



CHRIS BROWN RELEASED WITHOUT CHARGE AFTER HE WAS DETAINED IN PARIS OVER RAPE ALLEGATION



'FIJI WATER GIRL', WHO PHOTOBOMBED CELEBS AT GOLDEN GLOBE, TO MAKE A CAMEO ON 'THE BOLD AND THE BEAUTIFUL'

## US' right-wing nativists muddy Kamala's path to White House

Critic Claims PIO Senator Not Eligible For Prez Run Over Parents' 'Non-Resident' Status Prior To Her Birth

Chidanand Rajghatta  
@timesgroup.com

Washington: Lotus flowers (Kamala in Sanskrit) famously retain their pristine quality despite growing in muddy waters. California's biracial Senator Kamala Harris may have to draw on that feature after right-wing nativists in America began questioning her credentials to run for the White House in a replay of the birther conspiracy — a malicious falsehood propagated by the current president — that dogged then President Barack Obama.

But while President Trump propagated the lie that Obama was not born in the US and was therefore not eligible for the Oval Office, his acolytes began attacking Kamala Harris on more dubious grounds. Jacob Wohl, a prominent Trump supporter and Twitter troll ignited the controversy by asserting that Harris is "NOT eligible to be President" because "her father arrived from Jamaica in 1961 — mother from India arrived in 1960" and "neither parent was a legal resident for 5 years prior to Harris's birth, a requirement for naturalisation".

Wohl also maintained that Kamala was raised in Canada and presented a photo page from a yearbook from Westmount High School in Montreal, while remarking that "just like the worst President in American History, Barack Hussein Obama, Kamala Harris was NOT raised in the United States" and asking, "Is it too much to ask to have a President that was born and RAISED in America?"

Wohl's nativist bluff and racist flambait was quickly called out by others who pointed out that Article II, Section 1 of the US Constitution stipulates that the President must be "a natural born Citizen" regardless of where he or she grew up or their parents' status. "No person except a natu-



Right-wing nativists are questioning biracial Senator Kamala Harris's credentials to run for the White House in a replay of the birther conspiracy that had once dogged former President Barack Obama

### Harris raises over \$1m within 24 hrs

Kamala Harris has raised \$1.5 million within 24 hours after announcing her presidential bid for 2020. In the 24 hours after the Democratic Party leader from California made the announcement on ABC's "Good Morning America", 38,000 donors gave \$1.5 million to her campaign, the Fox News reported. "Thanks to you, we surpassed \$1.5 million in grassroots contributions in under 24 hours," Harris tweeted. In fact, within the first 12 hours alone, Harris' campaign registered \$1 million in funding, and the average donation was around \$37, the report said mentioning the Wall Street Journal.

ral born citizen, or a citizen of the US, at the time of the adoption of this Constitution, shall be eligible to the office of President; neither shall any person be eligible to that office who shall not have attained to the age of thirty five years, and been fourteen years a resident within the US," reads Article II of the US Constitution.

Harris was born in Oakland, California, just as Barack Obama was born in Honolulu, Hawaii, both well-established facts. But that has not stopped nativists from fos-

### First gay nominee enters prez race

He is a longshot candidate, but South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg said on Wednesday he is jumping into the burgeoning 2020 Democratic field challenging Donald Trump, aiming to become the first openly gay presidential nominee. Should he win, the 37-year-old wunderkind, a US Navy reservist who took leave from his mayoral duties to serve in Afghanistan, would also be America's youngest-ever commander-in-chief. Buttigieg announced that he has formed a presidential exploratory committee, a key opening step to formally launching a bid. Buttigieg was elected mayor at just 29.

While Harris did indeed spend her high school years in Canada (her mother worked for while at the McGill University in Montreal), she has been a resident in the US from her time as an undergraduate at Howard University in Washington DC in 1982, and she has served in public office in the US continuously since the 1990s.

Wohl is no stranger to baiting anyone who he sees as posing a threat to Trump's presidency. A former hedge fund prodigy and online muckraker, he was involved in a conspiracy to discredit special counsel Robert Mueller when journalists reported receiving suspicious emails from a woman claiming she had been offered money to fabricate accusations of sexual misconduct against the special prosecutor investigating Russian interference in the 2016 election.

## 'Fake news': Trump tells spokeswoman not to bother with press meets

Washington: US President Donald Trump said on Tuesday that he has told his chief spokeswoman Sarah Sanders "not to bother" with formal media briefings in the White House, because journalists don't cover her fairly.

"The reason Sarah Sanders does not go to the 'podium' much anymore is that the press covers her so rudely & inaccurately, in particular certain members of the press," Trump tweeted. "I told her not to bother, the word gets out anyway! Most will never cover us fairly & hence, the term, Fake News!"

The White House briefing room, a keystone of modern presidential messaging, has been largely abandoned under Trump. The last briefing where Sanders took questions from reporters was on December 18. On January 3, Trump himself made a surprise appearance — his first at the briefing room podium — to deliver a statement on border security, but took no questions.

The White House Correspondents Association, which represents journalists covering the president, attacked Trump's statement. "This retreat from transparency and accountability sets a terrible



President Trump on Wednesday refused to give up his demand of a border wall as the government shutdown entered 33rd day — the longest in US history. 'Build a Wall and Crime will fall!' he tweeted twice on Wednesday

precedent," said association president Olivier Knox.

On Wednesday, Sanders brushed aside criticism that the Trump administration is not accessible to the press, saying that such an opinion is "absolutely laughable". "I take questions from reporters every single day. The idea that this White House isn't accessible to the press is absolutely laughable," Sanders told 'Fox & Friends'. However, she was noncommittal about the future of White House press briefings. "We'll see what happens. As the president said, he doesn't like the decorum in the White House."

## China cyber watchdog deletes 7m pieces of info

Shanghai: China's cyber watchdog said on Wednesday that it had deleted more than 7 million pieces of online information as well as 9,382 mobile apps, and it criticised tech giant Tencent's news app for spreading "vulgar information".

The Cyberspace Administration of China said in a statement on its website the action was part of a clean-up of unacceptable and harmful information that started this month, adding that it had also shut down 733 websites. The administration singled out Tencent's Tiantian Kuaibao news app, saying the platform had been ordered to make changes as it had been spreading "vulgar and low-brow information that was harmful and damaging to the internet ecosystem".

Tencent did not immediately respond to requests for comment. The regulator also criticised Huaban, a photo-sharing network, as having "serious ecosystem problems". Huaban said on its website its online service had been temporarily taken down for upgrades. Control of the internet has tightened under President Xi Jinping — an effort that has accelerated since 2016, as the ruling Communist Party seeks to crack down on dissent in the booming social media landscape.

## EU negotiator warns lawmakers of chaotic Brexit

Brussels: EU negotiator Michel Barnier warned British lawmakers on Wednesday that their disparate efforts to amend, delay or thwart Brexit will see Britain crash out of the EU in March if they cannot rally behind one alternative.

Referring to parliament's rejection of a negotiated withdrawal treaty and raging cross-party debate about preventing a March 29 departure without a deal to cushion businesses and people, Barnier said the House of Commons faced a choice: "There are two possible ways to leave the EU," he told a gathering of business and labour leaders in Brussels. "Number one — an orderly withdrawal based on the agreement that we have built step-by-step with the UK over the last 18 months. Number two — a disorderly withdrawal. Leaving the EU without a deal is the default scenario and there appears to be a majority in the House of Commons to oppose a no-deal. But opposing no-deal will not stop no-deal from happening at the end of March. To stop no-deal, another majority will have to emerge," said the former French minister.

Referring to the need to build a majority behind an alternative to a no deal, he added: "This is the objective of the political consultations that Theresa May has started



BREXIT MESS

### Sony moves HQ to the Netherlands

The British government on Wednesday played down concerns that Brexit is scaring away businesses after Sony said it was moving its European headquarters to the Netherlands amid a bitter political stalemate in London. At the World Economic Forum in Davos, international trade secretary Liam Fox said Britain remained "open for business". Britain "is an attractive destination for foreign direct investment — and that during the time where there's been uncertainty over Brexit," Fox said. The Japanese electronics giant said it was moving its headquarters' registration by the end of March to avoid Brexit-related customs issues.

and we hope, sincerely we hope, that this process will be successful."

## Hacker uses security camera to broadcast hoax N-missile alert

San Francisco: Nest urged owners of its security cameras on Tuesday to use enhanced authentication to thwart hackers, after one terrified a family with a hoax nuclear missile attack.

A couple living in a California town told local media they experienced "sheer terror" over the weekend when a Nest security camera atop their family's TV issued a realistic-sounding warning of missiles heading to the US from North Korea.

The couple and their child eventually figured out they had been targeted by a hacker who got control of speakers built into the camera, which is equipped for

two-way conversations.

Nest, which is owned by Google-parent Alphabet, said incidents of commandeered camera control in recent months were the result of hackers using passwords stolen from other online venues. "Nest was not breached," Google said. "These recent ports are based on compromised passwords — exposed through breaches on other websites." Reported incidents involving Nest cameras in the US in the past three months include a hacker threatening to snatch a baby and a seemingly well-intended hacker telling someone that his data was exposed.

### PRIVACY BREACH

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## Desi couple who fell from US cliff was 'intoxicated'

New York: An Indian couple, who plunged 800ft to their deaths after taking a selfie at a scenic cliff in California's popular Yosemite National Park, were "intoxicated" at the time of the incident, according to autopsy results.

Vishnu Viswanath, 29, and his wife, Meenakshi Moorthy, 30, both engineers from Kerala, were "intoxicated with ethyl alcohol" prior to falling 800 feet from Taft Point on October 25, but no drugs were present in their bodies, US media quoted the autopsy report as saying. Ethyl alcohol is found in alcoholic beverages such as beer, wine and hard liquor.

Due to the condition of the bodies after the extreme fall, investigators were unable to accurately discern a specific level of intoxication.

The couple had been married since 2014.

## Venezuela oppn leader declares self acting prez

Caracas: Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido has declared himself interim president in a defiant speech before masses of anti-government demonstrators who took to the streets on Wednesday to demand President Nicolas Maduro's resignation. He immediately drew recognition from the Trump administration, which said it would use the "full weight" of US economic and diplomatic power to push for the restoration of Venezuela's democracy.

Guaido said he was taking the politically risky step just two weeks after Maduro took his own oath to a second, six-year term confident that it was the only way to rescue Venezuela from "dictatorship" and restore constitutional order. Guaido, 35, told a cheering crowd, "To be able to achieve this task and to re-establish the constitution we need the agreement of all Venezuelans." On Wednesday, protesters gathered in Caracas chanting "Get out Maduro!" in what was the largest demonstration since a wave of unrest that left more than 120 dead in 2017.

## French watchdog sounds alert over chemicals in diapers

Paris: A French public health watchdog issued a warning Wednesday about the risks of several chemicals found in disposable nappies, particularly artificial perfumes, leading the government to demand that manufacturers withdraw them from their products.

The Anses health body stressed there was no medical study which had proved health problems caused by disposable diapers. But "we cannot exclude a risk... because we have recorded some substances that are above health limits", the deputy director of the Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety (Anses), Gerard Lasfargues, said.

The chemicals identified in the study — described as the first of its kind — included two artificial perfumes as well as other complex aromatic products that are refined from oil, and potentially dangerous dioxins.

The French government called a meeting of nappy



The chemicals identified to be harmful include two artificial perfumes as well as other complex aromatic products that are refined from oil, and potentially dangerous dioxins

manufacturers on Wednesday morning and gave them 15 days to remove the products identified by the watchdog. "I want to reassure parents: Anses says that there is no immediate risk for the health of our children," health minister Agnes Buzyn said after the meeting. "Obviously we should continue putting nappies on our babies. We've been doing that for at least 50 years," she said, while adding that the report does not exclude "a health risk for

children in the long term".

"That's why as a precaution we want to protect our children from possible effects," said Buzyn, who met the manufacturers along with the economy and environmental ministers.

In a statement on Wednesday, market leader Pampers, which belongs to US consumer products group Procter & Gamble, said its diapers "are safe and have always been so". Scientists working for Anses tested 23 types of nappies in real-life conditions as they were worn by children.

"We calculated the amount (of chemicals) absorbed, calculated according to the time a nappy is worn, the number of nappies worn by babies, up to 36 months, and then we compared the results with toxicology standards," Lasfargues said. A average baby in France wears 3,800 to 4,800 nappies, Lasfargues said, with the potentially hazardous chemicals found even in products marketed as environmentally friendly.

## In FB post, man threatens to kill girls, arrested

Salt Lake City: A man in under arrest in Utah after police say he posted on Facebook about "killing as many girls as I see" the same weekend that Women's Marches were in US. Christopher W Cleary, 27, wrote he wanted to be "the next mass shooter", because he had never had a girlfriend and he was still a virgin, according to jail documents filed by police. He wanted to "make it right" with women who had turned him down and also said "there's nothing more dangerous than a man ready to die", the documents said.

With help from the FBI, officers tracked Cleary to a restaurant and arrested him on suspicion of a felony threat of terrorism charge. Cleary acknowledged making the posts, but said he deleted them after receiving threats in response. He told officials he had an impulse-control disorder and was suicidal. He was being held without bail.

## Oracle accused of underpaying women, Asians

San Francisco: The US government regulators are accusing software maker Oracle of engaging in discriminatory practices that resulted in thousands of its women, black and Asian employees being underpaid by more than \$400 million.

The allegations emerged on Tuesday in a filing made in a two-year-old case that is being pursued by a part of the US labour department that examines the pay practices of government contractors.

The filing cites evidence that Oracle underpaid women and ethnic minorities for similar work done by white men by as much as 25%. The alleged practices affected more than 5,000 women, more than 11,000 Asians and fewer than 30 blacks from 2013 through 2016. Oracle declined to comment.

## DNA test proves 'Spandau #7' who died in Berlin jail was indeed Rudolf Hess

Samuel Osborne

A DNA test has debunked the enduring conspiracy theory that Nazi war criminal Rudolf Hess was replaced by an imposter in prison. An analysis of blood samples showed the man imprisoned in Spandau Prison in Berlin was indeed Adolf Hitler's deputy.

Hess was captured after flying solo from Germany to Scotland in May 1941, in an apparent attempt to negotiate a peace deal between Britain and Nazi Germany. He was sentenced to life in prison at the Nuremberg trials and sent



Conspiracy theorists had claimed that Adolf Hitler's deputy and Nazi war criminal Rudolf Hess was replaced by an imposter in prison



Hess's doctor believed the man in Spandau was physically different from Hess and he was suspicious of his refusal to see relatives until 1969 and his apparent amnesia.

However, researchers at the University of Salzburg in Austria analysed a blood sample taken from the prisoner known as Spandau #7 in 1982. By comparing it with a distant male relative of Hess, they found a match of 99.99%.

"Hence, the conspiracy theory claiming that prisoner 'Spandau #7' was an imposter is extremely unlikely and therefore disproved," the researchers wrote in the journal Forensic Science International Genetics. Hess was convicted of crimes against peace and conspiracy to commit crimes and sentenced to a life sentence at the jail in 1947. He killed himself in August 1987, at the age of 93.

### AROUND THE WORLD



PINK FLOYD'S FRONTMAN REUNITES IS-KIDNAPPED BOYS WITH MOM: Roger Waters, Pink Floyd's frontman, used his private jet to reunite children of a dead Islamic State terrorist stuck in Syria with their mother. Waters flew Felicia Perkins-Ferreira from Trinidad to Syria to meet her children, lawyer and rights activist Clive Stafford-Smith said. She had not met Ayyub, 7, and his brother Mahmud, 11, since 2014 when they were kidnapped by their father and taken to Syria. The two children were freed from Raqqa some months back



### Parking fight lands Baldwin in class to control temper

Actor Alec Baldwin on Wednesday agreed to take anger-management training, as he pleaded guilty in a Manhattan court to a harassment charge for a November confrontation in which he was accused of punching someone over a parking spot. The 60-year-old actor, currently known for his impersonation of US President Donald Trump on "Saturday Night Live", was ordered by the judge to pay a \$120 fine and to return to court on March 27, to show he had completed the anger-management class. Baldwin has a history of losing his temper. In 2014, he was given a summons

for disorderly conduct after an argument with police when he was stopped for riding his bike down a one-way street in New York. In 2011, he was thrown off an American Airlines flight after refusing to stop playing a game on his phone before takeoff.

### Nurse held after US woman gave birth in vegetative state

A male nurse has been arrested in Arizona for the sexual assault of a woman who gave birth while in a long-term vegetative state. The 29-year-old victim gave birth late last month to a baby boy, whose DNA was matched to that of the suspect, leading to the arrest. The suspect, Nathan Sutherland (36), faces charges of one count of sexual assault and one count of vulnerable adult abuse, Phoenix police Sergeant Tommy Thomson said. "The baby I am told is doing good," Thomson said. The CEO of the nursing facility resigned following the scandal.

### Oz's 'Battered Wife' cafe to shut after uproar over name

A fish and chip shop in Australia called 'The Battered Wife' is to close next week after its controversial name sparked condemnation from women's rights groups, who accused the owners of trivialising domestic abuse. The owner of the cafe in the Australian state of Queensland said she was forced to shutter her business due to an "abusive witch hunt" by campaigners who criticised its controversial name.

### Pizza shop gives discount to patrons seeking Brexit 2.0

Like many small-scale entrepreneurs in UK, Oliver Kenny, says disarray over Brexit has left his business in limbo — but he's hoping customers at his pizzeria can help sort out the mess. He's offering 25% off pizzas to patrons who've written to their MPs to ask for a second referendum. "I buy a lot of cheese from Italy. I'd like to know my supply chain."