US Presidential Elections & Russian Tampering

Why in news?

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There is an ongoing investigations on Russian involvement to tamper the American Presidential elections.

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How did the case unfold?

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- **The Controvesy -** First signs of Russian complicity in hacking the emails of Hillary came when Mr. Trump began to speak of friendly relations with Russia.
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- The situation snowballed into a crisis post-election, and Mr.Trump faces charges of colluding with a foreign government to rig the election in his favour.
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- Notably, former Presidents Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton faced similar charges in the impeachment proceedings against them.
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- **Investigation -** The investigation began with the appointment of Robert Mueller, as Special Counsel by the Justice Department.
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- Also two Congressional committees were constituted for the same.
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- Evidence is mounting that Mr. Trump’s camp colluded with the Russians to gather information about Ms. Clinton.
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- The allegation is that Mr.Trump’s close aides met with several other Russians during the campaign trail.
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- Based on these initial leads, Mr.Trump’s campaign chairman, Mr. Paul Manafort became the first Republican to be accused.
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What is the impact on bilateral ties?

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- As the Special Prosecutor closes in on the President, U.S.-Russia relations are on a downward spiral.
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- The U.S. sanctions against Russia, tensions in Syria & Korean Peninsula, and the stalemate over Ukraine are problems that defy solutions.
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- Mr.Putin recently deplored what he termed an “unprecedented” anti-Russia campaign in the U.S.
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- As Russian diplomatic facilities were closed and Russia media has been stifled by US authorities, Putin has promised a symmetrical counter response.
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How does the future look?

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- Russia probably did meddled in the U.S. elections.
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- But even if the Mueller investigation throws up evidence, the President might turn out to be not guilty.
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- As it is highly improbable to pin the investigations directly down till the president, an impeachment is not likely on this account.
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- But the shadow such evidence casts on elections in the U.S. and U.S.-Russia relations will be dark and deep.
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Source: The Hindu

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