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INDIA BUILDS TUNNEL TO SUPPLY TROOPS ALONG CHINA BORDER

Indian engineers are digging the world's longest two-lane tunnel to move troops and supplies to the country's disputed border with China. The new road is 4,000 meters above sea level and runs underneath a critical mountain pass that is now only accessible by a treacherous 317km road. 'Currently snow clearance of the pass requires massive effort, and even then only certain kind of vehicles can cross. The tunnel will reduce travel time by hours, allowing faster and unhindered movement of troops round the year,' said Colonel Prakshit Mehra, a project director of the tunnel. The tunnel, which will open in June, will ensure that India can move troops without detection by China. (*Taipei Times*, November 3, 2021)

CHINA BUILDS MOCKUPS OF U.S. NAVY SHIPS FOR MISSILE TARGET PRACTICE

Satellite images reveal that China's military has built mockups in the shape of a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier and other warships in Xinjiang's Taklamakan Desert. The satellite images show a full-scale outline of a U.S. carrier, at least two Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyers, and a rail system with a ship-sized target mounted on it to simulate a moving vessel. The ballistic missile training range complex is overseen by the People's Liberation Army Rocket Force, which conducted its first confirmed live-fire launch into the South China Sea in July 2020, firing six DF-21 anti-ship ballistic missiles into the waters north of the Spratly Islands. (*Reuters*, November 8, 2021)

AS BIRTHS DECLINE SO DOES CHINA'S POPULATION

China's population may be shrinking as births continue to fall, from 12 million in 2020 to between 9.5 million to 10.5 million in 2021. 'If the number of newborns is near the lower limit of the prediction, that means the population will register negative growth,' as there's been an average of about 10 million deaths a year, wrote demographer He Yafu. In Dezhou, Shandong, for instance, the number of newborns declined by 17.9% in the first nine months of 2021, as compared with 2020, and data from Henan and Anhui show similar declines. In the first eight months of this year, Taizhou, Jiangsu saw 43.4% fewer newborns than during the same period last year. Despite doing away with restrictions on the number of children and new incentives that make it cheaper to raise children, Jefferies Financial Group Inc. predicts that in 2021 the number of newborns in China will drop to the lowest level since 1950. (*The Japan Times*, November 12, 2021)

TAIWAN GOVERNMENT SHUTTERS CHINA CENTER AT PREMIER UNIVERSITY

Taiwan's Ministry of Education has ordered National Tsing Hua University (NTHU) to close its Cross-Strait Tsinghua Research Institute () immediately and send its mainland Chinese staff home. The institute was founded in Xiamen, Fujian in 2015 by NTHU, Tsinghua University in Beijing, and the Xiamen City Government to attract Taiwanese talent to China. Then-NTHU vice president Wu Cheng-wen attended the institute's establishment ceremony in 2016, and in 2019 NTHU president Hocheng Hong and former NTHU president Chen Lih-juann met with representatives of China's Tsinghua University. Democratic Progressive Party Legislator Fan Yun said that NTHU officials lied about their involvement in cross-strait exchange programs that took student groups to China to meet with officials from Beijing's Taiwan Affairs Office. (*Taipei Times*, November 11, 2021)

SEOUL SCRAMBLES FIGHTER JETS AS CHINESE, RUSSIAN AIRCRAFT ENTER ADIZ

South Korea's military scrambled fighter jets after two Chinese and seven Russian warplanes entered the north-eastern part of the Korea Air Defense Identification Zone (KADIZ) during what Beijing called regular training exercises. Although they did not violate Korean airspace, Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff dispatched fighter jets and air refueling tankers to brace for a potential contingency and conduct 'additional analysis.' Neither Beijing nor Moscow recognizes the KADIZ. (*Straits Times*, November 19, 2021)

[EDITOR'S NOTE: In 2019, South Korean warplanes fired hundreds of warning shots toward Russian military aircraft when they entered South Korean airspace during a joint air patrol with China. At the time, South Korea and Japan had scrambled jets to intercept the patrol, accusing Russia and China of violating their airspace – a claim both Beijing and Moscow denied.]