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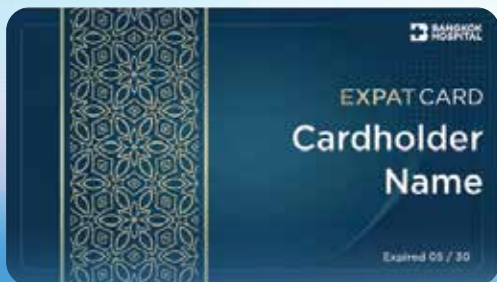


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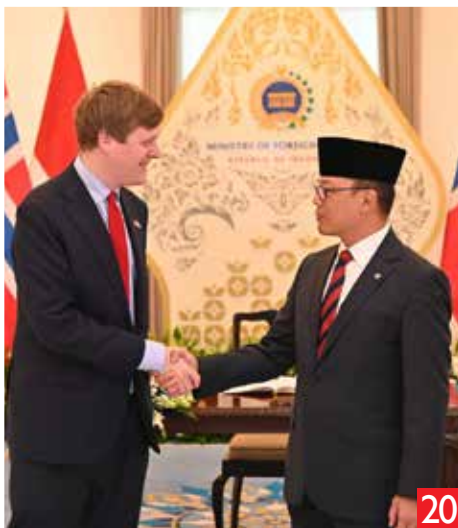
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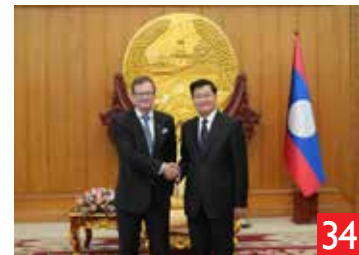
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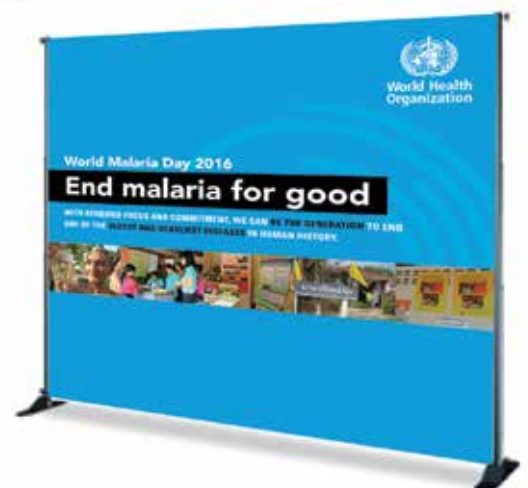
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The Greenland issue triggers unity in Europe and caution in Asia

Across Europe — and increasingly within the Nordic press — criticism of Donald Trump's statements regarding Greenland has converged into a notably unified response. What began as a diplomatic flashpoint is now producing political aftershocks far beyond the Arctic.

Following pushback from a broadly aligned European front in Davos, Trump claimed progress in the Greenland issue, though without public documentation or confirmation from other parties. The episode has nevertheless sharpened attention on both sides of the Atlantic and reinforced a growing sense of strategic unease in Europe.

What may have been intended as pressure instead contributed to an unusual degree of cohesion among EU and Nordic partners on questions of territorial integrity and strategic security. Commentary across Nordic media has repeatedly pointed to the Greenland controversy as a moment that strengthened European alignment rather than weakened it.

A secondary effect is now becoming visible in the United States. California Governor Gavin Newsom has argued that the Greenland episode helped galvanise European unity. At the same time, several prominent Democratic figures — including Newsom himself, Pete Buttigieg and Mark Kelly — are becoming more active in the political landscape ahead of the next presidential cycle.

In Asia, however, the picture is more complex. Trump's approach has not brought the region's major powers closer together; strategic rivalry between China and India remains firmly intact. Yet uncertainty about Washington's long-term direction is reinforcing a familiar instinct across much of Southeast Asia: the preference for strategic hedging.

ASEAN governments are again emphasising "ASEAN centrality" and the importance of preserving room for manoeuvre between competing great powers. Rather than forming new blocs, many Asian capitals appear to be doubling down on balance and economic pragmatism.

Taken together, the pattern is increasingly clear. In Europe, Trump's rhetoric around the Greenland issue has encouraged greater unity. In the United States, it is helping to shape the early contours of the next political contest. And in Asia, it is quietly reinforcing the region's long-standing preference for cautious equilibrium.

The ripple effects of Washington's political turbulence are indeed being felt far beyond America's shores.



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

ScandAsia

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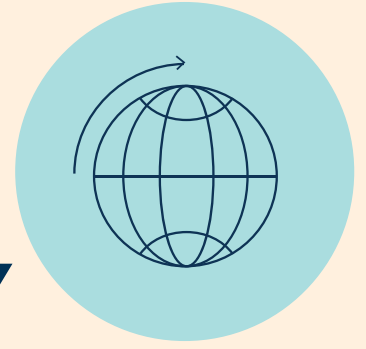
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Danish OECD criticises Nordic Aviation Capital over Myanmar deals



Denmark's OECD National Contact Point has found that Nordic Aviation Capital (NAC) did not meet OECD expectations on human rights due diligence in Myanmar.

The National Contact Point is a Danish state-backed grievance body under the OECD Guidelines. It reviews complaints about multinational companies' responsible business conduct.

In its conclusion, the body said NAC did not do adequate risk-based checks on its Myanmar business partners. It also said NAC did not sufficiently prevent or limit potential human rights harms linked to Air KBZ.

Justice For Myanmar filed the complaint in June 2024. The group alleged that several ATR aircraft linked to NAC later came into Myanmar Air Force use, which has been alleged to carry out attacks on civilians.

NAC was acquired by Dubai Aerospace Enterprise in May 2025, according to the complaint text. Justice For Myanmar also said the review was limited by a five-year rule.

Nordic ambassadors discover hidden Philippine island in rare diplomatic visit

Ambassadors from Finland and Sweden were among diplomats from more than 20 countries who recently visited Catanduanes, an island province in the eastern Philippines, as part of an effort to promote tourism and international cooperation. The visit was the first time the province had welcomed such a large diplomatic group, according to The Manila Times.

Local leaders organised the trip to introduce foreign representatives to Catanduanes' natural attractions, local culture and business potential. During the visit, the diplomats toured beaches and coastal areas, where officials spoke about environmental protection and sus-



tainable tourism.

Catanduanes' provincial government said the initiative aims to attract more international visitors and investors, while building closer ties between the province and foreign partners.

The delegation included ambassadors and diplomats from Europe, Asia, and other regions. The visit was arranged together with the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs and took several months to prepare.

Norway and Indonesia sign new partnership declaration

Norway and Indonesia have signed a joint declaration on a "Partnership for a Prosperous and Sustainable Future" on 26 January 2026, reaffirming and expanding bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

The declaration was signed by the two countries' foreign ministers and builds on a previous agreement concluded in Jakarta in 2010, which focused on areas such as climate and forests, energy, democracy and human rights, global health, research, and trade.

Under the new framework, both sides agreed to strengthen cooperation on international affairs, including regional peace and security, democracy and human rights, and efforts to combat human traffick-

ing, cyber threats, and transnational organised crime. Indonesia also expressed support for Norway's increased engagement with ASEAN. The two countries will establish regular dialogues on international development policy and ocean-related issues.

On climate and environmental cooperation, the ministers reaffirmed their bilateral climate and forest partnership and agreed to intensify efforts to reduce deforestation and emissions from land use, while promoting a green economy. They will also explore cooperation under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement and expand collaboration on ocean issues such as plastic pollution, sustainable fisheries, and green shipping.



Energy cooperation will continue through the bilateral Energy Dialogue, which marked its 30th anniversary in 2025, covering areas including renewables, hydrogen, energy security, and carbon capture and storage. Cooperation will also continue in agriculture, education, research, and trade.

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China's embassy in Sweden releases guidelines on updated visa-free entry policy

In a 16 February 2026 update, China published a set of FAQs clarifying its visa-free entry arrangements for ordinary passport holders.

The guidance says citizens of 50 countries can enter visa-free for up to 30 days. The list includes all Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

It says the visa waiver covers business, tourism, visiting family or friends, exchange, transit, and cer-



tain events. It also includes sports competitions, conferences, exhibitions, and study tours, if stays are within 30 days.

The post says the waiver runs until 31 December 2026 for 48 countries.

It adds that travellers should carry documents supporting their purpose, such as tickets and accommodation bookings. It also states the waiver does not apply to work, study, or news coverage.

Families outraged as Laos verdict leaves Danish deaths unaddressed

The deaths of two young Danish women in Laos have drawn renewed attention after a local court delivered a verdict that does not address their cases, according to TV2 Echo.

In November 2024, 20-year-old Anne-Sofie Ørkild Coyman and 21-year-old Freja Vennervald Sørensen died following suspected methanol poisoning at Nana Backpacker Hostel in Vientiane.

Ten people linked to the hostel have been convicted, but only in connection with the death of a 57-year-old American man. Staff were found guilty of destroying evidence and received fines and suspended sentences. The ruling did not formally address the Danish victims.

The outcome has upset the families.

"It feels as if their lives have been reduced to that amount," said Anne-Marie Ørkild, speaking on be-



half of both families. She noted that the verdict makes no reference to the young women who died.

According to TV2 Echo, the case involving the two Danes has been returned to prosecutors for further investigation, with no timeline announced.

The families have also criticised communication from Denmark's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, saying

they often learned updates through foreign media.

The ministry said it takes the case seriously and is coordinating with Australia and the United Kingdom, but cannot share details due to confidentiality.

For the parents, the search for accountability continues.

Thailand confirms visa-free stay will be reduced to 30 days

The Thai government has confirmed that the permitted stay under the visa-exemption scheme will be reduced from 60 days to 30 days.

The decision, announced by the Thai government in early 2026, marks a policy shift back to the previous 30-day framework. Authorities say the aim is to ensure that visa-free entry supports short-term tourism rather than extended stays.

Since July 2024, travellers from 93 countries have been allowed to stay in Thailand visa-free for up to 60 days. The expansion was introduced to stimulate tourism after the pandemic.

According to officials, the longer stay period has increasingly been used for purposes beyond holiday travel. Tourism operators have raised concerns about illegal employment,



unregistered businesses and foreign-run tour companies operating without proper permits.

By reverting to 30 days, the government says it wants to restore the visa-exemption system to its original intent.

Travellers who wish to stay longer than 30 days are expected

to still be able to apply for a 30-day extension at a Thai immigration office. The list of 93 eligible countries is not expected to change.

No exact implementation date has yet been announced. Until the new regulation takes effect, the current 60-day visa-free stay remains in place.

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From Classroom to Canopy: Fieldwork in Kaeng Krachan

By Coke Smith, Bangkok Patana School, Curriculum Leader - Environmental Science

Bangkok Patana School Year 12 Environmental Systems & Societies (ESS) students were at it again! In late January, they were in the wilds of Kaeng Krachan National Park investigating many aspects of the subtropic forest it protects.

This expedition is part of the ESS curriculum where students put in at least thirty hours of field investigation time. Our students are very fortunate in that they have such amazing biodiversity hotspots as Kaeng Krachan within a few hours easy drive to use as their outdoor laboratory.





Students spent the first two days of the 4.5 day expedition learning about the subtropical dry forest that dominates much of the Kaeng Krachan system. They learned about the plants and were very fortunate to have seen many of the native species that call the region home. Species such as spectacled langurs, Malayan giant squirrels, white-handed gibbons and critically endangered Robinson's Langurs were some of the mammals that introduced themselves to our students. Countless birds and invertebrates were also present.

Students learned how to mea-

sure aspects of the biotic and abiotic components of the ecosystem as well. Using the impressive tools we have in our field ecology arsenal, they measured dissolved oxygen, turbidity, pH, electrical conductivity and dissolved solids and many more factors. Students used dichotomous keys to identify the invertebrates they encountered in the streams and grasslands.

Being in such a natural area, away from the concrete jungle, in fresh air with a low pollution index, the students were energised. After two solid days of learning and practice, they designed and carried out a

field investigation of their own. The research questions were very interesting, ranging from determining the impact of canopy density, ground dwelling invertebrate biodiversity, stream invertebrate abundance correlation and to stream characteristics such as riffles and pond zones.

"This ESS trip was an unforgettable and educational experience that allowed us to deepen our understanding of the environment through hands on work. Also seeing how passionate our teachers are about the subject, makes me appreciate what I'm learning even more," said Rosie, one of the students.

The red cow behind Thai-Danish cooperation celebrated at national festival



Thailand and Denmark marked more than six decades of dairy cooperation at the Thai National Dairy Festival January 23rd to February 1st, held at the Thai-Denmark Milk Dairy Farm in Muak Lek.

Her Royal Highness Princess

Maha Chakri Sirindhorn opened the festival, highlighting the strong and long-standing partnership between the two countries in dairy development. Denmark's Ambassador to Thailand, H.E. Danny Annan, also attended and shared updates on

future cooperation, including cross-bred Viking Red cows and sustainable feed improvements through microbial innovation.

The event highlighted the Red Cow Diplomacy Project, which builds on the historic Thai-Danish collaboration to promote sustainability and innovation in the dairy sector.

The cooperation dates back to the early 1960s, when Danish expertise helped establish Thailand's first modern dairy farm. Early challenges led to the creation of a resilient Thai-Danish crossbreed – the red cows still seen on Thai-Denmark Milk cartons today.

More than 60 years on, Thai-Danish dairy cooperation continues to shape a more sustainable future for farmers in both countries.

Finland explores deeper education ties with Malaysia

Finland is strengthening its education partnership with Malaysia following high-level talks in Kuala Lumpur between Finnish officials and Malaysia's education minister, Fadhlina Sidek, according to the Embassy of Finland in Kuala Lumpur.

The meeting brought together representatives from Finland's education sector, including universities and education technology organisations, to explore closer cooperation in teacher training, digital learning and future-ready skills.

Finnish officials highlighted education as a key pillar of long-term



relations between the two countries, pointing to Finland's internationally recognised education model as a foundation for deeper collaboration.

The discussions reflect growing

Nordic engagement in Southeast Asia, where countries like Malaysia are increasingly looking to Northern Europe for expertise in education reform and lifelong learning.

Hong Kong uses Year of the Horse events to promote trade ties with Sweden and Norway

Hong Kong has marked the Year of the Horse with business events in Sweden and Norway aimed at promoting new trade and investment opportunities between the Nordic region and Asia.

The events were organised by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in London together with Invest Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council under a new cooperation framework called Economic and Trade Express.

On 21 January, a seminar and reception were held in Stockholm with the Hong Kong Chamber of

Commerce in Sweden, attracting more than 200 participants from business, government and academia. Speakers discussed investment opportunities in Hong Kong and the international expansion of Nordic life science companies.

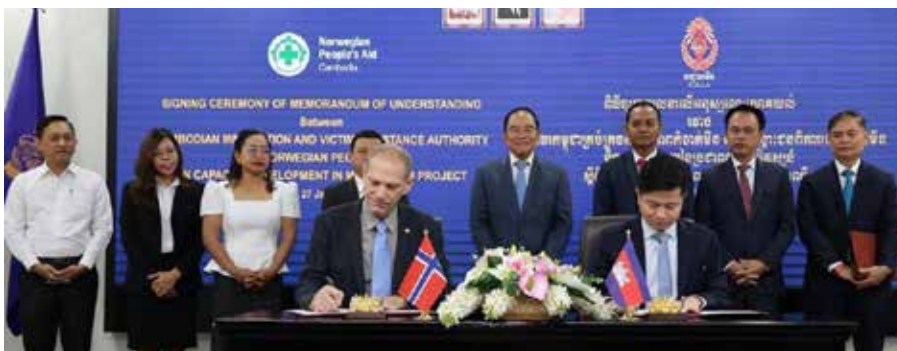
A similar event followed in Oslo on 22 January in cooperation with the Norway–Hong Kong Chamber of Commerce, with discussions focusing on clean energy, offshore wind and hydrogen, and on how Hong Kong's capital markets could support international growth.

Hong Kong authorities said



the Economic and Trade Express platform, announced in the city's 2025 Policy Address, is intended to strengthen coordination between overseas trade offices and trade promotion agencies.

Norwegian People's Aid renews support for Cambodia demining work with new agreement



Norway is continuing to support Cambodia's mine action efforts through capacity development under a new partnership agreement signed on 26 January.

The agreement was signed between Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority

(CMAA) secretary-general Ly Panharith and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) country director Hans Peter Risser, with Senior Minister Ly Thuch, first vice president of the CMAA, attending the ceremony.

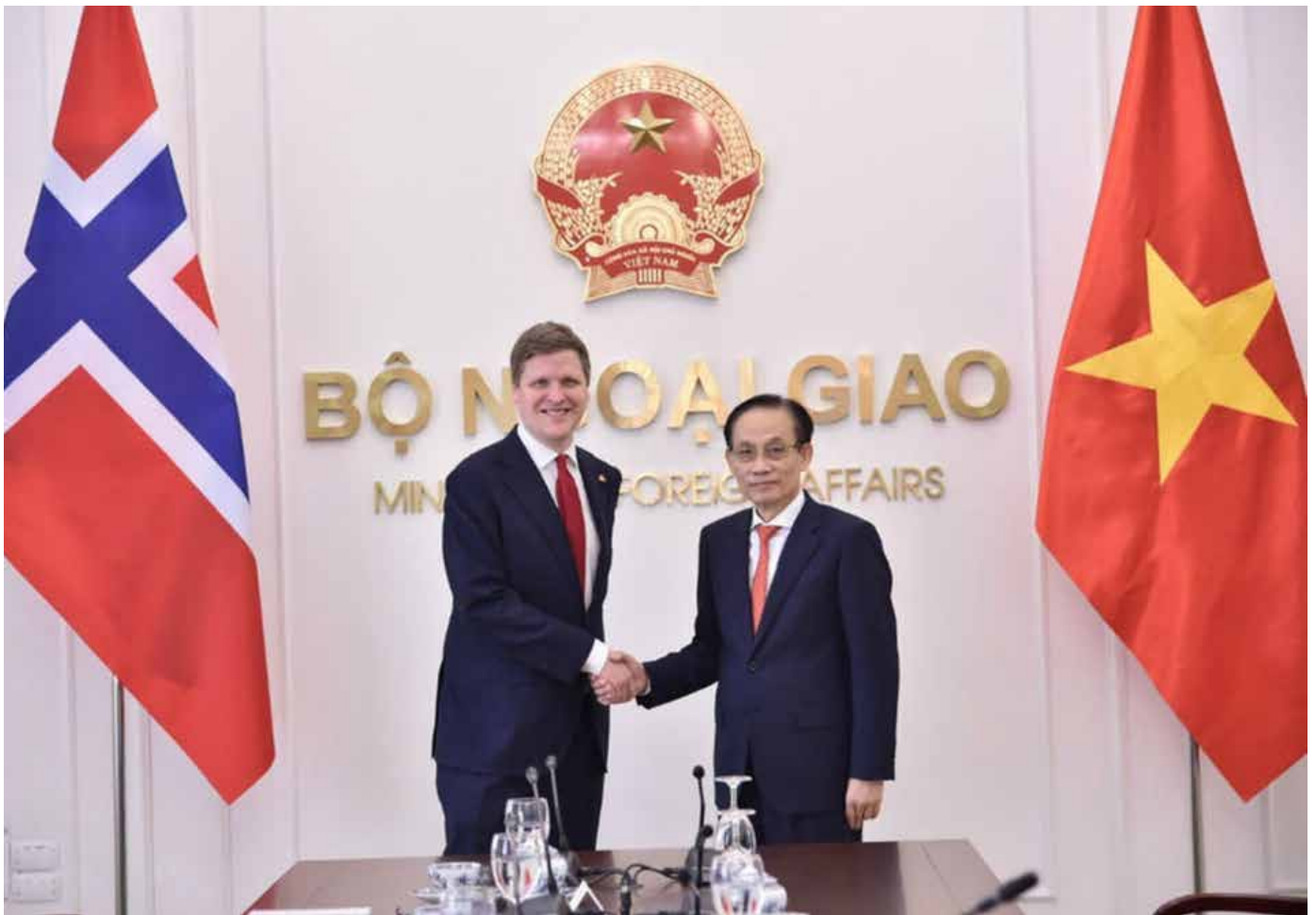
Ly Thuch thanked the Norwegian government for what he described as longstanding contri-

butions to Cambodia's peace process and demining support over the past three decades, including through NPA and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad).

He said the new agreement focuses on capacity-building, including strengthening risk management, reporting systems, rapid response mechanisms, and long-term safety measures after demining.

NPA Cambodia said the partnership will continue capacity development activities in information management, national data systems, technical coordination, and quality management, and will also include gender and environmental aspects supported by Norad.

Vietnam and Norway deepen multilateral and multisectoral cooperation during High-Level meetings



Foreign Minister Le Hoai Trung and Norwegian Minister for International Development Åsmund Aukrust. Photo: Vietnam's Foreign Ministry

Vietnam and Norway held a series of high-level meetings on 10 February to advance bilateral cooperation across trade, investment, green growth, and sustainable development.

By Moulik Jahan

Politburo member and Foreign Minister Le Hoai Trung received Åsmund Aukrust, Norway's Minister of International Development, at the headquarters of Vietnam Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Hanoi. The visit took place as the two countries mark the 55th anniversary of diplomatic relations, a milestone both sides described as an opportunity to elevate cooperation and set new priorities.

According to the Foreign Ministry, Le Hoai Trung stressed that Vietnam attaches importance to strengthening multifaceted cooperation with Norway. He pointed to the complementary nature of the two economies and highlighted room for expanding mutually beneficial collaboration in trade and investment, agriculture, sustainable fisheries, high technology, climate adaptation, environmental protection, green growth and the circular economy.

Against a backdrop of global uncertainty and rising trade tensions, Aukrust reaffirmed Norway's wish to deepen cooperation with Vietnam in sustainable seafood, green energy, the marine economy and green transformation. He also underlined Norway's continued support for multilateralism and joint efforts to address global challenges, particularly those linked to climate and sustainability.

Cooperation on Green Strategic Partnership and Free Trade Agreement

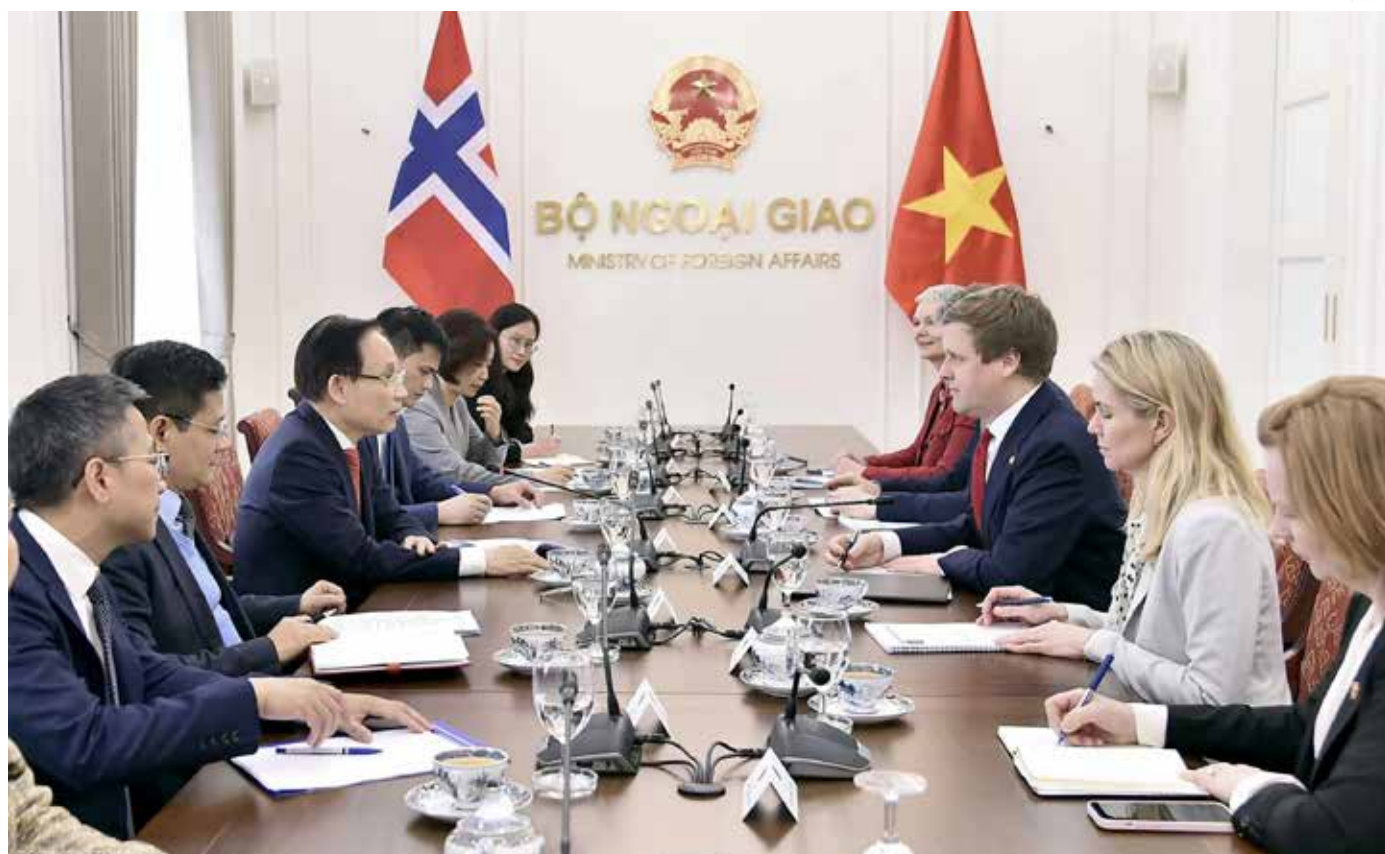
During their meeting, both sides exchanged views on key issues

A key theme of the meetings was the proposed

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The development of the marine economy is one of Vietnam's spearhead sectors.
”

Vietnam–Norway Green Strategic Partnership. Officials reviewed progress and agreed to continue negotiations toward formalising the framework, which is intended to guide long-term cooperation on climate, environment and sustainable economic development.

Both sides also discussed moving toward the early signing of a Free Trade Agreement between Vietnam and the member states of the European Free Trade Association — including Switzerland, Iceland and Liechtenstein. The FTA is expected to help diversify markets and deliver practical benefits for businesses and citizens on both sides.





Bilateral meeting between Deputy Minister Hoang Trung and Norwegian Åsmund International Development Minister Aukrust. Photo: Ministry of Agriculture and Environment of Vietnam

Le Hoai Trung noted that a partnership and FTA would create a structured framework for cooperation in green growth, climate resilience, sustainable marine development and technology-driven investment. Aukrust, for his part, highlighted Vietnam's active foreign policy and strategic role in the Asia-Pacific. He observed that his visit followed soon after the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam, which he said reflected political trust and Norway's interest in expanding both bilateral and multilateral ties.

Multilateral Coordination and Regional Engagement

The meetings also included discussions on regional and international cooperation. Both sides agreed to step up exchanges and coordination of positions on issues of mutual interest within frameworks such as ASEAN, the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the United Nations, contributing to peace, stability, and sustainable development in the region and globally. Minister Aukrust noted that Norway values Vietnam's proactive participation in international forums and its contributions to regional and global discussions on climate change, sustainable development, and multilateral cooperation.

Education, Training, and Capacity Building

Education, training and development assistance remain

longstanding pillars of bilateral ties. The two ministers reaffirmed the importance of these areas in strengthening institutional capacity, supporting socio-economic development and promoting gender equality.

Le Hoai Trung expressed appreciation for Norway's support over the years and called for continued cooperation in traditional areas such as education, training and development assistance. Both sides also showed interest in sharing expertise in digital technology, artificial intelligence, space cooperation, Arctic research and sustainable maritime industries, signalling an intention to expand cooperation into emerging sectors.

Bilateral Discussions on Environment and Climate

On the same day, Deputy Minister Hoang Trung of the Vietnam Ministry of Agriculture and Environment held a bilateral meeting with Aukrust to review environmental cooperation and sustainable development initiatives.

Discussions covered green growth, forestry management, climate adaptation and sustainable marine development. According to the ministry, the Green Strategic Partnership framework between the two ministries has largely been agreed in content and aligns with Vietnam's five-year development plan, which prioritises green growth and sustainability.

Vietnam identifies the blue economy as a key driver for its next phase of maritime development.



“
*Education,
training and
development
assistance remain
longstanding pillars
of bilateral ties.*
”



Hoang Trung highlighted Norway's global experience in marine resource management, offshore wind, green maritime technology and plastic pollution control. He proposed closer cooperation in offshore wind research and ecosystem conservation, particularly for coral reefs and seagrass beds.

Both sides agreed to continue technical exchanges and share practical solutions in marine farming, equipment, breeding and modern management systems.

“The development of the marine economy is one of Vietnam's spearhead sectors. Legal frameworks play a fundamental role in ensuring sustainable management, and exploitation of marine resources must be balanced with long-term ecosystem conservation.”

Aukrust noted that the two countries' long coastlines and ocean resources create natural opportunities for cooperation in fisheries management, renewable energy and marine plastic reduction. He expressed optimism about signing a Memorandum of Understanding on the Green Strategic Partnership and pledged continued technical support for marine spatial planning.

Forestry and carbon markets

Forestry and carbon credit development were also on the agenda. Norway commended Vietnam's progress in forest protection and carbon credit initiatives. Vietnam has introduced legal regulations for its carbon market, including methodologies for calculating and verifying

forestry-based carbon credits.

Vietnamese officials emphasised the value of international experience-sharing to improve sustainable forest management and maximise the economic value of carbon credits. They also called for continued Norwegian support in accessing climate finance and strengthening legal frameworks.

Vietnam highlighted its active role in global climate forums and its domestic efforts to tackle saltwater intrusion, land subsidence and extreme weather through coordinated planning.

A relationship built over decades

Vietnam and Norway established diplomatic relations in 1971. Over more than five decades, cooperation has developed in education, fisheries, climate adaptation, green energy and sustainable marine development.

Officials from both countries describe the relationship as grounded in mutual respect and complementary priorities in economic and environmental policy. The February meetings build on years of collaboration in climate finance, forestry, marine economy and technical assistance, while opening doors to newer areas such as high technology, renewable energy and the circular economy.

As both countries face the shared realities of climate change and economic transition, the expanding partnership suggests that sustainability will remain at the core of Vietnam–Norway relations in the years ahead.



Norway and Indonesia advance climate and development cooperation during ministerial meetings

Norway's Minister of International Development Åsmund Grøver Aukrust visited Indonesia on February 11-13 following his Vietnam trip on February 9-10, holding high-level meetings in Jakarta on climate, development financing and multilateral issues.

By Moulik Jahan

According to a February 4 statement from Norway's Ministry of International Development issued ahead of the visit, Aukrust's Indonesia programme was expected to prioritize dialogue with authorities and societal actors on international cooperation, development policy and innovative financing models. The ministry described the Indonesia-Norway relationship as

based on a broad and long-term partnership.

"When the development landscape is changing as dramatically as we have seen over the past year, we must strengthen partnerships with other countries where we share common interests," Aukrust said in the statement, noting Indonesia's demographic weight and the countries' existing cooperation on climate and the environment.

Bilateral talks with Foreign Minister Sugiono

Aukrust met Indonesia's Foreign Minister Sugiono in Jakarta on February 12. According to a post on X by Indonesia's Foreign Ministry account, the two sides reaffirmed their shared commitment to advancing sustainable development, strengthening multilateralism and promoting global peace. The post added that both countries would continue to work closely on the issue of Palestine. Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs also commented on the meeting via its official X account, stating that the Indonesia-Norway relationship is of "great value" in a polarised world and highlighting cooperation on climate, forests and UN reform. The ministry added that the ministers discussed joint efforts to promote peace, including between Israel and Palestine.

Forestry cooperation and carbon reduction talks

Forestry Minister Raja Juli Antoni (left) and Aukrust at the launch of the fourth period of the Community Fund for the Environment Service in Jakarta on February 12. Photo courtesy: Indonesian News Agency ANTARA

Aukrust also held talks with Forestry Minister Raja Juli Antoni on February 12, with discussions focusing on emissions reduction cooperation and community-based environmental financing.

According to Indonesia's state news agency ANTARA, the two governments launched talks on the fifth phase of their results-based contribution carbon emission reduction initiative (RBC-5).

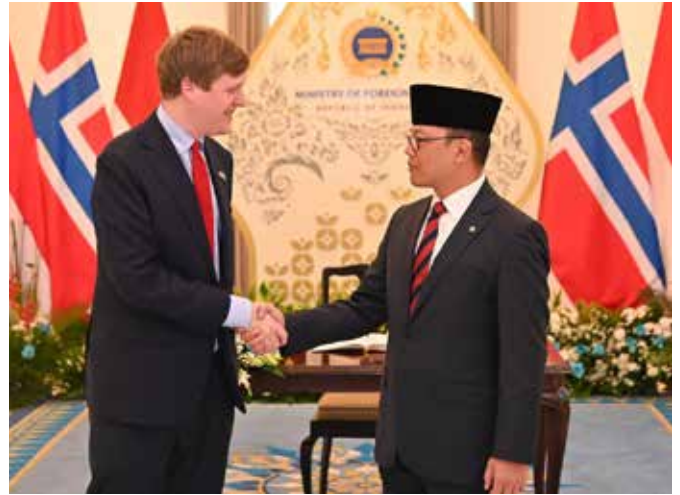
Antoni said Indonesia is working to improve data verification while aligning with ART-TREES standards, referring to the Architecture for REDD+ Transactions and its Environmental Excellence Standard for measuring and verifying emissions reductions.

The minister noted that the ART-TREES mechanism could support Indonesia's 2030 Forestry and Other Land Use (FOLU) Net Sink target, adding that 10 provinces have been registered under the scheme.

Aukrust, speaking at the same event, described the bilateral cooperation on reforestation and emissions reduction as long-standing and said he expected the partnership to strengthen further.

Results-based payments framework

According to ANTARA, Indonesia has received multiple payments under the bilateral climate partnership. The country obtained USD 56 million under RBC-1 for reducing 11.2 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent during 2016-2017. It later secured a combined USD 100 million under RBC-2 and RBC-3 for cutting 20 million tons of emissions between 2017 and 2019, followed by USD 60 million under RBC-4 for reductions achieved in 2019-2020. Officials presented the figures as part of the ongoing results-based funding mechanism between the two countries.



Aukrust shakes hands with Sugiono. Photo courtesy: Indonesia Foreign Ministry

Community Fund for the Environment launched

The two ministers also launched the fourth phase of the Community Fund for the Environment, allocating Rp7 billion to support Indonesia's FOLU Net Sink 2030 target, according to ANTARA.

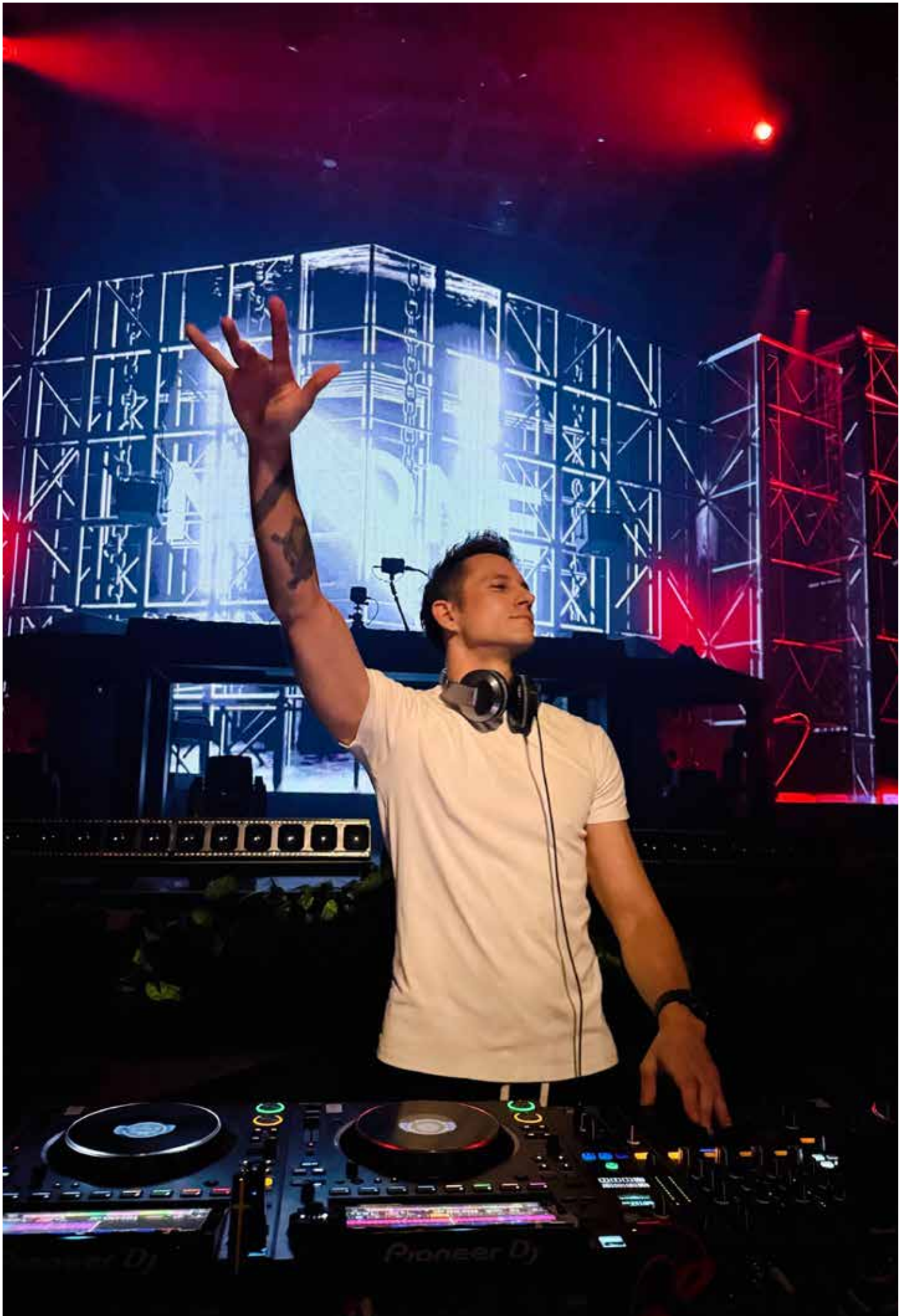
The fund supports local non-profit organisations, indigenous groups, universities and other entities through Indonesia's Environmental Fund Management Agency (BPD LH). Antoni said the programme has disbursed Rp19.31 billion to 561 community groups across 36 provinces over three previous implementation periods, benefiting more than 31,000 recipients. For the fourth phase, proposal submissions are open from February 12-19, 2026 through the BPD LH online portal.

Themes for community support

Applicants in the new funding round may apply under three main themes: FOLU Goes to School, which focuses on engaging younger generations in environmental conservation; FOLU Terra, aimed at improving community welfare through environment-based activities; and FOLU Biodiversity, which supports biodiversity conservation efforts. The Indonesian Forestry Ministry said the scheme is intended to strengthen community participation in environmental protection and sustainable land use.

Broader partnership context

Norway's development ministry said ahead of the trip that cooperation with Indonesia spans climate, environment and development policy, framing the visit as part of efforts to reinforce partnerships amid shifts in the global development landscape. Officials from both countries characterised the Jakarta meetings as part of ongoing bilateral engagement on sustainable development, forest governance and multilateral cooperation. When the development landscape is changing as dramatically as we have seen over the past year, we must strengthen partnerships with other countries where we share common interests.



From Sweden to Taiwan; Martin's journey to DJing

Buttons rise from the desk like skyscrapers in a city landscape. The jog wheels rotate in rhythm with the volume. Lights glimmer, drinks spill, and people crowd the dance floors. A typical night out in Taipei. Swedish DJ Martin Ferm presses a button and starts his set.

By Alexander Vittrup

Photo: Martin Ferm.

Making music

Music has always run in Martin Ferm's family. His grandfather was a musician who performed concerts. His mother was also a singer. As a kid, Martin played both the flute and trombone, and as a teenager, he picked up the guitar.

When he was younger, heavy metal was his preferred genre.

"Heavy metal is very wild—not necessarily angry, but very powerful and energizing. It was about community: everyone being together, headbanging, jumping. I enjoyed that very much."

In 2009, a young Martin wanted to see the world, so he went to Japan to study Japanese.

"Living in Japan gave me a whole new outlook on life—so many new things to learn and see," Martin remembers.

During his time in Japan, Martin made many friends, some of whom came from Taiwan and spoke highly of the island. This piqued Martin's interest.

"I moved to Taipei to learn Chinese. I didn't know much—just that it was a tropical island. But when I got here, I didn't see palms and beaches. I saw bustling cities and busy streets," he recalls. "I loved it."

Almost a decade and a half later, Martin still lives in Taipei. Despite the time gone by, he still enjoys exploring the city.

"My friends and I will go for a stroll, typically around the Ximen district, and we'll spot a little alley. It might lead us to cool street art or gardens with lush plant life. It's always exciting."

“

Being a DJ is being a musician. The sound system has all the songs that I enjoy, and I get to play around with them and make something that I enjoy. DJ equipment is my instrument.

”





Discovering music

His friends in Taiwan introduced Martin to electronic music and its many genres: techno, minimal, and house. This eventually led to Martin's current career.

His interest in DJing started with a friend.

"I had a friend who taught DJ classes, and one day he asked me if I would be interested. I had seen DJs perform before, but I had no idea what they actually did, so I became interested in learning," Martin says.

"Being a DJ is being a musician. The sound system has all the songs that I enjoy, and I get to play around with them and make something that I enjoy. DJ equipment is my instrument," Martin says.

Working with music

That one class became the start of a successful DJ career. Martin has played at almost all of the major nightclubs in Taipei, as well as in other cities in Taiwan, like Taichung and Tainan, under the artist name "Mr. Tone". He played at the festival ULTRA Taiwan in November 2025—a big personal milestone.

In addition to nightclubs and big parties, Martin also works daytime events for brand launches and high-end parties, sometimes very exclusive ones.

"I played at a private launch party for Chanel. They invited four or five VIP guests on a yacht, with a Michelin chef making a private dinner while we sailed along the coast of northern Taiwan. It gave me a unique look into the life of the rich and famous."

As a DJ, Martin has found a way to express his musicality.

"Music can evoke feelings. I love the creative process—playing around, getting an idea into a sound, and seeing it go from a spark to an actual piece of music."

One of the best things about being a DJ is that he gets to share his favorite songs with his audience.

"I want people to love music as much as I do. When I play, I jump around and dance—I can't stop myself. It might make me look silly, but the music makes me feel happy. Sharing my love for music, I think it's infectious."

But a career as a DJ is not as straightforward as some might think.



Martin Ferm performing at a VIP Chanel launch party.



Most of the job of being a DJ is spent sampling, editing and crafting sets to play.

When music becomes work

"DJing is very easy to get started with, but it becomes tougher and tougher. A lot of time and work goes into preparation. I don't think people realize that. Only 5% of the job is spent playing gigs; the rest is searching for new music, working and reworking a set, to make it perfect," he explains.

Music is Martin's passion, and it is always with him. When biking around Taipei, when cooking breakfast, and before going to bed, he either has music in his headphones or playing out loud.

However, Martin is acutely aware that there has to be a balance between music for work and music as a passion.

"Whenever you take something you love and try to make it a career, it is very easy for it to become work and feel tedious. You end up doing it because you have to, and by overdoing it, you can start to lose that passion," he says.

"But I haven't gotten to that stage yet. I still love music. I always have, and hopefully I always will."



Photo: Freja Nanna Mogensen/ScandAsia

Hundreds gathered at the Danish Embassy: Here's what happened after sunset

As darkness fell over Bangkok, Scandinavians and Thai guests filled the Danish Embassy's garden for an open-air night of Nordic cinema at the 2026 Nordic Film Festival.

By Freja Nanna Mogensen

Friday the 13th is usually associated with bad luck and horror stories.

But at the Danish Embassy in Bangkok, the evening unfolded in a very different way — with Pad Thai, popcorn and Nordic cinema under the open sky.

Big, bright screen and buzzing guests

The Nordic Film Festival set up its outdoor screening in the embassy garden, where a large screen stood against the darkening sky. In the distance, Bangkok's high-rise skyline framed the horizon, the city's skyscrapers glowing behind the trees as the sun went down.

However, the bright screen and the embassy's tropical garden proved irresistible not only to film lovers. As darkness fell, the light from the screen and the dense

greenery attracted plenty of mosquitoes.

Fortunately, the organisers had anticipated the challenge: a full table of insect spray stood ready for guests, and it quickly became one of the most visited stations of the evening.

Pad Thai, popcorn and picture-perfect vibes

Before the screen lit up, Tobias Lentz from the embassy's public diplomacy team stepped forward to welcome the crowd and formally open the evening.

As guests settled into their seats, plates of Pad Thai and cups of ice cream made their way around the garden. Rows of chairs and colourful beanbags quickly filled up, and there was hardly an empty seat in sight.

At the back of the garden, the Danish ambassador, Danny Annan, watched the film alongside the audience, seated quietly among the guests.

Popcorn rustled in paper bags, soft drinks fizzed in blue plastic cups, and bags of Danish gummy sweets and Marabou chocolate circulated among the guests. For some guests, the festival setting felt less like a public event and more like a cosy date night beneath the Bangkok sky.



Danny Annan, Ambassador of Denmark to Thailand and Cambodia.

The nordic weekend opened in Danish

The Danish film *The Land of Short Sentences* opened the festival. Although it was scheduled for 18:15, the screening started a little later, once everyone had settled in with snacks and found their seats.

The film was shown in Danish with English subtitles, and the audience reflected the Nordic spirit of the event. Scandinavians living in Thailand sat side by side with Thai guests, filling the rows with a mix of younger viewers and older members of the community.

The Nordic Film Festival featured films from Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland and has become a recurring cultural highlight at the embassy. After the Danish screening, the programme continued with a Norwegian film, and on Saturday the festival repeated the format with Finnish and Swedish films.

“

For some guests, the festival setting felt less like a public event and more like a cosy date night beneath the Bangkok sky.

”





I don't cook – so I took a cooking class in Chiang Mai

A nervous beginner's honest take on Thai cooking, fiery chillies, bustling markets, and the small triumph of not burning dinner.

By Maria Xaver Dover

I'm not exactly known for my cooking skills, so when I find myself in Chiang Mai and decide to sign up for a cooking class, I'm nervous, to say the least. Still, I do it anyway. It feels like one of those things you should try when you're in Chiang Mai.

All I really know is that I'll be picked up from my hotel at 3:30 pm and driven to a scenic location, where I'll be cooking alongside other (hopefully) lovely tourists — preferably ones who are just as lost in the kitchen

as I am. I step into the minivan and immediately meet two nice guys, and from our very first conversation, I get the feeling this is going to be fun. I'm optimistic. Three couples join us shortly after, and although I suddenly feel a bit — okay, very — single, it's all quickly overshadowed by our host.

Alley, which isn't her real Thai name, is just as hilarious as the reviews promised. She takes over the bus within seconds, joking with everyone, and when we're dropped off at the local market, she almost runs ahead in excitement. I find it slightly mind-blowing that she hosts two cooking classes a day — working around fifteen hours daily — and still radiates this much energy.

She leads us to a vegetable stall and explains that if the prices seem surprisingly low, it's because this is where the locals shop — much cheaper than the tourist spots. We look at, smell, and touch the vegetables we'll later be cooking with, many of them completely new to me. When she pulls out the chillies, I almost need a bathroom break just from the sight. I've been living in Thailand for five months now, and I'm still that Western tourist who says "no spicy!" every single time I order food. I do learn, though, that Thai cooking uses several different types of chillies and that not all of them are *that* strong.

We get a bit of free time to wander around the market, and I can't resist buying a freshly squeezed orange juice. Half the price of Bangkok. Back on the bus, we head out to the cooking venue.



Mango sticky rice to finish — the sweet reward after an intense introduction to Thai cooking.



The cooking class takes place in lush, green surroundings far from the city's noise.

"Wow," I say out loud when we arrive. It's incredibly beautiful — lush, green, and filled with fresh air. When you live in Bangkok, it's easy to forget that nature still exists.

On the way there, Alley notes down which dishes each of us will be cooking. Mango sticky rice is a given for dessert — a classic — but aside from that, we get to choose from several options. My menu ends up being fresh spring rolls, Tom Yum Kung (the famous hot and sour prawn soup), chicken pad thai, and massaman curry. Good thing I showed up hungry, I think to myself.

We're welcomed with a drink, put on our aprons, and after a short introduction from Alley, we get straight to work on our individual dishes. Time flies by, laughter fills the air, and I'm relieved to discover that I'm not the only one who's unsure how to light a gas stove. Yes — I'd never done that before.

I quickly learn that Thai cooking requires incredibly high heat, and before I know it, I'm stirring, flipping, and frying like never before. Still, I have to admit I feel a genuine sense of pride when I sit down to eat my pad thai, and it tastes just as good as the one from my local spot. By the time I take the last bite of my mango sticky rice, I'm full — and very happy there aren't any more dishes waiting.

Later that evening, I'm dropped back at my hotel and happily give the experience five stars. If you're curious about taking a cooking class in Thailand, it comes with my warmest recommendation!



A new year and new challenges!

As we get older, it seems like time goes faster and faster, but today, you will also hear lots of young people talking about how time flies. I can't remember that I, as a teenager, thought that time went too fast. Could it have something to do with the fact that we all live in a digital world today?

I do think so. For better or worse, who can say?

The world we live in today hardly looks rosy: wars, protests, shocking crimes, such as the rape of a 100-year-old woman in Sweden, gang violence, murders, and much more.

Not a day that goes by without waking up to terrible news.

Here in Thailand, we are following the conflicts between Thailand and Cambodia.

Many say it concerns a specific region. Some mention disputes over temples, and others believe it may be linked to talk of a possible decision to allow casinos in Thailand — a proposal that, so far, has never become law.

In the past, many Thais crossed the border into Cambodia to engage in gambling. If Thailand were to permit casinos, Cambodia would likely lose substantial sums of money — so the situation is probably not that simple.

We have also seen some new rules in Thailand as e.g., that we now have to complete a so-called electronic arrival card to enter the Kingdom, and that it must be done three days prior to arrival, which can sometimes be quite complicated. This has replaced the card that used to be distributed on board the aircraft for passengers to complete.



A photograph released by Thailand's army on Tuesday showed Thai commanders, left, meeting with Cambodian counterparts near the two countries' border. Photo: Royal Thai Army

Personally, I found it much easier to fill it in by hand than online.

When my friends and I returned from a brief trip to Siem Reap, we had not managed to fill in correctly online.

We were instructed by immigration staff to go back and line up in order to enter the information on the laptops that were set up in a row. We were certainly not alone in having problems. It was a long wait before we each reached a laptop. Many people – especially older travelers – struggled to make it work, and there was no one to turn to for help.

After many failed attempts to make it work, I lost my patience and walked over to a guard who had been stationed to direct first-class passengers and diplomats to the fast-track lane. I handed him my phone and asked for help. He looked at me up and down as if I were from outer space and understood nothing, and on top of that he had the nerve to ask if I had been drinking. I saw red, but kept a polite tone and said that it had been a short, intense trip to Siem Riep and that no alcohol had been consumed. He glared at me, but managed to make it work in two seconds, although I noticed he wasn't particularly careful what he entered.

It took us a long time before we could go and pick up our luggage, which of course, was not to find. We, at last, could pick it up at "lost and found".

Arriving at the new, enormous airport in Siem Reap was exciting. About twenty people were lined up to check passports and visas, all incredibly friendly and efficient, and we were outside and on our way to our waiting taxi in no time – a very positive experience.

Recently, when I went to top up my BTS card, that suddenly wasn't possible either, without my passport. Fortunately, I had it with me – an ID card or a photo of the passport was not accepted. This is the first time I have encountered this, and I can't help but wonder why it is necessary. It happened at Asoke and perhaps controls are stricter there than at other stations — what do I know??

In my opinion, too many things have become too complicated.

On a more positive note, Bangkok has welcomed a new Swedish fine-dining restaurant called EBBE, after the Chef.

Unfortunately, Villa Frantzen on Yenakath, has closed its door. This exclusive restaurant, with its somewhat austere, yet typical Swedish interior, and its location in a stunning, park-like garden, unfortunately did not last long. Was it due to the location, too high prices or why?

Chef Ebbe Vollmer has earned two Michelin stars in Sweden and one Michelin star in Florida/US. Chef Ebbe's philosophy represents a natural evolution of: pure flavors, fire, fermentation, balance and simplicity. At his restaurant, EBBE Bangkok, he and his team will stay true to a clear Nordic identity, using the very best seasonal ingredients and a precise technique to let each product shine.

Chef Ebbe Vollmer grew up in Hörby, a small village in southern Sweden. From an early age, he helped his grandmother in her restaurant.



At the age of 16, he moved to London to train as a chef, working in some of the city's best restaurant kitchens. Among others, he trained under Gordon Ramsay at his restaurant on Royal Hospital Road.

Ebbe has also worked as executive chef at JAAN in Singapore, one of the world's top-ranked restaurants.

In Malmö, Ebbe, together with his brother Mats Vollmer, founded the prestigious restaurant Wollmers. The restaurant received its first Michelin star in 2015, followed by two stars in 2017. Wollmers focuses on modern Nordic fine dining, with menus rooted in local produce and Skåne traditions.

Over the years, Ebbe has led kitchens and appeared as a guest chef in countries such as Singapore, Taiwan and Malaysia.

If I have now piqued your curiosity about Restaurant EBBE and you are planning to visit, the restaurant is located inside the Erawan Bangkok Building, Unit LG-06, Ploenchit Road and easily accessible by BTS Skytrain, Station Chit Lohm.

Opening hours Monday to Saturday 5.30 pm and last order approximately 8.00 pm. Closed Sundays.

Let us hope that Restaurant EBBE is here to stay. Best of luck, Chef Ebbe and team.

Over the past month, several delightful concerts have taken place in Benjakitti Park Bangkok, attracting large audiences. People of all ages – from children and teenagers to older visitors – have enjoyed these free performances.

A welcome and refreshing addition to our hectic times.

Somewhat more disappointing is the fact that SWEA Bangkok, for the second time, was forced to cancel our 25th anniversary celebration due to too few registrations.

Perhaps there is less interest today in social gatherings and celebrations than there was in the past?

Is there, in fact, still a need for an organization like SWEA in today's world?

Unfortunately, I cannot give a clear answer to that – I suppose only the future will tell.

Stay tuned for more and enjoy every day!

Norwegian company wins first fingerprint order in Malaysia

Norwegian biometric technology company Next Biometrics has secured its first contract in Malaysia, supplying fingerprint readers to government authorities, according to Biometric Update.

The company's Oyster III device will be used for identity verification across public-sector applications.

Shipments related to the order are expected to begin during the first quarter of 2026, marking Next's entry into the Malaysian market.

The Malaysian order comes at the same time as a new order from India worth NOK 3.5 million for

Next Biometrics' fingerprint sensor.

The Indian order is linked to the country's large national ID and payment system, where fingerprint technology is used to confirm people's identity.

Together, the contracts in Malaysia and India show that Norwegian biometric technology is gain-

ing ground in Asia, as governments continue to invest in secure digital identification systems, according to Biometric Update.



Growing Chinese presence in Norway draws security concern



Svalbard, the Norwegian archipelago in the High North, is emerging as a potential strategic pressure point in the Arctic, according to US-based defense analysis outlet RealClearDefense.

While Svalbard is under Norwegian sovereignty, the 1920 Svalbard Treaty grants several countries – including Russia and China – rights of access and activity on the islands. Russia maintains settlements in

Barentsburg and Pyramiden, while China has operated the Yellow River research station there since 2004.

According to RealClearDefense, Russia has expanded military capabilities in the surrounding Arctic region in recent years, and China has simultaneously increased its Arctic engagement through scientific and polar research initiatives.

Svalbard also hosts the Svalbard Satellite Station, one of the world's largest civilian satellite ground facilities.

Because the archipelago is demilitarized under the Svalbard Treaty, Norway operates within specific legal constraints, according to the analysis.

Sweden and Indonesian University plan closer cooperation

The Swedish Embassy in Indonesia and Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember (ITS) are looking to strengthen cooperation in education and research, according to Ecobiz Asia.

During a visit to the university, Swedish Ambassador Daniel Blockert met with ITS leaders to discuss expanding student exchange programmes and joint research projects.

ITS already works with several Swedish universities, and both sides expressed interest in developing more formal partnerships in the future.



The discussions show continued cooperation between Sweden and Indonesia in higher education.

Wärtsilä secures key role in China's expanding LNG fleet

A Finnish company has secured a key role in China's growing LNG shipping industry, The Digest reports.

Finland's technology group Wärtsilä has won an order to supply LNG cargo handling and fuel gas systems for two specialised bunker-

ing vessels now under construction in China.

The 20,000 cubic metre ships are being built at Zhejiang XinLe Shipbuilding for a Hong Kong-based owner. The order was booked in the fourth quarter of 2025. Equipment deliveries are set to begin in late

2026, with the vessels expected to be delivered in the second half of 2027.

Wärtsilä's Gas Solutions unit will provide the full system package. This includes engineering and design, as well as integrated control and monitoring systems for cargo operations.

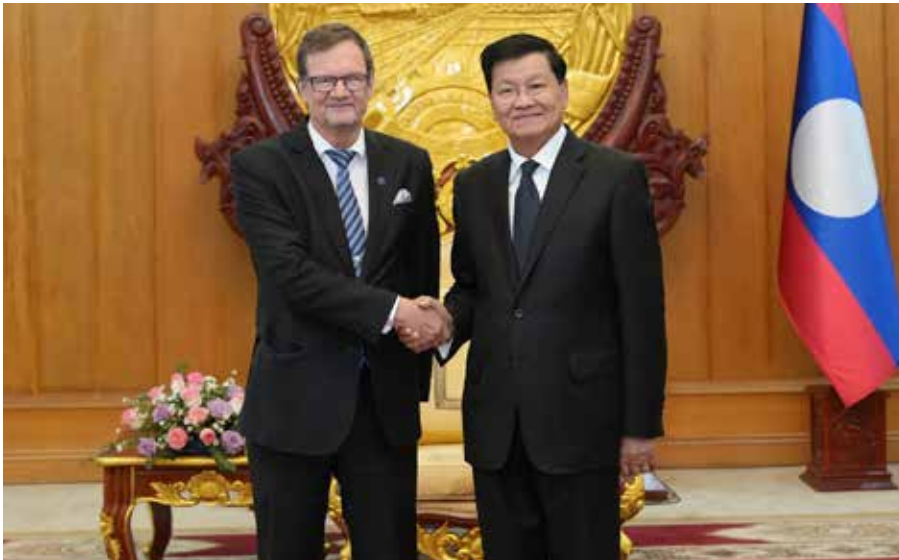
The vessels will supply liquefied natural gas to LNG-powered ships. Demand for LNG as a marine fuel continues to grow, especially in Asia, where ports are expanding bunkering capacity.

According to the company, the deal strengthens its position in the small-scale LNG market, where bunkering vessels play a central role in supporting cleaner shipping.

The order underlines how Finnish maritime technology continues to find customers in China's shipbuilding sector.



Finland's ambassador to Vietnam presents credentials to Laos president



Finland's Ambassador to Vietnam and Laos, H.E. Mr. Pekka Voutilainen, has officially pre-

sented his credentials to H.E. Mr. Thongloun Sisoulith, President of the Lao People's Democratic Re-

public.

The ceremony marks the formal beginning of Ambassador Voutilainen's duties in Laos as a non-resident ambassador. Based in Hanoi, he is accredited to Laos alongside his posting to Vietnam.

According to the Embassy of Finland in Hanoi, the presentation of credentials reaffirms the strong and growing partnership between Finland and Laos, underscoring continued bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

Ambassador Voutilainen will carry out his responsibilities for Laos from Vietnam, strengthening diplomatic engagement and supporting relations across political, economic and development sectors.

Norway steps in to strengthen peace in the southern Philippines

Norway has funded the renovation of a peace operations center in Mindanao in the southern Philippines. Philippine peace authorities and the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Manila officially handed over the upgraded facility in Cotabato City, according to a Facebook post by the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU).

The center will serve the Joint Peace and Security Teams (JPST), which include members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and the Philippine National Police.

Together, they help maintain stability in areas previously affected by conflict. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) carried out the refurbishment through its



“STAND for Peace” programme with funding from the Norwegian government.

During the handover on February 12, Norway's Ambassador to the Philippines, Christian Halaas Lyster, said Norway supports peace efforts that create visible results for local communities.

“We are committed to pro-

tecting women and girls and to integrating a gender perspective in international missions and operations,” Lyster said.

Philippine officials described the joint peace teams as an important example of reconciliation between former adversaries and a key part of the Bangsamoro peace process.

Indonesia turns to Denmark to make cattle feed safer

Indonesia's Ministry of Agriculture has worked with Denmark to strengthen national quality and safety systems for animal feed, AN-TARA reports.

The cooperation included a capacity-building visit to Copenhagen from 2–6 February with Denmark's Veterinary, Food, Agriculture and Fisheries Agency.

Indonesia said it wants to modernise feed oversight using more transparency and a risk-based approach, drawing on Danish best practices.

Officials said tighter monitoring could reduce losses from low-quality or contaminated feed, and lower disease risks in livestock production.



The ministry is also revising a 2017 animal feed regulation, preparing a feed safety policy paper, and

planning a certification body and national monitoring system.

China slashes tariffs on Danish-Swedish dairy giant Arla

China has significantly reduced planned tariffs on dairy imports from the European Union, lowering rates from as high

as 42.7 percent to a final range of 7.4 to 11.7 percent.

The new duties, announced by China's Ministry of Commerce,

replace the much higher preliminary tariffs imposed in December and will apply for five years from February 13.

For Danish-Swedish dairy cooperative Arla Foods, the final rate will be 9.5 percent.

The originally proposed tariffs of up to 42.7 percent had raised concerns among European producers that exports to China would become prohibitively expensive.

The final ruling reduces that burden, although EU dairy products will still face import duties.

China is the world's third-largest dairy producer, and according to analysts the tariffs are seen as offering protection to domestic producers facing oversupply.



Vietnam welcomes planned Swedish circular textile investment



Vietnam welcomes increased Swedish investment, Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh said during a meeting in Hanoi with Sweden's Ambassador to Vietnam Johan Ndisi and Dennis Nobelius,

CEO of SYRE, a subsidiary of H&M Group.

According to the Vietnam News Agency, the Prime Minister reaffirmed that Sweden is one of Vietnam's leading partners in Northern

Europe and stressed the importance of strengthening cooperation in science, technology, innovation, green growth and the circular economy. He also recalled the establishment of a Strategic Partnership in science, technology and innovation during his visit to Sweden in June 2025.

Pham Minh Chinh welcomed SYRE's planned investment and called on relevant authorities to coordinate closely with the company on procedures, ensuring environmental protection and the use of modern, efficient technology.

Ambassador Ndisi and Nobelius expressed appreciation for Vietnam's support. Nobelius said SYRE aims to develop large-scale textile recycling centres powered by advanced technology and renewable energy, contributing to Vietnam's circular economy and strengthening Vietnam-Sweden relations.

Nordic envoys join launch of Pasig City circular economy hub in the Philippines

Pasig City inaugurated its Innovation for Circular Economy hub on 26 January 2026. The hub targets waste recovery, recycling, and green jobs.

Mayor Vico Sotto led the opening with local and national agency representatives. Officials from the United Nations Development Programme also attended.

Sweden ambassador Anna Ferry and Denmark's deputy head of mission Peter Dalberg joined the ceremony. European Union ambassador Massimo Santoro and Japan's



ambassador Endo Kazuya were also present.

Santoro said the EU-Philippines Green Economy Partnership

is investing over 33 million pesos in equipment and support. Endo said the hub includes waste segregation and composting facilities.

China dramatically increases purchases of Norwegian salmon

Norwegian salmon is changing direction.

Where exports once flowed west toward the United States, they are now increasingly heading east – to China, according to the Norwegian Seafood Council.

In January, China marked a new milestone in Norwegian seafood exports. For the first time, exports of Norwegian salmon to China exceeded one billion Norwegian kroner in a single month. Nearly 11,000 tonnes of salmon products were shipped to China, representing an 86 percent increase in volume and a 34 percent rise in value compared to the same month last year.

The contrast with the US market is notable. In January, Norwegian seafood exports to the United States fell by 37 percent.

“High and unpredictable tariffs and a weaker dollar have created great uncertainty and challenges in



the USA,” said Christian Chramer, CEO of the Norwegian Seafood Council.

Just one year ago, the US was Norway’s largest single market. Today, it has been overtaken.

China stands out as the most viable alternative. Lower salmon prices have strengthened competitiveness, while Chinese New Year provided a seasonal boost in de-

mand. Market access has also proven more predictable than in the US.

“Uncertainty in global trade and a weak dollar have shifted exports from the US to Asia, especially China,” said seafood analyst Paul T. Aandahl.

In the current market, China is one of the few destinations delivering clear growth for Norwegian seafood.

SAS adds new winter routes from Copenhagen to Phuket and Krabi

SAS says it will launch three new long-haul routes from Copenhagen for Winter 2026/27:

Phuket and Krabi as well as Dubai.

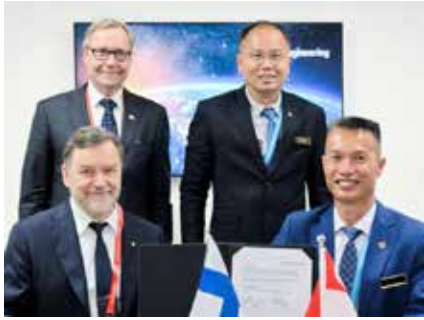
SAS plans new nonstop services to Phuket and Krabi, both oper-

ated with Airbus A350 aircraft. The Phuket route runs from 9 December 2026 to 29 March 2027 with 2–3 weekly flights, while Krabi runs from 8 December 2026 to 28 March 2027 with two weekly flights.

SAS also says it will add two Airbus A350 aircraft and increase long-haul capacity on several routes, including Boston, San Francisco, Chicago, Seoul, Tokyo Haneda and Bangkok. Executives said the expansion is aimed at meeting winter demand and strengthening Copenhagen’s hub role.



Finnish Sisu Auto and Singapore's ST Engineering deepen Arctic vehicle partnership



Finnish Sisu Auto and Singaporean ST Engineering signed an expression of interest at the Singapore Airshow on 3 February

2026. The companies said it sets a framework for closer technology cooperation.

The focus is Arctic-capable mobility platforms. These are tracked vehicles built to operate in extreme cold, snow, and rough terrain.

The partners said the SISU GTT articulated tracked vehicle will be the base for further development. They also plan work on TAURUS, a remotely operated and autonomous vehicle system.

The agreement was signed by

Timo Korhonen, chairman of Sisu Auto, and Tan Pek Tong, deputy president for international business at ST Engineering Land Systems. The companies said the goal is to support operations in Finland, Singapore, and other markets.

The two companies have previously collaborated on the SISU GTT. They said it combines ST Engineering's Bronco tracked carrier design with Sisu Auto's Arctic engineering.

Danish funding supports hundreds of local businesses in Myanmar

Denmark, the European Union and Switzerland have supported 461 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Myanmar under the RBF Plus programme, the Embassy of Denmark in Myanmar reports.

RBF, or the Responsible Business Fund, is a donor-funded initiative that provides grants and technical assistance to local businesses to promote responsible and sustainable business practices. SMEs play a central role in Myanmar's economy by creating jobs, supporting families and sustaining local communities.

The latest funding round aims to help businesses continue operating under challenging economic conditions marked by political instability and limited access to finance. By supporting SMEs, international partners seek to maintain economic activity at community level and strengthen



resilience in the private sector.

The Responsible Business Fund has supported private-sector development in Myanmar since 2017. RBF Plus represents a newer phase of the programme, with an increased focus on sustainability and high-impact sectors such as agrifood.

According to the programme

partners, the grants are intended to support investments in areas including improved production processes, food safety standards and responsible business practices.

A third round of RBF Plus funding is planned for 2026, with agrifood businesses expected to be encouraged to apply.

Taiwan and Sweden expand joint research in chips, AI and drones

Taiwan will step up technology cooperation with Sweden in semiconductors, quantum technology, AI, drones and robotics. The plan was outlined at a bilateral research workshop in Yilan on 30 January.

National Science and Technology Council Deputy Minister Robin Chen said a renewed agreement with Swedish Foundation for Strategic Research runs from 2026 to 2031. The partnership has operated since 2020.



Officials said joint results include gallium nitride power components, solid-state lithium batteries, beyond-5G antennas and biosensing. They also said the cooperation has produced 20 research papers.

Sweden's envoy to Taiwan, Helena Reitberger, said talks also cover scholarships and talent exchanges. Taiwan's council said it plans to invest 44.2 billion NT\$ by 2030 in the drone sector.

White Pearls signs LOI in Malaysia and Singapore

Sweden's White Pearl Technology Group AB (WPTG) said on 16 February it has signed a letter of intent to acquire Saltycustoms, a corporate merchandise, design and digital fulfilment company with operations in Malaysia and Singapore.

WPTG said the proposed deal

values Saltycustoms at 500,000\$, with 300,000\$ to be paid in cash and 200,000\$ in WPTG shares. The share payments would be made in three instalments at closing, after 12 months and after 24 months, subject to targets being met, and the transaction is subject to due diligence and final agreements.

According to WPTG, Saltycustoms offers end-to-end corporate merchandise services, including design, production, e-store solutions and global fulfilment. WPTG said Saltycustoms has served multinational customers and has supported brands including Amazon Web Services and Citibank.

WPTG said the acquisition would strengthen its digital commerce and digital transformation offering, expand its footprint in South-east Asia, and provide a platform for further regional growth. CEO Marco Marangoni said the company expects cross-selling opportunities between Saltycustoms' client base and WPTG's wider IT, cloud and digital services portfolio.

WPTG said it is listed on Nasdaq First North in Stockholm and OTCQX in the United States, and stated it has operations in more than 20 countries with a team of around 950 experts.



Danish violinist takes second prize at Singapore International Violin Competition 2026



Danish violinist Michael Germer won second prize at the Singapore International Violin Competition (SIVC) 2026. The grand final took place at Esplanade Concert Hall in Singapore on 7 February.

First prize went to Ukrainian violinist Georgii Moroz, while Chinese violinist Zou Meng took third prize. The three finalists performed complete concertos with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Joshua Tan.

Germer is a graduate of the Royal Danish Music Conservatory.

He also received a special prize for Best Performer of the Commissioned Work supported by the Kris Foundation.

Organisers said 29 candidates from more than 10 nationalities competed for prizes totalling over 110,000\$. Prizewinners also receive concert engagements with orchestras including the Singapore Symphony Orchestra and the Macao Orchestra, plus three-year violin loans from the Rin Collection.

Mowi opens first salmon processing plant in Thailand

Norwegian salmon company Mowi opened its first processing plant in Thailand on 28 January 2026. The facility is a partnership with CP Axtra, part of Thailand's CP Group.

Under the deal, Mowi will supply salmon products to Makro and Lotus outlets. Supplies will also go to Thailand's foodservice sector.

The partners said product development will include fillets and portion cuts for B2B customers. They also plan ready-to-eat sashimi in modified atmosphere packaging.

Norway exported 25,000 tonnes of salmon and 8,400 tonnes of trout to Thailand in 2025, valued at NOK 2.8 billion. The Norwegian Seafood Council said Thailand was Norway's second-largest salmonid market in Asia after China.



China breakthrough sends Finnish food giant to record year

Finnish food company Atria has delivered the best financial performance in its history following the launch of chicken exports to China, Xinhua Net reports.

In 2025, net sales rose to 1.81 billion euros, while adjusted operating profit increased to 69.9 million euros – both the highest figures recorded by the company.

“The year 2025 was strong for Atria and successful in many ways,” Chief Executive Officer Kai Gyllstrom said in a statement.

Exports of chicken meat to China began in December 2024 after market access was secured during an official visit by Finnish President Alexander Stubb.

According to Atria, the start of shipments to China and improved efficiency at its poultry plant in western Finland supported the annual result.



The company operates in Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Estonia and is one of the Nordic region's largest food producers.

Bird flu bans Danish chicken in Hong Kong

Hong Kong's Centre for Food Safety has ordered an immediate suspension of poultry meat, eggs, and related products from Guldborgsund Municipality in Denmark, the government agency has announced in a press release.

The move follows a WOAHA notification about a highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza outbreak in the Danish municipality.

Hong Kong imported about 450 tonnes of frozen poultry meat from Denmark last year. It also imported about 210,000 poultry eggs,



according to official statistics cited by the agency.

The Centre for Food Safety said it has contacted Danish authorities. It will monitor updates from WOAHA and relevant agencies.

Vietnam uses culture to strengthen ties with Sweden



The Vietnamese Embassy in Sweden hosted a large cultural gathering in Malmö on February 1st, using the event to strengthen ties between Sweden and Vietnam and to highlight the role of the Vietnamese community in bilateral relations.

Held at Moriska Paviljongen,

the event brought together around 600 participants, including Vietnamese Ambassador Tran Van Tuan, representatives of Malmö City Council, Swedish political figures, Vietnamese associations, and Swedish guests with an interest in Vietnam.

Ambassador Tran Van Tuan stressed that the Vietnamese com-

munity in Sweden plays an important role in building people-to-people connections and supporting friendly relations between the two countries. He also pointed to Vietnam's growing international standing and cooperation with European partners, including Sweden.

Swedish representatives attending the event underlined the value of cultural exchange in promoting mutual understanding and integration.

The programme featured Vietnamese traditional music, theatre, and cuisine, offering Swedish guests insight into Vietnamese culture while providing a meeting place for dialogue and community interaction.

The Malmö gathering is part of a broader initiative by the Vietnamese Embassy to deepen cultural engagement in Sweden, with a follow-up event scheduled in Stockholm on February 5th.

LEGO introduces new China-exclusive sets for Spring Festival

As China's Spring Festival draws near, the LEGO Group is again highlighting a key part of its China strategy: cultural closeness.

The Danish toymaker has launched new China-inspired sets for the festive season, including LEGO Galloping Horse Canvas and LEGO Prosperity Firecrackers. Inspired by traditional symbols of good fortune and renewal, the sets are designed to resonate with local traditions while staying true to LEGO's playful identity.

"For years, we've explored Chinese culture with the aim of creating



products that emotionally connect with local consumers," said Maciek Selinski, Head of LEGO China.

China holds a special place in LEGO's global operations. It is the only market where the company designs sets specifically for local

holidays such as Chinese New Year. Since 2019, LEGO has released 16 Spring Festival-themed sets, many of which have also attracted fans beyond China.

LEGO's presence in China continues to grow. The company operates more than 400 stores nationwide and produces most China-bound products locally in Jiaxing. It also recently opened Shanghai LEGOLAND, which executives describe as completing LEGO's ecosystem in China.

"China is still at an early stage for us, but the potential is enormous," Selinski said.



Danish Embassy hosted briefing on rules for citizens in Thailand

Danish bureaucracy has a habit of following you – even all the way to Thailand.

On February 6th, around 30 Danes showed up at the Royal Danish Embassy in Bangkok, where the Royal Danish Embassy in collaboration with Danes Worldwide and the Danish-Thai Chamber of Commerce, hosted an information evening on life as a Dane abroad.

With open-faced sandwiches on rye bread, familiar faces, and a packed agenda, the evening was designed to bring Danes living in Thailand together while offering practical updates on rules that affect everyday life far from Denmark.

Danish rules in Thailand

The event opened with welcoming remarks by Maria Müller Uhrskov Pilgaard, Danes Worldwide's representative in Thailand, followed by short introductions and updates from Ambassador Danny Annan, Michael Andersen, Secretary of the Danish-Thai Chamber of Commerce, and Peter Emil Romhild, Chairman of the Church Council.

The main presentation was delivered live from Denmark by Secretary-General of Danes Worldwide Michael Bach Petersen, together with leading law counsellor Lisbeth Kjærgaard.

They guided participants through recent developments in areas such as family reunification, Danish citizenship – including the 22-year rule – pensions, issues with Nem-Konto, driving licence, and admission to Danish schools and universities.

Nine priorities for Danes abroad

Beyond explaining current rules, Danes Worldwide also presented its nine key wishes to the Danish Parliament, a list that is continuously updated and will be relaunched when a new parliament is formed.

Central to the nine wishes is the call for Danes living abroad to be considered in all Danish legislation, such as a clearer division of the Aliens Act and expanded tax regulations allowing more flexible stays in Denmark.

The evening concluded with an open discussion, where questions, concerns, and personal experiences were shared across the room.

THE CALM AFTER THE STORM

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