



ASIA HOUSE

HOME OF BUSINESS – CULTURE – PEOPLE

New Year, New Beginnings!

Discover this month's highlights, updates, and cultural delights.

As we step into the new year, our first newsletter of 2024 presents new beginnings and developments in Asia House. In Davos, world leaders have recently gathered for the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting, and our project NAVA is sending off its 5th delegation to Japan. “Living Asia” is set to host its second event, with the theme 'Lunar New Year', and the first strategic meeting of our Young Professionals Council will take place.

The podcasting medium is in the process of finding its way to Asia House, which you will hear more about in the future. You can also read the 'Taiwan Takeaways' from Mira, who has spent the last half year studying abroad whilst working for Asia House.

Finally, the results of the recent elections in Bangladesh and Taiwan will be highlighted.

World Economic Forum in Davos



This year's World Economic Forum in Davos was reproached for being [too euro-centric](#), focusing on the war in Ukraine, the terrorist attack in Israel and humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, and the upcoming US elections.

Nevertheless, attendance from Asia at the highest level was prominent with Li Qiang, Premier of China, Pham Minh Chinh, Prime Minister of Viet Nam, Pham Minh Chi Han Duck-soo, Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea, Oyun-Erdene Luvsannamsrai, Prime Minister of Mongolia, Tharman Shanmugaratnam,

President of Singapore, Ranil Wickremesinghe, President of Sri Lanka, and Srettha Thavisin, Prime Minister of Thailand. India's delegation was led by Smt [Smriti Irani](#), Minister of Women & Child Development.

[Li Qiang hoped](#) that 2024 - year of the Wood Dragon - "with the vigor of a flying dragon, will forge ahead toward building a community with a shared future", while [Singapore's president urged US and China](#) to view each other as partners, deploring that "political antennae have gotten too short".

[Geopolitics](#) and [uncertainty](#) were at the top of the agenda for most, with many stakeholders focused not on predicting the future, but [the ability to act with agility](#) in rapidly shifting scenarios.

It's NAVA delegation time again

Over the next four months, NAVA will be sending off yet another three New Nordic tech startup delegations to Japan. The first will be taking off already next week, the first ever New Nordic Food and Agritech delegation to Tokyo, Hokkaido and Kobe. The eight startups joining come from across the New Nordic region; three from Finland, two from Latvia, one from Estonia, one from Sweden and one from Denmark.



This 5th delegation introduces seven innovative startups from the New Nordic Food ecosystem. Collaborating with partners like Nordic Innovation House - Tokyo, the program runs from January 28 to February 2, offering dynamic opportunities for matching, pitching, and networking.

Supported by Tokyo Food Institute, Future Food Fund, and JETRO, the agenda includes key partners such as Kiraboshi Bank, Japan Bioindustry Association, and others. You can visit the delegation landing page at <https://bit.ly/3QkdkhM> for program details and profiles of the first four companies.

The delegation focuses on Tokyo, with additional exploration options in Kobe or Hokkaido, and will obtain insights into the Japanese food innovation market,

on-site visits to major food companies, access to local experts, and networking with stakeholders, including potential clients, partners, investors, and peers.

Exciting Times Ahead for "Living Asia"



In 2024, Asia House is set to host a diverse set of events. February marks the second "Living Asia" gathering, fostering connections among young Asia-minded professionals. Simultaneously, the Young Professionals Council will gather to its first strategic meeting that will shape the council and Living Asia's activities from here on, promising a dynamic start to the year.

Lunar New Year - What's that?



With this second edition of Living Asia we are excited to delve into the rich tapestry of Lunar New Year celebrations.

Lunar New Year - what is it and what isn't it?

In Europe, "New Year" is squarely understood as the beginning of a calendar year - 1 January. In Asia, however, New Year can mean "Lunar New Year". Lunar New Year is linked to the Chinese zodiac, and it is also a diverse umbrella term encompassing various celebrations across Asia with unique traditions. This year, the Lunar New Year will fall on Saturday 10 February.

It is exactly because of the topicality of Lunar New Year that we are looking forward to gathering young professionals for an enlightening evening. Apart from networking and traditional Lunar New Year foods, the evening will feature a first-hand expert presentation exploring the cultural and business facets of the global phenomenon.

Zooming in on Asia Through Podcasting



December 31, 2023, marked not only the day when H.M. Queen Margrethe II of Denmark announced her abdication after 52 years of service, but also the closure of the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS) after over 55 years as a leading research center in the Nordic region.

We express our regret over the closure of NIAS. However, we are pleased to know that their renowned podcast will continue its journey.

Nordic Asia Podcast, known for its insightful discussions on topics ranging from the globalization of bubble tea to development and migration in contemporary Asia, is in the process of finding its way to Asia House. While bidding farewell to NIAS, we welcome the opportunity to host this podcast in the future, offering a platform for continued exploration and dialogue.

Taiwan Takeaways

Hello, I'm Mira, a student pursuing a BA in Chinese Studies at the University of Copenhagen. After COVID-19-related issues, I have finally gotten the chance to have an exchange semester in a Chinese-speaking area. In the past newsletters, I have shared my experiences adapting to a new culture, navigating a different education system, and learning a new language and traditions.



Now that I have completed my semester, I would like to share four essential things to remember during a semester abroad in Taiwan.

1. Find the balance between the pursuit of top grades and exciting environments

Easier said than done. At the University of Copenhagen, grades at the exchange semester do not get transferred, but university life is focused on obtaining the best possible grades. My friends and I spent many weekends worrying and studying in cafés in Taipei instead of exploring the country, and I am still pondering what the right choices are. It's all about finding the right balance.

2. Use your travel companions for support

I was fortunate to travel with friends, and that has been a huge advantage. Using each other doesn't mean being together all the time, but when you're on the other side of the world without your usual safety net, it's fantastic to have someone to call and share experiences or troubles with.

3. Speak that language now

Because I was often surrounded by people better at Chinese than I was, I got

used to having them as translators. But when traveling with my mom, who can barely pronounce "nihao", I suddenly had to take on the role as the interpreter. Even though my grammar and tones were far from correct most of the time, it improved my Chinese level significantly.

4. Everything will be okay

This applies not only to life in general, but also to when the university sends emails about various procedures and requirements. It's better to reach out one time too many than one time too few. And that form they send might not be as essential as it seems, if they only send out one email. It's a lot of information at once, but take a deep breath and know that everything will work out in the end.

I hope that my experiences can be helpful to other students considering a study abroad opportunity. It has been an incredible journey, and I will carry the memories with me for the rest of my life.

This Just in - Your Monthly Asia Insight



Did you know Asia has already witnessed two elections in 2024?

Bangladesh held its election on January 7, resulting in Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina securing a fourth consecutive term.

Meanwhile, in the 2024 Taiwanese presidential election, Lai Ching-te of the Democratic Progressive Party became president, marking a milestone with the party winning a third consecutive term. Despite this success, the DPP lost its majority in the legislature, ushering in a new political landscape in Taiwan.

Need a venue? [Click here to browse our EventSpace!](#)