



FBI PROBING ALLEGATIONS THAT RYAN ADAMS EXCHANGED SEXUALLY EXPLICIT MESSAGES WITH A 14-YEAR-OLD IN 2013

KATY PERRY AND ORLANDO BLOOM GET ENGAGED ON VALENTINE'S DAY WITH FLOWER-SHAPED RING



Thwarted by Congress, Trump declares emergency to get money for border wall

But Prez Averts Shutdown By Signing Spending Bill

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Washington: US President Donald Trump on Friday declared a "National Emergency" that will allow him to access money to build a southern border wall by getting around US Congress' constitutionally guaranteed spending powers.

In what could presage a titanic struggle between the executive and the legislature, regarded as co-equal branches of government in the US, Trump chose to circumvent Congress after lawmakers gave him only \$1.375 billion to build a wall, even though he signed the spending bill they sent him so that a government shutdown could be averted. "We're talking about an invasion of our country with drugs, with human traffickers, with all types of criminals and gangs," the President said in rambling remarks at the White House Rose Garden, where he explained why he invoked emergency provisions in front of an audience that included "angel" families of victims of violence by illegal immigrants.

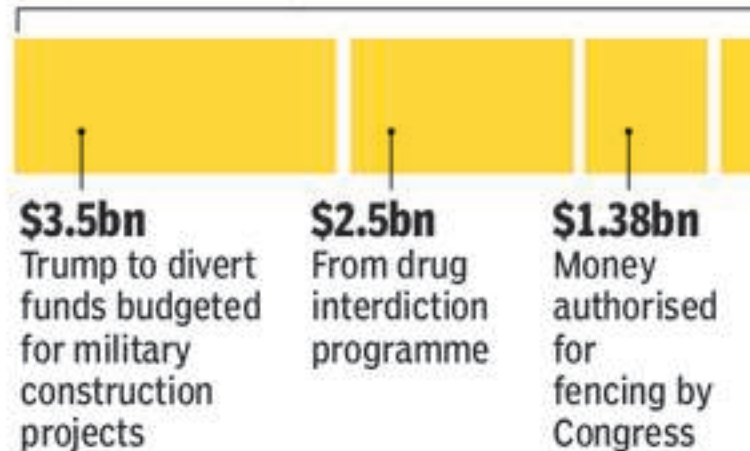
The emergency powers will allow Trump to divert some of the US military budget, including \$2.5 billion from the Pentagon's drug interdiction programme and \$3.5 billion from the Pentagon's military construction budget, towards the \$8 billion he intends to spend on expanding the southern border wall.

The national emergency does not involve revocation or suspension of any civil liberties or freedoms (of the kind during India's infamous emergency). There are 31 national emergencies currently active in the US and Trump himself

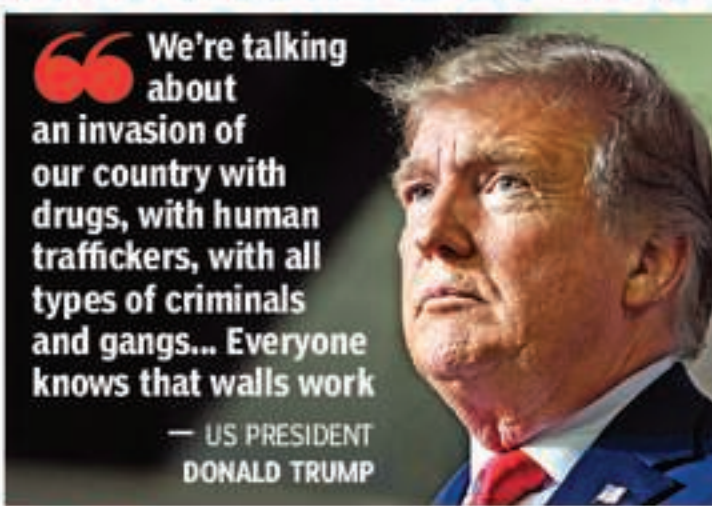
'EVERYONE KNOWS THAT WALLS WORK'

HOW WILL HE GET THE MONEY FOR WALL

\$8bn Amount Trump intends to spend on border wall



\$600m From treasury department asset forfeiture fund



"We're talking about an invasion of our country with drugs, with human traffickers, with all types of criminals and gangs... Everyone knows that walls work" — US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP

31 national emergencies currently active in US. Trump made light of this, saying emergencies had been declared for 'far less important things. Unlike in India, emergency in US does not involve revocation or suspension of any civil liberties



DEMOCRATS FUME
This is plainly a power grab by a disappointed president, who has gone outside the bounds of the law to try to get what he failed to achieve in the constitutional legislative process

— HOUSE SPEAKER NANCY PELOSI AND SENATE MINORITY LEADER CHUCK SCHUMER SAID IN A JOINT STATEMENT



REPUBLICANS DIVIDED



No crisis justifies violating the Constitution

— REPUBLICAN SENATOR MARCO RUBIO



It would not be a practical solution, because there would be a lawsuit filed immediately and the money would be presumably balled up...

— REPUBLICAN SENATOR JOHN CORNYN



made light of the declaration, saying emergencies had been declared in the past for far less important things. But many lawmakers, mostly Democrats and a few Republicans, saw Trump's move as usurpation of Congress' "powers of the purse" that is constitutionally guaranteed, setting the stage for a legal, legislative, and political fight. Democrats have pledged to challenge the decision both in Congress and in the courts.

Although the Republican leadership has said it backs Trump's emergency declaration, some GOP lawmakers are uneasy about the White House essentially grabbing Congress' right to allocate spending of tax-payer money. Democrats are already warning that a future Democratic president could use the same argument to declare emergencies on political issues that are dear to their heart — such as gun control and climate change — and divert money to address such problems.

"Let's talk about today: The one-year anniversary of another manifestation of the epidemic of gun violence in America," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said, referring to the Parkland school Valentine's Day carnage that killed 17 students last year. "That's a national emergency. Why don't you declare that emergency, Mr. President? I wish you would." But a Democratic president can do that," she warned.

At 110 kg, fast food fan Trump is now officially obese

Despite telling his doctor that he would like to lose 10 to 15 pounds, US President Donald Trump gained weight over the past year and is now officially obese. He was weighed last week as part of his annual physical, and is now at 243 pounds (110kg), according to Dr Sean Conley, the White House physician, a 4-pound gain since last year's physical. At 6 feet 3 inches tall, Trump now has a body mass index of 30.4. Anything over 30 is considered obese. Trump, 72, the oldest president to ever take office, is known for his love of fast food and pride in not exercising, and his weight has been a moving target in recent years. In 2016, Trump's former personal physician, Dr. Harold N. Bornstein, said he weighed 236 pounds. In 2015, Bornstein said he had lost at least 10 pounds over the previous year. But Bornstein did not report the specific weights at either point in time. Despite gaining weight, Conley said the president "remains in very good health overall". His resting heart rate is 70 beats a minute and his blood pressure reading was 118 over 80, well within the normal range. Aides say he now eats more fish than he used to but still enjoys steaks, well done with ketchup on the side, and fried potatoes. — NY TIMES AND AGENCIES

Indian-British IS militant may've been killed in Syria

Naomi Canton

London: Siddhartha Dhar, an Indian-origin British Islamic State terrorist, may have been killed along with his wife and five children in an air strike in Syria. Dhar had been named as a specially designated global terrorist by the US state department in January 2018.

A Bengali born in London, Dhar has relatives in Varanasi and Lucknow. His mother and siblings, who live in north London, have not heard from him since June 2017.

An IS telegram channel, run by IS supporters, has published a post by "Green birds of Paradise" which states: "abu rumaysah al-britani May Allah accept him". Next to it are three photos of Dhar: A Hindu by birth, Dhar, 35, converted to Islam at the age of 13 and changed his name to Abu Rumaysah. He got radicalised by childhood friend and a convicted Islamist militant, Mohammed Mizanur Rahman. At the time, Rahman was a follower of Omar Bakri Muhammad, a Syrian Islamist militant who is currently in a jail in Lebanon, and was friends with convicted British radical preacher Anjem Choudary.

Dhar became a leader in their banned terrorist organisation al-Muhajiroun and



Siddhartha Dhar, an Indian-origin British terrorist, is widely believed to have taken up the role of IS executioner after the death of 'Jihadi John' in 2015

married Pakistani-origin Aisha Tariq. Dhar and Tariq, pregnant with his fifth child, fled to Syria from UK in 2014 along with their children.

Out in Syria, Dhar is widely believed to have taken up the role of IS executioner from 'Jihadi John', who was killed in a drone strike in 2015. However, Danish PhD researcher Tore Hamming, who monitors the IS telegram channel, said it might be a ploy to convince people that he is dead. "We do not know for sure if he has been killed. It could be a trick trying to convince us he is dead. Sometimes it is done to protect... If he is high-profile, it takes the pressure off him. These messages do not have any details of where, how or when he died," he said.

A spokesperson for Operation Inherent Resolve, the

US-led coalition in the fight against IS, told TOI they do not keep records of individuals killed so there is no way they could verify if Dhar is dead or alive.

"Part of it sounds potentially suspicious. It is possible he's amongst the foreign contingent still holed up in the last remaining IS pocket in Syria's east," said Charles Lister, senior fellow and director of the Countering Terrorism and Extremism Programme at the Middle East Institute. "But there's no way to know for sure without some real evidence," Lister said.

According to the home office, more than 900 individuals have travelled from Britain to join IS in Syria. Of these, approximately 20% have been killed overseas and around 40% have returned to the UK. "The majority of those who have returned, did so in the earlier stages of the conflict, and were investigated on their return. A significant proportion of these individuals are assessed as no longer being of national security concern," the home office said.

UK security minister Ben Wallace said this week: "Anyone who does travel to these areas for the purposes of supporting al-Qaida or IS should expect to be investigated and potentially prosecuted if they return to the UK."

Facebook, FTC discussing 'multibillion dollar' fine

Washington: The US government and Facebook Inc are negotiating a settlement over the company's privacy lapses that could require the online social network to pay a multibillion-dollar fine, the Washington Post reported on Thursday. The newspaper said that the US Federal Trade Commission and Facebook had not agreed on an amount, citing two people it said were familiar with the matter. Facebook reported fourth-quarter revenue of \$16.9 billion and profit of \$6.9 billion.

Since March last year, the FTC has been investigating revelations that Facebook inappropriately shared information belonging to 87 million of its users with the now-defunct British political consulting firm Cambridge Analytica.

The probe has focused on whether the sharing of data with Cambridge Analytica & other privacy disputes violated a 2011 agreement with the

'FB tracks users who threaten its staff'

Facebook has been monitoring and tracking locations of those users who can pose threat to its employees or physical properties. According to a CNBC report on Thursday, the tracking of users begins when the Facebook security team finds they are making "credible threats on its social network".

The tracking is done by using location data taken from the user's Facebook app or an IP address collected by the social network when a user is active on Facebook. The locations of users are only accessible after they were placed on a 'Be On the Lookout' (BOLO) list after their threats are deemed credible. The list is updated nearly once a week. Users who publicly threaten the company — including posting threatening comments to executives like CEO Mark Zuckerberg — are added to the list. "We have strict processes designed to protect people's privacy... Any suggestion our onsite physical security team has overstepped is absolutely false," a Facebook spokesperson said in a statement. Depending on the threat, Facebook's security teams can take other actions, such as stationing guards, escorting a BOLO user off campus or alerting law enforcement. — IANS

FTC to safeguard users' privacy. An eventual settlement may also mandate changes in how Facebook does business. Facebook declined to comment directly. "We have been

working with the FTC and will continue to work with the FTC," a spokeswoman said. The FTC declined comment. The biggest FTC fine for a privacy lapse was \$22.5 million levied on Google. — AGENCIES

SA withdraws arrest warrant for Zuma ally Ajay Gupta

Johannesburg: South Africa has provisionally withdrawn an arrest warrant for Ajay Gupta, a businessman and friend of former president Jacob Zuma, police said on Friday, in a setback for the government's promised fight against corruption. Former deputy finance minister Mcebisi Jonas accused Gupta of offering him a large bribe and the position of finance minister if he would help the Gupta family with business ventures in South Africa.

Gupta denied wrongdoing and fought the accusation through his lawyers after prosecutors opened cases against him and Zuma's son Duduzane, in whose presence Gupta allegedly offered Jonas the bribe and cabinet post. "The warrant for Ajay Gupta was provisionally withdrawn," said Hangwani Mulaudzi, a spokesman for the Hawks police unit, without elaborating on the reason for the withdrawal. "But it can be reinstated."

A lawyer for Gupta did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment. Gupta and his family have denied there was anything untoward in their relationship with former president Zuma. — REUTERS

Vatican envoy to France faces 'sexual aggression' probe

Paris: The Paris prosecutor's office has opened an investigation into alleged "sexual aggression" by Catholic archbishop Luigi Ventura, the Vatican's envoy to France, according to French officials.



Confirming a report published by Le Monde newspaper on Friday, a judicial official and a spokesman at the Paris mayor's office said the police investigation targeting the apostolic nuncio came after a young male city employee claimed he was sexually molested inside the French ca-

pital's town hall. Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorised to be named in media reports. The Vatican said it found out about the investigation from media reports, adding that "the Holy See is awaiting the conclusions of the inquiry". Ventura, who has been holding the post within the Holy See's global diplomatic corps since 2009, is suspected of having groped the buttocks of a young male employee at the Paris City Hall three times during

a ceremony on January 17. Paris City Hall's press office said that the victim is a man in his 30s working for the town hall's international relations department. "He caressed and fondled his buttocks several times in front of witnesses," a spokesman at the City Hall. "Our employee was very surprised and did not know what to do." According to the spokesman, Ventura touched the employee three times over a period of about an hour before the young man left the ceremony after reporting the incidents to his superiors.

Ventura is the third Vatican diplomat accused of sexual wrongdoing. — AGENCIES

House of Lords member is accused of misconduct

London: A Pakistani-origin member of the House of Lords has been accused of using his position to exploit vulnerable women who came to him seeking help. Lord Nazir Ahmed, who is at the forefront of anti-India campaigns, is alleged to have conducted a sexual relationship with a woman after she asked him for help, according to a BBC report. Another unnamed woman who had sought Ahmed's assistance also claims he suggested she should spend the night at his London home, it said.

"I feel I have been preyed upon due to my vulnerability," Tahira Zaman told Lords' Commissioner for Standards, Lucy Scott-Moncrieff, in a complaint. While she accepts their relationship was consensual, Zaman said that she was looking for help and he took advantage of her. "He abused his power." Scott-Moncrieff said she was unable to "investigate" as Ahmed's offer to help her was not part of his parliamentary work. However, fellow peer Lord Carliile said what Ahmed had done breached the code covering conflict of interest. Meanwhile, Ahmed has denied any wrongdoing. — PTI

New tape shows R. Kelly having sex with minor, says lawyer

New York: The lawyer representing a porn star in a legal battle with US President Donald Trump said on Thursday his office has previously released footage of R&B superstar R. Kelly having sex with a young girl. Michael Avenatti said his team discovered the graphic tape as representati-

ves of multiple clients linked to accusations against the American singer, who has faced allegations of sexual assault for decades. Kelly denied the latest allegations on Thursday via his lawyer Steve Greenberg, who said, "I have not been contacted by anyone connected

with law enforcement, nor has R. Kelly." In a statement Avenatti said he gave the "new critical video evidence" against the artist to the Cook County State's attorney in Chicago, who Kelly, 52, lives. "We will continue to work tirelessly to ensure that this predator is brought to justice," Avenatti tweeted. — AFP

Americans held for speaking Spanish sue border agency

Helena (US): Two Montana women questioned by a US border agent who overheard them speaking Spanish in a convenience store sued US Customs and Border Protection on Thursday, saying the agent illegally detained them without reason. The agent held Ana Suda and Martha Hernandez for 40 minutes in a parking lot in the city of Havre in May 2018 without reasonable suspicion or probable cause, according to the lawsuit filed in US district court in Great Falls.

so, they said, was because they were talking in Spanish while waiting in line to buy milk and eggs. Suda took a video of the parking lot encounter with CBP Agent Paul O'Neill in which she asks him why he wanted their identifications. "Ma'am, the reason I asked you for your ID is because I came in here and I saw that you guys are speaking Spanish, which is very unheard of up here," O'Neill said in the video. CBP spokesman Jason Givens said on Thursday the agency doesn't comment on



US citizens Martha Hernandez (L) and Ana Suda were detained by a border patrol agent last year for speaking Spanish while buying milk and eggs at a store in Havre, US

O'Neill should have let them go as soon as they identified themselves as US citizens, but he instead detained them in violation of the Fourth Amendment barring unreasonable searches and seizures. The lawsuit also claims the agent targeted them based on their race in violation of the Fifth Amendment's due process protections. O'Neill and later his supervisor made it clear through their words and actions that the women weren't free to leave the parking lot, ACLU attorney

Alex Rate wrote in the lawsuit. "Speaking Spanish does not establish reasonable suspicion justifying a stop and detention, much less probable cause for an arrest," Rate wrote. Suda and Hernandez are asking for an unspecified amount of money in compensation, punitive damages and a judge's order barring border officials from stopping or detaining anyone based on race, accent or language. Suda was born in Texas, while Hernandez was born in California. — AP

AROUND THE WORLD



MELANIA CELEBRATES V-DAY WITH KIDS: Melania Trump visited a pediatric centre in Maryland on Valentine's Day. The first lady, who participated in an arts-and-crafts session with the kids, later tweeted that she 'loved sharing an afternoon with such sweet valentines!'

Drones briefly ground flights at Dubai airport

Flights at Dubai International Airport were temporarily grounded on Friday morning due to suspected drone activity, an airport spokesperson said. The suspension was in effect from 10.13am to 10.45am local time (06:13-06:45 GMT) before flights were cleared to resume, Dubai Airport said. Service was now back to normal, the Dubai Media Office tweeted. Dubai airport, the hub for airlines Emirates and flydubai, is the world's busiest for international travellers. It served 81.4 million passengers in the first 11 months of 2018.

The issue of drones interfering with commercial air traffic has taken on new urgency after reports of sightings around airports in Britain and the US.

Drugs smuggled into UK jail in 'Harry Potter' book: Inmates of a UK jail used pages from a copy of "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire" which were sprayed with drugs to smoke up illegally behind bars. It is believed the drugs had been sprayed on to the paper before the book was brought into HMP Nottingham jail in the East Midlands. At least 400 pages of the book were missing, which staff suspect had been torn into strips and smoked. Prison officer Adam Donegani told the BBC that each strip containing a "spice-

like substance" was worth about 50 pounds.

Roaches named after exes to be fed to zoo animals: Not in the Valentine's Day spirit? A Texas zoo has a cockroach that can help. The El Paso Zoo is running a promotion called "Quit Bugging Me" that allows people to name cockroaches after ex-spouses, former friends or anyone else on the nope list. The cockroaches will be soon fed to zoo animals. The zoo's Facebook page features dozens of pink-heart graphics showing black cockroaches and various first names or initials of people's exes. Officials say the response has been so overwhelming that they have had to cut off the submission period.