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French President Macron hopes to rebuild Notre-Dame in five years



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| Southern News Group

Minnesota student sues JD.com's CEO Liu, company over rape allegation

(Reuters) - A University of Minnesota student who said she was raped last August by Richard Liu, the chief executive officer of China's e-commerce retailer JD.com Inc., filed a civil lawsuit against him in a Minneapolis court on Tuesday, nearly four months after prosecutors declined to press criminal charges.

Liu, through his lawyers, maintained his innocence throughout the investigation of the woman's allegation.

The lawsuit in Hennepin County court seeks more than \$50,000 in damages and names Richard Liu and JD.com as defendants. It identifies the student as Liu Jingyao.

Richard Liu's attorney, Jill Brisbois, could not be immediately reached for comment on the lawsuit. A spokesman for JD.com also could not be immediately reached for comment.

"This action arises out of a sexual assault and battery that caused damages of more than \$50,000," the court document said.

The student accused Richard Liu of rape in August when he was visiting the University of Minnesota to attend a doctor of business administration program directed at Chinese executives.

The 46-year-old Liu, who started JD.com as a humble electronics stall and expanded it into an e-commerce company with 2018 net revenues of \$67 billion, was arrested on Aug. 31 but released without charge about 17 hours later. He soon returned to China and continued his executive role, as prosecutors in Minnesota investigated the rape allegation to determine if criminal charges were warranted. In December, Hennepin County Attorney Michael Freeman announced he was not charging Richard Liu as there were "profound evidentiary problems which would have made it highly unlikely that any criminal charge could be proven beyond a reasonable doubt."



FILE PHOTO: Richard Liu, founder and chief executive officer of e-commerce company JD.com, leaves the Great Hall of the People after the opening session of the National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing, China March 5, 2018. REUTERS/Stringer/File Photo

In major shift, Trump to allow lawsuits against foreign firms in Cuba

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The Trump administration will allow lawsuits in U.S. courts for the first time against foreign companies that use properties Communist-ruled Cuba confiscated since Fidel Castro's revolution six decades ago, a senior U.S. official said on Tuesday.

The major policy shift, which will be announced on Wednesday, could expose U.S., European and Canadian companies to legal action and deal a blow to Cuba's efforts to attract more foreign investment. It is also another sign of Washington's efforts to punish Havana over its support for Venezuela's socialist President Nicolas Maduro.

President Donald Trump's national security adviser John Bolton on Wednesday will explain the administration's decision in a speech in Miami and will also announce new sanctions on Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua, countries he has branded a "troika of tyranny," the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

It is unclear, however, whether such property claims will be acceptable in U.S. courts. The European Union has already warned it could lodge a challenge with the World Trade Organization. Trump threatened in January to allow a controversial law that has been suspended since its creation in 1996, permitting Cuban Americans and other U.S. citizens to sue foreign companies doing business in Cuba over property seized in decades past by the Cuban government.



FILE PHOTO: U.S. President Donald Trump talks to reporters as he departs for travel to Texas from the White House in Washington, U.S., April 10, 2019. REUTERS/Kevin Lamarque

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French President Macron hopes to rebuild Notre-Dame in five years

PARIS (Reuters) - President Emmanuel Macron pledged on Tuesday that France would rebuild the fire-devastated Notre-Dame de Paris cathedral, saying he hoped the work would be done in five years and the French people would pull together to repair their national symbol.

Macron devoted a brief prime-time televised address to Monday's catastrophic blaze in the heart of the capital, again postponing planned remarks on his response to months of anti-government protests.

"We will rebuild Notre-Dame even more beautifully and I want it to be completed in five years, we can do it," Macron said.

"It is up to us to convert this disaster into an opportunity to come together, having deeply reflected on what we have been and what we have to be and become better than we are. It is up to us to find the thread of our national project."

In the heart of Paris, a wounded Notre-Dame stirs emotions

In the heart of Paris, a wounded Notre-Dame stirs emotions

"This is not a time for politics," added Macron, who had cancelled a speech planned on Monday evening on the response to the "yellow vest" protests.

He visited the site of the fire late on Monday and promised then to rebuild the cathedral, parts of which date to the 12th century.

The cathedral spire was destroyed and its roof gutted but the bell towers were still standing and many valuable art works were saved after more than 400 firemen worked to contain the blaze, finally quelling it 14 hours after it began.

As the city and the country grieved for a potent national symbol, billionaires, companies and

local authorities were quick to offer donations.

Some 24 hours after the fire started, more than 750 million euros (\$845 million) had been pledged, including 500 million from the three billionaire families that own France's giant luxury goods empires: Kering, LVMH and L'Oréal.

Paris public prosecutor Remy Heitz said there was no obvious indication the fire was arson. Fifty people were working on what would be a long and complex investigation, officials said.

A view of the debris inside Notre-Dame de Paris in the aftermath of a fire that devastated the cathedral, during the visit of French Interior Minister Christophe Castaner (not pictured) in Paris, France, April 16, 2019. Christophe Petit Tesson/Pool via REUTERS

The fire swiftly ripped through the cathedral's oak roof supports, where workmen had been carrying out extensive renovations to the spire's timber-framed supports. Police began questioning the workers involved, the prosecutor's office said.

One firefighter was injured but no one else was hurt, with the fire starting at around 6:30 p.m. after the building was closed to the public for the evening.

Firefighters examined the facade, with its spectacular 10-metre filigreed stained-glass rose window still intact. They could be seen walking atop the belfries as police kept the area in lockdown.

Investigators will not be able to enter the cathedral's blackened nave until experts are satisfied its walls withstood the heat and the building is structurally sound.



French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe, Minister of Culture Franck Riester and French President Emmanuel Macron gather near the Notre Dame Cathedral as it burns in Paris



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Wednesday, April 17 2019

Editor's Choice



A man leaves a polling station as voters head to the polls in a provincial election in Calgary



FILE PHOTO: Tiger Woods celebrates on the 18th hole to win the 2019 Masters. REUTERS/Lucy Nicholson/File Photo



Sarah Moore and Esmee Hawkey attend a media day ahead of the inaugural season of the women-only racing series 'W Series' at the Lausitzring in Schipkau



FILE PHOTO: A Boeing 737 MAX 8 sits outside the hangar during a media tour of the Boeing 737 MAX at the Boeing plant in Renton, Washington



Chilean Navy teams along with officials from the National Fisheries Service, are seen working on the rescue of a live whale, which arrived at a beach in the Tongoy beach resort, Coquimbo about 430 kilometers north of Santiago



Shea Holbrook attends a media day ahead of the inaugural season of the women-only racing series 'W Series' at the Lausitzring in Schipkau



FILE PHOTO: A view of the U.S. and Cuban flags prior to the signing of agreements between the Port of Cleveland and the Cuban Maritime authorities in Havana



A group of boys take advantage of spring conditions to play with a frisbee on the National Mall in front of the U.S. Capitol building in Washington



In late December 2018 President Donald Trump signed the 2018 Farm Bill changing the hemp and CBD (cannabidiol) industry overnight. The 2018 Hemp Farming Act, part of the U.S. Farm Bill was led by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. The impact of this bill and its socioeconomic impact on the U.S. opens the door to more jobs and new products from hemp.

THE BANNING + REVIVAL OF A NON-PSYCHOACTIVE PLANT

Hemp cultivation has not always been banned. Hemp was once an agricultural staple – its durable fibers used for numerous products including canvas, cloth and rope. Hemp restrictions began in the 1930s to curtail marijuana use. The misplaced fears that hemp was the same as marijuana discouraged cultivation by imposing fees and restrictions that made hemp farming undesirable.

In the 1970s, The Controlled Substance Act classified cannabis as a schedule 1 drug. Since hemp is cannabis, industrial hemp farming was banned. Product manufacturers that relied on hemp seed oil and hemp fiber were forced to rely on imported hemp.

THE 2018 FARM BILL WILL FREE HEMP FROM FEDERAL REGULATION

With the signing of the 2018 Farm Bill, hemp farming will no longer be limited to the terms of the pilot program detailed in the 2014 Farm Bill. When restrictions are lifted, hemp will be treated the same as any other commodity crop. There are several benefits to removing federal restrictions, including:

ENDING THE LEGALITY DEBATE

Since hemp cultivation is federally restricted, there is a bit of a grey area about the legality of hemp-derived CBD and other hemp products.

When all hemp crops are legalized on the federal level, there will be no more need to interpret the intent of the law or debate legality.



OPENING THE DOOR TO SPONSORED RESEARCH

While hemp CBD is not a medication

or cure for any medical condition, research shows that the cannabidiol (CBD) in hemp oil has the potential to provide significant health benefits. Removing hemp from the list of federally restricted commodities opens government-sponsored research programs to researchers investigating the potential medicinal benefits of hemp oil supplements.

THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF THE 2018 FARM BILL ON THE AMERICAN ECONOMY

Until the passing of the 2014 Farm Bill, the U.S. relied solely on imported hemp. With the approval of the 2018 Farm Bill, we anticipate a large influx of capital into the hemp market, with an increase in the number of hemp farmers, quality hemp products, product consumers and business investors.

The signing of the 2018 Farm Bill will provide economic stimulation, bring countless jobs and income potential back to the American soil. By removing the restrictions on hemp farming, the 2018 Farm Bill places hemp from American farmers into the hands of American manufacturers and consumers. The hemp industry is expected to evolve into a \$22 billion market by 2022.

Back in 1941, Henry Ford built a car that

was not only entirely built from 'hemp plastic', but also ran on hemp fuel. Hemp oil, pressed from the seeds is also extremely versatile. It can be polymerized to create a solid plastic-like material, which is extremely durable, yet nevertheless is completely natural and biodegradable, which could replace plastics in numerous industrial processes.

What does the 2018 farm bill do for hemp?

The 2018 Farm Bill is more expansive. It allows hemp cultivation broadly, not simply pilot programs for studying market interest in hemp-derived products. However, the new Farm Bill does not create a com-

The Hemp Industry Is Expected To Evolve Into A \$22 Billion Market By 2022. Hemp Could Free The U.S. From Oil, Prevent Deforestation, Cure Cancer And It's Environmentally Friendly

The Significance Of The 2018 Farm Bill For The U.S. Hemp Industry

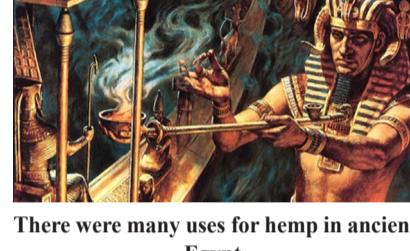
Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

pletely free system in which individuals or businesses can grow hemp whenever and wherever they want. For additional details, go here: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2018/12/14/the-farm-bill-hemp-and-cbd-explainer/> (Courtesy <http://www.cobizmag.com/>)

Related

Historical Use Of Hemp

Hemp is the most universally useful plant we have at our disposal. The history of mankind's use of hemp can be traced way back in time to between about 5000 - 7000 BC. Remains of seed husks have been found at Neolithic burial sites in central Europe, which indicate that they were used in funeral rites and shamanic ceremonies. It is probable that at that time the distinctions between various strains were not as pronounced as they are today.



There were many uses for hemp in ancient Egypt.

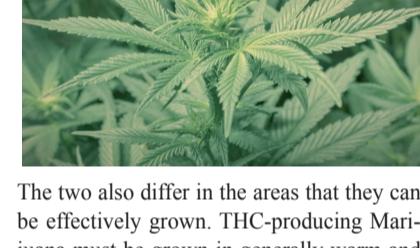
Up until and even during WWII, hemp was a widely grown crop, which provided the world with an excellent and most durable source of fibre. Since it is an annual with a growing cycle of only 120 days it can be harvested several times a year, depending on local weather conditions. Its biomass is considerable, which means that it absorbs large quantities of the greenhouse gas CO₂. It is resistant to bugs and requires little agrochemical treatment. It is extremely undemanding and can be grown in very poor conditions and depleted soils and will actually improve the soil structure over a period of years. For many centuries hemp was one of the most important industrial crops which provided the fibres for rope and tough, durable canvass without which the age of exploration could

never have set sail.

Misinformation About THC

Hemp is a variety of cannabis sativa that has a long history of use in the United States. However, since the 1950s it has been lumped into the same category of marijuana, and thus the extremely versatile crop was doomed in the United States. Hemp is technically from the same species of plant that psychoactive marijuana comes from. However, it is from a different variety, or subspecies that contains many important differences. Industrial hemp has very low Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) levels, which is the principal psychoactive constituent. Compared to marijuana which is specifically cultivated for personal psychoactive use, it is nearly impossible to "get high" on hemp. Marijuana that can be smoked usually contains between 5-10% THC, industrial hemp contains about one-tenth of that. In order to get a psychoactive effect, one would need to smoke more than a dozen hemp cigarettes over a very short period of time to achieve any kind of psychoactive effect. The reason for the low THC content in hemp is that most THC is formed in resin glands on the buds and flowers of the female cannabis plant. Industrial hemp is not cultivated to produce buds, and therefore lacks the primary component that forms the marijuana high.

Furthermore, industrial hemp has higher concentrations of a chemical called Cannabidiol (CBD) that has a negative effect on THC and lessens its psychoactive effects when smoked in conjunction.



The two also differ in the areas that they can be effectively grown. THC-producing Marijuana must be grown in generally warm and humid environments in order to produce the desired quantity and quality of THC-contain-

ing buds. However, since industrial hemp does not contain these buds, and the hardy parts of the plant are the more desired, it can be grown in a wider range of areas. Generally, industrial hemp grows best on fields that provide high yields for corn crops, which includes most of the Southwest, Southeast, and Northeast United States. Furthermore, since industrial hemp can use male plants as well as female plants (since the object is not THC production), higher crop yields can result.

Abundant Resources

Hemp provides the fibre to make a durable paper - a far more sensible solution than the wasteful method of clear cutting old growth forests, or even the cultivation pine plantations that are ecologically speaking dead zones that take 20 years to mature before they can be harvested. Cannabis produces 4 times more fibre per acre and can be harvested several times per year. The first dollar bills were printed on hemp paper, your old family bible is probably printed on hemp paper and even the constitution itself was drafted on hemp paper.



Hemp has the strongest natural fibres, which can be used not just to produce rough cloth, such as sails or canvass, but also durable work clothes, like the original jeans. When the plants are grown closer together the fibre becomes shorter and finer, which allows for finer textiles. Today, there are some fashion designers that are experimenting with a wide range of textiles made from hemp for their stylish, trendy hemp lines, shirts, suits, bags, jeans and more.

Hemp fibres are also finding application as a modern building material, an application that has been spearheaded and exploited successfully in France. Hemp fibres can be blended with water and limestone to create an extremely tough, light-weight, natural cement that has not only excellent insulating properties, but also shows more flexibility than conventional concrete, which makes it particularly useful as a building material in earthquake prone areas.

(Courtesy <http://healthcareusa.com/>) Additional reading: Andrew Weil's article on hemp oil at <https://www.ratical.org/renewables/TherapHoil.html>. Additional sources: phoenixtears.ca, sacredearth.com, cannabisculture.com.

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A judge has sided with Texas landowners who pushed back against the prospect of being forced to sell their land for a proposed high-speed rail line connecting Houston and Dallas. Leon County Judge Deborah Evans ruled this month that Texas Central Railway doesn't have the authority to force landowners to sell or provide access to their properties for its planned 200-mph (320-kph) bullet train, the Houston Chronicle reported.

The ruling centers on whether the company is a railroad, which backers say entitles them to access property through eminent domain. The privately funded project would use Japanese bullet trains to transport riders between the two cities in 90 minutes, and the estimated cost is \$12 billion to \$15 billion.



"Texas has long allowed survey access by railroads like Texas Central, pipelines, electrical lines and other industries that provide for a public good and a strong economy," the company said.

Texas Central Railway is a privately-funded high-speed rail line that wants to build a rail line to connect Houston and Dallas, turning a four and one-half hour drive into a ninety minute ride. But a judge's ruling could have major implications for the proposed high-speed rail line. The ruling could prevent the rail line's developers from using eminent domain to acquire land for the project. For the past few years, Texas Central Railway has been laying the groundwork for this massive

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Judge Sides With Texas Landowners Over High-Speed Rail Issue

Court Ruling May Derail Plans For Texas High Speed Railroad



Texas Central Railway says the trip from Houston to Dallas would take only 90 minutes.

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

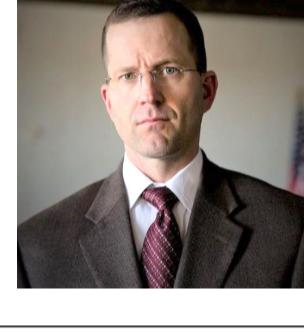
project. While it's received support from officials in the two cities, that's not the case in the rural areas along the train's proposed route. Many landowners say they don't want a rail line slicing through their property.



(Courtesy Texas Central Railway) Texas Central Railway has argued that, as a railroad, they'd be able to use eminent domain when landowners didn't want to sell their land voluntarily. But a couple weeks ago a Leon County Judge ruled Texas Central isn't a railroad. That ruling came in the case of a Leon County couple who sued after the company wanted to survey on their property. Blake Beckham is the couple's attorney.

"This project cannot be finished

without eminent domain and the project is completely off-track," explained Beckham. "The project is stymied and I don't believe it will ever be built."



Rep. Ben Leman, (R) Texas District 13. (Photo/Texas Tribune) Former Grimes County Judge Ben Leman applauds the ruling. Leman is now a state representative, and says he's pushing for legislation to clarify who can use eminent domain.

"In no way, shape, or form should a private entity be able to falsely claim to have the power of eminent domain," stated Leman. "And then under that false pretense be able to terrorize and threaten hundreds if not thousands of landowners."



This photo taken in 2018 shows a utility corridor which runs through Freestone County, Texas, near Fairfield, in a small community of Cotton Gin. Texas Central Partners is planning to build its 240-mile high-speed rail line between Houston and Dallas along the corridor. (Courtesy HOUSTON CHRONICLE)

Texas Central issued a statement saying they plan to appeal the ruling, and also believes Texas law does give them the authority to access and survey private property... and to acquire it by eminent domain. There's been no construction on the high-speed rail line as of yet and it is still under environmental review. (Courtesy <https://www.redriverradio.org> and <https://www.star-telegram.com>)

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