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Southern DAILY

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China presses Europe for anti-U.S. alliance on trade

BRUSSELS/BERLIN (Reuters) - China is putting pressure on the European Union to issue a strong joint statement against President Donald Trump's trade policies at a summit later this month but is facing resistance, European officials said. In meetings in Brussels, Berlin and Beijing, senior Chinese officials, including Vice Premier Liu He and the Chinese government's top diplomat, State Councillor Wang Yi, have proposed an alliance between the two economic powers and offered to open more of the Chinese market in a gesture of goodwill. One proposal has been for China and the European Union to launch joint action against the United States at the World Trade Organisation.

But the European Union, the world's largest trading bloc, has rejected the idea of allying with Beijing against Washington, five EU officials and diplomats told Reuters, ahead of a Sino-European summit in Beijing on July 16-17.

Instead, the summit is expected to produce a modest communique, which affirms the commitment of both sides to the multilateral trading system and promises to set up a working group on modernizing the WTO, EU officials said.

Vice Premier Liu He has said privately that China is ready to set out for the first time what sectors it can open to European investment at the annual summit, expected to be attended by President Xi Jinping, China's Premier Li Keqiang and top EU officials. Chinese state media has promoted the message that the European Union is on China's side, officials said, putting the bloc in a delicate position. The past two summits, in 2016 and 2017, ended without a statement due to disagreements over the South China Sea and trade.

"China wants the European Union to stand with Beijing against Washington, to take sides," said one European diplomat. "We won't do it and we have told them that." China's Foreign Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Beijing's summit aims.

Despite Trump's tariffs on European metals exports and threats to hit the EU's automobile industry, Brussels shares Washington's concern about China's closed markets and what Western governments say is Beijing's manipulation of trade to dominate global markets.

"We agree with almost all the complaints the U.S. has against China, it's just we don't agree with how the United States is handling it," another diplomat said.

Still, China's stance is striking given Washington's deep economic and security ties with European nations. It shows the depth of Chinese concern about a trade war with Washington, as Trump is set to impose tariffs on billions of dollars worth of Chinese imports on July 6.

It also underscores China's new boldness in trying to seize leadership amid divisions between the United States and its European, Canadian and Japanese allies over issues including free trade, climate change and foreign policy.

"Trump has split the West, and China is seeking to capitalize on that. It was never comfortable with the West being one bloc," said a European official involved in EU-China diplomacy.

"China now feels it can try to split off the European Union in so many areas, on trade, on human rights," the official said. Another official described the dispute between Trump and Western allies at the Group of Seven summit last month as a gift to Beijing because it showed European leaders losing a long-time ally, at least in trade policy.

European envoys say they already sensed a greater urgency from China in 2017 to find like-minded countries willing to stand up against Trump's "America First" policies.



A staff member walks past U.S. and Chinese flags placed for a joint news conference in Beijing

A report by New York-based Rhodium Group, a research consultancy, in April showed that Chinese restrictions on foreign investment are higher in every single sector save real estate, compared to the European Union, while many of the big Chinese takeovers in the bloc would not have been possible for EU companies in China.

China has promised to open up. But EU officials expect any moves to be more symbolic than substantive.

They say China's decision in May to lower tariffs on imported cars will make little difference because imports make up such a small part of the market. China's plans to move rapidly to electric vehicles mean that any new benefits it offers traditional European carmakers will be fleeting.

"Whenever the train has left the station we are allowed to enter the platform," a Beijing-based European executive said.

However, China's offer at the upcoming summit to open up reflects Beijing's concern that it is set to face tighter EU controls, and regulators are also blocking Chinese takeover attempts in the United States.

The European Union is seeking to pass legislation to allow greater scrutiny of foreign investments. "We don't know if this offer to open up is genuine yet," a third EU diplomat said. "It's unlikely to mark a systemic change."



Euro, Hong Kong dollar, U.S. dollar, Japanese yen, British pound and Chinese 100-yuan banknotes are seen in a picture illustration



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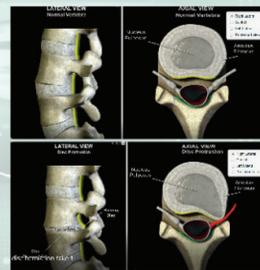
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Houston developer starts long-awaited Midtown apartment project

By Katherine Feser

Winther Investment has returned to the Houston apartment scene with a seven-story midrise going up in Midtown.

The Houston-based apartment development and management company broke ground on one of two blocks it acquired in October 2013 just south of the Pierce Elevated at Austin. It initially planned to start the development in October 2016.

"We put it on hold because of the soft economy of Houston then, and also there was a lot of supply of apartments," said Frederic Gautier-Winther, head of Winther Investment. "A year and 9 months later, we feel like the economy of Houston is stronger than what we thought and also there's been a good absorption of apartments."

The European Commission has finalized an investment plan aimed at kick-starting economic investment across the European Union. Wednesday's (July 22) deal, which is part of President Jean-Claude Juncker's Investment Plan for Europe, ensures that the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) will be operational by early autumn.

"We need an investment plan like the one we are now presenting because there is a real breakdown of investment in the European Union, in all the member states," said Juncker; at a press conference in Brussels following the signing of the investment plan. "For example, private investment in Germany fell by 52 percent between 1991-2013." The EFSI will be set up within the European Investment Bank (EIB) and aims to mobilise €315 billion in private and public investment. Nine member states have already contributed to the fund and more

are expected to follow. The EFSI will focus on small- and medium-sized enterprises and on job-creation, long-term growth and competitiveness. Projects pre-financed by the EIB will be guaranteed by the new fund, something EIB President Werner Hoyer said is key in attracting greater private investment. "I think the major investment gap and huge innovation gap in Europe are due to the fact that we are spending too little on research and development and education," he told reporters on Wednesday. "We can only tackle this problem if we mobilise private money. The trick applied in this matter is that we are able to mobilise private money – because if a project is approved by the EIB, then private investors will get interested." Target areas include infrastructure, education, research, innovation, renewable energy and energy efficiency. Since 2007, investment has dropped by around 15 percent across the EU.

Steinberg Dickey Collaborative designed the 216-unit apartment building at 2111 Austin with five levels of apartments atop two floors of parking. Frost Bank provided financing. H Midtown LP, part of Winther Investment group, is developing the project. Completion is planned in spring 2020.

Amenities will include a pool, fire pit, fitness center, clubhouse and a sky lounge on the top floor with views of downtown. Inside, the units will have classic style finishes with more crown molding and trim than popular modern loft style projects.

Rents will start around \$1,300, Gautier-Winther said. Units will average 830 square feet with mostly one-bedroom plans. There will be a few three-bedroom units and efficiencies, in addition to two-bedroom plans designed for



H Midtown LP, part of the Winther Investment group, broke ground on a 215-unit midrise apartment building at 2111 Austin in Midtown. Steinberg Dickey Collaborative designed the project. Completion is planned in spring of 2020.

professionals.

The two Midtown blocks, bounded by Austin, Gray, Crawford and Webster, appealed to Gautier-Winther because nearby townhomes owned by residents give it a neighborhood feel. It's close to restaurants and bars, but not as noisy, and there will be curbside parking in front. It's easy to walk to downtown or bike to area bars.

The second project, on the block east of La Branch across from the St. Joseph Professional building, is planned for a high-rise that will probably rise 21 stories, Gautier-Winther said. Construction could begin in late 2019 or early 2020 just as 2111 Austin is finishing up.

It would add to two other projects that are changing the Midtown skyline. Caydon, an Australian developer, is building a 27-story

apartment tower at 2850 Fannin, and PMRG and AECOM Capital recently broke ground on a 29-story apartment building at 3300 Main along the Metro rail line.

Winther Investment has developed 3,500 units in the U.S. since 1994. The company continues to own and manage its developments, including its first project, the Park at Westcreek near the River Oaks District, one, before adding, "with love, of course."

Following a wildly successful run overseas including New Zealand, Australia, Singapore, the U.K., among many others, the prolific comic is ready to come home and tell her truth in the only way she can – through fearless and peerless comedy. More motivated than ever, Griffin is ready to deliver the most balls-out and frankly hilarious shows of her stellar career.

HOUSTON 2019

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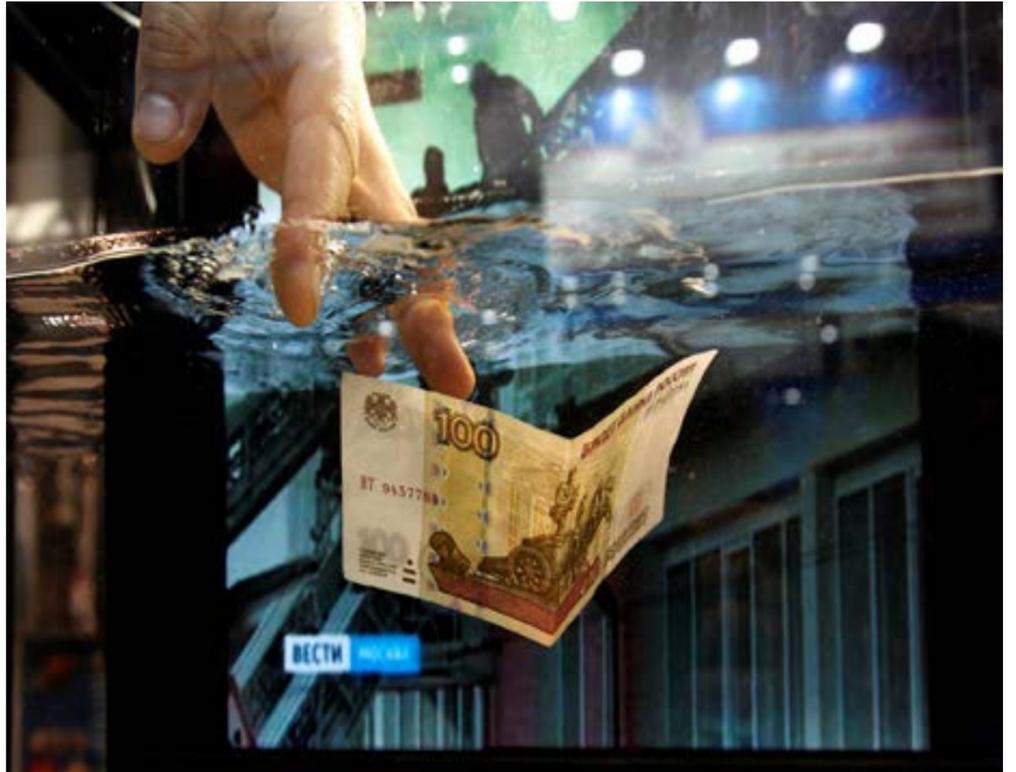


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Editor's Choice



Soccer Football - World Cup - Round of 16 - Belgium vs Japan - Rostov Arena, Rostov-on-Don, Russia - July 2, 2018 Japan fan looks dejected after the match REUTERS/Marko Djurica TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



FILE PHOTO: A 3M Co representative sinks a 100 rouble banknote in a container of fire suppression fluid during a presentation at the Security and Safety International Forum in St. Petersburg November 15, 2011. The environmentally-friendly fire suppression agent, called "Novec", has chemical properties that would allow the banknote to stay dry even after submersion in liquid, according to 3M Co company representatives.



A Japanese soccer fan wearing samurai costume walks on the crossing after the World Cup Round of 16 soccer match Belgium vs Japan, at Shibuya district in Tokyo



General view of a flooded farmland following heavy rainfall in Chengdu, Sichuan



Maezawa, the chief executive of Zozo, which operates Japan's popular fashion shopping site Zozotown, officially called Start Today Co, looks at his employee at an event launching the debut of its formal apparel items, in Tokyo



A retailer picks out clams from a pile at the seafood section of a fish market in Beijing



A poster with the message "No fortress Europe" is seen on the desk of a MEP during a debate at the European Parliament in Strasbourg



A man weighs fish that he intends to barter for basic staples in Rio Chico



FILE PHOTO: Sow is seen inside Guangxi Yangxiang's high-rise pig farm at Yaji Mountain Forest Park in Guangxi

President Donald Trump signed a full posthumous pardon for former heavyweight boxer Jack Johnson in a surprise Oval Office ceremony alongside actor Sylvester Stallone, former heavyweight boxer Lennox Lewis, and others.

"It's my honor to do it. It's about time," Trump said during the ceremony in the Oval Office.

"He was treated very rough, very tough," Trump said of Johnson on Thursday as he signed the pardon.

In 1913, Johnson, a noted boxing legend, was convicted by an all-white jury with violating the Mann Act after transporting a white woman he was dating across state lines for "immoral purposes." He served one year in prison.

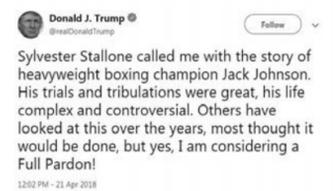


Open air Heavyweight World Championship fight between the reigning world champion Tommy Burns of Canada, left, and challenger Jack Johnson in front of 20,000 spectators at Rushcutters Bay near Sydney in 1908.

Under the Obama administration, the Department of Justice opted not to recommend a posthumous pardon for Johnson.

His great-great-niece, Linda Haywood, has led the charge for Johnson to receive a rare posthumous pardon. Others have taken up the cause célèbre as well including Senators John McCain, R-Arizona, Harry Reid, R-Nevada, and Orrin Hatch, R-Utah. Earlier this year, McCain, Sen. Cory Booker, D-N.J., and Rep. Pete King, R-N.Y., reintroduced legislation urging a posthumous pardon.

On Thursday, McCain applauded the pardon. "President Trump's action today finally closes a shameful chapter in our nation's history and marks a milestone that the American people can and should be proud of," McCain said in a statement.



Last month, Trump tweeted that "Sylvester Stallone called me with the story of heavyweight boxing champion Jack Johnson," the president tweeted Saturday. "His trials and tribulations were great, his life complex and

Galveston Native

President Trump Posthumously Pardons Boxer Jack Johnson – Boxing's First Black Heavyweight Champion

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



President Trump issued an executive grant of clemency last Thursday to John Arthur 'Jack' Johnson, the first African American heavyweight champion of the world, for a Mann Act conviction. Johnson was born in Galveston, Texas.

controversial. Others have looked at this over the years, most thought it would be done, but yes, I am considering a Full Pardon!"

The boxer Jack Johnson in 1913. Trump's other recent pardons include Arizona Sheriff Joe Arpaio and former Vice President Dick Cheney's chief of staff Scooter Libby. (Courtesy abcnews.com)

Related

A Controversial and Conflicted Champion Born in Galveston, Texas, Johnson was the target of racial resentment, particularly after he defeated white boxer James Jeffries in the 1910 "Fight of the Century," a bout that sparked race riots.

Three years later, he was convicted by an all-white jury of violating the Mann Act, which made it illegal to transport a woman across state lines for "immoral" purposes.

In their efforts to prosecute Johnson, authorities first targeted Johnson's relationship with the woman in question, Lucille Cameron, who later became his wife, but she refused to cooperate.

But they found another white witness, Belle Schreiber, to testify against him. Johnson fled the country after his conviction, but he agreed years later to return and serve a 10-month jail sentence. He died in 1946.



Jack Johnson and James J. Jeffries face off in the ring before the start of the World Heavyweight Championship, July 7, 1910, in Reno, Nev.

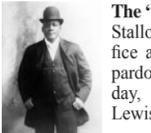
(Photo/Getty Images)

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., has been calling for a pardon for Johnson since 2004, and criticized President Barack Obama for leaving office in 2017 without having granted one. Former Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., had also called for a pardon.

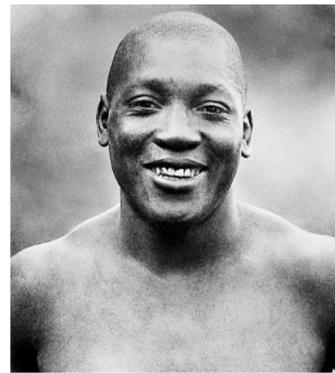
"Johnson's imprisonment forced him into the shadows of bigotry and prejudice, and continues to stand as a shameful stain on our nation's history," McCain said in a statement in January 2017.

Stallone, as well as Johnson's great-great niece, had urged Trump to pardon him and in April Trump said that Stallone had called him about it.

"[Johnson's] trials and tribulations were great, his life complex and controversial," Trump tweeted. "Others have looked at this over the years, most thought it would be done, but yes, I am considering a Full Pardon!"



The "dapper" Jack Johnson Stallone was in the Oval Office as a guest when Trump pardoned Johnson on Thursday, as was boxer Lennox Lewis.



Jack Johnson

Johnson's dominance spawned a search for a "Great White Hope" to challenge him, and resulted in what was called the "Fight of the Century" in 1910. Former undefeated heavyweight champ James Jeffries came out of retirement after having not fought in six years. Johnson dominated the fight and was declared the winner when Jeffries' corner threw in the towel in the 15th round.

Johnson's career was chronicled in film several times, including the Ken Burns documentary Unforgivable Blackness: The Rise and Fall of Jack Johnson.

Johnson's flamboyance also extended to his personal life. He taunted opponents in and out of the ring. He drew attention for his public dalliances with women and all three of his documented marriages were to white women.

He was convicted in 1913 by an all-white jury for violating the Mann Act -- on charges that he transported a white woman "across state lines for immoral purposes." However, he skipped bail and left the country, only to return in 1920 to turn himself in. He served 10 months of his one-year sentence before being released.

Johnson died in a car crash in 1946 at 68 "Jack Johnson lived in the lap of luxury, abused the fame and fortune that came to him, and died bereft of riches," the Associated Press said of him in its obituary.

He fought professionally until he was 60, finishing with a career record of 73 wins, 13 losses and 10 draws.

He was inducted into the Boxing Hall of Fame in 1954.

Efforts to grant him a presidential pardon began in 2008 with a bill that passed the House of Representatives, but not the Senate. The main reason cited in efforts that continued through other petitions: his conviction was racially motivated -- and the incident for which he was arrested took place before the Mann Act became law.

Actor Sylvester Stallone was among those who campaigned in Johnson's favor. Stallone was present at the Oval Office ceremony in which President Trump signed the official pardon. (Courtesy usatoday.com)



Posthumous pardons are rare, but not unprecedented. President Bill Clinton pardoned Henry O. Flipper, the first African-American officer to lead the Buffalo Soldiers of the 10th Cavalry Regiment; he was framed for embezzlement. President George W. Bush in 2008 pardoned Charles Winters, an American volunteer in the Arab-Israeli War convicted of violating the U.S. Neutrality Acts in 1949.

After 14 years of lobbying by supporters and family members, former heavyweight boxing champion Jack Johnson finally received a presidential pardon, 72 years after his death.

Born in Texas in 1878, Johnson was the world champion from 1908-1915 and was the first African American to hold the title. But beyond those basic details, what else do we know about him?

Here are five important facts about the "Galveston Giant":

Johnson rose to prominence at the height of the Jim Crow era, so his race was always an issue, delaying his opportunity to compete for the world title, but earning him even more publicity when he won it and later defended his crown.

According to Washington University in St. Louis professor Dr. Gerald Early: "While Johnson was heavyweight champion, he was covered more in the press than all other notable black men combined."

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Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (CNN) Saudi women drivers took to the roads legally a week ago last Sunday for the first time ever in the kingdom's history, as its decades-old ban on women driving finally lifted.

The end of the controversial ban brings the ultra-conservative Gulf nation into line with the rest of the world. It also represents the culmination of years of campaigning by rights activists who have sometimes been arrested and imprisoned for their efforts. More than 120,000 women applied for a driver's license Sunday, according to senior Ministry of Interior and Traffic Directorate officials.

"Demand for obtaining driving licenses is very high," said Maj. Gen. Mansour Al Turki, official spokesman of the Ministry of Interior.

Mona Al-Fares, a doctor, was in her car before midnight, waiting for the ban to lift before setting off through the streets of Jeddah with her husband and children.

"I feel like I'm surprised -- am I really driving in my own country? I feel happy, relieved. I feel like I'm free," she told CNN.



The step, first announced last September, will liberate many women from the constraints of needing to hire a male driver to travel even small distances, allowing many more to join the workforce, grow their own businesses and explore the kingdom.

Hiring women is a key part of Saudi Arabia's ambitious plan to overhaul its economy, known as Vision 2030. The reform agenda is being spearheaded by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

For some, though, the jubilation at realizing a hard-won freedom Sunday will be tempered by the arrests last month of a number of Saudi rights activists, including some who have played a prominent role in the fight for women's right to drive.

Many other restrictions on women's everyday lives remain in place under the male guardianship system -- including the right

It's Been A Long Road To The Driver's Seat For Saudi Women

Landmark Day For Saudi Women As Kingdom's Controversial Driving Ban Ends

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

to marry, work or travel.



Saudi woman Sabika Habib drives her car through the streets of Khobar City on her way to Bahrain on Sunday.

Women and their families began posting photos and videos of them driving and celebrating as soon as the ban lifted.

In Riyadh, Aliah Naser watched as her mother, Romoush Bana, drove for the first time and posted an image of the moment to Instagram.

"My reaction: I was super excited about this change in Saudi and really hope that everyone can have fun and enjoy these changes in Saudi Arabia," she told CNN. "She was scared a little but she did it in the end."

Baheerah Khusheim, 33, described how just after midnight she followed a route her late father had taken her on as an 18-year-old girl, dressed in her brother's clothing, "as he wanted me to have a real driving experience."

"It is a remarkable historic moment that I wish all the world would be here to witness it," she said.

Khusheim said she had picked up her Saudi license in Mecca. "The support from the community and officers was remarkable. As soon as you leave the license office, all you will hear is BEEP! BEEP! "MABROOK! CONGRATS!" from random strangers. It's a thrilling experience."

A spokesman for the Saudi Interior Ministry told a news conference that 120,000 women had applied for driving licenses in Saudi Arabia, according to state media Al-Ekhbariya TV.

Celebratory rides
Reema al-Bawardy, 28, took her 10 cousins on a drive across Jeddah at midnight as soon as the ban was lifted. They packed the

big black SUV again on Sunday afternoon for another drive to an upscale coffee house in the Rawda neighborhood. Out of the 11 people in the vehicle, two had driving licenses.

The celebratory rides will go on for a few days, she told CNN. "After that they have to learn how to drive."



Walia Abou Najem, 30, drives her car for the first time through the streets of Riyadh early Sunday.

Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, a billionaire businessman who was among the scores of high-profile Saudis detained for weeks last year in a luxury hotel in what the kingdom called an anti-corruption sweep, also hailed the end of the ban.

"Finally, first ride with my daughter @ Reem Alwaleed while she's driving me and my grand daughters in Riyadh," he tweeted.

Others were more skeptical about the much-touted advance.

"This is not an achievement," one woman, who gave her name only as Yasmin, told CNN in Jeddah. "An achievement is something you worked and fought hard for, like being the first ambassador or minister or astronaut. That would be something worth celebrating."

Her friend Batoul interjected. "At the end this doesn't solve the problem. Public transportation does, and this is what would make the difference for the women who really need it."

'Women can't drive'
The kingdom had already issued its first driver's licenses to a handful of Saudi women, in exchange for ones they acquired while overseas.

It also staged events last week in the cities

of Riyadh, Dammam, Jeddah and Tabuk to raise awareness of road safety and traffic laws. Women who were new to driving could try out driving simulators and practice parking.



Women take part in a government-organized road safety event at Riyadh Park Mall, in the Saudi capital, on Thursday. It may take some time, however, to change the attitudes of those opposed to the ban lifting.

"Women can't drive and they are unqualified," Khaled Abdullah Al-Houba, a 42-year-old state employee, told CNN on Saturday. He was sitting with his wife and children at the busy walkway overlooking the Red Sea in Jeddah.

"The society is not used to women driving," he said. For him, the decision taken last September was implemented too soon. "Women need at least two years to learn driving," he said, "so the women can be ready and society gets ready."

He would consider allowing his daughters to apply for a license in the future, he said, but for now, "Saudi women still don't have the guts needed to drive."

Activists arrested
Among the women's rights advocates arrested last month were Loujain Al-Hathloul, who was previously detained for 73 days in 2014 after trying to drive from the United Arab Emirates to Saudi Arabia, and Aziza al-Yousef, 70, one of the country's earliest activists for the right to drive.

The women who campaigned to overturn Saudi Arabia's driving ban
Both remain in custody, rights group Amnesty International said Thursday.



Those detained were accused of "suspicious contact with foreign entities," according to a statement on Saudi Arabia's official news agency.

Rights groups have condemned the crackdown and voiced fears that it could presage a closing down of Saudi civil society.

Saudi activist and author Manal al-Sharif, who was jailed in Saudi Arabia in 2011 after posting a video on YouTube of herself driving a car, tweeted Sunday that she was the first Saudi woman to be given a ticket.

"The first Saudi traffic violation that was issued to a woman was actually for me for driving without a license on May 19th, 2011," she said, adding that she paid 900 Riyals, or \$240.

Sharif also told CNN that after Saudi authorities announced plans to allow women to drive, they called her and asked her not to speak to the media about it.

In Thursday's statement, Amnesty International called for more reforms to follow the lifting of the driving ban -- and for the detained women's rights activists to be freed.

"The lifting of the ban is testament to the bravery and determination of the women's rights activists who have been campaigning on the issue since the 1990s, and the activists following up

their groundbreaking work in subsequent campaigns since 2011," said Samah Hadid, Amnesty International's Middle East campaigns director.

"While we welcome the fact that women can finally get behind the wheel, we should not forget that many people are still behind bars for their work in fighting for women's rights in Saudi Arabia."

Human Rights Watch said Wednesday that two more women's rights campaigners had been arrested in recent days "in what appears to be an unrelenting crackdown on the women's rights movement." It called for Saudi Arabia's western allies to pressure the kingdom to release all the detained activists unconditionally before they are sent for trial.

Saudi Arabia follows a strict form of Wahabi Islam that bans the mixing of sexes at public events and places numerous curbs on women. While there has been some loosening of restrictions in recent months, rights groups say much more remains to be done. (Courtesy <https://www.cnn.com>)

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