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Chinese phone maker ZTE saved from brink after deal with U.S.

Reuters - China's No. 2 telecommunications equipment maker ZTE secured a lifeline from the Trump administration on Thursday after agreeing to pay a \$1 billion fine and overhaul leadership in a deal that will lift a ban on its doing business with U.S. suppliers.

The agreement comes as U.S. President Donald Trump seeks trade concessions from China and negotiations continue to avoid a trade war between the world's two largest economies.

Shares of U.S. companies that do business with ZTE rose on Thursday.

U.S. lawmakers immediately attacked the agreement, citing intelligence warnings that ZTE poses a national security threat.

ZTE pleaded guilty last year to conspiring to evade U.S. embargoes by selling U.S. equipment to Iran. The ban on buying U.S. parts was imposed in April after the company lied about disciplining some executives responsible for the violations. ZTE then ceased major operations.

Under the deal, ZTE will change its board and management within 30 days, pay a \$1 billion fine and put an additional \$400 million in escrow. The deal also includes a new 10-year ban that is suspended unless there are future violations.

"We will closely monitor ZTE's behavior," Ross said in a statement. "If they commit any further violations, we would again be able to deny them access to U.S. technology as well as collect the additional \$400 million in escrow." Reuters reported exclusively on Tuesday that ZTE had signed a preliminary agreement with the Commerce Department, along with the fine and other terms.

Ross said the penalty is the largest the Commerce Department



FILE PHOTO - Visitors pass in front of the ZTE booth at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona

has ever levied.

The agreement does not take effect until ZTE pays the \$1 billion fine and puts the \$400 million in escrow, which is likely to take at least a few days, according to a person familiar with the matter. ZTE did not immediately respond to requests for comment on Thursday.

Under the new agreement, ZTE must also retain a com-

pliance team selected by the Commerce Department for 10 years. The company already has a U.S. court-appointed monitor. U.S. senators said they plan legislation to roll back the agreement. "I assure you with 100 percent confidence that #ZTE is a much greater national security threat than steel from Argentina or Europe," Republican U.S. Senator Marco Rubio tweeted with the hashtag #VeryBadDeal.

As Kim arrives in Singapore, no North Korean comrades in sight

SINGAPORE (Reuters) - Stella Choi, the principal of a Korean language school in a drab tower in downtown Singapore, works just across the elevator lobby from the modest suites that make up North Korea's embassy.

Yet the South Korean national, who runs the iSpeak Korean Language Centre, says she has neither seen nor spoken to any of her Northern neighbors or people entering the embassy since they moved in two years ago. Choi's experience is consistent with the extremely low profile Singapore's small community of North Koreans has kept in recent years as diplomatic pressure on their home country made traveling and working abroad increasingly difficult.

But they have disappeared in recent years as U.N. sanctions tightened around Pyongyang, and Singapore has been among the countries that have dutifully implemented resolutions to cut trade ties, ban transactions with North Korean banks and cancel the work passes of its citizens.

Singapore bars Australian former terror suspect ahead of Trump-Kim summit

North Korea's place in the world - and that of its diaspora - comes into focus in Singapore next week,

when the city-state hosts the first ever summit between a sitting U.S. president and a North Korean leader.

Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un will discuss ending the North's nuclear weapons and missile programs in return for diplomatic and economic incentives.

Singapore, a global trading and financial hub, was once home to a close-knit group of a few dozen North Korean diplomats and businessmen responsible for channelling money, fuel and goods to the secretive state.

While it still maintains diplomatic ties, North Korea's embassy has moved from a three-storey property in a lively neighborhood of heritage shop-houses to its present unassuming home.

"I hope to see them one day. Since the North and South Korean relationship is getting better, I may even be able to speak to them," said Choi.

Reuters has visited the North Korean embassy multiple times over the last year but on all but one occasion there appeared to be nobody there. Reuters did once meet the embassy's first secretary, Ri Pyong Dok, while he was entering the embassy in February 2017, but he declined comment.

In a call in recent weeks to the embassy to ask about preparations for the summit, a North Korean staffer

also declined comment.

The Singapore foreign ministry has four North Korean officials and their spouses in its list of diplomatic and consular staff as of June 2018.

"The sanctions and the pressure that was put on by the U.S. and its allies were definitely ... key motivating forces that encouraged him (Kim Jong Un) to consider engaging more, and to come out and have this summit," said Nicholas Fang, director of security and global affairs at the Singapore Institute of International Affairs.

North Korea has always strategically managed its expatriate population, mainly sending them to allies like China and Russia, where they feel they will not be corrupted by Western ideals.

Singapore is probably the most diplomatically neutral place where they've based people historically - more for trade reasons than diplomacy, said John Kim, a Korean-American businessman who advises a non-profit offering training in entrepreneurship and business in North Korea.

Kim said he had not spoken to a North Korean in Singapore in around five years. The last person John Kim spoke to told him there were around 50 North Koreans operating in the city-state, mainly in industries like shipping, although there are no official figures of the size of the community.

In contrast, there are about 20,000 South Koreans living in Singapore. In November, Singapore suspended all trade with North Korea to comply with tightening U.N. regulations.

In March, Singapore said it had revoked the work permits of all remaining North Koreans in the country.

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United's Boeing 737 Max 9 makes its debut with flight from Houston

By Andrea Rumbaugh

United Airlines became the first North American carrier to operate the Boeing 737 Max 9 aircraft on Thursday morning, with its inaugural flight departing Houston's Bush Intercontinental Airport for Orlando, Fla.

The new planes are more fuel efficient, with the ability to fly farther on less fuel, and provide a quieter ride. Having a longer range than previous 737 models allows United to operate the 737 Max 9 between Houston and Anchorage, Alaska, which previously needed a larger aircraft.

The Max 9 is scheduled to fly between Houston and Anchorage on Thursday. It's also scheduled to fly to Austin. United expects to have 10 of the 737 Max aircraft in its fleet by the end of this year.

"The Boeing 737 MAX is a great addition to United's fleet, providing approximately 14 percent fuel efficiency compared to previous 737 generations and an im-

proved customer experience on-board," Rodney Cox, vice president of United's Houston operation, said in the news release. "As we begin the busy summer travel season, Houston is happy to be home for United's first MAX aircraft, as we launch initial 737 MAX service from here, and later this month, add MAX service on flights from Houston to L.A., Sacramento and Tampa."

The Max 9 also uses Viasat next-generation satellite Wi-Fi, which United says provides faster, more reliable internet connections. United will expand Viasat Wi-Fi to more than 70 aircraft, including at least 58 new 737 Max planes, over the next three years.



Republic of Texas Biker Rally starts t in Austin

This annual event attracts bikers from all over the country, and this year its musical lineup features the legendary rock band ZZ Top.

Held at the Travis County Exposition Center, the four-day rally includes dirt bike races, hundreds of vendors, wrestling, a custom bike build-off and parade Friday night that will take over downtown Austin.

Cyndi Smith, owner of Cyndi's Hawg Hangout in Caldwell, Tx, describes a raid by U.S. Marshals to find additional bikers in the days after the biker shootout at Twin Peaks in Waco on May 17, 2015. Smith's bar is 90 miles south of Waco.

For music, The LACS and Hairball will perform Thursday, Richie Kotzen and Shooter Jennings on Friday, and the Dirty River Boys will finish things up with ZZ Top on Saturday.



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Editor's Choice



A portrait and medals related to U.S. Marine Sergeant Philip Mandra who has been missing in action (M.I.A) since 1952 after fighting in the Korean War are displayed in the home of his sister, Irene Mandra, in Farmingdale, New York



Japan's Prime Minister Abe shakes hands with U.S. President Trump during joint news conference at the White House in Washington



Soccer Football - International Friendly - England vs Costa Rica - Elland Road, Leeds, Britain - June 7, 2018 England fan before the match Action Images via Reuters/Jason Cairnduff



Cossacks stand guard on a street next to the official mascot for the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia, Zabivaka in Rostov-on-Don



Tsetse, the 6-year-old daughter of Dukha herder Erdenebat Chuluu, rides a reindeer in the forest near the village of Tsagaannuur



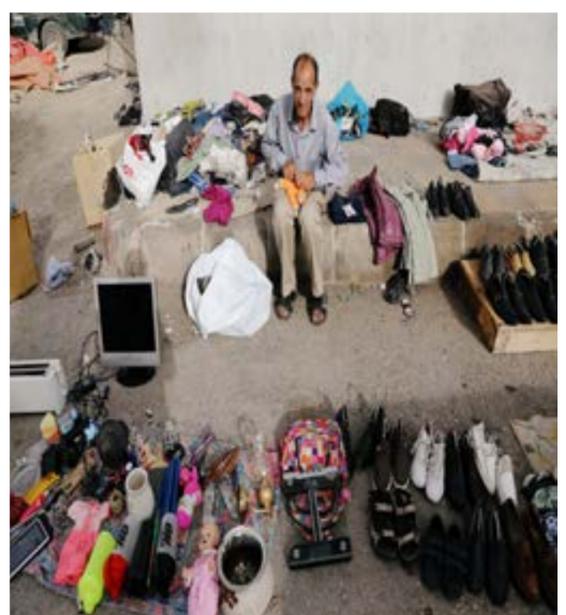
Activists wearing masks depicting leaders of the member countries of the G7 protest during the G7 summit in Quebec City



FILE PHOTO: Turkish Lira banknotes are seen in this picture illustration



Japan's First Lady Akie Abe attends lunch with military spouses from the Japan U.S. Military Program (JUMP) at the Japanese ambassador's residence in Washington



A man sells a second hand items in Amman

In the weeks and months after Hurricane Harvey, the evidence of its historic scope and intensity trickled out bit by bit: Record rainfall totals. Record reservoir levels. Record destruction.

Now, nine months after the storm, a report by the Harris County Flood Control District combines and analyzes all the available data about Harvey and its aftermath, distilling the numbers into a single message: By every conceivable measure and in every imaginable context, Harvey caused the most disastrous flooding in the nation's history. And it could have been worse.

"All 4.7 million people in Harris County were impacted directly or indirectly during the flood and after the flood waters receded," states the 32-page memorandum by two flood control district officials, Jeff Lindner and Steve Fitzgerald.

The compilation of all the data into one document provides a useful backdrop for ongoing policy discussions about recovering from Harvey and strengthening the region's resilience to future floods. On Tuesday night, county officials were scheduled to host the first of 23 planned public meetings on a \$2.5 billion August bond issue for flood control projects.



Rescue boats work along Tidwell at the east Sam Houston Tollway helping to evacuate people Monday, August 28, 2017 after Hurricane Harvey inundated the area.

Final Report Shows Hurricane Harvey's Impact On Houston Was The Most Disastrous Flooding In The Nation's History

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



Chad Smith, a Task Force One member from the Dallas Fire Department, carries 1-year-old Christian Rodriguez from a rescue boat as people are transferred to a pickup point along Edgebrook in Houston on Sunday, August 27, 2017, after Hurricane Harvey inundated the area.

Lindner, the flood control district's meteorologist and director of hydrologic operations, said district officials prepare similar reports after every major flood. The documents provide a historical record and make it possible to compare the relative impacts of different events, he said. Perhaps the most powerful theme in the document is the astounding intensity, duration and geographical reach of Harvey's rainfall.

In Harris County, the highest total recorded over four days was 47.4 inches at Clear Creek and Interstate 45. (Totals exceeding 51 inches were recorded in Liberty County east of Houston.) The lowest four-day total in Harris County was 26 inches.

According to the report, the Texas state

climatologist, John Nielsen-Gammon, examined the largest rainfall events in U.S. history and compared them with Harvey for durations of 48, 72 and 120 hours, and covering areas ranging from 1,000, to 50,000 square miles.

"Harvey exceeded the previous records in all of the 18 different combinations except one," the report states. "The most astounding statistic is that for the 120-hour duration over 10,000 square miles, Harvey exceeded the previous record from June 1899 by 13.33 inches or 62 percent. The rainfall amounts and spatial coverage of those amounts have never been experienced across the United States since reliable records have been kept."

-- Harvey dropped 1 trillion gallons of water on Harris County over four days, enough to fill NRG Stadium 1,472 times and cover Harris County's 1,777 square miles with an average of 33.7 inches of water. Over a 50,000 square-mile area, Harvey dropped more than 16.6 trillion gallons.

RELATED

Houston Home Prices Hit Record Highs



In Harris County, Harvey flooded 154,170 single-family houses — about 9 percent to 12 percent of all buildings in the county — and 5,000 to 15,000 apartments, condominiums and townhouses, making it "the largest and most devastating house flooding event ever recorded" in the county. In addition, thousands of commercial structures were flooded.

-- The Brays Bayou watershed, which includes the hard-hit Meyerland neighborhood, recorded the most flooded houses, 23,810, followed by Buffalo Bayou at 17,090 and Greens Bayou at 12,900. A watershed is the land area that drains into a particular stream. Among jurisdictions, Houston's 96,410 flooded houses was the highest by far, followed by unincorporated Harris County (34,600) and Pasadena (4,610.)

-- As many as 24,000 additional houses might have flooded if not for previous flood control district projects, including the buyouts of more than 2,000 homes deep within floodplains and improvements to Sims, Brays and White Oak bayous. Despite these efforts, "Hurricane Harvey's relentless and widespread heavy rainfall filled every channel and detention basin in every watershed in Harris County at some point during the four-day historic event," the report states.

-- More than 300,000 vehicles were flooded across the county. (Courtesy chron.com)



Houston Police SWAT officer Daryl Hudeck carries Connie Pham and her 13-month-old son Aiden after rescuing them from their home surrounded by floodwaters from Tropical Storm Harvey on August 27, 2017, in Houston, Texas.

Other key points in the report:

-- Officials confirmed 36 flood-related deaths across Harris County and 68 state-wide. While most deaths in other recent floods were caused by drownings in vehicles, most of the Harvey fatalities involved "people outside in the fast-moving or high water levels," the report states, adding, "Harvey is one of the only flood events where a few people drowned in their home or workplace."

-- With damage estimated at \$125 billion, Harvey was the second-costliest hurricane in U.S. history. Hurricane Katrina, which struck New Orleans in 2005, caused \$160 billion in damage.

-- Government agencies rescued 60,049 residents in Harris County, most of them from their homes, and 32,000 to 34,000 evacuees stayed in 65 temporary shelters. Civilian volunteers rescued tens of thousands more.

-- The Federal Emergency Management Agency has provided \$4.8 billion in rental assistance, home repairs and other aid to more than 177,000 households through its individual assistance program.

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Trump-Kim Singapore Summit Venue Is Set

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

The US and North Korea have settled on a venue for the summit between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, White House press secretary Sarah Sanders said Tuesday. Trump and Kim will meet for the first time at the Capella Hotel on Singapore's Sentosa Island on June 12, Sanders announced Tuesday via Twitter.



Sarah Sanders

✓@PressSec

UPDATE: The venue for the Singapore summit between @POTUS and Leader Kim Jong Un will be the Capella Hotel on Sentosa Island. We thank our great Singaporean hosts for their hospitality.

11:31 AM - Jun 5, 2018

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"We thank our great Singaporean hosts for their hospitality," Sanders tweeted. Delegations from the US and North Korea met four times last week at the Capella Hotel to hash out the logistics of the summit, with setting an appropriate venue for the summit at the top of the agenda.

Sanders said Monday the meeting will take place at 9 a.m. local time on June 12 (9 p.m. ET on June 11).



The exterior of the Capella Hotel in Singapore.

The red-shingled, colonial-style Capella is a five-star hotel on Sentosa Island, which boasts several resorts, hotels, two golf courses and a theme park.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: GETTY IMAGES/SUTHEESIT/GETTY

US and North Korean officials considered several other hotels in Singapore as potential locations for the summit, which will be the first meeting between a US and North Korean leader.

A top option from the beginning had been the Shangri-La hotel, a massive structure near Orchard Road that could be heavily secured while also providing

an ornate setting. The hotel hosted a historic summit meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Taiwanese leader Ma Ying-jeou in 2015.



Peacocks roam freely around the property, which features at least one pool.

US officials, led by Joe Hagin, the deputy White House chief of staff for operations, negotiated with a North Korean delegation last week to determine the location and time for the summit. Security had been a chief concern for the North Koreans during the discussions, sources told CNN.

The meetings often proceeded at a painstaking pace. North Korean officials are "sensitive to being dictated to," one source close to the talks said, and the Hagin-led team has taken pains to present ideas for the summit in a collab-

orative way.

"Even if you're leading a horse to water, you have to do it in a way that is collaborative," the source said.



The Capella is on the island resort of Sentosa, which is Malay for "peace and tranquility."

in Singapore during President Trump's summit meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un next week. But will the former NBA star actually be involved in negotiations?

Well, where there's a "Worm," there's a way, or at least there has been in the past in terms of Rodman's unlikely relationship with Kim. However, Rodman is reportedly not certain to make the trip, and even if he does, it could well be simply as a publicity stunt for a sponsoring company called PotCoin.



Kim Jong Un, left, shares a light moment with Dennis Rodman in Pyongyang in 2014. (Korean Central News Agency/Korea News Service via AP)

That's according to Trey Yingst, the chief White House correspondent for the One America News Network, which reported Tuesday that Rodman's presence in Singapore would, indeed, be "focused on promoting" the company, which describes itself as a "community-based cryptocurrency for legalized marijuana." Yingst cited a source close to Rodman in confirming the five-time NBA champion's travel plans, a development first reported by the New York Post.

"A lot of times in situations that involve complex diplomacy, countries like to identify ambassadors of goodwill, and whether you agree with it or not, Dennis Rodman fits the bill," a source told the paper. The newspaper added that sources said Rodman "could even play some sort of role in the negotiations." (Courtesy the Washington Post)

North Korean officials in Singapore also needed to get sign-off on almost every detail with their superiors in Pyongyang, leading to one- or two-day intervals before they could reach an agreement on even minor logistical details, the source said. (Courtesy cnn.com)

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Dennis Rodman eyeing trip to Singapore for Trump's summit with Kim Jong Un

Dennis Rodman is planning on being



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