



Headline News

Taiwan considers joining Mine Ban Treaty

The Republic of China (Taiwan) is looking to learn more about international efforts to ban landmines and the possibility of joining the Mine Ban Treaty, a Ministry of Foreign Affairs official said on 18 March. A total of 161 countries are parties to the Mine Ban Treaty, which was signed in 1997 in Ottawa and came into force in 1999. The Treaty aims at prohibiting the development, production, use, storage and transfer of antipersonnel landmines. 5 young people from Taiwan will attend the 3rd Review Conference of the Mine Ban Treaty in Maputo, Mozambique, from 23 to 27 June by joining the delegation of Mines Action Canada, a coalition of Canadian non-governmental organizations.



"Although we are not a party to the Mine Ban Treaty, we hope to learn more about the organization and engage more deeply with global efforts to eradicate antipersonnel mines through their [the students'] participation this year," a government spokesperson said. Before heading to the conference, the 5 representatives will participate in online capacity-building training sessions on issues related to the prohibition of antipersonnel mines, reduction in military forces and other human rights issues.

EU-Taiwan Relations

Taipei Mayor informs European Chamber of city's opportunities

On March 20, Taipei Mayor Hau Lung-bin presented his vision to build smart and sustainable infrastructures for Taipei residents at a round-table lunch with the European Chamber of Commerce in Taiwan (ECCT). In his speech, Hau described business opportunities in major infrastructure and urban renewal projects, as well as plans for intelligent infrastructure, including green buildings, electric vehicles and smart grid technology, according to the ECCT. He also delivered an update on public transport infrastructure, including roads and metro lines.



A delegation of Taipei city government officials also attended the event and answered ECCT members' questions related to finance, transportation, healthcare, infrastructure and procurement, environment and tourism. Hau was elected mayor of Taipei City in May 2006 and is currently serving his second four-year term, following re-election in 2010.

International News

Taiwan to donate rice to 17 countries

In a statement issued on 18 March, the Agriculture and Food Agency said that Taiwan will double its contribution to international food aid this year by donating 17,400 tons of rice to 17 countries. The rice is expected to be shipped by June 30, said the agency, which estimated it could save 5.8 million people from starvation. While 5,100 tons will be sent to typhoon victims in the Philippines, 3,100 tons are set for Syrian refugees in Jordan. Another

2,400 tons will go to Haitians still recovering from the destructive 2010 earthquake that hit the Caribbean country.

Since 2002, Taiwan has cooperated with international charity organizations to provide assistance to countries affected by famine. Taiwan has so far donated 250,000 tons of rice, helping an estimated 83 million people in 32 countries.

Philippine Coast Guard indicted

The ROC Ministry of Foreign Affairs welcomed on 18 March the decision by the Philippine government to charge Coast Guard personnel involved in the fatal attack last year on the Taiwan fishing boat Guang Da Xing No. 28 with homicide and obstruction of justice.

Science News

Taiwan researcher helps find evidence for Big Bang

Taiwan researcher Kuo Chao-lin played a crucial role in designing the main instrument recently used to detect gravitational waves, a discovery that confirms the Big Bang theory and makes the research team a strong candidate for a Nobel Prize.



Kuo, a graduate of National Taiwan University's Department of Physics and assistant professor at Stanford University in California, designed the Background Imaging of Cosmic Extragalactic Polarization detector fitted to an astronomical telescope in Antarctica. Kuo is a co-leader of the Stanford team, which used the device during a 9-year project to find direct evidence of the waves.