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## TAEF UPDATES

### TAEF Research Associate Praised Taiwanese Social Activism for Counter Covid-19 Effort



SOCIAL MEDIA/TECH

#### How a Reddit-like forum helped Taiwan prepare early for Covid-19

Taiwan's 25-year-old forum PTT helped limit the spread of the coronavirus

Friday, April 17, 2020

Jeremy Huai-Che Chiang, a research associate at the Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation (TAEF), said that PTT has aided Taiwanese social activism, commenting on the recent news story that Taiwan's Centers for Disease Control Official discovered the early sign of Covid-19 outbreak in China on the social media website. The website helped people mobilize for the 2014 Sunflower Movement that was sparked by the local government's attempt to ram through a wide-ranging services trade deal with China.

In the early hours of December 31st, Luo Yi-jun couldn't sleep. So he browsed Taiwan's Reddit-like forum, PTT. As deputy director for Taiwan's Centers for Disease Control, one post under the "Gossiping" category caught his eye: Word of an unknown disease causing pneumonia in Wuhan, China.

The post included screenshots of a notice from Wuhan health authorities. One poster even asked if this was the second coming of SARS. Luo fired off an email to his colleagues. That turned out to be Taiwan's first warning about the disease that would turn into a global pandemic just a few months later: Covid-19.

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## TAEF COMMENTARIES

*Rappler*

### **Do You Hear the People Sing? China's Influence on Kyaukpyu, Myanmar**

*-Ya-chi Lin, MA Student of Diplomacy, National Chengchi University, Taiwan*

*-Dr. Alan H. Yang, Executive Director, TAEF*

*Thursday, April 23, 2020*

Since China began its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in late 2013, disguising its geostrategic attempts at pursuing hegemony with economic statecraft, there are increasing numbers of in-depth reports and comments from international media on the dark side of the BRI, while Chinese media and institutions praise the BRI's contribution to the global community. However, not many records and solid disclosures of the real face of China's investment or influence over different localities have been exposed.

Kyaukpyu is an important township located in the Rakhine State in western Myanmar. With its convenient location and adequate port, coupled with the discovery of exploitable natural gas fields on the continental shelf of the Rakhine coast in 2004, Kyaukpyu's strategic position has been greatly elevated. In June 2009, China and Myanmar signed the "Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) and the Ministry of Energy of Myanmar on the Development, Operation and Management of the China-Myanmar Crude Oil Pipeline Project."

The project included building up crude oil pipelines, storage and transportation facilities and their ancillary facilities, and the construction of a terminal and port for the unloading of crude oil from super-large oil tankers, accessible crude oil storage and transportation facilities, and other ancillary facilities on Maday Island, Myanmar.

There were about 700 households being affected by the CNPC project, most of them are fishermen and farmers. Their humble requests were mainly regarding the improvement of livelihoods and the right to work. The CNPC said that there would be 500,000 job

opportunities in the construction of oil and gas pipelines, and local residents could get 50% of them, but, in fact, most of the residents did not have jobs from the CNPC, and they also lost their original jobs. For example, the No. 41 buoy placed in the sea by the CNPC has blocked the sealane of the fishing boats and has seriously affected fishermen's activities. Since the placement of the buoy, the fishermen have lost a total of about 30 million MMK. They urgently hope that this buoy can be removed, but their pleas are always ignored.

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## NEW SOUTHBOUND POLICY NEWS

### *Focus Taiwan*

## Singapore, Vatican thank Taiwan for Mask Donations

*Wednesday, April 22, 2020*

The Singapore Red Cross and the Holy See's top envoy to Taiwan expressed gratitude to Taiwan on Wednesday for its donations of surgical face masks to help with their countries' response to the COVID-19 coronavirus epidemic.

At a handover ceremony in Singapore, Benjamin William, secretary-general of the country's Red Cross, accepted a donation of 100,000 surgical masks from Taiwan's representative to Singapore Francis Liang.

William expressed thanks to Taiwan and said the masks will be distributed to the Red Cross' frontline workers and volunteers, as well as to the elderly, migrant workers, and underprivileged groups in his country. In turn, Liang said the donation was part of the Taiwan government's ongoing assistance to countries hard-hit by the pandemic.

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### *Taipei Times*

## Taiwan, Philippines Seek to Partner on Detecting Quakes

*Sunday, April 19, 2020*

Taiwan is hoping to work with the Philippines to install an 800km submarine cable between the nations to better detect seismic activity near the Manila Trench, the Central Weather Bureau said yesterday.

The underwater cable would stretch from Fangshan Township in Pingtung County to the Philippines' main island of Luzon and would become the first earthquake and tsunami observation system shared by Taiwan and a foreign nation, bureau Director-General Yeh Tien-chiang said.

The project, which is being reviewed by the National Development Council, received the Philippines' support at a technical level in earlier discussions, but the two sides have not finalized how the project's budget would be divided, the bureau said.

The bureau did not give any indication of if and when talks with Manila would be held to finalize the development.

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## REGIONAL HEADLINES

*The Strait Times*

**President Rodrigo Duterte Extends Manila Lockdown till May 15, Warns again of Martial Rule**

*April 24, 2020*

**P**resident Rodrigo Duterte has extended the lockdown on metropolitan Manila and half of the main island of Luzon, in the Philippines, till May 15 as the government begins a phased easing of strict quarantine

*The Jakarta Post*

**Poor, Rich Indonesians Do Not Get Equal Access to COVID-19 Tests: Why It's a Problem**

*April 23, 2020*

**A**mid the urgent need for mass testing to contain the spread of COVID-19 in Indonesia, poor people in the fourth-most-populous country have a difficult time to get tested for COVID-19. It's much easier for rich

*South China Morning Post*

**Singapore, Malaysia Arts Workers Left Reeling from Cancelled Shows, Lost Income**

*April 19, 2020*

**T**imes have been hard for everyone in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, but one of the groups left reeling most, on both sides of the Causeway, is the one deemed least essential: the creative community.

restrictions meant to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

“We are all at risk. Don’t increase the odds or chances of getting (the virus),” Mr Duterte said during a meeting of a task force overseeing efforts to control the outbreak.

The announcement on the extension was made on Friday (April 24) morning.

Apart from Metro Manila, 17 provinces in Luzon will remain in lockdown. All are deemed “high-risk” areas. Metro Manila accounts for three out of every five confirmed patients for Covid-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus.

For the rest of Luzon, where cases of infections were few or none at all, quarantine restrictions have been eased.

Luzon, which is the size of South Korea, makes up the northern third of the Philippines and is home to half the country’s population of over 100 million. Manila is in Luzon.

Mr Duterte placed all of Luzon in lockdown on

Indonesians to access COVID-19 testings.

Unequal access to testing can lead to late diagnosis and preventable deaths due to undetected COVID-19 among the poor.

President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo has ordered the implementation of a large-scale rapid test since March 19, distributing 450,000 test kits across the country to contain the pandemic.

Indonesia is among the countries with low testing rates – far less than in Singapore (16,203 per million), Australia (17,412), South Korea (11,138) or Italy (23,985).

Even though the tests are for people who have had contact with someone with COVID-19 or have traveled from infected areas, the country’s legislators have demanded rapid testing for their 575 members and their families – even without clear history of close contact with positive cases.

For people who have some money (but can’t abuse power to get free testing), they can get rapid testing at private hospitals in Indonesia for

According to [ilostmygig.sg](http://ilostmygig.sg), a website that collates data on Singapore’s creative industries and also provides resources on where to get help, since antivirus measures were stepped up in earnest, nearly S\$30 million (US\$21 million) in lost income has been reported by the thousands of freelancers who cannot find work in the city state’s arts, media, design and entertainment sectors.

Prose writers and television producers, whose works can be consumed on various screen media, have tended to be a little more sanguine about slowdown and confinement.

By comparison, designers and crew for live shows, indie filmmakers and performing artists face greater economic and emotional challenges, given that their short- and long-term viability depends on packing cinemas, theatres and concert halls.

For film and television freelancers who have fallen through the cracks, the Singapore

March 16.

[Read more](#)

Rp770,000 (almost  
US\$50) to more than Rp  
1 million.

[Read more](#)

Association of Motion  
Picture Professionals has  
worked with the  
government's Infocomm  
Media Development  
Authority to launch a  
S\$40,000 Covid-19 Relief  
Fund to soften the blow  
of lost jobs.

[Read more](#)

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