

Message



Axel Blom
President
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Time to look ahead

The year ahead 2008 started sadly with the passing of H.R.H. Princess Galyani Vadhana Krom Luang Naradhiwas Rajanagrindra, elder sister of H.M. The King of Thailand, on 2 January.

The Princess was a scholar and was active in education throughout her life. In addition to her role as patron for a number of charitable and educational organisations, her main interests were history, archaeology, art, classical music and travelling. Princess Galyani Vadhana visited Norway on several occasions. In 1993 she visited Northcape where she inaugurated a statue of her grandfather, King Chulalongkorn who visited Norway in 1907. In 2002, she again visited Norway, this time Svalbard. She had great interest in arctic life and had earlier visited both Iceland (1996) and Greenland (1999).

Last year, when the Thai-Norwegian Chamber of Commerce wished to issue a commemorative medal to mark the centennial of King Chulalongkorn's visit to Norway in 1907, the Chamber sought Royal Approval for donating the majority of the proceeds from the sale of replica statues and medals to one of H.R.H. Princess Galyani Vadhana's charities. H.R.H. kindly endorsed the project which is still running.

The Royal Mourning will be completed on 11 April 2008. A cremation pavilion is being built at Pramane Grounds in front of the Grand Palace, and it is expected that the Royal Cremation Ceremony will take place during autumn. During this difficult time, our thoughts are with the Royal Family as well as Princess Galyani Vadhana's daughter, Thanpuying Tasna-Valaya Sorasongkram, and her family.

2008 also marks a new era for Thailand with democracy being restored. Yet democracy is more than restoring elections and constitutions. It's about good governance and actions of elected officials once they enter their new positions. It's also about how the newly elected officials level the playing field for the country's citizens and investors alike. In the wake of the military coup in 2006, the confidence of foreign investors declined drastically. It's my sincere hope that the new government will serve Thailand well by restoring investor confidence as well as securing national reconciliation.

Sincerely,

Axel Blom
President
Thai-Norwegian Chamber of Commerce