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Bay Area Regional Medical Center announces closure and bankruptcy

Inside C2

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Buffett says U.S., China will avoid acting 'extremely foolish' on trade

Warren Buffett, CEO of Berkshire Hathaway Inc, talks to a reporter in the exhibit hall at the company's annual meeting in Omaha

OMAHA, Neb. (Reuters) - Billionaire Warren Buffett on Saturday said it is unlikely that the United States and China will come to loggerheads on trade, and the countries would avoid doing "something extremely foolish."

"The United States and China are going to be the two superpowers of the world, economically and in other ways, for a long, long, long time," Buffett said at Berkshire Hathaway Inc's annual shareholder meeting, and that any tensions should not jeopardize the win-win benefits from trade.

"It is just too big and too obvious ... that the benefits are huge and the world is dependent on it in a major way for its progress, that two intelligent countries (would) do something extremely foolish," he said. "We both may do things that are mildly foolish from time to time. There is some give and take."

The Trump administration has drawn a hard line in trade talks with China, demanding a $200-billion cut in the Chinese trade surplus with the United States, sharply lower tariffs and advanced technology subsidies, people familiar with the talks said on Friday.

Buffett, 87, and his longtime partner and fellow billionaire Charlie Munger, 94, also took pointed questions on Wells Fargo & Co, politics, guns, healthcare and their investment choices from shareholders, journalists and analysts at the Berkshire meeting in Omaha, Nebraska.

Buffett defended Wells Fargo and its chief executive, Tim Sloan, in response to a question asking when Berkshire would ditch the bank, one of its largest common stock holdings. Many shareholders applauded the question.

He said the bank committed the "cardinal sin" of incentivizing employees into "kind of crazy conduct," for which U.S. regulators imposed $1 billion of fines last month over lending abuses.

"Wells Fargo is a company that proved the efficacy of incentives, and it's just that they just had the wrong incentives," said Buffett.

But he maintained that the bank is not "inferior" as an investment or morally to its main banking rivals.

Berkshire owned $25.2 billion of Wells Fargo stock as of March 31, down 14 percent from year end as a series of scandals weighed on the bank's reputation.

Wells Fargo investors last week gave strong backing to the bank's directors and executives on Tuesday, indicating confidence in its overhauled leadership to rebound.

Buffett addressed his alliance with another banker, JPMorgan Chase & Co's Jamie Dimon, and Amazon.com Inc's Jeff Bezos to tackle healthcare. Buffett said U.S. healthcare costs are a tapeworm on the economy, and he said they expect to name a chief executive for that venture within a couple months.

The questions also elicited views on politics from the "Oracle of Omaha" and Munger.

Warren Buffett, CEO of Berkshire Hathaway Inc is seen on a screen at the company's annual meeting in Omaha, Nebraska, U.S., May 5, 2018. REUTERS/Rick Wilking

Buffett, for instance, suggested U.S. President Donald Trump should be an "educator-in-chief" on the invisible benefits of trade.

Munger, meanwhile, answered a question on steel tariffs imposed by the White House by acknowledging that U.S. producers are hurting.

"Even Donald Trump can be right on some of this stuff," he said.

Asked a pointed question why Buffett is willing to do business with gun makers, Buffett sharply retorted, "I do not believe in imposing my political opinions on the activities of our businesses."

Buffett faces a challenge investing Berkshire's more than $108 billion of cash and equivalents, including for acquisitions, saying his "phone is not ringing off the hook with good deals."

Shortly before the meeting, Berkshire ended its more than year-long stretch of falling operating profit, while a new accounting rule caused the conglomerate chaired by Warren Buffett to suffer an overall net loss. Buffett said the net results are not representative of the business.

The accounting change required Berkshire to report unrealized losses in its equity portfolio, which totaled $170.5 billion at year end, regardless of whether it planned to sell those stocks.

Berkshire's net loss was $1.14 billion, compared with profit of $4.06 billion a year earlier.

But operating profit, which excludes investment and derivative gains and losses, rose 49 percent to a record $5.29 billion, or about $3,215 per Class A share, higher than the $3,116 per share analysts had expected, according to Thomson Reuters I/B/E/S.

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(By Tina Huang / Southern Daily)

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Southern DAILY Make Today Different

LOCAL NEWS

Bay Area Regional Medical Center announces closure and bankruptcy

Jaimy Jones

Bay Area Regional Medical Center will close early next week and file for bankruptcy, the hospital said Friday. It was the second announced closure of a local hospital in the last six months.

CEO Stephen K. Jones Jr. told employees in an email provided to the Chronicle that the company "was not able to overcome significant hurdles with managed-care companies." An estimated 900 employees will lose their jobs.

"This morning local hospitals will be notified so that they can help facilitate the transfer of our patients to their facilities," the email said. "Local EMS will be deploying resources to help move patients, and doctors will be rounding to discharge patients who can safely go home or to a lower level of care."

The 191-bed hospital, which is owned by locally based Medistar Corp. and offers emergency, surgical and a range of other medical services, opened four years ago just a half-mile from the more established Clear Lake Regional Medical Center.

Spokesman Santiago Mendoza said Bay Area Regional tried for at least a year to get better reimbursement terms, but it did not have the backing of a major hospital system.

"When it came to negotiations with our managed care contracts we were unable to come to an agreement, a favorable agreement and due to overhead, we couldn't survive," Mendoza said.

A statement on the Bay Area Regional website Friday morning said the company is working with lenders to wind down the operation.

Amy Allen, a respiratory therapist who has been with the hospital since it opened in in 2014, said she felt "totally blindsided" when she received a call from a coworker on her day off.

"We just had a meeting yesterday that they're going to open supervisor positions for those of us who have been there for a long time," Allen said. "I'm a single mother and for them to do this is awful. I figured people would know ahead of time."

Employees were informed that their last day will be Monday or Tuesday, she said.

Payroll funds will be available Monday, the email to employees said.

"A determination is being made regarding our benefits plans," it added.

Jones, who took over as as CEO after the death of predecessor Tim Schmidt of pancreatic cancer in May 2017, said in the public statement that the company had invested $200 million in construction and operation in the last five years.

As late as August, the hospital was talking growth, citing the impending opening of a new women's center.

The closure follows the loss of East Houston Regional Medical Center, which announced in November that it would not reopen following severe damage from Hurricane Harvey in August.

That hospital, owned by HCA Healthcare Gulf Coast Division, had been open for more than 40 years when it was swamped by six feet of water in the historic storm and determined to not be salvageable.

The East Houston Regional closure cost more than 400 jobs. Update: A company spokeswoman says 342 of the workers whose jobs were cut are now employed at the 14 HCA-owned hospitals owned in the Houston area.

The shutdowns are dramatic, but other local medical facilities also have been hurt of late. Memorial Hermann Health System, Houston's largest employer, laid off more than 460 employees last year in three rounds of cuts.

That amounts to slightly less than 2 percent of Memorial Hermann's 25,000-employee work force.

Also in 2017, MD Anderson Cancer Center laid off 778 employees and Catholic Health Initiative's Texas division cut 1,295 jobs, most at the St. Luke's Health System in Houston.

Southern DAILY Make Today Different

Editor's Choice

Policemen detain an opposition supporter during a protest ahead of President Vladimir Putin's inauguration ceremony, in Moscow

Kilauea Volcano's crater is seen in this aerial image after the volcano erupted following a series of earthquakes over the last couple of days in Hawaii

Supporters of Turkish President Erdogan cheer as he makes a speech during a ceremony in Istanbul

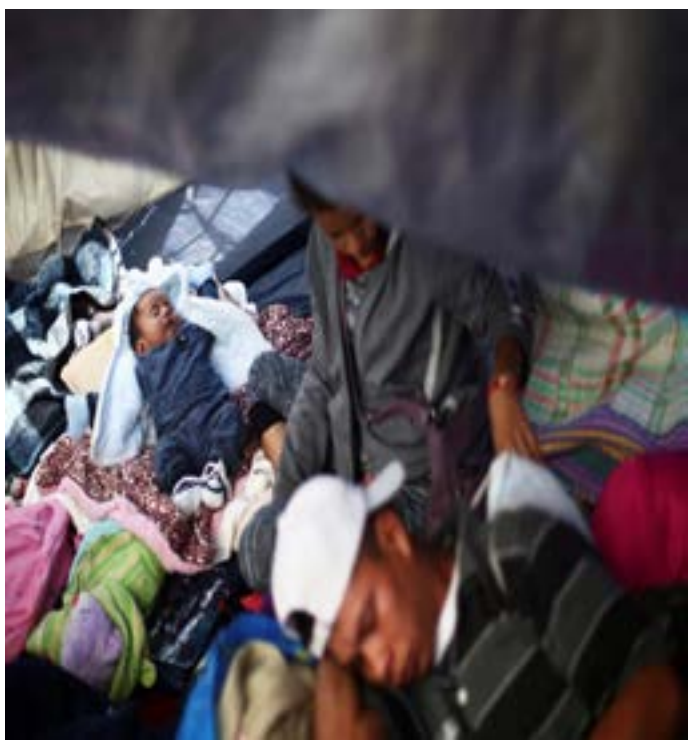
The Jacobite steam train crosses the Glenfinnan Viaduct in Scotland

Chewbacca character poses during a photocall to promote the new Star Wars Movie "Solo: A Star Wars Story" in Berlin

A peacock displays his plumage as part of a courtship ritual to attract a mate, at a park in London

Europa League Semi Final Second Leg - Atletico Madrid v Arsenal

KCNA picture of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un shaking hands with Chinese State Councillor Wang Yi



A baby traveling with a caravan of migrants from Central America sleeps under a plastic tarp at a camp near the San Ysidro checkpoint as he expected to apply for asylum, in Tijuana

Southern DAILY Make Today Different

COMMUNITY

FDA Officials To Target High-Risk Alternative Remedies

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

In 2009, the FDA ordered Zicam to stop marketing three products that contained zinc gluconate after more than 100 users reported losing their sense of smell.

WASHINGTON — U.S. health officials plan to crack down on a growing number of unproven alternative remedies, focusing on products containing dangerous ingredients that have occasionally been linked to serious injury and death.

The Food and Drug Administration on Monday issued a new proposal for regulating homeopathic medicines that have long been on the fringe of mainstream medicine. The agency plans to target products that pose the biggest safety risks, including those marketed for children or for serious diseases.

But under the government's framework, the vast majority of low-risk products would remain on the market.

Long regarded by scientists as a form of modern-day snake oil, homeopathic products are treated as drugs under law, but not supported by modern science. Most remedies contain heavily diluted drugs, vitamins, and minerals. Popular homeopathic brands include Zicam Allergy Relief and Cold-Eeze.

"We respect that some individuals want to use alternative treatments, but the FDA has a responsibility to protect the public from products that may not deliver any benefit and have the potential to cause harm," FDA Commissioner Dr. Scott Gottlieb said in a statement.

Homeopathic products are similar to dietary supplements, in that the FDA does not review their safety or effectiveness before they are sold. But unlike supplements, homeopathic medicines can state that they are intended for specific medical symptoms and conditions, similar to drugs.

A handful of products in recent years have been subject to major safety problems, usually involving potentially toxic ingredients.

Last year, the FDA warned consumers about the risks of teething tablets marketed by Hyland's Homeopathic after they were tied to seizures and deaths in infants and children. FDA testing later confirmed the products contained high levels of belladonna, also called nightshade, a poisonous herb that has long been used at low dosages in homeopathic medicine. The products were recalled in April.

In 2009, the FDA ordered Zicam to stop marketing three products that contained zinc gluconate after more than 100 users reported losing their sense of smell.

The FDA said its proposal also targets products that claim to treat serious diseases like cancer, or are administered via unconventional routes such as ear drops. The agency will take comments on its proposal for 90 days before beginning to finalize the plan.

Consumer advocates said the FDA plan makes sense for products that are mostly harmless, but can be dangerous if manufacturers stray from traditional ingredients, dosing and manufacturing.

"I think the rules do a good job of going after the things that are most problematic," said Dr. Adriane Fugh-Berman, an associate professor at Georgetown University Medical Center.

The FDA hasn't updated its regulations for homeopathic medicine since 1988, when it essentially exempted the industry from basic production standards that are mandatory for traditional drugs, like listing ingredients on product labels.

Since then the once-niche market has grown into a $3 billion industry, according to FDA figures.

Hundreds of homeopathic remedies today are sold alongside over-the-counter drugs like Tylenol and aspirin at pharmacies across the U.S. The National Institutes of Health has said there's little evidence that homeopathic medicine is effective for treating any specific condition. (Courtesy https://www.statnews.com)

Related

Homeopathic Remedies Harmed Hundreds Of Babies, Families Say, As FDA Investigated For Years

Blaine Talbott, now 3, began twitching in his limbs after taking homeopathic teething products. A neurologist later suggested he may have responded poorly to the tablets.

WASHINGTON — Case 7682299: Aug. 1, 2010. A mother gives her toddler three homeopathic pills to relieve her teething pain. Within minutes, the baby stops breathing.

"My daughter had a seizure, lost consciousness, and stopped breathing about 30 minutes after I gave her three Hyland's Teething Tablets," the mother later told the Food and Drug Administration. "She had to receive mouth-to-mouth CPR to resume breathing and was brought to the hospital."

The company, Hyland's, promotes "safe, effective, and natural health solutions" that appeal to parents seeking alternative treatments. But the agency would soon hear much more about Hyland's teething products. Staff at the FDA would come to consider Case 7682299 one of the luckier outcomes.

A review of FDA records obtained by STAT under the Freedom of Information Act paint a far grimmer picture: Babies who were given Hyland's teething products turned blue and died. Babies had repeated seizures. Babies became delirious. Babies were airlifted to the hospital, where emergency room staff tried to figure out what had caused their legs and arms to start twitching.

Over a 10-year period, from 2006 and 2016, the FDA collected reports of "adverse events" in more than 370 children who had used Hyland's homeopathic teething tablets or gel, a similar product that is applied directly to a baby's gums. Agency records show eight cases in which babies were reported to have died after taking Hyland's products, though the FDA says the question of whether those products caused the deaths is still under review.

(The agency is also investigating two other deaths tied to teething remedies but declined to confirm the manufacturer of the products or provide the case reports.)

Following an FDA warning in September, Hyland's said that it would no longer manufacture the teething products. But they remained on some store shelves for months, and are still available on the Internet. They likely continue to be used in homes nationwide.

Hyland's, a 114-year-old private company based in Los Angeles, is the nation's largest homeopathic business. It insists its products are safe and says the FDA has failed to show there is a scientific link between them and infant seizures or other complications.

"That doesn't mean that children don't have a sensitivity to a product. There is a lot of sensitivity on kids' parts and we have to watch carefully," said a spokeswoman, Mary Borneman. "It's not something that condemns the entire product line."

Behind each of the FDA case numbers are angry and, in some cases, heartbroken parents. But a STAT examination — and the first detailed look at the case reports — also raises questions over the response of regulators.

It took four years until the FDA pushed Hyland's to reformulate its remedies, in 2010. In the seven years since then, there has been a steady stream of reports of adverse events tied to Hyland's homeopathic teething products.

"The FDA could bring the hammer down on them," said Sarah Sorscher, an attorney for the nonprofit Public Citizen Health Research Group. "But it doesn't. At the point where you have infants being hospitalized and deaths reported, it's simply not acceptable for the agency to delay in taking action."

An FDA spokeswoman defended the agency's handling of the matter.

"It is important to note that while adverse event reports give us some information about a product and serious injuries or deaths related to use of a particular product, they often indicate situations that require additional analysis and do not constitute conclusive evidence of a problem with the product," the spokeswoman, Lyndsay Meyer, said in a statement.

Despite the FDA's difficulty in proving Hyland's products harmed children, some doctors had no doubt.

In case 462749, dated Sept. 15, 2011, a physician sent Hyland's a handwritten note, stating his patient, a 5-month-old girl, was unresponsive for 45 minutes after taking its teething tablets.

"I am sure this was not an allergic reaction," he wrote. "I would like you to report it, find a contact at the FDA, so we can start an investigation and pull this dangerous, unregulated product form the shelves."

One mother wrote the company to say her son's pupils dilated "like marbles with big black eyes." Another described seizures her daughter continued to have after taking the tablets and told the company, "I hate hate hate u for this."

An industry giant in a giant industry

Hyland's and its parent company, Standard Homeopathy Co., are considered major players in the homeopathic market. CEO John P. Borneman comes from a family that has been in the business for generations, and is president of the industry group that publishes the Homeopathic Pharmacopeia, a compendium that serves as the bible of the industry.

Homeopathy has become a multibillion-dollar industry. Its products are big sellers around the world, and popular with adherents from Cher to Prince Charles. The industry also has political clout: It has been able to exempt itself from many rules proposed by Congress and the FDA over the years.

Unlike pharmaceutical company-produced drugs, homeopathic products don't have to prove that they are effective at treating anything in particular before going on the market. It is left to the FDA's drug division to determine whether they are unsafe after they are on the market — a difficult task since the adverse event reports are generally considered to represent only a fraction of the actual incidents and may lack sufficient information to allow for thorough investigations.

"If I'm working in the emergency room and I have a family that comes in with a seizing infant, I may not have the wherewithal to get the history of homeopathic use," said Dr. Edward W. Boyer, a toxicologist in Harvard Medical School's emergency medicine department.

In some cases, parents assume that products described as natural remedies, as is the case with Hyland's tablets and gels, could not possibly result in complications, and never mention their use to a doctor. Without sufficient evidence of a problem, the FDA lacks what it needs to use the enforcement tools it does have.

'Deadly nightshade'

In investigating Hyland's teething products, the FDA focused on an ingredient known as atropa belladonna, an herb known colloquially as "deadly nightshade."

In diluted form, the substance is not expected to pose any health risk. In 2010, however, FDA inspectors who examined Hyland's facilities criticized the company for substandard manufacturing practices and found inconsistent levels of atropa belladonna in its products.

The agency issued a public warning, noting "reports of serious adverse events in children taking this product that are consistent with belladonna toxicity."

It also noted that "infants are very susceptible to the neurotoxicity of drugs" because of how the body distributes and responds to drugs, and noted that "absorption of belladonna from the skin and mouth was fairly rapid. "

The company voluntarily took the products off shelves and agreed to reformulate them, although it insisted they were safe.

"We felt it was the right thing to do so that parents didn't have to be concerned about the product," said Borneman, the spokeswoman.

But the number of serious adverse events tied by the FDA to the products kept climbing. Some pediatricians and neurologists concluded the tablets and gels were the cause. Many parents wrote to the FDA, accusingly, asking why the pills were still on the market.

In September 2016, the FDA announced that it was investigating more adverse events reports and recommended that consumers stop using Hyland's and other homeopathic teething products and dispose of any in their possession. Some stores, including Target and CVS, which sold Hyland's and other homeopathic teething products, pulled them in response.

"Homeopathic medicine has a very large margin of safety," she said. "Our testing ensures there's not too much belladonna in any bottle" of tablets.

Several weeks ago, on Jan. 27, the FDA issued another warning, saying that laboratory analysis of Hyland's teething tablets found levels of belladonna "sometimes far exceeding the amount claimed on the label." The agency warned consumers not to use the products and to seek medical care immediately if their child has seizures, difficulty breathing, lethargy, muscle weakness, or other problems after using homeopathic teething products.

The FDA also said there was no evidence that they actually worked.

Critics say the fact that homeopathic products are generally highly diluted has kept them on the FDA's back burner.

"It's low on their priority list," said Dr. Aaron S. Kesselheim, who co-authored a paper in the New England Journal of Medicine last year on the subject. "FDA for a long time just kind of deferred on homeopathic products because they are mostly inert and so diluted. The harm comes from people wasting their money, or diverting them from things that do work."

One problem the FDA has in doing so is a matter of staffing: The agency has a medical officer review each report from manufacturers, but it doesn't have someone who can routinely follows up with the patient, the patient's family, or physician for missing records necessary to take a serious enforcement action.

Outraged by the standoff between FDA and Hyland's, Connecticut Democratic Rep. Rosa DeLauro introduced a bill last week called the Recall Unsafe Drugs Act. The proposal would give the FDA mandatory recall authority over homeopathic products and drugs.

"Hyland's refusal to recall its teething tablets, despite numerous health and safety warnings from the FDA, is downright shameful," DeLauro said, adding that the company "is choosing instead to prioritize the company's profits and reputation before the safety of our children."

"As it stands the FDA would have to go through an arduous legal process to take action against manufacturers such as Hyland's. "This is unacceptable and threatens the health and safety of American families. "

FDA U.S. FOOD & DRUG ADMINISTRATION

For the parents of Case 10723317, any action would come too late. A mother reported that on July 9, 2014, her 9-month-old daughter died after being given two teething tablets, crushed, for the first time. She gave her infant the tablets, then a bottle, and then left her to sleep. When she checked on her 45 minutes later, she was dead in her crib, beside a puddle of vomit.

Five months later, after reading online reports suggesting babies may experience seizures after taking belladonna, she contacted Hyland's.

"Customer did not request a refund or replacement," noted the Hyland's staffer who filed the report with the FDA. Hyland's also noted that it was not able to test the bottle, because the customer threw it away.

"Due to the limited information provided by the reporter no further investigation is possible at this time of this incident," the company concluded. (Courtesy http://www.foxnews.com/health)

Southern DAILY Make Today Different

BUSINESS

Officials Say They Are Sending A Message To The World: Don't Enter The US 'Illegally' -- Advocates Claim Asylum Is A Right

Update: Central American Migrant Caravan: Lawyers And Judges Sent To US-Mexico Border

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

The remaining immigrants are hopeful their asylum applications will be processed

Half of the Central Americans from the so-called "immigrant caravan" have been allowed to apply for asylum in the US, according to lawyers on the scene.

Laura Gault, an asylum lawyer from US-based group Human Rights First, said on Twitter late on Wednesday that about 65 of the 200 people in the caravan, most of whom are from Honduras, were "allowed to exercise their legal right to seek asylum".Roughly 70 more were still waiting.

Count for today is actually around ~65 people allowed to exercise their legal right to seek asylum. One mom and her three kids and one father and his daughter wait patiently by the gate. Many more wait at the plaza. #refugeecaravan @humanrights1stThe 65 people allowed to enter was a sharp increase, as only a few asylum seekers had been allowed in each day for the past week.The San Ysidro crossing is in the US state of California, close to the Mexican city of Tijuana. The caravan reached the border last Wednesday.

Some of the waiting had been told that US border facilities were at capacity and could not accept more applicants, according to Gault. Gault is one of many US asylum lawyers who has travelled to the San Ysidro border crossing to observe the US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agency's conduct regarding the asylum seekers while also offering assistance.

The Department of Justice, headed by Attorney General Jeff Sessions, has also sent more US officials to the San Ysidro border crossing due to the increase in asylum applications.

Misdemeanour offence

Sessions said that an additional 35 assistant US attorneys and 18 immigration judges to the crossing.

The Department of Justice has also charged 11 possible members of the caravan with illegal entry into the US, a misdemeanour offence.

"We are sending a message worldwide: Don't come illegally. Make your claim to enter America in the lawful way and wait your turn," Sessions said.

The caravan is an annual event organised by volunteer group Pueblos Sin Fronteras (PSF), Spanish for "people without borders".

This year's caravan received media attention after President Donald Trump criticised the group, which travelled 3,220km from southern Mexico to the border in California.

Trump has called the immigrant caravan a sign of weak US law on migration and said it should be stopped in Mexico.

The Trump administration initiated a crackdown on undocumented immigrants shortly after the president assumed office in January.

Gault, the Human Rights First lawyer on the scene, said that Mexican border officials allowed US attorneys "to conduct legal observations" and treat asylum seekers "with kindness". (https://www.aljazeera.com/news)

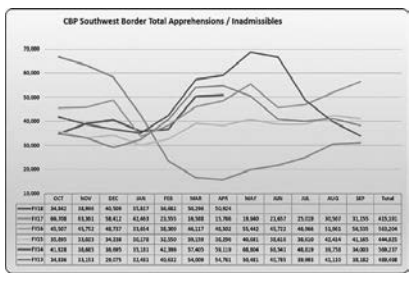
Related

Illegal Immigration Back To Obama Levels After 200 Percent Year-Over-Year Surge

People climb a section of border fence to look into the U.S. as members of a caravan of Central American asylum seekers arrive to a rally on April 29, 2018 in Tijuana, Baja California Norte, Mexico. More than 300 immigrants, the remnants of a caravan of Central Americans that journeyed across Mexico to ask for asylum in the United States, have reached the border to apply for legal entry. (Photo by David McNew/Getty Images)

Arrests of illegal aliens along the southwest border ticked up slightly in April from the previous month, marking a sustained rise in illegal immigration that has reversed gains made in the early months of President Donald Trump's administration. Border agents arrested or turned away 50,924 people in April — up eight percent compared to March — according to Customs and Border protection figures released Thursday. But when compared to April 2017 — a month that saw a historically low number of illegal crossings — southwest border apprehensions spiked by an astonishing 233 percent year-over-year.

Border arrests are used as a proxy for overall levels of illegal immigration. The idea is, assuming a given standard of border security, more apprehensions mean more illegal aliens are slipping undetected into the U.S., and vice versa As they were in March, total border arrests and inadmissible entries at the U.S.-Mexico border were higher in April than they were in the same month of the last two years of Obama's administration. Illegal immigration has risen in nearly every month since tumbling to historic lows last spring, after Trump took office, promising to crack down on border enforcement. Since April 2017, the only month-to-month decline in border apprehensions occurred in January, according to CBP data.



[SOURCE: Customs and Border Protection]

Border arrests often climb in the spring months, as warmer weather and the prospect of seasonal employment entice illegal immigrants to cross the southwest frontier. However, the persistent rise in apprehensions suggests the much-vaunted "Trump Effect" on illegal immigration has worn off completely, as Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen acknowledged in April. The Border Patrol nabbed 38,234 illegal immigrants in April, while CBP officers, who run the ports of entry, recorded 12,690 people who arrived without authorization to enter, according to CBP's numbers. Among those caught were roughly 15,000 people traveling in family units and another 5,300 unaccompanied alien children (UAC) — both categories of illegal migrants that must be handled differently than adults traveling alone.

Trump's administration has recognized the rising number of border arrests but says U.S. immigration laws are to blame for incentivizing illegal immigration. Nielsen urged lawmakers on April 26 to revise laws to make it easier to detain people — particularly UACs, who must currently be released into the "least restrictive" setting possible.

"If you have an alarm in your home and you catch a burglar, and you call the police and the police come; and in fact, it is an illegal entry into your home," she said in a Congressional hearing. "But the police then tell you that they have absolutely no ability to detain or remove those criminals and the criminals stay in your house, you would not tell me that is home security. That is what we face at the border." (Courtesy http://dailycaller.com)

韓湘寧、張照堂、莊靈、黃永松 大師齊聚 第11屆台灣國際紀錄片影展，隆重開幕！

第11屆「台灣國際紀錄片影展（TIDF）」於5月4日盛大開幕，開幕片爲韓湘寧《今日開幕》、張照堂《現代詩展／1966》與陳耀圻《上山》三部作品聯映！三部作品皆創作於1960年代的台灣，時隔50年首度出土。韓湘寧、張照堂兩位導演也偕同《上山》女主角黃貴蓉及男主角、漢聲出版社創辦人黃永松，以及《劇場》雜誌創辦人莊靈、《上山》攝影師賴成英、美術家梁小良同台，爲TIDF揭開序幕！場面溫馨感人，宛如一場睽違已久的同學會。

今年是TIDF二十週年，文化部丁曉菁次長、國家電影中心陳斌全執行長特別出席開幕典禮，給予影展與國內外創作者祝福。張照堂同時也是第一屆TIDF的創始人員，他感性表示：「當年創立TIDF像是種了一棵小樹苗，如今不僅長成了樹、結滿了果實，更塑造了台灣紀錄片新文化的運動」。

提到自己創作於1965年的作品《今日開幕》，藝術家韓湘寧說自己是「在對的時間，生活在對的地方」，能在體現真實自由的1960年代於台北、紐約結識不同領域的朋友，對他個人有重要影響，並感謝主辦單位看重這些老作品。張照堂在搬家時意外翻出的《現代詩展／1966》八厘米膠卷，記錄了他與黃華成、邱剛健、龍思良、黃永松等人在1966年3月29日舉辦的「現代詩展」現場花絮，這是台灣第一個裝置藝術展覽，珍貴的影像透露出這幫青春正盛的文藝青年，充滿爆發力與想像力的創作能量。黃永松也笑說當時的創作粗糙但非常奔放，年輕的他們努力完成「有觀念的裝置藝術」，也因爲當年有這些好友帶動，接下來才創辦了《漢聲》雜誌、持續往前走。

被譽爲台灣真實電影先驅的陳耀圻，其1966年的作品《上山》，去年由國家電影中心修復完成，片中主角黃永松、黃貴蓉特地蒞臨開幕現場，這也是兩位主角睽違五十年，首次在大銀幕上看見自己青春的身影。黃永松感動地說「青春真是件好事」，謝謝影片記錄下自己年少不懂事的樣子；黃貴蓉也感性回憶，當年自己只是一個愛做夢、想當演員的藝專學生，參與《上山》的製作可說是相當偶然，卻真實的記錄了青春。這次女兒一家也跟著她從美國飛回台灣觀影，小孫女更在映後座談舉手提問外婆「你喜歡你的工作嗎？」黃貴蓉也笑著回答，雖然後來沒有繼續在演藝事業發展，但這二十分鐘的影片卻保留住年少燦爛的夢想，「外婆的表現還不差吧？」

第11屆台灣國際紀錄片影展爲期10天，帶來全世界170部紀錄片、超過200場放映、4個實體展覽、1個劇場表演、近10場論壇、123場映後座談，並有100多位國際影人參與，規模爲歷屆之最。三大競賽—亞洲視野、國際、台灣競賽的入圍作品，自2,445件影片中脫穎而出，具獨立觀點與創意美學，將一同角逐亞洲紀錄片影展最高的總獎金。TIDF招牌單元「敬！華語獨立紀錄片」今年囊括多位新銳導演的作品，以新視角凝視華語世界；另一常設單元「記憶X記憶」則聚焦聲音，並推出三部沒有畫面、只有聲音的「聲音紀錄片」，結合「電影耳」展覽，要打開觀眾感官，帶來觀影新體驗。「當代精選」引薦多部近兩年在國際上優秀的作品，在議題、製作與形式上皆獨樹一格；「想像式前衛：1960s的電影實驗」挖掘1960年代的前衛影像，一探當年文藝青年的思想與生活風貌；「不只是歷史文件：港台錄像對話1980-90s」則對焦港台經典錄像作品，回應重要政治事件。

本屆焦點影人爲享譽國際影展的拉脫維亞女導演萊拉・巴卡尼娜（Laila Pakalnina），她擅長從冷靜的觀察鏡頭精準捕捉微小事件，並從中找出故事所在，並將於5月11日舉辦「大師講堂」。「時光台灣：翻檔案」單元則與公共電視合作，邀請14位台灣導演運用檔案影像再創作，作品將在TIDF世界首映。此外，本屆的重磅單元「憂傷似海：東南亞真實之浪」，更邀請前鹿特丹影展策展人葛江・祝鴻策劃，精選35部經典與新銳東南亞作品，刻劃東南亞創作的樣貌。

台灣電影前進坎城影展 多元類型掀「台味」熱潮

第71屆法國坎城影展即將於5月8日揭開序幕，在這場爲期12天的電影盛會中，台灣電影今年持續展現新銳實力，曾以短片《凡凡》榮獲台灣女性影展首獎的劉家欣，本次獲選坎城影展「電影基金會駐村創作營」（Résidence de la Cinéfondation），她將在駐村期間將《凡凡》發展爲長片，呈現當代年輕女性自我探索的旅程，以台灣角度探討女性成長之普世議題。此外我國片商亦將攜87部台灣電影及最新企畫案前進坎城電影市場展，展出新近獲得國際各大影展肯定之最新國片以及VR作品，以豐富多元的電影類型片單，展現台灣電影獨有之活力及新意。

坎城電影市場展（Le Marché du Film）同步與坎城影展於5月8日至17日盛大舉行，台灣片單陣容堅強，包括甫於今年入圍第47屆鹿特丹國際影展之話題新片《范保德》以及《小玩意》、入圍今年第68屆德國柏林影展「世界電影大觀」單元之黃榮昇導演作品《小美》及趙德胤導演紀錄片《十四顆蘋果》、甫拿下「東京動畫大獎」之長片《幸福路上》，亮相之後均獲得許多詢問度與話題熱度，此次預期亦將於坎城期間持續受到國際買家及選片人高度期待。除了上述作品以外，獲選今年「日舞影展」之台灣虛擬實境短片《全能元神宮改造王》（徐漢強導演）亦將進駐坎城市場展之「Next－VR」專區，國際買家與選片人將可於該VR專區體驗台灣民俗「觀落陰」，感受台灣新銳人才藉由玩轉最新影像技術所展現之豐沛創意。

法國坎城電影市場展是全世界最重要市場之一，預計將有來自全世界90餘國，總計12,400位以上的影視從業者參與，包括3,900位電影製片、3,300位電影採購與發行商、以及上千位影展選片人，在此尋求合作機會，影片試映會達1,450場以上。每年持續進駐之台灣電影館已成爲國際買家及選片人考量華語電影時固定造訪之展位，預期今年亦將以令人期待之豐富片單吸引更多注目。

第71屆法國電影市場展將於5月8日至19日舉行，坎城電影市場展（Le Marché du Film）同步在5月8日至17日盛大舉行。文化部影視及流行音樂產業局委由國家電影中心執行市場展參展事宜，持續在Palais 01會館設置台灣電影館，提供台灣片商參展開會空間，協助行銷國片。國家電影中心此次編印參展手冊，收錄87部台灣電影資料，包含26部劇情長片、11部紀錄片、21部短片、5部動畫片、12部經典修復片、12部企劃案，及11家台灣參展商詳細資料，手冊將在台灣電影館展位發放。並於坎城影展期間辦理「台灣之夜」酒會活動，邀請國際重要買家、選片人及各國貴賓蒞臨活動現場交流，以期能促成海外推廣及台灣電影於歐洲市場的蓬勃發展。

台北電影節埋10彩蛋 形象廣告藏「電影哏」

台北電影節下個月底登場，最新形象廣告也曝光，充滿許多「電影哏」！包括蔡燦得以《聶隱娘》造型亮相，遇上陳以文模仿李康生在電影《郊遊》的橋段，悲憤大唱《滿江紅》，每句台詞都暗藏片名。

蔡燦得換上古裝，爲台北電影節拍宣傳廣告，這身造型電影迷一看就知道在模仿舒淇！

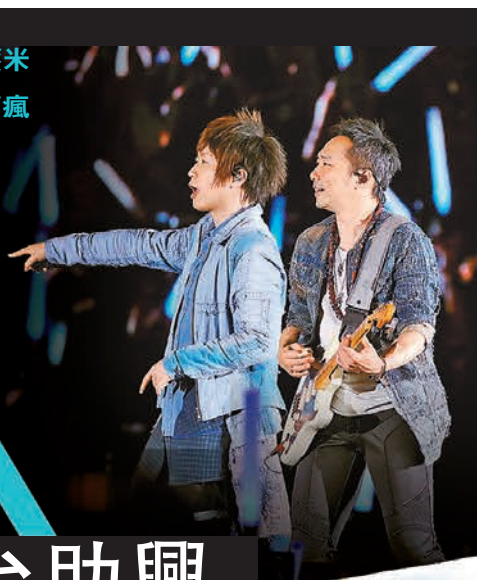
仿造海報動作化身刺客聶隱娘，另外還有導演陳以文套上輕便雨衣舉牌大唱《滿江紅》，這也是在模仿《郊遊》裡的李康生。

形象廣告充滿電影哏，還有《大佛普拉斯》的菜脯跟肚財，跟名導演魏德聖都在廣告中軋一角。不光如此，影評人李幼鸚鵡鵝鶇也是觀眾之一，另外國片片名也被串成台詞。

90秒的廣告講了10部電影令人玩味，今年適逢台北電影節20周年，一系列電影大集合，廣告也巧妙集結片名，讓觀眾眼睛爲之一亮。

香港文匯報訊（記者 吳文釗）五月天4日晚在香港主題公園舉行的戶外演員會順利完成，他們獲米奇老鼠和米妮上台助興，米奇和米妮先後與五月天五人擊掌打招呼，又在台上走來走去，令觀眾一度瘋狂起來，主音阿信也大叫多謝樂園和多謝香港。安歌環節，五月天表示與歌迷約定要唱到80歲。

米奇米妮上台助興
五月天
約定歌迷唱到80歲



■五月天第12度的“五月之約”，也是在香港首次舉辦的戶外演唱會。

■五月天主辦方5日加設圍欄。

■米奇米妮同五月天一齊唱歌。

當演唱會臨近尾聲時，五月天逐一多謝籌辦單位，坦言他們的演唱會一直都有很多限制，也是紅館的超時名單之一，笑指在紅館工作的叔叔和阿姨們，一聽到他們的名字就頭痛。阿信稱4日晚如唱得太晚會吵到隔壁的白雪公主和米奇老鼠，結果台下歌迷都大叫沒有，逗得五月天開懷大笑。曾說過偏心香港歌迷的冠佑，台上被阿信戲弄，問冠佑今年是第幾次五月之約，質問他爲何只對香港付出很多感情，在其他地方是不是付出了身體？冠佑就尷尬地說：“我在其他地方也有付出舞台上的激情，其實我對每個地方都是一樣的。”

安歌環節，五月天表示與歌迷約定要唱到80歲，並介紹要出場的神秘嘉賓，說：“這位朋友的年紀比我們五月天要大，但是他們比我們更有活力，讓我們歡迎米奇和米妮。”歌迷見到米奇和米妮都驚喜大叫，阿信高呼多謝主題樂園和多謝香港，再唱出歌曲《突然好想你》。到唱最後一首歌《倔強》前，阿信說：“香港是一個有點小、有點擠的城市，但是香港有美麗的海和壯闊的山，大家在這裡找到屬於大家的樂園，很開心第一次和大家在戶外唱歌，一起笑和跳舞，這個夢想終於成眞，我希望大家永遠記得這個晚上，希望大家聽到五月天在香港，我們永遠跟大家在一起。”最後，五月天眾人一起搭肩膀謝幕，演唱會約在晚上十時半結束。

歌迷質疑保安質素

由於現場有太多歌迷一同離開，大會要實施人流管制，分批讓觀眾離場，但因現場未有廣播離場安排，不少觀眾一度擁擠在出口處，幸沒有發生意外。有鑑於部分歌迷完秀後在網上留言反映現場秩序情況和質疑保安質素，主辦單位特高娛樂回應表示，已經即晚跟有關的保安公司開會討論有關情況，由於今次場地地方較大，本公司原意是希望歌迷能夠不太受拘束下享受演出，但有部分不自律的歌迷難掩興奮心情，罔顧他人感受地衝到前排位置，影響前排觀眾的視線之餘，更造成不必要的混亂。此等情況和相關的投訴，本公司已經向保安公司反映，主辦單位明確要求增加各區的鐵馬和加強保安。

唐詩詠渴望早出嫁

■袁偉豪向唐詩詠送上禮物。

香港文匯報訊（記者 吳文釗）袁偉豪、唐詩詠、朱晨麗等人5日到商場宣傳劇集《棟仁的時光》，剛度過生日的詩詠被祝福再奪多數年視后，她笑稱怕辛苦不好了，更坦言想嫁人。日前37歲生日的詩詠透露連日來共吃了7個生日蛋糕，希望可以吃足10個寓意十全十美。

問到劇中拍檔袁偉豪對詩詠有何表示？他笑道：“吃飯太膚淺了，我要送一包麥皮給你，其實我想幫你挑個好男生，可以幫你留意下，但好多筍盤（好男人）包括自己都被人挑了。”

回復單身的詩詠也投訴密友黃翠如一直說要做她紅娘，結果等了一年都沒有好介紹，她說：“其實都好享受單身生活，可以一個人去旅行，又可以選擇做自己喜歡的事。”袁偉豪就坦言受劇集帶旺近期多了外快活動，笑稱賺回過往20年沒賺過的錢，說：“我都霉足18年，是近兩年才賺回來。”

朱晨麗為新劇剪掉長髮

剪了一頭短髮的朱晨麗早前去峇里旅行大晒泳衣照，她坦言自選美後首次公開泳照，難得獲網友一致讚賞。為何剪掉長髮，朱晨麗稱因新劇《多功能老婆》角色需要，監製陳寶華覺得她長髮樣子太端莊，與角色不符，她說：“之前長髮留了一年多，現在效果也不錯，覺得寶華姐好麗還，因為我的角色比較十三點（不合常理），貪靚又要撒嬌。”

任達華爲女兒推表演工作

香港文匯報訊（記者 李慶全）任達華與太太琦琦、馬詩慧等5日出席精品店開幕，琦琦表示為好朋友剪綵不講酬勞，華哥笑言自己是負責來買禮物給岳母和女兒。

■任達華與太太琦琦、馬詩慧出席精品店開幕。

華哥表示5日他是從中山專程回來出席活動，近日他正忙拍電影《破冰行動》，戲中飾演警方的線人，也有點動作演出。談及女兒最近拍了一輯時裝照片，問是否放寬了讓女兒入行（娛樂圈）？琦琦表示沒有，不過女兒是喜歡時尚，只是不會讓她拍廣告或行商場秀，因為她才13歲，現又正箍牙。琦琦指女兒本身喜歡時裝設計，所以會帶她多看一些時裝秀，她算是一隻腳踩進時裝界，不過只是蜻蜓點水式，並不是全身投入。華哥之前為女兒推掉不少走秀的工作，等同推掉不少賺錢機會？華哥坦言賺錢是其次，且女兒才13歲很純樸，年紀畢竟太小了，希望她能先讀好書。

袁偉豪秀咖啡拉花技術

香港文匯報訊 袁偉豪（Ben）5日出席活動向來自台灣的咖啡大師林東源拜師學藝！活動中林東源調配濃黑咖啡予Ben品嚐，乘機考驗Ben對咖啡的認知。Ben亦不負眾望，成功答中該咖啡的風味和特點，之後更與林東源交流調配咖啡的心得。熱愛咖啡拉花的Ben亦藉此機會大展拉花技術，為粉絲送上親手炮製的咖啡和親筆簽名環保隨行杯。

經常在社交平台分享Latte Art練習成果的Ben表示，“很榮幸這次有機會向東源老師學習，事前我有努力下苦功練習，希望能表現出應有的水準。拍戲雖然忙碌，但我仍然努力鑽研咖啡知識和Latte Art，能夠抽空品嚐一杯香濃咖啡，正是減壓和放鬆心情的好方法。”

■袁偉豪向咖啡大師林東源拜師。

王馨平與舅舅曾江首出席活動

香港文匯報訊 王馨平（Linda）與舅舅曾江及羅蘭4日晚出席活動，並以黑色示人，王馨平表示好開心，第一次一齊出活動，原來有人不知曾江是自己的舅舅，還以為大家都知，這次正式公開。

兩人指向來感情要好，不時會一起吃飯。問到會否合作拍戲或做節目？Linda坦言：“沒有，沒想過，但如果有機會都想一齊拍戲，舅舅在我心目中是東方辛康納利（Sean Connery），我好多朋友都叫我約舅舅一齊吃飯，大家好想見他真人。”曾江笑言也很喜歡辛康納利，可惜自己不似對方有鬍鬚。