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Texas A&M, UT Austin each get \$20M from Dril-Quip founder



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China says U.S. trying to force it to submit on trade as new tariffs kick in

BEIJING (Reuters) - The United States and China imposed fresh tariffs on each other's goods on Monday as the world's biggest economies showed no signs of backing down from an increasingly bitter trade dispute that is expected to hit global economic growth. Soon after the new duties went into effect, China accused the United States of engaging in "trade bullying" and said it was intimidating other countries to submit to its will, the official Xinhua news agency said, reiterating China's willingness to fight if necessary. But Beijing also said it was willing to restart trade negotiations with the United States if the talks are "based on mutual respect and equality," Xinhua said, citing a white paper on the dispute published by China's State Council. U.S. tariffs on \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods and retaliatory tariffs by Beijing on \$60 billion worth of U.S. products took effect at midday Asian time, though the initial level of the duties was not as high as earlier feared. Stocks on Wall Street closed lower. Boeing Co, the biggest U.S. exporter to China, dropped 1.1 percent and Caterpillar Inc 1.5 percent on the New York Stock Exchange. Network equipment maker Cisco also fell. "One of the bigger risks with these tariffs going into effect is that the United States may be pushed out of the Chinese market, and it is a growing market," said Scott Brown, chief economist at Raymond James in St. Petersburg, Florida. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 181.45 points, or 0.68 percent, to 26,562.095, and the S&P 500 finished

10.30 points lower, or 0.35 percent, to 2,919.37, but the Nasdaq Composite rose 6.29 points, or 0.08 percent, to 7,993.25. Moody's said on Monday additional U.S. tariffs on Chinese imports are negative for various sectors in both countries and could spread beyond targeted sectors, adding that tariffs are credit negative for U.S. furniture & home goods retailers, with more than half their imports coming from China last year. The United States will levy tariffs of 10 percent initially, rising to 25 percent at the end of 2018. Beijing has imposed rates of 5 percent to 10 percent and warned it would respond to any rise in U.S. tariffs on Chinese products accordingly. The two sides had already slapped tariffs on \$50 billion worth of each other's goods. For U.S. consumers, the new duties could translate into higher prices for Chinese products ranging from vacuum cleaners to technology gear such as home modems and routers, while U.S. goods targeted by Beijing include liquefied natural gas and certain types of aircraft. President Donald Trump is pressing China to reduce its huge bilateral trade surplus and make sweeping changes to its policies on trade, technology transfers and high-tech industrial subsidies. Beijing has denied that U.S. companies are forced to transfer technology and sees Washington's demands on rolling back its industrial policies as an attempt to contain China's economic rise.



FILE PHOTO: A container is loaded on to the first Chinese container ship to depart after the inauguration of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor port in Gwadar

Trump Supreme Court nominee rejects 'false accusations'

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh said on Monday he would not step aside after a second woman accused him of sexual misconduct decades ago, with President Donald Trump and fellow Republicans showing no signs of relenting in their push for his Senate confirmation. "The truth is I've never sexually assaulted anyone, in high school or otherwise," Kavanaugh said in an interview on Fox News Channel's "The Story with Martha MacCallum," to air on Monday evening. The allegations, dating to the 1980s, have put in jeopardy Kavanaugh's chances of winning confirmation to the top U.S. court in a Senate narrowly controlled by Trump's party with high-stakes congressional elections just weeks away. Senate Republican leader McConnell: Democrats 'trying to destroy' Kavanaugh



Demonstrators chant before being arrested as they protest against U.S. Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh in front of the office of Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) on Capitol Hill in Washington

Senate Republican leader McConnell: Democrats 'trying to destroy' Kavanaugh
Confirmation of the federal appeals court judge to the high court and the broader federal judiciary to the right. The Senate Judiciary Committee has scheduled a hearing for Thursday to hear from Kavanaugh and Christine Blasey Ford, who last week accused him of sexual assault in 1982. Ford, a psychology professor at Palo Alto University in California, said Kavanaugh attacked her and tried to remove her clothing while he was drunk at a party when he was 17 years old and she was 15 when both were high school students in Maryland. "I am not questioning and have not questioned that perhaps Dr. Ford at some point in her life was sexually assaulted by someone at some place, but what I know is I've never sexually assaulted anyone," Kavanaugh said in the Fox News interview. He added he was not present at a party like the one described by Ford and noted that others Ford said were at the gathering had no recollection of it. "I want a fair process where I can defend my integrity and I know I'm telling the truth. I know my lifelong record and I'm not going to let false accusations drive me out of this process. I have faith in

God and I have faith in the fairness of the American people," Kavanaugh said. He added he "did not have sexual intercourse or anything close to sexual intercourse in high school or for many years thereafter." A second woman, Deborah Ramirez, accused Kavanaugh in an article published in the New Yorker magazine on Sunday of sexual misconduct during the 1983-84 academic year when both attended Yale University. Ramirez is cited by the New Yorker as saying Kavanaugh exposed himself to her during a drunken dormitory party. Kavanaugh and his Republican allies portrayed the allegations as part of a "smear campaign" by Democrats who have fought his nomination from the outset. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell made clear that no matter what happened at the hearing, the full Senate would vote on Kavanaugh's confirmation. "This fine nominee to the Supreme Court will receive a vote in this Senate in the near future," McConnell said on the Senate floor.



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Things to know about Houston's soon-to-open sex robot brothel

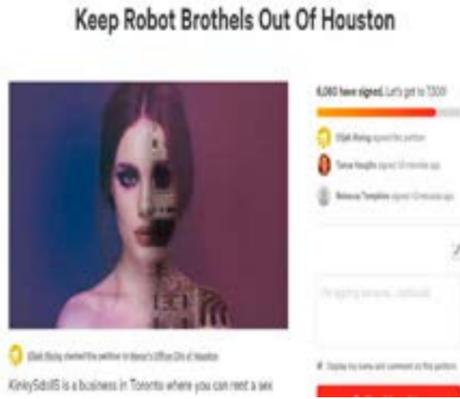
By Fernando Ramirez

In a surprise reveal last week, a Toronto businessman announced that he would be opening the nation's first robot sex brothel in Houston.

The business, set to open its doors later this month or in early October, will allow customers to rent or purchase a robotic sex doll that, according to the company's founder, is "warm and ready to play."

Already, the last-second announcement has raised many, many questions and plenty of outrage about the nature of the business and what it means for Houston. ro-themed patio bar and restaurant in Montrose that boasts a wild and colorful aesthetic.

Eight Row Flint, an upscale Heights icehouse that serves up whiskey, beer and tacos.



Texas A&M, UT Austin each get \$20M from Dril-Quip founder

Texas A&M University and the University of Texas at Austin will each receive \$20 million to support the mechanical engineering departments at the universities.

The gifts, announced Monday by the Texas A&M Foundation, are from alumnus J. Mike Walker, the co-founder of Dril-Quip, a Houston-based manufacturer of offshore drilling and production equipment. Walker earned a bachelor's degree and a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering from Texas A&M and a master's degree in mechanical engineering from UT Austin.

"Mike Walker has made an extraordinary investment in the future of engineering, not only for the University of Texas, but for our state and our nation," Gregory L. Fenves, president of UT Austin, said in a joint statement with A&M.

"This wonderful act on his part will propel an already stellar mechanical engineering program to new heights in our continual pursuit of excellence and mission to develop leaders who serve the world,"

Michael K. Young, president of Texas A&M University said in the statement.

Walker co-founded Dril-Quip in 1981. The company, with divisions in Texas, Scotland, Brazil and Singapore, designs and manufactures subsea, surface and offshore rig equipment for use oil and gas companies and drilling contractors across the globe.

"My experiences at these two universities certainly helped me grow as an engineer," Walker said. "But they also taught me how to be a leader — how to collaborate on big ideas, persevere through tough challenges and bounce back from failure. My education shaped who I am today, and I want to make that same opportunity available to as many students as I can."

Walker's career spanned from work at Exxon Refining, McEvoy and Vetco Offshore, and included a three-year stint teaching engineering mechanics. He retired from Dril-Quip in 2011 after serving as the company's chairman and CEO.



Four-time Grammy winner Lyle Lovett was a member of the Texas A&M Class of 1979.

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Editor's Choice



Sep 24, 2018; Memphis, TN, USA; Memphis Grizzlies forward Chandler Parsons (25) poses during media at FedEx Forum. Mandatory Credit: Justin Ford-USA TODAY Sports



Beto O'Rourke visits cities along the border after debating Ted Cruz



U.S. President Trump holds bilateral meeting with Egypt's President el-Sisi on the sidelines of the 73rd United Nations General Assembly in New York



Demonstrators shout slogans during a protest against the government's economic measures in Buenos Aires,



U.S. President Trump participates in appropriations legislation signing ceremony in Las Vegas, Nevada



Supporters along the border come out in droves to see Beto O'Rourke.



Secret Service agent cleans U.S. President Donald Trump's new Cadillac limousine nicknamed "The Beast" before debut drive in New York City



Residential buildings are seen in San Salvador

In April 2017, Crime Stoppers of Houston, working with Precinct 5 Constable Ted Heap, formed a city-wide Anti-Animal Cruelty Partner Council to bring key partners and agencies together to collaborate on finding solutions to improve the way crimes against animals are reported and responded to in Harris County and the City of Houston.

With over 50 law enforcement agencies in Harris County, citizens often do not know where this type of abuse can be reported. The council's goal was to make it easy for citizens to report animal cruelty and neglect to the correct agency, thereby helping animals in need as quickly as possible. This also would free up resources that were incorrectly getting the calls.



Active members of this council include Harris County Constable Precinct 5, Harris County District Attorney's Office, Harris County Sheriff's Office, Houston Police Department, Crime Stoppers of Houston, Houston PetSet, Houston Humane Society, ADORE Houston, and Houston K-911 Rescue. Following Hurricane Harvey, the Harris County Animal Cruelty Taskforce, led by Harris County Precinct 5 Constable Ted Heap, was formed with the primary goal of streamlining the process of where and how animal cruelty can be reported in the Greater Houston Area. The taskforce created 832-927-PAWS in order to further structure this reporting process, speed up response times and minimize duplication of efforts across the county.



WHAT IS THE HARRIS COUNTY ANIMAL CRUELTY TASKFORCE?

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



Additionally, the Taskforce secured a partnership with drumBEAT Marketing and their website, www.Best4Pets.org. drumBEAT Marketing is donating the time and services to create the one-stop website for citizens in Harris County and the Greater Houston Metropolitan area to report animal cruelty and get information on all issues pertaining to animal welfare. Harris County Sheriff's Office has also added an additional Deputy to animal cruelty investigations.



Harris County Animal Cruelty Task Force (HCACTF) is designed to be a proactive and comprehensive

approach to investigating human cruelty against animals. Concerned citizens can report cruelty through either the website www.927PAWS.org or by calling 832-927-PAWS(7297). Through education, awareness and continued collaboration, the Harris County Animal Cruelty Taskforce hopes to make a larger impact in the lives of abused and neglected animals.

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A Lady Vanishes: In China, A Movie Star Disappears Amid Culture Crackdown

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

BEIJING/SHANGHAI (Reuters) – Fan Bingbing, an A-list Chinese movie star who has appeared in the “X-Men” and “Iron Man” film franchises, has more than 62 million followers online in China and fronted campaigns for Montblanc watches and De Beers diamonds, has disappeared.

The star’s vanishing act – she dropped off the radar in June when reports started to swirl that she was involved in a probe into tax evasion in the film industry – has sparked wild speculation in China about her fate, including reports the actress had been detained.

Reuters was unable to contact Fan. Calls to her agent went unanswered. When asked about Fan, a spokesman for China’s Foreign Ministry replied: “Do you think this is a question of diplomacy?” The Beijing Public Security Bureau declined to comment.

The real-life drama has been playing out at a time when Beijing is tightening the reins on popular culture, looking to stamp out behavior seen as going against the ruling Communist Party’s ideological line and co-opting movie stars, pop bands and online celebrities to endorse socialist values.



Fan Bingbing.

“It is written in our new movie promotion law that entertainers need to pursue both professional excellence and moral integrity,” said Si Ruo, a researcher at the School of Journalism and Communication at China’s prestigious Tsinghua University.

“In the unbridled growth of the industry in the past few years, we might have overlooked the need for positive energy, so the government’s intervention is rea-



FILE PHOTO: Director Wang Xiaoshuai (R) and cast member Fan Bingbing attend a news conference for the film “Rizhao Chongqing” at the 63rd Cannes Film Festival, France May 13, 2010. REUTERS/Yves Herman/File Photo

sonable.”

Fan Bingbing is the most prominent example. The actress, 36, is China’s equivalent of Hollywood star Jennifer Lawrence. She topped Forbes’ China celebrity rich list last year with earnings of 300 million yuan (\$43.78 million). A Chinese TV anchor in May was widely reported to have posted tax-dodging pay agreements online known as “yin-yang” contracts – one setting out the real agreed payment terms and a second with a lower figure for the tax authorities – that appeared to implicate Fan. Hong Kong’s South China Morning Post reported that Fan’s studio denied she had ever signed separate contracts for a single job. China’s tax bureau said in June it was launching a tax evasion investigation into the film and television

industry.

CULTURE CLEAN-UP

But the culture clean-up is more widespread, snaring video games, online bloggers and rap artists. Critics say it threatens to stifle creativity in some sectors, and is hitting the bottom lines of firms such as tech and gaming giant Tencent.



State-run media have begun using phrases such as “tainted artists”, with official bodies pledging to ban stars who

behave badly, including drug taking, gambling or visiting prostitutes.

An open letter earlier this month from members of the Beijing Trade Association for Performances said the body would “purify” the city’s entertainment and performance sector and guide artists towards “core socialist values”.

“Celebrities are seen as a weapon in the Party’s ideological battle, which is fought across all sectors all the time,” said Jonathan Sullivan, Director of China Programmes at the University of Nottingham.

China has long sought to control the creative arts, from censoring movies to literature. However, a boom in online media has prompted a new push to cleanse the arts world, as President Xi Jinping looks to tighten his grip over a huge and diverse cultural scene popular with China’s youth.

That drive has created a dragnet that has swept over the creative arts, leaving few unaffected.

Fangu, a grunge band from Beijing, which has toured across China, said it had hit an issue with its name, which translates literally as “anti-bone”, though means something closer to “rebellious spirit”.



Chinese grunge band

The band was forced to change its name this week ahead of a concert in Shang-

hai. “The relevant bodies do not allow the word ‘anti’ so we have to change the name temporarily,” Qi Tian, an assistant to the band, told Reuters.

Video game makers have had to tweak their offerings to add patriotic Chinese elements. Others have simply seen approvals withheld. Big media platforms have been rapped for not censoring their content enough and some have had to take sites offline.

A report this month from a state university and circulated in official media, ranked Chinese stars in order of their social responsibility, including their moral conduct – underscoring an increasingly puritanical focus on good behavior.

Fan came in last place with zero points. The ongoing shake-up is also hitting China’s burgeoning movie and entertainment industry hard. Share prices of related companies tanked after the government probe was announced and many are conducting self-checks on their tax situations.



Chinese fans at rock concert.

Claire Dong, partner and attorney at Beijing-based Tiantai law firm, said there has been a surge of consulting requests since Fan got into hot water.

New policies are swiftly eroding the favorable tax treatment that actors and artists once enjoyed.

“This is what the government needed to do,” Dong said. “The government needed to guide the actors to be more focused on acting, not money making.” (\$1 = 6.8528 Chinese yuan renminbi) (Courtesy cnbc.com)

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