

ELSEWHERE



Von der Leyen secures EU executive top job
STRASBOURG
Germany's Ursula von der Leyen secured European Parliament's nod on Tuesday to become the first female President of European Commission. She presented her vision for a greener and rule-based Europe. REUTERS

Sudan paramilitaries 'torture' civilian to death
KHARTOUM
Sudan's paramilitary personnel beat and tortured to death a civilian in the Darfur region, a doctors committee linked to the country's protest movement said on Tuesday. AFP

Indian-origin man in U.S. convicted for killing wife
NEW YORK
A U.S. court has convicted an Indian-origin man for killing his estranged wife 12 years ago when she sought divorce. Avtar Grewal was extradited to the U.S. in 2011. He was found guilty of murder. PTI

Congresswomen hit back at Trump

'The blatantly racist attack is a distraction from the chaotic and corrupt culture of the administration'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

Democratic Congresswomen targeted in a xenophobic tirade by President Donald Trump hit back on Monday, saying he was trying to distract attention away from his policies with his "blatantly racist attack."

The President first attacked the four lawmakers – all but one of whom were born in America – with a series of tweets on Sunday, saying they should "go back" to their countries of origin.

The four – Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, Rashida Tlaib of Michigan, Ilhan Omar of Minnesota and Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts – struck back at a news conference on Monday and urged people not to "take the bait."

Mr. Trump was simply trying to distract with his "blatantly racist attack" on the four women of colour, Ms. Omar said.

"This is the agenda of white nationalists," she said.

Ms. Pressley also urged the American people "to not take the bait."

"This is simply a disruption and a distraction from the callous chaotic and corrupt culture of this administration, all the way down," Ms. Pressley said.

'The Squad'

The four lawmakers – who have been nicknamed "The Squad" by some media – said attention should instead be focused on healthcare and immigration and, in particular, the treatment of asylum seekers on the southern border.

"Weak minds and leaders challenge loyalty to our country in order to avoid challenging and debating the policy," said Ms. Ocasio-Cortez.

Mr. Trump "does not know how to defend his policies, so what he does is attack us personally, and that is what this is all about," she said.

Ms. Tlaib said Mr. Trump's tweets and remarks were "a continuation of his racist and xenophobic playbook."

"We cannot allow these hateful actions by the President to distract us from the



(From left) Rashida Tlaib, Ilhan Omar, Ayanna Pressley and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez in Washington. •AP

critical work to hold this administration accountable to the inhumane conditions at the border that is separating children from their loved ones and caging them up in illegal, horrific conditions," she said.

Ms. Omar and Ms. Tlaib repeated calls for Mr. Trump to be impeached.

At a White House event later, Mr. Trump said, "All they do is complain."

"These are people that hate our country. If you're not happy here, you can

The President also came under fire from some members of his Republican party but remained unrepentant.

"My view is that what was said and what was tweeted was destructive, was demeaning, was disunifying, and frankly it was very wrong," said Senator Mitt Romney, a Republican from Utah.

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern became the latest international leader to condemn Trump's tweets. "I completely and utterly disagree with him," she told Radio New Zealand, noting that her country welcomed diversity.

No racist bone: Trump
Meanwhile, Mr. Trump denied accusations of racism.

"Those Tweets were NOT Racist. I don't have a Racist bone in my body!" he tweeted, as lawmakers prepared to vote on a resolution condemning his "racist comments."

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Britain's Theresa May also expressed disapproval.

Pak. scribes protest against censorship

'Army seeks to quash critical coverage'

ASSOCIATED PRESS
KARACHI

Pakistani journalists held nationwide protests on Tuesday to denounce rampant censorship by the country's powerful security services, massive layoffs due to budget cuts and months-long delays in payments of their wages.

The rallies, dubbed Day of Protests, were spearheaded by the Pakistani Federal Union of Journalists, which said that journalists, who face the roughest phase in the country's history, have decided to "fight the unprecedented censorship."

Tuesday was only the "beginning of a protest movement," said Afzal Butt, union president.

Ad budget slashed
Journalists and press freedom advocates say that the Pakistani military is pressuring media outlets to quash critical coverage while the newly elected government is slashing its advertising budget.



Protesters holding a banner that reads: 'Stop sacking journalists', in Peshawar. •AP

In the last few months, hundreds of journalists have been laid off as media houses came under financial constraints after government advertising was drastically reduced.

Journalist wore black bands and held banners demanding an end to censorship, economic woes for those working in the media and abuse of media laws to curb free expression.

Authorities control "even minute details of the media content these days, and dictate who will be the face of print and electronic media," Mr. Butt said.

Khan to visit U.S. to 'refresh' ties

Washington may seek Pak. assistance in securing a deal to end war in Afghanistan

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan expressed hopes on Tuesday that Prime Minister Imran Khan's maiden trip to the White House later this month would help repair its acrimonious relationship with Washington as the U.S. seeks its help in ending the war in Afghanistan.

Observers believe that the nearly 18-year conflict will be the major focus of talks between Mr. Khan and President Donald Trump when they meet on July 22, as Washington presses for Pa-

kistani assistance in securing a peace deal.

"Pakistan has been facilitating the U.S.-Taliban talks in good faith, underscoring that it remains a shared responsibility," Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said during a seminar in Islamabad.

'Bitter pill'

"It will therefore be appropriate to work for broader engagement from Afghanistan to bilateral issues, economic and trade cooperation, to peace and stability in



Imran Khan

South Asia," he added.

Mr. Khan and Mr. Trump have clashed in the past, with the Pakistani premier once describing a potential

meeting with the U.S. president as a "bitter pill" to swallow.

But on Tuesday, Mr. Qureshi said that Mr. Trump's invitation to the Pakistani PM reflected the "importance of the relationship for both sides".

Relations between Pakistan and the U.S. have been turbulent since Mr. Trump took office in 2017, with the U.S. leader frequently singling out Islamabad for failing to rein in extremists and being an unfaithful partner in the fight against militants.

Iran confirms arrest of academic

It risks raising tension between Paris and Tehran

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TEHRAN

Iran confirmed on Tuesday the arrest of a French-Iranian academic without giving any details of her case, the latest in a long list of dual nationals held in the country's prisons.

The detention of Fariba Adelkhah, 60, risks increasing tension between Paris and Tehran at a critical moment in efforts to save a landmark 2015 nuclear deal.

Ms. Adelkhah is a well-known expert on Iran and Shiite Islam at France's Sciences Po university.



Fariba Adelkhah

"She is among suspects that have been recently arrested," Iran's judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Esmaili said, without

specifying the accusations against her.

Sciences Po said the arrest of the researcher was "unacceptable and shocking".

French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday expressed concern for her welfare. He added that France had so far received no meaningful explanation from Iran.

Other Iranian dual nationals jailed in Iran include Iranian-American Siamak Namazi and his father Baquer, who are serving 10-year sentences for espionage.

Google's ties to China need review: Trump

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump said his administration will "take a look" if Google has been working with the Chinese government. The firm swiftly denied the allegation.

"Tech Investor Peter Thiel believes Google should be investigated for treason," Mr. Trump said in a tweet. "A great and brilliant guy who knows this subject better than anyone! The Trump Administration will take a look!"

Merkel seated again after shaking spells

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BERLIN

German Chancellor Angela Merkel remained seated for national anthems at an official ceremony on Tuesday for the second time in a week, after a series of shaking spells sparked concern about her health.

Ms. Merkel took a seat next to visiting Moldovan PM Maia Sandu during military honours for her guest on Tuesday.

She has suffered three bouts of shaking while standing at ceremonies, and remained seated last week as national anthems were played during a ceremony with Denmark's PM.

How North Korea's leader gets his luxury cars

Bypassing UN sanctions, a complex system of port transfers, secret shipping ensure supply of vehicles

EDWARD WONG
CHRISTOPH KOETTL

The armoured black limousines appear everywhere with Kim Jong-un, sleek Western chariots for the young ruler of North Korea.

The cars are top-of-the-line Mercedes-Benzes – the Maybach S600 Pullman Guard and the Maybach S62, popular with world leaders and costing up to \$1.6 million each. And Mr. Kim is using them in open defiance of UN sanctions intended to ban luxury goods from North Korea.

High-end Western goods are making their way to North Korea's elite through a complex system of port



Comfort trip: A file photo of Kim Jong-un waving from a car in the truce village of Panmunjom, South Korea. •NYT

transfers, secret high-seas shipping and shadowy front companies, according to research by the Center for Advanced Defense Studies, and an investigation by *The New York Times*.

From 2015 to 2017, around 90 nations served as the sources of luxury goods for North Koreans, according to a report. Moreover, the networks run through the territories of some UNSC mem-

bers and U.S. allies – China, Russia, Japan and South Korea among them.

The journey taken by a pair of armoured Mercedes Maybach S600 sedans from Europe to East Asia illustrates how one of the luxury-goods transportation networks operated.

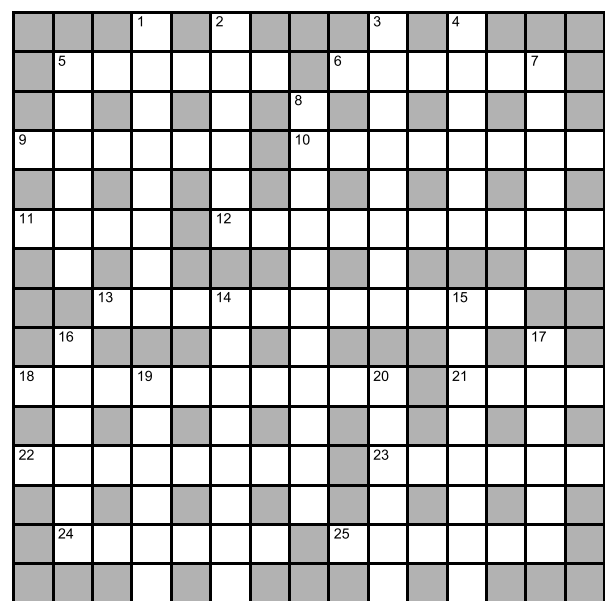
Mysterious voyage

The voyage began in the port of Rotterdam, the Netherlands. In June 2018, two sealed containers, each holding a Mercedes worth \$5,00,000, were brought by truck into a shipping terminal, according to cargo tracking records. The cars travelled by ship for 41 days to

Dalian, in northeast China. They were then put on a ship for Osaka, Japan. From there, they were put on a vessel for a three-day voyage to Busan, South Korea.

Then came the most mysterious part of the passage. The containers were transferred within one day of arrival to the DN5505, a cargo ship sailing under the flag of Togo, a West African nation, and bound for the port of Nakhodka in the far east of Russia. Then the ships went dark. When the signals came back on again, the ship was in South Korean waters. Now it was on a return trip to Busan, but laden with 2,588 tonnes of coal. NY TIMES

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12680



ACROSS

- 5 Doing away with North American vagabond for murder (3,3)
- 6 In charge of the soul (6)
- 9 Elector vetoing old high-flier (6)
- 10 Terrible women throttling proportional representation advances (8)

- 11 Foolish people initially rejected wicked spirits (4)
- 12 Bar aims to strip off architectural element (10)
- 13 Your future lies in the stars with her (11)
- 18 Keeners in Engineering hitting library at start of dawn on Saturday (5,5)
- 21 Oppose bill in the US (4)
- 22 Spooner's drunk winner to oversee digs in owner's absence (5-3)
- 23 Canadian First Nation claims Trudeau's beginning to bypass reason (6)
- 24 Sergeant Major finds all the soldiers obsequious (6)
- 25 Criminally underpay retiring District Attorney in straitened circumstances (6)

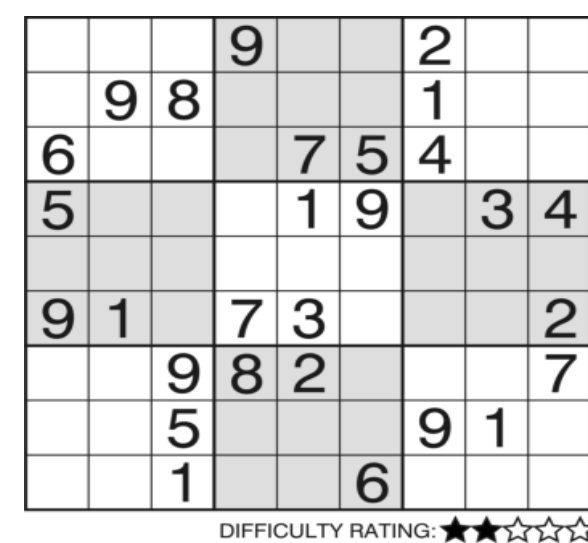
DOWN

- 1 Digital computers! (8)
- 2 Central components in clue (cryptic) (6)

(set by Skulldugger)

- 3 Demeaning and dodgy, if daring (5,3)
- 4 Carriage is ample, in a manner of speaking (6)
- 5 Moist, cold and ample, in a manner of speaking (6)
- 7 Spanish governess for Dutch girl from the South (6)
- 8 Absolute certainty seen in Luke and John, for example (6,5)
- 14 Motorbikes gutted, customised with cell synthesiser (8)
- 15 She throws a monkey wrench in the works (8)
- 16 Police Sergeant overwhelmed, a mite upset by jargon (6)
- 17 Sharp-sightedness you exhibited in a large town (6)
- 19 Jack in India uncovered flash card with detailing (6)
- 20 Black eye for the Polish guy! (6)

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12679

DE	MA	R	C	A	T	I	O	N	S				
S	C	A	R	G	L	I	T	T	E	R	A	T	
I	G	E	O	I	W	A							
E	D	G	E	I	N	A	M	N	E	S	T		
G	R	A	V	E	Y	A	R	D	M	I	N	S	K
L	E	E	C	H	O	N	T	H	E	N	O	S	
T	H	L	U	E									
S	E	A	L	I	N	G	A	L	A	X	A	X	
R	L	S	B	H	I	T							
E	N	G	A	G	E	M	E	N	T				
E	T	A	T	E	D	N							
E	X	T	R	A	V	A	G	A	N	T			

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

4	1	5	3	8	9	6	7	2
7	9	3	6	5	2	8	4	1
2	6	8	4	1	7	3	9	5
5	3	1	8	9	6	4	2	7
9	7	4	5	2	3	1	6	8
6	8	2	1	7	4	9	5	3
3	4	7	2	6	8	5	1	9
8	5	9	7	4	1	2	3	6
1	2	6	9	3	5	7	8	4

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

FAITH

Apt interpretations

Andal's Thiruppavai can be seen as praise of Ramanujacharya, said G. Satyabhama in a lecture, adding that all the verses were interpreted in this manner by Prativadhi Bhayankaram Annangarachar Swami. The first verse begins with the words Margazhi thingal. In Tamil, this is a reference to the month of Margazhi, that is Margaseersha. But marga means path, and if we take this meaning, then it can be taken as referring to the best path to moksha, which Ramanuja showed us. If we have the grace of our Acharya, then we are assured of moksha.

All of the Thiruppavai is about reverence for Acharyas. Mati niraindha, sings Andal, indicating that it is full moon. But mati can be taken to mean jnana, and niraindha, meaning full, shows that the world was filled with jnana. This happened when Ramanuja was born, for he dispelled the darkness of ajnana, just as the bright moon dispels darkness on full moon day. It is a nan naal, says Andal, a good day. It is good because the Gopikas are going to see Krishna. If we take it as referring to Ramanuja, that too is appropriate, for it was certainly a good day for mankind when Ramanuja was born. Andal refers to Krishna as kumarana, the eternally young one, and this is a most suitable description for Krishna, for He hid His greatness and mingled freely with the Gopas and Gopikas. Ramanuja too was kindness personified.

Krishna is an ilam singam – a fierce young lion. Ramanuja too was like a lion when it came to winning arguments against opponents. Kaarmeni is the word Andal uses to describe Krishna's beautiful dark hue. But how can this apply to Ramanuja, of whom traditional records say that he was fair skinned? Ramanuja was always thinking of Vishnu and so he too took on his beloved Krishna's colour.