

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

## Tsai Praises Taiwan's Human Rights Progress at 40th FIDH Congress

President Tsai Ing-wen said that the government is leaving no stone unturned in promoting human rights and making Taiwan a more fair and just country.

Safeguarding human rights remains a top priority for the government, Tsai said. Real progress has been achieved in removing job restrictions and eliminating discrimination against women in the workplace, as well as initiating judicial reform to create a legal system better reflecting the wishes of the people, she added.

Tsai made the remarks while opening the 40th Congress of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) in Taipei City—the first time the triennial event has been staged in Asia. Co-organised by Taiwan Association for Human Rights, the five-day congress involves 450 participants discussing responses and strategies to emerging challenges in related areas.

According to Tsai, the event is an



**President Tsai Ing-wen delivers her opening address at the 40th FIDH Congress in Taipei City. (Courtesy of Presidential Office)**

outstanding venue for Taiwan to share its democratic journey while learning from other countries' experiences. The country's hosting of the congress is particularly meaningful as Taiwan became the first in Asia to legalise same-sex marriage in May, she said.

Although Taiwan is not a member of the U.N., Tsai said, the government has incorporated many of the world body's major human rights treaties

into local laws so as to further entrench associated core concepts into the fabric of society.

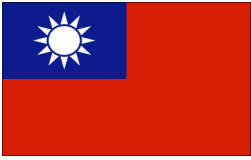
Tsai said the government will not budge an inch in ensuring human rights progress remains on the fast track, and has set up a unique voluntary assessment process involving academics from around the globe conducting reviews and communicating with civic groups and government agencies.

Taiwan's nongovernmental organisations also play a central role in this process, Tsai said, citing invaluable contributions in assisting the government improve protection of the people's rights and public communication.

Established in 1922 and headquartered in Paris, FIDH is an international NGO federating 184 member organisations from 112 countries and aims at defending civil, culture, economic, political and social rights as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human



**Left:** Celebrated Taiwan-born director Ang Lee (right) keeps a close eye on U.S. actor Will Smith as he demonstrates his calligraphy skills during a news conference for the duo's new film "Gemini Man" in Taipei City. (CNA) **Centre:** Chen Forng-shean, one of Taiwan's top miniature sculptors, shows off his handiwork during an open workshop session in New Taipei City. (LTN) **Right:** President Tsai Ing-wen (right) pays tribute to ROC (Taiwan) military personnel killed during the Battle of Gungingou 70 years ago during a ceremony in outlying Kinmen County. (Courtesy of Presidential Office)



## V P Chen Returns From Holy See Visit



**Vice President Chen Chien-jen (right), his wife Lo Fong-ping (left) and Deputy Foreign Minister Kelly Wu-chiao Hsieh (second row, centre) attend a canonization ceremony in St. Peter's Square, Vatican City. (Courtesy of Presidential Office)**

Vice President Chen Chien-jen has wrapped up a successful four-day visit to the Holy See designed to foster exchanges across a variety of fields.

At a news conference following his return to Taiwan, Chen said bilateral cooperation between the allies in recent years has yielded significant results in areas such as combating human trafficking and delivering humanitarian assistance. Taiwan will continue to support Pope Francis in his efforts to promote religious freedom, democracy and human rights worldwide, he added.

Serving as the special envoy of President Tsai Ing-wen, Chen presented the pontiff with two gifts: a documentary on Matteo Ricci, one of the leading figures of the Jesuit China missions, and a Taiwan magazine spotlighting Catholic priests and nuns working in the country's remote areas.

Pope Francis in turn asked Chen to convey his greetings to Tsai, adding that he would pray for Taiwan.

Chen also attended the canonisation of late British Cardinal John Henry Newman and four other holy figures at St. Peter's Basilica. He was accompanied by senior government officials including Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Kelly Wu-chiao Hsieh.

The ROC (Taiwan) and Holy See have had formal diplomatic relations for 77 years, with the two sides enjoying close ties and cooperation in many areas. Recent highlights include staging the World Congress of the Apostleship of the Sea in October 2017 in southern Taiwan's Kaohsiung City, as well agreeing a memorandum of understanding on strengthening cooperation in combating money laundering, terrorism financing and associated offenses in May the same year. **(Source: Taiwan Today)**

## Taiwan's Interpol Bid Wins Global Support

The staunch backing of allies and like-minded partners for Taiwan's meaningful participation in Interpol is sincerely appreciated by the government and people, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA).

Allies Belize, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Kingdom of Eswatini, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Paraguay, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines sent letters to Interpol President Kim Jong-yang urging Taiwan's participation in the international police organisation as an observer, the MOFA said.

During Interpol's general assembly in Santiago, Chile, representatives from Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Kingdom of Eswatini, Paraguay and St. Kitts and Nevis also voiced support for Taiwan, the ministry added.

This strong backing underscores the legitimacy of Taiwan's Interpol participation, the MOFA said, adding that it further reflects the discontent of the international community with the exclusion of the country from the global security



**The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is grateful for allies and like-minded partners backing Taiwan's bid for meaningful participation in Interpol.**

network on the grounds of politics.

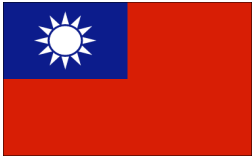
Support for Taiwan was received from officials, lawmakers and legislative bodies from 14 countries. These include a statement by Patrick Murphy, then acting deputy assistant secretary for South-east Asia with the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs under the U.S. Department of State, and the passage of the Taiwan Assurance Act of 2019 in May by the U.S. House of Representatives.

In addition, an op-ed outlining how Tai-

wan Can Help build a safer and more secure world by Huang Ming-chao, commissioner of the Criminal Investigation Bureau Commissioner under the Ministry of the Interior, has been carried by 49 international media outlets, the ministry said.

As an important stakeholder in the global community, Taiwan is willing and able to make greater contributions, the MOFA said, adding that it is imperative Interpol upholds its constitution and makes proper and swift arrangements for Taiwan to take part in its activities, mechanisms and meetings.

Established in 1923 and headquartered in France, Interpol is the world's second largest intergovernmental organisation after the U.N. with 194 member states. It facilitates borderless police cooperation to enhance public safety and battles such criminal activities as corruption, human trafficking and money laundering. **(Source: Taiwan Today)**



# The ROC Celebrates Its 108th Birthday

The 108th birthday reception of the Republic of China (Taiwan) was held at the Centurion Golf Estate Clubhouse on the 7th of October 2019. Hundreds of distinguished local guests and members of the Diplomatic Corps joined Taiwanese expats in the vibrant celebrations to commemorate the National Day of the ROC.

Representative Matthew W. Chou of the Taipei Liaison Office, said that while Taiwan had achieved many accomplishments and suffered many setbacks in its 108 years of existence, the values of democracy and freedom had always grounded the Taiwanese people and been the guiding force behind the country.

"The country and our people have never sacrificed or deviated from the democratic ideals people had 108 years ago," Representative Chou said.

"No matter what kind of trials the world will throw at us in the future, the people in Taiwan will always be able to pick ourselves up and worked together to overcome various challenges. It is in this sentiment and conviction that will propel Taiwan into the future," Representative Chou went on to say.

Representative Chou said that Taiwan and South Africa had been on similar journeys in their pursuit of equality, democracy and freedom and that these principles cemented their relationship.

Guests dined on a wonderful selection of Taiwanese food and were entertained by performers from the Nan Hua Temple, students from the Pretoria Chinese School and electric techno-neon dancers,



**Representative Matthew Chou (centre), Mrs Chou (third from right) and other distinguished guests cutting the cake at the 108th birthday celebrations of the Republic of China (Taiwan).**

who combined traditional Taiwanese folk dances with modern pop music and traditional outfits with up-to-the-minute components . **(Dominique Spalovsky)**



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) released a short film in the lead-up to Double Tenth National Day spotlighting Taiwan's successes at home and abroad.

Titled "Brave and Confident: One with the World," the 8-minute work is split into four segments—Defending Freedom, Safeguarding Democracy; Innovative Economy, Upgraded Technology; Multifaceted Society, Cultural Acceptance; and Steadfast Diplomacy, Mutual Assistance for Mutual Benefit—that

cover Taiwan's political, economic, cultural and diplomatic achievements.

According to the MOFA, the film showcases Taiwan's liberal, democratic and multicultural society. Highlights include scenes of the country's religious festivals and indigenous culture, as well as its sporting and technological achievements. This includes the government's landmark five-plus-two innovative industries program, the ministry said.

The farsighted initiative targets the other high-growth sectors of green energy, national defence, smart machinery and Internet of Things, as well as the promotion of a circular economy and a new paradigm for agricultural development.

Taiwan's diplomatic efforts are also showcased, the ministry said, including President Tsai Ing-wen's Journey of Freedom, Democracy, Sustainability state visit to the country's Caribbean allies Haiti, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and St. Lucia, as well as Vice President Chen Chien-jen's audience with Pope Francis and MOFA Minister Joseph Wu's keynote speech at the 2019 Democracy Summit in Copenhagen.

The short is available on the MOFA's YouTube channel with subtitles in Arabic, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Russian, Spanish, Portuguese, Thai and Vietnamese. **(Source: Taiwan Today)**



## President Tsai Welcomes Microsoft Expansion of AI Centre in Taipei

The expansion of an artificial intelligence R&D centre in Taipei City by Microsoft Taiwan Corp. shows that international firms recognise the talent and technical prowess on offer in the country, President Tsai Ing-wen said.

At a ceremony to mark the centre's expansion and to celebrate 30 years of Microsoft in Taiwan, Tsai said the company has chosen the ideal location for its global AI hub. Taiwan's well established supply chain and expertise in information and communication technology are perfect complements to the growing AI industry, she added.

According to Tsai, homemade talent also makes Taiwan an attractive option, with almost all of Microsoft's 600 domestic staff being local employees. This underscores the success of government efforts to improve the nation's human capital, she said.



**President Tsai Ing-wen (front, fifth left) gives the thumbs up alongside American Institute in Taiwan head William Brent Christensen (front, sixth right), government officials and Microsoft Taiwan Corp. executives at the opening ceremony of the expanded Microsoft AI R&D centre in Taipei City. (Courtesy of Presidential Office)**

Particular examples include the government's AI innovation and talent cultivation plan, which involves spending NT\$16 billion (US\$0.5 billion) from 2017 to 2021 to build the required ecosystem. Under-

taken by the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) with support from the public and private sectors, initiatives include establishing a home-grown R&D centre and the Grand Challenge, a competition to find the next generation of AI talents.

Microsoft's AI centre was set up under a memorandum of understanding on AI development the multinational inked with MOST's National Applied Research Laboratories in December 2017. The first of its kind in Taiwan, the centre focuses on R&D relating to audience intent recognition, integrating AI in vertical industrial applications and improving its Swift-Key Chinese character input method. **(Source: Taiwan Today)**

## Taiwan Ranks 12th in WEF Global Competitiveness Report

Taiwan ranks 12th among 141 economies in the latest Global Competitiveness Report released by Geneva-based World Economic Forum (WEF).

Scoring 80.2 out of 100, Taiwan finished ahead of neighbours South Korea, 79.6; Malaysia, 74.6; and China, 73.9, but behind Singapore, 84.8; Hong Kong, 83.1; and Japan, 82.3. Singapore topped the survey ahead of the U.S. in second and Hong Kong in third.

Among the 12 categories used to assess competitiveness, Taiwan earned full marks in macroeconomic stability and outperformed in financial system with 88. It was also lauded as a "super innovator" by WEF and one of only four economies, alongside Germany, the U.S. and Switzerland, to receive more than 80 in innovation capability.

Minister Chen Mei-ling of the Cabinet-level National Development Council wel-

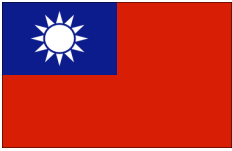


**Taiwan ranks 12th in the latest Global Competitiveness Report released Oct. 9 by Geneva-based World Economic Forum. (Staff photo/Chin Hung-hao)**

comed the result and said it demonstrates international recognition of Taiwan's reputation as a smart country and can-do problem solver. Recent investment in the country's start-ups from firms based in Japan, Singapore and the U.S. further illustrates this healthy state of affairs, she added.

According to Chen, the government will prioritise fostering an even more vibrant start-up environment, as well as deepening the talent pool and strengthening the education sector. These steps are expected to ensure the country's long-term competitiveness and keep it firmly on the development fast track, she said.

Launched in 1979, the report provides an annual assessment of the drivers of productivity and economic growth. The 2019 edition evaluates countries and territories across 103 indicators in a dozen categories. **(Source: Taiwan Today)**



## President Tsai Vows to Continue Advancing Taiwan's 5G Development

President Tsai Ing-wen said that the government will continue prioritising 5G technology development so as to secure Taiwan a key position in the potential-laden mobile services sector.

A long-established hardware manufacturing supply chain, as well as extensive expertise in information communication technology, gives the country the credentials to lead the way globally, Tsai said. Additional 5G licenses set for release by the end of January next year heralds the dawn of a new era for next-generation technology in Taiwan, she added.

Tsai made the remarks during a 5G demonstration event staged by telecommunications provider Chunghwa Telecom Co. Ltd. in New Taipei City. Featured devices include e-sport equipment, unmanned vehicles and warship bridge arrays.

According to Tsai, spurring digital transformation is a central plank in the gov-



**President Tsai Ing-wen settles into an e-sport device during a 5G demonstration event staged by telecommunications provider Chunghwa Telecom Co. Ltd. in New Taipei City. (Courtesy of Presidential Office)**

ernment's 5G strategy. One of the most exciting initiatives in this regard is the 5G Action Plan, she said.

Launched in May by the Cabinet, the four-year, NT\$20.5 billion (US\$660 million) undertaking focuses on cultivating high-profile opportunities for testing vertical

applications, establishing a platform for enhanced interindustry cooperation, growing Taiwan's 5G footprint, strengthening support and protection for home-grown products and operational cyber security, and bringing relevant laws and regulations more in line with international standards.

It is expected the plan will significantly assist local firms in upgrading marketplace competitiveness while boosting Taiwan's 5G ecosystem, Tsai said. **(Source: Taiwan Today)**

## Academia Sinica Gears up for Open House Event



**Academia Sinica is set to host its Open House event in Taipei City's Nangang District. (Courtesy of AS)**

Academia Sinica (AS), Taiwan's foremost research institution, is gearing up for the annual Open House event at its base in Taipei City's Nangang District, spotlighting the ground-breaking efforts of the country's academics.

Staffers from 31 of AS's research centres and museums are set to conduct over 300 demonstrations, lectures and hands-on activities for visitors, with the institu-

tions world-class facilities open to all.

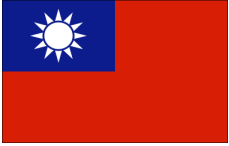
The main attraction at this year's Open House is a special exhibition on the Event Horizon Telescope, a large global array that in April produced the first ever images of a black hole. AS's Institute of Astronomy and Astrophysics was among the 13 stakeholders from around the world that led the project.

According to AS, the exhibition will feature interactive displays and keynote speeches by people involved in bringing the telescope to fruition. There will also be a games room and guided tours, the institution said.

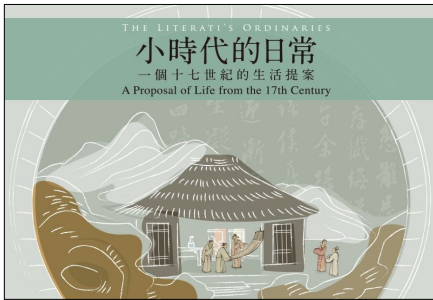
Additional events are scheduled for those more interested in the social sciences, AS said, adding that it hoped the occasion would help inspire the next generation of academic talent.

The inaugural AS Open House was held in 1997. Last year's event celebrated the

research institution's 90th anniversary last year, which received a record-breaking 160,000 visitors. **(Source: Taiwan Today)**



## Treasures of 17th Century Literati Featured in NPM Exhibition



***“The Literati’s Ordinaries - A Proposal of Life from the 17th Century” runs until Jan. 5 2020 at the National Palace Museum in Taipei City. (Courtesy of NPM)***

An exhibition featuring artefacts from 17th century China kicked off at the National Palace Museum (NPM) in Taipei City.

“The Literati’s Ordinaries - A Proposal of

Life from the 17th Century” runs until Jan. 5 next year and features objects originating from China’s Jiangnan region. The exhibition is curated based on the “Treatise on Superfluous Things” written by Ming dynasty (1368-1644) literati Wen Zhenheng.

It is split into four sections: Wen Zhenheng and Treatise on Superfluous Things outlines the scholars’ life through his collection of rare books and paintings, Taste of Literati presents the opinions of Wen and others in his circle regarding different works, Applicable Things showcases objects that reflect the appreciation criteria listed by Wen in his treatise, and In Pursuit of Curios in the Market displays mass-produced items made to copy the styles popularized by Wen.

According to NPM Director Wu Mi-cha,

the era was renowned for its refined tastes and unique aesthetic, especially among the literati class. Wen’s work bears some of the most detailed surviving descriptions of garden architecture and interior design from that time, making it particularly noteworthy, he added.

Established in 1965, NPM is home to the world’s largest collection of Chinese imperial art, boasting nearly 700,000 antiquities spanning 7,000 years from the prehistoric Neolithic period to the end of the Qing dynasty. The institution’s Southern Branch in Chiayi County opened in 2015 to showcase artefacts from diverse Asian civilisations. **(Source: Taiwan Today)**

## Taiwan Design Expo Gets Underway in Pingtung

The Taiwan Design Expo kicked off in the southern county of Pingtung, bringing together top talents and products to showcase the country’s prowess as a global centre of innovation.

Organised by the Taiwan Design Centre under the auspices of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Pingtung County Government, the exhibition attracted over 200,000 people on its opening day, the most since its inception in 2003, according to PCG’s Cultural Affairs Department.

The expo is spread over several locations, with the main 6,600 square-meter space at Taisugar County Park transformed to resemble a giant supermarket. Further satellite venues are at Pingtung County Tobacco Factory and Pingtung Art Museum.

At a promotional press conference, exhibition design team head Joe Fang said the supermarket concept was chosen to represent Pingtung’s status as one of Taiwan’s agricultural strongholds, giving rise to this year’s theme “Super South.”

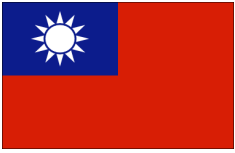


***The annual Taiwan Design Expo, running through Oct. 20, is staged in the southern county of Pingtung for the first time. (Courtesy of Taiwan Design Center)***

According to Pingtung County Magistrate Pan Men-an, the theme perfectly embodies the aim of this year’s exhibition, emphasising the importance of the cultural, agricultural and human needs of southern Taiwan. The event will help increase Pingtung’s international exposure, he added.

The annual Taiwan Design Expo has been staged in various locations across the

island since its founding in 2003 to promote creative design ideas with a local twist. **(Source: Taiwan Today)**



## Taiwan Steps up ASF Prevention Measures



**COA head and Central Emergency Operation Centre Director Chen Chi-chung (centre) speaks during a press conference at the Executive Yuan in Taipei City. (Courtesy of COA)**

Taiwan has strengthened its measures for preventing an outbreak of African swine fever (ASF) and remains on high alert, according to the Cabinet-level

Council of Agriculture (COA).

The World Organisation for Animal Health has so far confirmed ASF outbreaks across Asia in Cambodia, China, East Timor, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar, North Korea, South Korea, Vietnam and the Philippines.

At a press conference, COA head and Central Emergency Operation Centre (CEOC) Director Chen Chi-chung said that given the continuing ASF epidemic across East Asia, even stricter bio security measures have been implemented on hog farms. GPS tracking devices are also now being used for all transportation of live pigs and pork products, he added.

According to the CEOC, these upgrades are in effect at 753 hog farms, and 2,984 vehicles have been installed with track-

ing devices.

Premier Su Tseng-chang has also directed the Ministry of the Interior and Ocean Affairs Council to strengthen border inspections.

Last month, 17 pork products originating from China seized at customs were found to be infected with ASF, the CEOC said.

First-time offenders illegally importing meat products into Taiwan from these areas or any others affected by ASF within the past three years will be fined NT\$200,000 (US\$6,483), with the penalty increasing to NT\$1 million for repeat offenders. A total of 88 fines for first-time violations have been issued in the last month. **(Source: Taiwan Today)**

## VP Chen Vows to Deepen Taiwan's Asia-Pacific Medical Ties

Taiwan is a vital member of the global public health community and is working to expand medical collaboration and information sharing with countries throughout the Asia-Pacific, Vice President Chen Chien-jen said.

The country is leading the way in many aspects of health care, Chen said. This is illustrated by the success of the National Health Insurance system and its top-spot ranking in a related advisory released by respected Ceoworld Magazine in August, he added.

Chen made the remarks at the opening ceremony of the 2019 Global Health Forum in Taiwan. Organised by the Ministries of Health and Welfare and Foreign Affairs, the two-day event involved 1,500 experts and officials from 33 countries and territories discussing key issues such as aging societies, chronic disease, data analysis and technology applications, urban environments and public health.

According to Chen, Taiwan is expected to become a super-aged society with 20 percent of the population aged 65 years or older by 2026. This is why the govern-



**Vice President Chen Chien-jen delivers his opening address at the Global Health Forum Oct. 20 in Taipei City. (Courtesy of Presidential Office)**

ment is leaving no stone unturned in promoting the Long-term Care Plan 2.0, he said.

The 10-year initiative is a community-based services network integrating medical care and preventative health care resources. It aims to establish a comprehensive care system that promotes aging in place—the ability to live safely and independently in one's home or community regardless of age, ability or income level.

Taiwan has also made headway in bring-

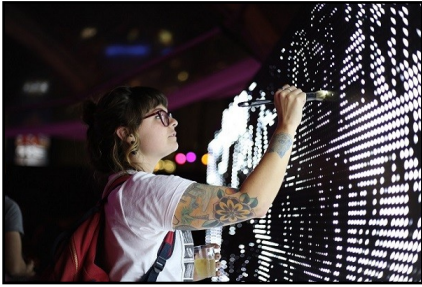
ing local laws and regulations for pharmaceuticals and medical devices more in line with the international standards, Chen said, citing the country's participation as an official member in the recently staged biannual meeting of International Council for Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Pharmaceuticals for Human Use.

Chen said the New Southbound Policy (NSP) is another important platform for Taiwan to share its medical know-how and build a seamless regional disease prevention network. Going forward, greater efforts will be dedicated to cultivating more mutually beneficial opportunities for Taiwan and the 18 target countries, he added.

A key plank in the government's national development strategy, the NSP seeks to deepen 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 News)**



## Nuit Blanche Taipei to Kick off in Dazhi, Neihu Districts



**Thousands of light-emitting diodes that illuminate on contact with water are part of “Waterlight Graffiti,” an interactive artwork by French artist Antonin Fourneau that is on display at Nuit Blanche Taipei in Taiwan’s capital city. (Courtesy of NBT)**

This year’s Nuit Blanche Taipei festival will kick off in the capital city’s Dazhi and Neihu districts for an atmospheric night full of artistic displays.

Organised by Taipei City Government (TCG) in partnership with French Office (FO) in Taipei, the fourth edition of the festival is themed “Double-Face Ballet” based on the concept that every person in the city is multifaceted.

At a promotional press conference, FO Director Jean-François Casabonne-Masonnave said that 30 cities worldwide have hosted their own Nuit Blanche since the inaugural event was held in Paris in 2002. The festival has endured and spread globally thanks to its ethos of encouraging attendees to interact with artists and artworks, he added.

According to the TCG’s Department of Cultural Affairs, the 12-hour celebration is set to feature 22 art installations and over 44 interactive performances and programs staged in the streets and cul-

tural sites of the north-eastern districts.

Originating in France in 2002, Nuit Blanche takes place annually on the first Saturday of October in cities around the world, with art galleries, museums and cultural organisations open throughout the night and free of charge. Taipei was the second city in Asia to stage the event in 2016 after Kyoto in Japan. **(Source: Taiwan Today)**

## Taiwan Biennial Film Festival Kicks off in Los Angeles



**“Heavy Craving” by director Hsieh Pei-ju opens the Taiwan Biennial Film Festival running at Billy Wilder Theatre in Los Angeles. (UDN)**

A film festival showcasing Taiwan’s success in advancing gender equality and LGBTQ rights kicked off at Hammer Museum’s Billy Wilder Theatre in Los Angeles.

Co-presented by Taiwan Academy under Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Los Angeles, the Ministry of Culture (MOC) and UCLA Film and Television Archive, the 11-day event features a dozen movies spanning genres like com-

edy, documentary, drama, experimental, romance and satire.

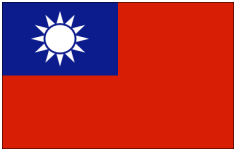
According to the MOC, the second edition of the festival comes at a time of significant societal change in Taiwan following the country’s legalisation of same-sex marriage earlier in the year. The event draws the curtain back on how the local movie industry is taking the milestone development on board, the ministry said.

Yang Ting-zhen, director of Taiwan Academy, said almost half of the line-up was directed by women filmmakers. These talents infuse the eclectic offerings with a boldness and creativity certain to leave festival-goers clamouring for more, she said.

One of the highlights is the opening selection “Heavy Craving.” Directed and written by Hsieh Pei-ju, the 2019 Taipei Film Festival Audience Choice Award winner examines the hot-button issues of body image, fat-shaming and the darker side of self-discovery.

In addition to the screenings, a number of cinephile-friendly activities are scheduled on the sidelines. These include filmmaker Q&A sessions and a special forum in which luminaries such as Michael Berry, director of UCLA’s Centre for Chinese Studies, share ideas and insights on the need to include more women in the industry and strategies to raise the global profile of Taiwan films. **(Source: Taiwan Today)**





## Muslim-Friendly Certification Given to 6 Taipei Tourist Spots



**Taipei City Deputy Mayor Tsai Ping-kun (centre) is all smiles alongside representatives of six tourist attractions displaying their Muslim-friendly environment certificates in the capital of Taiwan. (Courtesy of TCG)**

Taipei City Government (TCG) announced that six popular tourist spots in the capital have earned certification as Muslim-friendly environments, highlight-

ing efforts to cement Taiwan as a destination for visitors from the Islamic world.

The six spots are Discovery Centre of Taipei, National Palace Museum, National Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall, Taipei 101, Taipei Children's Amusement Park and Zhishan Cultural and Ecological Garden.

According to the Department of Information and Tourism under TCG, a survey of foreign tourists' revealed that one of the locations, Taipei 101, is among the most popular sightseeing locations for Muslim visitors.

At a ceremony presenting the certificates, Taipei Deputy Mayor Tsai Ping-kun said Taiwan continues to grow in popularity among Muslim tourists, ranking equal third with Japan and the U.K. among non-Organisation of Islamic Cooperation members in MasterCard's 2019 Global Muslim Travel Index.

Taiwan's freedom, diversity and openness are the main features that make Taipei an attractive destination for visitors, Tsai said, adding that the city will continue to refine its services to improve tourist satisfaction.

Issued by Taipei-based Chinese Muslim Association, Muslim-friendly environment certification verifies that a location or institution offers a variety of Halal eating options and comfortable areas for Muslims to pray. **(Source: Taiwan Today)**

## Taiwan, Italy Announce E-Gate Deal

The Ministry of the Interior (MOI) officially announced an agreement between Taiwan and Italy giving reciprocal access for both country's citizens to automated immigration clearance services, spotlighting government efforts to expand exchanges between the two sides and increase inbound tourism.

At the announcement ceremony in northern Taiwan's Taoyuan City, MOI Minister Hsu Kuo-yung said the scheme enables low-risk travellers from the two countries to use the e-gates at passport control after completing registration.

Taiwan is the eighth non-EU country to reach such an agreement with Italy, joining Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, and the U.S., he added.

According to Italian Economic, Trade and Cultural Promotion Office head Davide Giglio, the number of flights between the two sides is set to increase next year,



**MOI Minister Hsu Kuo-yung (left) presents a gift to Davide Giglio, head of the Italian Economic, Trade and Cultural Promotion Office in Taiwan, at an event announcing reciprocal access for both country's citizens to automated immigration clearance services Sept. 26 in the northern metropolis of Taoyuan. (Courtesy of MOI)**

and Italy is a popular destination with Taiwan tourists. Expanding the e-gate program is a logical step given the in-

creased demand, he said.

Travellers from Australia, South Korea and the U.S. have had access to Taiwan's e-gate system for the past two years. More than 210,000 travellers from these countries have registered to use the service so far, according to the latest MOI statistics. **(Source: Taipei Times)**



## Team Taiwan Wins Asian Baseball Championship



**Members of Team Taiwan celebrate winning the Asian Baseball Championship after defeating Japan 5-4 at Taichung Intercontinental Baseball Stadium in the central metropolis. (CNA)**

Team Taiwan triumphed in the Asian Baseball Championship after defeating Japan 5-4 at Taichung Intercontinental Baseball Stadium in the central metropolis.

The victory is the first Asian championship title for the national baseball team since it last won the competition in 2001.

The final started with Japan taking an early 1-0 lead in the bottom of the first inning, but Taiwan's Jhang Jin-de promptly hit back with a second-inning three-run triple.

Although Japan moved ahead 4-3 in the bottom of the fourth, Taiwan again responded in the fifth inning with a two-run hit by first baseman Chiang Chien-ming to retake the lead 5-4.

Backed by an aggressive defence, Wang Tsung-hao and Liu Chih-jung prevented further scoring from Japan's batting line-up. Liu was subsequently named the tournament MVP.

In a post-game interview, head coach Li

Ying-nan said he was proud of the players, who worked extremely hard and gave their all in every match. The team was delighted to have won the title, he added.

Organised by the Baseball Federation of Asia, the biennial Asian Baseball Championship was first held in 1954. **(Source: Taiwan Today)**

## Hualien Gears up for 8th Annual Taiwan KOM Challenge



**The country's beloved Oh Bear is joined by Taiwan KOM Challenge competitors during a promotion for the upcoming 105-kilometer hill climb race in Taipei City. (Courtesy of TB)**

The eighth annual Taiwan KOM Challenge gets underway in eastern Taiwan's Hualien County, involving 730 cyclists from 42 countries and territories contesting one of the world's toughest hill climb courses.

Organised by Taiwan Cyclist Federation (TCF) and the Tourism Bureau under the Ministry of Transportation and Communications, the 105-kilometre race fea-

tures top athletes from elite cycling teams such as Astana, CCC-Liv, EF Education First and Katusha-Alpecin.

Defending champion John Ebsen from Denmark and reigning silver medallist Benjamin Dyball from Australia are to be challenged by big-name participants like Nathan Hass from Australia, Steff Cras from Belgium, Kenny Nijssen from the Netherlands and Morimoto Makoto from Japan.

Taiwan is to be represented by home-grown talents such as Fan Yung-yi, Feng Chun-kai, Huang Wen-chung, Liu Shu-ming and Peng Yuan-tang.

According to TCF, the event boasts a record 74 women cyclists like Marianne Vos from the Netherlands, the 2012 Olympic gold medallist and multiple world champion.

Starting at 6 a.m. from Qixingtang Beach, entrants will race along the Pacific coast, through the spectacular Taroko Gorge before spinning west into central Tai-

wan's Nantou County and finishing at Wuling on Mt. Hehuan in Taroko National Park.

The riders will ascend at an average rate of 8 percent for the first 80 kilometres. This tops out at 27 percent during the final 10 kilometres en route to the highest point of Taiwan's highway system at 3,275 meters above sea level.

First staged in 2012 as part of the annual Taiwan Cycling Festival, the race was voted among the world's top 10 most difficult cycling races in 2014 by French magazine "Le Cycle." **(Source: Taiwan Today)**