

U.S. House condemns Trump's 'racist' tweets on lawmakers

The first time a President has been rebuked by the House in more than 100 years

JULIE HIRSCHFELD DAVIS WASHINGTON

The House voted on Tuesday to condemn as racist President Donald Trump's attacks against four congresswomen of colour, but only after the debate over the President's language devolved into a bitterly partisan brawl.

The measure, the first House rebuke of a President in more than 100 years, passed nearly along party lines, 240-187, after one of the most polarising exchanges on the House floor in recent times. Only four Republicans and the House's lone independent, Rep. Justin Amash of Michigan, voted with all Democrats to condemn Mr. Trump.

"I know racism when I see it, I know racism when I feel it, and at the highest level of government, there's no room for racism," said Rep. John Lewis (Democrat), an icon of the civil rights movement.

Some Republicans were just as adamant in their defence of Mr. Trump: "What has really happened here is that the President and his supporters have been forced to endure months of allegations of racism," said Rep. Dan Meuser (Republican). "This ridiculous slander does a disservice to our nation."

Republicans ground the proceedings to a halt shortly before the House was to vote on the non-binding resolution, which calls Mr. Trump's tweets and verbal volleys "racist comments that have legitimised increased fear and hatred of new Americans and people of colour".

It was the Democrats' response to Mr. Trump's attacks



Making a point: Minnesota Democratic representative Ilhan Omar speaking with reporters in Washington on Tuesday. • AFP

on Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, Ilhan Omar of Minnesota, Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts and Rashida Tlaib of Michigan, who he said should "go back" to their countries, an insult that he has continued to employ in the days since. "There's no excuse for any response to those words but a swift and strong, unified condemnation," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said as the House debated the resolution. "Every single member of this institution, Democratic and Republican, should join us in condemning the President's racist tweets."

'Shocking and shameful'

As Republicans rose to protest, Ms. Pelosi turned toward them on the House floor and picked up her speech, her voice rising as she added, "To do anything less would be a shocking rejection of our values and a shameful abdication of our oath of office to protect the American people."

Rep. Doug Collins of Georgia, the top Republican on

the Judiciary Committee, made a formal objection to the remarks, charging that they had violated the rules of decorum, which call for lawmakers to avoid impugning the motives of their colleagues or the president. It was a stunning turn in a debate about Mr. Trump's own incendiary language.

Mr. Trump on Tuesday denied that his tweets were racist and implored House Republicans to reject the measure. The President raged on Twitter, calling the House resolution a "con game".

"Those Tweets were NOT Racist," Mr. Trump wrote. "I don't have a Racist bone in my body! The so-called vote to be taken is a Democrat con game. Republicans should not show 'weakness' and fall into their trap."

Late on Tuesday, the President praised how the Republicans voted, tweeting, "So great to see how unified the Republican Party was on today's vote concerning statements I made about four Democrat Congresswomen".

The vote was a show of unity for Democrats who had been squabbling for weeks – and a test of Republican principles. In the end, the only Republicans to cross party lines were Reps. Fred Upton of Michigan, Susan Brooks of Indiana, Brian Fitzpatrick of Pennsylvania and Will Hurd of Texas, the House's only black Republican.

At one point, Rep. Emanuel Cleaver II (Democrat), who was presiding in the House when Republicans challenged Ms. Pelosi's words, banged the gavel, rose from the marble dais and stormed off the House floor. "We aren't ever, ever going to pass up, it seems, an opportunity to escalate, and that's what this is," Mr. Cleaver said, his voice rising in frustration. "We want to just fight."

Defending Trump

For their part, Republicans took to the floor not to defend the President's remarks but to condemn Democrats for what they called a breach of decorum.

Ultimately, it was left to Rep. Steny Hoyer, the majority leader, to recite the official ruling that Ms. Pelosi had, in fact, violated a House rule against characterising an action as "racist". The move by Republicans to have her words stricken from the record then failed along party lines, and Ms. Pelosi was unrepentant.

"I stand by my statement," she said as she strode through the Capitol. "I'm proud of the attention being called to it, because what the president said was completely inappropriate." NY TIMES

U.S. not to sell F-35 fighter jets to Turkey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump has announced that the U.S. would not sell the F-35 fighter jets to Turkey after Ankara purchased the S-400 missile defence system from Russia.

Mr. Trump said it was not fair that when Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan "really wanted" to buy the Patriot surface-to-air missile system, the previous Obama administration did not sell it.

"We have a situation where Turkey is very good with us, very good. And we are now telling Turkey that because you have really been forced to buy another missile system, we're not going to sell you the F-35 fighter jets," Mr. Trump told reporters on Tuesday.

Protesters, Sudan Army rulers ink deal

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE KHARTOUM

Sudan's protesters and the ruling generals on Wednesday inked a deal that aims to instal a civilian administration, a key demand of demonstrators since President Omar al-Bashir was deposed in a coup three months ago.

Deputy chief of the military council General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo said the agreement was a "historic moment" for Sudan. It has "opened a new and promising era of partnership between the armed forces, RSF (Rapid Support Forces) and leaders of the glorious Sudanese revolution," he said.

Taliban shuts 42 health clinics in Afghan province

Nearly 6,000 people will be hit, says Swedish NGO

ASSOCIATED PRESS KABUL

The Taliban forced a Swedish non-profit group to close 42 health facilities it runs in eastern Afghanistan, the organisation said on Wednesday, the latest attempt by the insurgents to show strength amid negotiations to end the country's nearly 18-year war.

In Sweden, the group's director called the closures "an obvious violation of human rights and international humanitarian law" and demanded that the facilities be allowed to reopen right away.

Sonny Mansson, the country director of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, told that the Taliban threatened the NGO's



Ahmad Khalid Fahim, programme director for the Swedish group. • AP

staff by saying that if they do not close the facilities, "it would have consequences for themselves and their families."

"We treat equally anyone who needs medical care regardless of who they are. Everyone who needs help gets it," Mr. Mansson said, adding that the facilities that closed over the weekend were in a Taliban-controlled area of Maidan Wardan province while others are still

open in the province's government-controlled areas.

Parwiz Ahmad Faizi, the group's communications manager, said the closures came after Afghan forces last week raided a clinic run by the NGO in Daimirdad district. The Afghan troops, acting on intelligence, were allegedly looking for suspected Taliban fighters hiding in the clinic.

Ahmad Khalid Fahim, programme director for the Swedish group, said two staff members, a guard and a lab worker, and two other people were killed in the attack, while a fifth person has been missing. Mr. Faizi said the closures would affect health services for around 6,000 patients, particularly women and children.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid confirmed the closure of the NGO's facilities.

U.S. mulls raising merit-based immigration to 57%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA WASHINGTON

The Trump administration is proposing to increase merit-based legal immigration to 57% and half of those would be based on family and humanitarian grounds, in an effort to overhaul the existing system.

Senior presidential adviser Jared Kushner, who is also the son-in-law of U.S. President Donald Trump, said having an immigration policy that would attract talented and meritorious people from across the world would create over \$500 billion in tax revenues over 10 years.

"It brings in a lot of people that are paying into the social safety nets. Not people who are coming in and then immediately taking from the social safety nets, which right now have to support Americans who are currently citizens," Mr. Kushner told the Cabinet during a meeting at the White House.

At the direction of Mr. Trump, Mr. Kushner is leading the immigration reform project, which he said was now into its final stages.

Mr. Kushner rued that America's immigration system was very outdated compared to some of the peer

countries that it competes with for talent. He said just 12% of people become legal immigrants through merit-based system right now.

"Compare that to some of our peer countries like Canada. They're at 53%, New Zealand at 59%, Australia 63%, Japan at 52%," he said. "Under President Trump's proposal, we'll go to 57%, which puts right in the range and it will make us competitive."

Last year 1.1 million people became citizens. "We are keeping the number the same. But we want to change the composition of what's that made up of," he said.

IN BRIEF



U.S. court gives life term to Mexican drug lord

NEW YORK Once one of the world's most powerful and notorious criminals, Mexican drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman was jailed for life on Wednesday – the mandatory sentence for a host of crimes spanning a quarter-century. AFP

Turkish diplomat among two shot dead in Iraq

ARBIL The Turkish vice consul to Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region was among at least two people shot dead Wednesday in the regional capital Arbil, prompting pledges of "retaliation" from Ankara. AFP

Netanyahu set to become Israel's longest-serving PM

ASSOCIATED PRESS JERUSALEM

Benjamin Netanyahu is set to become Israel's longest-serving Prime Minister as his 13-year rule surpasses that of Israel's founding father David Ben-Gurion on July 20.

But as he is about to cross the milestone, Mr. Netanyahu faces perhaps his greatest political challenge yet. After failing to form a parliamentary majority following the April elections, the country is holding a repeat vote in September. The following month, he faces a hearing with the Attorney General, who has recommended indicting Mr. Netanyahu on corruption charges. If formal charges are filed, Mr. Netanyahu could be forced to step aside.



Benjamin Netanyahu

Mr. Netanyahu has often said he would like to be remembered as the "protector of Israel." But admirers and critics alike say that what sets him apart is his unparalleled political acumen, a ruthless drive to win at all costs and an uncanny ability to sell his shifting policies to the public. "His marketing skills are so amazing that he can argue for one thing and then the opposite with the same conviction. It's an art form," said Aviv Bushinsky, a former Netanyahu aide.

U.S. bans Myanmar military leaders over Rohingya abuses

REUTERS WASHINGTON

The U.S. announced sanctions on Tuesday against Myanmar military's Commander-in-Chief Min Aung Hlaing and other leaders it said were responsible for extrajudicial killings of Rohingya Muslims, barring them from entry to the country.

The steps, which also covered Min Aung Hlaing's deputy, Soe Win, and two other senior commanders and their families, are the strongest the U.S. has taken in response to massacres of minority Rohingyas in Myanmar. It identified the two others as Than Oo and Aung Aung, both Brigadier Generals.

"We remain concerned that the Burmese govern-



Min Aung Hlaing

ment has taken no actions to hold accountable those responsible for human rights violations and abuses, and there are continued reports of the Burmese military committing human rights violations and abuses throughout the country," U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a statement.

Mr. Pompeo said a recent disclosure that Min Aung Hlaing ordered the release

of soldiers convicted of extrajudicial killings at the village of Inn Din during the ethnic cleansing of Rohingya in 2017 was "one egregious example of the continued and severe lack of accountability for the military and its senior leadership."

A spokesman for the Myanmar military, Brigadier General Zaw Min Tun, said by phone the military had not ignored the accusations, citing internal probes. One army-led investigation in 2017 exonerated security forces of all accusations of atrocities. Another is ongoing.

Critical media coverage may be treason: PTI

Imran Khan's party slams journalists

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE ISLAMABAD

The ruling party of Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has launched another blistering attack on the press, linking critical coverage to potential "treason" in the latest broadside against the beleaguered media.

The official account of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party fired off over two dozen tweets in English and Urdu late on Tuesday, lambasting the press for coverage criticising the government and Mr. Khan which it deemed "Anti-State".

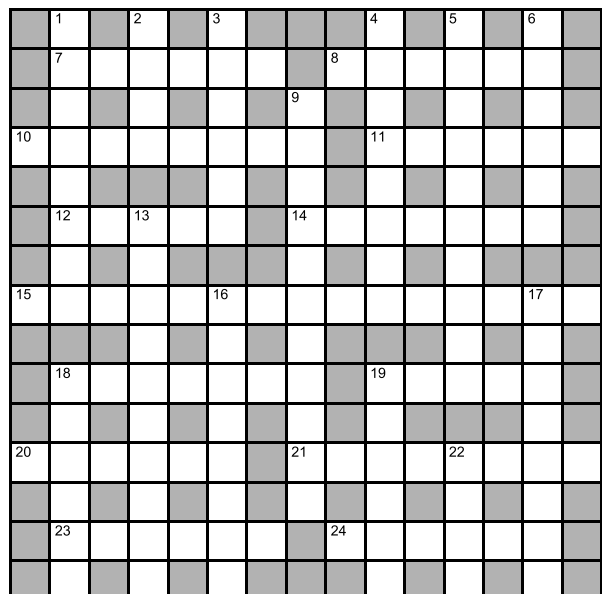
"Freedom of Expression is beauty of Democracy. Expressing Enemy's Stance is Not Freedom of speech but treason against its people,"

read one tweet.

"Media houses & journalists must take care that in their quest for criticism on State, they intentionally or unintentionally do not end up propagating enemy's stance," read another, with the hashtag: #JournalismNotAgenda.

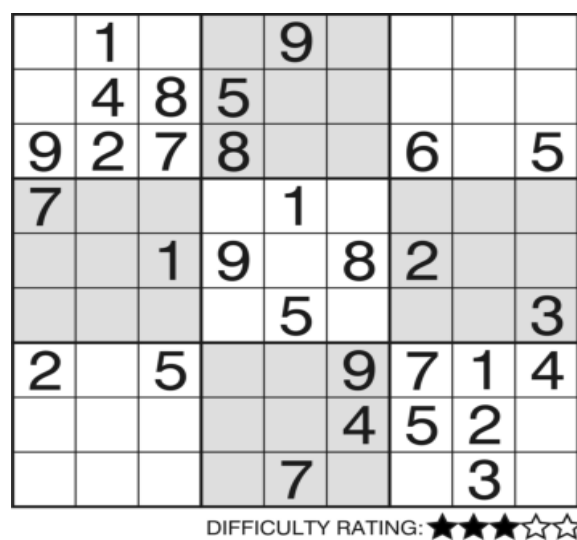
Pakistan routinely ranks among the world's most dangerous countries for media workers, and reporters have frequently been detained, beaten and even killed for being critical of the government or powerful military. In recent years the space for dissent has shrunk further, with the government announcing a crackdown on social networks and media houses.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12681



- (set by xChequer)
- 12 Monsters go back, saint carries on (5)
 - 14 Mum can supply loads of fish sauce (4,3)
 - 15 Modern man reached space, a wonderful experience (7,3,5)
 - 18 Get expert to heal (7)
 - 19 Extract using force with support (5)
 - 20 Bit of finery, over a pound during season (6)
 - 21 Fancy heiress eating fine specimen of mackerel (4,4)
 - 23 Perhaps a patient batting partner (6)
 - 24 Instrument of Zulu heritage, timeless hit (6)
 - 3 Current charge for admission (6)
 - 4 Several staff doubt veteran (8)
 - 5 Ahead before true game unfolds on a sticky wicket (2,1,3,4)
 - 6 Garment measure said to appear under hip (6)
 - 9 Put up with a kid in order to loosen up (5,2,4)
 - 13 Deficiency in butter reportedly for Spooner's meat dish (4,2,4)
 - 16 Identity of base character (8)
 - 17 Skill and cunning is on test (8)
 - 18 Limits to paper alliance in real-life operation (6)
 - 19 Tiny, most nasty pest (6)
 - 22 Name of northerly, stifling hot wind (4)
- ACROSS
- 7 Meal without a vessel (6)
 - 8 China's neighbour having power to remove Western expatriate tycoon (6)
 - 10 Tailor set mark to cut opening in robe (8)
 - 11 One beginning to close old fireplaces (6)
- DOWN
- 1 Noble use questionable for a prig (8)
 - 2 Barely reasonable (4)

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12680

R	U	B	O	U	T	I	N	W	A	R	D		
H	A	C	G	F	E	N	U						
T	E	R	C	E	L	O	G	R	E	S	S		
U	U	E	S	A	O	N							
I	M	P	S	I	M	P	E	D	I	M	E	N	T
Y	E	E	T	I	E	A							
P	A	S	T	R	O	L	O	G	I	S	T		
P	A	R	L	I	B	I	R	D	S	B	U	C	
T	A	A	O	U	H	O	O	U					
H	O	U	S	E	S	I	T	I	N	T	U	I	
I	C	O	H	N	E	T							
S	M	A	R	M	Y	P	E	N	U	R	Y		
S	R	E											

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

FAITH

Trivikrama praised

Thiruppavai covers the vibhava avatars of Lord Narayana. Most of the verses are about Krishna avatars, but other avatars are also covered, said Sujatha Raghavan in a discourse. Verse three speaks of the benefits we get by praising Trivikrama. Rains will be copious, fields will yield a lot of paddy, fishes will swim in the water between the crops, bees will rest in the large lotus flowers, and cows will give plenty of milk, if Trivikrama is praised.

Trivikrama is described by Andal as Uthaman, which shows His superiority to everyone. His are the feet that touched the heads of everyone in the world, regardless of whether a person was a sinner or was virtuous. The stalks of grain Andal refers to are the prapannas. The stout fishes are the Acharyas, who are glad that their efforts to perform Saranagati have been rewarded. The sleeping bees symbolically indicate the Lord. Glad that the Acharyas have been able to help their sishyas resort to Saranagati, He sleeps peacefully. The generous cows, which fill vessels with milk, are Acharyas, who teach and guide their disciples. In Ambarame Thanneere (verse 17), Andal talks again of Trivikrama, who pierced the skies, as He grew in stature, from the short Vamana to the gigantic Trivikrama. The Lord is the 'sOru' (rice) referred to here.

For true bhaktas, the Lord is everything, even the food they consume. That is why Nammazhvar said that for devotees Kannan is everything – He is the rice that is eaten (tunum sOru), water (neer) and even the betel leaves (vettrilai). In pasuram twenty-four, Andal praises the feet that measured the worlds. These are also the feet that went to Lanka, and destroyed Ravana. These are the feet that kicked Sakatasura, the demon who came as a wheel to crush Krishna.