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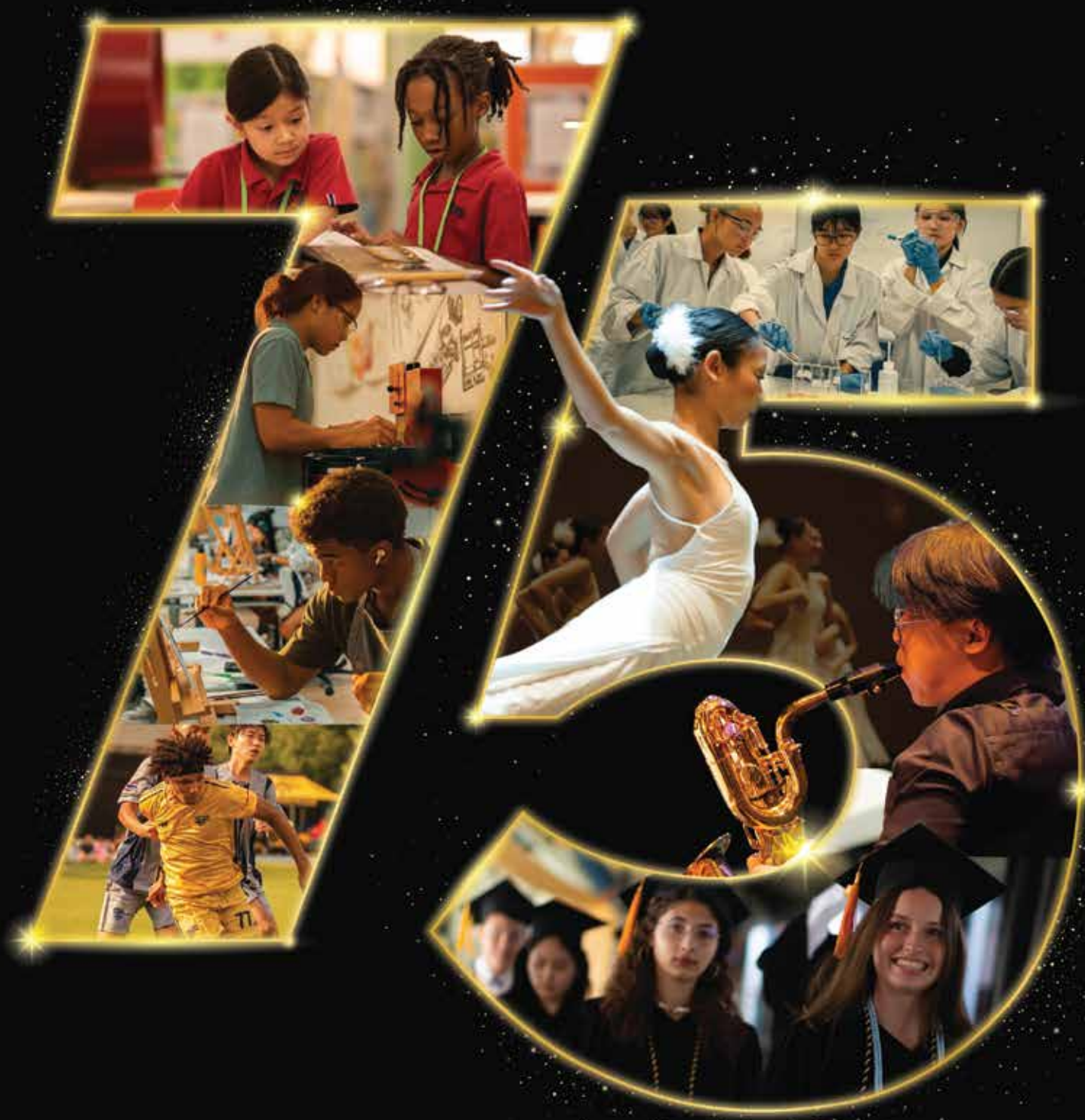
Sweden permanently closes
Section Office in Myanmar

COMMUNITY:

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to the ice in Indonesia

Axel Blom
The Norwegian
who built bridges
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2 Investigate

Basic Investigation

- 12-lead ECG

Additional Tests (if indicated)

- Echocardiogram (heart ultrasound)
- Holter monitoring
- Other tests as clinically appropriate

3 Diagnose

Cardiac arrhythmias can be classified into two major groups:

- Tachyarrhythmia (Heart beats too fast or irregularly)
- Extra Heartbeat
- Bradyarrhythmia (Heart beats too slowly)

5 Treatment

Treatment depends on the type and severity of arrhythmia

- Observation Only
- Medication
- Catheter Ablation
- Pacemaker Implantation

4 Follow-up

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- Monitor symptoms
- Adjust medication
- Check device function (if pacemaker implanted)
- Prevent complications

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"To control symptoms, reduce risks, and improve quality of life."

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Chinese patrols east of Taiwan represent an economic threat for EU

When Chinese Coast Guard vessels recently began patrolling the waters east of Taiwan, many Europeans saw another incident in the long-running tensions across the Taiwan Strait.

They should have seen something else.

Most Europeans still view Taiwan primarily through the lenses of foreign policy, democracy and human rights. Those remain important considerations. But they no longer tell the whole story.

China's growing ability to project power around Taiwan threatens the flow of trade on which both Taiwan and Europe and in particular the US increasingly depend. Taiwan has quietly become an economic security issue.

Taiwan understood years ago something that Europe is only beginning to recognise: trade and national security are inseparable. Facing growing pressure from China, Taiwan did not simply turn away from its largest trading partner. Instead, it steadily reduced its strategic dependence while strengthening economic ties with trusted partners.

The shift has been remarkable. At its peak in 2010, more than 83 percent of Taiwan's annual outward investment flowed to China. During the first five months of this year, the figure was just 0.9 percent.

While much of Taiwan's new investment has flowed to the United States, Europe has also become part of Taiwan's diversification strategy. Taiwan's exports to the European Union grew by more than 12 percent last year, while Taiwanese investment in Europe has accelerated, particularly in semiconductors, electric vehicles, batteries and other advanced technologies.

Taiwan has diversified. Europe has benefited. Now Europe should fully recognise what that means.

European industry today depends on Taiwan in ways that would have seemed unimaginable only a decade ago. Advanced semiconductors manufactured in Taiwan

power Europe's automotive industry, telecommunications networks, industrial automation, medical technology, artificial intelligence and an increasing share of its defence capabilities.

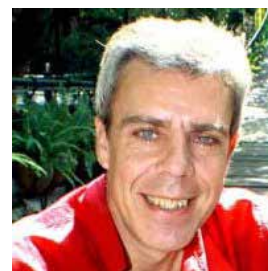
At the same time, Taiwan's semiconductor industry depends on European technology, from Dutch lithography systems and German precision optics to specialist manufacturing equipment. The relationship has become one of mutual dependence.

Yet Europe's debate about Taiwan still belongs to an earlier era.

A disruption of Taiwan's economy would not simply be an Asian crisis. It would ripple through European factories, research laboratories, transport systems and supply chains. The semiconductor shortages during the pandemic offered only a glimpse of how quickly production can be disrupted. A serious crisis around Taiwan would be on an entirely different scale.

This does not mean Europe should abandon its balanced approach towards China or seek confrontation where none is necessary. It simply means it is time to recognise that peace and stability around Taiwan are no longer matters only of foreign policy, democracy and human rights.

It is a matter of European economic security.



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

ScandAsia

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

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Denmark appoints new food and agriculture counsellor in China



The Danish Embassy in China has welcomed Sonja Canger as its new Minister Counsellor for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries.

Canger brings experience in leadership, policy development and regulatory affairs within agriculture and environmental issues. She holds a master's degree in Forestry and Natural Resources Management from the University of Copenhagen.

In her new role, Canger will work with the Food, Agriculture and Fisheries team across the Danish representations in China, as well as with Danish and Chinese stakeholders.

She said she looks forward to supporting Danish exports to the

Chinese market and strengthening cooperation between Denmark and China in food, agriculture and fisheries.

The appointment comes as Denmark continues to promote cooperation with China in sectors including food production, agriculture and fisheries.

Canger also brings a broad network of contacts among authorities, businesses and organisations, according to the Danish Embassy.

Her role will focus on supporting Danish interests in the Chinese market and further developing cooperation between Danish and Chinese partners in the food and agriculture sectors.

Finland appoints new Head of Immigration Affairs at Bangkok embassy



The Embassy of Finland in Bangkok has welcomed Mikke Kinnari as its new Head of Immigration Affairs.

Kinnari joined the embassy in August after spending the past three years at the Finnish Embassy in Kathmandu, Nepal, where he served as Deputy Head of Mission and Consul.

In an introduction published by the embassy, Kinnari said he was now in his second week in Bangkok and described the move as his sixth country of residence.

He has previously lived and worked in Tokyo, New York City,

Moscow, Petrozavodsk and London.

Kinnari said he was looking forward to spending more time exploring Thailand, including through diving, hiking, surfing and cycling.

His role as Head of Immigration Affairs places him in charge of a key area of consular services for Finnish citizens and others dealing with Finnish immigration matters in Thailand.

The Finnish Embassy welcomed Kinnari to Thailand and its diplomatic team.

Sweden permanently closes Section Office in Myanmar

Sweden has permanently closed its Embassy Section Office in Yangon, transferring responsibility for Swedish affairs in Myanmar to the Swedish Embassy in Bangkok.

The Yangon office announced the closure and said Swedish matters relating to Myanmar would from then on be handled by the embassy in the Thai capital.

Sweden has not provided a reason for the closure.

The closure concerns the Embassy Section Office. Sweden's honorary consulate in Yangon is still listed on the country's official foreign service website.



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Karine Erikstein joins Norwegian Embassy in Singapore



Karine Erikstein has joined the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Singapore as its new Deputy Head of Mission.

Erikstein is a career diplomat with 12 years of experience in Norway's Foreign Service. She most recently served as a Senior Adviser in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Section for Trade Policy and Economic Analysis in Oslo.

Her previous diplomatic postings include Geneva and Pretoria. Before joining the Foreign Service,

she worked for the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, focusing on ocean and fisheries law.

Erikstein holds a master's degree in law from the University of Oslo and an LLM in European Law from the College of Europe in Bruges.

The posting marks her first time living and working in Asia. She said she looks forward to exploring how major foreign-policy issues affect Singapore and the wider region.

Sweden sees opportunities for businesses in partnership with Philippines



Sweden is looking to strengthen economic and technological cooperation with the Philippines following an enhanced partnership between the European Union and the Southeast Asian country.

In a statement published by the Swedish Embassy in Manila, Team Sweden welcomed the development and highlighted potential opportunities for Swedish companies, researchers and institutions.

The embassy said the en-

hanced EU-Philippines partnership links closer cooperation with the EU's Global Gateway strategy, which supports investment in infrastructure and sustainable development.

For Sweden, the embassy identified artificial intelligence, digitalisation, innovation and climate-smart technologies as areas where Swedish expertise could contribute to the Philippines' development priorities.

"We believe this will create new opportunities for trade, investment and knowledge exchange," the embassy said.

The partnership could also make it easier for Swedish companies and institutions to establish longer-term cooperation with Philippine counterparts, according to the embassy.

The Swedish Embassy did not specify any new Swedish investments or individual business projects resulting directly from the enhanced partnership.

Denmark and ASEAN establish framework for five-year partnership

Denmark and ASEAN have held their first Joint Sectoral Cooperation Committee meeting, formally establishing a framework for closer cooperation between the two sides.

The meeting took place at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta on 11 August 2026. It was the first formal meeting since Denmark became an ASEAN Sectoral Dialogue Partner in January.

During the meeting, the two sides adopted the committee's terms of reference and agreed to develop a five-year plan outlining practical areas of cooperation.

The discussions covered trade and investment, climate adaptation, energy transition and the ASEAN Power Grid. Other potential areas



include green shipping, digitalisation, sustainable agriculture, circular economy, health, biotechnology and smart cities.

ASEAN and Denmark also discussed cooperation on human rights, counterterrorism, transna-

tional crime and people-to-people exchanges.

The committee will serve as the formal platform for managing and developing the partnership in the coming years.

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An Early Chapter of Bangkok Patana

Bangkok Patana School is Thailand's first British international school in Thailand. As they prepare to celebrate their 70th anniversary, one of its early alums recounts his experiences.

Tim Blackburn attended the school from 1974 – 1980. Bangkok Patana School was not just a place of learning but the beginning of a lifelong connection to community, culture and the wider world. Having joined the school in 1974 at just four years old, Tim was part of a generation that helped shape the identity of Bangkok Patana school in its earliest years.

A School Above the Klong

Tim's earliest memories are deeply rooted in the physical and emotional landscape of the school. The school by this time, had moved from its original location on Ploenchit Road, then to soi Ngam Du Phli and was on Soi Navin., just off Rama 4 Road. "The wooden classrooms above the

klong," he says are really memorable, "and the excitement of walking across to the opening of the new Stuetzel Building."

Bangkok in the early 1970s was a unique place for a non-Thai child to grow up. Weekends were spent exploring Hua Hin, Pattaya or traveling "up country," while the backdrop of global events quietly shaped daily life. "As a child, you're largely oblivious," Tim reflects, "but I do remember the military coups, occasional curfews and the presence of US military during the Vietnam conflict."

Despite this, he said his school experience was rich, joyful and full of discovery.

Milk Cartons, Sports Days and Spartans

Many of the experiences Tim had,



are still enjoyed by students today. His typical school day was simple yet full. Early mornings gave way to busy lessons, creative projects and lively break times. "Break time was all about trays of flavoured milk cartons, chocolate or strawberry," he recalled.

Art stood out as a favourite, with students creating crafts tied to cultural celebrations, from Christmas decorations to loy kratongs. There was also a strong sense of friendly competition. "Inter class sports rivalry was keen," he says. "And sports day was always a highlight." Perhaps most memorable to Tim were the swimming galas at the British Club, where students were divided into teams with classical names. "I remember the pride of being a Spartan," he shares. Today Bangkok Patana students can remain on campus to improve their swimming technique in one of the school's three pools, but they still compete in intra-school swimming galas.

People Who Shaped the Journey

Behind these memories were influential figures who helped define Tim's experience. Headmaster Duncan Lawson stood out to Tim as a charismatic and ambitious leader. "He was a huge character, mischie-



vous and really set the tone for the school," said Tim.

Equally memorable was Claire Gibson, the school librarian. "She presided over this cool, quiet treasure trove of books," Tim says. "Our families have remained lifelong friends."

These relationships, along with the school's diverse community, played a key role in shaping Tim's worldview. "Patana was incredibly international," he explains. "It taught tolerance, curiosity and a genuine appreciation for different cultures." Throughout its 70-year history, this diversity and cultural appreciation remained a defining characteristic of the school.

A Foundation for a Global Life

At the age of 10, Tim left for the UK, later attending Sherborne Boys and then Cambridge University, where he studied Modern Languages. His career has since taken him across the world, from Sydney and Singapore to Rio de Janeiro and Hong Kong, where he is now Chief Executive of Swire Properties.

Looking back, he sees a clear thread connecting his early years at Patana to his global journey. "A global outlook, openness and curiosity were all forged at Patana,"

he reflects.

Though the campus today is vastly different from the one he remembers, Tim believes the essence of the school remains unchanged. "The facilities are unrecognisable," he says, "but the values and the school's role in the community have remained constant."

A Pioneering Spirit

How would he describe the spirit of Patana in those early days?

"Pioneering, ambitious, international."

It is a spirit that continues to resonate, even as the school celebrates its 70th anniversary. For Tim, being part of that early chapter is a source of pride. "Patana opened my eyes to the wider world," he says. "It gave me an appreciation of people and cultures that has stayed with me throughout my life."

A Message for the Next Generation

His advice to current Patana students reflects his own time at the school:

"Embrace every moment of the Bangkok Patana experience, academic, extracurricular and social. It is a unique environment that prepares you not just for exams but for life as a global citizen."

Danish Pig Alliance returns to the Philippines

The Danish Pig Alliance is returning to the Philippines to promote Danish expertise and technology in the country's pig industry.

The alliance brings together Danish companies working in areas such as pig genetics, farm design, biosecurity and meat processing.

The Danish Embassy in the Philippines said the Danish companies can help local producers deal with challenges including animal diseases, biosecurity and rising production costs.

The alliance first visited the Philippines in March 2025. During the visit, Danish and Filipino industry leaders met in Davao and Manila to discuss opportunities for more effi-



cient and sustainable pig production.

The programme included business forums, company presentations, meetings between Danish and Filipino businesses and visits to local companies.

Among the Danish companies

taking part were DanBred, SKOV, Danish Farm Design, SundsAlfa, Spanvall, VissingAgro and AVS Agric. The companies offer solutions ranging from pig genetics and farm equipment to slaughterhouses and meat processing.

The initiative is part of cooperation between the Danish embassies in the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam to promote Danish business and technology in Southeast Asia.

The latest visit shows that Danish companies are continuing to look for opportunities in the Philippine pork sector.

The embassy has not announced any new contracts or investments linked to the latest visit.

Cambodia looks to Finnish technology to strengthen weather forecasting



Cambodian Minister of Water Resources and Meteorology Thor Chetha led a delegation on an official visit to Finland from 27 to 29 July to explore cooperation on weather forecasting and

climate monitoring.

During the visit, the delegation visited Finnish weather technology company Vaisala and the Finnish Meteorological Institute, where they examined weather radar systems,

automated observation technology and forecasting services.

The visit aimed to support Cambodia's efforts to modernise its meteorological infrastructure and improve weather forecasting, climate monitoring and disaster preparedness.

According to Cambodia's Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology, improved forecasting could benefit agriculture, water management and disaster risk reduction by providing more accurate and timely weather information.

The visit also highlighted cooperation between Cambodia and Finland in climate resilience and environmental technology.

Indonesia, Norway expand cooperation on energy transition and forestry

Indonesia and Norway have agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation on energy transition, sustainable fisheries, forestry and climate action following a meeting between their foreign ministers on the sidelines of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Manila.

Indonesia's Foreign Minister Sugiono met Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide to discuss expanding cooperation in environmental protection, marine aquaculture and renewable energy.

The two ministers agreed to increase collaboration in sustainable aquaculture through new technology and improved fisheries manage-

ment. They also discussed expanding cooperation on Indonesia's energy transition, including investment, innovation and technology development to support the country's energy and fertiliser self-sufficiency goals.

Sugiono thanked Norway for its long-standing support for forest conservation in Indonesia, describing the partnership as an important contribution to global climate action. The ministers also explored the use of satellite imagery to improve forest monitoring, natural resource management and sustainable development planning.

Eide highlighted Indonesia's importance as one of the world's



largest tropical forest nations and described it as a key partner in addressing climate change.

Both ministers also reaffirmed their support for a stronger multilateral system and discussed the need for reforms of the United Nations to make it more responsive to global challenges.

Thirty Swedish and Norwegian students receive Taiwan scholarships



Thirty students from Sweden and Norway have received Taiwanese government scholarships to study in Taiwan in 2026.

Taiwan's representative to Sweden, Phoebe Yeh, hosted an award ceremony on 14 August. The event was held in Stockholm and online, with 25 recipients attending.

The scholarships include three Taiwan Scholarships, 22 Huayu Enrichment Scholarships and five

language-study awards under the Taiwan Huayu BEST Program.

The Taiwan Scholarship supports degree studies, while the Huayu Enrichment Scholarship funds Mandarin studies at language centres in Taiwan.

Yeh encouraged the students to explore Taiwan and build ties with local society, expressing hope they will strengthen relations between Taiwan, Sweden and Norway.

Halvor Eifring, professor of Chinese studies at the University of Oslo, also attended. He said Norwegian students value Taiwan's democratic and open academic environment.

The University of Oslo will send five students to National Taiwan University through the Huayu BEST Program this year. Eifring said positive experiences from earlier students have boosted interest in studying Mandarin in Taiwan.

Members of the Taiwan Alumni Association in Sweden also shared advice with the recipients before their departure.

The total number of scholarships fell slightly from 33 in 2025 to 30 in 2026, but remains higher than the 22 awarded in 2024. The mission did not specify how many recipients are from Sweden or Norway, respectively.

Axel Blom has spent two decades building bridges in Thailand. Now Norway honours him



Axel Blom has been awarded the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit, Knight 1st Class, after almost two decades of strengthening ties between Norway and Thailand.

For nearly two decades, Axel Blom has helped connect Norwegian businesses with Thailand through his company Norway Connect. Now, he has been awarded the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit, Knight First Class.

By Helene Sadjadi-Munk



In the bottom left of every 100-Thai baht banknote, you will find this picture of the visit to Norway in 1907 of King Chulalongkorn. That is how important the bilateral relationship is viewed by Thailand.

Millions of people in Thailand have held it in their hands - the 100-baht banknote. Many most have wondered, what the images down in the corner is all about. It shows King Chulalongkorn, Rama V, one of Thailand's most respected monarchs, in a vintage car.

Hidden in the story behind the image on the banknote is a fascinating Norwegian connection – one that would later become part of the story that Axel Blom tells when he works to strengthen the relationship between Norway and Thailand.

After 44 years in Thailand, the Norwegian businessman has received the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit, Knight First Class, for his longstanding contribution to strengthening economic cooperation between Thailand and Norway and advancing Norwegian business interests in the region.

"I did not expect it at all," Axel says.

He had arrived at the Norwegian embassy to discuss a regulatory case for a client. When the ambassador called him into her office, he assumed they would talk about the case.

Instead, she told him he had received the order.

A childhood of travel

Thailand was not completely unknown territory when Axel first arrived.

He had already visited the country as a child in 1968, when his parents were living in the Philippines. At the time, travelling was a very different experience.

"There were no direct flights, so you had to make around ten stops along the way," he recalls.

The journey went through Europe, the Middle East, Pakistan and India.

"My entire childhood was about travelling around the world. We were in Africa, Greece, and many other places. I spent 17 years travelling on and off."

“
The most important
thing in a marriage is
respect for each other
and each of our cultures.
”



The diploma and medal Axel Blom received with the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit, Knight 1st Class.

His international upbringing continued. His father was born in the Netherlands to a Norwegian mother and a Dutch father, and the family spent a lot of time in the Netherlands.

In 1982, Axel moved to Thailand after meeting the woman who would become his wife.

They had met in Copenhagen, where he was working with SAS and she was studying architecture and furniture design at the Royal Academy of Arts. She lived in Denmark for nine years and still speaks Danish today.

When Axel received a job offer in Thailand, he moved there during the first year of their marriage. His wife returned after finishing her studies.

For Axel, their relationship has always been built on understanding.

"The most important thing in a marriage is respect for each other and each of our cultures."



“

We do not receive government subsidies for this work. I also do not operate with a meter running whenever someone comes through the door. I simply try to help companies.

”

Building his own business

Axel arrived in Thailand with a job already waiting.

He transferred from Thai Airways International in Denmark to SAS in Thailand and began working at the airport.

“For two years, I was just a regular employee at the airport.”

At the time, SAS operated ten flights a week to Thailand, continuing onwards to Singapore, the Philippines, and India. Everything was still handled manually.

After four years at the airport, Axel moved to the SAS office at Siam Square in Bangkok.

Then, in 1991, he took over the sales responsibility after another Scandinavian living in Thailand, Tom Sørensen.

Over time, his responsibility grew. He started with a team of 18 employees, later added airport operations, and eventually managed more than 40 employees.

When he left SAS in 2006, he had 130 employees.

“It has been exciting to be part of that journey.”

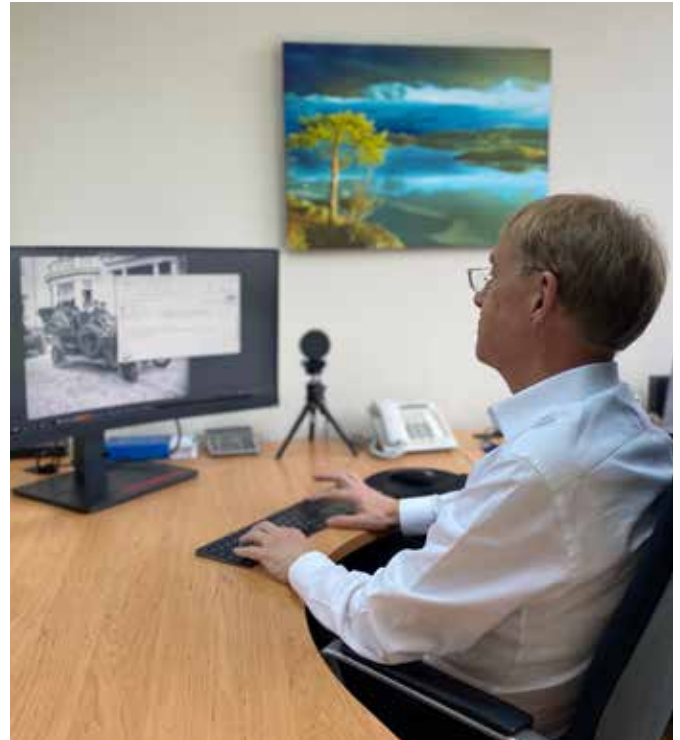
Beyond the daily operations, his team carried out important work for SAS headquarters in Scandinavia.

They handled departure control, weight and balance, and load control remotely for SAS’ intercontinental operations – tasks that required skilled employees and a high level of trust.

But in 2006, SAS decided to restructure the outsourced operations and moved these functions to Tallinn and Copenhagen.

That became the beginning of a new chapter.

Axel left SAS and started his own company, Norway Connect, in 2007.



Axel Blom at his office in Bangkok. He founded Norway Connect in 2007 after leaving SAS.

A bridge between Norwegian business and Thailand

Today, Norway Connect represents several Norwegian companies in Thailand.

One of these companies is Norse Atlantic Airways. Norway Connect does not run their daily operations, but Axel manages practical matters, including payments, administration, and communication with authorities regarding permits and routes.

The company also works closely with Norwegian organisations and businesses looking to operate in Thailand.

Another of the entities Axel represents is the Norwegian Seafood Council, where Norway Connect provides staff and practical assistance to the Regional Director for Southeast Asia, located at the Norwegian Embassy.

And the relationship between Norway and Thailand is strongly connected through trade.

Around 60 percent of Norway’s exports to Thailand consist of fish and seafood. Most of the value comes from salmon and trout, with 90 percent of it transported fresh by air and consumed as sushi and sashimi.

But the relationship also goes in the other direction.

Thailand has exported products and expertise to Norway, including modules for offshore oil and gas platforms in the North Sea and, more recently, transformer units for the UK’s Hornsea 3 wind farm through the Norwegian company Aibel, located on Thailand’s eastern seaboard. And the company continues to produce equipment for offshore wind projects.

Axel believes part of the explanation is the Thai ability to deliver consistent quality.



Axel Blom with the diploma for the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit, Knight 1st Class.

"Thai people are very good at doing the same task repeatedly without getting tired of it, unlike many of us in the Nordic countries."

He remembers visiting Thai Airways' catering unit some years ago, where he met a chef who had spent 19 years making omelettes.

"He had a huge smile on his face. The omelettes he made weighed exactly 100 grams, not 99 or 101 grams, and he did it all through 'fingerspitzgefühl.'" An intuitive feel for getting something exactly right.

The salary might not have been the highest, Axel says, but the man worked in a good environment, had good colleagues and was happy.

"That illustrates Thailand very well."

More than business

Axel's work has often been about more than commercial agreements.

In 2008, Innovation Norway approached him and asked if he could support their activities in Thailand. He agreed, and they found a solution where he represented them while continuing his other business.

That cooperation continued until 2017, when Innovation Norway reduced funding and closed several offices in the region.

Since then, Axel has continued supporting Norwegian companies and cooperating closely with both Innovation Norway and the Norwegian embassies in the region.

He helps companies understand the market, regulations, and opportunities.

"We do not receive government subsidies for this work. I also do not operate with a meter running

whenever someone comes through the door. I simply try to help companies."

Axel was also instrumental in opening Myanmar to Norwegian businesses back in 2011 and spent a lot of time in the country before the military coup ended everything in 2021.

And as the outgoing president of the Norwegian Chamber of Commerce, he also helped organise major Norwegian business summits in Asia, bringing together Norwegian companies across the region and from Norway.

Receiving the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit was therefore not something he sees as an individual achievement.

"It is thanks to all the people I have worked with. Not least the embassy, which has appreciated the work I have done."

He even believes someone else deserves the honour more.

Vibeke Lyssand Leirvåg, chair of the Joint Foreign Chambers of Commerce in Thailand, has worked alongside him for years. In Axel's eyes, she has done a lot for Thailand, and not only from a Norwegian perspective.

"I think she deserves this honour much more than I do. I hope her time will come."

For Axel, the award is a recognition of a journey shaped by thousands of relationships – from a historic royal visit in 1907 to a lifetime spent connecting two countries.

"I am a little proud, of course," he says.

But still humble enough to say thank you to all the people who have been part of the journey.

Historic Norwegian Seamen's Mission property in Singapore put up for sale



One of the most recognisable landmarks of the Scandinavian community in Singapore has been put on the market, as the Norwegian Seamen's Mission (Sjømannskirken) seeks a buyer for its hilltop property at Pasir Panjang Road with a guide price of SGD 70 million.

By Gregers Møller

The freehold property at 300 and 300A Pasir Panjang Road, which has been home to the Mission since 1977, is being marketed through an expression-of-interest exercise managed by JLL. Under Singapore's Master Plan 2025, the nearly 49,000-square-foot site is zoned for residential development and could potentially be redeveloped into around 63 boutique homes.

The sale marks a significant milestone for an institution that has played an important role in the lives of Norwegians – and later many other Scandinavians – in Singapore for more than seven decades.

A mission born from Norway's shipping ties

The Norwegian Seamen's Mission first established itself in Singapore in 1955, recognising the city-state's growing importance as one of the world's busiest ports. Although the venture initially began as a trial, it quickly proved its value when Norwegian and Scandinavian shipping traffic turned out to be far greater than anticipated.

By 1957, more than 1,200 Scandinavian ships were calling at Singapore annually, making the new station one of the busiest in the Seamen's Mission's worldwide network. Ministers spent much of their time travelling by ferry or hitching rides with harbour launches to visit crews anchored far from shore.



This photograph was taken on 10 October 1957 during the opening of the Norwegian Seamen's Mission's first permanent premises in Singapore. Assistant Chaplain Astor Kvistad and Ingeborg Sofie Haugland, wife of the resident chaplain, are pictured with Norwegian seafarers and members of the Scandinavian community outside the church entrance. Photo: sjomannskirken.no

The first premises were a rented bungalow before the Mission entered a unique partnership with the Anglican Mission to Seamen. Together, they built adjoining facilities at Connell House, where the Norwegian Seamen's Mission operated from 1957 until the area was expropriated by the Singapore government in 1971.

Finding a permanent home

After several years in temporary accommodation, the Mission achieved what was then no small feat. In 1977, it succeeded in registering as a legal entity in Singapore, allowing it to purchase property – a privilege not easily granted to foreign organisations at the time. The Mission acquired the Pasir Panjang property, perched on one of Singapore's highest hills with sweeping views over the Port of Singapore and the Strait of Malacca. The church was officially inaugurated on 17 April 1977.

The purchase soon proved remarkably farsighted. As Singapore's property market developed, the value of

the site multiplied many times over, making it unlikely that the Mission could have afforded the same property only a few years later.

From seafarers to expatriate community

While the Mission originally focused on serving Norwegian seafarers, its role gradually changed as international shipping evolved and the number of Norwegian residents in Singapore grew.

Singapore became Norway's principal business hub in Asia, with many Norwegian companies establishing regional headquarters in the city. The church increasingly became a gathering place for expatriate families, offering worship services, choirs, children's activities, business lunches, social events and its well-known Saturday porridge and Sunday waffles.

Since 1985, the Mission has also worked closely with the Church of Sweden Abroad (Svenska kyrkan i utlandet), serving both the Norwegian and Swedish communities in Singapore.



The church after its extension: The new church wing, completed in 1998, included a new, modern chapel, providing improved facilities for the growing congregation. Photo: sjomannskirken.no

What happens next?

Although the property is now being offered for sale, the Norwegian Seamen's Mission has not announced its future plans. No public statement has been issued on whether it intends to relocate to smaller premises elsewhere in Singapore or how the proceeds from a sale would be used.

The Mission continues to operate from the Pasir Panjang property, and community activities remain on its calendar while the sale process is underway.

For many generations of Scandinavians living and working in Singapore, the hilltop church has been much more than a place of worship. It has been a meeting place, a cultural centre and a home away from home. Whether the Mission remains at Pasir Panjang or begins a new chapter elsewhere, the sale marks the end of an era for one of the oldest Scandinavian institutions in Southeast Asia.



Peter Romhild (left) and priest Nicolaj Stubbe Hørlyck (right)

Peter Romhild heads a special place for Danes in Thailand

Whether for work, retirement, love or adventure, thousands of Danes are living all over Thailand. Isolated in bustling cities, far-off villages and touristy beach towns, it can be hard to find community, and homesickness may creep in from time to time.

By Alexander Vittrup / Photo: Peter Romhild

But on a small road in central Bangkok's Lumpini district, a white three-story house stands ready to welcome every Dane inside: the Danish Church and Culture House. For the past year, Peter Romhild has been chairman here.

"We are a church. We perform all the religious practices one would expect," Peter Romhild says. "But we are also so much more."

A long life in Thailand

Peter Romhild and his wife, Elizabeth Romhild, have been living in Thailand for 38 years, and over the years, Peter has created a solid and expansive network. So when, in April 2025, it became time to pick a new chairman for the church council, Peter was the obvious candidate.

"I had officially retired from the corporate world

after 52 years and was looking forward to leaning back, but in the Danish Church and Culture House I saw a calling, and then I was right back to work," Peter laughs. "As chairman, I have a chance to put my 38 years of experience in Thailand and my network to good use and help the Danish community."

More than a church

The Danish Church in Thailand also functions partly as a cultural house and partly as a community center, and there is space for everyone.

For new arrivals in Thailand, the church offers valuable networking opportunities, where people can socialise and build friendships. For Danes who have fallen on hard times, the church can offer help to get back on their feet again.

"We work closely with the Danish Embassy, Danes Worldwide and the Thai Danish Chamber of Commerce, who are ex-officio members of our council," Peter says. "Danes Worldwide does an amazing job of counselling and helping expats. The Danish Embassy works with us on many social matters. Where they can't step in, we help, and vice versa. We have a good partnership."



Living in Thailand is very different from Denmark. Life can be chaotic, and people go through hard times, and here the church is ready to offer a helping hand.

"We are very fortunate to have a priest here full time, who is ready and willing to talk. Sometimes all you need to beat homesickness and loneliness is someone to talk to, and we are happy to listen," Peter says. "Should the circumstances be more dire, we can get in contact with a person's family and friends back home. We are always willing to help, and where we cannot help, we can find someone who can."

The past and the future

It's been a year since Peter was elected chairman of the Danish Church and Culture House, and since then he has helped to promote and organise events like the Danish

Christmas bazaar, together with the Danish Women's Network, and church meetups for the Danish communities in Pattaya and Phuket.

"I am incredibly proud of the work that the Danish Church in Thailand does, and it is an honour to serve as chairman," Peter says.

As for the future, Peter is not short of ideas.

The usual events for the holidays are being planned, and monthly church services will be held. The church doors are open, both for private and public events. Peter and the council are planning musical gatherings and lectures open to anybody interested in stopping by.

A big challenge for the church over the past year has been funding. Previously, the Danish Church Abroad was financing most of the church's expenses. However, last year, it was announced that funding would be cut, leaving a lot more pressure on the Danish Church in Thailand to sustain itself. It has not been easy, but Peter and the church have found solutions.

"I am proud to say that we have managed to find sponsors and private donors willing to fund the important work we do here at the church. We are not entirely there, but I am very grateful for all who are



willing to help," Peter says.

A Danish oasis in Bangkok's chaos

For Danish expats in Thailand, it can be hard to be so far from the motherland. Homesickness and loneliness creep in. But that is why the Danish Church exists.

"We are a community center. We are a place where we can come together around our Danish values and share our values with each other," Peter Romhild smiles. "I have seen and felt firsthand how important that is. In a world as chaotic as ours, we have to stick together and take care of each other."

From those living in the bustling cities to those in far-off villages and touristy beach towns, the little white three-story house on a side street in Lumpini district is ready to welcome everyone.



Allan Riber Nielsen is one of three Danish co-founders and managing director of Padel Sozial. Photo: Mille Andersen

Three Danes bring a new padel community to Hua Hin

Only a month after opening its doors, Padel Sozial is becoming a place for both playing padel and building the padel community in Hua Hin. The centre was founded by three Danish men who set out to create a padel venue that could bring together both newcomers and experienced players.

By Mille Tanya Andersen

Hidden inside a massive warehouse on a quiet residential back street on the outskirts of Hua Hin, the reflecting glass of padel courts can be seen through the bottom of a large garage door.

Come a little closer, and you will hear the soft knock of padel balls hitting the red turf, people laughing and panting, and upbeat music playing in the background.

Inside the anonymous grey building, three Danish men have founded what they hope will become a cornerstone of health, sportsmanship and community in Hua Hin.

From first serve to full commitment

Allan Riber Nielsen is the day-to-day managing director of Padel Sozial, working alongside his wife and five local female employees. He is also the one welcoming me on a Sunday afternoon.

As he shows me around the venue, he tells me the story of how it all started.

Back in December, his former work colleague Morten Søgaard presented the idea of a community-based padel centre, and Allan did not hesitate to join the project.

"I had stopped working in China and Bangkok and settled down in Hua Hin with my family. I thought: I haven't tried that before, but let's give it a shot," Allan says.

Allan and Morten needed another partner, so they brought in Kristian Jensen, a Danish friend of Allan's from the golf community. Their first task was to find a space large enough to accommodate several courts.

Morten, who also owns the interior design and furniture store Ferior Interior in Hua Hin, knew the landlord of a large warehouse that had previously been used for Muay Thai.



“

I want to contribute to creating a social community in Hua Hin where people can have fun with the game.

”



A group of players participating in the Americano tournament on 11 August at Padel Sozial.



“

I'm so delighted that I get to do something that makes people get out and use their bodies and live a healthier lifestyle.

”

“And then we started wondering: how many courts can we have in here? And what is this padel thing? I had heard about it, but I was still quite new to it, especially building a centre,” Allan says.

Allan had never played padel before the courts in Hua Hin were laid, but he has since fallen completely in love with the sport.

“Right now I regret not starting earlier because of how amazing a sport it is. People are addicted to playing, because in padel you'll begin to feel a bit of success in your games pretty fast,” Allan says.

More than just a place to play

Although the founders had little experience with padel as a sport, they had a clear vision of how the centre should feel. The whole point of building it, according to Allan, was to cultivate a space where players could find a community and feel that they had a home.

“This community we've built only gets stronger by the day. It's easy for players to find teammates and opponents because we made groups where people could meet other players and there's room for everyone here. That's also the feedback we get from the customers, that they feel welcome even though they're new,” Allan says.

According to Allan, the “room for everyone” mantra applies not only to newcomers. The centre also caters to more experienced padel players by hosting tournaments and sessions with professional padel players.

“We take care of players that are completely new to the game, but we also offer a place for more experienced players to get even better and improve their ranking,” Allan says.

Building a home for padel

Allan describes how the founders wanted the centre to feel homely, while still being professional and optimised for good playing conditions.

The typical blue-coloured padel turf has been replaced with red turf to give the courts a more tennis-like feel, while rotating fans hover above each court.

Between the courts, Scandinavian-style benches and waiting areas are neatly arranged, while tropical plants make the space bright and welcoming. The centre also has a kids' corner where children can spend time while their parents play.





"First of all, we want to make it clear that we are in Hua Hin and not in Dubai. We didn't want it to be too clinical and clean. It is a nice and cozy place, and we want this to be the place people come before playing, but also stay after they've played," Allan says.

For the design and layout of the courts and equipment, the founders luckily had help from a local professional. Darika Roost, known as Dao, is currently the number one female padel player in Thailand and now the Padel Director at Padel Sozial.

"Dao worked as a freelance padel coach at some other padel centers in Hua Hin, but now we have hired her to manage all the coaching sessions and tournaments here. She's great," Allan says.

All the courts are named after major cities, including Copenhagen and Bangkok. On the "Madrid" court, a team of four players are competing against each other. On the adjacent "Marbella" court, Dao is conducting a one-on-one coaching session with a local Thai woman.

After the session, Dao shares what she likes about the sport and the centre.

"I love what I'm doing and I want to share my experience with padel, so people can feel confident on the court. I want to contribute to creating a social community in Hua Hin where people can have fun with the game."

What comes next?

When asked about the future of Padel Sozial, Allan points to several projects already in the works.

The founders have opened a coffee shop and restaurant inside the centre, giving players a place to enjoy food and drinks before or after their games. If the centre continues to thrive, Allan is also in talks with the other founders about opening centres in other parts of Thailand.

But for Allan, the ambitions go beyond expanding the business. This is also reflected in his working hours, which often reach 15 hours a day, seven days a week:

"I'm so delighted that I get to do something that makes people get out and use their bodies and live a healthier lifestyle."

Back inside the warehouse, the games continue. Balls bounce against the glass, players call out to one another and the music carries across the courts.

For three Danish entrepreneurs who entered the project with little experience of padel, the first serve has already turned into something bigger: a place where people come not only to play, but to meet, compete and stay a little longer.

He quit full-time architecture for farm life in China

Children sit around a long table in a covered outdoor classroom surrounded by cherry trees on the outskirts of Beijing – trees that will be ready for harvest in just a few weeks.

By Freja Nanna Mogensen



Danish architect and FunFarmFam founder Morten Holm left full-time architecture to create the outdoor learning farm outside Beijing.
Photo: Freja Nanna Mogensen

Mandarin and English blend together as teachers gather the five- and six-year-olds before lunch. Instructions are first shouted in Mandarin, then repeated in English by Danish architect and FunFarmFam founder Morten Holm.

Nearby, lunch is being prepared using vegetables grown directly on the farm.

The children quickly line up after the teachers' instructions and begin walking toward the lunch area – until everything suddenly stops for a group photo in front of a large FunFarmFam sign.

And instead of yelling "Cheese!", the children excitedly shout:

"Butterfly!"

"An extension of the classroom"

The scene plays out at FunFarmFam Ecology Plantation outside Beijing – a Danish-Chinese project where children swap classrooms for farm life.

Instead of sitting indoors reading about nature, the children feed animals, grow vegetables, cook food and spend their days outdoors.

Danish founder Morten Holm describes the project as "an extension of the classroom".

For Morten, the idea was never simply to create a farm.

"Here they get much more practical and real-time learning," he says. "It's much more authentic because it's happening in a real environment."

Sustainability built into the farm

The farm covers around 12 hectares filled with fruit trees, greenhouses, playgrounds and outdoor classrooms.

"There are cherries, apples, walnuts, pepper trees and Chinese sea hawthorn," Morten says while pointing across the farm.

Much of the project has been built by retrofitting older structures already found on the property.

"That's also a form of sustainability," he says.

Old farm buildings have been renovated instead of torn down, while furniture and covered teaching areas have been built using recycled materials.

The farm mainly welcomes kindergarten and school children from Beijing, and some of the playgrounds and shelters were even designed together with the children themselves.

"The older kids helped create some of the shelters and playground structures," Morten explains.

Swapping architecture for farm life

Morten originally came to China through architecture work and later settled permanently in Beijing.

For years, he worked as a partner in a Danish-Chinese architecture company before gradually shifting more of his focus toward FunFarmFam.

"The distance between starting something and seeing the payoff is much shorter here than in architecture," he says.



Dried vegetables and garlic hanging outside the farm kitchen help shade the building's indoor learning and dining spaces from the sun. Photo: Freja Nanna Mogensen



Colourful murals decorate several of the former farm buildings at FunFarmFam. Photo: Freja Nanna Mogensen

"With buildings, it can easily take five or ten years."

At the farm, ideas can instead quickly become physical projects involving children, teachers and families.

"It's probably the most fun when you don't completely know what you're doing," he says about throwing himself into something completely different from architecture and figuring things out along the way.

COVID forced the farm to evolve

The project originally began when Morten's mother-in-law asked for help upgrading the family farm outside Beijing.

At the time, the area mainly functioned as a traditional fruit and vegetable farm selling produce locally.

"What was here before was basically just a very practical farm," he says.

Together with his wife, he gradually began transforming the area into what has now become FunFarmFam.

Then came COVID-19.

"For three years, China kept opening and closing again and again," Morten says.

"We had to figure out what kind of business this actually was and where the demand really existed."

Outdoor classrooms remain rare

Since opening in 2022, the farm has welcomed children from schools and kindergartens across Beijing for outdoor learning activities on the farm.

Most visitors come from international or bilingual schools around the Chinese capital.

According to Morten, many local Chinese schools

simply do not have the budget for these kinds of trips.

"A lot of local schools maybe only have 20 or 30 yuan per student for excursions like this," he says.

"It's very different from Scandinavia where much of this is publicly supported."

Feeding chickens instead of sitting in class

After lunch, the children gather in a large circle near the animal area, quietly mixing garlic, corn and feed together in metal bowls for the farm's chickens and ducks.

British kindergarten teacher Matt watches from the side.

He regularly brings his students to the farm and says the children behave very differently outdoors compared to inside a normal classroom.

"They really engage with this activity," he says.

"There's not a lot of access to nature or farms in Beijing. So this is really unique."

Schools keep coming back

Morten believes outdoor learning is especially important in Asia's often highly academic school systems, where children can face heavy pressure to perform from an early age.

According to him, spending time outdoors offers many children something they otherwise rarely experience.

Today, Morten says the demand from schools has become much clearer.

"The difficult part now is actually getting through the doors of the schools," he says.

"Once schools come once, they usually come back."



The Summer I Said Goodbye

The summer of 2026 became the summer I travelled to Sweden, first and foremost to ensure that my late mother's ashes would be scattered at sea. Fulfilling her final wish was never a question – it was something I simply had to do.

My mother would probably have preferred to have been born a mermaid; she was truly at one with the sea.

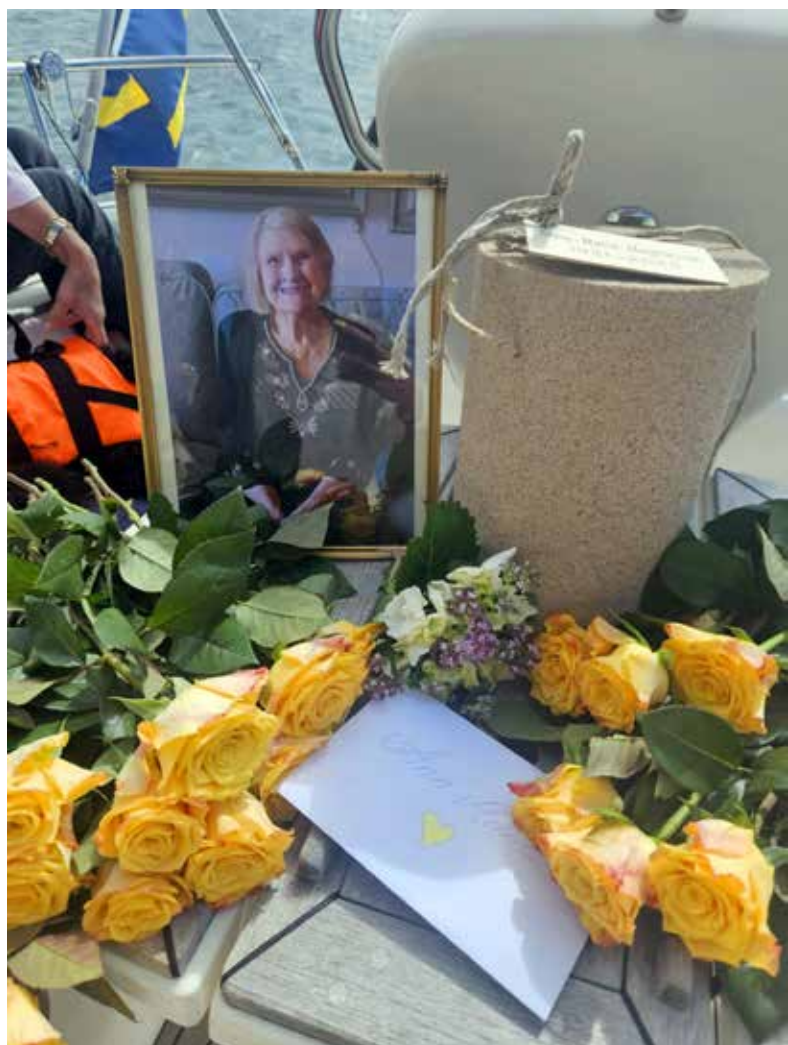
When travelling from Bangkok to Sweden, it hardly makes sense to stay for less than a month. The journey is both long and expensive. While my mother was still alive, I usually stayed for at least two months – a small way of making up for all the other months of the year when I was living on another continent.

To ensure that I would arrive safely at Landvetter Airport in Gothenburg, I booked my journey with Finnair; an airline I have remained loyal to for many years and one I have always trusted.

Imagine my surprise when I was greeted by clear blue skies and bright sunshine upon my arrival in Gothenburg. It was something I was certainly not used to. Normally, I would put on my down jacket as soon as I landed, since the weather was usually grey and chilly – or simply rainy. This time, however, Gothenburg welcomed me with beautiful summer weather.

Once I had secured permission for my mother's ashes to be scattered at sea, my family, friends and I agreed on a date that suited everyone who wished to be there. It is not simply a matter of going to any beach and scattering ashes.

Swedish regulations require that the ashes be released at least 300 metres from the mainland, and the location must be approved by the County Administration Board (Länsstyrelsen). Nor are the ashes scattered directly anymore.



“

My mother would probably have preferred to have been born a mermaid; she was truly at one with the sea.

”



Instead, the ashes are placed in a biodegradable sand urn, which quickly dissolves when it comes into contact with water.

The day had finally come. The sky was grey, and a gentle drizzle fell from the clouds. Dear friends had generously offered us the use of their beautiful sailing yacht. How my mother would have loved to have experienced such a day had she still been alive among us.

We had decided not to wear black, despite the solemn occasion. It was the height of summer, and yellow had always been my mother's favourite color. Each of us

wore something yellow in her honour. Once we were on board, we placed the urn, surrounded by yellow roses, beside a fairly recent photograph of my mother.

Our captain then sailed. There was a fresh breeze, and we had to hold on as the yacht made its way through the archipelago. After a scenic cruise among the islands near Styrösö, our captain found a calm spot and dropped the anchor.

It was time to say our final farewell.

As my mother dearly loved the songs "To The Sea" by Jussi Björling and "The Sea Was Never So Still" by Ewert Taube, we played those two songs. And then, as if on cue, the clouds parted and the sun broke through. It was a truly magical moment.

After a few heartfelt words and many salty tears, we gently released my mother into the sea.

Watching the urn drift away, surrounded by yellow roses, was both heartbreaking and beautiful.

Then we opened a bottle of well-chilled Prosecco – of course we did, as my mother had always loved a glass of sparkling wine and we needed it.

It marked the end of a long, well-lived life, and I am convinced it was exactly the kind of farewell my mother would have wanted.

The summer also brought many wonderful and unforgettable lunches and dinners with friends.

In our beautiful capital, Stockholm, one of Sweden's best-known designers celebrated a birthday and invited me to a magical afternoon and evening aboard the historic "Motala Express", a vessel built in the late nineteenth century. The Stockholm archipelago was at its most breathtakingly beautiful, as we were approximately one hundred guests who had the pleasure of sharing in this very special and fun occasion.

A birthday lunch at "Mälarpaviljongen", beautifully situated along Norr Mälarstrand, was another truly wonderful experience. How had I managed to miss this restaurant during all my previous visits to Stockholm?

So romantic, with its authentic Swedish home-style cuisine and an impressive wine list. We began with a classic Toast Skagen, the famous Swedish shrimp toast, created by the late, legendary Chef Tore Wretman. Chef Tore elevated this simple shrimp toast into an elegant classic toast by using selected hand-peeled prawns, creamy mayonnaise, fresh dill, a touch of horse-radish, and a generous topping of golden vendace roe (löjrom). I followed up with my choice of Swedish meatballs, served with mashed potatoes and freshly stirred lingonberries. A true classic – and absolutely delicious.

During my approximately six-week stay in Sweden, I felt almost as if I were on a tour. I have lost count of how many different beds I have slept in, thanks to so many caring and generous friends who opened their homes to me. A heartfelt thanks to all of you.



“

Sweden is as close to paradise as one can get – but as autumn approaches, paradise moves once again to Thailand.

”



I managed to visit Stockholm twice, as well as Smögen, Högsboholm, Nälleviken, Skaftö, Tommarp and Trelleborg. In Gothenburg, I was fortunate to be able to borrow a small apartment in a neighborhood that took me straight back to my school years. Here, as a young schoolgirl, I used to board the tram early in the mornings to get to school in Stampen.

Talking about nostalgia.

I have enjoyed watching Swedish television from time to time, something I never do in Bangkok. “Nyhets-

morgon” is an informative and pleasant programme to wake up to, offering a bit of everything.

I heard that in Finland, schoolchildren are offered free lunches in various parks during the summer holidays. For many families who struggle both to afford food and to find the time to shop and prepare meals, this initiative has been greatly appreciated.

Perhaps something for Sweden to consider adopting? Finland is, after all, a country that has achieved great success in many areas.

We have certainly noticed that living in Thailand has become considerably more expensive, but it is still not comparable to the high prices we experience in Scandinavia. It is said that Bangkok is now the tenth most expensive city in the world, with Singapore perhaps ranking first. That may well be true in some respects, but Bangkok still offers the possibility of living more affordably – as long as one sticks to local products and avoids the more luxurious, international restaurants.

I could write pages and pages about my Swedish tour; there is simply so much more I would love to mention.

When the weather is, as it has been for most of this summer, Sweden is as close to paradise as one can possibly get. But as the autumn approaches, paradise moves once again to “The Land Of Smiles” – Thailand.

Until next summer, Scandinavia!

Danish dairy companies exchange knowledge with Chiang Mai operations

Danish companies and Thai dairy stakeholders met in Chiang Mai earlier this month to discuss ways to strengthen Thailand's dairy industry.

The two-day programme on August 17–18 was organised by the Royal Danish Embassy in Bangkok as part of the Sustainable Danish Dairy Value Chain Partnership in Thailand.

The programme brought Danish companies together with Thai dairy farms, cooperatives and other industry stakeholders. Discussions covered areas including animal health, nutrition, breeding and genetics, farm management, milk processing and quality.

Companies involved included Arla Foods, Arla Foods Ingredients, Novonesis, GEA, Viking Genetics, Skov



Secco and FOSS. The embassy also thanked Brenntag for taking part.

The delegation visited several dairy operations in the Chiang Mai area, including Chiang Mai Fresh Milk, Farm Gold Milk, TK Dairy Gold Farm and local dairy cooperatives.

The embassy said the programme was intended to create

opportunities for knowledge sharing and closer cooperation between Danish companies and Thailand's dairy sector.

The initiative is part of Denmark's broader efforts to promote sustainable solutions and Danish expertise in Thailand's food and agriculture industries.

Vietnamese publisher explores Swedish education and publishing technology



Vietnam Education Publishing House is exploring cooperation with Swedish partners in education, publishing and digital learning.

The publisher discussed the opportunities during a meeting with

Vietnam's ambassador to Sweden, Tran Van Tuan, on 23 August. Representatives from the Vietnamese Teachers' Club in Sweden and Vietnamese community organisations also attended.

The discussions focused on

supporting Vietnamese-language education among the Vietnamese community in Sweden. Teachers highlighted the need for suitable textbooks, teaching materials and teaching methods for children growing up in Sweden.

Vietnam Education Publishing House is interested in Sweden's experience with digital publishing, educational technology and more sustainable printing and publishing.

The participants also discussed possible connections with Swedish schools, libraries, cultural organisations and technology companies.

Vietnam Education Publishing House donated books and learning materials to the Vietnamese Teachers' Club in Sweden.

Danish ambassador visits Carlsberg's Chongqing brewery

Denmark's Ambassador to China Michael Starbæk Christensen visited Carlsberg China's Dazhulin Brewery in Chongqing on 6 August.

The ambassador was accompanied by Minister Counsellor Jonas Bruntse Dahl Nielsen. They met with Carlsberg China President Lee Chee Kong, representatives from the Liangjiang New Area Administrative Committee and officials from the Foreign Affairs Office of the Chongqing Municipal Government.

During the visit, Carlsberg China presented its operations across China and discussed its work on innovation, sustainability and long-



term development in the Chinese market.

The Dazhulin Brewery is described by the Danish Embassy as a flagship brewery for Carlsberg China and the wider Carlsberg Group.

The meeting also included discussions about the future of the beer industry and Carlsberg's operations in China.

Chongqing is a major industrial centre in central China and an important production hub for the surrounding region.

The visit was part of the Danish Embassy's engagement with Danish companies operating in China.

Swedish programme promotes workplace dialogue at Vietnamese factories

Sweden's Ambassador to Vietnam, Johan Ndisi, joined representatives from six garment and textile factories as they marked their participation in a 12-month initiative facilitated by the Swedish Workplace Programme.

The factories, located in northern and central Vietnam, took part in practical training and peer coaching focused on workplace dialogue, co-operation and joint problem-solving.

According to the Embassy of Sweden in Hanoi, managers and worker representatives shared experiences, built trust and developed new approaches to addressing challenges together in the workplace.

The Swedish Workplace Programme is jointly implemented by the International Council of Swed-



ish Industry, NIR, and Swedish trade union IF Metall. It promotes cooperation between employees and management, including on issues such as health, safety and working conditions.

The Swedish Embassy acknowledged the six participating fac-

tory teams as well as H&M, NIR, IF Metall and the Swedish Workplace Programme for their involvement in the initiative.

The embassy did not disclose the names of the participating factories or provide specific measurable results from the programme.

Norway's Benchmark Genetics partners with Vietnam's NAVICO

Norwegian aquaculture genetics company Benchmark Genetics has entered a long-term strategic partnership with Vietnamese seafood producer Nam Viet Corporation (NAVICO) to develop a selective breeding programme for Nile tilapia.

The programme will focus on Nile tilapia, one of the world's most widely farmed freshwater fish and an increasingly important species for Vietnam's aquaculture industry.

NAVICO is one of Vietnam's largest seafood producers, while Benchmark Genetics specialises in designing and operating breeding programmes for more than 30 species.

"Our ambition is to position tilapia as a premium product and

export from Vietnam, supported by a fully integrated and sustainable value chain," said Doan Chi Thien, Chief Executive Officer at NAVICO.

Benchmark Genetics will design the breeding programme and provide technical guidance and support. According to the companies, the partnership has already established the foundation breeding population, with future breeding cycles focusing on commercially important traits such as growth, survival and robustness.

"We are proud to contribute our global expertise in genetic improvement to support NAVICO's ambitious goal and to help raise the standard for sustainable aquaculture in one of the world's most important seafood-producing nations,"



said Dr Morten Rye, Director of Genetics Services and International Strategies at Benchmark Genetics.

The breeding programme will be implemented in Vietnam and is intended to support NAVICO's ambition to expand premium tilapia production for export markets.

Finnish healthcare technology showcased in Malaysia

Finnish and Malaysian healthcare professionals came together in Kuala Lumpur for the Finnish Spine Therapy Masterclass 2026 and Lojer Manuthera Clinical Symposium.

Deputy Head of Mission at the Finnish Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, Maiju Lepomäki, attended the opening ceremony.

The programme was organised by Evo Performance, International Medical University and other partners. It focused on healthcare, rehabilitation and physiotherapy.

A key part of the event was the Manuthera treatment table, developed by Finnish healthcare company Lojer.

The table is designed for use



by physiotherapists, chiropractors and other healthcare professionals treating spinal and joint conditions.

During the masterclass, participants were trained in how to use the equipment in clinical practice.

The Finnish Embassy said the event highlighted the value of combining healthcare technology with clinical expertise to improve patient care.

Finland and Malaysia are also looking to strengthen cooperation in areas such as preventive healthcare, patient-centred care and health technology.

The event provided an opportunity for Finnish and Malaysian healthcare professionals to exchange knowledge and explore further cooperation in the sector.

Finnish Valmet signs deal to supply technology to Vietnam paper mills



Finnish technology company Valmet has signed an agreement to supply quality-control systems for two tissue-paper production projects in Vietnam.

Valmet and its Vietnamese partner ATZ Solutions will provide

two Valmet Quality Control Systems (QCS) for Vietnamese paper producer KORO. The systems are designed to improve production quality and efficiency while reducing the use of energy and fuel.

A separate memorandum of

understanding was also signed between ATZ Solutions and Vietnamese company Mizu Paper. It covers potential cooperation on future tissue-paper projects, including paper-making machinery, automation, quality-control systems and technical services.

The agreements were signed in Tampere, Finland, during a visit to Finland by a delegation from the Vietnam Paper and Pulp Association.

The delegation also met with the Vietnamese Embassy to discuss closer cooperation with Finnish companies in paper production and related technologies. The embassy said it would continue to support business links between Finnish and Vietnamese companies.

Norwegian developer withdraws proposed AI data centre project in Philippines

A Norwegian-linked developer has withdrawn a proposal to build a 50MW artificial intelligence data centre in Oton, Iloilo, in the Philippines, following a public consultation.

The proposed project, known as the WS Hyperscale AI Campus, was presented by Daniel Stefan Robertsen on behalf of Norway Green Energy. The planned facility was to be located on a 10-hectare site in Barangay Abilay Sur and was reportedly valued at around P20.3 billion.

The proposal was discussed during a public consultation attend-



ed by local officials and residents, with some residents raising concerns about the project's potential water consumption and cooling requirements.

Oton Vice Mayor Jose Neil Olivares stressed that the municipal council had not endorsed the project.

Robertsen later informed local authorities that Norway Green Energy would no longer pursue the proposal, citing the "current circumstances", according to Philippine media reports.

The withdrawal comes as demand for data-centre capacity is growing across Southeast Asia, driven in part by the expansion of artificial intelligence and cloud computing.

SAS expands flights to Thailand for winter 2026

SAS will expand its flight services to Thailand during the 2026–27 winter season, adding new routes to Phuket and Krabi while increasing capacity on its existing Copenhagen–Bangkok route.

The Scandinavian airline will launch direct flights from Copenhagen to Phuket on 9 December 2026, operating two to three times a week. A new Copenhagen–Krabi route will follow on 8 December, with two weekly flights.

Both new routes will be operated with Airbus A350 aircraft and are scheduled to run through late March 2027.



SAS will also increase capacity on its Copenhagen–Bangkok route by 15 percent compared with the previous winter season. Overall, the

airline says its capacity to Thailand will increase by more than 75 percent.

The expansion comes as SAS continues to strengthen its long-haul network from Copenhagen, its main hub. The airline is also adding capacity to destinations elsewhere in Asia, including Seoul and Tokyo.

The new flights will provide additional direct connections between Scandinavia and two of Thailand's major tourist destinations, while increased Bangkok capacity will strengthen an existing route between the regions.

Swedish documentary screened at Hong Kong film festival



A Swedish documentary exploring freedom of expression, public demonstrations and the role of police in protecting democratic rights was screened in

Hong Kong as part of the fifth annual EU-Asia Documentary Festival.

The Dialogue Police was screened at Broadway Cinematheque, with Sweden's Consul Gen-

eral Louise Bergholm and Deputy Consul General Amelie Coyet in attendance.

The film follows a specialised Swedish police unit tasked with facilitating dialogue during public demonstrations and protecting the right to freedom of expression. Set against climate protests and other controversial demonstrations, it examines how officers work to de-escalate tensions through dialogue and empathy.

In remarks before the screening, Bergholm highlighted the film's focus on democracy, freedom of expression and social cohesion.

The EU-Asia Documentary Festival ran from 22 July to 9 August and featured 17 European and Asian documentaries. The festival was organised by the EU Office to Hong Kong and Macao in partnership with Broadway Cinematheque.

Bangkok exhibition celebrates Danish diplomat's love of orchids

A long connection between Denmark, Thailand and orchids is being highlighted at a botanical art exhibition in Bangkok.

The 8th Botanical Art Thailand Exhibition at the Bangkok Art and Culture Centre (BACC) features a special display, "Orchids of Siam: The Seidenfaden Legacy", focusing on Danish diplomat Gunnar Seidenfaden.

Seidenfaden was Denmark's first ambassador to Thailand. During his time in the country, he developed a strong interest in its orchids and worked with Thai scientists to study them.

His work became an important part of Thailand's botanical history. Several Thai orchids were later named in his honour.

The exhibition brings this history to life through the work of Thai botanical artists. Their paintings and illustrations highlight the orchids that Seidenfaden studied and the lasting connection between science and art.

The Danish–Thai connection goes back even further. More than



125 years ago, Danish naval officer Andreas du Plessis de Richelieu served as an admiral and minister of the Royal Thai Navy. He was later given the Thai noble title Phraya Chonlayutthayothin.

Speaking at the exhibition opening, Martin Schneekloth, Special Advisor for Circular Economy Cooperation at the Royal Danish Embassy, highlighted the long history of cooperation between Denmark

and Thailand.

"Science helps us understand nature, but art helps us see its beauty," Schneekloth said.

The exhibition is organised with support from Mahidol University and botanical gardens in Bangkok and Chiang Mai. Orchids connected to the exhibition can also be found in the garden of the Royal Danish Embassy.

Swedish fashion brand Acne Studios opens first store in Malaysia

Swedish luxury fashion brand Acne Studios has entered the Malaysian market with the opening of its first standalone store at Pavilion Kuala Lumpur.

The new boutique is operated in partnership with Club 21, the regional luxury retailer that also manages Acne Studios' operations in Singapore and Taiwan.

Founded in Stockholm in 1996, Acne Studios is known for its minimalist Scandinavian design, premium



denim and ready-to-wear collections. The Kuala Lumpur boutique offers the brand's latest collections for men and women, including clothing, footwear, leather goods and accessories.

The Malaysian launch marks another step in Acne Studios' expansion across Southeast Asia, where the brand already has a presence in markets including Singapore and Taiwan.

Nokia to close almost all China sites by end of 2026

Finnish telecom company Nokia plans to close almost all of its sites in mainland China by the end of 2026, according to Reuters, citing the South China Morning Post.

A Nokia spokesperson confirmed that the company is reducing its operations in China as part of an effort to align its business with its global operating model. The company said its business in China has declined steadily in recent years.

Nokia has not yet disclosed the exact number of sites or employees

affected.

The move follows a restructuring of Nokia's China operations that was announced earlier this year. In its latest financial report, Nokia said it expects to complete the integration of its China operations within two years, with €350 million in integration charges expected by the end of 2026.

Nokia remains active elsewhere in Asia-Pacific, with offices and operations including Singapore, Indonesia, Japan and South Korea.



The company said its overall 2026 outlook remains unchanged, with comparable operating profit expected to be between €2.1 billion and €2.6 billion.

Indonesian pupils explore Danish portrayal of Jakarta

Indonesian schoolchildren were given an opportunity to see how their country was presented to pupils in Denmark through materials produced for the 2025 Danish Children's Development Calendar.

Representatives from the Royal Danish Embassy in Jakarta visited a primary school in North Jakarta in June, where 45 pupils participated in two days of presentations, games and storytelling about Denmark.

The pupils also read *Forsvundet i Jakarta – Missing in Jakarta*, a Danish children's book written by author Benni Bødker. The embassy had translated the book into Bahasa Indonesia under the title *Hilang di Jakarta*.

The translation allowed the Indonesian pupils to encounter the same story and portrayal of Jakarta that Danish children used while learning about Indonesia.

The book formed part of the educational material accompanying the 2025 edition of Børnenes U-landskalender, Denmark's annual Children's Development Calendar. That year's material focused on Indonesia and introduced Danish primary-school pupils to everyday life, nature and climate challenges in the country.

Proceeds from the 2025 calendar supported a PlanBørnefond project helping children and young people in Jakarta respond to climate-related challenges.



Historic home of Danish church in Singapore opens for guided tour

The Danish Seamen's Church in Singapore opened the doors to its historic Golden

Bell Mansion for a special guided tour on 15 August 2026.

Organised together with the

Royal Geographical Society – Singapore, the tour explored the history of the mansion on Mount Faber and its transformation into a gathering place for Singapore's Danish community.

The tour was led by Roney Tan, the great-great-grandson of prominent Singaporean philanthropist Tan Tock Seng. He presented the origins of the mansion, which was built for his relative Tan Boo Liat in 1910.

Golden Bell Mansion has also hosted several prominent visitors. Chinese revolutionary leader Sun Yat Sen stayed at the property during a visit to Singapore in 1911.

Today, the historic building is home to the Danish Seamen's Church, which serves as a church and cultural meeting place for Danes and other Scandinavians in Singapore.



Finnish diplomat takes to the ice at international tournament in Indonesia

Finland's Deputy Head of Mission in Indonesia, Teemu Laakkonen, represented the Jakarta Dragons at the City of Heroes ice hockey tournament in Surabaya.

The tournament, held from 14 to 17 August 2026, brought together Indonesian teams and players from abroad for four days of competition.

Laakkonen serves as Minister Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission at the Finnish Embassy in Jakarta. He has previously described ice hockey as a Finnish pastime he wanted to continue while posted in Indonesia.



The embassy welcomed the growing interest in ice hockey in Indonesia, describing the tournament as an example of *gotong royong*, the Indonesian tradition of cooperation and mutual assistance.

Although Indonesia's tropical climate offers few natural opportunities for the sport, ice hockey clubs have developed in cities including Jakarta and Surabaya. The Jakarta Dragons are part of this growing community.

Cooking event in Stockholm supports children in Thailand

The Royal Thai Embassy in Stockholm hosted a Thai cooking class and tasting lunch on 13 August 2026 to raise funds for underprivileged children in Thailand.

Organised in collaboration with the International Women's Club of Stockholm, the event brought together members of Stockholm's diplomatic community and the IWC at the Thai Ambassador's Residence.

Thai Ambassador to Sweden Arunrung Phothong Humphreys said the event highlighted the role of food in Thai culture, including the importance of sharing and conversation around the dining table.

Participants learned how to prepare Pad Thai and chor muang,



traditional flower-shaped Thai dumplings. A chef demonstrated the selection and preparation of ingredients before participants were invited to make the dishes themselves.

Proceeds from the event were donated to the Swedish Happy Child

Foundation, which supports Happy Child Home in Phuket and works to provide disadvantaged children with a secure upbringing and access to education.

Swedish musician Viktor Norén also performed during the event.

New Oslo-Shanghai route expands Norwegian salmon export to China



A new direct cargo route between Oslo and Shanghai has been launched by China Southern Airlines. It is expected to carry a capacity of around 200 tonnes of salmon from Norway to China every week.

The route began operating on 19 August, using Boeing 777F freighters carrying 100 tonnes of salmon on each flight twice a week.

"For fresh seafood where every hour counts, direct air freight has great value," said Eva Beate Lande,

cargo director at Avinor.

Five cargo routes connect Norway to China directly, with 13 departures a week, according to Avinor. China is Norway's third largest seafood market with exports reaching 178,000 tonnes in 2025 worth NOK 12.3 billion (€1.13 billion).

According to Lars Tømte, air freight director at Mowi, the new service would strengthen the Norway-Shanghai trade connection.

"The new China Southern route gives access to valuable capacity that is important for the seafood industry, and we look forward to exploring the opportunities this opens up," he said.

China Southern's Freight operations in Oslo will be handled by Oslo Seafood & Cargo Center.

Swedish athlete David Thid switches allegiance to Thailand

Swedish athlete David Thid, who competes in the 400-metre hurdles, has announced that he will switch his sporting allegiance from Sweden to Thailand.

The 23-year-old, who has Thai family roots through his mother, said his decision was driven primarily by concerns over Sweden's Olympic selection policy.

"It is mainly because I don't trust the Swedish Olympic Committee (SOK) and the risk of not being selected for the Olympics even though I deserve the place," Thid said.

With a personal best of 49.12 seconds in the 400m hurdles, Thid is among Sweden's leading active



athletes in the event. He hopes the move will improve his chances of qualifying for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games.

Swedish Athletics Secretary

General David Fridell described Thid's departure as another warning sign, while national team coach Kajsa Bergqvist called it "a great loss" for Swedish athletics.

Under international athletics rules, athletes changing national allegiance are normally required to observe a waiting period before representing their new country in international competition. Thid hopes to obtain an exemption that would allow him to compete for Thailand from late 2027.

For Thailand, Thid's arrival would strengthen the country's athletics programme with an internationally experienced athlete entering his prime.

Danish producer turns Chinese folk traditions into electronic music



Danish electronic music producer HEDEGAARD has spent two months travelling through western China, using traditional music as inspiration for a new project.

The musician, whose real name is Rasmus Hedegaard, travelled around 7,200 kilometres and collaborated with musicians from 10 ethnic groups, according to Chinese media outlet iChongqing.

The journey has resulted in the album KINΔ and a 10-episode documentary, *Western China's Melody*.

The documentary follows his journey and introduces audiences to musical traditions from different parts of the region.

HEDEGAARD recorded and worked with local musicians while travelling through different parts of western China. Their traditional instruments and musical styles were then combined with his electronic sound.

The documentary and album aim to introduce elements of western China's musical traditions to audiences outside the country, while bringing Danish electronic music into contact with Chinese musical heritage.



Beerlao wins global praise

The Economist recently described Beerlao as “probably the most important lager in the world”, echoing Carlsberg’s famous slogan. The newspaper recognised what many visitors to Laos have known for decades: the country’s national beer is far more than just another Asian lager.

For ScandAsia readers, however, Beerlao’s success has an additional dimension. It is also the story of one of the Nordic region’s longest-running and most successful business partnerships in Southeast Asia.

Founded in 1973 as a joint venture between Lao and French interests, Lao Brewery Company has grown into one of Laos’ largest companies. Beerlao dominates the domestic beer market, while the company has expanded into soft drinks, bottled water and other beverages. Today, it is also one of the country’s largest taxpayers and employers.

A partnership ScandAsia has followed since 2002

ScandAsia first reported on the Danish connection in August 2002, when Carlsberg became a shareholder in Lao Brewery in a deal that reshaped the country’s brewing industry.

At the time, the Lao Government retained a 50 percent stake,



while Carlsberg acquired 25 percent alongside another 25 percent held by TCC International, part of Thai businessman Charoen Sirivadhanabhakdi’s business empire.

The arrangement is particularly interesting in hindsight. Charoen would later build Chang Beer into Carlsberg’s biggest competitor in Thailand, meaning that, for a brief period, the future rivals were partners in Laos.

Within a few years, the ownership structure was reorganised into a joint venture between the Lao Government and Carlsberg. Today, Carlsberg holds a controlling 61 percent stake in Lao Brewery.

Building a national brand rather than replacing it

One of Carlsberg’s most successful decisions was not to replace Beerlao with one of its own international brands.

Instead, the Danish brewer invested in strengthening Beerlao as Laos’ national beer. Brewed with

locally grown jasmine rice combined with European malt and German hops and yeast, Beerlao has earned an international reputation while retaining its distinctly Lao identity.

Over the years, the company has expanded its range, developed its brewery operations and introduced premium brands, while continuing to build Beerlao’s position in the market.

Most recently, ScandAsia reported that Lao Brewery continued expanding despite Laos’ slowing economy. The company sells more than 100 litres of beverages per person annually in Laos, while Beerlao maintains around 90 percent of the domestic beer market. Laos has also become one of Carlsberg’s most important markets worldwide.

Recognition beyond the beer itself

Beerlao has become a symbol of modern Laos, demonstrating how a local brand can thrive through long-term international investment while preserving its national identity.

Perhaps that is why The Economist found itself echoing Carlsberg’s famous slogan when it described Beerlao as “probably the most important lager in the world.”

For ScandAsia, it is the latest chapter in a remarkable Danish-Lao business story that began more than two decades ago.

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