

# ASIA'S POWERFUL MEN AND WOMEN

Similar to the situation in Europe, authoritarian populists are on the rise in Asia. Like President Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines, they are striving to turn their countries into illiberal states. Aside from these populist neophytes, there are several countries where political dynasties have held the reins of power for years or even decades.

**XI JINPING** (A♠) CHINA  
 \*1953, Beijing  
 2013 GENERAL SECRETARY (COMM. PARTY)  
 In office since: 2013  
 Sharing leadership with: De facto no one  
 Studies: Chemical engineering, Marxist theory and political education, law  
 Last occupation: Agricultural laborer  
 Religion: None  
 More info: 1 Children  
 Father: prominent revolutionary figure close to Mao, who suffered from persecution during the Cultural Revolution, but was rehabilitated in later years.

**NARENDRA MODI** (K♥) INDIA  
 \*1950, Vadnagar  
 2014 PRIME MINISTER  
 President Shri Ram Nath Kovind  
 Political science  
 Worked at his uncle's canteen  
 Hinduism, None  
 Modi was forced into an arranged marriage at the age of 18, but it has never been consummated. He is the third of six children in a family of grocers.

**MAHATHIR MOHAMED** (J♣) MALAYSIA  
 \*1925, Alor Setar, Kedah  
 2018 PRIME MINISTER  
 Sultan Muhammad V  
 Medicine  
 Medical doctor  
 Islam, 7  
 Mahathir was already at the helm of the state from 1981 to 2003 and is now the world's oldest state leader.

**BOUNNHANG VORACHIT** (9♦) LAO PDR  
 \*1937, Thapantong  
 2016 PRESIDENT\*\*  
 Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith  
 Political theory, military college  
 Colonel in the army  
 Buddhism, 5  
 He dropped out of school at the age of 14. \*\*also: General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party

**NGUYEN PHU TRONG** (10♠) VIETNAM  
 \*1944, Hanoi  
 2011 GENERAL SECRETARY (COMM. PARTY)  
 Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc and President Tran Dai Quang  
 Philology, political science  
 Student  
 No Info  
 Due to the communist structures in Vietnam, Nguyen is de facto the most powerful politician in the country, though he is neither officially head of state nor head of government.

**MOON JAE-IN** (J♥) SOUTH KOREA  
 \*1953, Geoje  
 2017 PRESIDENT  
 Prime Minister Lee Nak-yeon  
 Law  
 Lawyer  
 Christianity, 2  
 Moon was born to refugees from North Korea. Right-wing politicians sometimes criticize him as being a North Korea sympathizer.

**SHINZO ABE** (A♥) JAPAN  
 \*1954, Tokyo  
 2012 PRIME MINISTER  
 Emperor Akihito  
 Political science  
 Manager at Kobe Steel  
 Shintoism, None  
 Abe's wife Akie has opposed her husband's policies on multiple occasions. Abe's father was foreign minister, his grandfather prime minister.

**AUNG SAN SUU KYI** (Q♣) MYANMAR  
 \*1945, Hmawng Saung  
 2016 STATE COUNSELLOR\*\*  
 President Htin Kyaw, a position Aung San Suu Kyi is constitutionally barred from  
 Philosophy, politics, economics  
 Scholar in political science  
 Buddhism, 2  
 \*\* an office created specifically for her

**RODRIGO DUTERTE** (J♦) PHILIPPINES  
 \*1945, Maasin  
 2016 PRESIDENT  
 Senate and House of Representatives  
 Political science, law  
 Prosecutor  
 Christianity, 4  
 Duterte has boasted of personally killing suspected criminals during his tenure as mayor of the city of Davao.

**JOKO WIDODO** (K♣) INDONESIA  
 \*1961, Surakarta  
 2014 PRESIDENT  
 Seeking alliance with Nahdlatul Ulama, the world's largest Islamic organisation.  
 Forestry  
 Furniture maker with own company  
 Islam, 3  
 Widodo is the first Indonesian president who comes from outside the military and political elite.

**PRAYUT CHAN-O-CHA** (K♦) THAILAND  
 \*1954, Nakhon Ratchasima  
 2014 PRIME MINISTER  
 King Maha Vajiralongkorn  
 Military academy  
 Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Thai Army  
 Buddhism, 2  
 Prayut is a junta leader turned despotic prime minister. His father was a colonel.

**IMRAN KHAN** (K♠) PAKISTAN  
 \*1952, Lahore  
 2018 PRIME MINISTER  
 President Mamnoon Hussain  
 Economics, philosophy, politics  
 Philanthropist, Cricket player  
 Islam, 2  
 Born into a well-situated Pashtun family, Khan is considered the greatest Pakistani cricket player.

**LEE HSIEN LOONG** (A♣) SINGAPORE  
 \*1952, Singapore  
 2004 PRIME MINISTER  
 President Halimah Yacob  
 Mathematics, computer science, public administration  
 Brigadier-General in the armed forces  
 No Info, 4  
 Lee is the son of the first prime minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew.

**BATTULGA KHALTMAA** (10♥) MONGOLIA  
 \*1963, Ulaanbaatar City  
 2017 PRESIDENT  
 Prime Minister Ukhnaa Khurelsukh  
 School of Fine Arts (painting)  
 Real estate tycoon  
 No info, 8  
 Battulga rose to national prominence practicing Sambo, a Russian martial art; in 1983, he became the World Champion at 52 kg.

**HASSANAL BOLKIAH** (10♣) BRUNEI  
 \*1946, Bandar Seri Begawan  
 1967 SULTAN  
 Prime minister, defense minister, finance minister, minister of foreign affairs and trade, head of Islamic faith  
 No one  
 Medicine  
 Cadet/captain, 12  
 Islam, 12  
 The sultan is the world's second longest reigning monarch and was ranked the world's richest person in 1997.

**SHEIKH HASINA** (Q♥) BANGLADESH  
 \*1947, Tungipara  
 2009 PRIME MINISTER  
 President Abdul Hamid  
 Bengali literature  
 Graduate living in exile  
 Islam, 2  
 Daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding father of Bangladesh. Sheikh Hasina survived the assassination of their family in August 1975.

**KIM JONG-UN** (J♠) NORTH KOREA  
 \*around 1983  
 2011 SUPREME LEADER, Chairman of State Affairs Commission, Chairman of Workers' Party, Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army  
 No one  
 Physics, military academy  
 Presumably none  
 Juche ideology, Allegedly 3  
 Kim's grandfather Kim Il-sung was North Korea's first "Supreme Leader," who was succeeded by Kim Jong-un's father, Kim Jong-il.

**HUN SEN** (10♦) CAMBODIA  
 \*1951, Peam Koh Sna  
 1985 PRIME MINISTER  
 King Norodom Sihamoni  
 Political science  
 Rebel army leader  
 Buddhism, 6  
 Hun Sen, a former Khmer Rouge commander, has been in office as the de facto leader since 1985, which makes him the longest-serving head of government of a Southeast Asian country.