

## **Taiwan celebrates Pride Month with world's only public parade**

28/06/2020 16:38 by admin

Coming just over a year after Taiwan became the first place in Asia to legalize same-sex marriage, the event cements the island's status as one of the most LGBTQ-friendly places in the region.

*The parade is scheduled to begin Sunday afternoon close to the Presidential Office in Taipei. (Reuters)*

**Taipei:** Taipei will be the only city in the world to celebrate Pride Month with a march Sunday, highlighting Taiwan's success in keeping the coronavirus outbreak largely under control.

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Taipei hosts one of Asia's largest Pride parades every October, attended by tens of thousands of people from all over the world. The community is holding an additional event Sunday during Pride month, which marks the anniversary of the Stonewall riots in New York in 1969, a key moment in the early fight for LGBTQ rights.

More than 500 Pride events originally scheduled for June have been canceled around the world due to the pandemic, according to the organizers of the Taipei march. Some will still go ahead but remain online only.

The Taipei celebration is taking place as life gets back to normal in Taiwan. The island has reported fewer than 450 cases of the coronavirus in total since the outbreak began, with seven deaths. The government has eased regulations on large-scale events, social distancing and business travel over the past month after registering no domestic transmission of the virus since early April.

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Taipei has established itself as a center for LGBTQ rights in East Asia. Around 80,000 people come to the Taiwanese capital every year for the annual Pride march. Openly gay and transgender presenters have been a fixture on Taiwanese television for much of the past two decades. In 2016, the government appointed Audrey Tang as a minister without portfolio, one of the few cabinet-level transgender officials in the world.

Since the government legalized gay marriage in May last year, more than 3,500 same-sex couples have tied the knot in Taiwan, according to government data.

- Bloomberg