

CHINESE ROBOTICS ENGINEER, ARTIST MAKES REAL-LIFE 'TRANSFORMERS'

BEIJING: In the suburbs of China's capital, a 32-year-old engineer creates the kind of larger-than-life, shapeshifting robots that most have only seen in "Transformers" movies. Sun Shiqian's roomy warehouse on the outskirts of Beijing houses a hulking menagerie, from a sleepy cow to a fiery metal dragon that stands 4.9 meters tall at the flip of a switch. A graduate of China's prestigious Central Academy of Fine Arts, Sun worked as an engineer before deciding to devote himself full-time to what he calls "robot arts".

"As a child, I loved watching cartoons with robots," Sun said. "But I noticed that they were all from either Japan or the United States. There were no Chinese robots." At the World Robot Conference in Beijing last month, the sculptor showcased an ox with the mechanical ability to transform into a robot "gladiator," equipped with steel abs and all. The android is part of his series based on the 12 animals of the Chinese zodiac.

This June, Sun unveiled a 5-metre tall "Monkey King" inspired by the simian protagonist of China's famed "Journey to the West". Like his model, the 5-tonne robot holds a golden cudgel—except his is 6.3 meters long. The next model of "Monkey King" is slated to challenge an American giant robot to a duel next year.

Robots with Chinese characteristics

Sun grew up on an island off the coast of Dalian in northeast China. His family could not afford many toys, but his father, a former soldier, would often show him simple blueprints of weapons that were used in combat. Using these blueprints and sheets of cardboard, Sun fashioned miniature fighting dragons and other creatures. "I began to like art more and more, and I made increasingly complex robots in my spare time," he said. After leaving his engineering post in 2011, Sun focused his energy on designing robots—some costing upwards of one million yuan (\$150,000) — and making his visions a reality.

In 2014, he was commissioned by Paramount Movies to make robot sculptures to promote "Transformers: Age of Extinction", which broke box-office records in China. One model was exhibited at the historic Qianmen Gate, which formerly guarded the entrance to the Imperial City in Beijing. "People asked me, why are they putting foreign art in front of Qianmen?" Sun recalled. "This had a big impact on me, because they recognized that this robot did not have Chinese origins. From then on, my dream has been to create robot art that is distinctly Chinese."—AFP



BEIJING: This picture shows Sun Shiqian, a Chinese artist who makes transformer-like sculptures, showing a transformers' head at his studio in Beijing.—AFP



LIAONING PROVINCE: Trucks transport goods to North Korea through the Friendship Bridge linking China and North Korea, as seen from Dandong in northeastern China's Liaoning Province.—AP

US PROPOSES UN BAN ON OIL TO NORTH KOREA AND ASSET FREEZE

RESOLUTION TO PROHIBIT N KOREA FROM EXPORTING TEXTILES

UNITED NATIONS: The United States is seeking the toughest-ever UN sanctions on North Korea that would ban all oil and natural gas exports to the northeast Asian nation and freeze all foreign financial assets of the government and its leader, Kim Jong Un. The US-drafted resolution, circulated to council members Wednesday and obtained by The Associated Press, would also prohibit North Korea from exporting textiles and ban all countries from hiring and paying workers from the northeast Asian nation — two key sources of foreign currency.

The proposed resolution identifies nine cargo vessels that have carried out activities for North Korea prohibited by previous UN sanctions resolutions and would subject them to inspection by government warships, vessels or aircraft. It would authorize the 192 other UN member states to stop these ships on the high seas to inspect their cargo without their consent and to use "all necessary measures" — which in UN language includes force — to carry out an inspection and direct the vessel to a port. This would also apply to any other vessels designated by the Security Council committee monitoring sanctions against North Korea.

US Ambassador Nikki Haley said at an emergency council meeting earlier this week after North Korea's sixth and largest nuclear test that the Trump administration wants to put the resolution to a vote Monday. The resolution is likely to face opposition from North Korea's neighbors and allies, China and Russia, who say pre-

vious sanctions aren't working. South Korean President Moon Jae-in urged Russian President Vladimir Putin this week to back stronger sanctions on the North, including an oil cutoff. But Putin worried that such moves would hurt North Korea's people, said Yoon Youngchan, Moon's chief press secretary.

Flagrant violation

Russia and China are calling for a resolution that focuses on a political solution and have proposed a suspension-for-suspension that would halt North Korean nuclear and missile tests in exchange for the US and South Korea halting their joint military exercises. Putin said earlier Wednesday that "we should not give in to emotions and push Pyongyang into a corner." The Trump administration has rejected the proposal by China and Russia, saying military exercises are essential in the face of escalating North Korean tests and threats to launch an intercontinental ballistic missile near the US territory of Guam.

President Donald Trump has said all options are on the table and told British Prime Minister Theresa May on Tuesday that "now is not the time to talk to North Korea," according to a White House readout. The proposed resolution would condemn "in the strongest terms" the latest nuclear test, which Pyongyang said was of a hydrogen bomb, calling it a "flagrant" violation of previous council resolutions banning all nuclear tests. It would order all countries to freeze all funds, oth-

er financial assets and economic resources outside North Korea "that are owned or controlled, directly or indirectly" by Kim Jong Un, the ruling Worker's Party of Korea, the government, or by individuals or entities acting on their behalf or at their direction.

The draft would freeze the assets of North Korea's state-owned airline Air Koryo, the Korean People's Army, and five other powerful military and party entities. It would also freeze the assets and impose a travel ban on Kim Jong Un and four other top party officials, Hwang Pyong So, Kim Ki Nam, Kim Yo Jong, and Pak Yong Sik. The proposed resolution would add 42 items to a list of equipment, goods and technology that countries are banned from exporting to North Korea. It would also prohibit North Korea from being part of any joint ventures or cooperative agreements.

The draft calls for a resumption of long-stalled six-party talks between North Korea and the US, Russia, China, South Korea and Japan with the goal of denuclearizing the Korean peninsula. It reiterates the importance of maintaining peace and stability in northeast Asia and the council's commitment "to a peaceful, diplomatic and political solution to the situation," and it welcomes efforts to resolve the situation through dialogue. The proposed resolution expresses the Security Council's "determination to take further significant measures" in the event of a new nuclear test or ballistic missile launch.—AP