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**TAEF UPDATES**

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**TAEF research fellow won a best paper presentation award**



*Tuesday, March 2, 2021*

TAEF's assistant research fellow and the project manager of the Cultural Exchange Program--Mr. Ding-Liang Chen--participated in the 2021 International Conference "Southeast Asian Media Studies: Histories, States, Theories, and Futures", organized by the [Southeast Asian Media Studies Association \(SEAMSA\)](#), and received the "Best Paper Presentation Award."

Chen's essay "*War and Waste: The Media Ecology of Laos' Battered Landscapes*" traces the afterlives of military waste that resulted from the US bombing of the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos during the last decade of the Vietnam War. In analyzing documentaries *This Little Land of Mines* and *The Remnants*, among other historical documents, this essay argues that military waste in post-conflict zones should be read as productive media through which local communities could not only reconstruct the overarching narrative of the Vietnam War, but function as core materials for rebuilding social relations and intimacies.

While media studies and ecocriticism have gradually drawn critical attention in the humanities, this essay aims to engage with pertinent debates from the epistemological standpoint of Taiwan and Southeast Asia.

Founded in 2017, the SEAMSA is an international, non-profit, non-government community of academics, researchers, media practitioners, and institutions who are actively committed to the study and research on the mass media of the Southeast Asian region.

[Read more](#)

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## TAEF COMMENTARIES

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*Sunday Guardian*

### **Covid-19: engaging Taiwan is a necessity, not an option**

*Saturday, January 30, 2021*

*- Dr. Sana Hashmi, Visiting Fellow, Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation*

Taiwan began to respond to Covid-19 even before it registered its first Covid-19 case on 21 January 2020. This was in contrast to countries across the world including India, where the number of Covid-19 cases started galloping, leaving the health management system helplessly ineffective.

One year into Covid-19, and instead of receding, the third wave of the pandemic has already hit some countries. The struggle to fight the spread of the pandemic while also finding a viable vaccine solution has been an uphill task for the international community. These are tell-tale signs that the fight against the pandemic is far from over. This grave situation demands the pooling of information and experiences from all affected countries that have been able to keep the virus at bay.

Shocking as it may seem, Taiwan has been excluded from the high-level discussions, thereby, leading to a disruption in the information flow. Taiwan's exclusion from the World Health Assembly also means that affected countries are deprived of an opportunity to find a plausible solution to the ongoing health crisis.

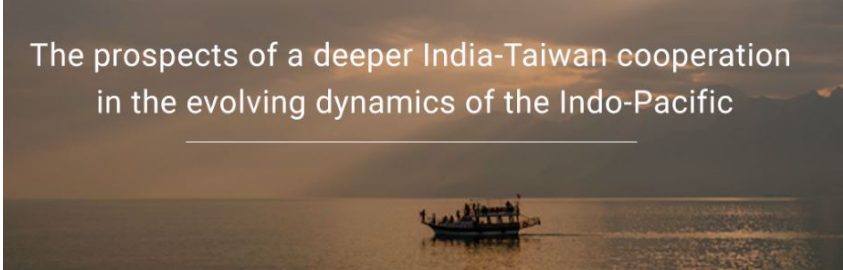
[Read more](#)

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## ASIA ENGAGEMENT CONSORTIUM UPDATES

*Chung-Hua Institution for Economy Research*

### **Call for Registration: Webinar 'The prospects of deeper India-Taiwan cooperation in the evolving dynamics of the Indo-Pacific'**



The prospects of a deeper India-Taiwan cooperation  
in the evolving dynamics of the Indo-Pacific

Long ignored for fear of incurring the wrath of Beijing, the time is ripe for a recalibration of India's relationship with Taiwan. India and Taiwan are natural allies in many respects: both share democratic values, uphold human rights and the rule of law, and recognize the benefits of a rules-based international order. India's relations with Taiwan have been on an upward trajectory and this does present an opportunity for India to leverage its ties with Taiwan vis-à-vis Beijing. Taiwan's successful handling of

the pandemic has led it to draw support from some major global players and some are even recalibrating their Taiwan policy.

At the 2020 Yushan Forum, Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen highlighted the significance of the New Southbound Policy and reiterated the spirit of "Taiwan helps Asia, and Asia helps Taiwan," a slogan Tsai has promoted on several occasions. She also pointed to Southeast Asia and India as particular focus points for the policy. Taiwan's New Southbound Policy and India's Act East policy are closely aligned. Tsai had commented that "Working together, these initiatives can achieve mutual benefits with complementary economic and social successes." Meanwhile, India's Indo-Pacific vision is "inclusive in nature and is based on cooperation and collaboration, given the need for shared responses to the shared challenges in the strategically important region." It is time for New Delhi to be more alert and aware of the strategic importance of Taiwan and the benefits of more comprehensive bilateral ties.

*Registration*

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## NEW SOUTHBOUND POLICY NEWS

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*Taipei Times*

### Trade soars with 'New Southbound Policy' countries

*Sunday, March 7, 2021*

Since November last year, trade with the 18 countries included in the government's New Southbound Policy has greatly increased, recovering from a downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Executive Yuan's Office of Trade Negotiation said on Friday.

On a monthly basis, trade in November last year grew 12 percent from 1.8 percent in October, and then 15.5 percent in December, the office said.

Trade could grow even further if the region recovers from the pandemic this year, the office said, adding that it plans to expand projects in the region, including skills training, medical cooperation, and start-up assistance.

The number of people from south and southeast Asia studying in Taiwan between 2016 and 2019 increased 84.8 percent, the office said, touting the policy's success.

*Read more*

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## REGIONAL HEADLINES

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*The Jakarta Post*

**Britain Tells  
Citizens to Quit  
Myanmar, UN wars  
of 'crimes against  
humanity'**

*March 12, 2021*

*CNA*

**New grants for Arts  
and Culture  
Resilience Package  
to support  
freelancers and  
businesses in  
Singapore**

*March 8, 2021*

*SCMP*

**Vietnam begins  
Covid-19  
vaccination drive  
without China-  
made shots**

*March 7, 2021*

**B**ritain on Friday advised its citizens to flee Myanmar, as a UN expert warned the junta is likely committing "crimes against humanity" in its attempt to stay in power.

The military authorities are cracking down with increasing severity on daily protests against their February 1 coup, with at least 70 people killed according to the UN's top rights expert on the country.

The turmoil prompted Britain, the country's former colonial ruler, to urge its citizens to get out if they could, warning that "political tension and unrest are widespread since the military takeover and levels of violence are rising."

[Read more](#)

**F**reelancers and businesses in the arts and culture sector will stand to benefit from new grants, as part of a \$20 million enhancement to the Arts and Culture Resilience Package, announced Minister of Culture, Community and Youth Edwin Tong.

"While live performances resumed safely in Phase 3, the return of capacity audience will take some time ... This however has put pressure on arts organisations and artists to cover operating costs," the minister said.

The grant will help to sustain the livelihoods of freelancers by minimising job and income loss, she said.

[Read more](#)

**V**ietnam, which has among the lowest total reported coronavirus infections in Southeast Asia, will launch its immunisation drive on Monday with over 117,000 doses of the vaccine developed by British-Swedish pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca.

The programme will initially be conducted in 18 hospitals treating coronavirus patients, and in areas with higher infection numbers, Vietnam's health minister Nguyen Thanh Long said on Friday.

Analysts say anti-China sentiment among the public and diplomatic tensions are two factors behind the spurning of the vaccine.

[Read more](#)

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