



Truck slid onto tracks a minute before collision

The crane truck that caused last week's fatal train accident had slid onto the tracks about one-and-a-half minutes before it was struck, the Taiwan Transportation Safety Board said on Wednesday (April 7).

The board had launched an investigation into the derailment, which took place near the eastern city of Hualien on Friday (April 2) and killed 50 people and injured 211 people, making it the nation's most devastating railway accident in decades. Carrying 494 passengers and four Taiwan Railways Administration personnel, the southbound express train to Taitung hit the truck as it was about to enter the Cingshuei Tunnel in Hualien's Sioulin Township. MOFA would like to express its sincere thanks for the messages of condolences and concern sent by 92 countries and international organizations and over 745 heads of state, foreign ministers, officials and political figures after the tragic train accident.

US bill calls for Taiwan's inclusion in UN

US Strategic Competition Act calls for Taiwan's participation in UN, WHA, ICAO, and INTERPOL

On Thursday April 8, Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ) announced that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which he chairs, will on April 14 vote on a proposed bill titled the Strategic Competition Act of 2021. Although the bill mainly focuses on ways to counter China's "aggressive and assertive behavior" and human rights abuses, it is replete with references to Taiwan, mentioning the country 46 times. Nestled within item 7 of under a section concerning the enhancement of the U.S.-Taiwan partnership is a call for the U.S. to champion Taiwan's "meaningful participation in the United Nations. It also stipulates that the U.S. should back Taiwan's participation in the World Health Assembly (WHA), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),

and International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), among other global bodies.

Taiwan was a founding member of the U.N. in 1949 but was expelled in 1971 after China was admitted as a member. The country was subsequently removed from all U.N. organizations, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), in 1972.



Taiwan says will fight to the end if China attacks

Taiwan will fight to the end if China attacks, its foreign minister said on Wednesday (7 April), adding that the United States saw a danger that this could happen amid mounting Chinese military pressure, including aircraft carrier drills, near the island. Taiwan has complained of repeated military activities by Beijing in recent months, with China's air force making almost daily forays in Taiwan's air defence identification zone.

"From my limited understanding of American decision makers watching developments in this region, they clearly see the danger of the possibility of China launching an attack against Taiwan," Joseph Wu told reporters at his ministry. "We are willing to defend ourselves without any questions and we will fight the war if we need to fight the war. And if we need to defend ourselves to the very last day we will defend ourselves to the very last day." Washington, Taiwan's most important international backer and arms supplier, has been pushing Taipei to modernise its military so it can become a "porcupine", that is hard for China to attack.

IMF raises Taiwan's GDP growth forecast for 2021 to 4.7%

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has raised its forecast for Taiwan's gross domestic product (GDP) growth for 2021 to 4.7 percent, up 1.5 percentage points from its most recent estimate late last year.

In the IMF's latest World Economic Outlook report issued Tuesday (April 6), titled "Managing Divergent Recoveries," the Fund's chief economist Gita Gopinath wrote that despite continued uncertainty around the COVID-19 pandemic, economies across the world had shown a "stronger than anticipated rebound."

As relates to Taiwan, the report predicted that its economy would grow by 4.7 percent in 2021, up 1.5 percentage points from the 3.2 percent growth it forecast last October, and that it would grow at a rate of 3.0 percent in 2022. Meanwhile, Taiwan's 3.1 percent GDP growth in 2020 put it first among economies in the Asia Pacific, followed by Vietnam with 2.9 percent growth and China with 2.3 percent growth.

Taiwan ranks 15th for global exports: ministry

Taiwan ranked 15th in the world by export value last year at US\$345.21 billion, gaining two places from a year earlier amid its strongest performance in 16 years, the Ministry of Finance said on Thursday (April 8), citing WTO data. The improvement came after exports grew 4.9 percent annually and imports rose 0.3 percent, bucking the world's more than 7 percent decline in exports and imports, the ministry said. Taiwanese tech firms benefitted from the surge in demand for laptops, tablets, TVs and other devices used in remote working and schooling, as well as for emerging technologies such as 5G smartphones, artificial intelligence and Internet of Things applications, the ministry said. Taiwan accounted for 2 percent of the world's overall exports and 1.6 percent of its imports, it said.