

ASIA HOUSE

HOME OF BUSINESS - CULTURE - PEOPLE



AIR POLLUTION IN SHANGHAI, CHINA

ON THE GLOBAL AGENDA IN MARCH 2019

Although the last month has been short when counting days, a torrent of events blur its brevity.

Tensions run high, in Europe not least around [Brexit](#), and in Asia some conflicts escalate, including between [Pakistan](#) and [India](#) which has led to [China](#) and [ASEAN](#) among many others urging dialogue. In Hanoi, despite the excellent hospitality of the [Vietnamese hosts](#), the summit between US President [Trump and Kim Jong-Un](#), leader of DPRK, ended abruptly with [no clear path](#) forward.

Economic outlooks seem not as stormy with [Japan](#) performing as expected, and a draft [law on foreign investments in China](#) introduced at the annual National People's Congress gathering. [Malaysia's Prime Minister](#) visited the Philippines and gave interesting perspectives on developments in Asia.

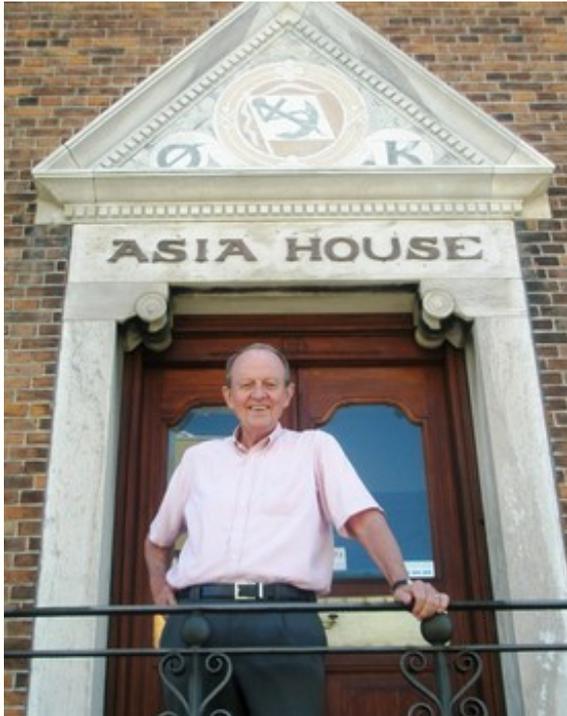
Elections will eventually take place in Denmark sometime in the coming months, the [election date in Thailand](#) is now set for 24 March, and in [India, elections](#) will begin on 11 April.

This year's [index on air pollution](#) in cities indicates that despite divisions, Asian countries also have much in common: 97 of the top-100 areas most affected by air pollution lie in Asia, demanding economic resources and political focus with ample opportunity for cooperation.

Susanne Rumohr Hækkerup

Executive Director

IN MEMORY OF CARSTEN DENCKER NIELSEN



It is with great sadness we must announce the passing of Mr. Carsten Dencker Nielsen, Honorary Chairman of Asia House and Honorary Consul General of Thailand. Carsten Dencker Nielsen devoted his entire working life to The East Asiatic Company, and after the dissolution of the EAC he focused his creativity and energy on developing Asia House. His dedication, inspiration and friendship will be missed immeasurably. Carsten Dencker Nielsen made a huge impact on everyone he met during his busy and committed life and will be forever remembered by his numerous professional acquaintances and friends all over the world. Our thoughts and compassion go to Carsten's wife, Lise, and his family.



SHOULD CORPORATE ACCELERATORS BE (RE-)CONSIDERED?

Within the last 2-3 years, multinationals have established a string of corporate accelerators in Bengaluru. Now they're looking to internationalize. Innovation Lab Asia visited Shell E4 and Maersk OceanPro, to learn what they have to offer.

Back in 2005 Indian author Chetan Bhagat rose to fame with a novel called "One Night @ the Call Center". The book gave a sobering insight into the reality of the Indian call center worker; how they lumbered to work every night to face hundreds of calls from irate westerners, and how their youthful dreams and academic aspirations slowly withered away.

The Call Center epitomized the Indian IT-revolution in the early 00's.

Moving up the value chain

Now things are changing. Today Bengaluru is moving up the value chain, providing cutting edge innovation to the global tech revolution. And this has caught the attention of the big multinationals.

Within the last two years, a growing number of corporate accelerators have popped up all over Bengaluru, seeking to leverage on the rapid and cost-efficient R&D provided by startups. Of course, corporate accelerators are no novelty - a similar trend took place in Europe and the US some years back - with mixed results.

A match made in Heaven?

At first glance, the corporate accelerator is a match made in heaven, combining the agile ingenuity of the startups with the vast resources of a corporate. But the partnership has a flipside, described in detail in this article on [Techcrunch.com](https://www.techcrunch.com).

The main concern seems to boil down to this: "The goal of a startup is to build a scalable solution to a general problem facing an industry, not a fitted solution to one company's challenges". Startups fear entering a Faustian pact with the corporates, compromising their independence and

committing themselves to just one partner.

Nonetheless, it may be worth exploring how these new corporate accelerators can help Nordic startups establish themselves in markets faraway from their own domestic shores.

Shell E4

Shell E4 was established in 2017 and presently has completed two rounds with 5 and 10 Indian startups. Now with the launch of the International Track they are also looking for foreign B2B startups within energy-related sectors, including electric mobility, renewable energy, biofuels, technology in energy such as blockchain & IoT, smart grids & microgrids, waste to value technologies. The International Track is flexible with a running in-take.

The program seeks to remove as many obstacles as possible for the startups: Shell provides practical support to establishing a legal entity and importing hardware to India, and assistance in setting up meetings with external stakeholders and investors.

A key aspect of the support is access to world class lab infrastructure at the Shell Technology Centre Bangalore. Shell also helps identify Proof of Concept pilots within the corporation, along with potential funding for its implementation.

According to Shell, one of its strongest value propositions is direct access to advanced laboratory facilities. Thus, one of the earlier startups printed two drones with onsite 3D-printing equipment. On the delicate question of IPR, the program aims to be startup friendly. Any IP independently created by the startup belongs to the startup.

OceanPro

Maersk OceanPro was launched in 2018, and in a few days – on 14 March – the first 7 Indian startups will be graduating. Each of the startups were given a specific problem to be solved during a 4-month period.

So, an AI company developed an algorithm to determine damage-level and repair quality of containers based on photos. An ML startup developed text analytics to identify unpaid invoices. A VR company created a 3D visual platform to allow Maersk employees to experience being on board their ships. If the solutions are found viable next week on Demoday, they may be converted into a vendor contract with Maersk.

Throughout the process, OceanPro has provided access to Maersk data and mentors, covered the costs of PoC-implementation and provided additional funding depending on the case complexity. The companies were selected from their solutions (based either on an existing PoC or a well-defined product) rather than their financials.

The startups did not need to be physically located in Bengaluru but could work at a distance. Importantly, this may also be the case for Danish or Nordic startups entering with OceanPro.

Perhaps a soft landing

The corporate startups – these and others – may therefore provide a viable entry point for Nordic startups to India. No matter how “born global” a company may be, it will always be easier taking the train to Berlin than the plane to Bengaluru.

But corporate accelerators narrow the gap, by providing – at least on paper – a full suite of soft-landing spots: Specific use-cases, laboratory access, logistical support, (some) expenses covered. And perhaps most importantly in a Danish context; a greater openness towards early stage startups than perhaps is the case for local VC’s and accelerators.

UPCOMING EVENTS IN ASIA HOUSE



20.03.19: Asia Days 2019

Asia Days, an organization at Copenhagen Business School, will once again host their networking event at Asia House as a part of their yearly two-day event. Asia Days is organized by students, and features talks, panel debates, and networking events for students and industry alike.

Read more about Asia Days 2019 on their facebook page [HERE](#).

04.04.19: Collecting data for AI - in Asia and elsewhere

How do you get high-quality labeled data without getting grey hair? Eric Navarro, Machine Learning Engineer at Radiobotics, Maria de Freitas, Growth Lead of Imagine Project at LEO Innovation Lab, and Akshay Pai, Co-founder and CTO of Cerebriu will share real-world experiences of how they navigated figuring out what data were needed and finding strategic ways to get it.



LAST MONTH IN ASIA HOUSE



19.02.19: Is India your (next) business adventure?

On February 19, the Maritime Development Centre held an event in Asia House focusing on business opportunities in India for maritime companies in Denmark. H.E. Ajit Gupte, the Indian Ambassador to Denmark, gave an introductory speech to the subject at hand, which was followed by a presentation of different cases from the maritime industry. The event concluded with a reception and a networking opportunity with key stakeholders in the business.



PHOTO: HASSE FERROLD

21.02.19: International Mother Language Day 2019

On February 21, the Embassy of Bangladesh hosted a celebration of the International Mother Language Day in Asia House. The celebration included a keynote speech by Marie Højlund Roesgaard, Associate Professor at the Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies at University of Copenhagen, as well as a speech by H.E. Muhammad A. Muhith, Bangladesh Ambassador to Denmark. 21 February was declared as the International Mother Language Day by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris in November 1999. Since February 2000, International Mother Language Day is being observed globally to recognize and promote cultural and linguistic diversity.

TOP STORIES FROM ASIA



06.03.19: China, Switzerland working on clean fuel

Chinese and Swiss scientists have discovered a catalyst to split water into hydrogen and oxygen, which may work under industrial conditions. Well-functioning and efficient water splitting is considered a technological breakthrough, and would make a hydrogen-driven economy possible.



15.02.19: New DNA-method to help monitor Southeast Asian ecosystems

A new method of collecting DNA to map wildlife, called environmental DNA, may revolutionize environmental monitoring. Environmental DNA is specially useful in monitoring wildlife in Southeast Asia, one of the most bio-diverse regions in the world, where traditional monitoring has not always been successful.



08.02.19: Recycled electronic waste to become Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games medals

All medals for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games will be made from metal collected from recycled electronic waste. In 2017, the organizing committee launched a project to collect electronic waste such as old smartphones and computers in order to collect this metal from not only the Japanese public, but also small businesses and the industry.

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ASIA HOUSE / YOUR ACCESS TO ASIA

Indiakaj 16 / DK-2100 Copenhagen Ø / +45 35 26 56 11 / ah@asia-house.dk



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Our mailing address is:
ah@asia-house.dk

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