

Headlines:

- **"We Went Through Hell.' Trump Attacks Democrats as 'Evil' as He Celebrates Impeachment Acquittal**
- **Saudi Arabia Using Secret Court to Silence Dissent, Amnesty Finds**
- **FO Denies Laxity in Pursuing Kashmir Case on World Stage**

Details:

"We Went Through Hell.' Trump Attacks Democrats as 'Evil' as He Celebrates Impeachment Acquittal

President Donald Trump used a White House ceremony Thursday to celebrate his impeachment acquittal, saying he had "been through hell" in a process he blamed on "leakers and liars" who had unfairly accused him of misconduct in his dealings with Ukraine. After entering the formal East Room to the anthem "Hail to the Chief," Trump praised Republican lawmakers and his legal team as "warriors" and accused Democrats of trying to destroy the country by removing him from office. "They brought me to the final stages of impeachment, but now we have that gorgeous word. I never thought a word would sound so good. It's called total acquittal," said Trump, standing before Cabinet members, Republican lawmakers and family members. In 63 minutes of unscripted remarks, he called out dozens of people by name to thank them for defending him, including Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and several other lawmakers. McConnell and other senators served as jurors in the impeachment trial. While Trump himself billed the event as a "celebration," it was also clear he was still seething over his impeachment by the Democratic-controlled House. Impeachment is a "very ugly word to me. It's a dark word," Trump said. Trump said the impeachment and the Ukraine investigation that preceded it were part of a years-long effort to go after him. He alluded frequently to the investigation into Russia's 2016 election interference by special counsel Robert Mueller. [Source: USA Today].

The impeachment trial is a deathblow to American politics. Both Republicans and the Democrats were exposed putting party interests ahead of justice, the American constitution and more importantly, what is right and wrong.

Saudi Arabia Using Secret Court to Silence Dissent, Amnesty Finds

Saudi Arabia is using a secretive special court set up for terrorism-related cases to systematically prosecute human rights activists and other dissenting voices who defy the country's absolute monarchy, a new report has found. The human rights watchdog Amnesty International spent five years investigating 95 cases heard at the Specialised Criminal court (SCC) in Riyadh, concluding in a report published on Thursday that the court is routinely used as a weapon to silence criticism despite the kingdom's recent attempts to cultivate a reformist image. Since 2011, overly broad counter-terror and anti-cybercrime laws have been used by the SCC in unfair trials to hand down prison sentences of up to 30 years and in some cases the death penalty to human rights defenders, writers, economists, journalists, religious clerics, reformists and political activists, particularly from the country's Shia minority, Amnesty said. "Every stage of the SCC's judicial process is tainted with human rights abuses, from the denial of access to a lawyer, to incommunicado detention, to convictions based solely on so-called confessions extracted through torture," said Heba Morayef, Amnesty's Middle East and North Africa regional director. Saudi Arabia has embarked on a

series of wide-reaching social reforms since Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman was appointed heir to the throne in 2017, allowing women to drive, curbing the powers of the country's notorious morality police and granting women the freedom to travel without the permission of a male guardian. The reforms, however, have been accompanied by a crackdown on dissent, including the detention of high-profile activists such as Loujain al-Hathloul, who campaigned for women's right to drive. Saudi Arabia's human rights record has also faced renewed international scrutiny since the murder of the dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the kingdom's Istanbul consulate in 2018. The SCC was established in 2008 to try individuals accused of crimes related to membership and support of al-Qaida. However, citing court documents, government statements and national legislation, as well as interviews with activists, lawyers and individuals close to the cases documented, Amnesty alleges that the court has morphed into a "mockery of justice" that targets freedom of speech and peaceful political activity. One of the most disturbing findings shows that the SCC is heavily reliant on confessions extracted under torture conditions. At least 20 people have been sentenced to death, 17 of whom have been executed. [Source: The Guardian]

Despite efforts to liberalize Saudi society and expose it to Western values, power is still centralized and rests with MBS. Western government have abounded their democracy mantra and given a green light to the Saudi regime to quash dissent.

FO Denies Laxity in Pursuing Kashmir Case on World Stage

The Foreign Office on Thursday strongly denied laxity in pursuing the Kashmir case on the world stage. "We take the cause of Jammu & Kashmir very seriously; it is the core issue of Pakistan's foreign policy. The observation that the Foreign Office is not taking it seriously is not accurate," FO spokesperson Aisha Farooqui said at the weekly media briefing. Pakistan observed the Kashmir Day on Feb 5 to highlight human rights abuses by Indian occupation forces in held Kashmir and create awareness about the longstanding dispute and unimplemented UN Security Council resolutions related to it. India last year annexed the occupied region by annulling Article 370, thereby ending the special status given to it in the Indian Constitution. There has been criticism by certain political quarters in Pakistan that FO was not doing enough to promote the Kashmir cause. The spokesperson said that the government outlined the "vision" of the foreign policy, whereas the FO implemented the same. She later explained the implementation mechanism of the government's Kashmir policy within the FO. The Kashmir Cell in the FO, she said, was a multi-agency unit dedicated to monitoring the evolving situation in occupied Kashmir and implementing the government's strategy through over 100 missions across the world. Cautioning against hyping expectations, Ms Farooqui said: "The strategy on the Kashmir cause is not an event, it is a process." She assured sceptics that the FO had never been "shy or negligent" on Kashmir and remained "dedicated in taking it forward". In reply to a question about Riyadh not backing Islamabad's proposal for convening a meeting of Organisation of Islamic Cooperation's Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) on Kashmir, she recalled engagement with the Muslim bloc including the meeting of the Contact Group and a report by OIC's human rights arm on Kashmir ever since annexation of the region by India and said "several ideas" were discussed in this regard. [Source: Dawn]

Ever since India annexed Kashmir, Khan's government has been dragging its feet and looking for excuses to legitimize Modi's subjugation of Kashmir. There is only one solution to Kashmir, and that requires the Pakistani army to liberate the region from Hindu zealots.