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Spring Branch ISD teacher arrested for alleged relationship



Inside C2

# Southern DAILY

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## Florence punishes Carolinas with torrential rain, flooding; six dead

WILSON, N.C. (Reuters) - Tropical Storm Florence dumped "epic" amounts of rain on North and South Carolina as it trudged inland on Saturday, triggering dangerous flooding, toppling trees, cutting power to nearly a million homes and businesses while causing at least six deaths.

Florence's intensity has diminished since it roared ashore along the U.S. mid-Atlantic coast on Friday as a hurricane. But its slow march over the two states, crawling west at only 2 miles per hour (3 km per hour), threatens to leave much of the region under water in the coming days.

"This system is unloading epic amounts of rainfall, in some places measured in feet and not inches," North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper told a news briefing about a storm that forecasters said was 300 miles (480 km) wide.

With flood waters rising rapidly in many communities, people trapped in homes awaited rescue, while tens of thousands hunkered down in shelters after fleeing their homes as the storm approached. Authorities warned about potential landslides and numerous roads were closed.

Utility crews worked to restore electricity. An estimated 772,000 people remained without power in North Carolina, 172,000 in South Carolina.

In Wilmington, a city of about 120,000 on North Carolina's Atlantic coastline along the Cape Fear River that is home to historic mansions and a decommissioned World War Two-era battleship, streets were strewn with downed tree limbs and carpeted with leaves and other debris. Electricity remained out for much of the city, with power lines lying across many roads like wet strands of spaghetti.



Flamingos are evacuated as a part of Storm Florence preparations at Riverbanks Zoo and Garden in South Carolina

## Wall Street gains with Apple, easing trade concerns



A demonstration of the newly released Apple products is seen following the product launch event in Cupertino

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Apple led a rebound in technology shares and boosted all three major U.S. stock indexes on Thursday, while trade worries eased after China said it was open to fresh talks with the United States.

Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in New York, U.S., September 7, 2018. REUTERS/Brendan McDermid

The technology sector .SPLRCT climbed 1.1 percent on the day, boosted by Apple's (AAPL.O) 2.3 percent gain.

Trade worries softened after the Trump administration invited Beijing for a new round of talks, even as Washington prepared to slap tariffs on \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods.

The timing of the talks remains unclear and President Donald Trump said in a tweet there is no pressure to make a deal.

On the economic front, U.S. consumer prices rose less than expected in August and underlying inflation pressures also appeared to be slowing, a report from the U.S. Labor Department showed.

"Stocks already got a boost yesterday when investors got word the Trump administration had reached out to China on trade talks. Also the inflation numbers came out lower than people had expected. That's a positive because it gives

the Fed cover to maybe move slower in raising interest rates which is good for equities," said Burns McKinney, portfolio manager at Allianz Global Investors in Dallas, Texas.

At 2:46PM ET, the Dow Jones Industrial Average .DJI rose 135.08 points, or 0.52 percent, to 26,134, the S&P 500 .SPX gained 15.14 points, or 0.52 percent, to 2,904.06 and the Nasdaq Composite .IXIC added 61.06 points, or 0.77 percent, to 8,015.29.

The Dow touched its highest since Feb. 1 and is roughly 2 percent shy of its all-time high hit on Jan. 26. The S&P 500 and the Nasdaq had already moved past their January peaks to record highs in prior weeks.

The trade-sensitive industrial sector .SPLRCI rose 0.5 percent. Caterpillar (CAT.N) was up 1.0 percent and Boeing (BA.N) rose 0.7 percent.

Apple, which has said tariffs could hit a "wide range" of its products, fell on Wednesday when it unveiled its largest-ever iPhone, but made only small, widely expected changes to its line-up.

The S&P consumer staples index .SPLRCS dropped 0.5 percent as shares of Kroger (KR.N) weighed on the sector.

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## Spring Branch ISD teacher arrested for alleged relationship

A 31-year-old Spring Branch ISD teacher has been charged with sexual assault of a child, accused of having an "improper relationship" with a student. Police arrested Whitney Grunder Laidlaw following allegations the Cornerstone Academy teacher had inappropriate contact with a student during the summer break.

Spring Branch ISD officials removed the seventh grade English language arts and social studies teacher from the classroom last week after learning of the allegations. She has been placed on administrative leave.

Laidlaw has been released from the Harris County Jail on bail and ordered to have no contact with the student, according to court records.

"We are outraged by this alleged conduct," the district said in a statement. "The safety of every SBISD student is our very highest priority, and having a strong moral compass is a key district

core value. We will never tolerate inappropriate actions on the part of any district employee who endangers or harms our students. These allegations, if true, are a complete breach of the trust our children, our community, and we place in our educators."

Counselors will be available to speak with students at Cornerstone.

Anyone with more information about this case is encouraged to contact the Houston Police Department at 832-394-5500 or the Spring Branch ISD Police Department at 713-984-9805.



Spring Branch ISD teacher Whitney Grunder Laidlaw, 31, was arrested Wednesday on charges of sexual assault of a child between the ages of 14 and 17 and inappropriate relationship with a student. She has been placed on administrative leave and is listed as a seventh grade English language arts and social studies teacher at the Cornerstone Academy.

## Post Oak Hotel awarded AAA's lone five-diamond rating in Houston

By Jordan Blum

The Post Oak Hotel at Uptown, Tilman Fertitta's 6-month-old luxury hotel near The Galleria, has been honored with AAA's only five-diamond rating in Houston.

Of the nearly 100 properties in the U.S. that have earned the five-diamond status, only three are in Texas. The other Lone Star State hotels on the list are the Ritz-Carlton in Dallas and the Emma Hotel in San Antonio.

Alison Cook at HoustonChronicle.com: Restaurant critic spends 72 hours in Tilmanland

According to the AAA, a five-diamond hotel is defined as one that "provides ultimate luxury, sophistication and comfort with extraordinary physical attributes, meticulous personalized service, extensive amenities and impeccable standards of excellence."

A view of the Presidential Suite at the Post Oak Hotel, 1600 West Loop South, Tuesday, June 5, 2018, in

Houston. (Melissa Phillip / Houston Chronicle)

The city's busy billionaire who owns Landry's Inc. and the Houston Rockets, seven hotels and five casinos oversaw even the tiniest details at the Post Oak to ensure its top rating. "There's never been a hotel built like this in Houston," he said just before the opening.

The Post Oak Hotel at Uptown, at 1600 W. Loop South, is a 38-story tower with 250 rooms, 20 residences, and a 35,000-square-foot conference facility including a ballroom.

Also on site are a Rolls-Royce showroom and a dealership for Bentley and Bugatti.

Some of the restaurants at the hotel complex are Mastro's Steakhouse, Bloom & Bee, H Bar, Craft F&B and Willie G's Seafood.

Rates start at \$409 for weekend, \$499 weekdays; the-postoak.com.



Fill your tank. While fuel prices remain the highest seasonally since 2014, gasoline costs are the lowest they've been since April.

# HOUSTON 2019

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# Editor's Choice



Students perform during a parade to commemorate the 197th anniversary of the independence from Spain, in Tegucigalpa



Boat that washed onto a marshy area is pictured after Hurricane Florence struck Wilmington



French President Emmanuel Macron shakes hands with visitors next to items for sale as the Elysee Palace opened its doors to the public in Paris



Pope Francis takes a selfie with a faithful as he meets with young people at the Politeama square in Palermo



Palestinian man scuffles with Israeli troops during a protest in the village of Ras Karkar in the occupied West Bank



French President Macron visits the "Picasso. Bleu et rose" exhibition dedicated to Pablo Picasso's blue and rose periods at the Musee d'Orsay in Paris



A children's doll is placed on a barricade built by environmentalists in the forest "Hambacher Forst" in Kerpen-Buir near Cologne



Lane Pittman of Jacksonville, Florida, stands in the wind and rain along Ocean Boulevard during Hurricane Florence in Myrtle Beach

HOUSTON (September 12, 2018) - When Priti Singh took over as CEO of Associated Testing Laboratories in Houston, her focus was on the immediate, day-to-day operations of the family-owned business that opened its doors in 1959.



Today, she has taken on a vastly broadened perspective powered by a strategic growth plan - sage advice she gained from the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program at Houston Community College.

Singh is among 21 Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses alumni who received certificates of completion at the summer class graduation ceremony at the HCC Missouri City campus.

Before taking part in the program, Singh said she had a parochial view of her business, which provides environmental and geotechnical engineering services, as well as construction materials testing and inspection.

"Now, I have more awareness of the different aspects of the business," she said. "We've implemented a growth plan and we're procuring new business."

While there is no one-size-fits-all formula for business success, many small business owners are getting ahead with the intensive training and guidance they receive in the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program.

"Today, there are roughly 600 small businesses that have received help from the Goldman Sachs program that began at HCC in 2011," said Rita Reed, the program's alumni manager.

During the summer session, the business leaders spent 14 weeks, roughly 100 class hours, soaking up an innovative management and business curriculum that included growth opportunities, money and metrics, a legal clinic, and marketing. The class also took part in one-on-one business advising and financial workshops, and got timely advice from Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses community partners.

"When you give business owners the opportunity to have the tools to grow their

Goldman Sachs 10K Small Businesses Program Graduates New HCC class

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



business, they will be able to increase their revenue and hire additional employees," said Manuel Aguilar, lead faculty for the Goldman Sachs program at HCC.

The deadline to apply for the spring 2019 session is Oct. 11, 2018. The program is open to business owners from across the Greater Houston region.

To learn more or apply, visit hccs.edu/10ksmallbiz or 10ksbapply.com.

Related

HCC's "Take One & Done" launches students into workforce

HOUSTON (July 30, 2018) - Houston Community College is pioneering a program to ensure students earn a level one certificate, receive resume writing assistance and get help with job interviews in just one semester. The "Take One & Done" program is being offered at HCC's Southeast College Eastside Campus.

"Students come full time and we will provide financial aid, child care from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. if necessary, and they will get a level one certificate in one of seven pro-



grams," says Melissa Gonzalez, president

of Southeast College. "We looked specifically at these programs, where there are jobs and there is a demand for workers."

"Take One and Done" includes level one certificates in:

- 1. Welding Technology-Basic Welding Helper
2. Construction Management Technology
3. Industrial Electricity Electrical Helper
4. Business Management-Insurance Specialist/Associate
5. Logistics & Supply Chain Management - Maritime Logistics & Specialist
6. Real Estate - Residential
7. HVAC

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7. HVAC

3. Industrial Electricity Electrical Helper



4. Business Management-Insurance Specialist/Associate



7. HVAC



8. Logistics & Supply Chain Management - Maritime Logistics & Specialist



9. Real Estate - Residential



While taking courses at the Eastside Campus, HCC will help students prepare for job searches. "They will be getting a professional resume done through our career center and we are going to provide interviews for every single student," Gonzalez says.

Gonzalez emphasizes that students also have the option to pursue an associate degree and prepare for a transfer to a four-year university. "We actually have an advisor on site from the University of Houston Downtown for our business program, but also for general UH programs," Gonzalez says.

• Fall 2018 Registration Begins May 7

• 16-Week Classes begin Aug. 27

• Morning and Evening Classes

• No Testing Required for Program Entry

• Payment Plans Available

• Financial Aid and Childcare (For those who qualify)

Registration for classes is going on right now. For additional information on "Take One & Done," go here: http://www.hccs.edu/campaigns/take-one. A video about the program is available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=33bKFw1-tbk&feature=youtu.be

About HCC

Houston Community College (HCC) is composed of 15 Centers of Excellence and numerous satellite centers that serve the diverse communities in the Greater Houston area by preparing individuals to live and work in an increasingly international and technological society.

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### Overview

*Rising property prices in China can help the country fend off some of the negative aspects of the trade war with the United States, according to CLSA property analyst Nicole Wong.*

*More expensive property would encourage buyers to make purchases to beat further anticipated rises, increase construction jobs and boost local government coffers, she says.*

*China has been seeking ways to blunt the negative effects of U.S. tariffs as the trade conflict drags on.*

A booming property sector would also increase new jobs centered on the construction industry, and developers' increased demand for land would mean local governments can rake in more revenues from land sales to invest in infrastructure.

"So the new economy of China is great, but then it really is the old economy that's going to be a very predictable macro tool for China in times of urgency," she said, referring to the distinction between headline-grabbing tech firms like Alibaba and long-standing sectors such as construction.



Land and housing have seen immense changes in the 40 years since the Communist Party began opening up China's economy to free market forces.

One of those reforms was allowing citizens to own property. As China's economy has grown into the world's second largest, many have seen their homes become a key source of personal wealth.

Wong said that potential buyers are in a good position because prices are currently affordable and there is plenty of room to take on mortgages.

"Overall, the China property market is just not leveraged," she said, stressing that household cash savings outnumber outstanding mortgages three to one.

## China May Use Its Property Markets To Defend Against Trump's Trade War Offensive

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



A poster featuring Xi Jinping, China's president, hangs on a wall as residential and commercial buildings stand in the background in China's Hebei province. (Photo/Bloomberg/Getty Images)

"So this is an industry that's still got a lot of leeway to leverage up, which we believe would happen," she said.

China has a potentially useful defense in its ongoing trade war with the United States: its vast property market.



The same sector that has long been a source of anxiety about China's economic fate could also prove to be its temporary savior in the face of tariff pressure from the U.S., according to Nicole Wong, managing director for property research at

CLSA.

Authorities are likely to encourage property prices, which are already rising, to increase further to help boost the economy, Wong told reporters Tuesday at the annual CLSA Investors' Forum in Hong Kong.

"With this trade war going on, we think that the China property market policy would reverse because with a trade war there is this risk of losses of jobs in the unskilled category," Wong said.

"And the property sector is a very good sort of replacement," she added.

U.S. President Donald Trump is targeting tariffs on potentially hundreds of billions of dollars in Chinese goods in a bid to both to rebalance trade between the countries and also pressure Beijing to fundamentally change industrial and commercial policies.

China has responded with tariffs of its own, but it imports far less from the U.S.

than it exports to the world's largest economy, so it has had to evaluate other responses. Those have included potentially stimulating the Chinese economy by letting its currency, the yuan, move lower against the dollar and encourage banks to lend more money.



### 'Leeway to leverage up'

Wong said that rising property prices can help stimulate the economy in several ways, such as by encouraging buyers to accelerate purchases before the cost goes up, thus bringing forward future demand.

Another positive result of costlier housing, she said, is that savings will move out of banks and into the real economy.

A booming property sector would also increase new jobs centered on the construction industry, and developers' increased demand for land would mean local governments can rake in more revenues from land sales to invest in infrastructure.

"So the new economy of China is great, but then it really is the old economy that's going to be a very predictable macro tool for China in times of urgency," she said, referring to the distinction between headline-grabbing tech firms like Alibaba and long-standing sectors such as construction.



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"So this is an industry that's still got a lot of leeway to leverage up, which we believe would happen," she said. (Courtesy cnbc.com)

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美南國際電視15.3日前「電視廣播合為一體」全球直播上線，手機掃描二維碼就可24小時觀看該頻道，獲得廣大迴響；為服務早晨上班通勤觀眾，讓新聞播報更即時，美南國際電視STV15.3即將在6月18日全球直播晨間新聞「早安，休士頓」，新聞播報時間為上午7點至9點讓觀眾行車間也可以方便收聽，掌握國際和社區重大新聞資訊。美南國際電視15.3創下華人媒體創舉，將電視與廣播融為一體，帶給觀眾不同體驗。全球晨間新聞「早安，休士頓」將採用全新主播陣容，用專業新聞態度為社區觀眾帶來最即時多元的新聞報導。「早安，休士頓」囊括國際時事、社區動態、生活藝文資訊三大版塊，播報新聞同時也會穿插氣象和路況報導，觀眾可利用網站搜尋、微信連結或下載Apps方式，行車間連接到車載音響設備（數據機/藍芽設備），可收看及收聽該頻道。