



Consortium of Indo-Pacific
Researchers

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Greetings Colleague,

The Consortium is pleased to share its latest newsletter for the Indo-Pacific. Press reply button for your feedback and comments.

Taiwan Elections 2024: Sustain for Self-Rule?



Figure 1: Mr. Lai Ching te speaking during the election. Image/BBC

Taiwan had its general elections on Jan. 13 and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) has won its third consecutive election, sending a strong message of democracy, freedom, and self-rule to the Taiwanese. The main [opposition party Kuomintang \(KMT\) party candidate got 33.49% of vote](#) and the third-party Taiwan People's Party (TPP) received over 26% of votes. The democratic win in Taiwan is a defining and historic moment for the regional geopolitical dynamic as well as the global politics.

The current vice president and the new president-elect, [Lai Ching-te, said](#), addressing a rally after the results, "This is a night that belongs to Taiwan. We managed to keep Taiwan on the map of the world." Taiwan's result stamped the long quest for its self-identity and the opposition to altering the status quo. Taiwan's ruling party secured a third term with over 14 million voters hopeful for a resilient and free Taiwan, away from China's influence and interference.

However, China's [President XI Jinping said in his New Year address](#) that China would "surely be reunified" with Taiwan. Furthermore, after the vote, China responded, "Taiwan is part of China." However, China's ambition of reunification got pushed backward for a while, which could lead to frustration and anxiety in Beijing. There could be more restrictions and sanctions from Beijing as the new Taiwanese government is a favorite of the U.S. and has close ties.

On congratulating Dr. Lai Ching-te on his victory, [Secretary Blinken congratulated the](#) "Taiwan people for once again demonstrating the strength of their robust democratic system and electoral process." He said, "The United States is committed to maintaining cross-Strait peace and stability, and the peaceful resolution of differences, free from coercion and pressure. The partnership between the American people and the people on Taiwan, rooted in democratic values, continues to broaden and deepen across economic, cultural, and people-to-people ties."

It is worth mentioning that the U.S. has been providing arms and defense capabilities to Taiwan to deter the threat. In Nov. 2023, the Biden

Administration [approved \\$345 million](#) in weapon aid package. It is evident that China disapproves of the U.S. assisting Taiwan in enhancing its defense mechanisms, which impacts the relationship between the U.S. and China. The future of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Taiwan remains uncertain, leaving many to speculate about the potential implications for the broader geopolitical landscape of the Indo-Pacific region. Any significant shifts in this relationship could have far-reaching consequences for the delicate balance of power between the United States and China, two global superpowers vying for influence and dominance in the region. [Read More](#)

Maldives Muizzu visits China

Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu [visits](#) China as his first state visit. President Xi called Muizzu an “old friend,” and both leaders have agreed to a “Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.” The Maldives and China’s affinity will impact the Indian Ocean regional dynamics. According to reports, [several key agreements](#) were signed between the two countries. According to the World Bank data, Maldives owes China \$1.37 billion, or around 20% of its public debt, and has participated in China’s Belt Road Initiative (BRI) since 2014.

It is worth mentioning that Muizzu’s party is “pro-China”, and he fought his election on the “India Out” campaign. After his victory, Muizzu asked to leave Indian military personnel based in Maldives. Recently, the India-Maldives spat was in media headlines of the derogatory remarks for Indian Prime Minister Modi after his visit to India’s Lakshadweep Island and inspiring tourism to the island in the Indian Ocean, 469 miles from Maldives. [Read More](#)

Bhutan and Bangladesh Elect New Prime Ministers

Two South Asian countries, Bhutan, and Bangladesh have [elected](#) their new Prime Minister in the General Elections held on January 7 and 9, 2024. In Bangladesh, the ruling party, Awami League, has won the fourth consecutive term. Analysts and observers reported the elections as one party show as the main opposition party, Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), had boycotted the elections.

On the contrary, in Bhutan, the opposition party People's Democratic Party, [won the election](#) and secured 30 seats out of 47 National Assembly seats. This is the fourth general election after the country transitioned from monarchy to Parliamentary Democracy in 2008. The geopolitical location of both countries makes them strategically crucial in the regional power play and the Indo-Pacific construct.

Indo-Pacific Quiz

Which country owns the Island of Hokkaido?

- a. Japan
- b. South Korea
- c. Russia
- d. North Korea

How many terms can a Taiwan president serve?

- a. 4 years
 - b. 5 years
 - c. 6 years
 - d. 3 years
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Consortium Highlights

- ❖ CIPR View(s): **Taiwan Elections and the Impact on U.S.-China Relations**, By: Christopher L. Kolakowski, Grant T. Willis, Brendan H.J. Donnelly, Jeffery A. Hollman, Dr. Indu Saxena & Jose Antonio Custodio. [Read Here](#).
 - ❖ Commentary: **Chagos Archipelago under Mauritian Sovereignty: A ‘Gain’ for the Rule-Based World Order and a ‘Bargain’ for India**. By Aditya Ghalsasi. [Read Here](#)
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