

House set to vote to impeach Trump

President says he did nothing wrong, denounces the probe as an ‘attempted coup’

REUTERS
WASHINGTON

The House of Representatives began debate on Wednesday ahead of a historic vote on two articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump charging him with abusing his office and obstructing Congress that would make him the third U.S. President to be impeached.

The vote in the Democratic-controlled House is expected to fall almost entirely along party lines, underscoring the deep divide in Congress over Mr. Trump’s conduct – and the larger political schism within the nation itself.

Mr. Trump would become only the third American President to be impeached, an extraordinary check on presidential power spelled out in the U.S. Constitution for executives who commit “high crimes and misdemeanours.” No President has ever been removed from office under its terms.

The vote would result in a trial next month in the U.S. Senate, in which House members would act as prosecutors. That chamber is controlled by Mr. Trump’s fellow Republicans, who have shown little interest in removing him from office.

House Democrats accuse Mr. Trump of abusing his power by asking Ukraine to investigate Joe Biden, a former U.S. Vice-President and leading Democratic contender in the 2020 election. Mr. Trump is also accused of obstructing the congressional investigation into the matter.

Republicans signalled as soon as the day began that they intend to do everything possible to stall the proceedings. Representative Andy Biggs, a Republican member of the Judiciary Committee, called for the House to ad-

journal immediately after the morning prayer and pledge of allegiance, leading to a vote on the House floor.

Mr. Trump has called the impeachment process “a total sham,” and on Tuesday sent House Speaker Nancy Pelosi a lengthy letter, in which he accused her of engaging in a “perversion of justice”.

The President has denounced the probe as an “attempted coup” and has argued Democrats are trying to undo the results of the 2016 election. “Can you believe that I will be impeached today by the Radical Left, Do Nothing Democrats, AND I DID NOTHING WRONG! A terrible thing,” Mr. Trump tweeted early on Wednesday morning. “Say a prayer!”

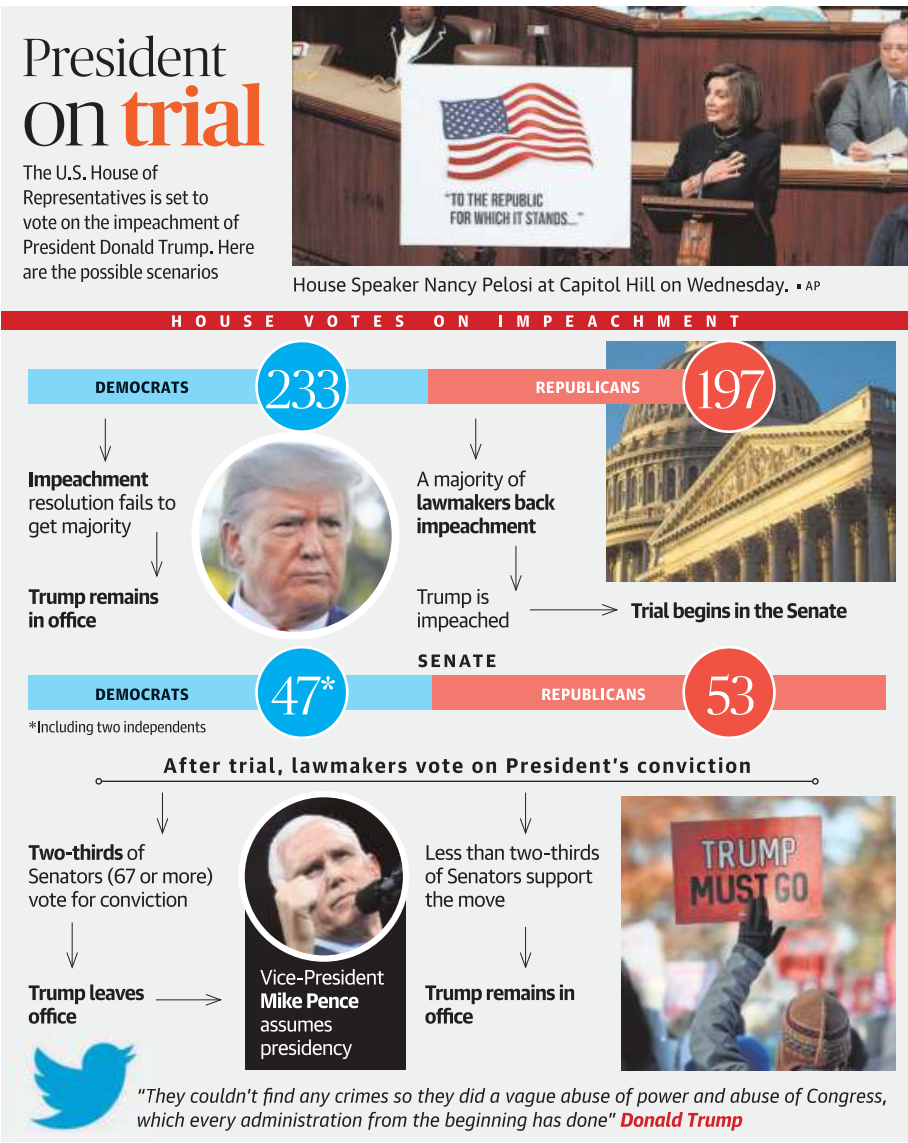
With Mr. Trump seeking a second term next year, impeachment has cleaved the public, with most Democratic voters supporting it and most Republicans opposed.

Republicans contend that a “yea” vote on impeachment could cost some moderate House Democrats their seats in next year’s congressional elections. Still, several Democrats who represent districts that backed Mr. Trump in 2016 have said in recent days they will vote to impeach him.

‘Violated Constitution’

As the debate unfolded, Ms. Pelosi called Mr. Trump an ongoing threat to American democracy. “If we do not act now, we would be derelict in our duty. It is tragic that the President’s reckless actions make impeachment necessary,” she said.

“He gave us no choice. What we are discussing today is the established fact that the President violated the Constitution. It is a matter of fact that the President is an ongoing threat to our



national security and the integrity of our elections – the basis of our democracy,” she added.

Fearful of the political blowback, Democrats were long resistant to an impeachment inquiry, even after Special Counsel Robert Mueller outlined potential episodes of Mr. Trump obstructing justice in his report on Russian interference in the 2016 election. But after a whistleblower brought to light a July phone call in which Mr.

Trump pressed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to investigate Mr. Biden, House Democrats moved swiftly to take testimony from current and former administration officials.

Two articles

Democrats accuse Mr. Trump of freeing nearly \$400 million in U.S. security aid to Ukraine and offering a possible White House meeting to Mr. Zelenskyy to get him to publicly announce in-

vestigations of Mr. Biden and his son Hunter, who was on the board of a Ukrainian firm.

The first article of impeachment details the Democrats’ account of Mr. Trump’s dealings with Ukraine. The second article accuses Mr. Trump of obstruction of justice by directing administration officials and agencies not to comply with lawful House subpoenas for testimony and documents related to impeachment.

+ Pak. PM calls emergency meet to discuss Musharraf verdict

Court has sentenced the former Army chief to death

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday summoned an emergency meeting of his party’s core committee to discuss the conviction of former military dictator Pervez Musharraf, a day after the powerful Army said the verdict caused “pain and anguish” in the armed forces.

The meeting will also discuss matters related to legislation regarding the extension of services of the Army chief and the appointment of a Chief Election Commissioner and other members of the electoral body.



Imran Khan

Sources in the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf said that Mr. Khan would take senior party leader on board on the policy regarding the conviction of Mr. Musharraf.

Interestingly, Mr. Khan while in opposition support-

ed prosecution of Musharraf in the treason case.

Mr. Khan was in Geneva on Tuesday to attend the ‘Global Refugee Forum’ when a bench of a special court, headed by Peshawar High Court Chief Justice Waqar Ahmad Seth, on Tuesday found the ailing 76-year-old former Army chief, now living in Dubai on self-exile, guilty of high treason and handed him the death sentence.

Mr. Musharraf’s sentencing angered the Army, which said that the verdict caused “pain and anguish” in the rank and file of armed forces.

2 policemen with Pak. polio team killed

ASSOCIATED PRESS
PESHAWAR

Gunmen in Pakistan shot and killed two policemen on Wednesday who were part of a recent anti-polio drive in the country’s rugged and volatile northwest, officials said.

The gunmen opened fire as the policemen were heading on foot to the town of Lower Dir in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, said police official Saeedur Rehman. He said the attackers fled the scene and a search was underway to find them.

The policemen were to escort a team of medics going house-to-house to vaccinate children against the crippling disease.

Dozens injured as Shia parties clash with police in Beirut

Video of man insulting sacred symbols sparks violence

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BEIRUT

Dozens of people were wounded in overnight clashes between security forces and supporters of Lebanon’s two main Shia political parties, the civil defence said on Tuesday.

It was the latest incident of violence in what have been largely peaceful protests since October 17 against a political class deemed inept and corrupt.

The movement pushed the Prime Minister to step down on October 29, but the country’s bitterly divided political parties have failed to agree on a successor.



Supporters of Hezbollah and Amal staging a protest in Beirut. • AFP

Shortly before midnight on Monday, young supporters of Shia political parties Hezbollah and Amal tried to attack the main anti-government protest camp in central Beirut, an AFP photographer reported.

The young men arrived on foot and scooters, apparently fired up by a video of a Lebanese man living abroad in which he insults the sacred symbols of Shias.

They lobbed stones and fireworks at the police trying to prevent them from entering the main square.

The counter-demonstrators also torched several cars. The security forces responded with teargas and a water cannon.

Civil defence said 23 people were taken to hospital, while 43 were treated at the scene.

Security forces said 25 of its members were wounded.

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka’s Supreme Court on Tuesday ruled against a case of custodial death, ordering seven police personnel and the state to pay a total compensation of LKR 2 million (about ₹8 lakh) to the victim’s family.

“It is the State’s responsibility to protect every citizen of this country. In the instant case, I find that the State has failed its responsibility and has violated the Fundamental Rights of the deceased,” Justice S. Thuraireja ruled, with the other two judges on the bench – L.T.B. Dehideniya and Murdu N.B. Fernando – agreeing.

The order pertains to a fundamental rights petition filed by a resident of Embilipitiya town in Sri Lanka’s southern Sabaragamuwa Province that her husband had been arrested and “killed” by the police who thereafter “fabricated a version to justify the killing”.

Almost a decade ago, in September 2010, police arrested the petitioner’s husband over his suspected involvement in a murder in the area. Days after the suspect’s arrest, the family was informed that he “was shot



The order pertains to a plea by a woman whose husband died in police custody.

and taken to the Embilipitiya Hospital”, where he was declared dead.

Counsels representing the police officers, named as respondents in the case, had submitted that the suspect was taken out of the police station at night “to recover a weapon” hidden in his plantation grove. On the way, the man “had struggled” with a policeman “to snatch his rifle and he was killed as a result of a single shot that went off”, they claimed.

Police failure

In a strongly-worded ruling, the Supreme Court judge observed that if the deceased were a person involved in grave crimes, as claimed by the police, then the police should have been more careful in handling him. Adding that the police side failed to “satisfactorily explain” why the man was taken out at

night without handcuffs with only three officers and the driver, close to a police officer with a readily loaded and unprotected (unlocked) weapon, in a faulty van without a door. “In these circumstances, I find the respondents’ submissions to be highly untenable,” Justice Thuraireja noted.

The judge cited a 1974 U.S. Supreme Court judgment, that said: “[A] prisoner is not wholly stripped of constitutional protections when he is imprisoned for crime. There is no iron curtain drawn between the Constitution and the prisons..”

Commenting on Monday’s ruling, Saliya Peiris, a President’s Counsel who appeared for the petitioner, told *The Hindu*: “This judgment is welcome. It was a classic case of a death in police custody. It sends out a strong message to the police that even in cases where a suspect is allegedly involved in a heinous crime, the suspect’s fundamental rights must be protected.”

The judgment is especially significant since such police action against suspects is sometimes popular among the public, depending on the crime, he added.

Germany bans gay ‘conversion therapy’

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BERLIN

The German government on Wednesday signed off on a new law banning “conversion therapies” designed to force homosexuality on homosexuals.

The legislation, set to be introduced next year, would see the practice made punishable with up to a year in

prison and fines of up to €30,000 (\$33,000). “Homosexuality is not an illness, so the word ‘therapy’ is misleading,” said Health Minister Jens Spahn, the architect of the law.

Once it is approved, Germany would be only the second European country with such a ban after Malta passed similar legislation in

2016. Mr. Spahn said that he wanted the ban to be as far-reaching as possible, adding that the so-called therapies often caused “severe physical and psychological damage”.

It could also potentially make parents and teachers liable if they are ruled to have neglected their duty of care.

ELSEWHERE



Revolutionary socialism led to defeat, says Blair

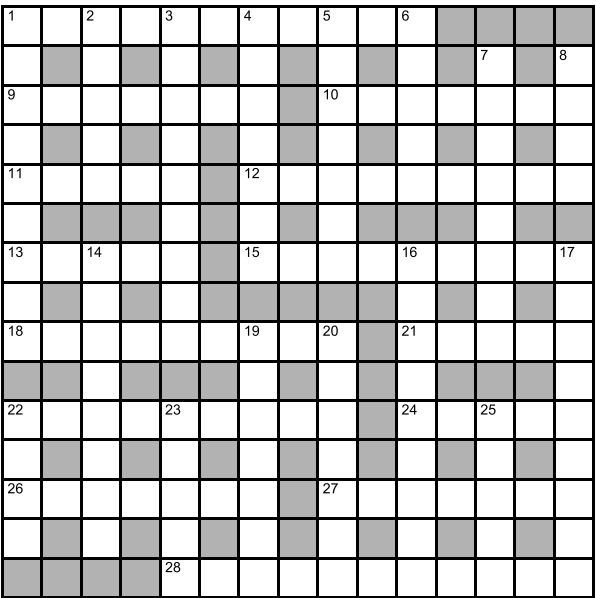
LONDON
Former British PM Tony Blair urged his Labour party on Wednesday to abandon “quasi-revolutionary socialism” as it seeks a new leader after its worst election defeat since the 1930s. Party leader Jeremy Corbyn has promised to step down. AFP

Xi lands in Macau for handover anniversary

MACAU
Chinese president Xi Jinping arrived in Macau on Wednesday on a three-day visit as the city prepares to mark 20 years since the former Portuguese colony was returned. AFP

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12810

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ACROSS

- 1 Topical pain? Spread on lotion (11)
- 9 Complain against pressure and routine taking endless time (7)
- 10 Some settle abroad eastern part of Denver (7)
- 11 Pay for fun (5)

(set by Afterdark)

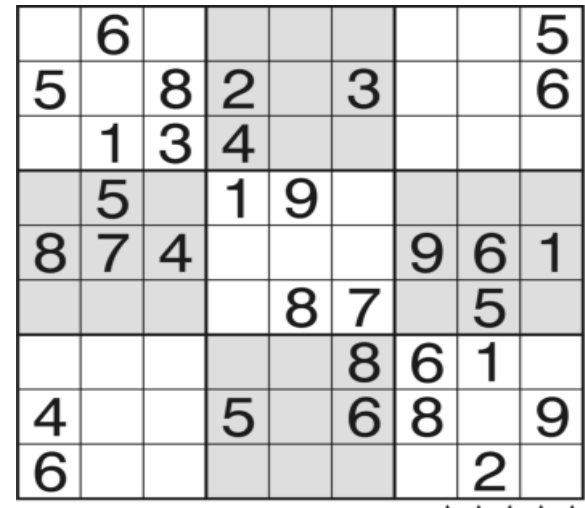
- 12 Dare to reform killers essentially imprisoned (9)
- 13 Theme of desktop icons... (5)
- 15 ...to show sites, blah blah (9)
- 18 Consumed soup first, to relish greedily in essence (9)
- 21 Country in quarrel, fighting to liberate England in the absence of Queen (5)
- 22 Often plays games with permits, say (9)
- 24 Husband had small grudges... (5)
- 26 ...unbecoming of an engineer, smart and primarily hospitable (7)
- 27 Concerned with Alderman bowling tail out (7)
- 28 Once media takes a side, firstly stokes emotions (11)

DOWN

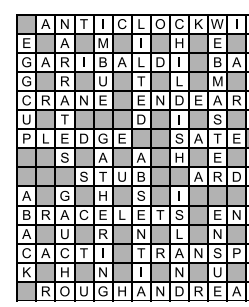
- 1 Desires a quiet pet, it's tense every now and then (9)
- 2 Check pressure range (5)
- 3 Side loses opener; losing heart next one gets caught – a little alike (9)

- 4 Perhaps, a recital botched up... (7)
- 5 ...in stage finishing early before time in a moment (7)
- 6 New verse used in Christmas (5)
- 7 Border row leading to battlefield's cut short earlier (8)
- 8 Ball used regularly becomes dirty (4)
- 14 Artist is overwhelmed by constant chant of cheering (8)
- 16 Dirty bash organised for annual events (9)
- 17 At Rome, 502 shells exploded on slopes (9)
- 19 Woman given choice to start sermon and joint prayer (7)
- 20 Ailment due to side strain; dog dies in dosage maladministration (7)
- 22 Bars break up empty bottles (4)
- 23 Venue is said to be quite large and excellent (5)
- 25 German auto company to persuade Tesla to cancel order (5)

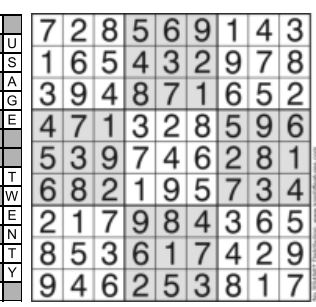
SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12809



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku



FAITH

Deserving of punishment

While Sugreeva and Vali are engaged in combat, Rama shoots an arrow, and hits Vali, as He had promised Sugreeva. Vali falls to the ground. Vali then asks Rama why He had attacked him (Vali). Rama was known to be righteous. He was from a famous dynasty. Was it right to hit a person who was engaged in fighting someone else? Was it right to catch him unawares, the way Rama had done? Vali regrets that he had not paid heed to his wife Tara’s warnings. Moreover, what was Rama’s grouse against Vali? Vali was not a citizen of Rama’s country. He was only a monkey living in the jungle and subsisting on whatever was available there. Vali says that Rama had gone against all the rules of a proper fight, for He had hit Vali from behind.

Rama justifies His action, said Akkarakkani Srinidhi in a discourse. Rama says that the Ikshvaku clan to which He (Rama) belongs has authority over mountains and jungles and therefore, He has the right to punish wrongdoing wherever it is found. The virtuous Bharata, known for his honesty and for enforcing rules, is the king. Every citizen of the land ruled by Bharata has a duty to enforce the rules. Rama, as a dutiful citizen, has only done what He should. Rama tells Vali that he had taken his brother Sugriva’s wife as his own, and this was unforgivable. Besides one’s biological father, two other persons must be seen as fatherly figures – one’s elder brother and one’s teacher. And an elder brother or a teacher should see a younger brother or a student as a son.

So, it becomes clear that the wife of a younger brother or a student becomes the daughter-in-law of an elder brother or teacher. Vali, therefore, had committed a great sin by having improper desires towards his brother Sugriva’s wife, and so he deserved to be killed, says Rama.



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