



IndyCar is back

Popular event returns to downtown Toronto
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Toronto Fringe Festival

As the Fringe Festival continues its run in Toronto this week, 150 small theatre companies are vying for the public's attention in Canada's most multicultural city.
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Personal Charisma

Lessons in how to increase your own powers of influence
Style P15



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Mortgage fraud in U.S. skyrockets, says FBI

By CHARLOTTE CUTHBERTSON
Epoch Times Staff

Mortgage fraud in the U.S. is reaching epic proportions as the estimated losses last year amounted to more than \$1.5 billion, the FBI said in a report Tuesday.

Suspicious activity reports topped 63,173 in the 2008 fiscal year, which ended in September. This is a 36 percent increase on the previous year of 46,717 reports.

This fiscal year is proving to be busy for the fraud office, with 40,901 suspicious activity reports listed up to the end of April. The projection is that more than 70,000 will be filed by fiscal year end.

Actual cases that opened in fiscal year 2009 (through 4/30/09) was 965, compared to 136 in all of fiscal year 2004.

"Mortgage fraud hurts borrowers, financial institutions, and legitimate homeowners," Assistant Director Kevin Perkins, from the FBI Criminal Investigative Division, said in the report. "The FBI, in conjunction with our law enforcement, regulatory, and industry partners, continues to diligently pursue perpetrators of mortgage fraud schemes."

Suspicious activity reports topped 63,173 in the 2008 fiscal year... a 36 percent increase

CONDITIONS RIPE FOR FRAUD

The mix of factors in the financial world has "uncovered and fueled a rampant mortgage fraud climate, fraught with opportunistic participants desperate to maintain or increase their current standard of living," the FBI report said.

"Industry employees sought to maintain the high standard of living they enjoyed during the boom years of the real estate market, and overextended mortgage holders were often desperate to reduce or eliminate their bloated mortgage payments."

The top mortgage fraud states for 2008 were California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, Arizona, Texas, Maryland, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Colorado, Nevada, Minnesota, Rhode Island, the District of Columbia, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.

According to the Mortgage Bankers Association, as of March 2009, 5.4 million American homeowners holding a mortgage, nearly 12 percent of American homeowners, were at least one month behind in their payment or in foreclosure at the end of 2008.

There were more than 3.1 million foreclosure filings reported nationwide during 2008, according to RealtyTrac, Inc., an 81 percent increase in total properties from 2007 and a 225 percent increase in total properties from 2006.

Beijing shapes reporting of unrest



USE OF FORCE: Chinese riot police use force to repel ethnic Uyghur women in Urumqi in China's far west Xinjiang Province on Tuesday. PETER PARKS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

By MATTHEW LITTLE
Epoch Times Staff

When violence erupted in China's Xinjiang Autonomous Region, home to the country's Uyghur Muslim minority, China's state media rushed to "cover" the news.

Western media followed their lead. "The clashes between ethnic Muslim Uyghurs and China's Han majority in Xinjiang that left more than 150 dead signaled a new phase in a region used to seeing bombings and assassinations by militant separatists but few mass protests," wrote Associated Press.

"The death toll from violent ethnic riots in China's northwestern Xinjiang region has risen to 156, and police on Monday dispersed 'rioters' in a second city, the official Xinhua news agency said early on Tuesday," reported Reuters.

But media experts and Uyghur activists

say that China's state-controlled media are working to frame the story in favour of the regime, a strategy one Hong Kong-based Chinese media expert calls "Control 2.0."

"By getting the information out, officials can get the 'peripheral media' (influential portal news sites, and commercial newspapers) to work for them," writes David Bandurski, editor of the China Media Project Web.

"These media feed off of the original Xinhua reports, amplifying their effect. Those same reports, with only slight permutations in many cases, become AFP, Reuters, and AP reports."

While Bandurski was talking about riots in Shishou city in June, the pattern holds.

China's state-controlled media have framed the riots as a violent Uyghur uprising led by terrorists and overseas anti-China forces that have attacked Han Chi-

Minister Baird to visit China amid unrest
...see P3 Nation

nese. Freedom House, a U.S. NGO that supports expanding freedoms, said the reports were part of the regime's effort to manage coverage of the unrest. The group called on state media to stop such reporting because it fuels ethnic tensions.

While few media have given much credence to the suggestion that Uyghur activists in the U.S. and Germany are behind the unrest, many have carried the rest of that angle as well as the suggestion that ethnic tensions are the primary cause of the conflict.

CONTINUED ON P4 WORLD

New law seeks to 'correct' China's garbled statistics

But root causes of inaccurate numbers are not addressed

By JASON MA
Epoch Times Staff

Statistics matter. They determine, for instance, how a nation distributes resources and plans for the future. They also inform those on the outside what is happening inside a country.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has long had a statistics problem—the numbers from different sources inside China don't always add up. The Party has sought to address this with a newly revised Statistics Law, which was signed by Hu Jintao on June 27 and will take effect in 2010.

As China has come to play an increasingly important role in the world economy, the statistical data released by the regime have been subjected to more and more scrutiny in the past

Both domestic and international scholars have been questioning several key economic figures released by the CCP

several years. Especially since the Chinese economy started to slow down in 2008. Both domestic and international scholars have been questioning several key economic figures released by the CCP's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and other state offices.

CONTINUED ON P5 WORLD

Small business owners in the West Bank struggle to survive

By GENEVIEVE LONG
Epoch Times Staff

NABLUS, Palestinian Authority—Ibrahim Jaber's phones are constantly ringing and his office is a merry-go-round of staff and visiting clients who have meetings standing up.

Jaber is the branch manager for the United Nations Relief Works Agency (UNRWA) in Nablus, in the West Bank. Jaber oversees the disbursement of at least 100 new small, targeted loans to small business owners every month through the agency's micro-finance department.

But that help might fall short of what West Bank businesses need to stay afloat.

The U.N. agency has three funding programs, with a capital fund is US\$3 million built from donations, almost 30 per-

cent of which came from the United States. Loans are given to business owners in installment checks over a period of time.

After peace talks failed and war between Israel and the Palestinian Authority broke out in 2000, it marked the beginning of a downward economic spiral that many of UNRWA clients in Nablus (which was a wartime hotspot) are still struggling to recover from.

"The bank looks for people who are a good risk," says Jaber. "We are looking for poor people."

From April to October, 2002, the Nablus branch office lost scores of portfolios due to bad debts because of regional instability. As Nablus became cut off by war and strict checkpoints, it became almost unfeasible for some small businesses to survive.

CONTINUED ON P4 WORLD

Jackson's death puts focus on painkiller addiction

By JOAN DELANEY
Epoch Times Staff

Michael Jackson's death has prompted fears that pain medications could be tougher to come by and has raised the issue of prescription drug abuse, a growing public health concern.

The Canadian Pain Society (CPS) is concerned that the negative publicity surrounding Jackson's addiction to painkillers could result in people who take medication to treat chronic pain being stigmatized or made to feel like they might be doing something wrong.

Some patients may even fear that their doctors could be scared into stopping their pain-relieving medications altogether.

"Every time something happens in the world that leads to negative press around either addiction, abuse, or diversion, what ends up happening is the access that people can get to their agents can become more difficult," says Mary Lynch, CPS president and professor of Anesthesia, Psychiatry, and Pharmacology at Dalhousie University.

"Michael Jackson's untimely death is a really a tragic situation and we're very sorry that it happened, but it is highlighting the importance of chronic pain and the need for access to treatment."

Jackson's long-running addiction to several prescription painkillers, including the powerful narcotics Diprivan and Oxycontin, is said to have contributed to his death on June 25 at the age of 50.

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