



Dramatic exit

Two police officers yesterday drag a tearful Chen Li-chu, ex-wife of former Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) chairman Shih Ming-teh, away from a press conference in Taipei after Chen had cut her wrist in an apparent attempt to disrupt the event. The press conference was held by the former DPP chairman's elder brother Shih Ming-hsiung, who claimed that Shih Ming-teh had continued paying Chen alimony until he initiated his campaign to oust President Chen Shui-bian last year.



Freedom House Survey affirms Taiwan's freedom

RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES: This year's survey said that Taiwan's political freedom had declined a notch, but the country still deserved to be considered 'free'

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Taiwan is one of only three free countries in East Asia besides Japan and South Korea, according to the results of the 2007 Freedom in the World survey released on Wednesday by US-based Freedom House.

The survey uses a scale of 1 to 7 to measure the freedom ratings of more than 100 countries and territories in the categories of political rights and civil liberties.

A rating of 1 indicates the highest degree of freedom and 7 the least amount of freedom.

The ratings determine whether a country is classified as "free," "partly free" or "not free."

2007 Freedom in the World survey findings

The survey uses a scale of 1 to 7 to measure the freedom ratings of more than 100 countries and territories in the categories of political rights and civil liberties.

- Taiwan received a rating of 2 in terms of political rights and a rating of 1 in terms of civil liberties.
- Japan and South Korea both scored 1 in terms of political rights and 2 in terms of civil liberties.
- Singapore received a 5 for political rights and a 4 for civil liberties.
- China scored 7 for political rights and 6 for civil liberties.
- North Korea and Myanmar scored a 7 in both categories.

Source: Freedom House

Taiwan received a rating of 2 in terms of political rights, down one notch from last year, and maintained a rating of 1 in terms of civil liberties.

Both Japan and South Korea performed similarly to last year, scoring 1 in terms of political rights and 2 in terms of civil liberties.

Among Asian countries rated as "partly free," Singapore received 5 for political rights and 4 for civil liberties; Malaysia received 4 for both categories; the Philippines received 3 for both categories and East Timor received 3 for political rights and 4 for civil liberties.

China

Among Asian countries rated as "not free," China scored 7 for political rights and 6 for civil liberties while both North Korea and Myanmar scored 7 in both categories.

Thailand scored 7 for political rights and 4 for civil liberties, Vietnam scored 7 for political rights and 5 for civil liberties, Cambodia scored 6 for political rights and 5

for civil liberties and Laos scored 7 for political rights and 6 for civil liberties.

Meanwhile, Mongolia is rated as a "free" country, receiving 2 for both political rights and civil liberties, while Hong Kong is classified as a "partly free" territory, scoring 5 for political rights and 2 for civil liberties.

More free than not

Worldwide, 90 countries are classified as "free," 58 as "partly free" and 45 as "not free."

By population, a total of 3.04 billion people live in "free" countries, 1.83 billion people are living in "partly free" countries, and 2.45 billion people are living in "not free" countries.

By region, there are 25 "free" countries, nine "partly free" countries and one "not free" country in the Americas.

In Western Europe, there are 24 "free" countries and one "partly free" country.

In the Asia-Pacific region, there are 16 "free" countries, 12 "partly free" countries and 11 "not free" countries.

In North Africa and the Middle East, there is one "free" country, six "partly free" countries and 11 "not free" countries.

In Africa south of the Sahara, there are 11 "free" countries, 22 "partly free" countries and 15 "not free" countries.



Chen emphasizes role of KMT in 228 Incident

MISUNDERSTANDING: A recent documentary funded in part by the Taipei City Government argued that the massacre was in fact the result of a language barrier

By Ko Shu-ling

STAFF REPORTER

The 228 Incident was not just a matter of the government oppressing the public, thereby pushing them to rebel, but total denial of democracy and human rights, President Chen Shui-bian said yesterday.

The 228 Incident was a rebellion that was sparked on Feb. 27, 1947 against the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) government.

Historians estimate that around 20,000 people were killed.

KMT Chairman Ma Ying-jeou has said that the incident was the result of actions of local government "officials," who provoked the rebellion, but was not connected to the KMT or Chiang Kai-shek.

A documentary sponsored by the Taipei City Government's Department of Cultural Affairs during Ma's mayorship drew criticism last month because it portrayed the bloody 228 Incident as a "pure misunderstanding resulting from language barriers."

The National 228 Memorial Hall is scheduled to open on Feb. 28 this year, which marks the 60th anniversary of the tragedy.

Chen, in the latest issue of his weekly e-newsletter, published yesterday, said that the 228 Incident was a prelude to 50 years of one-party rule.

The 228 Incident ushered in the White Terror, during which an unknown number of people lost their lives. The Lei Chen Incident, the Kaohsiung Chiaotou Incident and the Kaohsiung Incident all occurred during this period.

During his stint as Taipei mayor, Chen said he changed the name of Taipei New Park to 228 Peace Park, established the 228 Memorial Museum and designated Feb. 28 as Peace Memorial Day, which later became a national holiday.

After being elected as the president in 2000, Chen said, he continued to issue compensation to victims and their families, restore their reputation, and declassify and publish related official documents.

Despite government efforts, Chen said that because many details of the 228 Incident had not been cleared up, justice had still not been served, and he empathized with victims and their families.



Scorsese movie blocked in PRC

AP, HONG KONG

Hollywood crime thriller *The Departed* -- which has Boston gangsters trying to sell computer technology to ethnic Chinese villains -- won't be showing in China after its rejection by a state-run film distributor, an industry executive said yesterday.

China Film Group, the major importer for films shown in China, told the film's Hong Kong distributor Media Asia that the Martin Scorsese hit wasn't suitable for Chinese audiences, though it declined to give a reason, Media Asia marketing manager Kali Chan said.

"They sent a letter to us saying this movie is inappropriate, so they won't import it," she said.

The move effectively blocks the Warner Bros movie from China's market, and Chan said her company doesn't plan to lobby for a reversal of the decision.

"If they've seen the movie and they don't think it's appropriate, then there's probably nothing we can do," she said.

Yuan Wenqiang, a vice president at China Film Group, declined to comment, saying he needed to consult sales staff first.

Any leak of US technology to China is a sensitive political issue, and its portrayal in the movie may have worried company executives.

China allows only about 20 imported films per year, and it's not uncommon for government censors to reject major Hollywood movies. Last year, censors blocked *Memoirs of a Geisha*, which features ethnic Chinese movie stars playing Japanese escorts, amid speculation the government feared it could stoke Sino-Japanese tensions.

But the case of *The Departed* is unusual in that the importer appears to have rejected the movie before it was submitted to censors.

The film is based on the 2002 Hong Kong film *Infernal Affairs*, about a showdown between a police officer who goes undercover in a Hong Kong gang and a gangster who infiltrates the police.

The Departed has a largely similar plot but changes the setting to Boston.

Jack Nicholson, Matt Damon, Leonardo DiCaprio, Mark Wahlberg, Martin Sheen and Alec Baldwin star in the remake.

In one scene, the mobster played by Nicholson meets with ethnic Chinese gangsters about selling them computer chips.

The film has performed well at the box office, and losing the small-but-growing Chinese market won't be a big blow for the filmmakers.

Piracy is also rampant in China, and locals will likely be able to find illegal DVD copies.

The Departed has made US\$249 million worldwide on a budget of US\$90 million, and earned the best director award for Scorsese at the Golden Globes.



Taiwanese farms must upgrade to best quality

By Roger Wu

'Emergency exports of agricultural products during a glut is not a solution.'

Oranges are just entering their peak season in Taiwan, but Beijing and Taiwan's pro-China forces have already joined hands and said that they want to buy Taiwanese oranges. One can't help but wonder whether this is not another one of Beijing's "united front" tactics.

Remember when there was a glut of bananas in Taiwan last October? Beijing announced then that it would purchase a total of 2,000 tonnes at a cross-strait forum on agriculture sponsored by the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) and the Chinese Communist Party. A report released recently by the Council of Agriculture, however, shows that China in effect bought a mere 118 tonnes -- or 5.9 percent of what it promised to buy -- for a total of less than NT\$2 million (US\$610,000).

At that time, quite a number of Taiwanese organizations offered to boost their banana orders, while consumers started purchasing more bananas on a daily basis to help struggling farmers. However, certain media outlets mocked these efforts, saying that "even if all Taiwanese stuff themselves with bananas, they are still not going to help the situation improve."

Statistics say otherwise. Two weeks after the issue was made public, domestic orders for bananas increased by more than 200 tonnes, allowing the wholesale price of bananas to recover to a reasonable level.

Emergency exports of agricultural products during a glut is not a solution. It would certainly be a good thing if Taiwan could sell its surplus produce to China -- without politics involved. However, as the experience with trying to sell bananas to China shows, business opportunities created as part of Beijing's "united front" tactics are deceptive. They either quickly vanish when the political end is fulfilled, or never materialize.

Taiwan should adopt a pragmatic approach in liberalizing its produce market to ease the pressure on local farmers. The Chinese market could be one of the links in Taiwan's agricultural export chain, but it is not the most important link, nor is it the only link. Taiwanese should not put all their efforts into investing in a high-risk market like China. Nor should Taiwanese farmers harbor any illusion that China's offer comes with no strings attached or give up on concentrating their efforts on adjusting and upgrading the agricultural industry as a whole.

Ever since Japan adopted stricter measures to test for chemical residue in agricultural products last May, some Taiwanese farmers have turned their eyes to China, which has less stringent import measures. That's a short-sighted strategy. If Taiwanese farmers could upgrade their agricultural technology and quality control to meet Japan's strict criteria, they would have an edge over their rivals and avoid the cut-throat competition in lower end markets. This would increase their chances of

breaking into markets that demand higher quality standards like the US and Europe.

Both the Taiwanese government and farmers should view China's failure to purchase 2,000 tonnes of Taiwanese bananas and Japan's move to raise its inspection criteria for agricultural products as a turning point rather than a crisis.

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