

US President Trump Acquitted Of All Impeachment Charges

Press Trust Of India

WASHINGTON - The United States Senate Wednesday acquitted President Donald Trump on two articles of impeachment—abuse of power and obstruction to Congress—giving him a major political and moral victory in an election year.

The Republican-majority Senate voted 52-48 to acquit him of abuse of power and 53-47 to acquit him of obstruction of Congress, thus preventing the Democratic move to overthrow him, for which they required two-thirds of votes in the 100-member House.

The ruling Republican party has 53 seats while the Demo-

crats have 47.

ter that he will make a public statement Thursday noon from the White House “to discuss our Country’s VICTORY on the Impeachment Hoax!”

The White House Press Secretary Stephanie Grisham slammed the Democrats.

“Today, the sham impeachment attempt concocted by Democrats ended in the full vindication and exoneration of President Donald J. Trump. As we have said all along, he is not guilty,” she said.

“The Senate voted to reject the baseless articles of impeachment, and only the President’s political opponents all Democrats, and one failed Republican presidential candidate voted for the manufac-



ured impeachment articles,” Grisham said.

Trump 2020 campaign manager Brad Parscale said, “The do-nothing Democrats know they can’t beat him, so they had to impeach him. This terrible ordeal was always a campaign tactic to invalidate the 2016 votes of 63 million Americans and was a transparent effort to interfere with the 2020 election, only nine months away.”

Opposition Democratic party accused the Republican-dominated Senate of ignoring the facts, “the will of the American people and their duty to the Constitution”.

Trump announced on Twit-

3 Dead After Turkish Plane Skids Off Runway, Splits Into Pieces

Agencies

Istanbul: Three people have died and 179 were injured when a plane skidded off the runway at an Istanbul airport, caught fire and split into three after landing in rough weather.

Live images broadcast on Turkish television showed several people climbing through a large crack in the severed aircraft and escaping onto one of the wings at the rear.

The Boeing 737 operated by Turkish low-cost carrier Pegasus Airlines had flown into Istanbul’s Sabiha Gokcen airport from the Aegean port city of Izmir on Wednesday, NTV television reported.

The plane was apparently buffeted by strong winds and heavy rain lashing Istanbul, Turkey’s largest city.

Three Turks were killed and 179 injured, Turkish Health Minister Fahrettin Koca told reporters.

“Some passengers evacuated the plane by themselves but others are stuck inside and our rescuers are working to free them,” Transport Minister Mehmet Cahit Turhan said on CNN-Turk television.

The plane was carrying 177 passengers and six crew members, state news agency Anadolu said, revising the previous total given by Turkish authorities. Turkish media reports said there were 12 children on board.

Istanbul governor Ali Yerlikaya said the plane “slid some 60 metres (200 feet)” after skidding off the runway, and then “fell about 30-40 metres” down a bank.



‘No Known Effective Treatments’ For New Coronavirus, Says WHO

Agencies

NEW YORK - The World Health Organization played down media reports on Wednesday of “breakthrough” drugs being discovered to treat people infected with the new coronavirus, which is causing an epidemic in China and has spread to at least 20 other countries.

A Chinese TV report said researchers at Zhejiang University had found an effective drug for the virus, while Britain’s Sky News said researchers had made a “significant breakthrough” in developing a vaccine. Oil prices jumped on the reports.

Asked about the reports, WHO spokesman Tarik Jasarevic said: “There are no

known effective therapeutics against this 2019-nCoV (virus) and the WHO recommends enrolment into a randomized controlled trial to test efficacy and safety.”

The process of developing and testing drugs or vaccines against a new pathogen normally takes many years and is often fraught with pitfalls and failures.

Even at the accelerated pace enabled by new technologies, the earliest that scientists hope to be able to start initial human trials of a new coronavirus vaccine is by June this year.

Doctors looking for ways to treat patients infected with the new coronavirus are likely to try antiviral medicines licensed for use against other viral infections to see if they

might help, as well as potential antiviral drugs still in development.

The U.S. drugmaker Gilead says it has started clinical trials of patients in China infected with the new coronavirus, using an experimental drug called remdesivir, but stressed that this work is investigational at this stage.

“It is not approved anywhere globally,” a Gilead spokesman told Reuters in Beijing.

Gilead said it had increased manufacturing of remdesivir to create a stockpile that might be used in future viral disease outbreaks. “We are doing this before knowing whether the drug is safe and effective to treat 2019-nCoV,” the spokesman said.

Coronavirus Death Toll Rises To 563, Over 28000 Cases Confirmed

Press Trust of India

Beijing: The death toll in China’s novel coronavirus outbreak went up to 563 as 73 people died on Wednesday, the highest one-day fatalities so far, while total confirmed cases rose sharply to 28,018, Chinese health officials said on Thursday.

On Wednesday, 73 people died due to the virus and the new confirmed cases of the epidemic went up by 3,694, the country’s National Health Commission announced.

Overall 563 people have died in the country due to the virus so far and 28,018 confirmed cases have been reported from 31 provincial-level regions, the Commission said.

Among the deceased, 70 were from Hubei Province and its provincial Wuhan, the epicentre of the virus outbreak.

Tianjin, Heilongjiang and Guizhou provinces registered one death each, the Commission said.

Overall 563 people have died in the country due to the virus so far and 28,018 confirmed cases have been reported from 31 provincial-level regions, the Commission said.

Another 5,328 new suspected cases were reported on Wednesday of which 2,987 are in Hubei.

Also on Wednesday, 640 patients became seriously ill and 3,859 remained in severe condition, the commission said. As the virus is transmitted from human-to-human, over 2.82 lakh close contacts of the patients have been traced, with over 1.86 lakh others still

under medical observation. By the end of Wednesday, 21 confirmed cases had been reported from Hong Kong 10 in the Macao and 11 in Taiwan, the commission said.

The virus cases abroad climbed to 182 on Wednesday. The Philippines reported first death abroad while Hong Kong announced its first casualty on Sunday.

Chinese officials hope the cases will come down in the coming days with more specialised hospitals being set up in Wuhan.

China’s Ministry of Science and Technology said that a batch of Remdesivir, an antiviral drug, which will be put into clinical trials to test its efficiency on the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV), is expected to arrive in China soon.

Remdesivir has been used to treat Ebola infections abroad, a media report said. So far there is no set treatment to cure the coronavirus cases.

Israeli forces kill three more Palestinians amid tensions over US deal

Agencies

West Bank - Israeli forces have shot three Palestinians dead in the occupied West Bank, which has witnessed a sharp rise in tensions since the US unveiled a contentious Middle East plan.

Palestinian media reported that the 19-year-old victim, identified as Yazan Munther Abu Tabikh, was shot dead in clashes with Israeli soldiers in the city of Jenin early on Thursday.

The confrontations erupted after the Tel Aviv regime forces demolished a house belonging to a Palestinian accused of involvement in the killing of an Israeli settler.

Meanwhile, a Palestinian officer, who was critically injured by Israeli gunfire during Jenin clashes, succumbed to his wounds..

The Palestinian Health Ministry identified the victim

Bank city of al-Khalil (Hebron).

Elsewhere in central Jerusalem al-Quds, the Israeli military claimed a car-ramming had left 14 people, mostly soldiers, injured, including one in a serious condition.

The incident occurred early on Thursday near Jerusalem al-Quds’ First Station, a popular entertainment hub.

The Israeli army said the soldiers targeted were from the Golani Brigade and were making their way to the Buraq Wall — known to the Jews as the Western Wall — in the Old City of Jerusalem al-Quds.

Police said the driver of the vehicle had fled the scene and “a large force of officers were carrying out searches.”

“We saw three young people lying down on the sidewalk and around nine others who were also hit were standing,” Magen David Adom medic Oz Faulk said. “One person was unconscious. A 20-year-old who



as Tareq Ahmad Badwan, the first lieutenant in the Palestinian police force.

Additionally, Israeli forces shoot to death a Palestinian near Jerusalem al-Quds’s Lions’ Gate, claiming he had opened fire on Israeli police officers.

Israeli police said an officer had sustained injuries to his arm and taken to the hospital for treatment.

The fatal shootings came only hours after a 17-year-old Palestinian boy, identified as Mohammad Salman al-Haddad, was shot in the heart and killed as Israeli forces attacked Palestinian protesters in the West

suffered from head and body injuries told us a car had come and run them over.”

Following the first fatal shooting, the Gaza-based Hamas resistance movement called on the Palestinians to step up confrontations with Israel

“We call for escalating confrontations with the occupation and its settlers and fighting their assaults against the land and holy sites, especially the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque,” the group said in a statement posted on its website.

The situation is also tense in the Israeli-blockaded Gaza Strip.

Erdogan to address joint Pak Parliament session on Feb 14

Agencies

Islamabad - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who is scheduled to arrive in Islamabad on February 13, will address a joint Parliament session on February 14.

Confirming the Turkish President’s address, National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser said Erdogan would also hold talks with various parliamentary leaders, reports The Express Tribune. This will be the fourth time that Erdogan

addresses the Pakistani parliament, a Dawn news report said.

The Turkish President was scheduled to pay an official visit to Pakistan on October 23, 2019.

But the visit, however, was postponed after Turkey’s involvement with a military offensive against Kurdish militants in Syria that raised tensions with Washington and other Western nations.

Erdogan last visited Pakistan in 2016, during the PML-N-led government, when he had addressed Parliamen

NEWSMAKERS

NEW YORK - Nasa’s Christina Koch returned to Earth safely on Thursday having shattered the spaceflight record for female astronauts after almost a year aboard the International Space Station.

Koch touched down at 0912 GMT on the Kazakh steppe after 328 days in space along with Luca Parmitano of the European Space Agency and Alexander Skvortsov of the Russian space agency.

Dmitry Rogozin, head of Russia’s Roscosmos space agency, said the crew had returned safely. “All is well on board, the crew are feeling well,” Rogozin wrote on Twitter.

Koch, a 41-year-old Michigan born engineer, beat the previous record for a single spaceflight by a woman — 289 days, held by Nasa veteran Peggy Whitson — on December 28, 2019.

She had already made history by that point as one



Record-breaking US astronaut returns to Earth

half of the first-ever all-woman spacewalk along with Nasa counterpart Jessica Meir in October.

Koch told NBC on Tuesday that she would “miss microgravity” as she spoke to journalists ahead of the three-and-a-half hour journey back

to Earth.

“It’s really fun to be in a place where you can just bounce around between the ceiling and the floor whenever you want,” she said, smiling as she twisted her body around the ISS.

‘Make space for women’

Koch called three-time flyer Whitson “a heroine of mine” and a “mentor” in the space programme after she surpassed the 59-year-old’s record.

She also spoke of her desire to “inspire the next generation of explorers.”

Koch’s return comes after an advert produced by the skincare brand Olay ran during an intermission in the American football Super Bowl with a call to “make space for women”.

The advert featured Nasa astronaut Nicole Stott and saw the company promise to donate up to \$500,000 to the non-profit Women Who Code, which works with young women seeking careers in tech and scientific fields.

The first woman in space was Soviet cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova whose spaceflight in 1963 is still the only solo mission carried out by a woman.

Hollywood legend Kirk Douglas dies at 103

Kirk Douglas, one of the last superstars of Hollywood’s golden age of cinema renowned for his intense, muscular performances in “Spartacus” and “Paths of Glory,” died Wednesday aged 103.

The US leading man, 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, the Oscar-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,” Michael Douglas said in a statement posted to Facebook.

“To the world he was a legend, an actor from the golden age of movies who lived



well into his golden years, a humanitarian whose commitment to justice and the causes he believed in set a standard for all of us to aspire to.”

Tributes poured in from across Hollywood and around the world on social media, with many declaring “I am Spartacus!” in a nod to Douglas’s legendary role as a rebellious Roman slave.

“Kirk Douglas. The inspirational Scalawag,” wrote actor Danny DeVito, in reference to the 1973 movie of the same name -- the first film Douglas directed.

“103 years on this earth. That’s got a nice ring to it! Great hanging with you man,” he added.

“Heartbroken. Kirk Douglas was a friend and an absolute legend of a star and human. He got better with every passing day,” wrote “Seinfeld” star Jason Alexander, adding: “We could use a true Spartacus.”

The Academy which awards the Oscars tweeted: “Goodbye to a Hollywood legend.”

Larger than life Douglas, born Issur Danielovitch to Jewish-Russian immigrants in upstate New York in 1916, began as a stage actor before serving in the US Navy during the Second World War.

He graduated to movies in 1946 when “Casablanca” producer Hal Wallis signed him, and he became a star for his role as a double-crossing and womanizing boxer in 1949’s “Champion.”