

TRUMP'S SECOND IMPEACHMENT

WHAT'S NEXT?

The US House of Representatives impeached President Donald Trump on Wednesday for a second time -- just days before he is scheduled to leave office -- raising questions about what happens next. Here are some of the possible scenarios:

SENATE TRIAL

Now that Trump has been impeached, it is up to Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to submit the article of impeachment to the Senate at a time of her choosing. The Senate would then hold a trial. Trump has only a week left in the White House and Biden is to be sworn in as the 46th president of the United States on January 20. The Senate is currently in recess and is not scheduled to return until January 19. Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has ruled out any prior sessions. Even if the Senate did move "promptly," there is no way it could conduct a trial before Biden is inaugurated and Trump leaves office, McConnell said in a statement. McConnell noted that the three previous presidential impeachment trials had lasted 83 days, 37 days, and 21 days. A two-thirds majority of the senators present is needed to convict the president, meaning that if all of them are in the chamber at least 17 Republicans would have to join Democrats in voting for conviction, which is highly unlikely.

POST-PRESIDENCY TRIAL?

While three US presidents have been impeached, none has ever been tried by the Senate after leaving office. All three previous presidential impeachments -- those of Trump and presidents Andrew Johnson and Bill Clinton -- occurred while the leaders were still in the White House. Like Trump, both Johnson -- in



1868 -- and Clinton -- in 1998-99 -- were impeached by the House but acquitted by the Senate. Some constitutional scholars argue that an ex-president cannot be tried by the Senate. But the House has impeached and the Senate has tried former senators and judges after they were no longer in office or on the bench.

CAN SENATE BAR HIM FROM RE-RUN?

Democratic Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said the Senate will not only vote on convicting Trump for "high crimes and misdemeanors" but will also hold a vote that could bar him from running again for federal office. Trump has expressed interest in potentially running for president again in 2024 and some legal experts say a simple majority vote of the Senate could bar him from another White House run. Others don't. That may trigger a high-stake legal battle that will end up in Supreme Court where Trump's nominated judges can play a major role.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



Relatives of one of the 62 victims aboard Sriwijaya Air flight SJ182 which crashed shortly after take-off on January 9, mourn during a funeral in Jakarta, yesterday. Divers yesterday restarted their hunt for its second black box in hope to find out why the plane crashed.

PHOTO: AFP

10 states receiving 95pc vaccines

Says WHO; China logs first death in 8 months as new curbs imposed worldwide

AGENCIES

The World Health Organization's European branch yesterday said 95 percent of vaccine doses so far administered worldwide were limited to 10 countries and called for a more equitable distribution.

In terms of total doses the top countries are the US, China, the UK, Israel, United Arab Emirates, Italy, Russia, Germany, Spain and Canada.

"Collectively, we simply cannot afford to leave any country, any community behind," WHO's regional director for Europe, Hans Kluge, said at an online press conference.

According to website Our World in Data, over 32 million doses of Covid-19 vaccines have been administered so far.

In the WHO's European Region, which comprises of 53 countries and includes Russia and several countries in Central Asia, 31 countries have launched vaccination programmes.

But despite the start of vaccination campaigns the speed of transmission observed in some countries due to new more contagious variants, especially the so-called English and South African ones, was worrying, according to Kluge.



"This is a concerning situation," he said.

Meanwhile, global health experts gather yesterday to tackle new strains of the coronavirus blamed for a fresh surge in infections after China recorded its first Covid-19 death in eight months.

The WHO emergency committee session comes with their colleagues seeking the origins of the virus on a long-delayed mission to the pandemic ground zero in Wuhan.

The 10-man-strong mission leader Peter Ben Embarek said they would enter a two-week hotel quarantine before the probe begins in earnest.

Almost two million of the more than 91 million people who have caught the disease

have died, but the figures are widely believed to be an underestimate.

Much of the planet is facing a second or third wave of infections, with populations chafing under painful and economically damaging restrictions.

Lebanon went into full lockdown yesterday with residents barred even from grocery shopping.

France is hoping to avoid another national lockdown with the government due to announce tighter controls such as an extended night curfew across the country.

But there was better news for those who have already had Covid-19, with a British study suggesting recovery can confer immunity for at least five months.

The research will be welcomed by UK healthcare workers struggling to cope with surging caseloads and a new, more infectious strain of the virus.

That strain, and another identified in South Africa, was going under the WHO microscope in Geneva yesterday after being logged in dozens of countries.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Maria Ressa charged again with cyber libel

Embattled Philippine journalist Maria Ressa faces a third cyber libel charge, her lawyer said yesterday, this time for a story over students allegedly paying a professor for passing grades. Ressa and her news site Rappler face at least a dozen criminal charges and investigations after publishing stories critical of President Rodrigo Duterte's policies, including his bloody drug war. "It's my 10th arrest warrant in less than two years. That's definitely a pattern of harassment," Ressa, who Time magazine named Person of the Year in 2018, told AFP Thursday.

Snapchat permanently bans Trump from site

Image-centric social network Snapchat on Wednesday said it has permanently banned US President Donald Trump from the platform, as voices are raised against keeping him off the internet stage. Trump's access to social media has been largely cut off since a violent mob of his supporters stormed the Capitol in Washington DC in a deadly attack on January 6. Operators fear that Trump could use his Snapchat account to foment more unrest in the run-up to President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration. After the attack on the Capitol by Trump supporters, social media including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube began to bar him from using their platforms. Google and Apple pulled Parler apps from their shops for digital content shops stating that the right-leaning social network was allowing users to promote violence.

South Korea's SC upholds ex-president's 20-yr jail term



South Korea's top court yesterday upheld a 20-year prison sentence for former President Park Geun-hye on graft charges that led to her downfall, bringing an end to the legal process and for the first time raising the possibility of a pardon. Park became South Korea's first democratically elected leader to be thrown out of office when, in 2017, the Constitutional Court upheld a parliament vote to impeach her over a scandal that also landed the heads of two conglomerates in jail. The daughter of a military dictator, Park took office in 2013 as South Korea's first woman president. She was brought down after being found guilty of colluding with a confidante to receive tens of billions of won from major conglomerates to help her family and fund non-profit foundations she owned.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

Covid infection largely protects health workers

AFP, Paris

Healthcare workers who have recovered from Covid-19 are largely protected against falling ill again for at least five months, a British study has found, but researchers warned some people could still carry and transmit the virus.

Researchers from Public Health England's SIREN study detected 44 potential reinfections out of 6,614 participants, who had already tested positive for antibodies in a five-month period between June and November 2020.

In their first published report -- which has not yet been peer reviewed -- the authors said this represents an 83 percent rate of protection from reinfection.

But they warned that although antibodies may confer some protection from becoming ill with Covid-19, early evidence from the next stage of the study suggests that some of these individuals carry high levels of virus and could continue to transmit it to others.

Presidency not for a woman!

REUTERS, Manila

Philippine leader Rodrigo Duterte yesterday declared that the presidency was no job for a woman because of their emotional differences to men, and dismissed speculation that his daughter would succeed him next year.

"My daughter is not running. I have told Inday not to run because I pity (her) knowing she will have to go through what I am going through," Duterte said at the launch of a highway project, referring to his daughter Sara by her nickname.

"This is not for women. You know, the emotional set-up of a woman and a man is totally different. You will become a fool here. So... that is the sad story."

The Philippines has had two women presidents, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo from 2001 to 2010 and Corazon Aquino from 1986 to 1992.

Duterte, 75, is notorious for comments often deemed offensive, sexist and misogynistic, but his office typically calls his remarks harmless jokes. He remains hugely popular among female voters in the Philippines.

Daughter Sara Duterte-Carpio, 42, who succeeded him as mayor of Davao City, came top in a recent opinion poll that asked the public to choose a preferred candidate from a list of possible contenders for the 2022 elections.

Two other women, Vice President Leni Robredo and Senator Grace Poe, were hypothetical contenders.

Presidents in the Philippines are allowed only one, six-year term in office. Arroyo's was longer as she took over from an impeached former president.

Responding to Duterte's remarks, Cristina Palabay of human rights group Karapatan said women are as capable as men in any job. "What matters most especially when we talk of the presidency and public office is if the interests of the poor majority are upheld," she said.



'Fugitive' US pigeon caught in Australia

AFP, Melbourne

An American pigeon believed to have strayed 14,480 kilometres from home had Australian authorities in a flap yesterday after it turned up in a Melbourne backyard having evaded strict quarantine rules.

Kevin Chelli-Bird discovered the emaciated pigeon tagged with an ankle band outside his home on Boxing Day, local media reported.

Dubbed "Joe" after US President-elect Joe Biden, the bird went missing during a US race in October, Chelli-Bird told the Herald Sun newspaper, and has been tracked to an owner in Alabama.

The pigeon's epic journey sent local media into a flutter but as the news reached authorities, the bird became a fugitive for skipping Australia's strict entry procedures.

"As it was not legally prepared for import or imported, the health status of this bird and any others it has been in contact with at its origin and prior to arrival in Australia is unknown," a Department of Agriculture spokeswoman said in a statement.

"It poses a direct biosecurity risk to Australian bird life and our poultry industry."

It will have to be humanely destroyed if it came from the United States without passing through quarantine, according to the department.

Recent press coverage is unlikely to save Joe; officials previously threatened to euthanise dogs belonging to movie star Johnny Depp and then-wife Amber Heard, after they failed to declare the pets on immigration papers. The pair managed to save their Yorkshire terriers with a quick flight out of the country. However, as Joe's owner is still to speak up, the feathered fugitive may have to wing it.



Hondurans take part in a new caravan of migrants, set to head to the United States, in San Pedro Sula, Honduras on Wednesday night.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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