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Chuck E. Cheese's to open first rebranded store in Houston



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Trump, Iran's Rouhani exchange threats, insults on U.N.'s world stage

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters) - U.S. President Donald Trump and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani exchanged taunts at the United Nations General Assembly on Tuesday with Trump vowing more sanctions against Tehran and Rouhani suggesting his American counterpart suffers from a "weakness of intellect."

Trump used his annual address to the United Nations on Tuesday to attack Iran's "corrupt dictatorship," praise last year's bogeyman North Korea and lay down a defiant message that he will reject globalism and protect American interests.

But much of his 35-minute address was aimed squarely at Iran, which the United States accuses of harboring nuclear ambitions and fomenting instability in the Middle East through its support for militant groups in Syria, Lebanon and Yemen.

"Iran's leaders sow chaos, death and destruction," Trump told the gathering in the green-marbled hall. "They do not respect their neighbors or borders or the sovereign rights of nations."

Rouhani, addressing the assembled world leaders later, sharply criticized Trump's decision to withdraw from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, said he had "no need for a photo opportunity" with Trump and suggested the U.S. president's pull back from global institutions was a character defect.

"Confronting multilateralism is not a sign of strength. Rather it is a symptom of the weakness of intellect - it betrays an inability in understanding a complex and inter-

connected world," he said.

Trump's address was met largely by silence from world leaders still not comfortable with go-it-alone views that have strained U.S. relationships with traditional allies worldwide. His speech, while delivered in a low-key fashion, was nonetheless a thunderous recitation of his "America First" policies. He has disrupted the world order by withdrawing the United States from the Iran nuclear deal and the Paris climate accord, and threatened to punish NATO nations for not paying more for the ir common defense.

"We will never surrender America's sovereignty to an unelected, unaccountable, global bureaucracy," Trump said, in language popular with his political base. "America is governed by Americans. We reject the ideology of globalism, and we embrace the doctrine of patriotism."

Besides calling out Iran, Trump also criticized China for its trade practices but made no mention of Russia's interference in Syria's war or its suspected meddling in U.S. elections.



U.S. President Trump addresses the 73rd session of the United Nations General Assembly at U.N. headquarters in New York

Google to acknowledge privacy mistakes as U.S. seeks input

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Leading internet search engine Google will acknowledge that it has made "mistakes" on privacy issues in testimony an executive of the Alphabet Inc (GOOGL.O) unit will deliver to a U.S. Senate committee on Wednesday, according to a document reviewed by Reuters.

"We acknowledge that we have made mistakes in the past, from which we have learned, and improved our robust privacy program," Google chief privacy officer Keith Enright will say in written testimony before the Senate Commerce Committee. Google will testify alongside AT&T Inc (T.N), Amazon.com Inc (AMZN.O), Apple Inc (AAPL.O) and other companies amid growing concerns about data privacy.

Google's written testimony did not identify specific prior mistakes but the company has come under fire for privacy issues.

In 2012, Google agreed to pay a then record \$22.5 million civil penalty to settle Federal Trade Commission charges that it misrepresented to Apple Safari Internet browser users that it would not place tracking "cookies" or serve them targeted ads.

A year earlier, Google agreed to an FTC privacy settlement and regular privacy audits for 20 years after the government charged it used deceptive tactics and violating consumer privacy promises when it launched its social network, Google Buzz.

In August, Alphabet was sued and accused of illegally

tracking movements of millions of iPhone and Android phone users even when they use a privacy setting to prevent it.



A Google sign is seen during the WAIC (World Artificial Intelligence Conference) in Shanghai

The U.S. Commerce Department said it was seeking comments on how to set nationwide data privacy rules in the wake of tough new requirements adopted by the European Union and California.

Also, the Justice Department said it held a "listening session" with state attorneys general on how the government can safeguard consumers online. Senate Commerce committee chairman John Thune wrote that Congress must work on enshrining consumer data privacy protections into law. Congress has questions about how internet companies sell advertising and use data from email accounts or other services. Thune wrote in The Hill newspaper that "mounting controversies" have fed doubt that tech companies can "regulate themselves and enforce real privacy safeguards for the collection and use of our digital data."

Massive breaches of data privacy have compromised personal information of millions of U.S. internet and social media users, including notable breaches at large retailers and credit reporting agency Equifax Inc (EFX.N). Enright's testimony says "with advertising, as with all our products, users trust us to keep their personal information confidential and under their control. We do not sell personal information. Period." Andrew DeVore, an Amazon vice president, will tell the committee that new European privacy rules "required us to divert significant resources to administrative and record-keeping tasks and away from inventing new features for customers."

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Chuck E. Cheese's to open first rebranded store in Houston

Chuck E. Cheese's on Thursday plans to open its first redesigned store in Houston, part of a national rebranding effort that aims to improve the customer experience for parents and kids.

The Irving chain's classic restaurants and birthday venues -- remember bright colors, flashing lights and the smell of greasy pizza -- are being replaced with modern interiors featuring muted colors, updated furniture and house-made pizza, sandwiches and wraps.

The first 2.0 store in Houston, located at 146 FM 1960, will have a light-up dance floor and hourly live shows instead of the animatronic show. In the arcade game area, "Play Passes" cards will replace tokens. Tickets redeemable for prizes will still be around.

"This new location is a landmark of the brand's evolution and it will provide a modern, clean and fun experience for the entire family for years to come," the company said in a statement.



"It's been an amazing ride": Texas country singer Charlie Robison retires due to surgery problems

By Craig Hlavaty

Texas Red Dirt country scene mainstay Charlie Robison announced on Monday via social media that he has called it a career after complications from a surgery earlier this year damaged his vocal cords. Robison, just 54 years old, has been a constant touring act on the Lone Star circuit and beyond for decades. His debut solo album titled "Bandera" was released in 1996. His latest album, "High Life," came out in 2013. One of his most enduring hits, covered by many in his scene, was 1998's "My Hometown" which name-checks his native Houston and is an autobiography up to that point in his career.

Earlier this year in April his official Instagram page revealed that Robison had serious throat surgery. He had been playing shows regularly up until at least March. On his official Facebook page where he communicates

with over 86,000 fans, Robison released a statement. His trademark rugged personality seems to still be in place. "Hey amigos, Charlie here. I'm sure you've all been wondering where I've been. Well, at the beginning of this year I underwent a surgical procedure that because of complications left me with the permanent inability to sing. Therefore, with a very heavy heart I am officially retiring from the stage and studio."

Robison added, "Gonna keep it short but just wanted y'all to hear it from me. It's been an amazing ride and I cannot tell you all what the last 25 years has meant to me. I was looking forward to another 25 but as they say "(expletive) happens". I thank you all for everything you've given me and I hope I was able to give you a fraction of the happiness you gave me. It was a hell of a ride but as they say all good things must end. Keep on supporting this thing we call Texas/Red Dirt and hopefully we'll all get to have a cocktail or two and talk about the good ol' days. Until then, Buenos Noches. It's been fun. Love each and every one of y'all. C."



Charlie Robison performs at the Redneck Country Club in Stafford in October 2016. Robison announced this week that he has retired from performing due to throat surgery.

Advertisement for the 2018 Houston Travel Shopping Guide. The image shows a magazine spread with various articles and a central guidebook cover. The cover features the title '2018 休斯頓旅遊購物指南 HOUSTON TRAVEL SHOPPING GUIDE VOLUME 5' and lists several featured restaurants and locations. A large red banner at the bottom reads '請至本報社 免費取閱' (Please come to our newspaper office for free pickup).

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Editor's Choice



South Africa's President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa addresses the United Nations General Assembly in New York



U.S. President Trump addresses the 73rd session of the United Nations General Assembly at U.N. headquarters in New York



Bill Cosby departs the Montgomery County Courthouse in handcuffs after being sentenced in his sexual assault trial on September 25, 2018 in Norristown



The financial district of La Defense is seen during sunset near Paris, France, September 25, 2018. REUTERS/Christian Hartmann



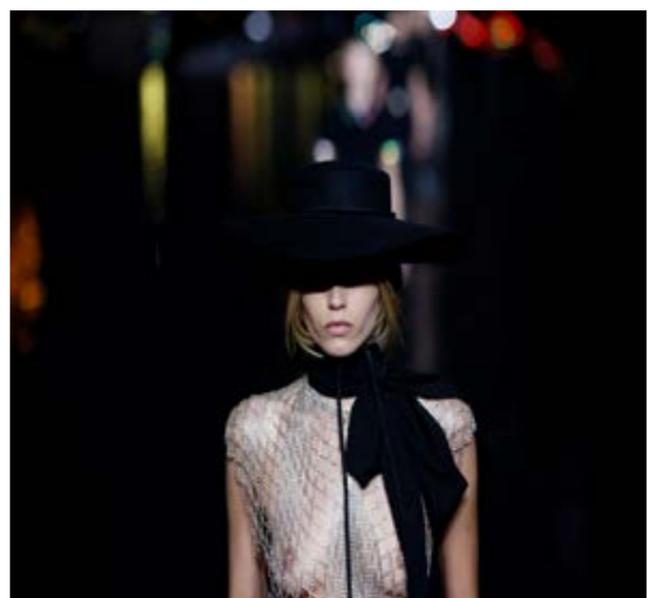
Britain's Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, leaves after attending the opening of 'Oceania' at the Royal Academy of Arts in London



FILE PHOTO: A Canadian dollar coin commonly known as the "Loonie" is pictured in this illustration picture taken in Toronto



Carabao Cup - Third Round - Wolverhampton Wanderers v Leicester City



A model presents a creation by designer Anthony Vaccarello as part of his Spring/Summer 2019 women's ready-to-wear collection show for fashion house Saint Laurent during Paris Fashion Week in Paris

Texas Bullet Train One Step Closer To Reality With \$300M Loan

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



Proposed Texas Bullet Train Route

AUSTIN (KXAN) — A Texas company wanting to build the state's first high-speed passenger rail line got a major boost recently.

Texas Central got a loan of up to \$300 million from Japan Overseas Infrastructure Investment Corporation for Transportation & Urban Development and Japan Bank for International Cooperation.

Travis Kelly, vice president of Texas Central, said this is critical to "completing the regulatory processes, doing engineering and design work and securing permits."

"Driving is unpredictable," Kelly said. "It should take 4.5 hours to go from Dallas to Houston, but it often doesn't."

The bullet train Texas Central is proposing is supposed to take you from Dallas to Houston in 90 minutes.

"You can use it to surf the web, take a nap, get ready for your meeting, have a meal," Kelly said. "Whatever you need to do with your time, you can do that on the train."

Kelly explained they're working with Central Japan Railway Company, which operates high-speed rail lines in Japan.

"They introduced the concept of high-speed passenger trains to the world [in the 1960s]," Kelly said. "They've since been optimizing and improving on that technology over those many decades. We're going to be deploying their technology."

Kelly said, right now, their goal is to secure more funding and start construction next year. They expect construction to take about 5 years.

"I think it's an aggressive schedule," said Chandra Bhat at UT Austin's Center for Transportation Research. "If everything else works out from the technology perspective, from the construction perspective, it may be feasible. But I think there are other elements that eventually come up that have to be addressed and that might put

this off."

Another project in the works in Texas is Virgin Hyperloop One.

They announced their plans to connect North Texas and Laredo through Hyperloop back in July. Their long-term proposal includes a stop in Austin.

Professor Christian Claudel at UT Austin said, "Hyperloop is a radical change from the bullet train concept."

Hyperloop is a low-pressure tunnel where pods can travel at up to 700 miles per hour, but Claudel said it is more expensive and harder to develop.

"I think that commercial exploitation with passengers is at least a decade away. One of the most difficult parts is safety and certifications," Claudel said.

Virgin Hyperloop One representatives said, however, their system is cheaper to build, maintain and operate.

They sent a statement to KXAN after this story aired:

"Virgin Hyperloop One's goal is to have operational systems in service by the mid-2020s, but much of our ability to meet that goal will depend on the speed in which the regulatory process moves forward. So far, we've received a very positive response from government to our technology."

The \$300 million loan Texas Central got is just a fraction of what they need to complete the project. They expect the Dallas-Houston route will cost about \$15 billion to complete.

Hyperloop One doesn't have any total cost estimates yet.

Related

Northwest Mall could gain new life as terminal for Houston-Dallas bullet train

Hundreds turned out in Cypress to ex-

press displeasure with project.

Once a Houston destination for shopping, movies and visits with Santa, the site of Northwest Mall is poised for revival as a bullet train terminal, with local officials and train backers seeing dollar signs from the sales tax growth potential.

Texas Central Partners and Houston-area elected officials on Monday announced that the company, which is seeking federal approval for a 240-mile high-speed train line, has chosen the mall's 45-acre tract near Loop 610 and U.S. 290 as its preferred site for the southern terminal.

Mayor Sylvester Turner called the announcement further proof of a dramatic change in how — and where — people will travel in the Houston region.

"We are moving to a new phase in this city," Turner said at a Monday ceremony announcing the site selection and releasing renderings of the proposed station.

The station would alter mobility for miles around it, as Houston — with some yet-to-be-determined help from Texas Central — aims to connect the location to downtown, both Houston-area airports and other major job and entertainment centers.

The announcement was timed to coincide with a public hearing Monday night in Cypress on the high-speed rail line, where critics lined up to lament the plan, which calls for trains on elevated tracks.

"We have been shouting this from the rooftops ... it does not cash flow," said Waller County Judge Trey Duhon, who said he fears the company will seek a government bailout if allowed to build. "It may not run through your property, but it will run through all of our pocketbooks."

The project, expected to cost between \$15 billion and \$18 billion to build, must receive federal approval to proceed, even though it is privately funded.

Though vigorously opposed by rural areas where the train is expected to speed by at more than 200 mph, Texas Central has broad support in the metro areas. Both the Houston and Dallas regions are expected to swell to 10 million residents by 2035.

That growth will require new ways to move, officials said, for both regions to reach their economic potential.

"Right now, we compete against Dallas. But with that 90-minute trip, we will compete with Dallas," Harris County Precinct 4 Commissioner Jack Cagle said.

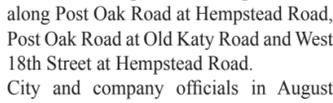
Texas Central has an option to buy the Northwest Mall land, said Jack Matthews, who is handling property acquisition for the company. Transit improvements

Redeveloping the site into a major train hub that would attract an estimated 18,000 travelers daily is expected to result in new restaurants, shops and hotels in the vicinity. Plans call for trains to leave every 30 minutes throughout most of the day from Houston, making the trip to Dallas in around 90 minutes. A stop also is planned in the Roans Prairie area of eastern Grimes County, between College Station and Huntsville.

The station also means road and transit improvements. The company in a statement said it expects road improvements along Post Oak Road at Hempstead Road, Post Oak Road at Old Katy Road and West 18th Street at Hempstead Road.

City and company officials in August agreed to share information and develop a plan for road and transit improvements.

Future proposed routes of the Texas Bullet Train.



Future proposed routes of the Texas Bullet Train.

Prior to the agreement, downtown officials and some city leaders were discouraged when an early analysis by Texas Central showed it would be cost-prohibitive to bring bullet trains inside Loop 610.

Though not certain, Metropolitan Transit Authority chairwoman Carrin Patman said the hope is to develop light rail between the high-speed train terminal and downtown.

"What we'd like to see is something where maybe there is an opportunity for partnership, something that benefits both sides, which we're looking for, for this and other parts of the (Metro) service area," Patman said.

All of those plans for encouraging growth hinge on the trains ever getting on the tracks.

'Devil is in the details'

The train plan is vehemently opposed by rural landowners and officials who say it only benefits the metro regions, while ruining their quality of life and tranquility. Skeptics have cast doubt on the proposal, ranging from its business sense to claims made by Texas Central about noise, visual effects and ridership claims.

"At first I was very excited. But the devil is in the details and it is not great," said Nel Coffey, a Jersey Village resident who travels frequently to Dallas to visit family. Coffey also questioned the value of pursuing rail, when other travel technologies show more promise.

"We should not be looking at a 50-year-old train that is going to destroy people's lives," she said.

The Federal Railroad Administration hosted the Cypress hearing and another Monday in Madisonville so the public can comment on the preliminary environmental report for the train project, backed by a cadre of state investors using trains developed in Japan.

Six meetings were held last week in northern and central Texas. Company officials kicked off those meetings by announcing the site for the Dallas terminal, on a tract already owned by the company south of downtown.

Texas Central said it hopes to have federal clearance for the line by the end of the year. If approved, construction could start in 2019. The environmental review estimated construction would take about five years. (Courtesy <https://www.chron.com/news>)

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The US believes factory-produced opioids - powerful painkillers increasingly abused by US citizens - are being made in China and sold from there too.

One of the main ones is fentanyl - 50 to 100 times stronger than morphine - which is only approved in the US for severe pain arising in cases like treatment for cancer. President Trump has called out China publicly.



China, while not denying there's a problem, has hit back at claims that most illegal fentanyl is from China.

A senior Chinese official, Yu Haibin of the National Narcotics Control Commission, said there was "no proof" of this, and described President Trump's comments and "unacceptable" and "irresponsible".

Mr Yu had earlier spoken about growing drug demand in the US as the real problem, and suggested there should be better intelligence sharing with China.

There's no doubt a lot of these chemicals are produced in China - although in exactly what quantities is impossible to tell. And despite the rhetoric, China has been taking some steps to address the problem.

Dangerous chemicals

These synthetic drugs are cheap to make, are sold on the internet and sent by post, either directly to the US or to trafficking networks based in Mexico.

On arrival at their destination they can be mixed in very small amounts with other drugs, especially heroin, to increase their potency.

"Fentanyl is potentially lethal, even at very low levels. Ingestion of doses as small as 0.25mg can be fatal," states the US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA).

It's also relatively easy to alter its chemical structure to produce similar substances - known as fentanyl analogues - to bypass legal controls.



Amid tension between China and the US over trade, there's also friction over another issue - the illegal trade in synthetic drugs

The Fentanyl Crisis: Is China A Major Source Of Illegal Drugs?

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



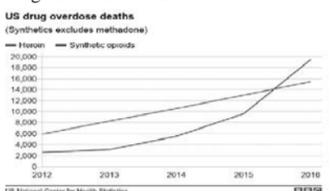
China has one of the largest chemical industries in the world.

"The countless possibilities to create new compounds by small changes in chemical structures pose a growing challenge to international control of the opioid trade," states the UN Office for Drugs and Crime.

Growing concerns - not just in US

The US authorities are increasingly worried about opioid abuse, and have now put all fentanyl-related products into the most dangerous class of drugs.

In testimony before Congress, Assistant Secretary of State Kirsten Madison described the situation as the most "severe drug crisis" the US has ever faced.



She said that in 2017, more than 40% of the 72,000 drug overdose deaths in the US involved synthetic opioids like fentanyl.

Health statistics from Canada show that last year, 72% of deaths related to opioid abuse were believed to involve fentanyl or related substances - up from 55% in 2016. Europe's drug monitoring agency the EMCDDA, which covers the EU plus Turkey and Norway, said in a report this year that "the number of synthetic opioids has grown rapidly in Europe since the first substance was reported in 2009".

The China connection

US officials are unequivocal that China is the main source for fentanyl and similar drugs.

In October 2017, the US authorities announced the first ever indictments against two Chinese individuals for conspiracy "to distribute large quantities" of fentanyl as well as other opioids.



Katherine Pfaff, spokesperson for the US Drug Enforcement Agency, told the BBC that interceptions from the US postal system, information from people on the ground, and tracking cyber footprints, leads them to believe a "significant amount" comes from China.

The European drug monitoring agency report states: "It appears that most shipments of new fentanyls coming into Europe originate from companies based in China."

However, it added that there have also been some examples of illegal production by laboratories in Europe.

And, although the Chinese authorities don't officially accept that most fentanyl is produced in China, they have taken some action.

Martin Raitelhuber, an expert on synthetic drugs with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, says China now has restricted more than 150 chemicals that can be used

to create synthetic drugs.

"They have been quite active in introducing national controls," he adds.

The DEA's Pfaff told Reality Check that China is "recognising the problem" and that there's an "on-going, strong working relationship" with the Chinese.

Regulation and corruption But do the Chinese have a problem regulating their large and rapidly growing pharmaceutical industry?

Drugs policy expert at the Rand Corporation in the US, Bryce Pardo, describes their regulatory capacity as "limited".

"Gaps in regulatory design, the division of responsibility between provincial and central governments, and lack of oversight and government and corporate accountability, increase opportunities for corruption," he says.



"I think it is fair to say that a lack of regulatory capacity, perhaps regardless of the letter of the law, certainly limits their ability to control the industry," says John Collins, head of the International Drug Policy Institute at the London School of Economics (LSE).

The other problem is that as more controls are introduced, new chemical substances are produced to get around them.

"The lessons from other countries suggest that effective regulation and enforcement does not ensure the absence of an illicit market," adds Collins.

"In the presence of a demand, supply finds a way."

He believes a more comprehensive approach to managing the overdose crisis in the US is needed, not simply relying on control of supply from abroad.

And that is also part of China's argument - that the US needs to address its growing demand for such drugs, rather than just blaming Beijing. (Courtesy https://www.bbc.com/news/world)

Advertisement for '雲天燒腊麵食家' (Yun Tian BBQ Noodle House) featuring a menu with items like 京都肉排, 葱油鯧魚, and 特價午餐 \$5.75. Includes address: 9380 Bellaire Blvd, Houston, TX 77036.

Advertisement for '中美酒樓' (Chinese American Restaurant) featuring a menu with items like 四人份, 八人份, and 十人份套餐. Includes phone number 281-498-1280 and address: 11317 Bissonnet, Houston, TX 77099.

Large advertisement for 'Adolphus Rice' featuring a bag of rice and text: '靚苗米 經濟, 營養, 美味'. Includes contact information for American Rice, Inc. and phone number 713-525-9570.