

Uber fined US\$35.47 mln in Taiwan

Photo taken on Aug. 1, 2016 shows Apps of Didi and Uber on a cellphone of a citizen in Hangzhou, capital of east China's Zhejiang Province. [Photo/Xinhua].

According to United Daily News in Taiwan, after three and a half years of operation in Taiwan, Uber received 11 penalties with fines totaling US\$7.42 million and was required to close business by the transportation administration in Taiwan yesterday. Uber announced to close its business in Taiwan on Feb. 20. Meanwhile, the Uber TAXI service, which is scheduled to be online in February, was also closed. However, UberEATS service, which was online at the end of last year, will continue its service.

Uber said it will restart communication with Taiwan administration. The transportation administration of Taiwan asked Uber to operate its business legally. Hochen Tan, the head of the transportation administration, said that both sides should seize the opportunity to communicate and avoid a dead end.

In July 2013, by establishing a company named Taiwan Yu Bo Shu Wei service Co., Ltd, Uber entered Taiwan. The new company is registered as an information service business. Its service area includes Taipei, New Taipei City, Taoyuan, Keelung, Taichung and Kaohsiung.

However, Uber's business is related with motor transport service without business registration certification and professional driver licensing. Over the past three years, Taiwan administration issued 513 penalties with a total fine of US\$3.11 million to Uber and its drivers. Uber paid US\$2.2 million.

With the implementation of an updated law, the fine amount has been increased greatly by the Taiwan administration. Since the implementation of the new rule Jan. 6, any company who breaks the new rule will be fined US\$32.3 thousand, and the fine amount will be raised to US\$161.2 thousand for the second violation. Anyone who breaks the rule six times in total or three times in half a year will be fined with US\$806 thousand and required to close its business.

By Jan. 20, 48 Uber cars had been banned and a total amount of US\$35.47 million in fines had been issued by the transportation administration of Taiwan.

The Malta Summit

Today the EU Heads of state and government will meet in Malta. Their background text will be the pessimistic and alarmist letter from Mr Tusk that we talked about on Wednesday.

The meeting will mainly be concerned with strengthening the EU's external borders, with special emphasis on the problems of Libya. There are in the EU's view too many migrants coming across the sea from Libya. The EU wishes to work with the Libyan authorities – to the extent that there are authorities in charge there – to reduce the flows. The EU may also wish to beef up its naval force, though so far this has been used to offer safe transit to the EU for those who have taken to the seas in dangerous and overloaded boats and got into trouble. The EU will wish to take stronger action against people smugglers, though that too will require co-operation with governments on the African continent.

All this illustrates the cruel dilemma of Mr Tusk's letter. He does not wish the EU to give concessions to people he calls populists or to political parties that challenge the elite view of the EU. Yet he feels the need to hold a summit largely devoted to the populist issue of trying to reduce the flow of migrants and to strengthen the EU's external borders. He is ambiguous about the elite themselves, saying they genuflect too far towards populists, yet saying they are losing faith in the democracy which is driving the populist movements. I guess Mrs Merkel felt the need to change her permissive immigration policy owing to the pressure of public opinion. Does Mr Tusk think this was the wrong thing to do?

Important though Mr Tusk is within the EU, he is but the servant of the Council which is made up of the Heads of state and government. If they say they wish to shift policy in the so called populist direction, he has to allow them an agenda to do so. It will be fascinating to see what emerges from their consideration yet again of migration and borders.

I do hope they take up the UK's request to lift the uncertainty they have created for British citizens living in other EU countries. If they just agree they are all welcome to stay, the UK can confirm the same for all EU citizens legally settled in the UK. It is the right and decent thing to do, so why won't they do it? I am sure Mrs May will ask them again. I thought civilised values were part of their idea of the EU, but they are not showing them on this matter.

The later afternoon session will be for the EU 27 only. They plan to discuss how to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, which they think the UK could not help them with. It will be fascinating to see what celebration they want to hold, and what they think are their main achievements to trumpet.

[Death toll rises to 6 in China homes](#)

collapse

Two survivors were rescued and six found dead after a residential building collapsed in Wenzhou, east China's Zhejiang Province, local authorities said Friday.

Part of a five-storey residential building in Dahui village of Wencheng County collapsed at about 8 a.m. Thursday, burying nine people from two families.

A 63-year-old woman was pulled out from the debris at about 10:40 p.m. Thursday and another female survivor was rescued at about 7 a.m. Friday. Both have been rushed to hospital for medical treatment.

There was one still buried under the rubble.

With the help of eight cranes and excavators, more than 400 paramilitary officers, fire fighters, township officials and medical workers have been carrying out rescue operation.

"The scene is quite chaotic, as if the place was leveled by an earthquake," a rescuer told Xinhua. "We have to work very carefully because the wreckages of the ruined building are joined to homes still standing."

One of the adjacent homes, he said, was already damaged with a big hole in its outer wall.

A total of 58 people living nearby were evacuated to safe places.

Local authorities have launched an investigation into the cause of the building collapse.

Bad traffic slows return journeys



Traffic slows to a crawl on the Liuzhou-Nanning Expressway in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region on Thursday as the highway is overwhelmed with travelers returning home. [Photo/Xinhua]

Traffic slowed to a crawl on major highways on Thursday as tens of millions of people returned home after the Spring Festival holiday.

According to China Central Television, about 94.2 million people were expected to travel on Thursday.

Traffic was slow on several major highways, including Beijing-Hong Kong-Macao Expressway and Shanghai-Chongqing Expressway, according to the Ministry of Transport, with traffic jams in some sections extending for dozens of kilometers.

In Henan and Hunan provinces, some highways were partly closed due to snow or smog.

According to the ministry, the rush of traffic into major urban areas, including the Yangtze River Delta, Pearl River Delta and Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, was expected to last past 10 pm.

About 1.5 million vehicles were expected on highways in Central China's Hubei province on Thursday as many parts of the province experienced light rain.

Chen Ying, who was heading to Hubei's capital Wuhan from the province's Enshi Tujia and Miao autonomous prefecture, encountered a traffic jam after passing Yichang city.

"I don't know whether it was because of the weather or there was an accident ahead, but the traffic was terrible," the 53-year-old said.

She said the traffic was so slow that some people even got out of their cars

and did some exercise, and many service zones were so packed that it was hard to find somewhere to park.

The 340 kilometers from Yichang to Wuhan, which usually takes about four hours, took Chen nine hours. "At its worst, we moved only about 5 km in 80 minutes," she said.

China Railway Corp was expected to log 11.5 million trips on Thursday, 11.3 percent more the last day of Spring Festival in 2016. The company had to add 819 temporary trains to meet the high demand.

About 8.48 million people left Beijing during Spring Festival – 39 percent of the city's population – according to the Beijing Municipal Commission of Transport. Now, their return is putting stress on the capital's transportation system.

Almost 1,700 flights were expected in Beijing on Thursday. According to the commission, 224 trains a day arrived at Beijing South Railway Station during the Spring Festival holiday.

The commission said it has taken various measures to help travelers get back home using the capital's public transport system. From Feb 1 to 4, 1,000 taxis will be dispatched to Beijing South Railway Station and the operation of the subway's Line 4 will also be extended.

Nation plays bigger role in global health

From exporting low-cost, effective vaccines to sending doctors to combat outbreaks of disease, China is increasingly benefiting the world with its enhanced medical capacities and expertise, according to an international health expert.

Seth Berkley, CEO of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, said Chinese vaccines are "significantly cheaper" than those made by many other countries.

The Chinese-made vaccine for Japanese encephalitis, for example, is up to 95 percent less expensive than those produced in the West, he said.

Transmitted by mosquitoes, Japanese encephalitis is the leading cause of viral encephalitis in Asia and the Western Pacific.

With an average price of 42 cents a dose, the live attenuated vaccine made by the Chengdu Institute of Biological Products is providing lifesaving protection to millions of children in low-income countries, including Laos,

Nepal and Cambodia, under the alliance's program, Berkley said.

The alliance has committed to using 27.7 million doses of the vaccine. In light of this, Berkley hailed China's efforts to move on from being an alliance recipient of vaccines to being a key supplier.

The nation's Japanese encephalitis vaccine became available on the global market after the World Health Organization endorsed China's vaccine regulatory body in 2011. Two years later, the product became the first prequalified Chinese vaccine to be licensed for use on children.

"We're seeing huge potential for China to supply the global public vaccine market via WHO prequalification, including for emergency outbreaks such as yellow fever and Ebola," Margaret Chan, director-general of the WHO, said last month.

During the Ebola outbreaks, China sent 1,200 medical workers to affected regions. Chinese experts also trained more than 13,000 local medics to treat patients in nine countries in Africa.