Trump Precarious Position

Who is the issue?

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- Recently, U.S. President Trump's two key aides during the 2016 presidential polls were implicated by the FBI for misconduct.
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- While these would generate a political storm, it would amount to little more than that, Trump is insulated from prosecutions.
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What are the implications of these developments?

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- Trump's lawyer Michael Cohen pleaded guilty for violating campaign finance laws by paying a settlement to two women, to enhance Trump's chances.
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- Notably, the women were allegedly paid on the direction of Trump himself for staying silent on their sexual encounters with him.
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- On the very same day, Trump's former campaign chairman Paul Manafort was convicted of bank and tax frauds.
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- **Legal -** United States Justice Department has long held that a President cannot be charged with a crime as long as he holds office.
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- The Justice Department's line hasn't yet been challenged in court, and a prosecutor can in theory go ahead, ignoring the Department's position.
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- However, there is little movement in that direction as no person seems to have taken steps in that direction.
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- In this context, it is to be noted that Manafort's criminal conviction does not

directly implicate Trump too and the President has stated the same.
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- **Political –** With legal proceedings ruled out, impeachment is the only possibility to hold Trump accountable for his violations.
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- The removal of Trump from office has long been discussed, and the recent developments can spark calls for impeachment hearings.
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- But it is unlikely Congress would go down that road as long as Republicans are in a majority and even Democrats aren't unanimous in their views.
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- Pressure on Democrats to commit to begin impeachment proceedings if they take the House later in the year is likely to go up.
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- But apart from the mere symbolism of introducing impeachment, Trump will the recent courtroom developments will account to nothing more.
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- Notably, for impeachment to be passed, both chambers of the U.S. congress has to pass it with two-thrid majority of the total numbers in both houses.
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Source: The Hindu

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