

SELENA GOMEZ SET TO PRODUCE TV SHOW BASED ON HER EXPERIENCE AS A YOUNG HOLLYWOOD STAR

PAMELA ANDERSON TO MAKE AN APPEARANCE IN FILM REBOOT OF 'BAYWATCH', BUT NOT AS CJ PARKER



FBI chief suggests iPhone hacking bill topped \$1.3m

Eric Lichtblau & Katie Benner

Washington: The director of the FBI suggested on Thursday that his agency paid at least \$1.3 million to an undisclosed group to help hack into the encrypted iPhone used by an attacker in the mass shooting in San Bernardino, California.

At a technology conference in London, a moderator asked James B. Comey Jr., the FBI chief, how much bureau officials had to pay the undisclosed outside group to demonstrate how to bypass the phone's encryption. "A lot," Comey said, as the audience at the Aspen Institute event laughed. He continued: "Let's see, more than I will make in the remainder of this job, which is seven years and four months, for sure."

The FBI had been unwilling to say anything at all until



FBI disclosed three weeks ago that it had managed to get access to the data inside an iPhone used by one of the San Bernardino attackers

Thursday about how much it paid for what has become one of the world's most publicised hacking jobs, so Comey's cryptic comments about his own wages and the bounty quickly sent listeners scurrying in search of calculators. The FBI director makes about \$185,100 a year—so Comey stands to earn

at least \$1.35 million at that base rate of pay for the remainder of his 10-year term.

The FBI declined to confirm or deny on Thursday whether the bureau had in fact paid at least \$1.3 million for the hacking, and it declined to elaborate on Comey's suggestive remarks. But that price tag, if

confirmed, appears in line with what other companies have offered for identifying iOS vulnerabilities.

Zerodium, a security firm in Washington that collects and then sells such bugs, said last fall that it would pay \$1 million for weaknesses in Apple's iOS9 operating system. Hackers eventually claimed that bounty. The iPhone used by the San Bernardino gunman ran iOS9.

"The cost of keeping a flaw secret is high," said Alex Rice, co-founder of security start-up HackerOne CTO. He added that buyers like Zerodium's customers and the government might not work to fix problems.

When companies run bug bounty programmes, they may pay about \$100,000 to hackers that show them system vulnerabilities that must be fixed. "When you sell at a high price, you have to be OK with the pos-

sibility that the person you sold the flaw to could do something bad with it," Rice said.

While Comey's remarks appeared to address the lingering mystery of how much the FBI paid to get into the San Bernardino phone, he said nothing that would indicate the actual identity of the outside group behind the hacking. Some media reports have named an Israeli software company that might have helped the FBI, but numerous law enforcement officials have said that company was not involved.

After an intense courtroom fight in Southern California, the FBI disclosed three weeks ago that it had managed to get access to the data inside an iPhone 5c used by Syed Farook, one of the attackers in the San Bernardino rampage, which killed 14 people, by paying the outside group. NYT NEWS SERVICE

Obama issues trade warning against Brexit

'Move Will Put UK At Back Of Queue For Any Deal With US'



Prince Philip plays chauffeur to US President Barack Obama, his wife Michelle and queen Elizabeth II as they arrive at Windsor Castle

London: US President Barack Obama warned Britain against leaving the European Union on Friday, undercutting a key argument of eurosceptics by saying London would be "at the back of the queue" for a post-Brexit trade deal. The US president's detailed comments on the June 23 membership referendum at a press conference with PM David Cameron drew a furious reaction from campaigners to leave the European Union.

Standing alongside Cameron at the foreign office in London, Obama said Britain was "at its best when it is helping to lead a strong Europe".

The president, whose term ends next January, made an unusually detailed and heartfelt intervention in the politics of another country and repeatedly spoke of the "special relationship" between Britain and the US.

But his most significant remarks in nearly an hour of comments came on trade, reflecting growing concern in Washington at the prospect of Britain leaving the EU.

Asked what would happen if Britain did vote to quit, Obama said that while "maybe at some point" it could seal a trade deal with the US, "it's not going to happen any time soon." "The UK's going to be at the back of the queue," Obama added.

Anti-EU campaigners like London Mayor Boris Johnson have made the claim that Britain could cut free trade deals

with allies around the world a key plank of their argument for leaving the bloc. Nigel Farage, leader of the eurosceptic UK Independence Party, dismissed the president's

comments on Twitter: "President Obama won't be in office by the time we're out of the EU post-referendum," he wrote. "Trade deal of course in both countries' interests." AFP

British PM Winston Churchill was removed from the Oval Office after Obama was elected and returned to the British Embassy.

Johnson wrote that some said removing the bust "was a symbol of the part-Kenyan president's ancestral dislike of the British Empire, of which Churchill had been such a fervent defender." Obama's late father was from Kenya, a former British colony that gained independence in the 1960s.

Johnson's comments drew criticism from his political opponents. Former Liberal Democrat leader Menzies Campbell said "this attack constitutes an unacceptable smear."

The White House said the Churchill story is untrue, and the bust is still in a prominent place in the White House. AFP

German cops call gurdwara explosion a terror attack

Berlin: An explosion at a gurdwara in Germany's Essen city was a "terror attack" carried out by radical Islamists, authorities have said for the first time, terming it as an "entirely new" strike targeting the Sikhs.

After the interrogation of two detained teenagers, the investigators hold the view that the blast was a "religious motivated terror of the Islamist scene", Essen's police commissioner Frank Richter said on Thursday. The blast ripped through the entrance hall of the gurudwara on Saturday evening during a wedding ceremony and severely damaged part of the building besides shattering windowpanes and injuring three persons, including the priest.

The interior minister of the state of North Rhine Westphalia Ralf Jaeger spoke of an "Islamic background" to the blast and called for a thorough investigation to establish to what extent the two youths were radicalised by jihadis.

It also must be investigated who are the other persons with whom the two terror suspects had contacts, he said. Jaeger said it was "entirely new" that the Sikh community in this country has become the target of a terror attack. The two terror suspects' affiliation to a particular group cannot be established. PTI

Uber settles for \$100m in lawsuit over driver status

Mike Isaac & Noam Scheiber

San Francisco: Uber has long been embroiled in a debate over the status of its drivers: Should they be independent contractors or full-time employees?

Uber says that as independent contractors, its drivers get flexibility. Their freelancer status also lets the company sidestep the costs of full-time employees, including paying minimum wage and the employers' share of Social Security. But labour groups and lawyers have argued that Uber drivers should be classified as employees to receive worker protections.

On Thursday, Uber moved a step closer to getting its way. The company reached a settlement in a pair of class-action lawsuits in California and Massachusetts that will let it continue to categorise drivers in those states as independent contractors — a landmark agreement that could have lasting implications for the long-term viability of the ride-hailing service.

Under the settlement, filed in the United States district court in the Northern District of California, Uber will pay as much as \$100 million to the roughly 385,000 drivers represented in the cases.

The company also agreed to several concessions to appease driver concerns, including giving more information on how and why drivers



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are barred from using the app, as well as aiding in creating new "drivers associations" in both states.

"Importantly, the case is being settled — not decided," Shannon Liss-Riordan, the attorney representing the drivers in the suit, said.

"This case, however, with this significant payment of money, and attention that has been drawn to this issue, stands as a warning to firms who play fast and loose with classifying their work force as independent contractors," Liss-Riordan said.

The settlement is a significant victory for Uber on the matter of its drivers' status. By keeping its drivers as contractors, the San Francisco-based company can keep its costs low. And while the settlement applies only to two states and is nonbinding elsewhere, the agreement and the changes that Uber is adopting

may influence regulators in other places where the issue has surfaced.

"Drivers value their independence — the freedom to push a button rather than punch a clock, to use Uber and Lyft simultaneously, to drive most of the week or for just a few hours," Travis Kalanick, chief executive of Uber, said in a blog post announcing the settlement.

"That said, as Uber has grown — over 450,000 drivers use the app each month in the US — we haven't always done a good job working with drivers," he said. "It's time to change." The class actions that are being settled were originally filed in 2013 and became the biggest suits in terms of the number of drivers represented. Uber still faces litigation about driver status in other states, including Florida, Arizona and Pennsylvania. NYT NEWS SERVICE

Eight killed 'execution style' in US city: Police

Piketon: At least eight people were found dead on Friday in four locations in rural Ohio, authorities said.

Seven of them, including two children, were slain in "execution-style killings" at three homes along a rural road, but no arrests were made and it's unclear whether the killer or killers were among the dead, authorities said on Friday. Details on the death of the eighth person weren't immediately available, but the body was found in a fourth location, said Jill Del Greco, spokeswoman with the Bureau of Criminal Investigation. Attorney general Mike DeWine planned to provide an update in Pike County later on Friday afternoon, she said.

DeWine and Pike County sheriff Charles Reader had said earlier that seven victims were believed to be members of the same family. All were shot to death, he said.

There is not an active shooter and no arrests have been made, DeWine and Reader said. Authorities are trying to determine a motive, identify the deceased and determine if the killer or killers are among the deceased individuals or on the loose. A dozen agents were called on Friday morning to Pike County, an economically struggling area in the Appalachian region some 80 miles east of Cincinnati. AP

Brussels bomber a guard of IS hostages

Paris: Najim Laachraoui, one of the Brussels airport bombers, has been identified by several Frenchmen held hostage by Islamic State (IS) in Syria as one of their prison guards, sources close to the investigation said on Friday.

According to one of the sources, four French journalists kidnapped and held in Syria from 2013 to 2014 had identified a guard known as "Abou Id-riss". One of the journalists, Nicolas Henin, "has formally identified" Abou Id-riss as being Najim Laachraoui, his lawyer Marie-Laure Ingouf said. Prosecutors have said Laachraoui travelled to Syria in February 2013 to join up with IS forces.

There was no further trace of the Belgian national until he was registered under a false name at the border between Austria and Hungary in September 2015. Laachraoui, 24, was one of the two suicide



Najim Laachraoui

bombers who struck Brussels airport on March 22, while a third attacker blew himself up on a metro train, with the two attacks killing 32 people.

Prosecutors have also linked him to November's Paris attacks, saying his DNA was found on a suicide vest and a piece of cloth at the Bataclan hall where 90 people died. His DNA was also found on explosives used at the Stade de France, leading investigators to believe he was the bomb maker in both attacks.

The former French hostages have already identified two Frenchmen — Mehdi Nemmouche and Salim Benghalem — as being among their jailers in Syria. While Nemmouche is in custody accused of killing four people in Brussels, Benghalem has been sentenced in absentia in France for recruiting for IS and is listed as a "foreign terrorist combatant" by the US. AFP

China blocks Apple's book, film services

Beijing: Apple Inc's online book and film services have gone dark in China, after Beijing introduced regulations in March imposing strict curbs on online publishing, particularly for foreign firms. Attempts to access Apple's iBooks store and iTunes movie services were met with a message in Chinese saying they were "unusable".

The services were closed by Apple at the demand of China's media regulator, the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television, the New York Times reported.

"We hope to make books and movies available again to our customers in China as soon as possible," said an Apple spokeswoman, declining to comment further. In March, regulations came into effect that prohibit foreign ownership and joint ventures in online publishing and stipulate that all content be stored on servers in China. REUTERS

Top Nepalese scribe held for 'corruption'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Nepal's Commission for Investigation into Abuse of Authority (CIAA) arrested Himal Southasian founding editor Kanak Mani Dixit on Friday for alleged corruption. The arrest is widely seen as vindictive and follows Dixit's opposition to Lokman Singh Karki's appointment as CIAA chief, who is known as "a permanent fixture" in Nepal's power politics.

The anti-graft body has been investigating complaints accusing Dixit of amassing illegal property by "abusing" his position as cooperative bus service Sajha Yatayat chairman. Reports said around 20 policemen arrested him from Patan Dhoka, 15km from Kathmandu. The Kathmandu Post quoted Dixit calling the arrest "politically motivated" and "part of vendetta" for opposing Karki's appointment.

Dixit had appeared before the CIAA on January 8. Nepalese media reported

the arrest violated an order of the country's supreme court, which had directed the CIAA to follow proper procedure while investigating the case. The directive had come after Dixit moved the court in December saying CIAA had breached its jurisdiction and followed a flawed investigation process. Dixit, who was among 29 people whom CIAA had summoned in December, said his arrest violated Nepalese chief justice Kalyan Shrestha's order. Some commentators linked Dixit's arrest to his opposition to India's alleged blockade of Nepal following Madheshi protests over the passage of the Nepalese Constitution last year.

Nepali Times columnist Rubeena Mahato underlined Dixit has been a vocal critic of the blockade. "KMD (Kanak Mani Dixit) is being punished for his stances that did not sit well with some power centres," she tweeted. Journalist Mallika Aryal called it worrying that CIAA chief "is above all laws, (and) can defy SC order".

South Korea looks to woo Indian tourists

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

After Malaysia, Thailand, Turkey, Australia and Eastern Europe, it's South Korea's turn to woo the Indian tourists. Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) and Korean Air (KAL) recently organised a FAM (familiarization) luxury tour of Seoul and Jeju Island. Some of the leading names in travel, ticketing and packaged tours in India, like Cox & Kings, Kesari, Akbar and Riya, were invited along with this newspaper. "We believe Indians will fall in love with South Korea," said a KTO



MT Hallasan in Jeju Island

official. "From the windswept natural beauty of the volcanic Jeju Island, a UNESCO heritage site, to the throbbing hi-tech city of Seoul, South Korea is both an exotic and a happening destination," he added. Incidentally, a part of Gangster, Kangana Ranaut's debut film, was shot in South Korea back in 2006.

The FAM tour participants seemed to concur: South Korea dances to the twin beats of tradition and modernity. Their food, especially seafood, is a global favourite. But there are plenty of delectable options for vegetarians too.

South Korea is well connected to major hubs. Mumbai is just 7 hours away. While aviation giant KAL operates 3 direct weekly flights to Incheon, Ariana flies thrice a week from Delhi. "We are mulling more flights out of India and might even triple them soon," said Korean Air head of passenger operations Kim Yong Chul. With the itinerant Indian becoming more discriminating and adventurous, and corporates looking for newer places for offsites and MICE events, South Korea does seem poised to tap the Indian market.

When Indians Go Seoul-Searching: Log on to www.timesofindia.com

AROUND THE WORLD

Don't put Harriet Tubman on \$20 bill, says Trump

Republican presidential frontrunner Donald Trump said on Thursday he opposes placing an image of one-time slave Harriet Tubman on the \$20 bill, saying she should grace the rarely used \$2 note instead. "Andrew Jackson had a great history, and I think it's very wrong when you take someone off the bill," Trump told NBC's 'Today' show. Tubman will be the first African-American to be featured on American currency.

China to develop floating nuclear power plants:

The various equipment and defence systems that China has set up on its newly built island chain in the South China Sea require tremendous amounts of electricity, hard to come by in a place hundreds of miles from the country's power grid. Beijing's solution: floating nuclear power plants. A state-owned company, China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation, is planning to build a fleet of



PURPLE TRIBUTES: A woman pays tribute to popstar Prince at a memorial in Minneapolis on Friday. Tributes poured in from around the world following the sudden death of the superstar, with fans flocking to dance parties to celebrate the life of the 'Purple Rain' music legend. As US authorities sought to shed light on the singer's mystery death in an elevator, several buildings and websites were coloured purple in memory of the performer

vessels to provide electricity to remote locations including offshore oil platforms and man-made islands, the state-run Global Times reported.

A refugee is torchbearer of Rio relay in Greece: Syrian refugee Ibrahim Al-Husseini, 27, who had part of a leg amputated after a bombing, will be one of the torchbearers for the Greek leg of the Rio de Janeiro

Olympic flame relay. Al-Husseini will carry the torch at an Athens refugee camp hosting 1,500 people next Tuesday.

Snowden sues Norway to prevent extradition: Edward Snowden has filed a lawsuit against the Norwegian government seeking a guarantee he will not be extradited if he visits to accept the Ossietzky prize, a literary rights group said.