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A 17-year-old YouTube star insulted a notorious drug lord.



Inside C5

Southern DAILY

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Friday, December 29, 2017 | www.today-america.com | Southern News Group

Foreign money driving top of housing market in Vancouver, Toronto

VANCOUVER/OTTAWA (Reuters) - Foreign buyers in Canada's two largest housing markets are focused on larger and more expensive homes, new data from Statistics Canada shows, confirming industry lore that their money drives up top-end real estate prices in Vancouver and Toronto. While non-residents, defined as people living outside Canada, own less than 5 percent of residential properties in the two cities, those homes are worth significantly more than those held by residents, according to a Reuters analysis of Statscan data released this week. Public debate over the role of foreign investment in Canada has reached a fever pitch, with locals saying price increases of 60 percent in Vancouver and 40 percent in Toronto over the past three years are keeping them out of the market. In Toronto, the average value of a detached home built in 2016-2017 and owned by a non-resident is C\$1.7 million (\$1.3 million), a whopping 48.7 percent higher than C\$1.1 million for residents. Those values for Vancouver

average a lofty C\$2.5 million for non-residents and C\$1.8 million for residents for a difference of 40.6 percent. Among all detached homes, not just new ones, those owned by non-residents were larger than residents' houses by 13.1 percent in Vancouver and 2.2 percent in Toronto. The new data reinforces anecdotal evidence that foreign buyers tend to focus on the most affluent neighborhoods, said Jane Londerville, a real estate professor at the University of Guelph in Southern Ontario. "If the goal is to get a couple million dollars out of their country and put it in a very safe, calm economy, you might as well buy a C\$2 million house," she said. "So they're buying in Forest Hill in Toronto and Kerrisdale in Vancouver." The Statscan data does not look at sales, or flow, but rather is a static snapshot of ownership of housing stock at the time of collection. Foreign capital also targets new condos, with new Vancouver units owned by non-residents valued at 19.7 percent more than those owned by residents. In Toronto, the difference is 11.2 percent.



"There's been a huge spike in foreign ownership in newer buildings," said Diana Petramala, senior researcher at Ryerson University's urban policy center in Toronto. Toronto realtor David Fleming said high prices and tight supply increasingly meant only foreign

investors could afford to buy into the new projects, whose pre-construction prices are "out of this world." "What it has really become is essentially a safety deposit box for those with foreign money," Fleming said. "Those buyers can park the money, whether they intend to flip it before it is finished or take possession and rent it." A 15 percent foreign buyers tax was imposed in Vancouver in 2016 and Toronto in 2017 amid a backlash against foreign buyers, particularly from China. This has cooled both markets at least temporarily.

Stop meddling in foreign elections, UK's Johnson tells Russian hosts

MOSCOW (Reuters) - British foreign minister Boris Johnson told his Russian counterpart on Friday there was "abundant evidence" of Moscow meddling in foreign elections, but said any Russian efforts to interfere in last year's Brexit referendum had fallen flat. On the first visit to Russia by a British foreign minister in five years, Johnson said he wanted to normalize UK-Russia relations, which were going through "a very difficult patch". But that didn't mean pretending that Britain did not have serious concerns about Russia's behavior, he said. "We can't pretend that they (the problems) do not exist, and that we share a common perspective on the events in Ukraine, or in the Western Balkans or ... on Russian activities in cyberspace," said Johnson. He also said Britain had a duty to speak up for the LGBT community in Chechnya. Two men from

Chechnya told Reuters in June they had been tortured because they were gay. Chechen authorities deny the allegations. Johnson's visit comes at a time when relations between London and Moscow are strained by differences over Ukraine and Syria as well as by allegations, which Russia flatly denies, that Moscow has meddled in the politics of various European countries by backing cyber attacks and disinformation campaigns. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov challenged that narrative, however, saying Johnson himself had recently said he had no proof that Moscow had meddled in last year's British referendum on leaving the European Union. "Not successfully, not successfully, I think is the word," Johnson -- a leading advocate of Brexit -- shot back, to which Lavrov replied: "He's scared that if he doesn't disagree

with me, his reputation will be ruined at home." Johnson, who said there was abundant evidence of Russian election meddling in Germany, the United States and other countries, said it was Lavrov's reputation he was worried about. "I think it is very important ... to recognize that Russian attempts to interfere in our elections or in our referendum, whatever they may have been, they've not been successful," said Johnson. Lavrov said he blamed Britain for the poor state of relations, complaining about "insulting and aggressive statements" from London. He also complained about Britain airing its differences with Moscow publicly rather than in private. But although the two men spent much of their joint news conference exchanging barbs, both sounded upbeat when it came to trying to cooperate in narrow areas.

Business

U.S. rig count rises by one



The U.S. rig count crept up by one this week as oil prices headed toward \$60 a barrel. Houston oilfield services company Baker Hughes, a GE company, reported Friday that oil rigs stayed steady at 747, and gas rose one to 184. The total has slipped to 931, 27 off its recent peak of 958, at the end of July.

Still, the count has risen 278 over this time last year, with oil rigs up 224, gas 55. The U.S. offshore count is unchanged from last week at 19, down six year-over-year. Texas and Wyoming lost two rigs each, Oklahoma one, Baker Hughes said. New Mexico added four, North Dakota one.



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The U.S. would be ready to talk with North Korea if it renounced further nuclear or missile tests and followed through on the pledge, U.S. Ambassador to China Terry Branstad said.

"If they announce that they're not going to be doing any more nuclear tests and they're not going to be launching any more missiles," Branstad told Bloomberg Television on Wednesday, when asked what it would take for talks to start.

Branstad, speaking on the sidelines of the Fortune Global Forum in Guangzhou, also said that sanctions against North Korea were "starting to have an impact." Calling Kim Jong Un's push for nuclear weapons "the biggest threat to humankind right now," the former Iowa governor repeated the Trump administration's call for China to cut off oil sales to Kim Jong Un's regime.

"We believe we need to go further," Branstad said. "We think oil and also these North Korean workers working in China and other countries, that needs to stop."

President Donald Trump has sought to pressure China to rein in its ally and neighbor, which last week tested a new type of intercontinental ballistic missile. Kim said the test showed that North Korea's nuclear program was complete because it could deliver an atomic warhead anywhere in the U.S.

While Kim hasn't yet proven he has the technology to put a warhead on an ICBM and deliver it safely to a target, the test has put new pressure on the U.S. and its allies to find a solution. By declaring his weapons program complete, Kim may have created a path to resume negotiations from a position of strength.



'An Opportunity For Us To Get Back To The Bargaining Table' North Korea Must Halt All Testing For Talks To Begin, U.S. Ambassador Says

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



U.S. Ambassador to China Terry Branstad

"I interpret this as a starting gun, signaling that he's opening up the negotiating pas de deux, the dance," Daniel Russel, who until June was assistant U.S. secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, told reporters in Beijing after the test.

The United Nations' top official for political affairs is in Pyongyang this week to discuss the nuclear issue, and countries from Canada to Germany are seeking to help facilitate talks.

the economic forum later Wednesday that Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who was attending the same event, would meet with U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to discuss North Korea on Dec. 19. A spokesman for Trudeau declined to comment on the possible meeting.

Military Drills

Meanwhile, the saber-rattling has continued on both sides, with the U.S. sending a B-1B bomber to join massive aerial drills with South Korea on Wednesday. North Korea had previously threatened

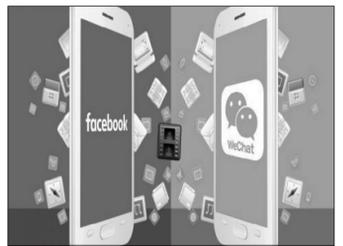


U.S. - South Korea Military Drills

to retaliate against the exercise with the "highest-level hard-line countermeasure in history."

The U.S. must work with China and others to convince North Korea "what they are doing is a suicide mission that makes no sense," Branstad told the forum. He declined to rule out a Trump visit to North Korea at some point, but said the timing "is probably not right."

Branstad, 71, has ties with Chinese President Xi Jinping that go back decades. The two men met in 1985, when Xi visited Iowa as part of a delegation from the northern Chinese province of Hebei. Chinese officials refer to the envoy as an "old friend of the Chinese people," a designation reserved for foreigners who've demonstrated a particular understanding of the country.



Facebook, WeChat

But the ambassador told Bloomberg that the "very good" chemistry demonstrated in meetings between Trump and Xi was more important. "Building a relationship of trust and respect hopefully can go a long ways to these two big countries, the two biggest economies in the world, working together," he said.

Still, the U.S. has sharpened its tone toward China since Trump's state visit last month to Beijing, which ended with no big breakthroughs on trade. The Trump administration has in recent weeks hit China with a probe into the country's aluminum imports, and accused its leadership of backsliding on market-oriented reforms.

Branstad said he agreed with such criticism. He cited as an example how China blocks access to Facebook while the U.S. allows Americans to use Tencent Holdings Ltd.'s WeChat messaging service.

"There are areas where we think China has not been fair, their market is not open," Branstad said. (Courtesy bloomberg.com)

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Table with columns for days of the week (MON-SUN) and time slots (00:00-00:30, 00:30-01:00, etc.), listing various TV programs and their broadcast times.

A Snapshot Of The World



A man dressed as Santa Claus gestures as he poses with children during a visit at the zoo of Abidjan



Israeli-Arab Issa Kassissieh rides a camel wearing a Santa Claus costume during the annual Christmas tree distribution by the Jerusalem municipality in Jerusalem's Old City



Pupils from Arena Academy wave flags after the winning bid for the 2022 Commonwealth Games was announced in Birmingham



Pope Francis greets the Roman Curia on the occasion of Christmas in the Clementine Hall at the Vatican



A winter swimmer dives into the icy water of Songhua river in Songyuan CHINA-ODDLY/



Female window cleaner dressed as Santa Claus prepares to clean a glass window at an event to celebrate the upcoming Christmas at DECKS Tokyo Beach in Tokyo



German Chancellor Merkel attends the inauguration of memorial at the site of last year's truck attack in a Christmas market at Breitscheidplatz square in Berlin



A girl cries as her mother combs her hair outside their home on the outskirts of Srinagar INDIA-DAILYLIFE/



An elephant dressed in a Santa Claus costume distributes a doll to students during Christmas celebrations at Jirasart school in Ayutthaya

Lola Astanova is a young pianist who has forged an exhilarating musical career and upended the classical music scene with her unique artistic approach and fashion. A modern-day virtuoso, Lola Astanova was born in Uzbekistan but has been residing in the U.S. since 2000. Astanova has already enjoyed a breathtaking career and has become famous not only for her virtuoso performances with major orchestras around the world, but also for her unique sense of style, which is feminine, sexy and vivacious.

According to Astanova, when she picks out her performance outfits she thinks about the repertoire as well as the venue and the audience.



"I want my outfits to look vivid and organic because it is a part of my presentation. For the people in the audience the concert is a special event, the event they have been waiting for and paid good money to attend, so the last thing they want to see is some messy figure that just rolled out of bed, and came to the stage to mechanically run through a bunch of notes," Astanova told Sputnik Mundo.

Her passion for performing, evocative of the Romantic age virtuosi, is her greatest love and through her videos many have discovered the music of Chopin, Liszt and Rachmaninoff for the first time. Astanova's own original virtuoso transcriptions have also become YouTube and Instagram sensations.



"Reading about Liszt and Chopin one quickly realizes that those were the rock stars of their day: free, passionate and real dandies. So, it is odd that their music has

***The Artist Attended Rice University In Houston
And Studied Music Overseas In Europe***

**Dazzling, Modern-Day Virtuoso Lola Astanova:
The Pianist Who is Redefining Classical Music**

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



A modern-day virtuoso, Lola Astanova was born in Uzbekistan, but has been residing in the U.S. since 2000. She attended Rice University in Houston as well as studied music overseas in Europe.

come to mean something restrictive, sad and reeking of naphthalene," Astanova said.



She further said that she deals with a living art form, the one that has a pulse, a breath, instincts, feelings, and thoughts. "I don't have a specific goal 'to break the stereotypes', I simply do what I love as I feel it, and I am very glad that it touches and inspires many people," the pianist said. Talking about her work ethic, the artist said that she believes her most valuable quality is her ability to focus, to block out

the noise and distractions, and to finish everything that she starts. "I think it's the foundation of success in anything," she said.

Her musical journey started at an early age when her mother, who was a piano teacher, gave her first lesson at the age of six. Lola instantly showed a talent for the piano and soon after she joined the studio of a renowned piano professor Tamara Popovich.

Looking back at her early days of playing the piano she said, "I was so little that I couldn't yet reach the pedals, and they had to put two large telephone books under my feet. Tamara Popovich was the person who developed my basic skills and forever instilled professionalism in me." She also studied with two musical geniuses Mark Rusak who was her first harmony professor, and Lev Naumov who was known simply as "the godfather of the Russian piano school." She moved to the United States in the early 2000s, and the main motivation behind that decision was

her career.



Astanova's big break came in 2007 when she starred in a \$1.6 million Neiman Marcus Classical Superstars Fantasy Concert, which also featured the Kirov Orchestra and was hosted by ABC's Regis Philbin. In 2012 the pianist made her Carnegie Hall debut which was hailed as a triumphant performance. With her unique style she has attracted a wider and younger audience to classical music.

Today, Astanova has a broad audience and

apart from a large fan base in the US, Canada, Europe and Russia, her posts draw huge numbers of viewers, in places such as Turkey and Iran, and in Asian countries - in China, Korea, and Singapore and also in Latin America in Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina.



"I am always fascinated to see those stats because the variety of cultures, languages, beliefs, social and political backgrounds among my viewers never ceases to amaze. For me, it is yet another confirmation that music is a universal language that connects us all," Astanova told Sputnik.

Her latest performance for a documentary film that featured her interpretation of Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" received an Emmy Award.

Talking about her future plans, Astanova said that the upcoming year promises to be very interesting. A documentary called "The Journey to the Theater of Silence", about her unique concert with Andrea Bocelli will be released.



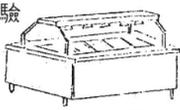
Secondly, Stjepan Hauser of the 2CELLOS and Astanova are preparing some duet recordings and a concert program that will, probably, "challenge a few more stereotypes about classical musicians."

"Finally, my own original compositions that up until now have been kept as 'classified' will be released, and, hopefully, they delight my loyal fans, and win over many new hearts," Astanova said. (Courtesy <https://sputniknews.com/society>)

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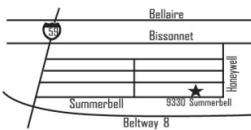
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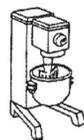
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A 17-year-old YouTube star insulted a notorious drug lord. He was found with at least 15 bullet wounds.

Juan Luis Lagunas Rosales was born in the Mexican state of Sinaloa, a mecca for cartels and the land of notorious drug lord Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán. Lagunas grew up never knowing his father. His mother left him with his grandmother as a child. Lagunas left his hometown at the age of 15 without finishing high school, moving to the nearby municipality of Culiacán and washing cars to make a living, he said in an interview in July. It was in this adopted town that he took on the nickname that would later become known across cyberspace: "El Pirata de Culiacán," or "The Pirate of Culiacán." He started landing invitations to more and more parties, and soon fell into a life of excessive drinking. He would post videos on social media showing him chugging beer and bottles of whiskey, sometimes getting so drunk he would pass out. The videos started going viral. In the years that followed, the bingeing teenager became a perverse YouTube sensation. At the age of 17, he racked up more than a million followers on Facebook and more than 300,000 on Instagram. His social media fame started earning him spots in music videos and at promotional events. Weaponized drones are often deployed by modern militaries, but now appear to have been adopted by Mexican gangs. In the battle for territory in Guanajuato, Mexico, police seized a kamikaze drone packed with explosives, as well as a remote detonator and a gun. Four suspected gang members believed to be linked to a Mexican drug cartel were arrested. The explosives, which were strapped to the drone, can only be sourced from the military. Questions remain as to how the suspected gang members got access to those explosives. His baby face, matched with his belligerent,

clownish behavior, entertained the masses. Yet it was easy to forget that he was still a boy. He drew a beard on his chin to look older. He tattooed his arms - a pirate on one, a tiger on the other. He posted pictures on Instagram with large guns, half-naked women and luxury cars. The drinking age in Mexico is 18, but "El Pirata de Culiacán" drank as if he had no limits. Like many teenage boys, he lived as if he was invincible, saying whatever he wanted about whomever he wanted. It was all a big game, a big party. But in Sinaloa, one of Mexico's most violent states, no one is invincible - especially when you mess with the wrong people. In one recent video posted online, a seemingly intoxicated Lagunas was recorded taking a stab at Nemesio Ocegerra Cervantes, also known as "El Mencho." Cervantes happens to be one of Mexico's most dangerous drug lords, according to U.S. government officials, the leader of the New Generation Cartel of Jalisco. "El Mencho a mí me pela la verga" he said, which means, more or less, "El Mencho, peel my c---," according to El Pais. And on Monday night, while he and his friends partied at a bar in Jalisco, a group of armed individuals burst in and fired at Lagunas, the Attorney General of Jalisco, Raúl Sánchez Jiménez, told Mexican media outlets. The teenager died, sustaining between 15 and 18 bullet wounds. Authorities managed to identify Lagunas by his tattoos. Prosecutors have not determined the identities or motives of those responsible. But they confirmed to news outlets that they are investigating a possible link to the recent videotaped insult toward El Mencho. El Mencho is one of the last people anyone would want to offend. His cartel, the New Generation, is relatively new, coalescing less than a decade ago. It



stemmed from the remnants of another group, the Milenio cartel, and makes money by selling guns, stealing gasoline, extortion and kidnapping. The Washington Post's Josh Partlow wrote in 2015. It is one of the fastest rising drug cartels in Mexico, operating in several Mexican states and forging underworld ties around the globe. The group has been linked to thousands of murders, according to a Rolling Stone profile. Many of them have been traced specifically to their leader, "El Mencho," who is reportedly a former police officer. Lagunas' death comes during a year that is on track to become the bloodiest on record in Mexico. In the first 10 months of 2017, 20,878 murders were counted nationwide, an average of 69 murders a day, Reuters reported. It's a dangerous time and place for anyone, but especially for a teenage boy living recklessly in search of fame. "He opted to make a career as a broken toy of cyberspace, a path he carved out drink by drink and that left him with enemies of flesh and blood," Univision reporter Fernando Mexia wrote in an article titled "The poisoned fame

of 'El Pirata.'" The YouTube star managed to "transcend borders," even landing in Rolling Stone - not for his fame, but for his death. His killing "gave him the popularity he never imagined," Mexia wrote. As the teenager's celebrity rose, activists criticized the musicians, bands and promoters who featured him drinking in music videos. The attention only encouraged his dangerous behavior and promoted the alcoholism of a minor, critics told Univision. "There are a lot of people who criticize him, but the truth is... that's why 'El Pirata' got started," said one artist, Luis Adame, of Último Escuadrón. "Everyone in their own way tries to find a way to get ahead." In recent interviews, Lagunas seemed to come to terms with his vices. He hoped to pursue a singing career, and reportedly had signed a contract with a record label. Speaking to Pepe Garza, a radio host and producer, in July, Lagunas said he knew he needed to rein in the drinking. "You drink a lot all at once, and the body isn't meant for that," Garza said to him.

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瀚歲文才學校 連精6年榮獲最佳教育獎、全年招收雙語幼兒園、課後輔導班(可代送回家)、中文班、西文班、GT英語、珠心算數學班、繪畫、鋼琴、Chess、Engineering、舞蹈 最佳校區: Fame Well School 2317 Settlers Way Blvd. Sugar Land 77478 最佳校區: Best Kids Academy 21915 Royal Montreal Dr. Katy 77450 最佳校區: 孔子學院國家漢辦授權漢語考試中心、國內外來美遊學團、暑期育樂營、Field Trip、籃球(可one on one)校隊代訓、乒乓球、羽毛球、游泳。 最佳校區、文理、才藝、游泳、球類、綜合學校專業教學20餘年豐富經驗 持政府執照學費可抵稅 休士頓華人唯一買地自建最大民營連鎖綜合學校附設: 游泳池、體育館、舞蹈室、會議室、繪畫室、鋼琴房、電腦室、圖書室、Playground、學校標準格局寬敞安全57,000呎, 全新設備、政府培訓一流師資、勤教嚴管、品質保證、學費合理, 課超所值。 KATY周六中文學校特設2歲-4歲幼兒班和5歲-12年級實力班 採用馬立平漢拼簡體字課本教學 珠心算數學 繪畫 GT 英語 老外學中文 鋼琴 舞蹈 籃球 乒乓球 西洋棋 珠心算實力班及數學高分保證班 (5歲~G8) 梁楚宜校長親授珠心算(加、減、乘、除)技巧, 啟發智慧, 增強記憶力, 配合應用數學分析演算, 訓練思考邏輯及計算能力的快又準, 使學習過程不在害怕, 而是充滿自信, 質量控管限定70位。 糖城、凱蒂唯一蒙特梭利雙語學校 (1歲半~5歲) 由Montessori專業執照經驗教師分級小班教學, 獨特教材及教具訓練手部肌肉, 使幼兒反應靈活強化自信心及群體生活能力, 提昇日後認真學習、閱讀書寫能力及情緒穩定。 天天密集中文教學建立識字背誦好根基。 供午餐及早晚點心。 課後輔導班 After School (PreK-9年級) 校車接送, 完成作業, 每日密集分級中文(漢拼簡體)教學、英語加強、考題訓練, 提供點心, 定期和家長聯繫。 暑期國外來美遊學營 (5歲~14歲) 安排知(感)性參觀從活動中潛移默化的認識美國生活文化、遠程旅遊。 國際熱愛大自然促進會 教導學生大自然快樂操、歡喜歌以達和諧的身心教育。 暑期游泳訓練密集班 (瀚歲校內標準游泳池) 專業教練教授呼吸打水、滾翻轉身、蹬腿出發、自由泳、仰泳、蛙泳、蝶泳。 繪畫基礎、中級、高級班 (5歲以上) 由三位專業老師教授各種繪畫技巧、物像遠近大小比例、色彩調配、及不同筆具和材料之使用。 含素描、彩色鉛筆、蠟筆、馬克筆、炭、墨汁、水彩、油彩、粉彩、膠彩并定期畫展。 籃球及乒乓球 1 on 1 或 5-12歲 控球/運球/投籃/傳球/接傳/防守/進攻/團隊戰略/體能彈跳。 孔子學院國家漢辦漢語考試中心(HSK)漢語水平考試、(YCT)中小學生漢語考試, 請上網查詢報名: www.chinesetest.cn

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