

China using Lee Ming-che case as warning to foreign NGOs: activist



Shanghai, Sept. 13 (CNA) China is using Taiwanese human rights activist Lee Ming-che's (李明哲) case as a warning to all foreign NGOs operating within the country, a prominent leader of the Chinese democracy movement said on Wednesday.

Speaking to CNA during a telephone interview on Wednesday, Wang Dan (王丹), a leader of the Chinese democracy movement and one of the student leaders of the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests who now lives in Washington, said that China is making an example of Lee Ming-che to warn foreign NGOs operating in China to abide by its regulations.

Wang noted that the Chinese government has ramped up its regulation of foreign NGOs in recent years and will continue to do so, given that it is trying to control the influence outside NGOs have in the country.

Notable examples of tighter government scrutiny of foreign NGOs include a charity law and a foreign NGO law, which were promulgated in mid 2016 and early 2017 respectively, introduced extensive registration and reporting requirements.

Chen Yu-huan (陳玉環), who has operated his own NGO in China for five years, says that Beijing has adopted a more regulated and standardized approach.

The government will not tolerate unchecked growth and development beyond its control, he continued.

Foreign NGOs are having a hard time coping with China's new NGO law, which gives the police a wide range of powers to question foreign NGO workers, inspect their offices, review documents and even confiscate premises and assets, according to international media reports.

Even the charity law, which seems like a benign law to ensure the proper use of charitable donations, could be used by the government to "tame" charitable groups in China, Wang Hsin-hsien (王欣先), a professor at National Chengchi University's Graduate Institute of East Asian Studies, pointed out.

China's Taiwan Affairs Office spokesman An Fengshan (安鳳山) made a statement on Wednesday, saying that individuals in China must obey the laws of the country and any violation will be prosecuted in accordance with the law.

(By Chen Chia-lun and Kuan-lin Liu)

Enditem/AW

Award-winning biologist suggests Taiwan invest in basic research



Jerusalem, Sept. 12 (CNA) Chinese American biologist and Tang Prize laureate Feng Zhang (張鋒) has suggested Taiwan invest in basic research and translational research to help establish itself in the global biotechnology sector.

Zhang said the investment in basic research is necessary because the biology of the human body and human cells remains unknown territory, and investing in translational research can help scientists turn basic technologies into useful medicines and therapies.

Investing in those areas could help Taiwan build a foundation and a presence in the biotech sector, Zhang said in an interview with CNA in Jerusalem on Tuesday before delivering a lecture at the annual congress of the Federation of European Biochemical Societies (FEBS).

Translational research has been defined by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) as the process of applying ideas, insights, and discoveries generated through basic scientific inquiry to the treatment or prevention of human disease.

In 2016, Zhang shared the Tang Prize in biopharmaceutical science with Emmanuelle Charpentier of France and Jennifer Doudna of the United States for the development of CRISPR/Cas9 as a breakthrough genome editing platform that promises to revolutionize biochemical research and disease treatment.

In Tuesday's interview, Zhang told CNA that he is now trying

to develop a new genome editing technique with a brand-new algorithm to allow better gene repairing.

He hopes the new technique will be more accurate and efficient than CRISPR/Cas9 and be applied to treating cells in the brain, liver and other organs. If he succeeds, defective genes will be able to be repaired rather than simply being removed, he said.

Speaking of Taiwan and Tang Prize, Zhang said he has had good experiences with Taiwan and that his team has been happy to work with Taiwan and hopes to visit it again.

He also praised the Tang Prize as an award that plays the important role of drawing public attention to scientists and their work, which inspires more people to enter or invest in scientific research.

In his lecture, titled "From Microbial Immunity to Genome Editing," at the FEBS congress, Zhang introduced the development, applications and research directions of genome editing, and he elaborated on ways to reduce errors in the editing process and improve its accuracy.

Zhang urged more scientists to join in related research, which he described as a broad territory needing joint exploration.

The lecture was jointly organized by the Tang Prize Foundation and the International Union of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (IUBMB). It drew an audience of more than 1,000 people.

The Taiwan-based foundation formed a nine-year cooperation partnership with the IUBMB – an international non-governmental organization concerned with biochemistry and molecular biology – last year to promote the advancement of biopharmaceutical and biotechnological science education.

The Tang Prize, dubbed the "Asian Nobel Prize," was

established by Taiwanese entrepreneur Samuel Yin (殷雪利) in 2012 to honor people who have made significant contributions in the fields of sustainable development, biopharmaceutical science, sinology and the rule of law.

(By Charles Kang and Elizabeth Hsu)

Enditem/ls

[New Taipei begins free Wi-Fi on city buses](#)



Taipei, Sept. 12 (CNA) Commuters traveling on city buses in New Taipei will now be able to enjoy free Wi-Fi on the city's 2,500 buses, Mayor Eric Chu (朱立倫) announced in a news conference Tuesday.

New Taipei leads other cities and counties in Taiwan in terms of free wireless network access, Chu said, citing as examples Taipei's mass rapid transit (MRT) system and the high speed railway, in which Wi-Fi services have yet to be fully installed.

Buses are the most heavily used mode of public transport in New Taipei, with ridership of nearly 800,000 per day, he said,

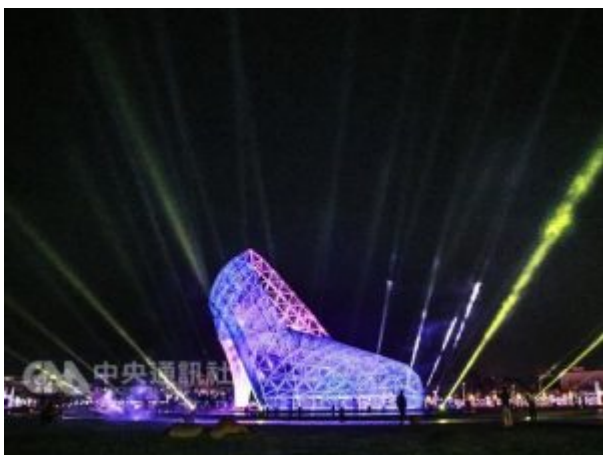
thanking the city's bus operators for their support and for providing the convenience to commuters.

According to the city's Transportation Department, users will be able to connect to the Internet without having to create an account or provide a password.

Free Wi-Fi is available on city buses bearing a logo sticker that says "New Taipei Free Wi-Fi," and users can simply connect to the "NewTaipeiBusWiFi" service without having to log in with their personal Google or Facebook accounts, the department said.

(By Lin Chang-shun and Ko Lin)
Enditem/J

Tourism Bureau trying to revive charm of 'Cinderella Shoe'



Taipei, Sept. 9 (CNA) The Tourism Bureau will launch a series of campaigns to boost travel interest in a "Cinderella Shoe"

structure in Chiayi County, a once popular tourist attraction that has been losing its appeal.

The installation art piece, 17 meters tall and made from 320 panes of blue-tinted glass, is shaped like a high-heeled shoe and is sometimes booked as a wedding venue because people associate it with the Cinderella fairytale.

Soon after it was built in February 2016, it reportedly drew 200,000 visitors over the five-day Lunar New Year holiday that year.

Later in the year, the bureau's Southwest Coast National Scenic Area Administration that built and now manages the installation artwork, applied for and eventually gained Guinness World Record certification for the artwork as the world's largest high-heeled shoe shaped structure.

Recently, however, the number of visitors to the site has dropped sharply from an average 200,000 per month in spring to 140,000 in summer, according to the Tourism Bureau.

"It is very surprising to see that the structure has lost its appeal so fast," Wu Chun-chieh (吳俊吉), an official at the bureau's Southwest Coast National Scenic Area Administration, told CNA on Friday.

He said efforts to attract private operators have also been unsuccessful.

Even now, with the annual rent set at the rock bottom price of NT\$1.7 million (US\$56,650), there have been no tenders to operate the wedding venue and the 12 shopping booths, Wu said.

As a result, the southwest administration has come up with a plan to upgrade the facilities and services and launch a series of promotions in the hope that interest in the structure will be revived, he said.

The measures include an extension of a temporary projection

mapping show to an year-round event, as well as an installation of air conditioning facility inside the building.

Meanwhile, Ocean Hotel, which is about a 15-minute walk from the structure, has not seen any significant drop in business as a result of the waning popularity of the Cinderella Shoe.

The three-star hotel, once a visitor service center, said it is more worried about slow business on weekdays.

According to the hotel, which will start formal operations in October after a 13-month trial run, it usually has full occupancy on weekends and public holidays, but is only about 30-50 percent full on weekdays.

(By Lee Hsin-Yin)

Enditem/pc

[TAIUNA to appeal for Taiwan's desire to join UN in New York](#)



Taipei, Sept. 8 (CNA) The Taiwan United Nations Alliance (TAIUNA) on Friday sent a 25-member team to New York to express Taiwan's desire to join the United Nations (UN).

TAIUNA President Michael Tsai (蔡其昌) said in the interview at the Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport prior to the team's departure that 80 percent of Taiwan's citizens wished for the country to join the UN as Taiwan.

Tsai said the goal of the trip is to help the United States clearly understand Taiwan's appeal.

The delegation will also meet with members of the United States Congress, think tank scholars and officials.

Taiwan has tried without success to re-enter the U.N. since 1993, after losing its seat to the People's Republic of China in 1971.

(By Chiu Chun-chin and William Yen)

Enditem/cs

Former Philippine beauty queen promotes Taiwan tourism



Taipei, Sept. 8 (CNA) Former Philippine beauty queen Maggie Wilson has been invited to shoot travel videos promoting Taiwan as a tourist destination to Southeast Asians, the

Tourism Bureau said in its press release Friday.

This marked the second time that Wilson has worked with the travel bureau to help promote Taiwan.

She and another Philippine beauty queen Parul Shah were here earlier this year to film a 30-second-long video.

The new 60-second promotional video will feature some of the island's popular travel spots and recreational activities, including a tour of Taroko Gorge in Hualien County and visits to local indigenous villages.

The film will be made in collaboration with Sony Pictures Television Networks, Asia, and will be available from Nov. 11 on channels including AXN Philippines, SONY and Animax Philippines, according to the bureau.

It said the project is in line with the government's "New Southbound Policy," which aims to enhance Taiwan's relations with countries in Southeast Asia, South Asia, Australia and New Zealand.

The bureau also pointed to statistics which showed that the number of arrivals from the Philippines reached 161,303 from January to July this year, up 73.51 percent from the same period last year.

Among them, 68,186 were here as tourists, it said.

(By Chen Wei-ting and Ko Lin)

Enditem/cs

Taiwan could play role in resolving S. China Sea dispute



Taipei, Sept. 8 (CNA) The Republic of China (Taiwan) could play an important role in resolving the South China Sea dispute as it was the ROC that first claimed sovereignty over the region and it still has many historic documents on the issue, a visiting UK expert said on Friday.

“I think Taiwan could play a really important role in resolving the dispute. Because of course the claim really started with the ROC in the early 20th century,” said Bill Hayton, an associate fellow at Chatham House, an international policy institute based in London.

In addition, many of the historic archives are still stored in Taiwan, where political openness makes it easier to discuss sovereignty claims than in China or Vietnam, he noted.

By presenting its historic documents on the South China Sea, Hayton said Taipei could demonstrate that the more exaggerated claims made by Beijing are not supported by the historical evidence.

Such an approach could take some of the heat out of the

dispute, he told the Central News Agency on Friday.

Hayton also said it is clear Taiwan has occupied Taiping Island or Itu Aba for 70 years, noting “clearly you have the best claim to that feature.”

Hayton said that President Tsai-Ing-wen’s proposal to make the island an international humanitarian relief and resupply base is “a good way and good step to reduce tension.”

However, all claimants still need to have practical discussions on how to realize such a proposal, he added.

Hayton told CNA that to resolve the dispute everybody has to be “realistic” and recognize that no country is going to get 100 percent of what it wants.

He made the remarks on the sideline of a seminar organized by the South China Sea Think Tank (SCSTT) in Taipei on Friday. SCSTT is a Taipei-based non-profit organization that promotes dialogue, research, and education on South China Sea related issues.

In his lecture titled “The Modern Origins of China’s Claims in the South China Sea,” Hayton argued that the current tensions in the area can be traced back to the origins of China’s claims in the early 20th century. He presented evidence that China’s claim to islands in the South China Sea was made in 1909 and further expanded after 1933.

He argued that the claim is more modern than ancient as often claimed by China and has developed in response to domestic political crises.

(By Joseph Yeh)

Enditem/AW

Taiwan to maintain existing cross-strait policy



Taipei, Sept. 7 (CNA) The Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) reaffirmed its position on cross-strait relations on Thursday, noting there would be no shift in policy in the wake of recent personnel changes in the Cabinet.

During a routine press conference, MAC Vice Minister and spokesperson Chiu Chui-cheng (邱國治) was asked about the administration's stance on cross-strait relations, given previous pro-independence comments by premier-designate Lai Ching-te (賴清德).

Chiu took the opportunity to reiterate the administration's policy goal of promoting peaceful and stable development of cross-strait ties and maintaining the status quo.

"The government is one body and speaks with one voice," the vice minister said.

He added that the government would handle cross-strait affairs in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of China and the will of the people.

The administration will continue to promote good cross-strait ties while defending Taiwan's sovereignty, dignity and the rights of its people, he continued.

"Such a policy stance is in the best interest of Taiwan and parties in the (East Asian) region," he said.

Chiu was also asked about China's "one country, two systems" policy, reportedly lauded as a good solution for cross-strait peace by former Hong Kong Chief Executive and Vice Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference Tung Chee-hwa (譚震).

Chiu responded that Taiwanese society has rejected the idea of "one country, two systems" – as can be seen from repeated polls on the issue as well as statements by major political parties in Taiwan.

(By Miao Tzung-han and Kuan-lin Liu)

Enditem/AW

Minister of foreign affairs urges UN not to forget Taiwan



Taipei, Sept. 7 (CNA) Taiwan's Minister of Foreign Affairs David Lee (李顯赫) has urged the United Nations (UN) not to forget the 23 million people of Taiwan.

According to the Taipei Representative Office in the EU and Belgium, Belgium's biggest French language newspaper Le Soir published an article by Lee titled "Taiwan, a Valuable Partner for SDGs – True Universality" on Wednesday.

The article also said that the United Nations Headquarters symbolizes diversity, equality and freedom, but the symbolic imagery is fading as more and more Taiwanese are prevented from entering.

It further points out that Taiwan has made for its nationals visa free arrangements with 165 countries and territories, winning the respect of many in the fields of business and education, but remains ineligible to enter the UN headquarters.

Lee notes that these restrictions are aimed directly at Taiwan and even extended to not allowing Taiwanese reporters to cover news at the UN.

In the Philippines, The Manila Times, Manila Standard, Malaya, Tonight and People's Journal published seven articles by Lee from Sept. 1-4 in which Lee stressed that Taiwan is an important partner in the joint national Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and called on the UN not to reject Taiwan in order to realize the principle of true universality.

In Burkina Faso, one of the biggest media agencies, French-language newspaper Sidwaya, also published an article by Lee on Wednesday in which he points out that Taiwan has given US\$6 billion for global medical care since 1996 but was left out of the World Health Assembly in May 2017.

He also pointed out that many lives were lost in 2003 to SARS due to inactivity from the WHO in its contacts with Taiwan.

Lee said that Taiwan compares well to any country in terms of human rights and equality and performs better than many.

(By Emerson Lim, Tang Pei-chun and William Yen)

Enditem/AW

Taiwan ranked 4th best place to live for expats



Brussels, Sept. 7 (CNA) Taiwan was ranked the fourth best place for expatriates to live and work, behind Bahrain, Costa Rica and Mexico, according to a recent annual global survey of top destinations for expatriates.

However, although Taiwan remained among the top five places for expatriates, the country lost its top spot from the previous survey by InterNations, the world's largest website to serve expatriates, in 2016.

In the 2016 survey, Taiwan, Malta, and Ecuador were the top three destinations for expatriates but they all slipped down the rankings in the 2017 InterNations Expat Insider Survey. Taiwan remained ahead of New Zealand, Singapore, Germany,

Switzerland and Austria, which are generally considered to offer a good quality of life, the Taipei Economic and Culture Office in Austria cited the survey as saying.

In the latest survey, InterNations said Taiwan came second in the Quality of Life index, one of the five individual indexes that make up the survey, and was first in the Health and Wellbeing category of that index as the country has world class healthcare and infrastructure.

Meanwhile, in the Leisure Options category in the Quality of Life Index, Taiwan took 20th place. It was also 24th in Personal Happiness, 6th in Travel & Transport and 15th in Safety & Security, according to the 2017 survey.

Among other indexes in the survey, Taiwan ranked as the 19th best destination on the Ease of Settling In index for expatriates, 12th in the Working Abroad index, 13th in the Family Life index and 14th in the Personal Finance index.

In the Ease of Settling In index, Taiwan took the 46th place in the language skills category, which was said by Business Insider to be a key reason for the fall in the country's overall score in the index.

In the 2017 survey, InterNations took a close look at 65 destinations to see how these countries and areas were rated by their expat residents. The website looked at more than 40 individual factors that influence an expat's experience of living in a foreign country, from family life to finances.

The 2017 survey, conducted from February to March 2017, asked nearly 13,000 expats about their quality of life to get the results.

Following Bahrain, Costa Rica, Mexico and Taiwan, Portugal came in fifth, ahead of New Zealand (No. 6), Malta (No. 7), Cambodia (No. 8), Singapore (No. 9) and Spain (No. 10), the survey showed.

At the bottom of the survey were Turkey (No. 56), India (No.57), Qatar (No. 58), Ukraine (No. 59), Italy (No. 60), Saudi Arabia (No.61), Brazil (No. 62), Nigeria (No. 63), Kuwait (No. 64) and Greece (No. 65), according to the survey.

China ranked 55th in the 2017 survey, while South Korea and Hong Kong took 31st and 39th place, respectively.

(By Tang Pei-chun and Frances Huang)

Enditem/AW