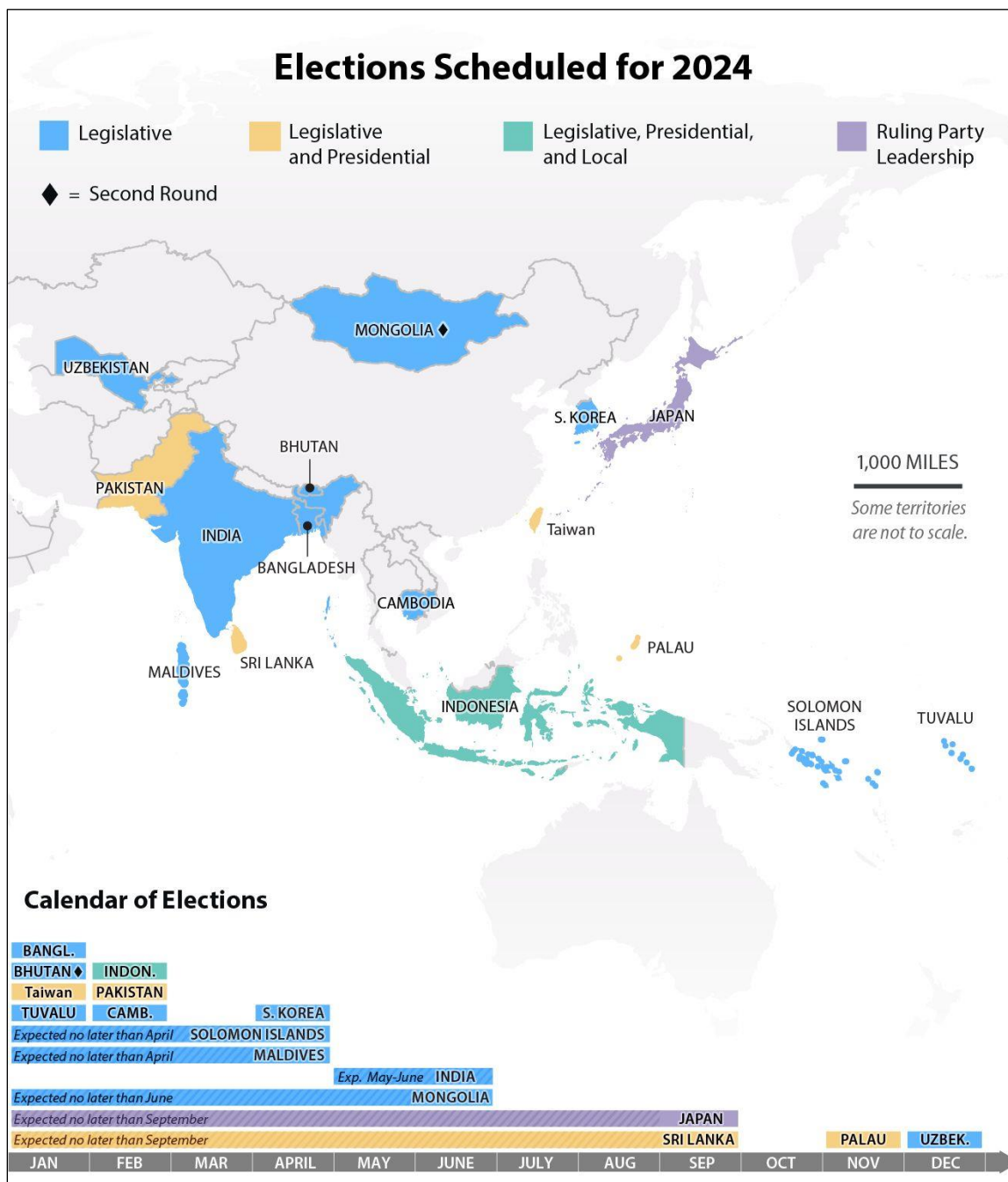


December 29, 2023

Asia Elections in 2024

In 2024, a number elections in Asia could have implications for U.S. policy in the region. Scheduled and expected election dates are listed below in chronological order; snapshots of the key issues for selected elections may be found on the following page.



Note: The timeline is arranged by scheduled date, or where applicable, the date the election is due. Cambodia's Legislative election is for the Upper House of the National Assembly (Senate) only.

Selected Election Snapshots

Bangladesh (*Legislative, January 7*) Some observers have expressed concern about democratic backsliding in light of the Bangladesh government's ongoing crackdown on the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and others, which has sparked large-scale protests. Although the ruling Awami League (AL) has promised the 2024 election will be free and fair, the BNP and 14 other parties are boycotting the polls, making an AL victory all but guaranteed. Some analysts question whether the elections can be considered legitimate given these circumstances. The State Department announced in May 2023 that it will restrict visa issuance for any Bangladeshi it finds to be undermining the democratic election process ahead of scheduled 2024 voting. (See CRS In Focus IF10214, *Bangladesh*, by Maria A. Blackwood)

Taiwan (*Legislative and Presidential, January 13*) Voters will elect the president, vice president, and all 113 members of the parliament, the Legislative Yuan (LY). After eight years in office, President Tsai Ing-wen of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) is term-limited and ineligible for reelection. Three candidates are vying to succeed her, including her Vice President Lai Ching-te of the DPP, as well as Hou Yu-ih of the established opposition party the Kuomintang (KMT) and Ko Wen-je, former mayor of Taipei and founder of the new (since 2019) Taiwan People's Party. The People's Republic of China, which claims sovereignty over Taiwan but has never controlled it, accuses Lai of seeking Taiwan's permanent separation from China, and warns such a pursuit "signifies war." In the LY election, the DPP faces the possible loss of the legislative majority it has held since 2016. (See CRS In Focus IF10275, *Taiwan: Political and Security Issues*, by Susan V. Lawrence and Caitlin Campbell)

Pakistan (*Legislative, February 8*) After a six-month delay, Pakistan will hold elections for the National Assembly and four provincial assemblies. Former Prime Minister Imran Khan was removed through a 2022 National Assembly no-confidence vote, a controversial move reportedly instigated in part by the security services, which observers say wield significant undemocratic influence. Khan is not eligible to run in 2024, but his still-popular Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party is competing against the Pakistan Muslim League faction of former PM Nawaz Sharif and the Bhutto family's dynastic Pakistan People's Party. (See CRS In Focus IF10359, *Pakistan's Domestic Political Setting*, by K. Alan Kronstadt)

Indonesia (*Legislative, Presidential, and Local, February 14*) Indonesia is the world's third most populous democracy and the world's largest Muslim majority democracy. This will be the nation's fifth direct presidential election since the fall of an authoritarian government in 1998; voters also will select nearly 20,000 officials to national, state, and district parliaments across the country. President Joko Widodo is barred by term limits from seeking re-election, but his son is running for vice president on a ticket with Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto. If no presidential

candidate wins a majority of votes, a runoff will be held in June. The new president is slated to take office on October 20. (See CRS In Focus IF10247, *Indonesia*, by Ben Dolven)

South Korea (*Legislative, April 10*) South Korea is scheduled to hold elections for all 300 seats in the National Assembly. Observers say the elections will be an indicator of President Yoon Suk Yeol's political strength. Since assuming office in 2022 Yoon has more closely aligned South Korea with the United States on many foreign policy issues. Yoon's party, the right-of-center People Power Party, has fewer than 40% of seats in the unicameral National Assembly, which is controlled by the left-of-center Minjoo (Democratic) Party. (See CRS In Focus IF10165, *South Korea: Background and U.S. Relations*, by Mark E. Manyin and Liana Wong)

India (*Legislative, expected May-June*) The world's most populous country is set to elect its 18th Lok Sabha (House of the People). The nationally ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has enjoyed an absolute majority since 2014, expanded its majority in 2019, and is favored to win another five-year term in power. The BJP faces a coalition of more than two dozen opposition parties formed to contest the 2024 elections. The coalition is led by the Nehru-Gandhi family's dynastic Indian National Congress along with several other high-profile opposition leaders and parties. (See CRS In Focus IF10298, *India's Domestic Political Setting*, by K. Alan Kronstadt)

Japan (*Ruling Party Leadership, expected September*) Since 1955, Japan's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has held power for all but four years. The LDP's dominance all but guarantees the LDP's president is selected as prime minister by the Lower House of the Diet (parliament). Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's approval ratings—in the 20%-30% range in late 2023—have fueled speculation that he will face internal challengers in 2024. (See CRS In Focus IF10199, *U.S.-Japan Relations*, coordinated by Mark E. Manyin)

Sri Lanka (*Legislative and Presidential, expected September*) With presidential elections due by October, President Ranil Wickremesinghe has said he intends to hold both presidential and parliamentary elections this fall. Wickremesinghe became president in 2022 after protests over the government's handling of the economy forced former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa from power. Wickremesinghe has said he will seek re-election, and some observers say he is stifling media and civil society to avoid criticism of his handling of the country's 2022 economic crisis and subsequent bailout by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). (See CRS In Focus IF10213, *Sri Lanka: Background and Issues for Congress*, by Colin Willett)

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