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Asia in Review

(2/1/2019)

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Dear Reader,

CPG is presenting you the second issue of Asia in Review (AiR) in January 2019 with an update on the latest developments in law, politics and international relations in Asia.

I hope you enjoy an informative reading!

With best regards,

Henning Glaser

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Law and Politics in East Asia

China's first high profile corruption case in 2019

(dql) Chen Gang, former vice-mayor of Beijing (2006-2017), was arrested as part of an investigation into alleged corruption. He is the first high-profile official in 2019 to be caught in the country's sweeping anti-corruption campaign launched back in 2012.

Chen, who was also alternate member of the Central Committee from 2012-2017 and once considered a rising star in Chinese politics, is believed to have used his authority to help Guo Wengui, a fugitive tycoon Guo Wengui wanted by China for bribing, kidnapping, money laundering, fraud and rape, to obtain loans and receive government approval for property developments in Beijing. [South China Morning Post]

South Korea: Government accused of seizing control of press

(dql) On the occasion of the launching of special committee by the main opposition Liberty Korea Party (LKP) aimed at establishing a movement to protest the mandatory fee of monthly 2.500 won to the country's

public broadcaster Korea Broadcasting System (KBS), leading LKP figures accused the government of trying to "seize control of the press – including KBS." [Korea Herald]

Taiwan: Ruling DPP elects new leader

(dql) Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive Party elected former cabinet secretary-general Cho Jung-tai as its a new chairman. Analysts view his election as a victory for the moderate wing of the party with regards to cross-straits relations. He is expected to play an important role in the re-election bid of President Tsai Ing-wen as she is facing challenges from radicals within the party who have persistently rejected closer relations with China. The presidential election will be held in 2020.

The post was vacated after Tsai resigned in November as party leader after the party suffered a string of defeats in local elections. [Nikkei Asian Review]

Taiwan: Supreme Court orders retrial for former President Ma

(dql) Taiwan's Supreme Court last week revoked the conviction of former President Ma Ying-jeou by the High Court, which in May found Ma guilty of leaking classified information related to the investigation of an opposition lawmaker while the probe was in progress and sentenced Ma to four months in prison for violating the Communication Security and Surveillance Act. The Supreme Court, arguing that the High Court judges failed to clarify all facts, send the case back to the High Court for a retrial [Focus Taiwan]

Law and Politics in South Asia

Indian women protest over equality

(jk) India has seen growing protests of women since the beginning of the year against the ban on women of menstruating age entering the Sabarimala temple in the southern Indian state of Kerala. Traditionally, menstruating women in India are not supposed to enter Hindu temples because they are deemed “unclean”. The temple in question however, is barring women altogether in a broad age group from 10-50 years and is particularly strict with its access rules for all worshippers. [Strait Times]. The country's Supreme Court has ordered the temple to lift the ban last year [Economic Times], and the first three women have now been able to enter the temple – under police protection and heavy protests and clashes, including from PM Modi’s Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). [NPR, Indian Express]

The women who have managed to enter the despite the protests are now said to be in hiding [VoA]. In a show of support, women across the country have formed a 385 mile “wall of support” in which somewhere between 3 and 5 million women lined up and joined hands. While it is being discussed whether it actually was a continuous line or whether there were any gaps, the signal is clear - with India headed for elections this year, women want to raise gender equality as an issue. Hindu national and right wing groups including the BJP are supporting the protestors, while the opposition says it is of utmost importance to ensure that the court's orders are followed. [NPR II]

Bangladesh: Post-election crisis over allegation of election abuses

(cc) On Thursday, 289 of the newly elected lawmakers took oath at the Parliament Secretary in accordance

with the country's constitution. The main opposition party Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) boycotted the ceremony as they reject the results of the election [Reuters] The Awami League led-Alliance won over 90 percent of the seats. On Monday, the Chief Election Commissioner rejected the call from the opposition for a new election despite multiple accusations of election abuses and the high level of violence which led to the death of at least 17 people. [Reuters 2]

While India, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bhutan, Russia and Sri Lanka all welcomed the outcome of the election, western countries are more critical of the way the polls were handled. Indeed, the European Union, the United States and the United Kingdom released statements in which they express their disappointment regarding the alleged irregularities and call for a transparent process for the resolution of all complaints. [The Dhaka Tribune]

Human Rights Watch urged the government to mandate an independent and impartial commission to investigate the serious allegations of abuses. [HRW] A call reiterated by the United Nations [Reuters]. At a meeting with diplomats on Sunday, opposition figures asked diplomats based in Dhaka to convince the government to organise a new free and fair election to solve the crisis that has emerged over the results. [The Dhaka Tribune 2]

Sheikh Hasina, who is now in her third consecutive term, has chosen to form a cabinet solely with members of her own party, excluding for the first time AL's allies such as Jatiya Party which is now the main opposition in Parliament with 22 seats. The newly appointed ministers are due to take oath on Monday January 7. The composition of the new government was announced on Sunday afternoon and includes 47 ministers, with the vast majority being nominated at such position for the first time. [The Dhaka Tribune 3]

Law and Politics in Southeast Asia

Malaysian King abdicates

(ls) Malaysia's King, Sultan Muhammad V. of Kelantan, has abdicated in an unprecedented move, ending weeks of speculation about his future. Only two years into his five-year term, he resigned as the 15th Agong or Supreme Ruler of the federation after he took a two-month break "following treatment". It was reported during this time that he had married the Russian beauty queen Oksana Voevodina in Moscow. Other rulers appear to have been uneasy with the arrangement and the possible coronation of Voevodina as Queen. Perak Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah will be the Acting King before a new monarch is picked by the Conference of Rulers, a meeting of Malaysia's nine Malay sultans and other civilian heads of states. [Straits Times]

Malaysia is a constitutional monarchy where the Agong – or "king of kings" – is appointed to a five-year term in the position, which he rotates with the other sultans. According to the rotational system that decides who shall be the next Agong, the ruler of Pahang state is due to take over – although the Conference of Rulers has the power to vary the order of succession. [South China Morning Post]

Thailand: Coronation date announced

(ls) Thailand's King Maha Vajiralongkorn will be officially crowned in elaborate ceremonies on May 4-6. He has been serving since shortly after his revered father, King Bhumibol Adulyadej, died on 13 October 2016 following a 70-year reign. In the three-day coronation, the King will be officially crowned on May 4 and a celebration procession will be held on May 5.

The King will meet the public and foreign dignitaries on May 6. [Reuters]

Thai elections to be postponed again

(ls) The Thai parliamentary election will likely be delayed from 24 February 2019. Deputy Prime Minister Wissanu Krea-ngam announced that this is necessary to avoid having poll-related activities overlapping with those of the coronation ceremony. Only shortly before the announcement of the probable delay, the Election Commission had denied any election delay. Under the constitution, the general election must be held within 150 days of the constitution's organic law governing the election of MPs taking effect on 11 December last year, or by 9 May. [Bangkok Post 1] [The Nation]

Currently, 10 March 2019 appears to be a likely new date. The Election Commission appears to have proposed that date to the government. If the cabinet agrees to the proposal, it must issue a royal decree calling the election by 25 January. [Bangkok Post 2]

Politicians of major political parties appeared not to disagree with the postponement. The Future Forward Party, however, said that there was no reason to delay the election again. [Bangkok Post 3] Dozens of activists on Sunday protested against a possible delay, the first such gathering since the military government lifted a ban on political activity imposed after the 2014 coup. [Reuters]

In a separate development, a historic monument commemorating Thailand's transition to democracy has been removed in Bangkok. The Constitution Defence Monument, located in the Laksi district, appeared to have made place for an ongoing high train construction. Whether it will be restored is unclear. [The Nation]

Meanwhile, the House of Parliament building has shut down for good after 44 years as the seat of Thailand's democracy. A new parliament building is under construction several kilometers away. [Khaosod English] looks back at some historic moments of the site, which has witnessed its share of passionate debates, fistfights and other particularities.

Indonesia: Electoral campaign for the 2019 elections

(cc) As Indonesia is preparing for crucial elections in April, for which 190 million people will have to vote for their President, Vice-president and members of the People's consultative Assembly on the same day, the two main candidates, Joko "Jokowi" Widodo and Prabowo Subianto, for the presidency are the same than during the 2014 elections, but according to the Jakarta post "the race will not be the same".

Widodo benefits from his status of incumbent but also received numerous criticisms for his administration. On the other hand, Prabowo, former general under the ruling of Indonesian dictator Suharto, has broader support from conservative Muslim people but has often been criticized for politicizing religion. A face-to-face debate is scheduled for January 9. For the moment, the polls still place Widodo in first position with approximately 50% against 30% for Prabowo. [Asian Review] [Jakarta Post 1] [Jakarta Post 2]

The non-governmental organization Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW) published a list of 40 candidates to the upcoming legislative election who are former corruption convicts. The list announced through the NGO's twitter account is composed of 40 candidates running either for the Regional Legislative Councils (DPRD) or the Regional Representatives Council (DPD) and represents 11 different political parties. [Tempo]

Myanmar: Resurgence of conflict between AA and Tatmadaw in Rakhine State amid ceasefire

(cc) While the Tatmadaw unilaterally announced a four months ceasefire in Kachin and Shan States on Friday December 21, clashes with the Arakan Army (AA) continue in Rakhine State, which is not included in the ceasefire. The Northern Alliance, composed of four Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs), the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) the Arakan Army (AA) and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), first welcomed the announcement before stating they will not adhere to the Tatmadaw's conditions if Rakhine state is not included in the peace process. [The Irrawaddy]

On January 2, Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu's convoy was attacked when three mines exploded on his way from Kyaukphyu. The AA denied any involvement in the mine attack and U Khine Thukha, spokesman for the EAO, suggested it could have been

orchestrated by the Tatmadaw. [The Irrawaddy 2] The police is now investigating what is the second attack against U Nyi Pu since December 2017. [The Myanmar Times]

The conflict escalated on Friday when the AA conducted a series of coordinate attacks on four border outposts in Buthidaung township in Northern Rakhine State, killing 14 policemen and injuring nine others. On Saturday, the EAO announced it released 13 Border Police officers and 4 civilian women who have been captured during the attacks,and stated the release has been done following the international legal provisions regarding the treatment of prisoners of war. [The Irrawaddy 4] [Reuters] Thousands of civilians fled their homes since the attacks and found refuge in temporary camps with scarce resources, provoking high tensions in an already tense situation. [The Myanmar Times 2] The Myanmar National Human Rights Commission condemned the attacks, stating that it could undermine national reconciliation and the peace process. [The Myanmar Time 3]

However, Rakhine State is not the only conflict area in Myanmar and while Shan State is covered by the Tatmadaw's ceasefire, 316 persons fled their villages in Namtu township in Northern Shan State on January 1 and 2 due to clashes between the Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army South (RCSS/SSAS) and the combined forces of Shan State Progressive Party/ Shan State Army North (SSPP/SSAN) and the Ta'ang Nationalities Liberation Army (TNLA). [The Irrawaddy 5] The TNLA also accused the Tatmadaw of increasing its troop number in Shan State since the announcement of the ceasefire, an allegation denied by the spokesman for the North East Command. [The Myanmar Times 4]

Myanmar: Military retains influence over General Administration Department

(cc) The Myanmar government appointed U Tin Myint as Deputy minister for the Office of the Union Government, a week after it was announced that the control of the General Administration Department will be shifted from the military-led Ministry of Home Affairs to the civilian Ministry of the Union Government office. The newly appointed deputy minister is the director general for the GAD and is a former captain in the Tatmadaw. While the move from military to civilian control of the powerful GAD has been welcomed by many, U Tin Myint is not the only former military who will be involved in the supervision of the "backbone of

Myanmar's public administration" as retired Colonel U Min Thu was appointed Minister of the Office of the Union Government in November. [Myanmar Times] [The Irrawaddy]

Philippines: Bomb explosion ahead of autonomy plebiscite

(ls) Two people were killed and about 35 others wounded after a bomb exploded outside a shopping mall in the southern Philippine city of Cotabato on Mindanao. The bombing came ahead of a plebiscite in the southern Philippines this month for the creation of a Muslim autonomous area as part of an attempt to end the separatist insurgency. Many of the ISIS-linked groups have rejected these peace efforts. Mindanao is still under martial law. The attack was probably in retaliation for the deaths of four militants in previous weeks. [Straits Times 1] [Straits Times 2]

Former mayor, listed as "narco-politician", killed in the Philippines

(ls) A former southern Philippine mayor, named in the government's list of "narco-politicians", and his brother were killed last Friday, just hours after President Rodrigo Duterte threatened to slit the throats of "big-time" drug dealers. He was the sixth mayor killed in the government's controversial drug war, which has left over 5,000 dead since Duterte came to power in June 2016. [Straits Times]

40th anniversary of Khmer Rouge defeat

(ls) Monday, 7 January, was the 40th anniversary of the day the Khmer Rouge regime was overthrown by forces backed by Vietnam. Recently, the Khmer Rouge tribunal in Phnom Penh handed down its final verdict, holding two former regime leaders criminally liable for acts of genocide. Today, the country is still divided, with older generations hanging on to the past, while young people focus on the future. An article in the [South China Morning Post] gives an account of the current social climate.

Vietnamese cybersecurity law enters into force

(ls) Vietnam's new cybersecurity law has entered into force on 1 January. It criminalizes criticizing the government online and forces internet providers to give authorities' user data when requested. Last week, the country's Association of Journalists published a code of conduct banning reporters from posting information that could "run counter" to the state on social media. The government has asked Facebook and Google to open offices in Vietnam, and to agree to comply with the new censorship and user data rules. [Guardian] [The Diplomat]

International Relations, Geopolitics and Security in Asia

China-Taiwan relations: Tensions to rise

(dql) Already strained cross-strait relations are expected to worsen following Xi Jinping's first public speech in 2019 last Wednesday delivered on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the 'Letter to the Taiwanese Compatriots' of the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress (NPC) on 1 January 1979 which called for the realization of peaceful reunification of the motherland.

Addressing the Taiwanese people under the vision of the grand rejuvenation of the Chinese nation in the new era of which unification is an "inevitable requirement", Xi reiterated Beijing's offer for peaceful

unification on the basis of the 'One-country-two-systems' model as the only possible way to "accommodate Taiwan's reality and safeguard the interests and benefits of Taiwan compatriots." Reassuring that "Taiwan is a part of China, ..., a fact nobody and no force can change", and although he refrained from making overt threats against Taiwan, he did not fail to stress that China "does not promise to give up the use of military force in order retain all necessary alternative measures in countering external intervening powers and the few 'Taiwan Independence'-separatists and their separatist movements." [BBC] [Xinhua, for the speech in Chinese]

Defying Xi's speech, Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen declared that Taiwan would never agree to unification under the 'One-country-two-systems' framework. [The Diplomat] This stance is echoed in her New Year speech held a day ahead of Xi's speech in which she had demanded Beijing to accept "Four Musts" including facing the reality of the existence of the Republic of China (Taiwan); respecting the commitment of the 23 million people of Taiwan to freedom and democracy; handling cross-strait differences peacefully, on a basis of equality; and agreeing that it must be governments or government-authorized agencies that engage in negotiations. [Focus Taiwan] [China Gate, for the speech in Chinese]

In a latest development, Xi Jinping in a speech two days after his 'Taiwan' speech at a meeting attended by top officials from the Central Military Commission, which he heads as chairman, instructed that "all military units must correctly understand major national security and development trends, and strengthen their sense of unexpected hardship, crisis and battle" and to be prepared for war in the wake of unprecedented risks and challenges. [South China Morning Post]

China's advancement in space exploration: Far moon side landing

(dql) Marking a major breakthrough in space exploration, the China's Chang'e-4 lunar exploration mission successfully landed for the first time in history a spacecraft and rover on the far side of the moon, equipped with instruments allowing for analyses of the unexplored region's geology and biological experiments. [BBC]

With China's bold plans for future space activities including the landing of a rover on the Mars in 2021

and of astronauts on the Moon in 2030, analysts believe that Beijing's move may also set the stage for a race for space exploration and domination between the US, Russia and China. [The Atlantic] [The Week]

China-US relations: Trade negotiations clouded by US warship sailing near disputed islands in South China Sea

(dql) A 'freedom of navigation' operation of guided-missile destroyer USS McCampbell near of the Paracel Islands claimed by China has clouded the start of trade talks for which Chinese and American officials met on Monday in Beijing to potentially resolve the trade war between the world's two biggest economies after U.S. President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping at the sidelines of the G20 summit in December agreed to suspend import tariffs on hundreds of billions worth of goods for 90 days. [Reuters]

Japan-South Korea relations in a 'severe state', says Japanese top government spokesman

(dql) The relations between Japan and South Korea are deteriorating rapidly over the issue of compensation for wartime forced labor, causing Japan's top government spokesman to describe the ties between both countries being in a 'severe state'. [Straits Times]

Tokyo and Seoul have sparred over rulings of South Korea's Supreme Court requiring Japanese firms to pay compensation to Koreans forced into labor during Japan's colonial rule from 1910 and 1945.

In the latest development of this diplomatic quarrel, lawyers of the South Korean plaintiffs, last week launched legal procedures to seize assets belonging to Nippon Steel & Sumitomo Metal Corp. in South Korea after the company refused to comply with a ruling of the Supreme Court in October 2018 sentencing it to pay 89.400 USD to each of the four plaintiffs. [Korea Times]

Reacting to this move taken by the plaintiffs, Prime Minister Abe announced that he has instructed concerned government agencies "to review specific measures regarding the case" in order to "take actions with fortitude based on international laws". [Korea Herald 1]

In another development signaling deteriorating relations between Japan and South Korea, Seoul released a video clip to rebut Tokyo's claim that a South Korean warship had locked fire-control radar on a Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force patrol aircraft which flew over a South Korean military vessel on December 20. Seoul demanded that Tokyo, which earlier had released footage to back up the claim, to "cease actions that warp the facts and apologize for carrying out a low-altitude flight toward our warship that was on a humanitarian rescue operation." [Korea Herald 2][Mainichi] [AiR 4/12/2018]

Japan-India relations: Deepening security cooperation

(dql) Japan's Foreign Minister Taro Kono and his Indian counterpart Sushma Swaraj announced on Monday an agreement to deepen security cooperation in the framework of an upgraded 'two-plus-two' ministerial and vice-ministerial level security talks. They also agreed to include in the increased cooperation the areas of space and cyberspace. [Japan Times]

India will start receiving S-400s in 2020 and will continue to seek a waiver for potential US sanctions – which it is likely to receive.

(jk) India will begin receiving the first parts of the Russian made S-400 Air Defence System in October 2020 and delivery will be completed by 2023. [The Diplomat] It is not clear yet, whether New Delhi will be able to secure a waiver from U.S. sanctions under CAATSA—the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, which foresees sanctions for states that purchase arms from Russia.

As [AiR] has pointed out before, India, which has a long history of purchasing Russian arms, is also a major defence partner of the United States and a strategic and vital partner in the US administration's Free and Open Indo-Pacific approach. It is therefore likely that India will receive a waiver for the S-400s despite the fact the China did not when it signed the contract to purchase the weaponry in 2015 as the first foreign buyer of the system. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) which has received the last shipments of the weaponry from Russia in July, has recently successfully tested the system. [Economic Times] In China's case, as

pointed out in the article above, sanctions were implemented only at the time when it took delivery of the units, rather than when it signed the deal. For India, this suggests that if sanctions are at all to be implemented, this would not happen until at least October 2020.

China building 'most advanced' naval warships for Pakistan

(jk) China has started building an advanced warship that would be delivered to Pakistan as part of a major arms deal. [Economic Times] The Pakistan Navy has ordered four of those vessels, in addition to eight Chinese submarines which Pakistan has ordered for US$6 billion back in 2015. [NYT] It is not yet known how much the ships will cost but the purchase surely comes at a financially difficult time for Pakistan. The vessels will be the most capable ships in the Pakistan Navy and will supposedly be delivered by 2021. [The Week]

Improving Pakistan – UAE relations due to financial difficulties?

(jk) As previously reported, the United Arab Emirates is providing a 6 billion USD financial aid package out of which 3 billion USD have thus far materialised to help address Pakistan's balance-of-payments crisis. Pakistan's leader PM Khan has been to the UAE twice since he took office in August, and last weekend, the Abu-Dhabi Crown Prince visited Islamabad for the first time in 12 years amid intensifying ties between the two countries. Support from the UAE has the same size and terms and conditions as those given by Saudi Arabia. According to a Pakistani cabinet member, the total financing support from the UAE and Saudi Arabia is to be around $14bn. [Dawn] PM Khan is seen to have few other options than to make friends with those who are willing to help with Pakistan's financial problems. China too, has allegedly pledged another $2bn dollars recently to avoid an economic crisis [SCMP]. The deals with the Saudi / UAE axis are welcomed at home, but it remains a complicated matter as Pakistan also has important energy trade relations with Qatar, which is of course blockaded by a group of countries led by precisely these two nations. Also, the first foreign leader Khan met as PM was Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif – a relationship that Saudi's and the Emirate's would like to see cool. [Dawn II]

India-Maldives cooperation

(jk) AiR has been reporting on the shifting external relations of the Maldives since the end of former President Yameen's rule. New President Solih recently reaffirmed an "India First policy" which has led to cooperation agreements on economic assistance, mutual visa facilitation programmes, maritime security cooperation, joint counter-terror efforts, or Male's support of India's candidature for non-permanent seat for the year 2020-21 at the UNSC. India supported the Maldives' decision to re-join the Commonwealth and welcomed the Maldives' membership to the Indian Ocean Rim Association late last year, an inter-governmental organisation aimed at strengthening regional cooperation and sustainable development within region. It currently has 22 members and nine dialogue partners. [New Delhi Times]

ASEAN diplomats worried about Thailand's Chairmanship in challenging times

(ls) Diplomats of ASEAN countries have expressed worries whether Thailand can handle the ASEAN chairmanship alongside the upcoming general election and possible domestic trouble. As reported late last year, the first ASEAN Summit in Thailand has been set for late June to avoid a power vacuum during the formation of the new government after the election. Usually, ASEAN hosts two summits a year – the first one is an in-house summit due in March or April and the final one is with dialogue partners, including leaders of superpowers, in November. [The Nation]

Chinese railway project in Malaysia may go ahead in smaller scale

(ls) A controversial China-backed infrastructure project that Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad put on the back burner after his election victory may continue on a smaller scale. Mahatir said the 80 billion ringgit (US$19.3 billion) East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) project, which was out for tender when it was dropped, could continue if Beijing took into account the tough economic situation Malaysia was in. In suspending the project, Mahathir had earned a reputation for being willing to stand up to China. Beijing, for its part, has publicly accepted that Malaysia is attempting to reduce

its ballooning national debt. [South China Morning Post]

Dispute between Hong Kong and Philippines over life-long imprisonments

(ls) Hong Kong's Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor has written to the Philippine president Rodrigo Duterte to raise concerns about four Hong Kong citizens jailed for life on dubious drug charges in the Philippines, making the case a top-level diplomatic issue. The charges appear possibly false as Philippine police chief Ronald dela Rosa, who is now running for a Senate seat, invited journalists to witness the arrest of the suspects, but initially could not find any evidence. Only after the suspects were taken briefly to a room with no light, then escorted back out, were drugs found in their bags. [South China Morning Post]

Indonesia stops sending students to Taiwan through internship program amid forced labour allegations

(cc) Indonesian foreign ministry spokesman Armanatha Nasir announced that Indonesia is halting recruitment for the New Southbound Policy (NSP) scholarship program, a study-internship scheme that started in 2017 at the initiative of the Taiwanese administration. The move follows reports from Taiwanese media last week of hundreds of students from the program being allegedly forced to work in factories. In a statement on Thursday, the Taiwanese Education Minister denied the allegations. Indonesia also asked Taipei to investigate the media reports. Currently, approximately 6,000 Indonesians are studying in Taiwan and almost 1,000 of them have been sent through the NSP. [The Jakarta Post] [SCMP] [Reuters] [The Straits Times]

Background Reading

The state of democracy in South Asia

(jk) From Sri Lanka to India, to Bangladesh, to Pakistan and beyond, the author examines the state of democracy in South Asia, in particular problems of ethnic and religious majoritarianism and how elected politicians interfere with independent institutions or autonomous militaries meddle in civilian politics. [Foreign Affairs]

Beyond "Debt-Trap Diplomacy": The Dissemination of PRC State Capitalism

(dql) In his critical account of the narrative of PRC "debt-trap diplomacy", Hong Zhang stresses that this narrative deflects from the main issue at stake, namely "the penetration of the global economy by PRC 'national champion' state-owned enterprises (SOEs), which will serve to entrench and legitimize the PRC development model" across the globe. [China Brief: The Jamestown Foundation]

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