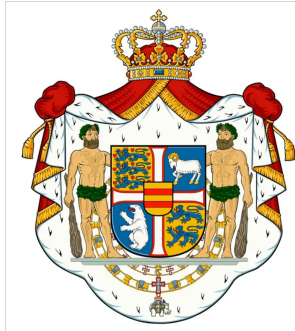


News from Denmark

April, 2026



The Royal Court

Prince Vincent and princess Josephine were confirmed April 18 in Frederiksborg Slotskirke

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King Frederik went on a sledding trip in Greenland April 20-23



Still no government

Denmark went through April without a new government. Following the inconclusive March election – in which PM Mette Frederiksen's Social Democrats got their worst result since 1903 – coalition negotiations were continuing between Frederiksen's camp and potential partners including the Green Left, the Social Liberals and the centrist Moderates. Today, chances are that the future government will be a center-left wing one led by Mette Frederiksen and with support from the far most left-oriented party to avoid having a majority against them in parliament, in which case the government must resign.

In this context, it is important to be aware that even the most right-wing Danish parties are to the left of the American Democrats.



Mette Frederiksen

Acting Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen has been named in Time Magazine's list of the 100 most influential people in the world this year. Time Magazine justifies Mette Frederiksen's choice for the list with, among other things, her actions in connection with Donald Trump's desire to get Greenland into American hands. "Frederiksen remained adamant when President Trump threatened to 'one way or another' get hold of Danish-controlled Greenland", writes Time Magazine.

The news magazine further writes that Mette Frederiksen has been firm in her support for Ukraine, which has been at war with Russia since 2022. Time Magazine draws parallels between the Danish Prime Minister and the British Prime Minister from 1979 to 1990, Margaret Thatcher, also known as the "Iron Lady". Thatcher would have recognized her determination, writes Time.



Great Prayer Day debate continues

For those Danes who grew up hearing about Store Bededag – Great Prayer Day, a uniquely Danish Lutheran holiday celebrated on the fourth Friday after Easter – April is when its absence is felt most acutely. The holiday, which dated back to 1686, was abolished by the Danish government in 2023 and removed from the calendar in 2024, with the savings used to fund Denmark's NATO defence commitments.

What is striking is how the debate has shifted. A poll in late April found that 40% want the holiday reinstated – down from 56% in February. Store Bededag was – in modern times – most famous for eating warm wheat rolls (called 'hveder') the evening before, which is still a widespread tradition.



Can we say it in Danish?

On 30 April, the Danish Language Council (Dansk Sprognævn) launched a nationwide campaign called 'Kan vi på dansk?' — 'Can we say it in Danish?' The campaign invites all Danes to share their opinions on English loanwords that have crept into everyday Danish, and to help find Danish alternatives.

The campaign runs through to the end of 2026 in three phases. Phase one, running through May, asks people which English words feel unnecessary or irritating in Danish — and to suggest Danish alternatives. Phase two in September will test the most promising Danish alternatives. Phase three, in early 2027, will see the Language Council publish its official recommendations.

This campaign touches the perennial tension between keeping a language pure and letting it absorb the words of the world around it. Danish has always borrowed freely — from German, from French, from English (where Danish, or rather the Old Norse language is responsible for contributing several words) — and the question of where the line falls is as much cultural as linguistic.



Viking Ship Museum announces extraordinary find

The month's most remarkable news for history lovers came on 2 April: the Viking Ship Museum in Roskilde announced the discovery of the wreckage of the warship Dannebrog, sunk by the British Navy during the Battle of Copenhagen — exactly 225 years earlier to the day, on 2 April 1801.

The Dannebrog was Denmark's flagship at the Battle of Copenhagen, one of the defining naval engagements of the Napoleonic Wars. It was during this battle that the British Admiral Horatio Nelson famously raised his telescope to his blind eye and declared he could see no signal to retreat. The Dannebrog caught fire and exploded, with the loss of most of her crew. Her wreck had never been found — until now.

For those with ancestors from the Copenhagen area or from naval families, this discovery connects directly to a moment of great national drama. The museum plans further excavation and conservation work. It is the kind of discovery that reminds us how close Danish history lies beneath the surface — sometimes literally.



All Copenhagen buses now electric

Copenhagen has now completed a transition that had been ten years in the making: the last of the city's 42 bus routes switched to fully electric operation.

The goal was set by Copenhagen City Hall back in 2016, when politicians decided that all city-funded bus lines would be converted to zero emissions. By early 2024 the target of 50% electric had already been reached.

The move saves an estimated 14,700 tonnes of CO2 per year from Copenhagen's municipal bus fleet alone. For descendants visiting Copenhagen, you'll now ride in near-silent electric buses on every city route — a very different experience from the rumbling diesels of previous decades. It is the kind of infrastructural achievement that rarely makes headlines but shapes daily life for hundreds of thousands of people.



The Round Tower gets a new hat

One of Copenhagen's most beloved landmarks — Rundetårn, the Round Tower built by King Christian IV in 1642 — has been undergoing a major restoration since January 2026. The three-tonne copper dome that crowns the observatory was carefully lifted down by crane and has spent the winter being restored at the foot of the tower, alongside the tower's refractor telescope, which was sent to a specialist in Germany.

The plan is for the restored dome to be lifted back into place in May. The observatory itself — Europe's oldest functioning public observatory — is expected to reopen in October, with a newly restored telescope and renewed copper roof that should protect it for decades to come.

For those visiting Copenhagen before autumn: the tower's famous spiral ramp and viewing platform remain open, and a special year-long exhibition called 'Lightyear 2026' is running to mark the 350th anniversary of Danish astronomer Ole Rømer's discovery of the speed of light in 1676. If your ancestors were Copenhageners, the Round Tower was as central to the city's skyline in their days as it is now.



Priscilla Presley in Randers

This story began just before April but was the talk of the month: Priscilla Presley — the 80-year-old former wife of Elvis Presley — made a sold-out visit to Randers in central Jutland to give a lecture on her life with the King of Rock and Roll.

The occasion was arranged by Memphis Mansion, Denmark's remarkable Elvis museum in Randers — a full-scale recreation of Graceland, Elvis's Memphis home. Priscilla toured the city, visited the museum, was officially welcomed by the city's cultural committee chairman, and expressed genuine delight at the warmth of Randers. 'All the people are so friendly — I really hadn't expected that,' she said.

The visit was such a success that it sold out immediately, and a return visit has been announced for October 2026 — this time also including Copenhagen. For those with Jutland roots, Randers' status as home to Europe's most elaborate Elvis museum is one of those wonderful Danish eccentricities that speaks to the country's capacity for enthusiasm and craft. Memphis Mansion is well worth a visit if you are ever in the area.



Odense Cathedral asks residents to donate gold for the bishop's clasp

In a story that feels straight out of the medieval church — but is entirely contemporary — Odense Cathedral made an appeal in late April that caught Denmark's imagination: they asked all residents of the island of Fyn (Funen) and the surrounding islands to donate gold, which would be melted down and cast into an 18-carat gold clasp for the bishop of Funen's new ceremonial robe.

The bishop has served in the role since 2023. The previous episcopal robe was altered by his predecessor in a way that made it unwearable for him, and so a new one has been created — funded by foundation grants.

But Odense Cathedral wanted the gold clasp to come from the people of Funen themselves. "By having Funen residents donate their used gold," said the parish priest, "we get the opportunity to weave the new episcopal robe together with the many generations who have a connection to the church on Funen."

The clasp is shaped as an impression of Odense Cathedral's star vault — the Gothic vaulted ceiling of the church — with a blue-green gemstone in the centre, referencing the azure background of the cathedral's altarpiece. It will weigh approximately 170 grams, equivalent to about 50 rings of 18-carat gold. Within hours of the appeal, the first donation arrived: a gold pendant from a necklace, brought in by a retired schoolteacher from Odense.

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