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RP press freedom...

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again this year.
"A military coup caused Fiji (152nd) to fall 73 places. Soldiers moved into Fijian newsrooms for several weeks and censored articles before they were published, while foreign journalists were deported," RSF said.
In RSF's ranking, "authoritarianism governments" in Sri Lanka (162nd) and Malaysia (131st) have prevented journalists from properly covering sensitive subjects like corruption and human rights abuses.
"War and terrorism wrought havoc and exposed journalists to

great danger," RSF said.
"It shared (with Somalia) the world record for journalists killed during the period under review."
RSF said Asian countries that least respected press freedom were North Korea, Burma, and Laos.
The Press Freedom Ranking also cited Asia's few democracies getting well placed rankings.
New Zealand (13th), Australia (16th) and Japan (17th) are all in the top 20.
Respect for press freedom and the lack of targeted violence against journalists enable these three countries to be regional leaders. ■

House panel...

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would allow federal regulators to exempt national banks from state laws if those laws would "significantly interfere" with the bank's ability to do business. Otherwise, banks would be forced to comply with a myriad of state laws that are often tougher than federal laws, under the House plan.
The House panel was on track to approve by Thursday broader legislation that would create a Consumer Financial Protection Agency dedicated to monitoring such common financial products as credit cards and mortgages.
The debate on the agency's scope was the latest tussle between lawmakers, who say they are working to protect the average American from abusive rate hikes and predatory lending, and a powerful financial lobby with deep pockets.
The financial industry has contributed more than \$53 million this year to members of Congress and the political parties, with \$6 million of that going to members of the House Financial Services Committee as of the end of July, according to the watchdog group Center for Responsive Politics. ■

RP moving closer to getting \$5.5M...

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The \$5.5-million funding is a major step that brings the Philippines closer to concluding an MCC compact agreement. It does not constitute a commitment to sign a compact but is an important milestone in MCC's compact development process.
The memorandum was signed last Friday, Oct. 16., by Philippine Ambassador to the United States Willy Gaa and MCC acting vice president for compact development Darius Teter who called the Philippines "a model partner in every way."
Gaa emphasized his government's commitment to promote economic growth through a compact proposal aimed at benefiting the poorest of the poor in the Philippines while addressing issues involving tax evasion and corruption. ■

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