



PRINCE PHILIP, 97, WON'T FACE CHARGES OVER CAR CRASH AS BRITISH PROSECUTORS TAKE HIS AGE INTO ACCOUNT



THE 'OSCAT' GOES TO... BRADLEY COOPER WINS ANIMAL RIGHTS GROUP'S AWARD FOR CASTING HIS DOG IN FILM

Justice officials discussed removing Trump from office when he fired Comey: McCabe

FBI's Former Acting Director Says Prez Move Had Raised Issues Of Trust & Fealty To US

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Andrew McCabe said, 'I was speaking to the man who had just run for the presidency and won the election for the presidency and who might have done so with the aid of the government of Russia, our most formidable adversary on the world stage. And that was something that troubled me greatly'

Washington: A former acting director of the FBI has confirmed reports that officials of the US justice department discussed invoking the 25th Amendment to remove President Trump from office when he fired FBI director James Comey because of suspicion that he (Trump) could be a Russian stooge.

The rarely deployed 25th amendment deals with issues related to presidential succession and disability, the extreme scenario allowing for a majority of the 15-member cabinet voting to remove a president they deem unfit from office and handing over executive authority to the vice-president. It has been used only three times in US history, mainly when presidents have had to undergo medical procedures, and never because the president was seen as treasonous.

But in this case, according to former FBI honcho Andrew McCabe, top justice department officials were so alarmed by Trump's decision in May 2017 to fire Comey that they discussed whether to canvass cabinet members to invoke the 25th Amendment, ostensibly

over issues of trust and fealty to the US. They even discussed an informal headcount to assess support for such a move, and McCabe himself moved to strengthen the Russia probe just in case he was fired.

"I was very concerned that I was able to put the Russia case on absolutely solid ground, in an indelible fashion. That were I removed quickly, or reassigned or fired, that the case could not be closed or vanish in the night without a trace," McCabe was quoted telling a



President Trump hit back at McCabe, tweeting, 'Disgraced FBI Acting Director Andrew McCabe pretends to be a 'poor little Angel' when in fact he was a big part of the Crooked Hillary Scandal & the Russia Hoax — a puppet for Leakin' James Comey... McCabe is a disgrace to the FBI and a disgrace to our Country'

CBS 60 minute interview slated to be telecast on Sunday.

"I was speaking to the man who had just run for the presidency, and won the election for the presidency, and who might have done so with the aid of the government of Russia, our most formidable adversary on the world stage, and that was something that troubled me greatly," McCabe says, recalling his first meeting with Trump.

MCCabe's interview is evidently part of an exercise to

promote his memoir, "The Threat: How the FBI Protects America in the Age of Terror and Trump," due to be released next week, and it was received with skepticism in the Trump constituency.

MCCabe was eventually fired in March 2018 by then attorney general Jeff Sessions (who was himself subsequently sidelined by Trump), and the president has frequently attacked him, Comey, and other FBI and justice department officials, for what Trump and his acolytes see as an attempted constitutional coup by the so-called Deep State to subvert the electoral verdict in cahoots with Hillary Clinton and the Democrats, whom the president characterizes as "losers".

"Disgraced FBI Acting Director Andrew McCabe pretends to be a 'poor little Angel' when in fact he was a big part of the Crooked Hillary Scandal & the Russia Hoax — a puppet for Leakin' James Comey. I.G. report on McCabe was devastating. Part of 'insurance policy' in case I won," Trump tweeted minutes after excerpts of McCabe's interview was made public. "Many of the FBI brass were fired, forced to leave, or left. McCabe's wife received BIG DOLLARS from

Clinton people for her campaign — he gave Hillary a pass. McCabe is a disgrace to the FBI and a disgrace to our Country. MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!" he added.

But many Trump critics argued that the electoral verdict itself was flawed due to foreign subversion, and the FBI was right in pursuing the Trump campaign's Russia ties. Trump met with the Russian ambassador and the Russian foreign minister the day after he ousted Comey, telling them "I just fired the head of the FBI... He was crazy, a real nut job."

However, parts of McCabe's assertion were refuted by deputy attorney general Rod Rosenstein's office, particularly the claim that he discussed wearing a wiretap while meeting President Trump to record conversations. "The deputy attorney general again rejects Mr McCabe's recitation of events as inaccurate and factually incorrect," the justice department said in a statement, adding that Rosenstein "has stated, based on his personal dealings with the president, there is no basis to invoke the 25th Amendment, nor was the deputy attorney general in a position to consider invoking the 25th Amendment."

Google, Facebook will soon have to pay creators in EU

Negotiators From EU Members Clinch Deal To Rewrite Decades-Old Copyright Rules; EU House Nod Awaited

Brussels: The European Union is set to rewrite its two-decades-old copyright rules which will force Alphabet Inc's Google and Facebook Inc to share revenue with the creative industries and remove copyright-protected content on YouTube or Instagram.

Negotiators from the EU countries, the European Parliament and the European Commission clinched a deal after day-long negotiations. The commission, the EU's executive body, launched the debate two years ago, saying the rules needed to be overhauled to protect the bloc's cultural heritage and make sure that publishers and artists are remunerated fairly.

The deal needs approval from the European Parliament and EU nations before it can become law. That is expected to be a formality. REUTERS



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Google, which has lobbied intensively against both features and even suggested that it may pull Google News from Europe, said it would study the text before deciding on its next steps. "Copyright reform needs to benefit everyone — including European creators and consumers, small publishers and platforms... The details will matter," the company said in a tweet. Spain and Germany in recent years tried to force Google to pay publishers for taking snippets of their news articles, but that backfired after Google News pulled out from Spain and traffic of German publisher Axel Springer plunged after it sought to block the search engine.

The European Magazine Media Association, European Newspaper Publishers' Association, European Publishers Council and News Media Europe gave a thumbs-up to the revamp. "If we want a future for professional journalism in

the European Union, we must take action to support the press and to redress an unbalanced ecosystem," they said in a joint statement. However, European consumer organisation BEUC expressed disappointment. "It will become much harder for users to share their own, non-commercial music, video or photo creations online," its deputy director general, Ursula Pachl, said.

Online platforms in existence for less than three years and with less than 10 million euros in revenue and fewer than 5 million monthly users are exempted from installing upload filters. Non-profit bodies, online encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia, and open source software platforms will be able to use data without being subjected to the copyright rules.

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UK to debate Jallianwala Bagh massacre in House of Lords

London: Indian-origin peers in the House of Lords have initiated a "historic" debate on the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in April 1919 during the British Raj, to be held next Tuesday. "Commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Amritsar massacre", initiated by Lord Meghnad Desai and Lord Raj Loomba, will take place in the main chamber of the upper house of the UK Parliament and include around nine speakers during what is listed as a "short debate".

Both Desai and Loomba are members of the newly-formed Jallianwala Bagh Centenary Commemoration Committee, set up to mark 100 years since the tragic event. "This is a historic moment as the centenary of the massacre falls on April 13, 2019. The debate proposes discussing the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in detail, as well as the UK government's plans to commemorate the centenary," a statement from the Jallianwala Bagh Centenary Commemoration Committee (JBCC) said.

"This is the first time in 100 years that there will be a full debate on Jallianwala Bagh. The last time was in July 1920, when the House of Lords, through a vote, condoned the actions of Brigadier General Dyer who killed more than a thousand peaceful protesters at Jallianwala Bagh," the statement noted. Dyer had fired on the gathering without warning and continued to fire even as they were trying to escape, while he blocked the main exit with his soldiers.

Desai and Loomba have also written a letter to UK PM Theresa May requesting an apology. Previously, former PM David Cameron had defended a decision to not deliver a formal apology for the Jallianwala Bagh massacre during a visit to Amritsar in 2013. "I don't think the right thing is to reach back into history and to seek out things you can apologise for. I think the right thing is to acknowledge what happened, to recall what happened, to show respect and understanding for what happened," he had said.

Harris is accused of lying about listening to Tupac, Snoop Dogg

Astead W Herndon



In the midst of answering questions about what music she listens to, Kamala Harris appeared to some to say she listened to Tupac and Snoop Dogg as she smoked in college, though neither released an album until after she graduated

It began as a lighthearted moment. Democrat Senator Kamala Harris, who announced her presidential candidacy last month, revealed on a popular radio show this week that she had smoked marijuana during her college years at Howard University in Washington, DC.

But after a viral tweet ignited backlash from marijuana activists and conservatives, Harris faced accusations that she fabricated parts of her story. In the midst of answering simultaneous questions about what music she listens to, she appeared to some to say she listened to rap artists Tupac and Snoop Dogg as she smoked in college, though neither released an album until after she graduated. Harris' campaign, however, has denied that she ever claimed to be listening to Tupac and Snoop Dogg

while in college, and a video of the radio interview provides additional context that may support that account.

Harris appeared on Monday on "The Breakfast Club", a morning radio show that often focuses on hip-hop and black culture. Charlamagne the God, one of the show's hosts, asked Harris if she had ever smoked marijuana

herself. Harris confidently said she had, adding, "It was a long time ago." Later in the interview, Harris was asked about her taste in music. She has previously named rap artists Tupac and Snoop Dogg among her favorites. "What does Kamala Harris listen to?" asked DJ Envy, another one of the show's hosts. Before Harris answered the question, Charlamagne the God interjected, asking her to say what she listened to while she smoked in college. Everyone laughed, before DJ Envy appeared to return to his original question. "Was it Snoop?" he asked. "Oh yeah, definitely Snoop," Harris said. "Tupac for sure." Harris' campaign argued that DJ Envy had asked Harris more generally about her music opinions, a key portion in the exchange that makes it unclear whose question she was responding to. NYT NEWS SERVICE

US pledges to coordinate with allies on any Af pullout

Brussels: The US will not reduce its troop presence in Afghanistan unilaterally, the top Pentagon official said on Thursday, pledging that any move will be fully coordinated with its allies. "There will be no unilateral troop reductions," acting defence secretary Pat Shanahan told reporters after his first meeting with Nato defence chiefs. "That was one of the messages: It will be coordinated. We're together."

Frustrated with US' longest war, President Trump has said he wants out of Afghanistan,

raising doubts about Nato's Afghan troop training operation. Shanahan made clear that if US troop cuts are made, Washington will consult with Nato to ensure coordination. "What we talked about was, how do we double down on support for Afghan national defence and security forces to put even more pressure on the Taliban," Shanahan said.

Were US troops to leave the Nato operation, countries like Germany and many smaller allies wouldn't be able to do their jobs as they rely on American air support. Nato's top military officer, US general Curtis Scaparrotti, said that he has not been asked to plan for any drawdown. "I don't have the direction to do it... or the decision to drive it. AP

EU to keep closer eye on Chinese takeover moves

Saibal Dasgupta | TNN



Beijing: The European Union has added to China's trade war woes by making a new law to closely scrutinise Chinese investments that can lead to the leaking of crucial technologies. The new law aims to create systems for close scrutiny of all foreign investments. But it is mostly aimed at Chinese investors who play the most important role in the acquisition market.

The EU recently joined the US in scrutinising investments by Huawei Technologies, a leading Chinese technology company. The new law was passed with overwhelming support, indicating the strong sentiment across Europe against technology leakage. A total of 500 lawmakers voted for it, only 49 opposed.

"We're not looking to bar foreign investment. It is

The EU move comes at a time when President Trump has strongly raised the issue of technology theft and initiated action against Chinese firms

essential for EU countries, we need it. It's to pay attention to the investments that are strange, that do not make economic sense but are political," said Franck Prost, the leading EU lawmaker on the plan.

The EU has also extended the list of "critical sectors" where foreign investments would be examined to include aerospace, health, nanotechnology, the media, electric batteries and the supply of food.

Egypt lawmakers clear way for Sisi to rule until 2034

Cairo: Egyptian lawmakers voted overwhelmingly on Thursday to extend term limits for President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi until 2034, part of a package of constitutional amendments also set to further enshrine the military's role in politics that will now face a national referendum. Of the 596-seat Parliament, 485 lawmakers backed the amendments, which could see the former general ruling for the length of four US presidential terms, in addition to the nearly five years he's already spent in office.

Critics of the move argue that Egypt is slipping back into authoritarianism, eight years after a pro-democracy uprising ended autocrat Hosni Mubarak's three-decade rule.

Parliament Speaker Ali Abdel-AI said the motion would now be discussed by the constitutional and legislative affairs committee for 60 days before returning to Parliament for a final vote followed by the referendum, likely to take place before early May, the start of Ramadan. AP

Ryan Adams accused of abuse by ex-wife Mandy Moore, others

Joe Coscarelli & Melena Ryzik



IN LINE OF FIRE: Ryan Adams

For nearly two decades, Ryan Adams, one of the most prolific singer-songwriters of his generation, has been heralded as a mercurial creative genius and a respected industry tastemaker. Equal parts punk-rock folk hero and romantic troubadour, Adams, 44, has 16 albums and seven Grammy nominations to his name. He has overseen music by Willie Nelson, written a Tim McGraw hit and recorded with John Mayer.

He has also taken a special interest in the trajectory of female artists, especially younger ones. Some now say that Adams' patronage masked a darker reality. In interviews, seven women, including singer Phoebe Bridgers and singer-songwriter Court-

ney Jaye, and more than a dozen associates described a pattern of manipulative behaviour in which Adams dangled career opportunities while pursuing female artists for sex. He would turn domineering and vengeful, jerking away his offers of support when spurned, and subjecting them to emotional and verbal abuse, and harassment.

From a teenager to his former wife, singer and actress Mandy Moore, these artists said Adams exploited and then stifled their ambi-

tions. "Music was a point of control for him," Moore said. A 20-year-old female musician said Adams had inappropriate conversations with her while she was 14. Identified by her middle name Ava, she said that Adams exposed himself during a video call.

Moore, who was married to the singer from 2009 to 2016, said Adams was psychologically abusive. Adams tweeted on Wednesday: "I am not a perfect man and I have made many mistakes. To anyone I have ever hurt, however unintentionally, I apologise deeply. But the picture that this article paints is upsettingly inaccurate. Some of its details are misrepresented; some are exaggerated; some are outright false. I would never have inappropriate interactions with someone I thought was underage. Period". NYT

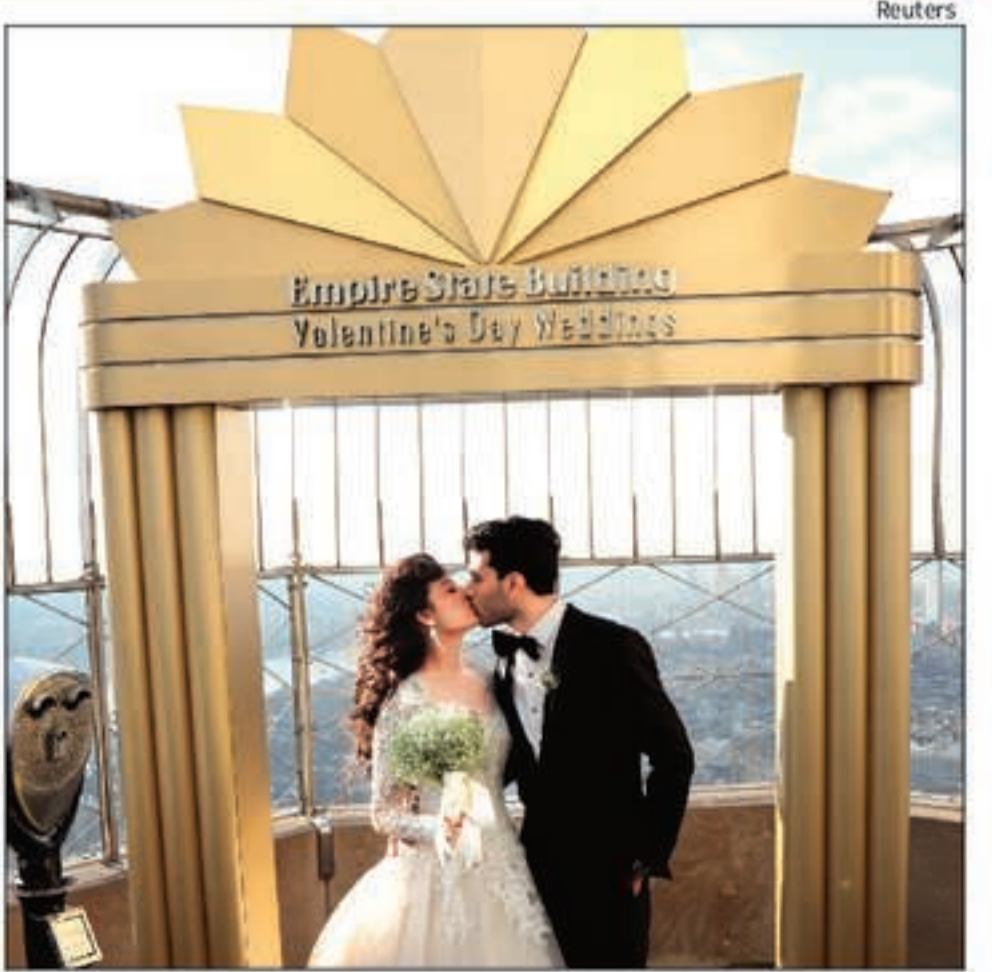
Pak to host talks between US, Taliban

The next round of peace talks between the Afghan Taliban and the US will be held in Pakistan as part of efforts to seek a political settlement of the 17-year Afghan war, the Pakistan's information minister Fawad Chaudhry said on Thursday. He gave no further details. A Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid had said on Wednesday that the insurgents' negotiators would meet their US counterparts on February 18 in Pakistan's capital Islamabad. REUTERS

AROUND THE WORLD

'Vacuum for her and laptop for him' offer angers HSBC staff

A Valentine's day special deal for HSBC staff in Hong Kong offering discounted laptops 'for him' but vacuum cleaners and kitchen appliances 'for her' has angered staff over the sexist implications of the campaign. The offer has drawn criticism from HSBC staff both in Hong Kong and in London, where it was posted in an internal chatroom, according to a source who shared images of it with Reuters. The multi-page advertisement, described as an 'HSBC Staff Offer' was apparently produced by an external company. On pages festooned with pink heart drawings, the 'FOR HIM' section offers discount laptop computers as well as a GoPro camera and wireless headphones, while the 'FOR HER' gifts include five different vacuum cleaners, a blender and a kitchen water tap. "The offer is from a third party source who manage their own marketing materials. HSBC is committed to gender diversity in the workplace," a spokeswoman for the bank said.



HIGH ON LOVE: A couple exchange wedding vows at the top of the Empire State Building in New York City on Valentine's Day

dozens of people to hand over their online banking details over the phone from the Netherlands. Federal prosecutors say the woman managed to use the banking details to steal more than 2 million Swiss francs (\$1.9 million) between March 2016 and July 2018. Prosecutors said that about 50 people fell victim to the scam, known as "voice phishing".

Woman sweet-talks her way to \$1.9m bank scam Swiss authorities say they have indicted a woman who convin-

ced dozens of people to hand over their online banking details over the phone from the Netherlands. Federal prosecutors say the woman managed to use the banking details to steal more than 2 million Swiss francs (\$1.9 million) between March 2016 and July 2018. Prosecutors said that about 50 people fell victim to the scam, known as "voice phishing".

in Malaysia, with his horrified nephew spotting the victim disappearing into a river during the attack, police said Thursday. Muh Tahir Majid Syam, 40, went missing while hunting for crabs with his nephew on Tuesday by a river in Sarawak state on jungle-clad Borneo island. While looking for him, the younger man suddenly saw his uncle's head pop up above the water's surface before sinking again, deputy local police chief Mohamad Sabri Zainol said.

Apple, Google urged to dump woman-tracking Saudi app

Ben Hubbard

Beirut: A Saudi mobile application that lets men track and restrict the movements of women under increased scrutiny this week with an American senator and rights groups urging Apple and Google to remove it from their platforms, accusing the technology giants of facilitating gender discrimination. Saudi "guardianship laws" give women a legal status similar to that of minors. Every Saudi woman has a male "guard-

The app allows men to manage the women under their guardianship by giving or revoking their right to travel through airports, tracking them by their national identity cards or passports. The men can turn on notifications that alert them with a text any time a woman under their guardianship passes through an airport.

dian," usually her father or husband, but sometimes her brother or son, who must give his permission for her to get a passport, have certain medical procedures or get married. The app in question, called

Absher, was launched in 2015 by the Saudi government. It allows men to manage the women under their guardianship by giving or revoking their right to travel through airports, tracking them by their

national identity cards or passports. The men can turn on notifications that alert them with a text any time a woman under their guardianship passes through an airport.

Absher, which roughly translates as "yes sir," critics say makes the tech companies complicit in the repression of Saudi women. The effort to pull Absher from the platforms got a boost this week when Democrat senator Ron Wyden demanded as much in a letter to the two companies. "It is hardly news that the Saudi monarchy

seeks to restrict and repress Saudi women, but US firms should not enable or facilitate the Saudi government's patriarchy," Wyden wrote in the letter.

Addressing the CEOs of Apple and Google, Wyden requested that they prevent their companies from "being used by the Saudi government". Representatives of Apple and the Saudi government did not respond to requests for comment. A Google spokesman confirmed that the firm is assessing the app to determine if it is in accordance with its policies. NYT