

Trump abused office for own gain: report

Impeachment inquiry concludes that he made efforts to ‘bend’ U.S. foreign policy to target rivals

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON DC

United States President Donald Trump used his office for personal political gain and obstructed a Congressional inquiry into his conduct, a 300-page scathing report released by House Democrats on Tuesday concluded.

“The evidence is clear that President Trump used the power of his office to pressure Ukraine into announcing investigations into his political rival, former Vice-President Joe Biden, and a debunked conspiracy theory that it was Ukraine, not Russia that interfered in the 2016 election” the chairpersons of the three committees that conducted the impeachment inquiry said in a statement. “These investigations were designed to benefit his 2020 presidential re-election campaign.”

The report concludes that Mr. Trump scheduled a White House meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and offered a military aid of \$391 million to Ukraine conditional on Uk-



Mounting pressure: House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff speaking to reporters in Washington. •AFP

raine announcing the investigations.

Importantly, the investigation also concludes that the President made an “unprecedented effort” to obstruct the impeachment inquiry by instructing agencies and witnesses to ignore Congressional subpoenas.

Nixon cited

“Even President Richard Nixon – who obstructed Congress by refusing to turn over key evidence – accepted the authority of Congress to conduct an impeachment inquiry and permitted his aides

and advisers to produce documents and testify to Congressional committees,” the report said.

Despite Mr. Trump’s efforts, the House had collected “overwhelming” evidence of his misconduct, the inquiry has found, due to the evidence provided by “courageous individuals”, whom the President had engaged in a “brazen effort to publicly attack and intimidate,” as per the report.

The inquiry concluded that the July 25 phone call between Mr. Trump and Mr. Zelensky, which served as

the basis of a whistleblower complaint that sparked the impeachment inquiry, was neither the start nor the end of Mr. Trump’s efforts to “bend” U.S. foreign policy for personal gain.

Vice-President Mike Pence, Secretaries of State (Mike Pompeo) and Energy (Rick Perry), as well as White House Acting Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney and others “were either knowledgeable of or active participants in an effort to extract from a foreign nation the personal political benefits sought by the President”, the inquiry found.

“... The Founding Fathers [of the United States] prescribed a remedy for a chief executive who places his personal interests above those of the country: impeachment,” the introduction to the report said.

Nevertheless, the actual decision of whether or not to proceed with the impeachment, has been left to another committee. It is almost certain that the House will proceed with drafting and voting on impeachment arti-

cles against Mr. Trump.

The White House also dismissed the findings of the report. “At the end of a one-sided sham process, Chairman Schiff and the Democrats utterly failed to produce any evidence of wrongdoing by President Trump,” Press Secretary Stephanie Grisham said in a statement. “This report reflects nothing more than their frustrations. Chairman Schiff’s report reads like the ramblings of a basement blogger straining to prove something when there is evidence of nothing.”

Inquiry a hoax: Trump

Mr. Trump, in London, said the inquiry was a “hoax”, “unpatriotic” and done for political gain.

On Wednesday, the House Judiciary Committee, which drafts articles of impeachment, will hear from constitutional experts on whether the evidence collected against Mr. Trump thus far meets the “high crimes and misdemeanours” constitutional standard of impeachment.

U.S. House passes Bill seeking action over Uighur crackdown

It urges sanctions on Chinese officials; Beijing vows retaliation

REUTERS
WASHINGTON/BEIJING

The U.S. House of Representatives on Tuesday overwhelmingly approved a Bill that would require the Trump administration to toughen its response to China’s crackdown on its Muslim minority, drawing swift condemnation from Beijing.

The Uighur Act of 2019 is a stronger version of a Bill that angered Beijing when it passed the Senate in September. It calls on President Donald Trump to impose sanctions for the first time on a member of China’s powerful politburo.

The Uighur Bill, which passed by 407-1 in the Democratic-controlled House, requires the U.S. President to condemn abuses against Muslims and call for the closure of mass detention camps in the northwestern region of Xinjiang. It calls for sanctions against senior Chinese officials who, it says, are responsible. It specifically



Tough stand: Women confronting Chinese paramilitary police during a protest in Urumqi in Xinjiang, China. •REUTERS/FILE

ly names Xinjiang Communist Party Secretary Chen Quanguo, who, as a politburo member, is in the upper echelons of China’s leadership.

The revised Bill still has to be approved by the Republican-controlled Senate before being sent to Mr. Trump for approval.

China’s Foreign Ministry called the Bill a malicious attack against China.

“We urge the U.S. to immediately correct its mis-

take, to stop the above Bill on Xinjiang from becoming law, to stop using Xinjiang as a way to interfere in China’s domestic affairs,” said the statement, attributed to the Ministry’s spokeswoman, Hua Chunying. “Do you think if America takes actions to hurt China’s interests we won’t take any action,” Ms. Hua said when asked whether the Bill would affect the trade negotiations between U.S. and China.

Trump calls Trudeau ‘two-faced’

Despite differences, NATO leaders vow to stick together

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WATFORD

NATO leaders vowed to stick together against threats from Russia and terrorism and recognised the challenge of a rising China on Wednesday, despite another summit overshadowed by U.S. President Donald Trump’s angry outbursts.

The 29 leaders meeting outside London to mark the 70th anniversary of the Atlantic alliance agreed a joint statement despite divides over spending and strategy and sharp exchanges bet-



Delicate ties: Donald Trump with Justin Trudeau in Watford, Britain. •REUTERS

ween several of the heads of state.

But the bad blood continued to the end of he two-day get together, with Mr. Trump branding Canada’s Prime Minister Justin Tru-

deau “two-faced” after a group of allied leaders were caught on video at a Buckingham Palace reception mocking the U.S. leaders’ rambling press appearances.

Mr. Trump cancelled his planned final news conference to fly directly back to Washington, despite boasting of having convinced his European allies to boost defence spending and Turkey to drop its objections to the adoption of an updated defence plan for the Baltic states and Poland.

Indian-origin Congressman likely to lead Asia panel

Democrat Ami Bera is a strong proponent of closer India-U.S. ties

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON

An imminent shuffling of positions in the U.S. Congress could be of particular significance to India with Indian American Congressman Ami Bera likely to take over a crucial Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and Non-proliferation.

The Committee, which is currently headed by Democrat Brad Sherman, was in the news recently for an Oc-

tober 22 hearing on human rights in Kashmir and South Asia that caused a diplomatic and political challenge for the Indian government.

While Mr. Bera, a physician and California Democrat, is a strong proponent of closer India-U.S. ties, his potential leadership of the Asia subcommittee does not mean the Indian government will get a free pass on Kashmir and human rights and related issues, two sepa-

rate sources on Capitol Hill and one former Congressional staffer told *The Hindu*.

Contingent on Mr. Sherman shifting out to the capital markets subcommittee, Mr. Bera could be voted into the Asia subcommittee as early as the end of this week. A vote for the capital markets subcommittee is being held on Wednesday afternoon, a Congressional aide told *The Hindu*.

While he was co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans in the 114th Congress (January 2015- January 2017), he

co-sponsored an amendment to the annual defence authorisation Bill, recognising India as a ‘Major Defence Partner’ of the U.S. In September this year, he co-sponsored a “Sense of the House” resolution (i.e. advice, guidance from the House of Representatives) that India should be a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

‘Will ensure objectivity’

A source on the Indian side told *The Hindu* on Wednesday that they had hoped Mr. Bera’s leadership of the Asia

subcommittee would bring objectivity and impartiality to the panel.

Following the October 22 hearing, it was reported that Indian officials had been taken by surprise by the focus of that day’s panels on India’s actions in Kashmir relative to a discussion on Pakistan’s sponsorship of terror in the region. During the hearing that also discussed the National Register of Citizens in Assam, Mr. Bera emphasised India’s foundation as a secular democracy and called for an easing of restrictions in Kashmir.

Climate-related disasters on the uptick

Japan worst-hit, India ranked fifth for water shortages, crop failures and flooding

REUTERS
MADRID

Worsening heatwaves are taking a heavier toll on rich as well as poor countries, according to an annual ranking that measures the damage done by extreme weather to human life and economies.

The Global Climate Risk Index, published on Wednesday by environmental think-tank Germanwatch, rated Japan as the most-affected country in 2018, while Germany was in third position.

Both of the industrialised nations were hit hard by heatwaves and drought that year, as was India – in fifth position – which suffered

water shortages, crop failures and worst flooding, Germanwatch said in a report.

“Recent science has confirmed the long-established link between climate change and the frequency and severity of extreme heat,” it added in a statement.

In 2018, a severe summer heatwave in Japan killed 138 people and caused more than 70,000 people to be hospitalised with heat stroke and exhaustion, the report said.

And in Germany, the period from April-July 2018 was the hottest ever recorded in the country, leading to the deaths of over 1,200 people.



Bangladesh is closing down illegal brick factories to cut high smog levels. •AFP

Across Europe, extreme heat spells are now up to 100 times more likely than a century ago, says the report. It noted that the impact of heatwaves on African countries may be under-represented due to a lack of data.

Powerful storms also left a trail of destruction in 2018, with the Philippines second in the climate risk index due to large losses when it was battered by top-strength Typhoon Mangkhut.

‘Crisis can’t be ignored’

Madagascar was the fourth most weather-affected country as two cyclones killed about 70 people and forced 70,000 to seek refuge.

Laura Schaefer, a policy adviser with Germanwatch, told journalists at the UN climate talks in Madrid that the index results showed that the “signs of climate crisis”, on all continents, could no longer be ignored.

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LAHORE

A total of 629 girls and women from across Pakistan were sold as brides to Chinese men and taken to China. The list, obtained by Associated Press, was compiled by Pakistani investigators determined to break up trafficking networks exploiting the country’s poor and vulnerable. The list gives the most concrete figure yet for the number of women caught up in the trafficking schemes since 2018.

But since the time it was put together in June, investigators’ aggressive drive against the networks has largely ground to a halt, largely



A survivor of illegal trafficking showing a picture of her Chinese husband, in this file photo. •AP

because of pressure from government officials fearful of hurting Pakistan’s lucrative ties to Beijing.

The biggest case against traffickers has fallen apart.

Govt. pressure has curtailed probe as it doesn’t want to hurt ties with Beijing

FAITH

Mutual affection

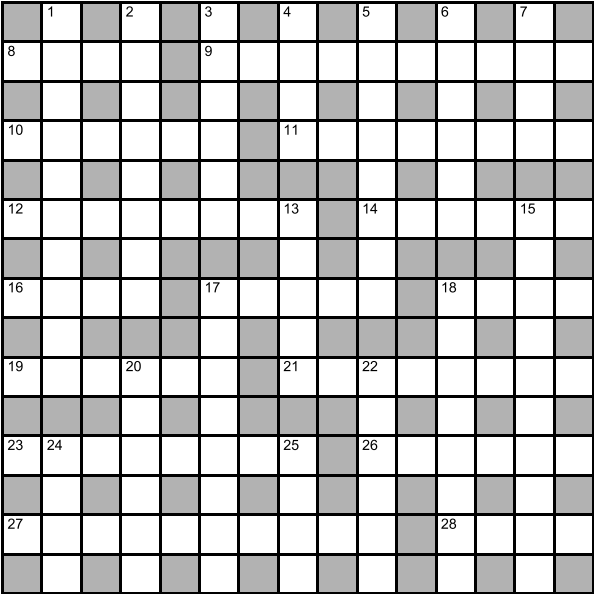
Mantras recited during weddings are full of meaning and hold valuable lessons for us, said V.S. Karunakarachariar in a discourse. One mantra, which is recited during the Seshha homa, shows how the couple must value each other as gifts that have come to them through penance. A good marriage is indeed a boon and it is best to begin with one’s best foot forward, and that is what the recitation of the mantra, in fact, aims at. The mantra is to be recited by the bride first. She must say that she has been blessed with such a good man as her husband because of her penance. Then she must look at him. Then, the bridegroom must recite the same mantra, and then he too must look at the bride.

Usually, the sandhyavandana ritual should be performed before any other ritual. But in the case of this particular vivaha mantra, it is prescribed that it should be recited by the bride and groom even before the men perform sandhyavandana. This is one of those rare exemptions to the usual rule that prAtasandhyAh, that is the morning Sandhya ritual, should precede all others. When weddings were five days affairs, the seshha homa was on the fourth day. Apastamba dharmasutra says that recitation of this Rg Vedic mantra will lead to mutual affection between husband and wife, and therefore will result in a happy marriage without rifts and without serious differences.

The idea that a wife and a husband must view each other as the results that have come to them due to penance is a lofty one. Adi Sankara, in his Sivanandalahari, stresses the importance of such penance resulting in mutual benefit. Sankara uses the words, nijatapah phalAbhyAm, that is Siva and Parvathi obtained each other as the fruit (phala) of the focused penance (nijatapah) of each of them.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12798

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■ ACROSS

- 8 Gazed about, after girl left, in stupor (4)
- 9 She regularly takes off, and sometimes, feeds people (10)
- 10 When hovering, I can be found here (6)
- 11 Reserve mechanical device for academic (8)

(set by Incognito)

- 12 Inconsequential matter? Not French child (8)
- 14 City side rebuilt for women (6)
- 16 King, knight and English explorer’s first joint (4)
- 17 Perspiration produced by wife in chair (5)
- 18 Remedy for scoundrel with energy (4)
- 19 Also dances on bar (6)
- 21 Sign to stop! Bordellos are in this district! (3,5)
- 23 Other woman has highway tension (8)
- 26 Top dress is worn by a couple of men (6)
- 27 Au (Australian) soldier is a fortune hunter (4,6)
- 28 Again, one leaves and walks around tribal (4)
- DOWN**
- 1 Hide Arab’s first letter in grain in a state in America (10)
- 2 Less than 0? No! (8)

- 3 Nomad Rastafarian’s city of old (6)
- 4 Worm food (4)
- 5 Cooked moong with a bit of lemon, onion and tomato for person knowing only one tongue (8)
- 6 Drunken editor chases West at sea (6)
- 7 King’s star exploded (4)
- 13 Leader seen amongst native meerkats (5)
- 15 Heartbroken over fishes and creatures on this planet (10)
- 17 Fears sin, resorts to font (8)
- 18 Hooligan has got energy, at first, to hold male type of squirrel (8)
- 20 Sets of eight – month’s promotions (6)
- 22 Want to dump master in a river? (6)
- 24 Criminal chases setter’s idol (4)
- 25 Oxygen added after gas is pumped back to make tapioca product (4)

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12797												
K	V	E	I	E	A	A	O	U				
E	D	I	F	I	E	R	M	E	M	O	R	
R	T	G	D	P	E	I						
F	L	A	S	H	C	O	A	L	L	T		
F	A	S	T	T	R	A	N	S	G	R	E	S
L	I	E	U	A	N	T	E					
L	I	E	U	A	N	T	E					
E	U	P	R	I	G	H	T					
R	T	I	I	I	D	L	A	S				
S	E	C	U	R	E	D	I	G	I	T	A	L
S	D	S	E	E	H	Y						
E	S	S	E	N	T	I	A	L	L	Y		

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku												
2	8	9	3	1	7	5	6	4				
5	7	6	4	9	2	3	8	1				
3	4	1	5	6	8	9	7	2				
6	9	3	8	7	4	1	2	5				
7	2	5	6	3	1	8	4	9				
8	1	4	2	5	9	7	3	6				
1	6	8	7	4	5	2	9	3				
9	3	7	1	2	6	4	5	8				
4	5	2	9	8	3	6	1	7				



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