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In response to a push from students, Texas A&M changes protocol for Title IX investigations



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Chinese beauty app reveals ugly tech reality

HONG KONG (Reuters Breakingviews) - A Chinese beauty app just revealed an ugly tech reality. Meitu unveiled dismal first-half results, which lopped nearly a fifth off its \$2.9 billion market capitalisation. A strategic makeover designed to focus more on social media offered little solace. Stiffer competition and regulatory crack-downs are taking their toll.

Meitu lost about \$19 million in the first six months of the year. Though that was narrower than a year ago, revenue slipped 6 percent. Investors are accustomed to startups burning cash to acquire customers and secure their loyalty, but 66,000 - or 16 percent - of Meitu's monthly active users vanished between January and June. So, too, did some \$500 million of equity value on Wednesday, as the shares tumbled to less than half their 2016 initial public offering price.

Things aren't pretty elsewhere either. Shares of U.S.-based Snap are trading at less than \$12 apiece after going public at \$17 less than two years ago. In Hong Kong, Chinese tech companies ranging from index heavyweight Tencent to recently listed China Literature have run into skeptical headwinds, too.

As with many of its Chinese tech peers, Meitu's business model aggregates loosely related functions. It sells smartphones targeted at people obsessed with photographing themselves and makes a popular app that allows users to doctor selfies. Neither segment has proven easy to defend from competitors. The hardware business, which supplies three-quarters of the company's revenue, is shrinking. Meitu's solution is diversification. It invested in a plastic surgery website and is planning a new social media service intended to increase usage of its app, and attract more male users. Neither idea is original, but means the company "will de-emphasize net profit generation" until it can implement the new strategy. Tech investors typically have been patient about promises of future prosperity, especially if there is appreciable top-line or customer growth. At Meitu, and increasingly at similar outfits, those features are no longer in the picture.



Meitu Inc management COO Bryan Cheng, founder and CEO Wu Xinhong, Chairman Cai Wensheng and CFO Gary Ngan attend a news conference in Hong Kong

What Dr. Copper ordered: Trade war gives China metal a shot in the arm



FILE PHOTO: Workers inspect the production of copper cathodes at a Jinlong Copper plant in Tongling

BEIJING (Reuters) - China's copper producers and traders are riding an unexpected surge of business that has pushed physical prices to their highest in nearly two years as fabricators rush to buy refined metal to avoid import tariffs on scrap that kick in on Thursday.

The buying spree took off after Beijing announced two weeks ago it would hit \$16 billion worth of U.S. imports, including scrap metal, with duties of 25 percent from Aug. 23 in retaliation for a similar move by Washington.

The United States is one of China's biggest copper scrap suppliers.

The surge has given short-term relief to the world's top market for the metal, often taken as a bellwether for the health of China's economy and dubbed "Dr. Copper", as demand growth had slowed just as a wave of new capacity was due to start up.

Physical copper premiums in China SMM-CUYP-CN jumped to as high as \$91 a tonne this week, the most since November 2016, and are up 13 percent in the past two weeks alone. Five weeks ago the premiums were languishing near 10-month lows.

The premiums for physical deliveries are paid by Chinese copper importers on top of benchmark London Metal Exchange futures prices CMCU3, which have fallen by around 18 percent since hitting a four-year high on June 7.

Three traders attributed the spike to tighter supply of

scrap copper, as Beijing also continues a campaign against foreign waste to stop being seen as a dumping ground for the world's garbage.

"Some people who use scrap are turning to cathode, especially cheap African cathode," said a trader based in Hong Kong. Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia are two of the world's top copper producers.

Cathodes are refined copper typically processed into rod and wire and used in infrastructure and construction.

A profitable arbitrage window to import copper into China has also increased premiums, adding momentum to a typical move as benchmark futures prices fell due to concerns that the trade row will hurt demand for industrial metals. Copper inventories in warehouses monitored by the Shanghai Futures Exchange CU-STX-SGH have fallen by more than 40 percent since end-June, further boosting premiums.

The tariffs "will likely mean additional cathode imports would be required to replace the lost copper contained in scrap," said Wood Mackenzie senior consultant Yanting Zhou.



FILE PHOTO: Worker inspects a pump jack at an oil field in Tacheng, Xinjiang

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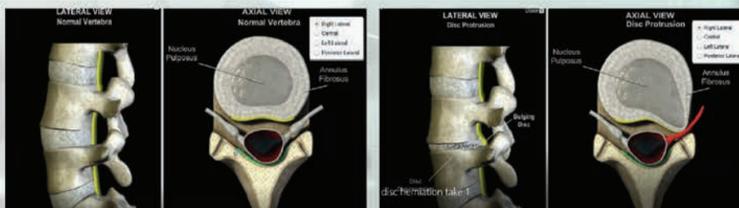
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In response to a push from students, Texas A&M changes protocol for Title IX investigations

COLLEGE STATION -- After students pushed for a change in June, Texas A&M University announced policy changes Monday designed to improve the way the university addresses sexual assault investigations. Texas A&M will streamline the process of reporting sexual misconduct, so that a complainant knows what will happen next and doesn't have to repeat the same story of trauma again and again to multiple staff members.

The university has created a set range of sanctions that clearly shows what will happen in each violation, whether it's a reprimand, probation, suspension or expulsion. An example: Students found responsible for sex-based violence and/or non-consensual penetration will be suspended for at least one full year. Students will be made aware of this chart that lays out the sanctions.

The dean of students, not a coach or an adviser, will decide which interim restrictions will be placed on a student who has been accused of sexual misconduct. Counselors will be available at multiple points across campus, making them easier for students to find.

The decision about whether a student will be allowed to take part in extracurricular activities will be made when the investigation ends, not when the student returns from a suspension.

When a student is suspended, dismissed or expelled, a notation will be made on his or her transcript.

Two committees on campus and an external review firm have recommended several changes, officials said. The recommendations, they said, are designed to bring clarity and consistency to a process that students have called confusing, traumatic and inconsistent.

The university assembled an internal review committee of experts, including students who are sexual assault survivors, to analyze A&M's policies and Title IX processes - how the university handles assault accusations and how it communicates with victims.

A third-party review firm, Husch Blackwell, also scrutinized the university's policies and procedures.

The system has worked well in the vast majority of Title IX investigations, said Texas A&M president Michael Young, but the reviews this summer have shown that "it didn't work all the time and wasn't as supportive as it could be in ways."

In June, Texas A&M students put pressure on the university to impose stronger and more uniform sanctions after a student went public with her dissatisfaction on Twitter.

In a tweet that spread far and wide, a student complained that the varsity swimmer who assaulted her was back on the swim team after he'd been found responsible by the university's Title IX process. His punishment for assault was merely a one-semester suspension, she said - and he'd been granted an extra year of eligibility on the swim team.

Her tweet drew attention from fellow Aggies and prompted the university to review its system of dealing with assault.

"Our primary concern is the safety and ability for all members of our community to thrive on campus," said Carol Fierke, provost and executive vice president. "That's really our goal moving forward."



Texas A&M launched a review this summer of the ways the university addresses sexual assault investigations.

Authorities: High school 'beef' behind drive-by shooting in Greater Inwood

High school beef is believed to be behind a drive-by shooting that injured a woman while she slept in her home in the Greater Inwood area, said Sgt. Scott Ashmore of the Harris County Sheriff's Office.

This is the second time the home has been the target of a drive-by shooting in the past several months, Ashmore said. A high school feud might have motivated the violence, he said.

A vehicle drove past the house on Grand Haven near Wexford Park and fired at

least three shots into the house.

One of the bullets, shot into the second floor, grazed a 33-year-old woman in bed who was asleep. She was taken to the hospital in stable condition.

Several children and adults were inside at the time. Some of the children were as young as toddlers, Ashmore said.

Police are looking for a dark-colored Dodge Durango in connection with the shooting.

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Editor's Choice



Cosplayers are seen during the media day of the world's largest computer games fair Gamescom in Cologne



U.S. President Donald Trump's former lawyer, Michael Cohen, leaves a federal court in New York City



Muslims perform prayers for the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha at Sunda Kelapa Port in Jakarta,



North and South Korean family members meet during a reunion at Mount Kumgang resort



2018 MTV Video Music Awards - Arrivals - New York



University of North Carolina police surround the toppled statue of a Confederate soldier nicknamed Silent Sam on the school's campus after a demonstration for its removal



U.S. President Trump reacts to a question during interview with Reuters in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington



A state funeral of Marshal of the Korean People's Army Kim Jong Chun took place in this photo released by North Korea's Korean Central News Agency



Trump hosts Salute to the Heroes event at the White House in Washington



An aerial photo taken through the window of a Philippine military plane shows the land reclamation by China on Mischief Reef in the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, west of Palawan, Philippines, May 11, 2015. TAIPEI — A proposed 60-40 split favoring the Philippines over China in rights to any oil or gas discovered together in a contested sea helps Beijing protect an iffy but valuable diplomatic relationship with Manila and prove its neighborly credentials in other parts of Asia, analysts say.

The foreign minister under Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte was quoted saying July 31 Beijing is willing to take the minority stake in any fossil fuel discoveries found under a tract of the South China Sea where the two countries have competing sovereignty claims.

A minority stake for China would help Beijing prove itself to a skeptical Philippine public, analysts say. Philippine President Duterte has sought strong relations with China since he took office in 2016 by laying aside their maritime sovereignty dispute. China has offered aid and investment in return. But polls have shown many Filipinos still do not trust China.



Philippine President Duterte

The two countries once vied bitterly over the South China Sea, culminating in Manila's victory in a world arbitration case two years ago.

"This plan for the government has re-

Analysts: China to Gain from South China Sea Compromise

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

ceived a lot of criticisms, because others would argue if these areas are in the exclusive economic zone of the Philippines, that belongs to the Philippines and it should not be shared," said Maria Ela Atienza, political science professor at the University of the Philippines Dili-

Unsettled dispute, Chinese military strength

Duterte advocates friendly ties with

China because, he says, the Philippines could not win a war with the country. China, which commands Asia's strongest armed forces, has built military installations on three islets in the Spratly Islands, a South China Sea archipelago that each side claims as its own. Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam also dispute rights to the Spratlys. (Courtesy https://www.voanews.com)

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Chinese President Had Been Invited To Attend Celebrations To Mark 70th Anniversary Of Communist Neighbour's Foundation

Xi Jinping To Visit North Korea Next Month, Report Claims

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

Chinese President Xi Jinping will visit Pyongyang next month at the invitation of North Korea leader Kim Jong Un to attend the celebrations of the 70th anniversary of North Korea's founding as ties between China and its close neighbour North Korea improve. The Straits Times reported on Saturday. The Straits Times did not cite a source for the report and the Chinese foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The Singapore-based newspaper's report said Xi would go to Pyongyang to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the country's founding on September 9 at the invitation of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un.

It was earlier reported that North Korea sent an invitation to Xi for the event, but Beijing has yet to provide any information on the Chinese president's visit. China's foreign ministry did not respond to a request to confirm the report on Saturday. North Korea's celebrations are set to take place on Sept. 9 and the Straits Times said that Xi's visit could still be subject to last-minute changes.

If confirmed, it will be the Chinese leader's first visit to the North Korean capital since he took power in 2012, and 13 years after the last visit by a Chinese President, when Xi's predecessor Hu Jintao visited in 2005, the newspaper said on Saturday.



Xi's predecessor Hu Jintao visited in 2005.

China is North Korea's most important trading partner and Kim has visited China three times so far this year during which he has held talks with Xi on improving co-operation between the two countries and economic reforms.

The United States has stepped up sanctions on North Korea to pressure Pyongyang to give up its nuclear program. This week, the United States imposed sanctions on Chinese firms for exporting alcohol and cigarette products to North Korea in breach of those sanctions.

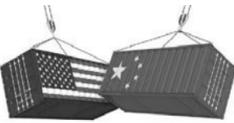


Kim has already visited China three times this year, traveling twice to Beijing and once to Dalian. Xi met the North Korean leader during all of those visits, amid warmer relations between the two communist countries. The first two meetings, in March and May, were held in the lead-up to the landmark summit between Kim and US President Donald Trump in Singapore in June. The third came after the talks, to brief China on the outcome. The Chinese leader's attendance at the 70th anniversary event in North Korea would be in line with a development plan for bilateral ties set out by Xi and Kim earlier this year, according to Sun Xingjie, a Korean peninsula expert at Jilin University.



Kim Jong Un's Visit to China. "They have agreed to step up high-level exchanges, including mutual visits by

state leaders and their special envoys," Sun said. Xi previously visited Pyongyang in 2008, when he was vice-president. That was his first foreign trip after he became China's heir apparent. The following year, then premier Wen Jiabao also visited the North. But the relationship between Beijing and Pyongyang began deteriorating after Kim took power in late 2011 after the death of his father, Kim Jong-il, and accelerated the country's nuclear and missile development. Beijing has opposed the weapons program and supported the United Nations sanctions against North Korea. As a result, no senior Chinese leader has made the trip in recent years, except for Liu Yunshan, who was ranked No 5 in the Communist Party hierarchy when he attended the 70th anniversary event for the founding of North Korea's ruling Workers' Party in 2015. But strained ties between North Korea and its biggest trading partner, and traditional ally, China, have started to improve this year.



China is meanwhile locked in a trade war with the United States, and US President Donald Trump last month suggested Beijing could "be exerting negative pressure on a deal because of our posture on Chinese trade". Pyongyang has made slow progress on an agreement signed between Kim and Trump committing to the "complete denuclearisation" of the Korean peninsula.

But Sun said the trade war and relations between Beijing and Pyongyang were two separate issues.

"The China-North Korea relationship has little to do with the imbalance in trade with the US," Sun said.

Pyongyang is taking advantage of the regime's 70th anniversary to improve ties. The leaders of the two Koreas will meet again in September, their governments said on Monday. That summit will take place in Pyongyang and will be the third this year between South Korean leader Moon Jae-in and Kim - and only the third time that a South Korean leader has travelled to the North Korean capital for such a meeting.

How the next inter-Korean summit only raises the stakes for South Korea's Moon Jae-in

The anniversary is one of the hermit kingdom's most important annual holidays, along with the birthdays of late leaders Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il. (Courtesy <https://www.scmp.com> and <https://www.reuters.com>)

Related

North Korea stops tourist visas as republic's 70th anniversary approaches
Block on visitor visas for foreigners expected to remain in place until the anniversary on September 9.



Students take part in a mass dance in Pyongyang in April during celebrations marking the anniversary of the birth of late North Korean leader Kim Il-sung. Photo: AFP

North Korea has stopped processing tourist visas for foreigners ahead of a high-profile anniversary next month, according to a China-based tour operator.

The measure follows reports that Pyongyang had suspended visits by Chinese tour groups as it prepares to mark the 70th anniversary of the foundation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as the country is officially known.

Koryo Tours, a popular agency among Western tourists seeking to visit the North, said on its website it had been "informed on 13 August by our partners in Pyongyang that they had been instructed from above that all tourist visa applications currently under way are to be frozen".

It was not given a reason for the freeze, the company said, but was told it would apply until the anniversary on September 9.

"This suggests to us that ... a higher power in the country is simply pressing pause on tourism until it is clear to them who is coming in such delegations and how many people," it added.



Prior military parades in Pyongyang, North Korea. Pyongyang has previously celebrated the date lavishly with military parades or mass games involving thousands of people performing acrobatic choreography in unison, and is expected this time to hold its first mass games for five years.

Speculation has also mounted that the nuclear-armed North could be preparing to stage a parade - at which it normally shows off some of the weapons that have earned it multiple sets of UN Security Council sanctions. (Courtesy <https://www.scmp.com/news/china>)

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