

Senate opens Trump’s impeachment trial

New evidence that could bolster case against the President emerges; arguments to begin on Tuesday

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON

The charges against U.S. President Donald Trump, who was impeached on December 18th by the House of Representatives on charges of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress, were read out on Thursday on the U.S. Senate floor as the historic impeachment trial of the U.S. President got underway.

“In his conduct of the office of President of the U.S., and in violation of his constitutional oath... Donald J. Trump has abused the powers of the presidency,” Representative Adam Schiff read out from the first article of impeachment.

The events on Capitol Hill unfolded as the House released a second set of documents related to Lev Parnas, an indicted associate of the President’s personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani. The documents and interviews Mr. Parnas had this week with U.S. media outlets appear to further bolster the case against Mr. Trump – specifically that the President used his office to advance his own interests by trying to get the Ukrainian administration to publicly announce an inves-



Final phase: House Speaker Nancy Pelosi signing the articles of impeachment against President Trump on Wednesday. •AP

tigation into his political rival, Democrat frontrunner for the White House and former Vice-President Joseph R Biden, and his son, Hunter.

Mr. Trump will now need to be found guilty of the impeachment charges by at least 67 of 100 Senators, or a two-thirds majority, to be removed from office. With 53 Republican Senators, this is an unlikely scenario.

Once the House managers – seven lawmakers named by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to serve as prosecutors in the trial – and White House counsel have been

heard by the Senate, it will likely vote on whether to invite new witnesses, *Politico* reported on Wednesday.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and House Democrats have been at loggerheads for weeks on the rules governing the Senate trial, specifically the possibility of new witnesses being called in to take stand and new documents being submitted as evidence. Mr. McConnell has said the trial will be conducted along the lines of the 1999 impeachment trial of Bill Clinton, where the trial proceeded

Ukraine probes surveillance of Ambassador

ASSOCIATED PRESS
KYIV

Police on Thursday opened an investigation into the possibility that U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, Marie Yovanovitch, came under illegal surveillance by an unknown party before she was recalled from her post in May.

‘White House broke law over Ukraine aid’

REUTERS
WASHINGTON

The White House “violated the law” by freezing military aid to put political pressure on Ukraine, an action at the centre of President Donald Trump’s impeachment, a Congressional watchdog said on Thursday.

without prior agreement on whether or not to bring in new witnesses.

Democrats would be keen to see the likes of former NSA John Bolton testify. Mr Bolton had used the phrase “drug deal” to describe a part of the alleged pressure campaign on Ukraine by Mr. Trump’s administration.

Next week crucial

Republicans, in turn, would want to question Hunter Biden on his dealings with Bursisma, a Ukrainian company, on whose Board the younger Biden had served.

Chief Justice of the Supreme Court John Roberts is expected to be the presiding officer of the trial. He will swear-in Senators, who will act as jurors in the President’s trial, arguments for which is likely to begin on Tuesday after the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

The Senate is expected to summon the President – who will probably not appear in person but submit written responses, and will be represented by his legal team, a process that will likely play out next week.

(With AFP inputs)

‘Taliban proposes brief Afghanistan ceasefire’

Move could pave way to a peace deal that would eventually allow the U.S. to withdraw its troops

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
KABUL

The Taliban have offered a brief ceasefire to the U.S., two insurgent sources said on Thursday, a move which could allow for the resumption of talks seeking a deal for Washington to withdraw troops from Afghanistan.

Washington has for weeks been calling on the militants to reduce violence, posing it

as a condition for resuming formal negotiations on an agreement that would see U.S. troops begin to leave the country in return for security guarantees, after a near two-decade fight.

“It is an offer for a ceasefire either for seven or 10 days,” a senior Taliban official who requested anonymity told AFP, adding that the offer was made to U.S. nego-

tiators in Doha. “It has been finalised and given to the Americans. It is going to pave the way for an agreement.”

The Taliban have yet to release an official statement, and Washington has not said whether it has received any offer from the insurgents or what its response will be.

The Taliban and the U.S. had been negotiating the deal for a year, and were on

the brink of an announcement in September 2019 when President Donald Trump abruptly declared the process “dead”, citing Taliban violence.

Talks were later restarted between the two sides in December in Qatar, but were paused again following an attack near the Bagram military base in Afghanistan, which is run by the U.S.

On Saturday, two Americans were killed in a blast in Kandahar.

The insurgents’ offer, if accepted, could see the negotiations begin again. Graeme Smith, a consultant with International Crisis Group, called the reports of a temporary ceasefire a “positive signal”, saying a reduction of attacks in urban centres has added weight to the process.

ELSEWHERE



Iran accuses EU of abandoning nuclear deal

TEHRAN

Iran’s Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Thursday three European nations – U.K., France and Germany – had succumbed to “high school bully” Donald Trump when they triggered a dispute mechanism in nuclear deal. **REUTERS**

Japan reports case of mystery virus

TOKYO

Japan has confirmed a case of a mystery virus that first emerged in China and is from the same family as the deadly SARS pathogen, authorities said on Thursday. **AFP**

Musharraf challenges special court’s ruling in SC

Verdict handed death sentence to him

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan’s self-exiled former dictator Pervez Musharraf on Thursday challenged in the Supreme Court a special tribunal’s verdict that found him guilty of high treason and handed him a death sentence, according to a media report.

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government led by former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had filed the treason case against the former Army chief in 2013 over the imposition of an extra-constitutional emergency in November 2007, which led to the confinement of a number of

superior court judges in their houses and sacking of over 100 judges.

The special court in Islamabad on December 17 last handed down the death penalty to the 74-year-old retired General, now based in Dubai, after six years of hearing the high-profile treason case against him.

However, on Monday, Gen. Musharraf’s trial in the high treason case was declared as “unconstitutional”, leading to the annulment of the death sentence against the ex-Army chief.

In an appeal, he called for the order of the special court to be set aside, the *Dawn* newspaper reported.

5 indicted over Pak. weapons programme

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

Five men have been indicted in the U.S. for allegedly running a network that purchased U.S. products for Pakistan’s nuclear weapons programme.

“The defendants smuggled U.S. origin goods to entities that have been designated for years as threats to U.S. national security for their ties to Pakistan’s weapons programs,” assistant attorney general John Demers said. The five, who live outside the U.S., were indicted by a grand jury in October. The indictment was unsealed on Wednesday and arrest warrants are pending.

China, U.S. sign initial trade agreement

Beijing to buy an additional \$200 bn worth of American farm products, services

REUTERS
BEIJING/WASHINGTON

China will boost purchases of U.S. goods and services by \$200 billion over two years in exchange for the rolling back of some tariffs under an initial trade deal signed by the world’s two largest economies, defusing an 18-month row that has hit global growth.

Key world stock market indexes climbed to record highs after the deal was signed on Wednesday in Washington, but later stalled on concerns over unresolved thorny issues.

President Donald Trump hailed the agreement as a win for the U.S. economy and his administration’s



U.S. President Donald Trump with Chinese Vice Premier Liu He after signing the trade deal in Washington. •AP

trade policies.

China has pledged to purchase at least an additional \$200 billion worth of U.S. farm products and other goods and services over two years, above a baseline of \$186 billion in purchases in 2017, the White House said.

Commitments include \$54 billion in additional energy purchases, \$78 billion in additional manufacturing purchases, \$32 billion more in farm products, and \$38 billion in services.

Chinese companies would buy \$40 billion in U.S. agri-

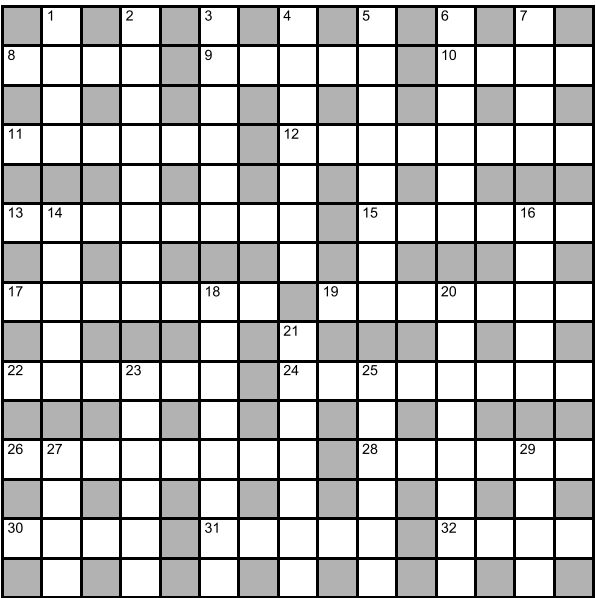
cultural products annually over the next two years “based on market conditions” which may dictate timing of purchases in any given year.

The Phase 1 deal cancelled planned U.S. tariffs on Chinese-made cellphones, toys and laptop computers and halved the tariff rate to 7.5% on about \$120 billion worth of other Chinese goods, including flat-panel televisions, Bluetooth headphones and footwear.

But it will leave in place 25% tariffs on a \$250-billion array of Chinese industrial goods and components used by U.S. manufacturers, and China’s retaliatory tariffs on \$100 billion in U.S. goods.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12834

Log on to crossword.thehindu.com for more puzzles



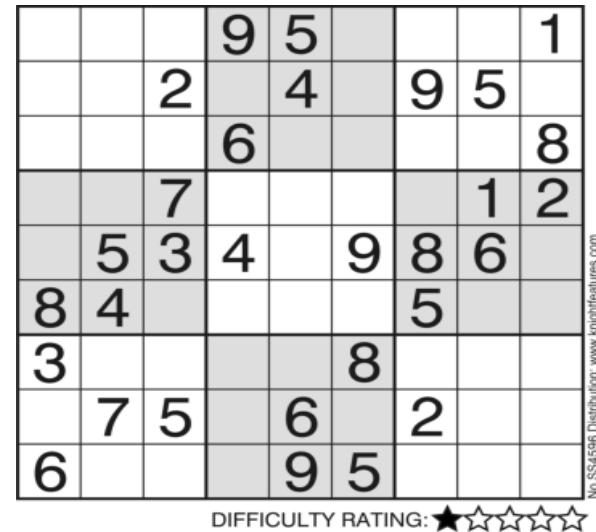
ACROSS

- 8 Auction special liquor (4)
- 9 Fast flotilla (5)
- 10 General Karat produces vegetable (4)
- 11 Elevated area in Channel Islands yields hot pepper (6)
- 12 With courage, Yankee follows Shifty, darling (8)

- 13 English army officer, in short, follows small child to well known village in Luxembourg (8)
 - 15 Lure ward with cold stuff (6)
 - 17 Sounding horn to return to Indian gram (7)
 - 19 American journalist meets accountant with initial report in secondhand automobile (4,3)
 - 22 Gore thousand in drain (6)
 - 24 One may grow fruits here or 16 saplings in the beginning (8)
 - 26 Mention about organ producing chemical salt (8)
 - 28 Clever! Spitfire dives at first (6)
 - 30 Catch a couple of eggs in Hong Kong (4)
 - 31 City’s baton is covered by hollow ebonite (5)
 - 32 Around end of winter, purchase hide (4)
- ### DOWN
- 1 Flier gets hot shower (4)
 - 2 Water source on King’s pet ground is maintained properly (4,4)

- (set by Incognito)
- 3 Some distance away, females with gin cocktail support love (6)
 - 4 Studying gander wandering around island (7)
 - 5 Bare ark rests awkwardly (8)
 - 6 Aircraft model for Venus, for example (6)
 - 7 Trade, touring Delaware without goods? (4)
 - 14 Criminal chef consumes a bit of radish (5)
 - 16 Leafy vegetable is scorched, I hear (5)
 - 18 Told and ran back with new tread (8)
 - 20 Princess leading a clan gives tongue-lashing (8)
 - 21 Renovated bedroom results in ennui (7)
 - 23 Mad journalist follows Welsh story at last (6)
 - 25 Excited caws surround that man in tree (6)
 - 27 Great royalist protects Helen’s place (4)
 - 29 Fight with European for goods (4)

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12833								
N	A	G	I	A	O			
M	O	O	E	N	C	R	C	L
T	C	R	I	E	O	I		
M	A	H	E	M	C	H	A	S
S	I	X	P	E	N	C	E	
A	R		S	D	P			
A	L	C	O	V	E	S		
A	B	S	E	N	T			
R	O		R	O	A	L	I	S
T	O	P	B	R	A	S		
A	O	C	E	L	O	C		
D	E	N	A	T	U	R	E	D
D	S	S	S	S	S	S		

FAITH

Lessons taught by sages

The Supreme One incarnates to help jivatmas attain moksha. As Krishna, He gave the world the Bhagavad Gita. But He also got Bhishma to tell Yudhishtira about the power of His names. Bhishma had already set an example to everyone by his virtuous conduct. Sages have laid down rules which we must follow to attain His feet.

When He Himself has taken avatars, to show us the right path, why did He send sages to instruct us? Although as Rama He lived an exemplary life, we might dismiss it saying He was able to adhere to dharma, because He was the Supreme One. But if a fellow human being were to advise us and show us how to live life in accordance with dharma, then we are likely to pay attention. That was the reason why He sent rishis to this world, to give us important lessons in life, said Velukkudi Krishnan in a discourse. Saunaka was one such rishi who listed steps to follow in life in order to reach Him and to be rid once and for all of repeated births and deaths. Saunaka’s advice is compiled under the title Vishnu dharma, and it came in response to questions asked by King Sataneeka.

Sataneeka had an illustrious lineage. He came in the line of Parikshit. Parikshit, knowing that he had only a few days to live, listened to Suka’s narration of Srimad Bhagavatam. Parikshit’s son was Janamejaya and Janamejaya’s son was Sataneeka. Kings used to pay attention to what sages told them, for they needed to govern in accordance with dharma. They, therefore, paid heed to rishis.

Sage Vaisampayana narrates the story of the Mahabharata to King Janamejaya. Janamejaya’s son turns to sage Saunaka for answers to his questions. In Vishnu dharma, there are stories within the main story, conversations within the main conversation.

