

I, and the South African Government, have enormous appreciation for the contribution that the Government of the Republic of China (Taiwan) has made to the commitment of the Government sector in the economic development in Africa. The ROC (Taiwan) further, made a generous and much appreciated contribution to South Africa's transition to democracy .



Statement by President Nelson Mandela—27 November 1996

President Tsai Eyes Greater Global Participation for Taiwan

President Tsai Ing-wen reiterated that Taiwan is committed to expanding its contribution to the global community through seeking meaningful participation in the U.N. system.

Globalisation has led to increasingly frequent people-to-people interactions and trade exchanges among countries, while issues such as aviation safety, global health and sustainable development require collaboration between all members of the international society, Tsai said.

It is important that Taiwan is not excluded in the process so that a sound global network can be achieved to address these challenges, she added.

Tsai made the remarks while receiving a delegation of the permanent and deputy permanent representatives to the U.N. of four of Taiwan's diplomatic allies at the Office of the President in Taipei City.



President Tsai Ing-wen (center) receives Eswatini Permanent Representative to the U.N. Melusi Martin Masuku (fourth left), Kiriabati Deputy Permanent Representative to the U.N. Tukabu Tauati (second left), Marshall Islands Deputy Permanent Representative to the U.N. Deborah Barker-Manase (first left) and Tuvalu Deputy Permanent Representative to the U.N. Fakasoa Tealei (fourth right) at the Office of the President Jan. 24 in Taipei City. (Courtesy of Office of the President)

The visiting officials were Melusi Martin Masuku from the Kingdom of Eswatini, Tukabu Tauati from Kiriabati, Deborah Barker-Manase from the Marshall Islands and Fakasoa Tealei from Tuvalu.

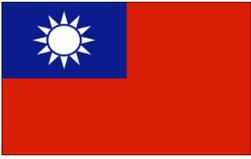
According to the president, the government attaches great importance to its relationships with the country's diplomatic allies as they are key avenues through which Taiwan connects with the world.

The government is looking forward to enhancing information exchanges and promoting bilateral projects in areas spanning agricultural technology, green energy, medical care and resilient cities with these nations to fast track achieving sustainable development goals, she added.

Tsai also thanked the members of the delegation for consistently speaking up for Taiwan at international venues, including at the U.N. (Source: Taiwan Today)



(Left) Thambo Gina, minister of economic planning and development in the Kingdom of Eswatini, inspects Taipei Lantern Festival signage in Wanhua District's Ximen area. (Staff photo/Chen Meiling) (Centre) An oversized clog planter is expected to feature heavily on social media platforms during the Chiang Kai-shek Shilin Residence Tulip Show. The popular event runs until March 3 in Taipei City. (Courtesy of Taipei City Government) (Right) A flock of shovellers and wigeons fly over Jiading Wetlands in southern Taiwan's Kaohsiung City. The area usually attracts migratory birds until the end of April. (Courtesy of Kaohsiung City Government)



The 2019 Chinese New Year and Cultural Festival



Representative Matthew Chou (far right) with the The Mentor of the Nan Hua Temple, Venerable I-Chun (second from right).

The Nan Hua Temple once again provided the stunning backdrop for the Chinese New Year and Cultural Festival. Attendees could be forgiven for thinking they had been transported to the Far East as they stood in the shadow of the magnificent buildings while hundreds of firecrackers echoed loudly around the temple, creating small explosions in order to drive away old ghosts and evil spirits.

The mesmerising Dragon and Lion Dances were performed to the pulsating beat of drums which simulated the heartbeat of the auspicious creatures. Both dances were performed as a means to chase away evil spirits and welcome in prosperous times, and to show respect to Buddha.

Amid all the noise and jubilation, the smell of incense wafted out from the Temple where people offered silent prayers for the New Year and to their ancestors.

2019 ushers in the year of the Pig, which is believed to be a good year to make money and friends. The portly pig is associated with wealth, good fortune, emotion and intuition.

Representative Matthew Chou from the Taipei Liaison Office wished everyone a happy Lunar New Year saying, "The Pig represents the completion of a cycle, as the Pig is the twelfth sign of the Chinese

Zodiac. In life, every end is a new beginning, and it is in that spirit that today we look forward to the coming year with hope and aspirations in our hearts."



Representative Matthew Chou delivering his remarks.

Red envelopes symbolising good luck were handed out to the thousands of people. Inside was a beautiful blessing for the New Year and money, as is the tradition for the New Year.

The rows and rows of mouth watering food stalls did not disappoint and is always a highlight of the festival. From vegetable fritters, stinky tofu, fried noodles, bubble tea, matcha ice cream, vegan dogs, and fake fish and chips, each vendor had a unique take on the strictly vegetarian street food. Over the years the food has been drawing foodies to the festival and to anyone who wants to try authentic Asian street food.

Balloon sculpting, lantern painting, go-cart racing, paint ball, trampoline jumping with bungee cords were but some of the activities for the little ones, while cultural events around the Temple and meditation sessions provided food for the mind, body and soul and got everyone in to the right mindset to tackle the New Year. **(Dominique Spalovsky)**

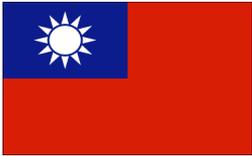


2019 ushers in the year of the Pig, the twelfth sign of the Chinese Zodiac.



The Lion and Dragon Dances proved firm favourites with the crowds.





MOFA Gears up for Taiwan Relations Act 40th Anniversary Celebrations



The MOFA is staging a series of events throughout the year to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Taiwan Relations Act. (UDN)

A yearlong program of events celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) was announced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in Taipei City.

These activities underscore the importance of the TRA in cementing bilateral relations and ensuring cross-strait peace, stability and security, said Vincent Chih-shiang Yao, director-general of the MOFA's Department of North American Affairs. They also illustrate the firm friendship and expansive exchanges be-

tween Taiwan and the U.S., he added.

According to Yao, the events will be held in Taiwan and the U.S. They include the Indo-Pacific forum on religious freedom and Global Cooperation and Training Framework workshops on digital economy, energy security, indigenous language preservation, law enforcement, media literacy, public health and women's economic empowerment.

The forum—organised by Taiwan Foundation for Democracy—is taking place March 11-12 in Taipei. It will be attended by Sam Brownback, head of the U.S. State Department's Office of International Religious Freedom, as well as academics, experts and officials from more than 10 like-minded countries.

According to the MOFA, the event is seen as playing a key role in protecting religious freedom while promoting freedom, democracy and human rights throughout the region. It was inspired by the inaugural Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom hosted by U.S. Secretary

of State Mike Pompeo last July in Washington.

Other program highlights include the Indo-Pacific Security Dialogue in Taipei; a special reception on Capitol Hill; a short film about Taiwan-U.S. ties; and a series of Taiwan Day events organised by Taiwan's representative offices in various U.S. cities.

The American Institute in Taiwan is also marking the milestone. Its TRA@40: An Enduring Partnership campaign, launched by AIT Director Brent Christensen Feb. 1, focuses on a different aspect of Taiwan-U.S. relations each month for the coming year.

Signed into law April 10, 1979, following the switch of recognition from Taipei to Beijing by the U.S., the TRA authorises the continuation of substantive relations between the two sides in the absence of diplomatic ties to help maintain Indo-Pacific peace, stability and security.

(Source: Taiwan Today)

Premier Su Convenes First Cabinet Meeting, Pledges Tangible Results

Premier Su Tseng-chang convened his first Cabinet meeting in Taipei City, pledging to lead his team in delivering tangible results so that the public can experience and share in the achievements of government reforms.

Ministries must collaborate closely and forge ahead on the existing foundation of economic transformation laid down by outgoing Premier Lai Ching-te, Su said, vowing to step out of his comfort zone, roll up his sleeves and dive into the work.

According to Su, the top priority for the government is to create real benefits for the people through policy measures that aptly respond to public expectations. All central government agencies will take stock of programs under implementation, identify those that are failing to deliver outcomes and propose appropri-



Premier Su Tseng-chang (centre) addresses his first Cabinet meeting alongside Vice Premier Chen Chi-mai (right) and Cabinet Secretary-General Li Meng-yen in Taipei City. (Courtesy of Executive Yuan)

ate action, he said.

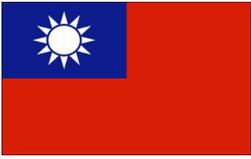
The premier also instructed ministers to communicate with the public in a decisive and straightforward manner so the

people clearly understand the steps that are being taken to address their needs.

Su and the new Cabinet members assumed their posts earlier the same day in a swearing-in ceremony hosted by President Tsai Ing-wen at the Office of the President in Taipei.

Afterward, Su received the seal of office from Lai at the Executive Yuan. He said that he accepted the immense responsibility out of passion for Taiwan and a sense of duty to the country and its people.

The premier also thanked Lai for his contributions to Taiwan. By laying out far-sighted national development plans, Lai has paved the way for the work ahead, Su said. **(Source: Taiwan Today)**



Taiwan's Cabinet Passes Same-Sex Marriage Bill



Taiwan is expected to become the first country in Asia to legalise same-sex marriage following the approval of a landmark bill by the Cabinet.
(Photo/Jimmy Lin)

A bill proposed by the Ministry of Justice on same-sex marriage in Taiwan was approved by the Cabinet, underscoring the government's commitment to promoting freedom, human rights, and the right to marry and found a family.

Comprising 27 articles, the bill serves as the legal basis for same-sex couples aged

18 and older to wed. It also covers such areas as adoption, divorce, inheritance, and medical and property rights.

President Tsai Ing-wen said the bill reflects broad-based consensus in society on the issue and is in line with the government's stance on protecting the traditional values of marriage. It further underscores the health of Taiwan's democracy and the respect and tolerance of citizens for one another, she added.

Echoing Tsai's remarks, Premier Su Tseng-chang said the bill is in line with a related Constitutional Court ruling in 2017, while taking into account last year's referendum rejecting amendments to the Civil Code permitting same-sex unions.

Although there may still be some differences in opinion, Su said, the bill should be seen as an important first step in the right direction. All members of the society should be treated equally and with

respect so Taiwan can continue developing as a diversified and sustainable society.

According to Judicial Interpretation No. 748 issued May 24, 2017, the provisions on marriage in the Civil Code do not allow two persons of the same sex to create a permanent union of intimate and exclusive nature for the purpose of living a common life.

The ruling found the provisions in violation of the Constitution's guarantees of freedom of marriage and right to equality. It also stipulated the government amend or enact relevant laws within two years from the announcement of the interpretation.

According to the Cabinet, the bill is set for fast-tracked legislative review and expected to take effect May 24 this year. **(Source: Taiwan Today)**

Tsai Lauds Taiwan-US Satellite Project

President Tsai Ing-wen said that Formosat-7, a group of six satellites jointly developed by Taiwan and the U.S., will strengthen the nation's capabilities in such areas as disaster preparedness and meteorological monitoring while spotlighting its space technology prowess.

Set for launch later this year from Kennedy Space Centre, the satellite constellation is an initiative between the National Space Organisation (NSPO) and U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. It marks the largest collaborative project of its kind between the two sides, Tsai said.

The constellation's primary mission is to gather weather and ionospheric observation data on low- and mid-latitude regions. According to the president, this will boost Taiwan's contributions to global research in fields spanning climate change, disaster prevention and relief, and sustainable development.

Formosat-7, an initiative under the government's 2004-2018 space technology development plan, is set to take over



President Tsai Ing-wen addresses officials and researchers at the National Space Organization in northern Taiwan's Hsinchu City. (CNA)

from Formosat-3, which was launched in 2006 and has collected more than 10 million atmospheric profiles.

The upcoming deployment also follows the successful launch in August 2017 of Formosat-5, Taiwan's first wholly home-grown ultra-high resolution Earth observation satellite.

Tsai described Formosat-5 as a major milestone for Taiwan's space tech industry and a clear demonstration of the nation's R&D capabilities in remote sensing

satellites. Taiwan is committed to expanding its expertise in related fields, as underscored by the new 10-year, NT\$25.1 billion (US\$814 million) space technology development program approved by the Cabinet Jan. 15, she said.

Under the plan, NSPO is tasked with producing an additional 10 satellites by 2028. These efforts will further strengthen the nation's Earth observation capabilities and bolster its role in global space tech industry supply chains, Tsai added.

According to NSPO, Formosat-7 is capable of capturing 40,000 atmospheric and ionospheric profiles of tropical and subtropical regions each day, about three to four times the amount of Formosat-3. The increased data sets will enhance the country's weather forecasting accuracy, the organization said.

Established in 1991, NSPO is administered by the National Applied Research Laboratories under the Ministry of Science and Technology. **(Source: Taiwan Today)**



Taiwan Unemployment Hits 18-Year Low in 2018

Taiwan's unemployment rate averaged 3.71 percent in 2018, down 0.05 of a percentage point from the year before to its lowest level in 18 years, according to the Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics (DGBAS).

The latest DGBAS figures revealed that this was the best result since 2000 when the jobless rate stood at 2.99 percent. The average number of unemployed fell to 440,000, a decrease of 3,000 or 0.7 percent from 12 months ago.

Those with jobs tallied 11.43 million, up 82,000 or 0.73 percent, while the labour participation rate gained 0.16 of a percentage point to 58.99 percent, continuing its upward trend for nine years in a row since 2009.

According to the DGBAS, these positive



Taiwan's job market remains resilient in 2018 despite challenging conditions at home and abroad. (CNA)

numbers indicate that despite pressure from a slack economy, the country's employment situation has been better than expected.

In terms of educational level, those with college degrees posted the highest job-

less rate at 5.12 percent for the year. Youth aged 20-24 topped other age groups with an unemployment rate of 11.98 percent.

Taiwan's services sector remained the biggest contributor to employment during the period, accounting for 59.38 percent of the job market. It was followed by the industrial and agricultural sectors at 35.71 percent and 4.9 percent, respectively.

The positive labour market sentiment was also reflected in the average monthly wages of the industrial and services sectors, which picked up 3.97 percent in the first 11 months of 2018 to a record NT\$52,059 (US\$1,685). (Source: *Taiwan Today*)

2018 Agricultural Exports Hit 20-Year High in Taiwan

Taiwan's agricultural exports increased 9.8 percent year on year to a two-decade high of US\$5.47 billion in 2018, according to the Council of Agriculture (COA).

Of the country's four major export categories, three chalked up rises: crops, 16.2 percent to US\$2.59 billion; aquatic products, 7.1 percent to US\$1.93 billion; and forestry products, 2.1 percent to US\$93.79 million. Livestock declined 0.6 percent to US\$846.38 million.

The biggest mover in crops was fresh fruit, up 29.5 percent to US\$134.75 million. The record figure was attributed by the COA to double-digit growth in shipments of bananas, custard apples, mangoes and pineapples.

Vegetables also fared well, gaining 8.5 percent to US\$163.17 million, with broccoli, cabbage, carrot and green soybean shipments all establishing new export value benchmarks. Green soybeans accounted for 44.3 percent of Japan's imports, continuing the 11-year run of Taiwan as the Northeast Asian country's No.1 supplier.



Pineapples are one of the four fruit crops helping keep Taiwan's agricultural exports on the growth track. (Staff photo/Meg Chang)

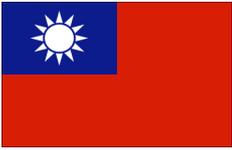
Taiwan's top-three major export destination rankings remained unchanged: China, 23.2 percent or US\$1.27 billion; Japan, 16.9 percent or US\$922.72 million; and the U.S., 10.3 percent or US\$564.8 million.

Export destinations posting the three highest growth rates are Saudi Arabia, 52 percent to US\$18.31 million; New Zealand, 35.7 percent to US\$10.94 million; and the Philippines, 29.8 percent to US\$96.55 million.

The strong showing was attributed by the COA to public and private sector efforts aimed at encouraging primary producers to adopt high-value animal and plant varieties, improving farming techniques and removing trade barriers in major overseas markets.

Equally important was the staging of workshops on enhancing cost and pest controls, as well as implementing growing season regulation, in conjunction with related agencies and local farmer associations.

Another factor cited by the COA was the effectiveness of promotional tie-ups with the Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA). A total of 31 joint events were staged in markets such as Canada, Hong Kong, Japan and the U.S., further boosting the global image and reputation of the country's fresh produce. (Source: *Taiwan Today*)



Taiwan Start-ups Recognised as Global High-Tech Leaders



Taiwan start-ups feature in the latest AR/VR/XR Leaders report by U.S. market research firm Digi-Capital.

Four innovative start-ups from Taiwan were recently named international front-runners in artificial intelligence and augmented, virtual and extended reality technologies, according to the National Development Council (NDC).

In the latest AR/VR/XR Leaders report produced by U.S. market research firm Digi-Capital, iStaging Corp. from Taipei

City and Pumpkin Studio from Kaohsiung City in southern Taiwan won recognition as leaders in the games category. Redpill Lab Ltd. from Taipei followed suit in the lifestyle category.

iStaging is an AR and VR content producer for industries like e-commerce, real estate and travel; Pumpkin is a VR content and game developer for construction, interior design and related industries; and Redpill is a VR games developer specializing in AI and motion capture technology.

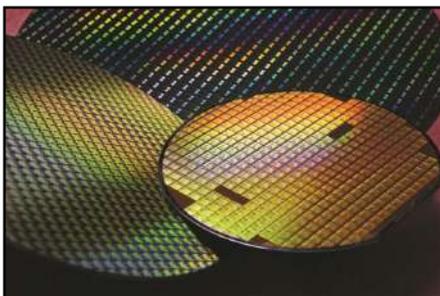
Another home-grown outfit gaining global accolades is Taipei-based Osense Technology Co. Ltd. The provider of image resolutions utilising AI and computer vision was listed as one of 100 companies expected to change the world by Japan's Nikkei Business magazine in a Jan. 14 article entitled "Searching for Google in the Next 10 Years."

According to the NDC, the achievements reflect the effectiveness of government

efforts in promoting AI, AR and VR development via the XR Express Taiwan Project.

Implemented by the NDC in March 2018, the initiative is a central plank in the government's policy of transforming Taiwan into the Silicon Valley of Asia. The project, which has benefited more than 100 firms, is strengthening the local XR ecosystem and promoting tie-ups between local start-ups and counterparts worldwide. **(Source: Taiwan Today)**

Taiwan Maintains Global Leadership in IC Wafer Fab Capacity



Taiwan leads the world in 200mm-equivalent fab capacity for the fourth year running. (Courtesy of TSMC)

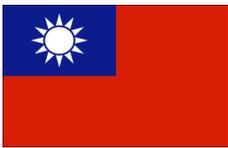
Taiwan maintained its global leadership in integrated circuit 200mm-equivalent wafer fab capacity for the fourth consecutive year, according to U.S.-based IC Insights Inc.

According to a report recently released by the semiconductor research firm, Taiwan boasts an average monthly capacity of 4.13 million wafers as of December 2018. This represents a global share of

21.8 percent, positioning the country ahead of South Korea, 21.3 percent; Japan, 16.8 percent; North America, 12.8 percent; and China, 12.5 percent.

China was the biggest year-on-year mover, the report said, attributing the increase from 10.8 percent to large-scale investment in new facilities and lines, as well as technology.

In terms of individual companies, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co. Ltd., the world's largest pure-play foundry, account for 67 percent of Taiwan's capacity, while Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd. and SK Hynix Inc. comprise 94 percent of South Korea's capacity. The trio are also the top three capacity leaders worldwide. **(Source: Taiwan Today)**



CIP, Local NGOs Join Forces in Promoting Indigenous Languages



Children dressed in traditional garb perform at an event to unveil the 16 NGOs tasked with spearheading indigenous language preservation efforts in New Taipei City. (Courtesy of CIP)

A group of nongovernmental organisations has been tasked with spearheading efforts to preserve the languages of Taiwan's 16 officially recognised indigenous tribes, according to the Cabinet-level Council of Indigenous Peoples (CIP).

Unveiled on International Mother Language Day in New Taipei City, the NGOs are each responsible for one indigenous tongue. They will receive government funding to launch instructor training programs, produce teaching materials and strengthen use

of the languages in areas spanning competitions, festivals and radio programs.

The organisations are also working with the CIP to map out development plans in accordance with each language's risk of falling out of use. Participating groups include Taitung County Orchid Island Catholic Culture Research and Development Association for the Tao language; Taiwan Indigenous Language Development Society for Paiwan; and Yofayof no Palofasaray to Sowan no Pangcah i Taiwan for Amis.

CIP Minister Icyang Parod said that empowering these organisations to drive revitalisation efforts will ensure that the unique preservation needs of each language are met. Selection of the groups also underscores the government's commitment to implementing the Indigenous Languages Development Act and protecting the nation's linguistic diversity, he added.

Taking effect in June 2017, the legislation designates indigenous tongues as national languages and outlines a host of measures to preserve them and advance their use. Parod said that the law was a key factor in Taiwan's excellent score of 93 out of 100, a

two-point year-on-year increase, in the 2018 Freedom in the World report published by U.S.-based Freedom House.

According to the CIP, a total of 152 personnel specialising in indigenous dialects have been recruited by local government agencies like township offices since the law was enacted. Other measures include the establishment of indigenous language learning centres at seven universities across Taiwan as well as the launch of a project to enlist fluent tribe peoples as teachers for critically endangered languages such as Hla'alua, Kanakanavu, Kavalan and Thao.

Also under the act, the CIP is preparing to set up an indigenous languages research foundation. This institution is expected to serve as Taiwan's foremost centre for related linguistic studies, certification system development, and dictionary design and publication, the council said.

Indigenous peoples have lived in Taiwan for millenniums. The latest CIP statistics revealed that the population of the country's 16 officially recognized tribes stands at around 560,000, or 2.3 percent of the total 23.5 million. **(Source: Taiwan Today)**

Taiwan Artists' Designs Enliven Lunar New Year Festival in Canada



An interactive game "The Universe of Piggy Banks" designed by Taiwan's Su Kuan-chih is a key attraction at the 2019 LunarFest in Toronto and Vancouver. (Courtesy of MOC)

Taiwan artists are enlivening the 2019 LunarFest in Toronto and Vancouver with their designs to welcome in the Year of the Pig, the Ministry of Culture (MOC) said.

Sponsored by the MOC, the annual celebration of Lunar New Year features work by local talents who created outfits, a children's game and various lanterns for the event. This year's festival is themed Saving the Moment, highlighting the concept of

being careful with money as well as savouring time spent with loved ones.

Charlie Wu, managing director of organiser Asian-Canadian Special Events Association, said since it was first held on the sidelines of the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, LunarFest has become one of the most significant celebrations showcasing Asian cultures in the country.

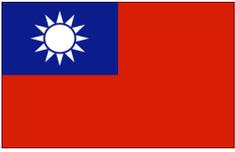
Taipei City-based National Palace Museum collaborated with ACSEA to present the fashion exhibition "The Galleria of Imperial Inspirations." Taiwan's Ko Ai-ting and students from Taipei-headquartered Shih Chien University are among the designers who created outfits for the show inspired by the work of Giuseppe Castiglione, an Italian missionary who served as a court painter during the Qing dynasty (1644-1911).

In line with the event's theme, local artist Su Kuan-chih devised an interactive game,

"The Universe of Piggy Banks" for children to learn about global currencies and the practice of saving money.

Taiwan artist Lu Yen-chun designed 12 handheld lanterns shaped like pigs dressed in outfits from various cultures that are aimed at encouraging people to donate to charity. Featuring in the festival's exhibition "Coastal Lunar Lanterns," are works made by local craftsman Yao Yi-lun and decorated by four indigenous artists from Taiwan's Atayal tribe and Canada's Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.

Another LunarFest highlight is the musical "An Accident of Love," an adaption from the renowned 1983 film "Papa, Can You Hear Me Sing" by Taiwan director Yu Kan-ping. The show featuring more than 30 classic Mandarin pop songs will be staged in Toronto and Vancouver. **(Source: Taiwan Today)**



Taiwan Set to Offer Cell Therapies to Treat Cancers, Joint Disease



Medical professionals at approved centres are expected to be able to start offering cell therapy to patients by the end of February, the Cabinet said. (Staff photo/Chen Mei-ling)

Six cell therapies recently approved by the government to treat medical issues including cancer, degenerative joint disease and skin wounds are expected to be available at permitted medical centres

by the end of February, the Cabinet said.

Under an amendment to the Regulation Governing the Application of Specific Medical Examination Techniques and Medical Devices passed last September, the procedures that can treat degenerative joint disease, haematological malignancies, spine injuries, solid tumours, strokes and burns were authorized for use. More than 100,000 patients a year are expected to benefit from the therapies once they are rolled out, according to the Cabinet.

Four medical centres in northern, central and southern Taiwan have reached the final assessment stage and the result of their applications is expected to be unveiled by the end of this month, the Ministry of Health and Welfare said.

Emerging treatments like cell therapy—a

technique that involves injecting live cellular material into patients—can help treat advanced cancers as well as improve life quality for seniors, the Cabinet said. The government aims to transform Taiwan into a hub for regenerative medicine in Asia and is committed to establishing a comprehensive regulatory and R&D environment for such procedures, it added.

To protect patients and ensure quality, medical centres must apply to the MOHW for permission to use each therapy separately and provide proof that facilities, qualification of practitioners, fees, treatment and monitoring protocols meet standards, the ministry added. **(Source: Taiwan Today)**

ITRI, Local Hospital Join Hands to Offer Smarter Health Care for Seniors

A memorandum of understanding on providing smart health care services for seniors was concluded by Industrial Technology Research Institute (ITRI) and National Taiwan University Hospital (NTUH) Yunlin Branch, underscoring the country's efforts to deal with an aging population.

Under the agreement, the government-backed institute headquartered in northern Taiwan's Hsinchu County will offer rehabilitation devices and locally developed medical technologies to help the hospital establish an effective health care network for seniors in the western county. NTUH Yunlin Branch is working with clinics, nursing homes and social centres to provide services such as doctor's appointments by video call.

ITRI Vice President Lin Chii-wan said official statistics show that Yunlin now has 121,000 seniors over the age of 65, accounting for 17.6 percent of the total population. The government has been promoting its long-term care plan 2.0, which includes the establishment of a



Robotic exoskeleton legs are one of the smart technologies that ITRI is providing to National Taiwan University Hospital Yunlin Branch under an agreement to offer intelligent health care services for seniors. (Courtesy of ITRI)

community-based service network for seniors as a response to the nation's aging society, he added.

According to Lin, the institute will provide a range of equipment including wearable technology that monitors the user's cardiac health by measuring data

like heart rate and volume of blood pumped in one minute. These kinds of devices assist the work of caregivers and ensure doctors receive timely and accurate health information on their patients, he added.

Other equipment to be provided include a diagnostic machine that reads a diabetic patient's retina and robotic exoskeleton legs that aid mobility.

Hospital superintendent Hwang Juey-jen said the collaboration between NTUH Yunlin Branch and the institute is expected to spur progress in developing smart solutions for Taiwan's long-term health care sector.

Established in 1973, ITRI works to enhance the country's industrial competitiveness through conducting applied research and providing technical services. **(Source: Taiwan Today)**



2019 Taiwan Lantern Festival Kicks off With Circus, Drone Light Shows



Fireworks and a dancing fountain light up the night sky at the opening of the 2019 Taiwan Lantern Festival that runs Feb. 19 to March 3 in the southern county of Pingtung. (Courtesy of Office of the President)

The 2019 Taiwan Lantern Festival kicked off in the southern county of Pingtung with an extravaganza of circus, drama and music performances, a drone light show and fireworks.

Renowned local artists, including indigenous musician Parangalan—commonly known as Kimbo—from the Pinuyumayan tribe, as well as Taiwanese opera singer Tang Mei-yun starred in the opening entertainment staged at Dapeng Bay National Scenic Area.

Attending the launch, President Tsai Ing-wen said this year's event, which is being held at three exhibition sites, is one of the biggest in its 30-year history and is the result of government agencies at all levels working closely together. Tsai also urged local and foreign tourists to come and enjoy the beautiful festival and her hometown Pingtung.

One of the opening's highlights was an aerial show featuring 300 drones illuminating the night sky with the image of a giant blue fin tuna—the same design as the celebration's centrepiece lantern—and the words Pingtung spelled out in Chinese characters and Taiwan in English

letters. The display, by U.S.-based Intel Corp., will also be staged Feb. 23, 24, 28 and March 1-3.

According to the Tourism Bureau, the annual event is lighting up the county with exhibits featuring designs spanning diverse themes from the cultures of Taiwan's different ethnic groups to green technology. This edition is also the first time that visitors can take boat trips to enjoy lanterns over the water.

The festival, which runs through March 3, will feature performances from headline acts such as renowned drumming group U-Theatre Taiwan, Spanish circus troupe Voala Company, singer Rui Si from the Paiwan tribe as well as local rock band Fire Ex.

In addition to Dapeng, the main exhibition site, celebrations are being staged at the county's Donggang Township and Pingtung City. **(Source: Taiwan Today)**

New Album Spotlights Emerging Indigenous Music Talent in Taiwan



Amis musician Mayaw Laway (centre) and his band are featured on the new album of indigenous music, "Pasiwali 2018." (Courtesy of Council of Indigenous Peoples)

"Pasiwali 2018," an album comprising 10 tracks by emerging aboriginal musicians in Taiwan, was released by the Cabinet-level Council of Indigenous Peoples (CIP), underscoring government efforts to cultivate new artistic talent.

The record is a product of the CIP-organised Taiwan Pasiwali program launched last year that offered three-

month recording, song writing or stage engineering training sessions to musicians from the nation's 16 officially recognised indigenous tribes. "Pasiwali," meaning "towards the east" in indigenous Amis language, highlights the initiative's aim of spotlighting music from eastern Taiwan, which is home to numerous aboriginal communities, the CIP said.

Ten of the 15 students in the song writing group, representing different tribes including Atayal, Rukai and Seediq, were chosen to submit their songs for the collection and a competition. During the program, the trainees were guided by five professional artists, including acclaimed singer-songwriter Aljenljeng Tjatljuvy from the Paiwan tribe.

Amis musician Mayaw Laway won the first prize of NT\$50,000 (US\$1,622) in the competition for "Widangi," a song about friends making fun of each other. Lowking from the Truku tribe claimed the creativity award of NT\$30,000 for "Mita Ku Spah," a track that dwells on the feel-

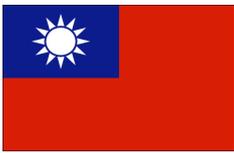
ings of joy that arise when on the way home.

"Widangi" is his first Amis-language song, Laway said, adding it encapsulates his tribe's unique sense of humour. "Only true friends make these kinds of jokes to show how close their relationship is."

According to Laway, he was inspired to join the program because he wanted to write in his mother tongue. During the three-month course, his mentor, Amis musician Chalaw Pasiwali, taught him it was possible to blend his tribe's music with other styles and to keep an open mind during the creative process, he added.

Featuring a diverse range of tracks influenced by musical genres such as R&B, hip-hop and rock, the album is available in stores across Taiwan, as well as via online streaming platforms including Apple Music, KKBOX and Spotify, the CIP said.

(Source: Taiwan Today)



Taiwan Listed Among Top 10 Travel Destinations Deserving of More Attention in 2019



Excellent hiking trails such as those on Mt. Liushishi in eastern Taiwan's Hualien County are among the reasons for the nation's inclusion in the top 10 destinations worldwide deserving of more attention in 2019, according to travel website Globe Spots. (Courtesy of Hualien County)

Taiwan was ranked eighth among the top 10 destinations worldwide deserving of more attention in 2019, according to a list published by international travel website Globe Spots.

Classified as a classic and convenient loca-

tion with great sites, the country was lauded for its unique attractions and diverse landscapes ranging from soaring peaks and traditional rural communities to neon-flashing cosmopolitan cities.

According to the website, Taiwan's mountains offer excellent hiking opportunities and natural hot spring getaways, while the nation's famous night markets serve up unlimited choices to spoil any food lover.

But what really sets Taiwan apart is its compactness, Globe Spots wrote, adding that "you can circumnavigate the whole island in a matter of days, but to do the place justice you will need weeks."

Noting that the country is growing in popularity as a vacation destination, the website encouraged readers to visit sooner rather than later.

This is the second time Taiwan has made the annual top 10 list after placing sixth in 2010. Sao Tome and Principe, Belarus and Sweden lead this year's ranking, in that

order.

According to the Tourism Bureau under the Ministry of Transportation and Communications, Taiwan received a record 11 million foreign visitors in 2018, underscoring the effectiveness of government initiatives to attract more overseas travellers.

Related measures include easing visa regulations for tourists from New Southbound Policy (NSP) target nations and fostering a Muslim-friendly environment through promoting halal certification and installing prayer rooms at major transportation hubs, the bureau said.

A central plank in the government's national development strategy, the NSP is enhancing Taiwan's agricultural, business, cultural, education, tourism and trade ties with the 10 Association of Southeast Asian Nations member states, six South Asian countries, Australia and New Zealand **(Source: Taiwan Today)**

Asian Ecotourism Network to Stage Annual Conference in Chiayi

The annual conference of Bangkok-headquartered Asian Ecotourism Network (AEN) is set to kick off in the southern county of Chiayi, according to event organiser Taiwan Ecotourism Association (TEA).

Themed around mountain ecotourism and indigenous people, the one-day forum comprises panel discussions and speeches by business leaders, experts and industry representatives from Taiwan and nine other countries including Japan, New Zealand and Thailand.

Participants will discuss challenges and opportunities related to ecotourism promotion and share development experiences. TEA is also hosting a three-day technical tour to a Tsou tribal community and the Alishan National Scenic Area.

The event represents private sector efforts in support of the government's Tourism 2020 initiative and New



The AEN annual conference in the southern county of Chiayi is set to spotlight Taiwan's mountain ranges and indigenous culture on the global stage. (Courtesy of AEN)

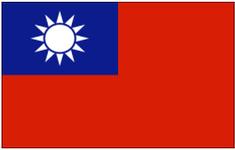
Southbound Policy, the association said. Mountain ranges are set for strategic promotion in the final year of the sustainable tourism development project, with townships the target for 2019.

In addition to tourism ties, the NSP is enhancing the nation's agricultural, busi-

ness, cultural, education and trade links with the 10 Association of Southeast Asian Nations member states, six South Asian countries, Australia and New Zealand.

According to TEA, the conference will serve as an invaluable platform for connecting local operators with counterparts throughout the region and showcasing Taiwan's rich indigenous culture and ecotourism assets on the global stage.

Established in June 2015, the AEN aims to promote sustainability by fostering business development exchanges and knowledge transfer among regional stakeholders spanning academia, communities, nongovernmental organizations and the public and private sectors. **(Source: Taiwan Today)**



Taiwan's Chan Sisters Win Doubles Title at Qatar Open



Chan Yung-jan (right) and Chan Hao-ching display their trophies after winning the women's doubles title at the Qatar Open in Doha. (Courtesy of Qatar Tennis Federation)

Taiwan tennis stars Chan Yung-jan and Chan Hao-ching claimed their second women's doubles title of the season with victory at the Qatar Open in Doha.

The sisters powered out of the blocks in

the 76-minute final against Anna-Lena Groenefeld of Germany and Demi Schuurs of the Netherlands, claiming the first set 6-1. The second frame proved more competitive, with the Europeans edging it 6-3.

Rediscovering their earlier form, the Taiwan duo bagged the first three points of the tiebreaker on their way to a 10-6 win. The pair took home prize money of US\$49,700 for the championship, their second triumph at the Doha event after previously claiming the crown in 2016.

Victory in Qatar continues the Chans excellent start to the new season following success at the Hobart International Jan. 12 in Australia. Next up for the sisters is the Dubai Tennis Championships running through March 2, a leading tournament on the Association of Tennis Professionals and Women's Tennis Association tours. **(Source: Taiwan Today)**



The Chan sisters on and off the court.



Taiwanese Golfer Finishes 3rd at Women's Australian Open



Taiwanese golfer Hsu Wei-ling in action. (Courtesy of Central News Agency)

Taiwanese golfer Hsu Wei-ling (徐薇凌) finished in third place at the 2019 ISPS Handa Women's Australian Open with a four-round 12-under par 276.

Hsu shot five birdies and a bogey to finish with a four-under par 68 for the final round Sunday.

However, Nelly Korda of the United

States posted a five-under par 67 in perfect conditions in the final round to win the title with a 17-under par 271.

Hsu and Sweden's Madelene Sagstrom shared the lead for the first two days of the event Friday.

The 24-year-old Taiwanese player maintained her overnight advantage from the first day into day two, with a fine round of 69 to finish the day on 10-under par. The world No. 69 hit just one bogey in the first two days of action.

However, in the third round Saturday, Hsu carded a two-over par 74, finishing the day in third place.

Hsu's best career best finish was second at the 2018 Pure Silk-Bahamas LPGA classic, two strokes behind champion Britanny Lincicome.

The Women's Australian Open had a purse of some US\$1.3 million. **(Source: Taiwan News)**



Hsu Wei-ling.