

The world recovery will be fine

There are many fears and alarms expressed about the state of various economies around the world. The curious thing is in recent years none of these has come true. The world economy has continued to grow at a modest pace, with contributions from all the advanced countries led by the US and UK growth rates. China too has kept a steady growth of over 6% going, with many critics claiming it is about to end. This year we may also get some turnaround in Brazil and less of a drag from the oil and commodity based economies which suffered in recent past years from low oil and commodity prices.

The background with the Euro area continuing to create extra money and buying up sovereign bonds, Japan doing the same, and the persistence of ultra low interest rates outside the USA, is favourable for more growth. It is true there has been an uptick in US, UK and Euro area inflation this year. This owes much to the higher oil price, aided by some Chinese price rises on exported goods to reflect the higher input prices they are paying for energy and raw materials. This may well abate later this year, as oil and commodity prices have been weaker recently. Higher inflation has not so far impeded reasonable growth in consumer spending in all these affected areas.

Mr Trump's new found ability to get a Healthcare reform through the House of Representatives means he may be able to get through some reflation as well. He still has to get the Healthcare Bill through the Senate, who may wish to amend it and cause difficulties. Getting some kind of healthcare reform through is an important first step prior to tax cuts which will be easier to achieve if healthcare reform delivers some expenditure savings. Serious tax cuts in the USA would power more growth, which would benefit the rest of us as well.

Promoted by Fraser McFarland on behalf of John Redwood, both at 30 Rose Street Wokingham RG40 1XU

45 sentenced for deadly Shenzhen landslide

Forty five people were sentenced in Shenzhen on Friday afternoon for their parts in a landslide that left 73 dead and four others missing in December 2015.



Photo taken on Dec. 27, 2015 shows the landslide site in Shenzhen, south China's Guangdong Province. (File photo/Xinhua)

The suspects, mostly from Hong Ao landfill, the Yixianglong company which managed the dump site and local governments were tried in the Intermediate People's Court of Shenzhen, the People's Court of Nanshan district and the People's Court of Bao'an district from April 26 through 28.

Long Renfu, boss of Shenzhen Yixianglong, was sentenced to 20 years in prison and fined 10 million yuan (about 1.5 million U.S. dollars) for bribery and negligence which led to the accident.

The dump site had a planned storage of four million cubic meters and a maximum stack height of 95 meters, but when the accident happened, its actual storage reached 5.83 million cubic meters and the waste heaps stood as high as 160 meters.

Meng Jinghang, former head of the city administration bureau of Shenzhen, was convicted of abuse of power and taking bribes of 24.9 million yuan and 800,000 Hong Kong dollars. He was sentenced to 20 years of imprisonment and fined eight million yuan.

Peng Shuiqing, former head of the Guangming New District management bureau of the Urban Planning, Land and Resources Commission of Shenzhen, was sentenced to 16 years and fined one million yuan for the same offences.

Another 17 government officials were sentenced to three to seven years in jail for negligence and abuses of power. Another 25 also received penalties.

The landslide occurred when a huge waste pile collapsed. The accident resulted in a direct economic loss of 880 million yuan, and was believed to be caused by mismanagement rather than any geological reasons.

Sandstorm expected to hit south



Cyclists in Tianjin wear masks on Friday, as dust hits the city.
[Photo/Xinhua]

A severe sandstorm sweeping the northern region turned the sky yellow, and caused at least one death in the affected regions.

The storm is forecast to persist, and marched south and east on Friday to blanket cities including Shanghai and Jiangsu province.

The affected southern regions are expected to see the storm disappear on Sunday, the National Meteorological Center said.

In Beijing, a 50-meter section of wall was blown down, killing one person and burying eight vehicles on Friday morning.

In addition, a pedestrian was severely injured by a flying brick in Haidian district on Friday morning, Beijing News reported. The wind blew down trees, causing severe traffic jams in the morning.

Shanghai has issued a warning that air pollution is forecast to climb to the severe level on Friday night, and that it will persist until Sunday, the municipal environment and weather authorities said.

They suggested people take precautions like closing windows, staying indoors and wearing protective masks.

In addition, the provinces of Henan, Jiangsu and Hubei have been affected by dust and sand on Friday, and will see it linger until Saturday, the national weather authority said.

Wuhan, Hubei province, suspended work on construction sites and demolitions, and the frequency of watering roads was increased to reduce dust generation, the city government said.

The ongoing dust and sand storm, the strongest bout this year, has swept over more than 10 provinces and big cities in northwestern and northern regions since Wednesday, including Beijing, the center said.

In Mongolia and the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, the dust storm has reached alarmingly high levels and lowered the visibility to 300 meters in some areas, according Zhang Bihui, a senior meteorologist at the weather authority.

On Thursday, the concentration of PM10—the main pollutants in the dusty weather—soared to over 2,000 micrograms per cubic meter, the Ministry of Environmental Protection said, adding that at least seven cities including Beijing saw their air quality indexes reaching the maximum of 500.

In Hailar district of Hulunbuir, Inner Mongolia, the strong sandstorm forced the closure of a section of major expressway and closed schools on Thursday and Friday.

[West Lake patrol officer saves lives, smartphones](#)



Hangzhou police officer Zhou Xiangjun helps a visitor in August to retrieve an item that had fallen into West Lake. [Photo/China Daily]

Zhou Xiangjun, a police officer who has patrolled the shores of Hangzhou's West Lake for almost 15 years, is more used to spending time in the water than in the media spotlight.

That has changed in recent days, however, after a TV show reported on his exploits in saving people who jump or fall into the lake as well as salvaging people's bags, cameras and mobile devices from the deep water.

Zhou said he has prevented dozens of people from attempting suicide at the popular scenic spot in Zhejiang province. He also estimates that the total value of the smartphones he has recovered over the years comes to about 100,000 yuan (\$14,500).

"As a police officer, it's my job to save lives. I also would like to help people salvage stuff from the lake," said the 57-year-old, who joined the police force 36 years ago. His main tasks are to patrol the waters, maintain public security and deal with emergencies, such as saving drowning people or

those who attempt suicide.

Because the scenic spot is the subject of many legendary love stories, West Lake is a common choice for suicide attempts.

“I can recognize a suicide attempt quickly by a person’s actions or words,” he told China Daily. “Usually I will go forward and try to chat with them ... and I start to talk them out of it.

“To make people feel comfortable, I’ve learned many dialects. It has turned out to be very useful. All of those I’ve talked to have returned home safely.”

In recent years, people have increasingly turned to him to salvage their belongings from the lake.

“The number of tourists here is many times that of years ago, and it makes West Lake the most crowded scenic spot in the city,” he said, adding that the popularization of smartphones and rising popularity of selfies make the phone one of the items most easily lost.

Zhou used to jump into the lake to find lost things. Once, however, he hit an underwater stake, making him realize that dangers lurk beneath the surface. So he tied a magnet to a fishing line to recover items. Then he did some research in his spare time and upgraded his equipment, making a hollow steel tube that can be extended to more than 4 meters long to find things in deeper water.

He fixes a strong magnet to one end of the tube and puts the magnet side into the water to retrieve lost property.

“For smartphones, only the charging port and SIM card port are made of metal components that can be detected and attracted by a magnet,” he said. “It requires patience, experience and skill to pull them out.”

[Execution in Belarus of Siarhei Vostrykau](#)

Another execution has taken place in Belarus: that of Siarhei Vostrykau. The European Union again reaffirms its strong opposition to capital punishment in all circumstances.

The continued application of the death penalty goes counter to Belarus’ stated willingness to engage with the international community, including the European Union, on the matter and to consider the introduction of a moratorium on the use of the death penalty.

The European Union urges Belarus, the only country in Europe still applying capital punishment, to commute the remaining death sentences and to introduce without delay a moratorium on the death penalty as a first step towards its abolition.