stands on the otherwise jungle-covered hillside — these are the classrooms of Children of the Forest School. A school bus arrives and unloads a new batch of excited passengers. A young teacher, Poraetoo, or, as the kids call her, “Teacher Jhaa,” rings a big bell, and the kids scurry into lines. The principal starts reading the morning announcements, but the youngest kids, the kindergartners, don't pay her much attention. Multiple teachers calmly try to keep them in line, but the kindergartners are impatient. Today is special. Instead of rice porridge, today's breakfast is noodles with vegetables — their favourite — and it's waiting in the lunch building. But first, they stand

for the national anthem, as is customary in all Thai schools. Yet these kids are unlike most Thai students — these kids are stateless.

Sangkhla Buri district is home to three distinct peoples: Thai, Karen, and Mon. Each group has its own language and culture. Among these three, only the Thai population are Thai citizens, with access to government-funded healthcare and education. Because their families lack access to government healthcare, most Karen and Mon kids are born at home in their villages, with no Thai official present to sign their birth certificates, leaving the newborns effectively stateless. New policies have recently been implemented to improve the status of newborns in the district, and even though they have helped, statelessness for kids remains a serious issue.



“

Their student number is the first time they are registered in the Thai education system. That can, eventually lead to ID cards, which gives them protection against exploitation and provides them with rights.

”

It's an issue Daniel Hopson, founder of Children of the Forest (COF), wants to help solve. COF School enrolls Karen and Mon kids in Sangkhla Buri. The school is free to attend, as many of the families would otherwise be unable to pay school fees. COF started two decades ago when Daniel Hopson first visited Sangkhla Buri.

"I was walking around the rubber plantation and saw a lot of kids at work. I asked why they weren't at school. They don't have ID cards, I learned. I struggled to make sense of the answer. Not having the right paperwork meant no school, no fun, no opportunity, no future," he says.

That's when Daniel decided he wanted to help out. Together with his friend Mark Curragh, he opened COF in 2005 as a school. COF has since grown and now encompasses a free medical clinic run by Mark's wife, Talaitow and a women's shelter for single mothers. In 2010, Daniel brought his parents, Tom and Lynda, from the UK to help out. Tom helps out at the school and Lynda helps in the women's shelter.

"Children of the Forest aims to address the injustice and inequality faced by stateless children and mothers. Through various programs, we ensure access to the basic services citizens take for granted, such as protection, education, and healthcare."

The school accepts new students all year-round. The kids are taught math, Thai, English, and Art. Thai is the language of the national school system, but for most stateless kids, it is their second or third language. This language barrier further excludes them from attending regular schools. At COF, the kids are taught Thai so that when they graduate, they can join official Thai elementary and high schools.

COF School has been granted official status by Thai education authorities. An important component, since it means students are officially registered and receive a student number.

"Their student number is the first time they are registered in the Thai education system. That can, eventually lead to ID cards, which gives them protection against exploitation and provides them with rights. Even further down the line, it can lead to full citizenship — but it all starts with the student number." Tom Hopson explains.

"A is for a-a-apple, B is for bird b-b-bird." The song continues as the kids sing along in Ms. Saranee's classroom. She is one of two English teachers at COF, and like most teachers, she cares deeply for her students. Saranee also relates to her students on a personal level. 20 years ago, she was sitting in their exact place. She was among the first generation of kids to study at COF back in 2005. Since then, she has gone on to graduate high school, study English language and teacher training at university in Kanchanaburi. After graduating, she returned to COF, where she now works as an English language teacher.

"I chose to come back because I wanted to help. I know what these kids are going through — I've been there. I want to give back. I want to be a role model for them," she says.





Today's lesson is on word families: sun, fun, run, bun. Saranee likes to incorporate games into her classes to motivate the kids. She has spread papers with words across a table. She gathers the kids in a circle and starts playing music. A pen is passed around, and when the music stops, the holder must find a specific word. The kids laugh — some cling to the pen, excited to play, while others pass it quickly. The music stops, and the boy holding the pen is asked to find the word "sun." He jumps onto the table, giggling with determination, as his classmates shout encouragement and Saranee smiles.

The game is briefly interrupted by the noise of construction outside the classroom. It's loud and distracting,

but Saranee welcomes it. The school is building a new toilet block — something she has wanted for some time and that they've now secured funding for.

COF relies entirely on donations and sponsors for its funding. One of the long-time supporters of the organization is the Danish Women's Network, Bangkok (DWN). DWN has worked with and supported COF for 15 years.

"We wish to support good organizations and causes, especially those focused on women and children," says Kit Daniel, chairwoman of DWN.



“

I chose to come back because I wanted to help. I know what these kids are going through — I’ve been there. I want to give back. I want to be a role model for them.

”

“Over the years, we’ve gotten to know the people at Children of the Forest, and we’ve built mutual trust. I and others from DWN have personally visited them in Sangkhla Buri, and we know they do phenomenal work. We are very happy to support them and see the children there flourish.”

One of the ways DWN supports COF is by raising money through their annual Christmas Bazaar, held in collaboration with the Danish Church in Bangkok. The two groups share the costs and proceeds equally. All of DWN’s portion goes directly to COF. The Christmas Bazaar 2024 was the most successful yet, attracting around 1,000 visitors and raising a record amount of money. The money raised helped COF buy new classroom supplies, sports equipment, and support outreach programs for local families and at-risk kids.

“We are really grateful for the support from the Christmas Bazaar and the Danish Women’s Network,” says Tom Hopson. “As we take in more and more students, events like these are crucial for our funding.”

The Christmas Bazaar isn’t the only way DWN supports COF. DWN has also run a sponsorship program where families or individuals cover education-related costs for students.





Teacher Poraetoo, “Teacher Jhaa,” was one of those students, receiving financial support for her education from DWN members.

Poraetoo is Karen and grew up in Sangkhla Buri. Like her friend and fellow English teacher Saranee, she was among the first students when she started at COF in 2005 at the age of eight. With DWN’s help, she went on to study at a university in Kanchanaburi and earned a degree in English Language Business Studies. She has since returned to Sangkhla Buri, where she now teaches English at COF School.

“At first, I started work here because I wanted to help out a little,” Poraetoo explains. “But I quickly fell in love with teaching and the kids. I feel like I can truly make a difference in their lives — just like this school made in mine.”

The biggest change in Poraetoo’s life came two years ago when, after years of applications and paperwork, she finally received Thai citizenship, granting her full access to healthcare and voting rights.

“I am really happy,” she says, proudly showing her blue ID card. She explains that her university degree was the tipping point that helped her obtain citizenship — a degree made possible in large part thanks to DWN support.

“I feel so grateful for the people who helped me come this far and reach a point where I can now give back!”

A football is kicked across the blue sports field, and several boys run after it. A little girl slides down to her friends, while others play tag nearby. On the hill above, Saranee and Tom stand watching the kids play. There are many of them now. COF School started with three teachers and 2 classrooms back in 2005. Today, it employs 18 teachers plus another 8 staff, for admin duties, school bus drivers, cooks, maintenance staff and 380 students, and the number keeps growing. Some stateless kids in Sangkhla Buri still don’t go to school, and although COF does all it can, there is always more to do. Despite the challenges, the people at COF remain determined to keep going.

“Every day, when I come to the school, the kids give me a big smile and want to high-five me,” Tom says. “It just fills me with joy”.



A bag of onions, a garden, and a dream

This is a story about how a Danish woman turned a time of crisis into a thriving school where Balinese children learn to grow and cook their own food — a Danish-Balinese collaboration that continues to flourish four years later.

By Maria Xaver Dover

When COVID-19 brought Bali to a standstill and left thousands of families struggling to put food on the table, Thea Melgaard, a Danish woman from Dokkedal, felt she couldn't just watch from afar. She had travelled to Bali many times before and had close friends on the island. When she saw how hard they were hit by the collapse of tourism, she decided to act.

She sold her house in Denmark, packed her belongings, and flew to Bali — not to escape the pandemic, but to help.

"I'd never really understood what it meant to feel called to do something," says Thea Melgaard. "But this time, I knew I had to go."

In the early months, she organised small-scale food distributions for elderly people and families in need. The donations were simple — rice, eggs, cooking oil, vegetables — but always received with deep gratitude. One day, while delivering food, she was told that onions couldn't be grown on Bali — only in China — because, as the woman said, "we're not farmers."

"That remark stayed with me," says Thea Melgaard. "It struck me how much knowledge had been lost. Many families could easily grow their own vegetables, but they didn't believe they could."

That moment planted the seed of what would later become Rimba Garden School — a place where learning starts with the soil and ends with a shared meal.

From crisis to community garden

Together with her Balinese friend Nyoman Godem, Thea Melgaard bought a few simple gardening tools, found a small plot of land, and began planting vegetables. At first, the adults in the village were sceptical. Some laughed, saying nothing would grow. But as the first shoots appeared, curiosity replaced doubt — and neighbours began stopping by to chat, drink coffee, and lend a hand.



“

We wanted to create a place where children not only gain knowledge but also dignity. They learn how to plant, harvest, and cook using what they've grown themselves.

”

"The first time someone came to help, I thought: maybe this is how it begins," says Thea Melgaard.

From the beginning, the idea was to create a place where children could learn how to grow and prepare food — and at the same time practise their English. Thea Melgaard hoped that by teaching the younger generation, the knowledge and pride of growing food would naturally return to the community.



“

Something good grew from it. Now we have something meaningful — for us, for the children, for the whole village.

”

With support from locals and friends in Denmark, the initiative took shape. When LEGO donated DKK 25,000, Thea Melgaard and Nyoman Godem decided to move the garden to his family's land, where there was more space and sunlight for the crops — and room to build. That became the start of Rimba Garden School. Later, with additional support from the Merkur Foundation and a second donation from LEGO, the school added a combined modern and traditional kitchen, a toilet and shower building, a small playground, and a greenhouse for the children's "upside-down" plants.

"We wanted to create a place where children not only gain knowledge but also dignity," says Thea Melgaard. "They learn how to plant, harvest, and cook using what they've grown themselves."

Sundays in the garden classroom

Four years later, Rimba Garden School has become a weekend learning space for around 45 children from nearby villages. They attend regular school from Monday to Saturday, but every other Sunday they gather at Rimba Garden School.

When I visit on a sunny Sunday in September, 28 children sit on the floor of the open classroom. The youngest is seven, the oldest fourteen. On the board, their teacher has written simple English questions: What is your name? Where are you from? What is your favourite food?

Smiles fill the room; curiosity fills the air.

Their teacher, Ali Nugara, 45, teaches Bahasa and English at a local public school. On Sundays, he spends his time at Rimba Garden School.

"I enjoy sharing knowledge," he says. "When guests from Denmark visit, the children are so proud to speak a little English. It gives them confidence and better opportunities, and I love seeing that."

After class, the children head out to the garden to harvest vegetables and fill small bags to bring home to their families.

"They're so proud," says Thea Melgaard. "They feel like they're contributing — and that earns them respect at home."





Among the students is Deknita, aged 14, one of the oldest at Rimba Garden School.

"I really like coming here," she says with a shy smile. "I enjoy learning English, being with my friends, meeting the kind guests who come to visit — and I like taking vegetables home for my family."

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A Danish-Balinese partnership

Last year, Thea Melgaard returned to Denmark because she missed her daughter and wanted to be closer to

family. Back home, she now runs a small shop in Lønstrup together with her daughter, selling Balinese crafts and handmade items — and part of the profits go directly to support Rimba Garden School.

But although she is back in Denmark, Thea Melgaard remains in close contact with Rimba Garden School, speaking with the team several times a week and continuing to raise funds from home.

"I had peace leaving because I knew the project was in good hands," she says. "And part of my heart will always stay there."

Today, Nyoman Godem and his wife manage the daily operations of Rimba Garden School. During the pandemic, Nyoman Godem lost his job as a taxi driver when tourists stopped coming, but through Rimba Garden School, a new purpose took root.

"It was a very hard time," he says. "But something good grew from it. Now we have something meaningful — for us, for the children, for the whole village."

Nyoman Godem and his wife have already hosted several cooking classes for visitors — and they hope more people will join in the future. The classes bring both joy and a modest income to the family.

"I hope more people will come and cook with us," says Nyoman Godem. "We've received so much support — now we want to share what we've learned."

A school that keeps growing

Thea Melgaard's vision continues to grow — both in Bali and back home in Denmark. A support group, Friends of Rimba Garden School, has been established to help develop the project further. The four-person board is now working to formalise lesson plans and create more structured learning modules.

"The dream is to expand Rimba Garden School into a place for broader education and experimentation," says Thea Melgaard.

And while the school continues to evolve, so do the connections it inspires. During my visit, a group of Danish women arrives at Rimba Garden School. They sit down among the children, handing out candy and greeting them with warm smiles. The children respond eagerly: "Nice to meet you!"

"You really feel welcome," says Signe Madsen, one of the visitors. "The children are so open, and it's moving to see how Rimba Garden School brings people together."

For the children, Rimba Garden School is more than a classroom — it's a place where they feel safe and proud.

"They call Thea their grandmother," says Nyoman Godem. "When she hasn't visited for a while, they always ask when she'll come back."

Thea Melgaard hopes to spend a few months each year in Bali in the future.

"I miss the smells, the sounds, the people," she says. "But most of all, I miss the children. They remind me why it all started — with a bag of onions and the belief that even small things can grow into something big."



Karin leads a Swedish choir far from home

For 51-year-old Karin Widell, music has always been part of life's rhythm. Growing up in Stockholm, she sang in church choirs, school choirs, and at home, where melodies were woven into everyday moments.

By Maria Xaver Dover

“We grew up singing and playing the piano and guitar — around the dinner table, at Christmas, everywhere,” she says.

With a jazz-playing and singing father and a sister who shared the same choir, music quickly became a natural way for her to connect with others.

That didn't change when she moved abroad. Ten years ago, Karin arrived in Singapore with her husband and their two children, then six and twelve years old. Raising children in a new country became her main focus — challenging at times, but a privilege she remains grateful for. But she also knew she needed something that was hers: a hobby, a community, a way to feel rooted.

Music was the obvious place to start looking.

A lifelong love for singing

As a young adult, Karin studied at Sweden's Music Academy, but career opportunities were limited. She eventually moved into IT and later ran her own businesses. No matter the path, she always kept one evening a week for singing.

“I needed that one rehearsal,” she says. “It kept the music alive.”

When the family settled in Singapore, she immediately looked for a choir. She had heard about a Swedish group and joined almost at once.

“I walked in and thought — yes, this is it,” she recalls. “Nordic songs, warm people, that familiar feeling of beautiful Christmas music.”

Karin loves the Swedish traditions of the Lucia celebration, which she celebrated for many years while growing up in Sweden.

Leading a Swedish choir abroad

Today, Karin has been the conductor of the Swedish choir in Singapore for five years. Before her, there have been several other conductors. The choir started in 1988.

It is open to anyone who likes singing, can sing, and has some kind of connection to Sweden. Most members are adults from Sweden, Norway, or Finland, but others have joined as well, including several teenagers and older children. There are currently around 30 singers, about ten of them young participants. Her own children have also been part of the choir. Her youngest daughter is part of the choir this year as well.

"It's not about perfect harmony," Karin says. "It's about creating something together — that makes a very special feeling."

Rehearsals, recruiting new members, choosing songs for different events, and finding musicians all take time. But she never sees it as a burden.

"People often tell me after rehearsals how much they needed these hours," she explains. "You feel it the moment the voices blend — that sense of belonging."

More than Lucia

The choir is perhaps best known for its yearly Lucia procession — one of Singapore's largest Swedish community events, organised by SWEA, the global association for Swedish women living abroad. The tradition is deeply ingrained in Nordic culture. For many Swedes, it starts in kindergarten, where the first Lucia procession often takes place.

"It's a tradition we all grow up with," Karin says. "Bringing it to Singapore feels very special."

Every 13 December, on Lucia Day, between 150 and 250 people gather to watch the choir perform. Even during the pandemic, they were allowed to continue — though with masks and distance. One year, the procession took place at Gardens by the Bay.

"That was unforgettable," she says.

But the choir's work doesn't end with Lucia. They perform at midsummer celebrations, spring concerts, May 1st celebrations, and other Swedish events throughout the year, including Christmas bazaars. They have prepared ABBA medleys — always a success — and once performed with a well-known Swedish singer visiting Singapore.

The choir mainly sings in Swedish and English, reflecting both their Swedish roots and their international setting.

Giving something back

"We want to spread the light, the traditions, and the music," Karin says — a sentence that captures why the choir and singing mean so much to her.

For her, leading the choir is a way to contribute to the Swedish and Nordic community in Singapore. She has long been active in volunteer work, writing for SWEA's magazine, supporting SwedCham, and participating in charity initiatives.

“

It's not about perfect harmony. It's about creating something together — that makes a very special feeling.

”



"In Sweden, people grow up being part of different groups — sports, culture, associations," she explains. "You bring that with you when you move abroad."

The choir is built on that spirit.

"It creates connections that go beyond the music," Karin says. "Especially when you're far from home."

Home is still Sweden

Singapore has given Karin and her family a decade of new experiences, friendships, and opportunities. But Sweden is still home. They return every summer and every Christmas, spending time in Stockholm and at their summer house in Dalarna.

"The future is in Sweden or somewhere in Europe," she says. "But living abroad has been a privilege we wouldn't want to be without."

She continues, also this year, to lead the choir that brings people together — with candles, harmonies, and Swedish traditions carried into the tropics.

Because for Karin, music is more than a passion. It is a way to connect, to create community and, especially in December, to bring a little Swedish light into the warm Singapore night.



Swedish hotelier Alexander Parry thrives in Thailand - as resort owner and tech entrepreneur

Text and photos: Joakim Persson

The story about hotelier-turned tech startup entrepreneur Alexander Parry (Alex) and Let's Hyde Resort takes us on a journey that spans several continents, including what is known as the land of opportunities: the USA.

The way this Swede educated himself and learned the hospitality trade in North America – later ending up in Thailand for a continued career – is the stuff of dreams. And after being in various hotel management and operations for 20+ years, Alex has eventually become a hotel co-owner – a new adventure which has also meant having to survive the Covid-19 closure before eventually experiencing brighter days. Thanks to a bit of luck, combined with a great sense for location in taking over a Pattaya-based resort, the business is now thriving.

As is often the case, Alex is one of those who have worked for international chains. And when the right opportunity presented itself to establish and run his own resort, it also meant an opportunity to obtain more freedom while also pursuing other business interests.

His hospitality career was by then – in 2017 – already significant, and that actually began with ten years in the United States. Thanks to his father having dual citizenship, including the U.S., Alex had the opportunity as a young Swede to move across the Atlantic. And what was evidently also possible back then was to get a hotel job without having any hospitality education – and undergo on-the-job training to gradually climb the ranks. At least this is what Alex managed to do. And what a hotel career start it was – working in Beverly Hills and for no other employer than the prestigious Four Seasons brand!

“Having worked as assistant store manager at a large Swedish department store, I left Sweden for the U.S., and when I was driving around in Beverly Hills, I spotted the Regent Beverly Wilshire – the hotel from the *Pretty Woman* movie! Entering the hotel to have a look impressed me, so on the spot I decided to look for a job there. And based on my previous customer service expe-

rience they hired me for a front desk job. And that is how my hotel journey started as a 24-year-old!” Alex begins.

“At that time the U.S. (especially L.A.) was so impressive because they had all the iconic brands in terms of the dining industry, fashion etc. Also, at the time, Beverly Hills was the *crème de la crème* of luxury. And for a young man it was certainly jaw-dropping,” he remembers.

“It's a beautiful landmark hotel, which had lots of famous guests at the time; in 1996. Later I also worked for Four Seasons Beverly Hills, and I was also part of the Four Seasons Las Vegas opening, which was another good experience.”

“I started at the front desk, and I got to learn about that, and continued in the same way with on-the-job training while working. And every time I swapped position, I changed for an upward opportunity, so by the time I came to New York I became a reservations manager.”

“I worked for the New York Palace, a luxury hotel [now officially called the Lotte New York Palace Hotel], with 900 rooms located in Midtown Manhattan. And there I was an assistant manager, which was kind of a higher role than front desk manager, and became night manager. And it was hard work, being super busy all the time, and with constant phone calls from guest rooms expecting top-notch service. And with things not very digital back then, my work was basically about managing the front office department and dealing with bellmen, housekeeping and managing guest complaints. It was very lively,” Alex recalls from this first five-star hotel in NYC's history.

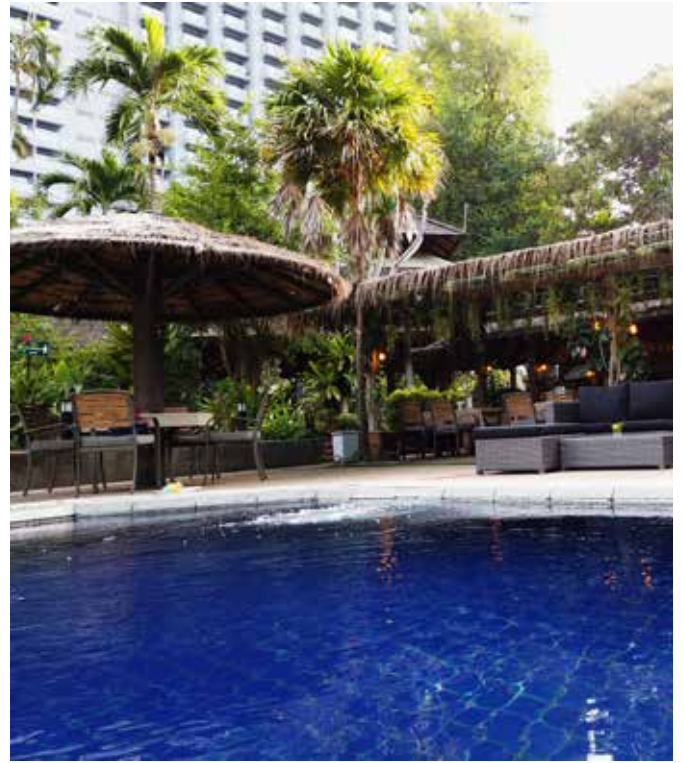
“And at that time, I realised that I was doing a good job. And from there, my boss moved on to Millennium Copthorne in New York – asking me to come along. Then I became hotel manager for the Premier Hotel, which is basically a separate wing of the Millennium. And with that position, my career within hotels in the Western world ends.”



“

I had always wanted to be involved in a resort – as an owner – and a particular lead really seemed like the ultimate chance to do so.

”



Instead, Asia was calling. Alex had been to Thailand on vacation and discovered something else – a different and overall appealing lifestyle.

“I had been here on holiday, and through conversations I heard more about all the advantages. Especially, a lower cost of living, high quality of life etc. seemed appealing to me.”

“And I learned that working in the hotel industry in Asia meant getting great experience. And Thailand is of course famous for its hospitality. And with my experiences from in particular the U.S. and five-star hotels, I thought that maybe there could be an interest in someone with my profile.”

One General Manager advised Alex that it would be easier to get a job on site. “So, I decided to come here. And I got myself an interview with Amari at the time – and my first job at Amari Don Muang Airport. There I became number two.”

He then continued working for Amari for a few years, including a stint in Pattaya. Later he got his first General Manager position for Le Fenix Hotel, Sukhumvit Soi 11.

Following that, Alex became Hotel Manager for the 423-room Novotel Siam Square, and GM for two more Novotel postings followed, before he became Operations Manager for BMH Asia.

Another juncture, however, occurred: an opportunity to take over a resort had materialised, and this indeed led to a big decision for Alex.

“I had always wanted to be involved in a resort – as an owner – and a particular lead really seemed like the ultimate chance to do so.”

Alex and some of his Thai friends had already been talking about finding a hotel. “And my friends who are in industries related to hospitality knew my track record by now in running hotels. They too saw the interesting investment opportunity – to take over this particular, and unique type of, 86-room resort in northern Pattaya,” the Swede elaborates.

“With some refurbishment at a fairly low cost we could get it operational again. And the hotel’s attractiveness was that it offered this tropical oasis and nature like no other resort in the area. I had also worked in the vicinity before, and knew that there was certain demand where we could position the hotel at a nice, competitive level.”

“We’re not a budget hotel, but also not a four-star as such, nor are we luxury; but sort of in between somewhere,” adds Alex. “As a resort, we fit into an interesting space in terms of quality.”

Following the renovations they named it ‘Let’s Hyde’: “It’s a play on words and having something catchy. It refers to ‘Let’s hide’, but with a different spelling, like in Hyde Park. And that alone in fact makes it more memorable and visually appealing. And it’s actually also a hideaway from a nowadays busy city – and in a nice, tropical and relaxing setting,” Alex elaborates.

And Alex and his co-investors – aside from having to survive the devastating Covid-19 lockdown – have hit the jackpot in terms of the location. And this is something that started happening more recently in a positive way: the rapid and qualitative development of the surrounding area called Na Kluea!

First of all, there were already several high-quality



hotels in North Pattaya, and many quality restaurants and delis lining the main street outside the side street that houses Let's Hyde. And then came the new shopping and entertainment centre Terminal 21 with Grand Center Point Pattaya, followed by Grand Center Point Space Pattaya as their second hotel – actually placed next to the lush resort – which really set off a ripple effect of additional development.

“Naklua was always popular in certain markets, especially among Germans. And now some additional top-end hotels, a new lifestyle centre, more high-quality restaurant options, as well as residential projects are opening up in the area. It's probably the most favourable destination within Pattaya for many travellers.”

Near the resort, the beach area north of Beach Road is also attractive, offering seaside bars and dining – both high- and low-end in terms of options.

“The future for Na Kluea is definitely looking to up-scale quite a bit. So the outlook seems pretty bright. It's kind of a mixture with the best of both worlds.”

“Also, we have a mixture of guests from within the Asia region, including locals, and visitors from Central Europe and Germany, which I find very interesting and healthy.”

So, at Alex's hideaway guests can escape from the busy city that is just on its doorstep: “The hotel has this tropical oasis and nature like no other.”

And that uniqueness is further enhanced by the fact that the resort's huge trees constitute a habitat for the very fascinating and nocturnal Thai fruit bat – which is in itself a fascinating and unexpected encounter with nature, not least given the location.

Situated in lush nature, Let's Hyde thus has everything for a true jungle feeling, thinks Alex: “It's like if you're on an island, but in fact you're just five minutes away from the city centre. So that's an oasis island feeling, and it's really what Thailand is all about. And we are not pretentious; you don't need to come here dressed up in beach fashion. You can look good, but you'll totally blend in regardless of outfit.”

As another quite unique feature, the resort also houses the Caravan restaurant, with Central Asian food, including Uzbek, Ukrainian as well as Russian cuisine.

The resort also caters nicely to today's travellers who often need to get things done and communicate via their digital devices. And at this resort this can be done poolside – where each daybed is equipped with its own fan, power plug and USB port.

Alex is often on site at the resort – while he also spends time developing various marketing solutions for hospitality.

“I left my corporate hotel career as such to dedicate more time to the hotel venture and turn it profitable. And what this has also allowed me to do was to focus on my own development of various products and services. I realised that I don't need to be at the resort all the time, so it's a great opportunity to also do other projects, such as taking my other business interests further.”

Guests to Let's Hyde therefore come across multiple new services relating to the guest experience, as the resort also functions as a test bed for Alex's interesting and promising work, including LetsOrderIt for simple menus, guest requests and small orders.

“So, at Let's Hyde we are mixing the latest in hospitality-driven tech with charm and nature.”



Agneta's
World

Agneta de Bekassy



The New Era of Preventive Medicine: Unlock the Future of Longevity!

Members of the Thai-Swedish Chamber of Commerce recently attended a seminar co-hosted with Phyathai Hospital 2 at Sanam Pao, focusing on “The New Era of Preventive Medicine”.

In a world where health trends come and go, one truth remains: understanding your body, listening to it and taking proactive steps to maintain balance is the key to living a healthier, more vibrant, longer life.

Preventive and functional medicine is revolutionizing how we approach wellness and focus on early detection, personalized care and a sustainable lifestyle.

This morning we met the experts Dr. Kobkullaya Chuengprasertsri, Head Director of Premiere Life Center and Dr. Poonyanuch Chongjaroenjai, Specialist, Premiere Life Center.

Together, they shared insights into how functional lab testing and proactive health strategies can transform personal health management.

From a blood sugar test, a test of your cholesterol level, to our hormone balance, the experts explained how understanding our bodies give us the tools to choices that lead to a healthier, longer life.

Beyond Appearance: Longevity in Focus

Having spent almost 20 years in Bangkok, I have noticed the city's fascination with wellness and beauty. There are clinics lining the streets, promising us rejuvenation, youthfulness, and quick fixes.

These treatments can be very enjoyable, but the seminar reminded us that true health isn't about skin-deep – it's about vitality, resilience and balance.



Preventive medicine shifts the focus from appearance to function, knowing your body, understanding its needs, and making the right choices that support a long-term health.

Nutrition, good sleep, movement, emotional well-being and last, but not least, a social connection contributes to a well-lived life.

Feeling strong, energetic, and comfortable in your body is more than chasing trends, balance and knowledge are the real beauty secrets, a tip from the experts.

Lifestyle lesson for Bangkok Residents

Environmental factors like heat and pollution can impact health, particularly for adults over 50. Research from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health suggests adjusting daily walks of 6,000-8,000 steps to 4,000-6,000 steps during extreme heat and staying properly hydrated.

These adjustments make exercise safe, sustainable and effective in supporting cardiovascular health.

The doctors also highlighted how simple lifestyle changes-like mindful eating, regular activity and social connections-can dramatically influence long-term wellness.

Social ties are important, supporting both our mental and physical health.

Six Pillars Health

Dr. Poonyanuch Chongjaroenjai presented six key pillars, each one essential to prevent care:

1. Nutrition-Eat a balanced, varied diet tailored to your individual needs.
2. Physical Activity-Move regularly to maintain strength, endurance and flexibility.

“

True wellness comes from knowledge, proactive care, and nurturing every part of your life – body, mind, and social connections alike.

”

3. Sleep-Prioritize restorative rest to recharge both body and mind.
4. Emotional Well-Being-Manage stress and cultivate a positive mindset.
5. Toxin management-Minimize harmful exposures and support your body's natural detoxification.
6. Social Connection-Build meaningful relationships for mental and physical wellness.

We were also introduced to non-invasive tests that provide early insight into our health, from the standard blood panels to specialized screenings.

During the seminar break, we enjoyed a buffet of healthy snacks accompanied by peach iced tea and fresh guava juice.

When leaving the seminar, we were presented with a gift bag with offers for screenings and preventive tests, including breast screening with digital mammogram and ultrasound at a Thai-Swedish Chamber of Commerce member rate of 4,900 THB.

With 20-30 participants in attendance, the seminar created a warm, interactive atmosphere. The organizers assured us attendees that similar events will be held regularly.

A Takeaway for All

Mrs. Anna Olsson Moore, Executive Director of the Thai-Swedish Chamber of Commerce, closed the seminar with a heartfelt thanks to the doctors and the staff.

A Final Thought:

True wellness comes from knowledge, proactive care, and nurturing every part of your life – body, mind, and social connections alike.

Bangkok and Nordic embassies sign environmental sustainability pledge

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) has signed the Pledge on Environmental Performance and Sustainability together with 15 embassies and UN-ESCAP to strengthen cooperation on urban environmental initiatives.

The signing took place on Tues-

day 18 November 2025 at the Buddhadasa Indapanno Archives, where Bangkok Governor Chadchart Sittipunt joined ambassadors and representatives from the participating missions, including the embassies of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. After the ceremony, sig-

natories planted Monkey Flower Trees at Wachirabenchathat Park to mark the launch of the Eco-Capitals Forum 2025.

Governor Chadchart said the BMA is developing “15-minute parks” to expand access to green spaces and has planted more than two million trees to help reduce dust levels. He also highlighted the BKK Waste Pay project, which aims to improve waste collection and encourage reuse and recycling.

The Eco-Capitals pledge outlines eight areas of cooperation: solid waste management, transportation, green urban environment and climate adaptation, energy conservation, air, water, food and the green economy. The framework aligns with Bangkok’s environmental policies and the Sustainable Development Goals.



Cambodia welcomes Norway-backed forest fund

Cambodia has urged world leaders at the COP30 summit in Belém to simplify access to global climate finance, saying developing nations cannot respond to intensifying climate impacts without funding that is accessible, predictable and aligned with long-term goals, according to Cambodianess.

Environment Minister Eang Sophalleth told delegates that existing financing channels remain too slow and complex, and stressed the need for direct access to funds and mechanisms that encourage private and innovative investment.

Cambodia highlighted forest



protection as a central priority and said it welcomes the Tropical Forests Forever Facility, a results-based financing mechanism supporting tropical forest conservation. The ini-

tiative, introduced at COP28 and formally launched in early November at COP30, aims to reward countries for maintaining and restoring forest cover. Cambodia is among 53 endorsing nations.

Norway pledged USD 3 billion over the next decade, with additional commitments from Brazil, Indonesia and several European countries.

Sophalleth also noted that Cambodia’s updated climate plan, NDC 3.0 — submitted in August 2025 — charts a pathway to reduce emissions by up to 55 percent by 2035. Nature-based solutions remain central to this ambition.

Sweden introduces zero-injury mining technology in the Philippines

Sweden is partnering with the Philippine mining sector to introduce new safety technologies aimed at reducing accidents and improving operational standards.

Swedish Ambassador to the Philippines Anna Ferry said the initiative brings solutions used in Sweden into local mining operations. "In Sweden, we have 13 mining companies and a strict zero-tolerance policy for accidents," she said, noting that companies work closely with equipment providers and researchers to develop safer, science-based technologies.

The initiative is being high-



lighted at the 71st Philippine Mine Safety and Environment Association (PMSEA) conference in Baguio City, where a Swedish delegation, together with Business Sweden, is

promoting systems designed to support safer underground mining.

As part of the effort, Sweden has partnered with Apex Mining for a pilot project introducing Swedish-developed technologies. The collaboration will begin with installing underground internet connectivity to support digital monitoring systems. Apex representatives said the move will improve real-time data access, reduce equipment downtime and strengthen both safety and productivity.

The companies stressed that safety remains a core investment area across the mining industry.

Carlsberg in talks to sell minority stake in Asia to Sapporo

Danish brewer Carlsberg A/S is reportedly considering selling a minority stake in its Asian operations, with Japan's Sapporo Holdings Ltd emerging as a potential buyer, according to Bloomberg and AK&M.

Sources told Bloomberg that discussions focus on the ownership ratio and other terms, and the deal may not proceed if an agreement is not reached. Both Carlsberg and Sapporo declined to comment.

The possible transaction aligns with Sapporo's strategy to strengthen its core beer business. The Japanese group is also progressing with the sale of its real-estate arm, Sapporo Real Estate Co., expected to be completed by early December 2025.

Sapporo Breweries Ltd partnered with Carlsberg in 2023 to produce and sell Sapporo beer in

Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaysia. A capital alliance would expand this cooperation and allow Sapporo to leverage Carlsberg's distribution network across Asia.

Headquartered in Copen-

hagen, Carlsberg employs around 41,000 people and is the sixth-largest brewer globally by revenue. Its flagship brand is Carlsberg beer, and the company is majority-owned by the Carlsberg Foundation.



EU move against Huawei lifts Nordic telecoms Nokia and Ericsson

The European Commission is studying ways to require EU member states to phase out Huawei and ZTE from their telecom networks. A 2020 recommendation to avoid high-risk suppliers could soon become binding law, with potential penalties for countries that do not comply. The EU is also considering limits on Chinese equipment in fixed networks and may deny Global Gateway funding to projects using Huawei technology. Several European countries al-



ready treat Huawei differently. The UK and Sweden have banned the company, while Spain and Greece still allow Chinese suppliers. Germa-

ny and Finland are weighing stricter rules, and China has criticized the "high-risk" label as unfair.

These discussions come after China restricted Nordic companies Ericsson and Nokia, limiting their access to the Chinese market.

The prospect of an EU clamp-down has boosted Nordic competitors. Nokia's shares rose by more than 5%, while Ericsson gained nearly 4%, as investors expect European operators to shift toward non-Chinese vendors.

Nokia partners with Surge to expand affordable 5G internet across Indonesia

Finnish technology company Nokia has signed a multi-year partnership with Indonesian digital solutions provider Surge to roll out a nationwide 5G Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) network aimed at improving affordable broadband access across the country.

The project will support Indonesia's digital inclusion goals and its "Affordable Broadband" initiative, with deployment beginning in December 2025. The network will cover provinces including Java, Papua, and Maluku, targeting areas where fiber connectivity remains limited.

Under the agreement, Nokia will supply its AirScale Radio Access Network portfolio, its latest generation of AirScale Baseband and Remote Radio Head units, and a customized RAN and CPE solution designed specifically for FWA. Surge will also use Nokia's MantaRay NM

intelligent network management system to monitor and optimize performance.

"This deal with Nokia gives us a platform to build a unique and best-in-class 5G network ready for the digital world that will bridge the digital divide and bring affordable connectivity to even more people," says

Shannedy Ong, Director at Surge Indonesia.

Mark Atkinson, Head of Radio Access Networks at Nokia, says the partnership will "deliver premium connectivity experiences and accelerate the digitalization of society in Indonesia."



Norway reviews cybersecurity after hidden remote-access feature found in Chinese buses

Norway is reviewing cybersecurity procedures after public transport operator Ruter discovered that electric buses supplied by Chinese manufacturer Yutong contained hidden SIM cards that could enable remote access.

Ruter said internal testing at a secure facility revealed Romanian SIM cards inside the buses, theoretically allowing external parties to interfere with vehicle systems through software updates. While there is no evidence of misuse, the discovery shifted concerns “from suspicion to concrete knowledge,” the operator said.



The SIM cards have since been removed, and Ruter is tightening procurement rules, internal firewall systems, and cloud-security requirements to ensure full local control of operations.

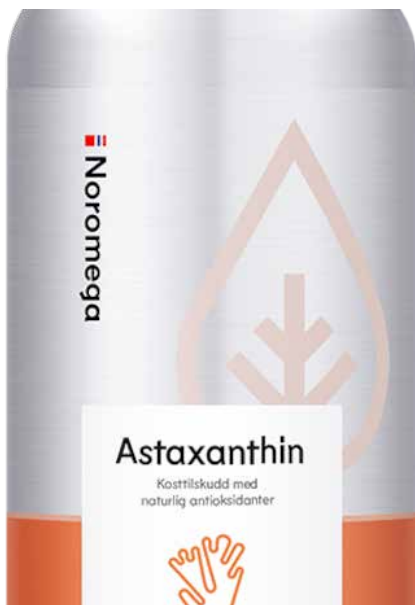
Transport Minister Jon-Ivar Nygård told national broadcaster

NRK that the government is assessing supplier risks from countries outside Norway’s security alliances, stressing the importance of protecting critical infrastructure.

Around 1,300 electric buses operate in Norway, including about 850 from Yutong. Ruter said the risk of interference remains low, but the case highlights growing cybersecurity challenges linked to foreign technology suppliers.

“It’s unlikely these buses would ever be misused,” Ruter CEO Bernt Reitan Jenssen said, “but we must take the risk seriously.”

Norwegian supplement brand Noromega eyes Thai market after China success



Norwegian health supplement company Noromega is expanding into Thailand, seeking to replicate the success it has achieved in China through e-commerce and livestreaming.

The brand entered the Chinese market in 2018 via cross-border e-commerce and reached sales of around USD 100 million last year. Its growth has been driven by strong performance in livestreaming and social commerce, alongside offline retail partnerships.

“Certainly the culture and spending habits are a little different, but China and Thailand have a number of market similarities. So, I

think we can replicate some of our successes in Thailand,” says Derek Liu, CEO of Noromega.

The company believes Thailand shares key similarities with China in terms of digital consumer behaviour and online shopping platforms such as Lazada and Shopee. It is now seeking local distributors to bring its products to Thai consumers, who it says are already well-informed about dietary supplements.

Noromega’s expansion reflects a broader trend of Nordic health and wellness brands leveraging Asia’s fast-growing online retail and influencer-driven markets.

Malaysia launches Visit Malaysia 2026 campaign in Finland

Malaysia has launched its Visit Malaysia Year 2026 (VM2026) campaign in Helsinki, aiming to strengthen tourism ties with Finland and increase Nordic visitor numbers ahead of the tourism year.

The event, hosted by the Embassy of Malaysia in Finland, introduced the VM2026 theme and

highlighted Malaysia's focus on sustainable tourism, cultural exchange and nature-based travel experiences. Finland has been identified as a key market within the Nordic region.

According to the embassy, Finnish travellers' interest in outdoor activities, cultural immersion and eco-friendly destinations aligns

well with Malaysia's tourism strategy, which promotes national parks, island destinations and community-based initiatives.

The campaign also unveiled two new mascots inspired by Malaysia's sun bears, reflecting the country's emphasis on biodiversity and environmental conservation.

The embassy encouraged Finnish travel companies and tourism stakeholders to expand cooperation with Malaysian partners in the lead-up to VM2026. The availability of direct flights between Helsinki and Malaysian cities was highlighted as a competitive advantage.

Malaysia plans to continue promoting VM2026 across Finland throughout next year, including roadshows and cultural events to build awareness and strengthen people-to-people ties.



Norway's Katapult Ocean backs US cultivated-seafood start-up in Singapore

Norwegian ocean impact fund manager Katapult Ocean has invested in Atlantic Fish Co., a North Carolina start-up developing cell-cultivated seafood. This method grows muscle tissue directly from fish cells, replicating restaurant-grade fillets while reducing pressure on wild stocks.

The investment is part of a USD 1.2 million seed round to support the development of Atlantic Fish Co.'s first cultivated whitefish products. Other investors include Alwyn Capital, DMV Capital, and the Georgetown Angel Investment Network, bringing total funding to USD 2.3 million when combined



with a US National Science Foundation grant.

Atlantic Fish Co. aims to address overfishing, noting 90 percent of global fish stocks are fully exploited or overfished. Initial products target high-value sea bass, with fund-

ing supporting texture, flavour, and nutritional development, as well as US Food and Drug Administration preparations and pilot collaborations with chefs.

Katapult Ocean investment manager Sam Selig said Atlantic Fish's progress over the past two years represents "breakthrough technology in cultivated protein," aligning with the fund's mission to support sustainable blue-food innovation. The investment coincides with Katapult Ocean's expansion in Asia, including a new Singapore office and the launch of the Asia Ocean Fund.

Pandora opens Asia headquarters in Singapore to drive regional growth

Danish jewellery brand Pandora has established a new regional headquarters in Singapore to accelerate expansion across Asia. The office will coordinate operations for markets including Japan, South Korea, India, and Southeast Asia.

The headquarters is located at Asia Square Tower 1 in Marina Bay, with approximately 8,600 square feet of office space. Pandora says the move positions the company closer



to key growth markets in the region.

The company plans to recruit around 50 roles across branding, marketing, market development, and operations as the Singapore office becomes fully operational.

Pandora describes Asia as an under-represented region for the brand and says the Singapore base will strengthen support for both owned-and-operated and distributor markets across the region.

Royal Danish Embassy contributes Danish-themed displays to Gardens by the Bay Christmas Train Show



Gardens by the Bay in Singapore has announced its year-end festive programme, featuring several large-scale Christmas events and exhibitions, according to AsiaOne. The Royal Danish Embassy has collaborated with Gardens by the Bay to present Denmark-themed elements at the Flower Dome, including a five-metre LEGO Christmas tree, a

wintery Nyhavn harbour miniature, and a classic black-and-red Danish-style locomotive.

The Christmas Train Show runs from 23 November to 4 January 2026, featuring around 20 model trains travelling along 145 metres of track in the centre of the Flower Dome. The route includes American landmarks such as the Golden Gate Bridge, Grand Central Terminal, and

the Statue of Liberty. In celebration of SG60, the display also features a specially commissioned G-scale SMRT train passing miniatures of Singapore landmarks, including the Dragon Playground, Supertrees, and heritage shophouses.

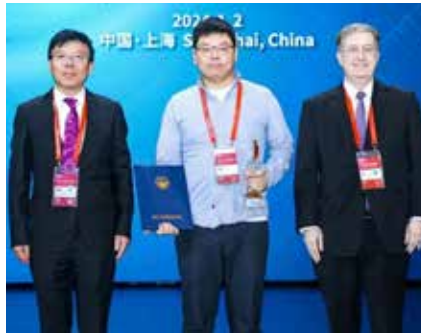
The Flower Dome exhibition will showcase approximately 7,000 festive plants across more than 70 varieties, including holly, mistletoe, cyclamens, multiple types of poinsettias, and Christmas trees up to four metres tall. Four luminaries, standing 7.5 metres high, will illuminate the landscape at night.

In addition, Christmas Wonderland returns for its 12th edition at Supertree Grove from 29 November 2025 to 1 January 2026, with light installations, carnival rides, festive displays, and a flying Santa Claus. Gardens by the Bay will also host *My Little Pony: Petals of Friendship* at Floral Fantasy from 11 December 2025 to 12 April 2026.

Finnish-backed math-genius Wu Meng returns to China

Chinese mathematician Wu Meng has returned to China after several years in Finland. He is now a full-time professor of fundamental mathematics at Hunan University. Before moving, he worked at the University of Oulu, one of Finland's largest universities.

While based in Oulu, Wu solved a major part of Furstenberg's conjecture from the 1960s. His work studied how numbers behave in different bases, such as binary and ter-



nary. The proof was published in *Annals of Mathematics* and earned him the 2023 International Congress of

Chinese Mathematicians Best Paper Award. He also received a *Frontiers of Science Award* in 2025.

Wu's research on Furstenberg's conjecture in Finland was supported by a grant from the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters. Earlier in his career he studied in France and held postdoctoral positions in Israel and Sweden. He will now continue his work on ergodic theory and number expansions from his new base in Hunan.

Fritz Hansen reopens Jakarta showroom with Indonesian design collaborations

Danish design brand Fritz Hansen has relaunched its Fritz Hansen Place in Jakarta, introducing an expanded concept that blends Scandinavian craftsmanship with Indonesian cultural elements.

The newly renovated venue now functions as an immersive design space rather than a traditional showroom. It includes a café, a curated Soundroom and several collaborative installations created with Indonesian designers and artisans.

Among the highlights is the limited-edition SUMBA Lounge collection on the second floor, combining the SUMBA Ro and Fri lounge chairs with colours and textiles inspired by traditional woven fabrics from Sumba. The relaunch also features *Tenun – Weaving the Thread of Indonesia*, an installation developed with designer Yuni Jie and Floorstudio, translating Indonesian weaving

heritage into modern wall art and carpets.

Pieces such as *White Stillness*, *Aurora Dream* and *Weave of Timor* reinterpret regional textile traditions in a contemporary form. The venue also showcases basket-based totem installations made in partnership with Du Anyam.

On the top floor, visitors can

view selected pieces from Fritz Hansen's Poul Kjærholm collection. The Soundroom, equipped with a Dynaudio audio system, offers separate zones for vinyl, CDs and private listening.

The Fritz Hansen Café completes the space with Scandinavian-inspired hospitality and a menu of coffee and pastries.



Nordic Walk & Run brings hundreds to Benjakitti Park

Around 500 people took part in the third annual Nordic Walk & Run on 15 November in Benjakitti Park, organised by the embassies of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden in collaboration with the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration.

The event aimed to promote a healthy and sustainable Nordic lifestyle and showcased Nordic companies contributing to green solutions and wellbeing. It was held as a fully plastic-free event, reflecting the Nordic countries' climate ambitions.

"We Nordics love nature and are always surrounded by it," says Finnish Ambassador Kristiina Kuvaja, who emphasised the importance of encouraging people to move and



take care of their health.

Danish Ambassador Danny Annan highlighted the link between wellbeing and urban planning, noting that "It's important to build cities that encourage people to walk, run,

and enjoy the outdoors."

The event was supported by sponsors including AstraZeneca, Ecco, Finnair, KONE, LINAK, Novo Nordisk, Pandora, SAAB, Tetra Pak, Valmet and Yara.

Norwegian reality hit 'Ville fristelser' returns to Malaysia for new season



NRK's reality concept Ville fristelser will return to Langkawi, Malaysia, for a new season in early 2026, according to production company Monster.

The first season, which followed ten Norwegians trekking through the Langkawi rainforest while resisting temptations that reduced a

NOK 2.5 million prize pot, became a major success for the Norwegian public broadcaster. Average viewership reached 625,000 per episode, with peak episodes drawing nearly 800,000 viewers.

"We have received just over 2,600 applications in a little over three weeks," says Marius Hofstad

from Monster. "We even had nearly 600 applications during the final weekend. We had to bring in extra resources to get through everything."

The application deadline is 23 November, and all submissions will be reviewed before casting concludes.

NRK has confirmed that Nate Kahungu (28) will return as host. Filming will once again take place in Malaysia, although details about any changes to the format have not yet been disclosed.

The production team says they are looking for "strong personalities who can stand in difficult choices" and encourages applicants from across Norway, especially younger participants and those from rural areas.

Swedish jazz pianist Håkan Rydin concluded Hanoi series with Vietnamese collaborators

Swedish jazz pianist Håkan Rydin finished out his Hanoi shows from October 31 to November 2, appearing at V-Art (Ciputra Club) and Long Waist Jazz Club with Vietnamese artists. The programs featured original works and jazz standards arranged for collaborations between Vietnamese and Swedish musicians.

Rydin, a professor of Jazz Piano at Malmö Academy of Music and founding member of Nexus, has performed internationally for over four decades. He has worked with Thad Jones, Pepper Adams, Etta Cameron and David Liebman, and



his discography includes *Beautiful Friendship* and *Tender Silhouette*.

For more than 20 years, Rydin has supported jazz education in

Vietnam through training and collaboration with the Jazz Faculty at the Vietnam National Conservatory of Music. In Hanoi, he performed with the Báo Long Trio Band and in lineups including saxophonist Hoàng An, double bassist Vinh Nguyễn and percussionist Đỗ Mai Sơn.

The series opened on October 31 with a 6:30–7:30 pm concert at V-Art, Ciputra Club, Bắc Từ Liêm District, and continued on November 1 and 2 at Long Waist Jazz Club, No. 5 Nguyễn Quang Bích Street, Hanoi.

Danish theatre company Teater Katapult to perform in Hong Kong

Danish theatre company Teater Katapult will make its Hong Kong debut in December with the solo production *The Insider*, presented as part of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department's "European Theatres

in Resonance" programme.

Inspired by the real "Cum-Ex" dividend tax fraud case, the play follows a young lawyer drawn into a large financial scheme. Performed by Christoffer Hvidberg Rønje and directed by Johan Sarauw, it combines

live acting, visuals and a binaural soundscape to portray his personal journey inside the scandal.

The Insider has been staged in several European countries and Korea and received a Scotsman Fringe First Award at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 2023.

Founded in Aarhus in 1995, Teater Katapult focuses on developing and presenting contemporary drama by Danish and international artists.

Performances are scheduled at the Studio Theatre of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre at 8pm on Friday 19 and Saturday 20 December, and at 3pm on Saturday 20 and Sunday 21 December. The programme will be performed in English with Chinese and English surtitles.



Thailand tightens scrutiny of repeated short-term entries



Thai immigration authorities have introduced stricter checks on travellers who repeatedly enter and leave the country on short stays, as part of a nationwide effort to curb abuse of visa exemptions.

According to the Immigration Bureau, the increased scrutiny aims to prevent foreigners from using back-to-back entries as a substitute for long-term visas. Officials say the practice has been linked to illicit activities, including online scams and unlicensed business operations. The measures follow directives from Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul and the national police chief.

The current visa exemption programme allows nationals from 93 countries to enter Thailand for up to 60 days without a visa, with the

option to extend for an additional 30 days at immigration offices. Thai authorities have previously indicated that a return to a 30-day exemption is under consideration, but no change has been officially implemented.

Under the new enforcement approach, immigration officers will examine travel patterns more closely at airports and border checkpoints. Travellers who show signs of repeated visa-exempt entries without a clear reason may be denied entry and advised to apply for the appropriate visa type, such as business, education, retirement or marriage. Immigration offices across the country have also been instructed to review applications for stay extensions more thoroughly.

Since the beginning of the year,

around 2,900 travellers have been refused entry for misusing visa-exempt privileges. The Immigration Bureau said the intention is not to deter tourism, but to ensure that visitors comply with the purpose of the visa exemption scheme. "Screening will remain efficient, taking no longer than 45 seconds per person," said bureau spokesman Pol Maj Cheongron Rimpadee.

Authorities have warned that travellers relying on repeated short stays should apply for the correct visa before arrival rather than depending on continuous exemptions.

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