



Press Review Taiwan



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Switzerland in the local press

Climate change seen as cause for mudslide in Switzerland (Taiwan News, 28.08.2017)

Switzerland's environmental protection office says the effects of climate change are partially to blame for a mudslide through a southeastern village that left eight people missing after a massive chunk of rock broke off an Alpine mountainside. Switzerland has experienced an average temperature increase of 2 degrees Celsius since record-keeping began in 1864, over twice the world average of 0.9 degree. The climate change effects include "urban heat islands" in Swiss cities, localized water shortages, and the instability of mountain flanks like the one that cracked and triggered mudslide in southeastern Bondo.

MOU inked with Switzerland (Taipei Times, 25.08.2017)

Representative to Switzerland Gu Ruey-sheng signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with representatives from the University of Zurich (UZH). Gu represented the Ministry of Education in signing the MOU, Taiwan's first research-study program in Switzerland, with UZH division of social and business psychology professor Klaus Jonas and Wolfgang Behr of the Institute of Asian and Oriental Studies. It is a milestone in Taiwan Studies attracting greater international attention, Gu said.

Sign at Swiss hotel directed to 'Jewish guests' draws scorn (Taiwan News, 15.08.2017)

Switzerland's tourism office is expressing regret over an "unfortunate" incident in which a small Swiss Alpine hotel posted a sign asking "Jewish guests" to shower before swimming in the hotel pool. The Simon Wiesenthal Center demanded the closure of the Paradies Arosa hotel in eastern Arosa. On Twitter, Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Tzipi Hotovely called for "justice." Swiss Tourism spokesman Markus Berger called the sign "unacceptable," adding it has been removed and hotel management has apologized.

Swiss to demand German car overhaul (Taipei Times, 07.08.2017)

Switzerland is to demand that German automakers treat Swiss customers the same as German buyers of diesel cars being fixed to cut pollution, Swiss Federal Roads Office Director Juerg Roethlisberger said. Swiss authorities would monitor the situation to see what the proposed fixes bring and if public pressure forces German carmakers to take the more costly step of replacing hardware on affected cars, then Switzerland would demand the same.

Citizenship for 4 Swiss missionaries (China Times, 04.08.2017)

Taiwan authority has granted Republic of China (ROC) citizenship to four Swiss Bethlehem missionaries, Father Gottfried Vonwyl, Father Josef Eugster, Father Ernst Gassner, and Brother Augustin Büchel, to honor their contributions to the nation for more than half a century. Justin Huang, Taitung County Governor, presented their Taiwan ID card and welcomed them into the Taitung family. "The contribution have made by the Swiss priests of the Bethlehem Mission Society to Taiwanese society will never be forgotten," the Governor added.

Don't look down: Swiss open new foot bridge near Matterhorn (Taiwan News, 03.08.2017)

Switzerland has inaugurated the world's longest suspension foot bridge along a trail toward the famed Matterhorn that features majestic Alpine views. A Swiss tourism official said the 494-meter (1,621-foot) bridge can cut hiking time on the Europaweg trail by at least 3 hours between the southwestern towns of Graechen and Zermatt. Only 65 centimeters (25 inches) wide, the bridge soars as high as 85 meters (279 feet) above the ground, traversing over the deepest-cut valley in Switzerland.

Foreign Policy

U.S. congressional delegation arrives for government meetings: MOFA (Focus Taiwan, 30.08.2017)

A US congressional delegation arrived in Taiwan to meet with government officials to discuss issues of mutual interest to both countries, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) stated in a press release. The 12-member group, led by Representative Ed Royce, chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, will participate in a range of meetings with Taiwanese officials from Aug. 30-Sept 2. All of them have track records of supporting Taiwan in domestic and international issues.

French delegation arrives for bilateral cooperation: MOFA (Taiwan News, 29.08.2017)

A delegation of French senators arrived in Taiwan to learn more about the development of Taiwan's economic sector and boost bilateral cooperation, the MOFA said. The eight-member delegation, led by Senator Cyril Pellevat, visits Vice President Chen Chien-jen and Deputy Legislative Speaker Tsai Chi-chang, as well as tour the ministries of Economic Affairs, Culture, and Science and Technology during their four-day visit.

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**Canada raises program quota (Taipei Times, 08.08.2017)**

More Taiwanese would be able to participate in working holiday programs in Canada this year after the nation raised its quota for Taiwanese participants from 1,000 to 1,200, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) said. The working holiday agreement between the two nations took effect in 2010. Under the program, people aged from 18 to 35 from the two nations can travel and work in the other nation for up to one year.

China Relation**China's military activities near Taiwan said to be war preparation (Eye on Taiwan, 15.08.2017)**

The Ministry of National Defense said that China's air force has conducted four rounds of long-distance flight training near Taiwan's Air Defense Identification Zone so far this month. This followed four rounds of similar training in July. Kung Chia-cheng, former head of the Chung-Shan Institute of Science and Technology, said that China is preparing for a partial, limited and non-nuclear war, and warned that Taiwan cannot just look on without doing anything.

Domestic Policy**Cabinet approves government's 2018 budget (Focus Taiwan, 17.08.2017)**

The Cabinet has approved the government's 2018 budget proposal, which shows expenditure of NT\$1.985 trillion (US\$65.49 billion) and revenue of NT\$1.8904 trillion. High on the government's agenda will be its Forward-looking Infrastructure Development Program, which will be funded by a special allocation of NT\$108.9 billion. Other areas of priority will be construction of public projects, industrial innovation, drug abuse prevention, food safety, education, and social welfare.

Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission to be dissolved by end of Aug. (Taiwan News, 15.08.2017)

The Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission (MTAC) under the Cabinet will be disbanded at the end of this month at the earliest. After the commission is abolished, part of its duties will be transferred to the Mainland Affairs Council's (MAC) Department of Hong Kong and Macao Affairs, which will be renamed the Department of Hong Kong, Macao, Mongolia and Tibet. Others will be transferred to the Ministry of Culture. Matters involving relations and exchanges with Mongolia will be taken over by the MOFA.

Economy/Finance**Taiwan's economy flashes 4th straight yellow-blue light (Focus Taiwan, 28.08.2017)**

The local economy flashed a yellow-blue light for the fourth consecutive month in July, signaling sluggish growth, the National Development Council (NDC) said. The composite index of monitoring indicators totaled 22 in July, unchanged from a month earlier. Because the index again reached the top of the yellow-blue range, the NDC said it remained cautiously optimistic about Taiwan's economy.

July jobless rate up slightly (The China Post, 25.08.2017)

The jobless rate in July rose 0.1 percentage points to 3.84 % from a month earlier on the back of an increase in first time job seekers during the graduation season, according to statistics released by the Directorate General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics (DGBAS). In the first seven months of the year, the local jobless rate averaged 3.76 %, down 0.15 percentage points from a year earlier, while the labor participation rate averaged 58.76 %, up 0.08 percentage points from a year earlier.

Taiwan's industrial production grows for 3rd straight month (Taiwan News, 23.08.2017)

Taiwan's industrial production rose 2.38 % from a year earlier to 111.84 on the back of strong global demand for electronic gadgets as the world's economy remained on a recovery track, statistics from the Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA). The data indicated that Taiwan has been benefiting from a peak season in the global high-tech industry in the third quarter, which boosted its exports, while the local old economy sector has also been riding a rebound in product prices.

Taiwan export orders grow for 12th straight month (Taipei Times, 22.08.2017)

The export orders Taiwanese companies received in July grew 10.5 % y-o-y for the 12th consecutive month to US\$38.72 billion largely because of solid demand for electronic gadgets. Companies in the information & communication sector received US\$10.89 billion in orders in July, up 13.9 % from a year earlier due to increasing demand for notebook computers, tablet computers, servers and Internet communications devices, while the base metal, optoelectronics and machinery sectors also saw double-digit growth.

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**Current account surplus increases in second quarter (Taipei Times, 22.08.2017)**

The nation's balance of payments recorded a current account surplus of US\$17.65 billion in the second quarter, backed mainly by improving exports amid a global economic recovery, the central bank said. The financial account, which captures fund movements by financial institutions, saw net outflows of US\$14.58 billion in the second quarter, an extra flight of US\$1.82 billion from a year earlier, the bank said. That is the 28th consecutive quarter of net outflows as local investors raised holdings in foreign-currency assets to pursue better yields.

Taiwan's approved China-bound investment down over 12% (Taiwan News, 21.08.2017)

The amount of government-approved China-bound investment by Taiwanese companies in the first seven months of this year fell 12.21 % from a year earlier to US\$5.18 billion because of a high base of comparison, the Investment Commission said. Meanwhile, the amount of government-approved overseas investment made by Taiwanese firms outside of China for the seven-month period fell 31.55 % y-o-y to US\$5.83 billion. The amount of approved foreign direct investment in Taiwan for the seven-month period fell 27.39 % from a year earlier to US\$4.47 billion, as a relatively high base of comparison.

Taiwan's economy forecast to grow 2.27% in 2018 (Focus Taiwan, 19.08.2017)

Taiwan's GDP is expected to grow 2.27 % in 2018, the highest increase in four years, largely on the back of increasing government investments, according to the DGBAS. Government investments are projected to rise by an annual 10.59 % next year, showing the biggest growth in nine years, as public infrastructure projects come on stream under the recently passed Special Budget Statute for Forward-Looking Infrastructure. Meanwhile, the DGBAS has raised its forecast for Taiwan's 2017 GDP growth from 2.05 % to 2.11 %, citing solid global demand which has been driving Taiwan's exports.

CPI up 0.77% in July (The China Post, 09.08.2017)

The consumer price index (CPI) for July rose 0.77 % from a year earlier on the back of higher food prices, in particular vegetables, according to data released by the DGBAS. In July, food prices rose 1.23 % from a year earlier, as prices of vegetables soared 7.09 % y-o-y due to a tight supply in reflection of high temperatures and hits by two typhoons--Nesat and Haitang--late in the month.

Taiwan exports grow for 10th straight month in July (Focus Taiwan, 07.08.2017)

Taiwan's exports totaled US\$27.11 billion in July, up 12.5 % from a year earlier, as global demand remained solid with the world economy on a steady road to recovery, while imports grew 6.5 % from a year earlier to US\$21.74 billion, the Ministry of Finance (MOF) data showed. Taiwan had a trade surplus of US\$5.37 billion during the month, up US\$1.69 billion y-o-y. In the first seven months of the year, Taiwan's exports were up 12.5 % at US\$174.84 billion, and imports were up 14.9 % at US\$146.64 billion, resulting in a trade surplus that was up 1.5 % from the previous year at US\$28.2 billion.

Forex reserves hit new high at end of July (Taiwan News, 04.08.2017)

Taiwan's foreign exchange reserves hit a record high to reach US\$444.45 billion at the end of July, up US\$2.51 billion from previous month because of a rising euro and an increase in returns on the funds managed by Taiwan's central bank. It was the fourth consecutive month in which Taiwan's forex reserves moved higher and set a new record, the central bank data showed.

Technology/Innovation**FormoSat-5 launch takes Taiwan to 'new era': official (Taiwan News, 25.08.2017)**

The successful launch of FormoSat-5 is not just the beginning of a new space mission for Taiwan, it also shows that "Taiwan has marched into a new era of indigenous space technology," Deputy Science and Technology Minister Su Fong-chin said. FormoSat-5 is the first satellite program in which Taiwan's NSPO was fully responsible for systems integration.

Taiwan lays out NT\$16 billion development plan for AI (The China Post, 18.08.2017)

The Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) said that it plans to invest NT\$4 billion (US\$132 million) over the next four years in the local semiconductor sector in a bid to maintain Taiwan's global competitive edge. The four-year plan code named the "moon shoot" has set its sights on artificial intelligence by widening the applications of Taiwan's integrated circuit industry to meet demand. According to the ministry, the four-year plan will kick off in 2018 as it starts to allocate NT\$1 billion a year.

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Special Focus

Taiwan economics minister resigns over blackout (Taiwan News, 15.08.2017)

The Cabinet accepted the resignation of Economics Minister Lee Chih-kung after a massive power outage which knocked out traffic lights, trapped people in elevators and darkened shopping malls and offices across the nation. The incident was reportedly caused by human error, with the supply of gas to the Datan Power Station in Taoyuan City being interrupted for two minutes just before 5 pm. After appearing at a news conference apologizing to the public, Lee handed in his resignation to Premier Lin Chuan and the latter accepted it, a Cabinet spokesman announced. Vice Minister of Economic Affairs Shen Jong-chin has been named by Premier to take over as head of the ministry. Shen, 67, a Ministry of Economic Affairs technocrat, will serve as acting economic affairs minister, Cabinet spokesman Hsu Kuo-yung announced Wednesday.

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