

Sham trial is a vindication for Trump: WH

Senators voted to acquit the President on charges of abuse of office and obstruction of justice

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON DC

Shortly after he was acquitted of impeachment charges in the Senate on Wednesday, U.S. President Donald Trump tweeted a video of election signs starting with "Trump 2024" and culminating in "Trump 4EVA" (i.e., "Trump forever"). Mr. Trump has repeatedly joked that he might serve more than the constitutionally mandated limit of two terms.

"Had failed presidential candidate @MittRomney devoted the same energy and anger to defeating a faltering Barack Obama as he sanctimoniously does to me, he could have won the election. Read the Transcripts," Mr. Trump tweeted.

Romney's dissent vote
Republican Senator Romney, who lost his presidential bid to Obama in 2012, voted with 47 Democrats in the Senate against Mr. Trump on abuse of office charge. Senators voted 52 to 48 to acquit Mr. Trump on the charge. They voted 53-47 as per party lines



All smiles: Donald Trump holding up a copy of *Washington Post* with the headline "Trump Acquitted" in Washington. *AP

to acquit the president of the charge of obstruction of Congress.

"Today, the sham impeachment attempt concocted by the Democrats ended in the full vindication and exonerated of President Donald J. Trump," White House Press Secretary Stephanie Grisham said via a statement.

Speaking before the vote, Senate Democrat Leader

Chuck Schumer criticised the arguments law professor and criminal defence attorney Alan Dershowitz had made on the Senate floor in defence of Mr Trump.

"These are the excuses of a child, caught in a lie."

The Democrat Leader called the arguments in defence of Mr. Trump "as dangerous to the Republic as this President ... a fig leaf so large, as to excuse any presi-

dential misconduct."

Senate Democrats could not get enough GOP votes to summon fresh witnesses and evidence during the impeachment trial. Among the possible material witnesses the Democrats wanted to hear from was former National Security Adviser John Bolton.

Mr. Bolton had, as per reports of a leaked book manuscript, said that Mr. Trump had asked him to withhold the aid to Ukraine pending an announcement of investigations in the President's Democratic rival Joe Biden and his son Hunter.

House Democrats are "likely" to subpoena Mr. Bolton, House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler told reporters on Wednesday.

"When you have a lawless President, you have to bring that to the fore, you have to spotlight that, you have to protect the Constitution whatever the political consequences," Mr. Nadler said.

At the annual National Prayer Breakfast meeting on

Thursday Mr. Trump criticised his political opponents.

"I don't like people who use their faith as justification for doing what they know is wrong," Mr. Trump said in a reference to Mr. Romney, who had alluded to his faith during remarks about voting to convict the President.

"Nor do I like people who say, 'I pray for you,' when they know that's not so," Mr. Trump said, in a comment directed at Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, who has said before that she prays for the President.

Ms. Pelosi, who was also present, was seen standing and clapping for Mr. Trump as he was introduced. The last time they were in the same room was Tuesday, at the House, when Mr. Trump did not shake Ms. Pelosi's hand and Ms. Pelosi tore up a copy of Mr. Trump's State of the Union address after he was done delivering it.

Mr. Trump is scheduled to deliver remarks on his impeachment and acquittal later on Thursday.

China scrambles for beds, supplies as toll hits 563

20 people on ocean liner off the Japanese coast test positive

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
REUTERS
BEIJING

China scrambled to find bed space for thousands of newly infected patients on Thursday, as the death toll from the novel coronavirus soared to 563, with more than 28,000 confirmed infections

At the Chinese epicentre of the epidemic in Hubei province, the locked-down city of Wuhan was due to open a second field hospital, offering 1,600 beds.

The first hospital, with 1,000 beds, opened earlier this week, and authorities said they were converting public buildings into temporary medical facilities to deal with the influx of sick people.

The city of 11 million is facing a "severe" lack of beds, said Hu Lishan, a senior official in Wuhan, noting that there were 8,182 patients admitted to 28 hospitals that have a total of 8,254 beds. There is also a shortage of equipment and materials, he said.

The central government has announced measures intended to ensure the supply of vital medical resources, with tax breaks for manufacturers. "We must make all-out efforts across the country to meet the need for essential medical supplies and medical professionals in Hubei Province," Premier Li Keqiang said, according to the official Xinhua news agency.

BGI Group, a genome sequencing company based in southern China, said it opened on Wednesday a lab in Wuhan that is able to test up to 10,000 people per day for the virus.

At least 20 people on board an ocean liner off the



Whistleblower: Doctor Li Wenliang, who first warned about the coronavirus, at a hospital in Wuhan. *LI WENLIANG/WEIBO

Doctor who first warned about coronavirus dies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BEIJING

Chinese doctor Li Wenliang, one of the eight whistleblowers who warned fellow doctors about the coronavirus outbreak but were reprimanded by the police, died of the epidemic on Thursday, official media reported.

Dr. Li, 34, was the first to report about the virus way back in December last year when it first

emerged in Wuhan. He posted a message in his medical school alumni group on WeChat that seven patients from a local seafood market had been diagnosed with a SARS-like illness and quarantined.

Dr. Li told his friends to warn their loved ones privately. But the messages went viral.

Soon thereafter, the police accused him of rumour-mongering.

Japanese coast have tested positive for the new coronavirus. The vessel, with 3,700 passengers and crew hailing from over 50 countries, has been quarantined by officials in a desperate bid to stem the spread of virus.

Novelist appeals to U.S.

Gay Courter, a 75-year-old American novelist on board, said he hoped the U.S. government would take the

Americans off. "Its better for us to travel while healthy and also, if we get sick, to be treated in American hospitals," he told Reuters.

In Hong Kong, another cruise ship with 3,600 passengers and crew was quarantined for a second day pending testing after three cases on board. Taiwan, which has 13 cases, banned international cruise ships from docking.

ELSEWHERE



7 killed in Iraq clashes as protests continue

NAJAF
Young Iraqi protesters pushed on with anti-government rallies across the country on Thursday as they buried seven fellow activists killed overnight in violence blamed on supporters of powerful cleric Moqtada Sadr. *AFP

Nepal will add a third gender option in census

KATHMANDU
Nepal will count a third gender in its next population census, for the first time counting LGBT people as a minority group that can be allocated government jobs and education. The group had for long demanded inclusion as sexual minorities. *AFP

Ex-CEO of Sri Lankan Airlines arrested

COLOMBO
Kapila Chandrasena, the former chief executive of Sri Lanka's national carrier Sri Lankan Airlines, was arrested on Thursday over allegations he received bribes for a multi-billion-dollar Airbus aircraft deal. *AFP

35 IS-linked Russian orphans repatriated

QAMISHLI
Syria's Kurds on Thursday handed over 35 Russian orphans linked to the Islamic State group to their home country after their 'identities were verified via DNA testing' in the latest such repatriation of parentless children, an AFP correspondent said. *AFP

Buttigieg, Sanders nearly tied

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON

Pete Buttigieg and Bernie Sanders are nearly tied in the Iowa Democratic caucus, with nearly all results counted in a contest marred by technical issues and reporting delays.

The race remained too early to call early Thursday with 97% of precincts reporting. Party officials were scrambling to verify the remaining results three days after Iowans gathered at caucus sites across the state to begin choosing which Demo-

crat will take on President Donald Trump in November.

A new batch of results released just after midnight narrowed the margin between Mr. Buttigieg, the former Mayor of South Bend, Indiana, and Mr. Sanders, the progressive senator from Vermont. Mr. Buttigieg has a lead of three state delegate equivalents out of 2,098 counted.

The nearly complete results show Mr. Buttigieg and Mr. Sanders leading Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, with former Vice-Presi-

dent Joe Biden and Sen. Amy Klobuchar trailing behind.

Technical problems

But the results in Iowa were muddled by the stunning breakdown of the caucus reporting process in a state that traditionally kicks off presidential nominating contests. Iowa officials initially attributed a delay in reporting results to technical problems with an app that precinct chairs were supposed to use to record votes, then to backlogs as those volunteers tried to call the party to

Israeli-Palestinian violence spikes a week after Trump plan

Motorist rams his car into a group of soldiers, injuring 12

ASSOCIATED PRESS
JERUSALEM

Israeli forces killed two Palestinians in clashes in the occupied West Bank on Thursday and a third in Jerusalem after he opened fire at a police officer, hours after a car-rammung attack elsewhere in the city wounded 12 Israeli soldiers.

Tensions have soared following last week's release of President Donald Trump's West Asia initiative, which greatly favours Israel and was rejected by the Palestinians. The violence put the plan on even shakier ground and raised fears of another extended round of fighting.



On the boil: Palestinians clashing with Israeli security forces in the Bethlehem area on Thursday. *AFP

The violence began on Wednesday, when a Palestinian motorist slammed his car into a group of Israeli soldiers, wounding 12, the Israeli military said.

In the West Bank, two Pal-

estinians were killed in clashes with troops. Later, Israeli police said they shot and killed an Arab citizen of Israel, who opened fire at forces in Jerusalem's Old City, wounding an officer.

Israeli strikes kill 12 pro-Iran Syrian fighters

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BEIRUT

Israeli air strikes killed 12 pro-Iran fighters in Syria on Thursday, a monitor said, the latest in a spate of raids Israel has said targeted develop a military presence on its doorstep.

Israel has pledged to prevent its main enemy from entrenching itself militarily in Syria, where it is backing President Bashar al-Assad's government alongside Russia and Lebanese militant group Hezbollah. The pre-dawn raids killed seven foreign fighters in the Kisweh area south of Damascus, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

Hollywood legend Kirk Douglas dead at 103

Spartacus star started his career in 1940s

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LOS ANGELES

Kirk Douglas, one of the last superstars of Hollywood's golden age of cinema who was renowned for his intense, muscular performances in *Spartacus* and *Paths of Glory*, died on Wednesday aged 103.

Mr. Douglas, an actor, producer and director, came to prominence in the late 1940s and never lost his popularity, taking on nearly 100 movies over a six-decade career that endured beyond a severe stroke in his later years.

His death at his family home in Beverly Hills was confirmed by his son Michael Douglas, the Oscar-



Kirk Douglas

winning actor and filmmaker.

"It is with tremendous sadness that my brothers and I announce that Kirk Douglas left us today at the age of 103," Mr. Michael Douglas said in a statement posted to Facebook.

German state premier quits, calls for poll

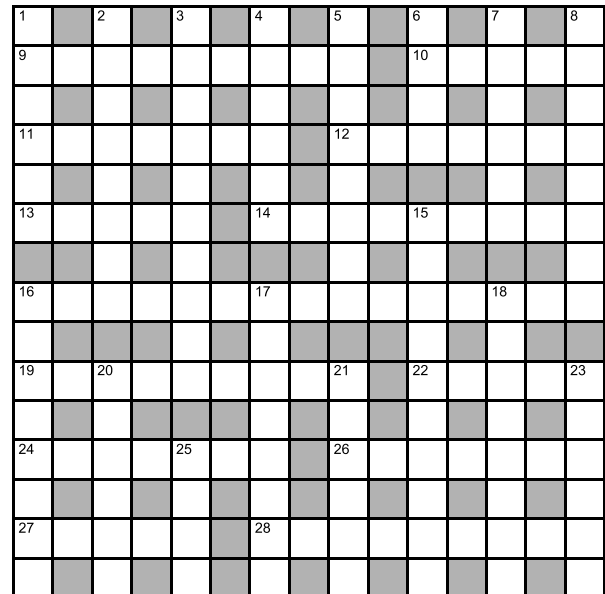
AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
FRANKFURT AM MAIN

The premier of Germany's Thuringia state stepped down and called for snap elections on Thursday, barely 24 hours after he was elected with the help of far-right AfD in a vote Chancellor Angela Merkel called "unforgivable".

Thomas Kemmerich, from the liberal Free Democrats, said he would apply for the regional Parliament to be dissolved in response to the outrage over his appointment, which drew comparisons with the rise of Nazis in the 1930s. "We want elections to remove the stain of the AfD's support from the office of the premiership," he said.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12852

Log on to crossword.thehindu.com for more puzzles



(set by Gussalufz)

- falling short by a couple of spots? (7)
- 13 Control shower verbally? (5)
- 14 Left country; money sent back overwhelms jar (9)
- 16 Code broken by a German to out Binod Pradhan, perhaps (15)
- 19 Brush fire put out? Clean up! (9)
- 22 Setter returns, embracing India instead of alien customs (5)
- 24 Cancellation of date certain (7)
- 26 Spooner's able to sleep off, ultimately (7)
- 27 Better kick out corrupt leader for political beginner (5)
- 28 Cut wild trees in July, August, and September, perhaps (9)
- 7 He famously had existential doubts - he wondered whether or not to pursue an engineering degree, reportedly! (6)
- 8 Unwelcome guest ruined the first half of trip, unfortunately (8)
- 15 Right-o! A drummer replacing all instances of rhythm's ending with arbitrary numbers is cuckoo! (10)
- 16 Centipedes are moving in! See - hidden under rug! (8)
- 17 Three things affect girth somehow, after getting rid of leading high glycaemic foods (8)
- 18 So far from home, halfway around Italy, husband starts to exasperate really thoroughly (8)
- 20 Flung inexpertly at Sudhir, cake overshoots; toppings make a mess! (6)
- 21 An abnormal growth seen in brain: rehabilitate in retreat (6)
- 23 Settled down at last, beyond old city, in a faraway place (6)
- 25 Unpleasant sort of guy, after drinking some liquor (4)

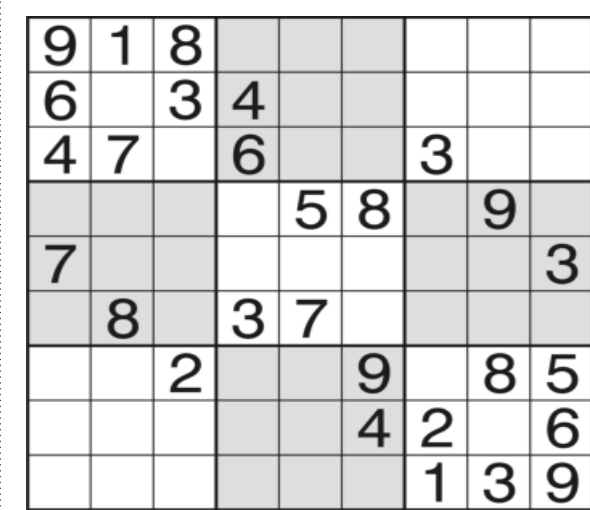
DOWN

- 1 I laud this comic ad R. Saluja edited creatively! (6)
- 2 A rickety train transporting us from Vienna (8)
- 3 Hypatia, perhaps as mentor for setting without flaws, for beginners? (10)
- 4 After 6, Vinod eats nothing before lunchtime on vacation - only one piece of pasta! (6)
- 5 Trying to repair sign? Easy! (8)
- 6 Oddly rejected good lab report published online (4)

ACROSS

- 9 Mixtures of sound brought about by a little synthesis, incorporating hints of mandolin, ukulele, lute (9)
- 10 Get tip that's about right (5)
- 11 I disapprove of rubbish extremist demagogue leaders taught (7)
- 12 With edges going to point - and now gully area - all

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to puzzle 12851

FRANKLY URUGUAY
O G R A B N K F
R A N C O U R O R D E R E R
E A N D A A A O
I N T R A N S I T U N I O N
G I T T N N T
N I C H E I N F E T T E R S
M A S T E R C R E E B A R
A I V I T I E
C O B R A T E N A C I O U S
B E T T E G O M I
E A R L O B E P E R H A P S
T I R N A A S T
H E A R S A Y N E M E S I S

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

4 8 6 7 5 2 1 9 3
5 3 9 1 8 6 2 4 7
1 7 2 9 3 4 5 8 6
2 6 4 8 7 3 9 1 5
3 9 5 2 4 1 7 6 8
7 1 8 6 9 5 4 3 2
8 5 3 4 2 9 6 7 1
6 4 7 5 1 8 3 2 9
9 2 1 3 6 7 8 5 4



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