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“Political uncertainty created by Tsai's party and safety concerns over the bus accident are the main reasons for the free fall in mainland tourists.”

Zhu Songling, director of Taiwan Research and Cross-Straits Relations at Beijing Union University



Pushing through

Knee-deep water on a street in Luoyang, Henan province, impedes traffic on Thursday. Heavy rains that started on Wednesday paralyzed part of the city's transportation system for three hours. The city has also issued a lightning warning. Thunderstorms are expected to continue. ZHANG XIAOLI / FOR CHINA DAILY

ANTI-GRAFT

Ex-Yunnan official expresses remorse in corruption trial

By CHINA DAILY

A former senior official in Yunnan province stood trial on Thursday for allegedly accepting bribes worth over 24.3 million yuan (\$3.7 million).



Qiu He

Qiu He, 59, former deputy secretary of the Yunnan Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China, was accused of taking advantage of his official posts from 2008 to 2015 to seek benefits for others on construction projects, getting bank loans and job promotions.

The open trial was held in the Guiyang Intermediate People's Court in Guizhou province and attended by 60 members of the public including media, legislators and political advisers.

Qiu pleaded no contest to all the charges, according to a statement from the court.

He was quoted by the statement saying, "I feel sincerely remorseful for the crime I

committed and I am willing to accept the punishment."

Qiu's case was tried in a court outside the jurisdiction of Yunnan province, which is customary in major corruption trials.

Ren Jianming, a professor of government administration at Tsinghua University, said officials in a province or a region are connected with intricate interests.

"When trials are carried out outside the administration of suspected corrupt officials it helps to root out nepotism in the region, which greatly benefits the continued anti-graft campaign."

The court adjourned on Thursday and will announce a verdict later.

Yunnan, a province with abundant minerals and rich

tourist resources, has been plagued with corruption in recent years.

In June, Bai Enpei, a former senior official in China's top legislature, and the former top official in Yunnan province, confessed to corruption charges during a court trial.

Bai, deputy head of the Environment and Resources Protection Committee of the National People's Congress, pleaded no contest to charges of making illegal gains of nearly 250 million yuan and the accusation that his family members' expenditures were far greater than their income, according to the Anyang Intermediate People's Court in Henan province, where a public hearing was held.

According to the prosecution, Bai used his positions to benefit 17 companies and individuals in engineering construction, real estate development, mining franchises and job promotions.

TRAVEL

Taiwan tourism feeling a chill

By CHINA DAILY

For Taiwan tourism, winter came early.

A significant drop in mainland visitors in the past few months has taken its toll on the island's tourism economy. Forty percent of related businesses were hit with a sharp drop in revenue — 23 percent on average — according to a survey by Taiwan companies 1111 Job Bank and its subsidiary TaiwanXing travel agency.

The cold spell claimed its first major victim when Genesis Travel Agency, a time-honored company specializing in group tour services for mainland visitors, declared bankruptcy on Wednesday, according to the Taiwan tourism authority.

Mainland tourists accounted for 40 percent of Taiwan's total visitors last year. Now, with fewer visitors coming from the mainland, Hsu Kao-ching, a former executive of the Travel Agent Association, said he worried there would be more travel agency closures.

The total number of mainland visitors has fallen 22.3 percent since Tsai Ing-wen took office in May 20, according to the Taiwan tourism authority. In June, the number had dropped to 271,000, the lowest point in 30 months.

The number of Chinese group tours was cut by 47 percent from June to July, partly because of fallout from a fatal bus fire near Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport that killed 24 mainland tourists

on July 19, according to the Taiwan tourism authority.

"Political uncertainty created by Tsai's party and safety concerns over the bus accident are the main reasons for the free fall in mainland tourists," said Zhu Songling, director of Taiwan Research and Cross-Straits Relations at Beijing Union University. "Mainland visitors just don't feel safe or welcome in Taiwan anymore."

The livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of tourism employees are at risk, said Lee Chi-yueh, chief adviser for TaiwanXing, in a public seminar on Wednesday.

"The situation doesn't look promising in the rest of the year either," he said.

Zhang Zhihao in Beijing contributed to this story.

SOCIETY

Telecom fraud blamed in death of college applicant

Students' information is easily collected and sold to scammers who prey on trusting people

By ZHAO RUIXUE in Jinan
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Xu Yuyu, a college-bound student, died from a sudden heart attack on Sunday after tuition fees raised by her family were swindled in a telephone scam.

The 18-year-old from Linyi, Shandong province, scored 568 points on her college entrance exam this year and was admitted to Nanjing University of Posts and Telecommunications.

On Aug 19, she received a phone call notifying her that she was due to receive 2,600 yuan (\$390) in student funding. She had received an official phone call from the education authority the day before, so she did not question the authenticity of the second call.

Xu wired a 9,900-yuan "activation fee" into the scammer's bank account, hoping the money would appear in her student account, but it never did.

Xu was said to be devastated and fainted on the way back home from reporting the case to police.

Despite doctors' efforts to revive her, she died. According to reports, Xu was healthy.

Xu's family is poor and had to save for almost a year and borrow from relatives to put aside their daughter's tuition. "We are already so poor. Why did they swindle us?" Li Ziyun, Xu's mother, recalled Xu asking.

"She never misspent her money and always saved what little she had," said Li.

Xu Lianbin, Xu's father, regretted taking his daughter to the police station the day of the swindle.

"If I took her to the police station even one day later, she might have been calm and she wouldn't have died," Xu said.

Staff at the Nanjing University of Posts and Telecommunications told the Linyi police on Wednesday that the school didn't contact Xu, except for issuing an admission letter to her. The school expressed sympathy to Xu's family.

"Information about safety education, including how to avoid fraud, are in the admission notices, which each freshman gets along with the admission letter," said Xu Lei, director of the publicity department at the university.

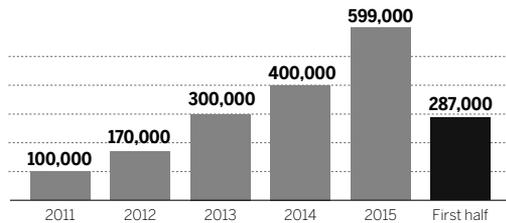
On the same day that Xu encountered the telephone scam, Li Xiaqing, a sophomore at Shandong Agriculture and Engineering University, also received a call, this one informing her that she was involved in a case of money laundering and needed to transfer money to prove her innocence.

Li, also from Linyi, wired



Police officers make a list of bank cards seized in a telecommunication fraud case in Xuchang, Henan province, in January. NIU YUAN / FOR CHINA DAILY

Telecom fraud cases filed by police across China



The average annual loss from telecom fraud is more than 10 billion yuan (\$1.5 billion), according to the Ministry of Public Security.

In 2013, Beijing reported 1.3 billion yuan of losses; Zhejiang province nearly 800 million; Shanghai 500 million; Chongqing 300 million and Tianjin 180 million.

Source: Ministry of Public Security

CHINA DAILY

Police step up coordination overseas against scams

The number of telecom fraud cases in China has seen a sharp rise in recent years, resulting in significant financial losses for those who have fallen prey to scam phone calls. Many families have been left destitute.

In the first half of this year, 287,000 cases were reported nationwide, with losses totaling 8 billion yuan (\$1.2 billion).

Authorities have handled 50,000 cases, finding more than 20,000 people guilty of telecom fraud since June last year. During the same period, more than 4,000 telecom fraud rings have been cracked.

Since April, police departments have stepped up coordination with other countries to crack down such crimes, detaining 295 suspects from countries such as Kenya, Malaysia, Cambodia and Laos.

Last year, nearly 600,000 cases were reported nationwide, an increase of almost 50 percent from the previous year, with victims scammed out of a total of 22.2 billion yuan. Half of that total flowed into bank accounts in Taiwan. Only a fraction of the amount has been recovered.

Chen Shiqu, a deputy inspector at the criminal investigation

What they say

"I often receive telecom fraud phone calls. These calls are annoying. The swindlers who caused the young woman's death didn't plan for that, but I strongly suggest severe punishment for them."

Sun Xiaowei, 63, a retiree from Dalian in Liaoning province

"I feel terrified when I ponder how this student's personal information was leaked, because only schools and the education authority have the information of students who apply for financial aid. There must be some loopholes in this system."

Yan Xin, 20, a sophomore at Yan'an University in Shaanxi province

"We should reflect on why cheap deception tactics like this succeed. Cheaters are detestable, but we need to raise our awareness."

Xue Dan, 32, a media worker from Yunnan province

"Information leakage is very severe in the country. Most cases end without anyone being punished. The low cost that criminals pay for their wrongdoing is the reason they take such risks."

Zhang Xiuli, 29, an accountant from Beijing

“If I took her to the police station even one day later, she might have been calm and she wouldn't have died.”

Xu Lianbin, father of Xu Yuyu

6,800 yuan to the bank account provided by the caller.

The Ministry of Education reminded students on

Wednesday about frauds involving student funding. The ministry said any organization or person funding students does not ask students to make any transactions through ATMs or online. Students were advised to first confirm any payments with teachers and the local education authority.

According to an agent who provides student information, such information is easily collected and can be sold for as low as one fen (one-sixth of a cent) per student, Qilu Evening News reports.

"I frequently receive calls from strangers promoting their products. I am really puzzled over who released my information," said Yu, a

resident of Jinan, Shandong province who only gave his family name.

Yu said he once received a phone call asking whether he'd like to send his 3-year-old daughter to a class that trains future movie stars.

"I just handed in materials to the kindergarten for my daughter in the morning. Then I got the call in the afternoon," said Yu.

Shi Xinmin, a police officer at the Shizhong district police station in Jinan, said, "These scammers clearly target their victims. It seems they know what you care about."

Inside

Editorial > p8

Briefly

BEIJING System to boost TCM coordination

As part of the country's health-care drive, the State Council will promote an interdepartmental conference system to coordinate work on traditional Chinese medicine, its website said on Thursday. The system will

improve communication between various government agencies on regulation, publicity and policy implementation. The State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine will lead 35 other government bodies, including the State Administration for Industry and Commerce and the China Food and Drug Administration.

Student aid increases by 9.8%

Financial aid of 156 billion yuan (\$23.4 billion) was given to students across China in 2015, up 9.8 percent year-on-year, the Ministry of Education said on Thursday. There were 84 million grants, supporting many different types of educa-

tion, from preschool to higher education, the ministry said. Student grants have seen strong growth for nine consecutive years, it noted. In addition, textbook and meal subsidies worth 45 billion yuan were also offered to students nationwide.

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