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Elections 2017 - Cambodia, UK, France

On June 4 Cambodia held a general election for commune leaders and councilors. Cambodia holds elections on two levels only, communes and the national legislature, which will take place next year. Everything in between; province and city leaders are all appointed by the ruling party.

The entire country is divided into 1646 communes, both urban and rural. In America we'd call them neighborhoods except here they have a lot more responsibility. That's where people go to get ID cards and official papers stamped, for instance, so they do have an impact on people close to home. However, they don't have a lot of power and over the commune leader's head is a representative of the ruling party. They also don't have much in the way of funding, being dependent on the central government for any public project.

In the election just passed the ruling CPP Cambodian People's Party won 1158 communes, the opposition CNRP Cambodian National Rescue Party won 487. One commune was captured by a minor party. This was a loss for the ruling party from the last commune election when they won all but about 30 communes.

The actual vote in Cambodia was much closer with the CPP getting 51% and the CNRP getting 44%, the rest going to minor parties. The opposition does better in Phnom Penh where communes have more people than in rural areas. Those vote totals aren't much different than the last general election in 2013, still it marks a real challenge to the ruling party's control. Also some of the contests ran on local issues so might not reflect exactly on the people's mood as a whole.

Several points stand out, the most remarkable being an astounding turnout of 86%. This is all the more exceptional considering that registration closed last October and many people had to return to their home towns to vote. And since the government created a new voter list for this election, everybody had to register anew. It was also the first time people were allowed to vote where they work, but not everybody was able to change their place of registration.

In contrast Oregon has one of the best turnouts in America. They make it very easy to vote. All voting is by mail, there's no waiting in line to vote. You can register the day of the election. Every time you go to the Dept of Motor Vehicles they ask you if you want to register. With all that they still can't beat Cambodia at 86%. The Cambodian people are committed to and passionate about the democratic system.

With some few exceptions the election was considered free and fair, for Cambodia a real achievement. However, while the election itself went off smoothly and peacefully, election observers consider the election to be tainted by pre-election media control and threats of violence on the part of the CPP. The PM went off into his usual threats of civil war and chaos if he doesn't get reelected. Some of it is pure politics, the scare factor. Teresa May's approach in the UK's election was similar... You must stay with us for stability and strength or else you'll get a dangerous man like Jeremy Corbyn.

Some of it you have to take at face value. He has threatened to 'eliminate' 100 or 200 people if they try to run a revolution on him. His Defense Minister threatened to 'smash the teeth' of anybody who doesn't accept the result in next year's general election.

Okay, I got that, but what if he actually loses in a free and fair election? He and his crew actually believe that mayhem will follow the loss of the CPP. After 30 years in power would he graciously accept defeat?

He wants the legitimacy of elections and risks economic chaos if he stages a coup against a duly elected government. At least for a while, there would be sanctions, international pressure and general opprobrium. He'd wreck the very stability he runs on. The CPP has greatly increased prosperity over their long reign and people see great improvement in infrastructure and other facets of government, but displacement, land-grabbing, and widespread impunity and corruption are ranking to the masses.

Sometimes no matter how good a political situation might be, after 30 years people get tired and want to try something new. Also there are storm clouds on the economic horizon. Overbuilding of structures tailored for the upper classes in the capital will cause a general crash in property values, at least in the short term.



Cambodians are heavily indebted to microfinance institutions, some 88% of rural Cambodians have borrowed from them. With interest rates so high many can only afford to pay interest and never pay the loans off. Any economic slowdown would cause many to default. I also think dependency on loans from China for many projects puts the country in a tenuous position.

The opposition on the other hand stuck to the issues, corruption, decentralization, money for communes. They have to be nice, otherwise the courts will come after them with a vengeance. But what about the people? There were some for sure who heard the CPP's message and felt pressured to vote for 'stability', but clearly most people said, meh, I'll vote for who I want. A lot of people, in this case 44%, weren't going to be cowed no matter how serious the threat. When popular activist Kem Lay was gunned down last year in suspicious circumstances mourners were told there could be no march. People defied the authorities and 200,000 showed up. They take their rights seriously.

The big election next year will be the test of how far democracy is allowed to go. Jailing and harassment of the opposition might achieve its goals in the short run but will only strengthen the people's resolve and resentment of the ruling party's ham-handed tendencies. It'll be fascinating to watch.

Meanwhile, elections in the UK have created a miasmatic morass of uncertainty and confusion. First there was PM David Cameron pandering to his right wing by holding a referendum on the UK

leaving or remaining in the EU. It was a vote he was sure was going to be for staying, but instead went for Brexit. Personally, I think it's dangerous to base such a momentous decision on a single plebiscite: it should've required two votes, especially since the vote was close, 52-48.

A lot of people on all sides of the political spectrum are angry at the status quo. Neoliberal policies born in the Thatcher/Reagan era have transferred wealth and power from the 99% to the 1%. The last time inequality was as extreme in the US was in 1929 and we all know how that turned out.

The same goes for the UK. Cosmopolitans and youth in the cities, as well as Scotland and N Ireland voted to stay. It was small town and rural voters who carried the referendum, people nostalgic for a long past past.

Teresa May who took over as Conservative PM when Cameron resigned after the Brexit vote saw an opportunity a couple months back when polls showed her riding high and called for a special election. She had said she wouldn't call an election ahead of the one scheduled in the regular sequence of things, but couldn't resist when polls showed her gaining 100 seats in Parliament.

Jeremy Corbyn her opponent was widely derided in the press and by his own Labour MPs who, being staunchly centrist and pro-business, wanted nothing to do with his leftist populist message. However rank and file Labour party members voted for him as leader by an overwhelming majority: this was seen by the establishment as a death knell for the party's chances in the next election.

Then a funny thing happened on the way to the vote. The more people saw of May, the less they liked her, for Corbyn the exact opposite happened. Instead of a blowout in favor of the Tories, they lost seats and their parliamentary majority. It was a disaster for the party and a big dose of uncertainty going forward for the nation. The electorate was much less divided this time compared to the last election and both major parties gained a lot of votes. Conservatives went from 37% to 44%, Labour went from 30% to 41%.

As in the Brexit vote, young voters were extremely one side in their preference for Labour. All May could offer was her 'Strong' leadership along with austerity, hardship and feed-the-rich tax policies, whereas Corbyn talked about free college tuition, taxing the wealthy, nationalization of the railways and more national holidays. As to the last, the UK has only 5 national holidays, less than any other EU country. More time off to enjoy life was his message... imagine that.

Free tuition was also one of Bernie Sanders' campaign planks. As in the US his opponents talked about that as if it were some impossible pie-in-the-sky populism, so lets look at that more closely.

I don't know the details regarding the UK, so I'll stick to US as an example. Bernie's free tuition proposal for all public higher education would cost \$69 billion per year based on the current number of students. American corporations have more than 2 trillion dollars stashed overseas to avoid paying taxes on it. If they were good corporate citizens (bwahahahaha, have you ever heard such a thing?) brought the money back and paid the 35% corporate income tax rate, that would amount to about \$700

billion or enough to pay for the program for 10 years. Wealthy Americans have \$20 trillion dollars in assets, if you tax that wealth at 1% you'd raise almost 3 times as much as the annual cost of the program. Just the 10 richest Americans could pay for the program for 5 years and each still have tens of billions to play with.

The program would actually cost more since a lot more people would be able to afford an education, but it would still be a pittance compared to the excessive wealth strewn about in the elite. And really, is it better for society to have the superwealthy wallow in their riches or educate everyone who wants? Cost is not the problem, our priorities are.

Corbyn represented a clash with the establishment and spoke to simple truths. He's the real thing and youth especially knew it and responded.

Meanwhile May having lost her parliamentary majority has got a hell of a problem on her hands. She gets first crack at forming a new government, but she needs the help of a smaller party. Unfortunately, the only potential partner is a far right party in N. Ireland, but it's not a good match. She may not be able to form a stable government, which job would then fall to Corbyn.

The other great point of confusion brought about by her loss is the beginning of Brexit negotiations. She campaigned on the idea of a hard Brexit, a complete break with the EU, but many Brits, maybe a majority would prefer a soft Brexit. If they had the option to vote again they might even decide to stay.

I think the Brexit vote will ultimately turn out for the best. The UK has always tried to stymie European cooperation and integration and frequently tried to exempt itself from EU wide policies. Brexit will be a grand experiment. It's all in flux now, but if the exit goes through, I predict within 5 or 10 years

they'll be asking to join again. With more humility and respect for the whole project the next time.

Finally, France has a new president. Emmanuel Macron came from nowhere one year ago with a new party to sweep the presidential field and elect a majority in parliament. Once again the old-guard centrist parties were vanquished in favor of a totally new voice. In this case he's decidedly centrist, but with a youthful twist. Not only that Macron himself, at 39, is the youngest French president in modern times, but the youth vote carried him to victory. And even in his very short time in office he's shown himself to be a strong forceful leader.

His major goal is the reform of labor laws that discourage hiring and firing. In past attempts unions came out in force to thwart that goal but with a new mandate and control of government there's nothing to stop change now. I have great sympathy for the working class but in this case it protects people who are already working while discriminating against those who aren't. It also protects underperformers while leaving the young out in the dust. The only mitigating factor in today's cutthroat world would be a generous safety net to cushion job losses and insecurity.

It is heartening that in all three contests mentioned it was the youth who were forward looking and progressive, the voice and direction of the future, giving hope that politics can change.

As a final note I'd like to bring up a voting system variously called preference, ranked choice or instant runoff, a system cur-



rently used in Ireland and Australia. France just held 4 votes in one month. Both the presidential and legislative elections required runoffs for contests in which no candidate achieved a majority. By the fourth vote, voter fatigue pushed turnout down to 40%.

Instant runoff guarantees a majority on the first ballot. The voter chooses candidates by ranking their preference, first, second, third. If there's no majority winner, the candidate with the least votes is eliminated and their second choice votes are divided up among the remaining candidates. This happens until a candidate gets a majority. For instance, if I were voting in the UK under that system, I'd always vote Green first. It doesn't matter that I

know the Green candidate has no chance of winning because my second choice would be Labour. If the Conservative (or another party candidate) won a majority in the first round, then it didn't matter who I voted for. If another party didn't win there's still a chance my second choice might win.

Instant runoff eliminates the spoiler role minor party candidates play in electing the voter's worst choice, like the way that votes for Green Party candidate Ralph Nader in 2000 helped elect GW Bush. There are lots of reasons why Gore lost the presidency, but the Green party vote for Nader was undoubtedly one of them. With preference voting the Dems and Greens would work together instead of slamming each other. Cambostan

Bits from the Beach

The rain is setting in an early start to wet season. The flood of Chinese Casinos sees no sign of abating. Rumours are that the government is planning to give in to demands and rename the town New Macau, if the price is right.

Latest developments include the OC hotel, which only changed hands a month ago now being renamed as Sun City Casino. Apparently a new Poker room is opening run by the most reviled poker operator in town who has opened and failed at poker rooms in Queenco, Lion City, Yadouli Casino and one in Poipet. How long he lasts is apparently the subject of a sweepstake amongst expat poker players.

The King Pharaoh KTV opposite the square has been taken over by the Chinese and is being redeveloped into ... wait for it ... another Chinese Casino. Rumours are that the large 333 KTV is being gutted and will become yet another Casino.

Meanwhile conflicting rumours continue to come forth every week about the fate of the square. Someone in the Know said that it would be closed before the next issue of this magazine hits the newsstands yet one hears that 3 year leases are being renewed. Mind you one wonders why as the patron numbers are well down and coinciding with men lamenting the quality of the talent. At least one bar owner has just walked away from their deposit as they cannot afford to carry the losses.

The square is not the only prime site where rumours abound. Utopia is apparently on the market and depending on the lease length it could well go the way of many other now underdeveloped sites and become yet another Chinese run casino.

There was a bit of concertation at the start of the month when two gangs of Chinese men met in a bloody fight in town. Apparently the police had to fire their weapons to get the situation under control. Many western Expats are complaining about their behaviour and quite a few are leaving town. What we may be seeing is not only a fundamental shift in the makeup of casino ownership, but also tourist profile and expat make up.

Chiva's has reopened under Chinese management. The former owners who also own a boat cruise operation are advertising for more staff, which must speak Chinese, it is a sign of the times.



A local lad fishes for plastic catfish in a beautiful local creek.



IN BAD TASTE

Theresa May 'wept uncontrollably' about the loss of cladding at Grenfell Tower.

The Prime Minister made a private visit to the North Kensington block where she spoke to emergency services and witnessed firsthand the destruction to the costly exterior. Speaking after her return to No 10, she said: 'I asked the firefighters if they did everything in their power to limit the damage to the expensive cladding, and they just stared at me horrified. It was clearly a very traumatic time for them, witnessing the destruction of the £10 million refit in minutes. I'm sure they did everything in their power to save the beautiful exterior while selfish residents fled the inferno.

'I heard stories of firefighters running into the building, risking their own lives... which I'm sure was to save as much cladding as possible. Of course they strenuously, even angrily, denied this. But many whole panels were saved thanks to their heroic efforts. So, I want to assure the residents of nearby more affluent buildings that as soon as possible we will replace the burnt-out tower with something more aesthetically pleasing and restore the Kensington skyline to its former glory.'

Pictures were posted on social media of the Prime Minister hugging some of the surviving cladding, with many far-right commentators praising her compassion towards inanimate, replaceable building material.

'Any "normal human being" can empathise with families who have lost loved ones,' said Peter Mitchell-Rose, a resident of Kensington Palace Gardens whose rear view has been severely affected by the burnt-out husk of the tower. But it takes a special kind of person to weep openly about the tragic loss of a reasonably-improved vista. We are so grateful that the Prime Minister is with us in our hour of need. Last night on my balcony, I found it almost impossible to enjoy my Gin and Dubbonet with that ugly charred tower obscuring the view. I had to look the other way, which actually made quite a pleasant alternative.

New EU Brexit Gameshow Starts With a Bang

BRUSSELS - Belgium - The unsavoury task of talking to pig headed unelected EU technocrats is an unfortunate necessity for Brexit to begin.

Just imagine entering a gameshow where all contestants are meant to start on a level playing field, when suddenly you're handed a bill for £100 billion and told nothing will go ahead unless you pay up right now.

Well, that's probably how poor old David Davis, Britain's Brexit Secretary felt like yesterday when he arrived in Brussels for talks with EU Rottweiler Michel Barnier.

"Hello, pleased to meet you, shall we get started then?"

"First, you have to pay £100 billion, then I may talk to you, mon amis."

"Er, what is your legal rationale for handing us this bill you conjured up out of thin air?"

raising voice "They question that there is a legal basis for an exit payment, you cochon, it is because there will be a €10bn euro per year black hole that will be left in EU budgets after Brexit."

"Well, we're sorry about that but once we leave we have nothing to do with the EU budget. That's your problem, not ours."

"Listen here Ros Beef, you wanted to join EU, now you want to get out, there is a price to pay, and you will pay the bill we give you for dining at our table. We have pensions for unelected eurocrats to pay, we have unlimited expense fees to pay, what about Juncker's cognac bill or the Greek black hole money pit?"

"Well, according to our books, you owe us money. We have paid absolutely billions into your coffers and got pretty much nothing in return. What's your answer to that?"

"You English imbecile, Britain was our cash cow. We cannot afford to lose your money, so pay up or I will smear escargot juice all over your Savile Row bespoke suit."

"Why did you Frenchies plant trees on the Champs Elysées?"

"Because it is aesthetically beautiful, and the French way, is that right English idiot?"

"No, because the Germans could march in the shade."

"Why, you pig, I will increase the bill to £200 billion now."

"Go ahead mate, we ain't paying a penny any way."

Meeting ends and both parties leave the podium

THE LAUGHING STOCK OF EUROPE

This article in a Swiss newspaper today is so ruthlessly clear-sighted in its assessment of just how screwed we are that I just had to translate it for the non-German speakers. Hold on to your hats:

If it weren't so serious, the situation in Great Britain would almost be comical. The country is being governed by a talking robot, nicknamed the Maybot, that somehow managed to visit the burned-out tower block in the west of London without speaking to a single survivor or voluntary helper. Negotiations for the country's exit from the EU are due to begin on Monday, but no one has even a hint of a plan. The government is dependent on a small party that provides a cozy home for climate change deniers and creationists. Boris Johnson is Foreign Secretary. What in the world has happened to this country?

Two years ago David Cameron emerged from the parliamentary election as the shining victor. He had secured an absolute majority, and as a result it looked as if the career of this cheerful lightweight was headed for surprisingly dizzy heights. The economy was growing faster than in any other industrialised country in the world. Scottish independence and, with it, the break-up of the United Kingdom had been averted. For the first time since 1992, there was a Conservative majority in the House of Commons. Great Britain saw itself as a universally respected actor on the international stage. This was the starting point.

In order to get from this comfortable position to the chaos of the present in the shortest possible time, two things were necessary: first, the Conservative right wingers' obsessive hatred of the EU, and second, Cameron's irresponsibility in putting the whole future of the country on the line with his referendum, just to satisfy a few fanatics in his party. It is becoming ever clearer just how extraordinarily bad a decision that was. The fact that Great Britain has become the laughing stock of Europe is directly linked to its vote for Brexit.

The ones who will suffer most will be the British people, who were lied to by the Brexit campaign during the referendum and betrayed and treated like idiots by elements of their press. The

shamelessness still knows no bounds: the Daily Express has asked in all seriousness whether the inferno in the tower block was due to the cladding having been designed to meet EU standards. It is a simple matter to discover that the answer to this question is No, but by failing to check it, the newspaper has planted the suspicion that the EU might be to blame for this too. As an aside: a country in which parts of the press are so demonstrably uninterested in truth and exploit a disaster like the fire in Grenfell Tower for their own tasteless ends has a very serious problem.

Already prices are rising in the shops, already inflation is on the up. Investors are holding back. Economic growth has slowed. And that's before the Brexit negotiations have even begun. With her unnecessary general election, Prime Minister Theresa May has already squandered an eighth of the time available for them. How on earth an undertaking as complex as Brexit is supposed to be agreed in the time remaining is a mystery.

Great Britain will end up leaving its most important trading partner and will be left weaker in every respect. It would make economic sense to stay in the single market and the customs union, but that would mean being subject to regulations over which Britain no longer had any say. It would be better to have stayed in the EU in the first place. So the government now needs to develop a plan that is both politically acceptable and brings the fewest possible economic disadvantages. It's a question of damage limitation, nothing more; yet even now there are still politi-

cians strutting around Westminster smugly trumpeting that it will be the EU that comes off worst if it doesn't toe the line.

The EU is going to be dealing with a government that has no idea what kind of Brexit it wants, led by an unrealistic politician whose days are numbered; and a party in which old trenches are being opened up again: moderate Tories are currently hoping to be able to bring about a softer exit after all, but the hardliners in the party – among them more than a few pigheadedly obstinate ideologues – are already threatening rebellion. An epic battle lies ahead, and it will paralyse the government.

EU chief negotiator Michel Barnier has said that he now expects the Brits to finally set out their position clearly, since he cannot negotiate with himself. The irony of this statement is that it would actually be in Britain's best interests if he did just that. At least that way they'd have one representative on their side who grasps the scale of the task and is actually capable of securing a deal that will be fair to both sides. The Brits do not have a single negotiator of this stature in their ranks. And quite apart from the Brexit terms, both the debate and the referendum have proven to be toxic in ways that are now making themselves felt.

After the loss of its empire, the United Kingdom sought a new place in the world. It finally found it, as a strong, awkward and influential part of a larger union: the EU. Now it has given up this place quite needlessly. The consequence, as is now becoming clear, is a veritable identity crisis from which it will take the country a very long time to recover

Phnom Penh Pub Page

This is going to be a very very very short Pub Page this month. I actually have not really been to more than a couple of bars in Phnom Penh in the last month – I had good excuses – disease, travel, a sworn oath not to let another hostess take advantage of me (this one will only last as long as I can stay away from the bars obviously), etc. However, none of that was satisfactory to the Evil Publisher who is insisting I at least partly comply with my contractual obligations – SKIRTS!!!!

Actually, to be fair, the Evil Publisher – for the new world record 2nd month in a row – has been exceedingly kind to this poor and incredibly unproductive investigative reporter.

So on with the almost no bars entered into review....

First, something that has no relation to bars. A few months ago the Pub Page gave a bit of the tale of Joe Garrison – a long time expat who came down with cancer. He has a wife and young daughter and had no insurance or savings to cover his treatment. A lot of Joe's friends and local ex-pats (including some who have not met or barely know Joe) have generously contributed and, while there is a bit more to go, I wanted to congratulate and acknowledge everyone who has assisted because Joe has now had his surgery and it was amazingly successful. By the time this is published, Joe should

be home and cancer free – great to hear that the PP community still steps up to help their own.

Ok bars – really have not been to many but the Page was invited to one opening – the Beehive on 130 St. This is essentially Honeypot 2. With a single entrance, one can choose which bar to go to and there is a door in the back also linking the two bars. To be frank, while I have enjoyed a number of the bars started up by this group, I can't see the point of this one.

When I dropped by, the room had a few tables and seats but no bar. Instead you are served through a hole in the wall into Honeypot or by servers bringing drinks through the joining door at the rear. There was a very small stage at the back and what seemed to be a Filipino band playing. I walked in, saw what was going on and walked right into Honeypot. Except for one person I recognized who was enjoying the Beehive vibe, everyone else I saw that night walked right through the Beehive and into Honeypot.

I was extra amused when one regular customer of Honeypot

complained to me that he was told to keep the tunes down so as not to disturb the crowd in Beehive. Overall, I will probably keep walking in the front door, but expect to keep right and skip the hive.

Another bar that has finally opened but which I have to admit that I have not been to yet is Fire Lounge on 118 St..

The Pub Page wrote about the new establishment opened by the charming and beautiful Amey of Fire Bar on 130 St. The grand opening took place while the Pub Page was on holiday but the photos online make it clear that the bar looks great and the opening was a big success. Am looking forward to checking out the new digs.

The other month, the Pub Page lamented the closing of Mara on Sisowath. Turns out there has already been a resurrection. As far as I understand, the bar will be renamed M (or at least that is what was hanging when I walked by). The previously silent partner has taken over the operation and the previous operating partner (who was clearly one of my favourite publicans) will be taking a much-deserved place in the shadows to focus on the real boss of the family (yes Blake I mean you). A real review will happen soon but given the current

operators experience with major bars in the area, I expect that things will be going smoothly by the time I get there.

Last but not least, a bar that has not opened yet but which will get some advance mention – Chaplin bar on 108 St is expected to open in early July. It will be themed bar with what was described as “no hassle hostesses” in appropriately themed outfits. There is expected to be an extensive outside deck and private sofa rooms as well as a few screens showing sports and “silent films”. Why is a bar that is not yet opened getting press – 1) I have nothing to write about this month and 2) Dusty who many of you will remember as a standout manager of Shanghai has been brought in to set the place up so expectations are high.

Sabay Sabay Street (174) have their giant signs up across the street. Well all but one. Which apparently should be up by the time you read this despite the idiots erecting it having no understanding of physics. Hence bent poles!

So that is really it. One bar I have been to. Two bars that are open that I want to go to. And one vapour ware.





The Gravy train continues

In closing statements for the trial of Noun Chea and Khieu Samphan. Former Khmer Rouge head of state Khieu Samphan said he was not a murderer on Friday and denied knowledge of grave crimes against humanity that occurred under the regime, in which millions of Cambodians lost their lives.

Also stating that it was “false Vietnamese propaganda.”

The defence had used a Khmer proverb to cast the Khmer Rouge leaders as a goat blamed by a farmer for eating his food,

when in fact a monkey (or, in this case, the Vietnamese) had framed the goat by smearing food on its face.

The prosecutor turn it against them stating. “The Khmer Rouge leaders would not have just blamed the goat – they would have “smashed” the goat, arrested the monkey for espionage and sedition, and killed all their offspring.

The case, has lasted two and a half years, with 283 hearings involving 185 witnesses, civil parties and experts. A verdict is expected next year.

Lazy bastards!

To all employees & our valued clients:

In the Occasion of **International Children’s Day**, the bank will be closed from June 1st, 2017 to June 2nd, 2017 and will resume on May 17th, 2017. For your guidance and notification. Thanks

ABA playing mind games again!



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Don’t enforce the law!

Traffic vigilantes who stop and turn round people driving against traffic then posting the scenes on facebook have been told to stop by Phnom Penh chief of police!

Chuon Sovann, municipal police chief, said members of the group, Humanitarian Force News, were interfering with traffic police officers’ duties. “They cannot try to work as traffic police,” he added.

Bloody right they can’t because they are actually doing something not snoozing under a tree! Why don’t they just

make them volunteer police.

And it seems they know the worst traffic spots where the cops are absent!

Traffic lights award

The most ignored traffic light award goes to the recently installed ones on Sisowath Quay! Nobody seems to be aware of them and merrily carries on as before.

The number of traffic lights continues to expand rapidly around the country and they are sometimes installed in absurd places.

FAUX NEWS

Trump and Macron Announce Wife Swap

Paris, France - French President Emmanuel Macron and US President Donald Trump have announced a wife swap. Both spouses are considered more age appropriate for the other president. President Trump and Macron's wife Brigitte are senior citizens. President Macron and First Lady Melania Trump are in their forties.

The announcement was made after President Macron's meeting with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, who offered the swap as a gift to the new President, much to Macron's surprise and delight.

"Trump still owes me," Putin reportedly said, "and I need Macron in my back pocket as well."

Trump and Macron are clear rivals, giving each other white knuckles from their press worthy handshake battle at a recent gathering of NATO leaders.

Melania is reportedly pleased with the deal. "I get to live in Europe, a train ride away from home, and I like all of Emmanuel's positions. Well, all of them so far. I'm tired of having to hold Donald's hand through everything. Trussia, Russiagate, Trumpgate, whatever. Donald made his own bed on this problem. Now he can sleep in it by himself and let Putin have his hand in it too. On to bigger and better as they say."

White House staffers, having recently formed the Leakers Union, reported that Trump went along with the arrangement because he thought he and Brigitte, and Macron and Melania, were just filming the reality television show "Celebrity Wife Swap", and that

the arrangement was for only a week or two.

Davis tells room full of people who can speak German that they'd all be speaking German if it wasn't for us

DAVID Davis has told a room full of people who can speak German that if it was not for Britain they would all be speaking German.

Davis made the announcement during day two of the Brexit negotiations after not knowing what else to say.

Chief EU negotiator, Michel Barnier, told the Brexit secretary: "I can speak German. In fact I can speak several languages.

"What's your point?"

In response, Davis shook his head while scribbling on a piece of paper and muttering to himself about 'smart arses'.

Davis then offered to lend the Europeans his DVD of the classic documentary series *The World at War*, 'narrated by Brexit-supporting Laurence Olivier'.

He added: "Maybe they'll learn a thing or two. Which they almost certainly will because they all speak excellent English."

Britain's homeless population relieved to hear Prince Philip still alive and well

Downtrodden vagrants all over the UK have breathed a collective sigh of relief to hear that one of their beloved overlords is still alive after rumours of his death spread like wildfire.

"Thank goodness he's all right," said one emaciated wretch who was far too insignificant to be named. "The other night as I lay in the gutter pulling some newspapers over me in a futile attempt to keep warm, I saw the headlines that he might be dead. I started praying that it was untrue. Surely, I thought, god wouldn't be so cruel as to take such a noble man and leave scum like me still alive."

One bedraggled woman spoke of her anguish upon hearing the dreadful rumours.

"I was squatting behind a skip to relieve myself because I haven't got any money to access public toilets when I overheard someone on a mobile talking about how the Queen had called a meeting because her husband was dying. I was beside myself with grief and guilt. Our poor prince was lying on his antique four-poster deathbed and here I was wiping myself with an old sock and shoeing off rats as though it was just another ordinary day."

Countless other worthless pieces of sub-human filth who don't contribute to the Royal Family's divine right to obscene wealth and luxury shared similar stories. One starving immigrant was so overcome with emotion upon hearing that Philip was still alive that he abandoned his attempt to retrieve the half-eaten remains of a dead cat from a storm-drain and just lay in a ditch and cried. When Prince Philip does inevitably pass, Britain's homeless have vowed to beg outside Tube stations until they've raised enough money to buy flowers to lay at the gates of Buckingham Palace.

May unable to do deal at Tesco checkout

THE prime minister has caused chaos at a Tesco checkout after being unable to do a deal where she handed over money for goods.

May was spotted at the Tesco Express on Bridge Street promising cashiers that she had shopped with 'humility' and her basket contained groceries that were 'right for Britain', but refusing to discuss payment.

City worker Joanna Kramer said: "It was definitely her. She was doing her stare.

"They kept telling her the bill was £15.34 and asking if she had a debit card, and she'd just repeat that 'this early in negotiations was not the time to show her hand'.

"The cashier offered to put some things back if she couldn't afford them, but she refused because she had committed to deliver these specific items to the people."

Kramer added: "Then she just stood there, saying nothing, ignoring all suggestions that she leave.



"I left after 10 minutes. She's probably still there."

Legally I can kill him, Queen confirms

THE QUEEN has confirmed that if President Trump makes a state visit, she can kill him with a sword and nobody can touch her.

Palace staff have assured the Queen that, according to English law, Trump is a subject of the Crown and can, if judged to be damaging the monarchy, be dispatched without repercussion.

She said: "I haven't made up my mind yet. I might.

"It's been an awful lot of years hefting the old sword without using it, and who better to christen it on? Just imagine the look on his satsuma face.

"And the colonies would be so grateful they'd have me straight back as their reigning monarch, which solves this Brexit thing literally at a stroke.

"I should do one useful thing before I abdicate, really. And imag-

The withdrawal signals a step back to pre-accord notions that the



world is flat and that if you go too far you'll fall off the edge, which, according to Trump, is a significant danger "if we don't build a big ol' wall around it".

The president is expected to ignore established scientific consensus that the world is not, in fact, flat, in favour of the evidence of his own eyes.

"When I look out at the world, I see it's got a flat edge", he told us.

"Some call it the horizon, I call it the window ledge or the bottom of the screen showing Fox News in my office.

"The concept of the world being round was invented by China to make the US construction industry less competitive.

"If everyone thinks it's, like, some kind of big blue marble surrounded by a thin, delicate mix of breathable gas which protects us from both solar radiation and the cold, hard emptiness of space, then hard-working American workers building lovely, protective walls round the edge will be out of a job.

"And just think of how much more gas and coal they'll use doing that.

"It's going to be great, beautiful. It'll make us all so much better off," he added.

The Tory Brexit negotiating team arrives in Brussels



ine how furious it'd make the May woman."

Her Majesty added: "I genuinely can't think of a reason not to. Anyone?"

Trump pulls out of Round Earth accord

Donald Trump has today withdrawn the United States from an international accord agreeing that the world isn't flat.

The president has told reporters that the accord, under which all nations agree that the Earth is an oblate spheroid, is "not fit for purpose" in the 21st century, and the idea is just a theory and possibly a hoax by China.

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TECHNOLOGY PAGE

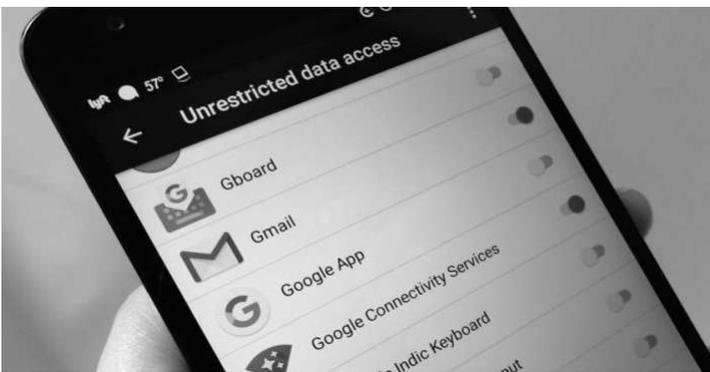
5 vital Android settings that save your apps, data, battery and more

No matter what you do in Android, there are five settings that everyone should know. These vital features range from one that limits your cellular data use to a cloud backup setting that preserves your data in case bad things happen to your handset.

Note: These tips are tested on a Nexus 5X running Android version 7.1.2. The settings on your phone may vary depending on the make and model of your handset.

Turn on Data Saver

Unless you've signed up for one of those pricey unlimited data plans, you're probably keeping an eye on your mobile data use. Unfortunately, Android apps are notorious for gobbling up more than their fair share of data, particularly when they're sitting in the background.



Once you've turned on Android's Data Saver feature, you can pick which apps (like Gmail) that can continue to use background cellular data.

That's why you should turn on Android's Data Saver feature immediately. With Data Saver enabled, your Android handset will restrict the background use of cellular data, thereby saving you from any unpleasant surprises on your monthly mobile bill.

Just tap Settings > Data Usage > Data Saver, then flip on the switch.

Blocking background cellular data has its downsides. For example, Data Saver will keep the Gmail from fetching new messages, Twitter won't notify you of mentions unless you manually reload your feed, and your favorite news app won't refresh its articles until you open it in the foreground.

Luckily, you can pick and choose which apps can continue to use background mobile data while Data Saver is enabled. On the Data Saver settings screen, tap Unrestricted data access, then flip the switches next to the apps that you want Data Saver to skip while it's blocking background mobile data use.

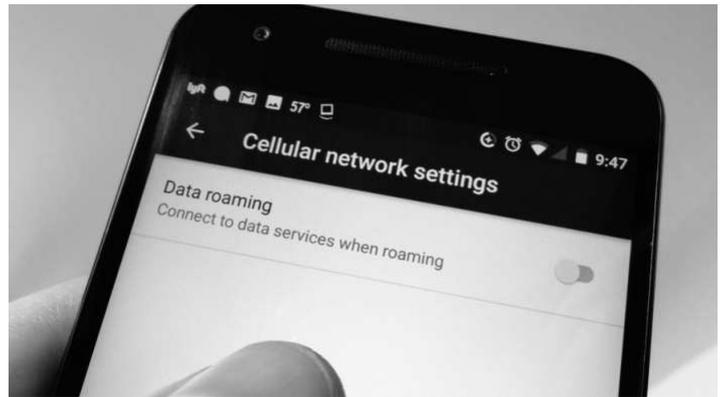
Bonus tip: You'll need to turn Data Saver off before using your Android phone as a mobile hotspot. That in itself is not a big deal, but don't forget to turn Data Saver back on once you turn your handset's hotspot off. I've made that mistake myself, and I've got the data overage charges to prove it.

Turn off Data Roaming

Even if you've got the cash for an unlimited data plan, you could still end up with unexpected data charges if you've got this particular setting enabled.

If you don't like unpleasant surprises on your monthly wireless bill, make sure to turn off Android data roaming setting.

Android's Data Roaming feature lets your phone use cellular data

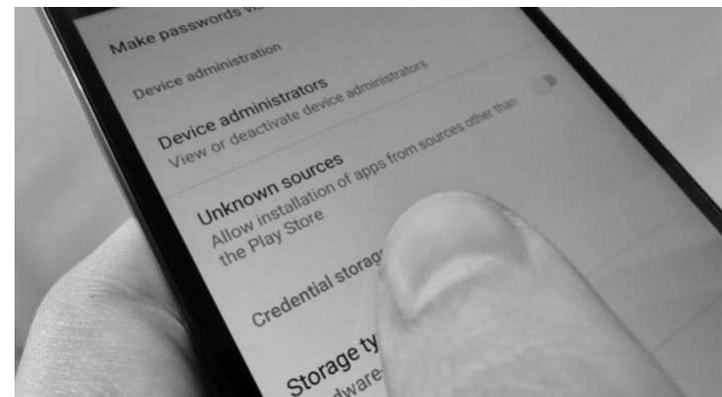


when you're "roaming" on another network (usually because you've wandered out of your carrier's coverage area). That's handy if constant cellular data access is your top priority, but it could also lead to hefty data charges if you're not careful.

To ensure that Data Roaming is switched off, tap Settings > Data usage, tap the three-dot button in the top-right corner of the screen, tap Cellular Network, then turn off the Data Roaming setting.

Turn off the Unknown Sources setting

One of the beauties of Android is that you're not restricted to the Google Play store when it comes to apps. Indeed, you can download and install apps from any third-party app store or website—from the Amazon app store and DownloadAtoZ to Mobango and SlideMe—without having to root your device.



With the Unknown Sources setting turned off, you'll block any non-Google Play apps that try to install themselves on your Android phone.

The problem with third-party app stores, however, is that they don't necessarily go to the lengths that Google does to ensure their apps are malware-free. Even worse, you could wind up on a iffy website that tries to install a nasty piece of malware on your phone without asking first.

That's why you want to make sure Android's Unknown Sources setting is turned off—or at least, almost always off.

When enabled, the Unknown Sources setting opens the door to any and all third-party apps that want to install themselves—invited or not—onto your handset. Turn Unknown Sources off, and your Android phone will block the installation of any app that isn't from the Google Play store.

I recommend keeping Unknown Sources off pretty much all the time, unless you happen to be downloading apps from a third-party source that you trust. Once you're done installing, make sure to switch off Unknown Sources again.

To toggle the Unknown Sources setting on or off, tap Settings > Security. You'll find the Unknown Sources setting about half-way down the list of security settings.

Set Battery Saver to turn itself on automatically

Even as Android phones get more and more powerful, battery life seems to keep shrinking. Indeed, my Nexus 5X can't make it through the day without an afternoon charge, and that's with only a moderate amount of use.



You can set Android's Battery Saver feature to turn itself on when your phone's battery life starts to dwindle.

That's why Battery Saver is such a must-use Android feature. Once activated, Battery Saver will switch your device into a low-power mode by (among other things) dimming the screen, shutting down most background app activity and location services, and turning off other bells and whistles, all in an effort to squeeze every last drop of juice out of your phone's fading battery.

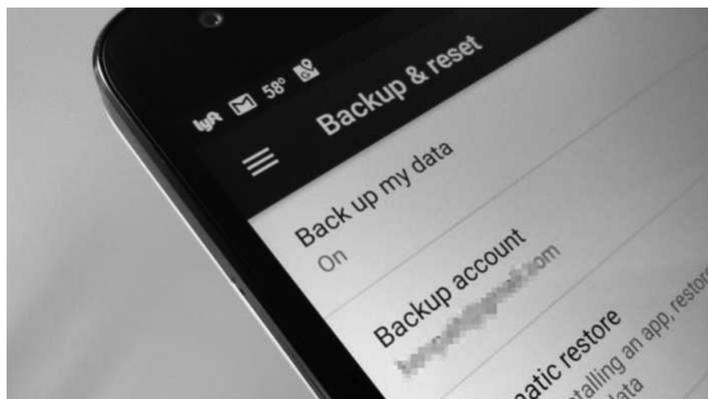
The beauty of Battery Saver mode is that you don't need to turn it on manually. Instead, you can set your handset to enable Battery Saver once your phone's battery level falls below a certain

level. Once your device is charged up again, Battery Saver will turn itself off until it's needed again.

Tap Settings > Battery > Battery Saver > Turn on automatically, then pick a battery level at which the function will trigger: either 5 percent or 15 percent.

Keep your Android data backed up

Last but not least, you want to make sure all the app data and settings on your Android device are backed up to the cloud. Just flip a switch, and Android will periodically upload snapshots of your handset's current state to Google Drive. If you ever need to wipe or even replace your phone, you'll be able to restore most of your data and settings right where you left off.



Turn on the "Back up my data" setting to keep your phone settings and app data preserved in Google Drive.

Tap Settings > Backup & Reset > Back up my data, then flip on the switch. On the main Backup & Reset screen, you can designate which of your Google accounts (assuming you have more than one) you'd like to use as your backup account, while the Automatic Restore setting will (as you might guess) automatically restore any backed-up settings or data for an app you've decided to reinstall.