

# ICJ orders Myanmar to protect Rohingya

UN court says it ‘must take all measures to prevent all acts prohibited under the Genocide Convention’

REUTERS  
THE HAGUE/COX'S BAZAAR

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) on Thursday ordered Myanmar to take urgent measures to protect its Rohingya population from genocide, a ruling cheered by refugees as their first major legal victory since being forced from their homes.

A lawsuit launched by Gambia in November at the United Nations’ highest body for disputes between states accuses Myanmar of genocide against Rohingya in violation of a 1948 convention.

The court’s final decision could take years, and Thursday’s ruling dealt only with Gambia’s request for preliminary measures. But in a unanimous ruling by the 17 judge panel, the court said the Rohingya face an ongoing threat and Myanmar must act to protect them.

Myanmar must “take all measures within its power to prevent all acts” prohibited

under the 1948 Genocide Convention, and report back within four months, presiding Judge Abdulqawi Yusuf said, reading out a summary of the judgment.

Myanmar must use its influence over its military and other armed groups to prevent violence against the Rohingya “intended to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part”.

‘Ethnic minority group’ Rohingya activists, who had come from all over the world to the Hague, reacted with joy to the unanimous ruling, which also explicitly recognised their ethnic minority as a protected group under the Genocide Convention.

“That is something we have been fighting for a long time: to be recognised as humans the same as everyone else,” Yasmin Ullah, a Canada-based Rohingya activist said. Majority Buddhist Myanmar generally refuses



First step: Gambia's Justice Minister Abubaccr Tambadou, right, waving at a Rohingya member at the ICJ, The Hague. •AFP

to describe the Muslim Rohingya as an ethnic group and refers to them as Bangladeshi migrants.

### Military crackdown

More than 7,30,000 Rohingya fled Myanmar after a military-led crackdown in 2017, and were forced into squalid camps across the border in Bangladesh. UN investigators concluded that the military campaign had been executed

with “genocidal intent”.

In camps in Bangladesh where they have fled, Rohingya refugees hovered over mobile phones to watch the judgment. For the first time, we have got some justice,” said Mohammed Nur, 34.

Rohingya still living inside Myanmar contacted by phone said they hoped the ruling would force the country to improve their situation. “We need protection.”

said Tin Aung, a Rohingya leader in central Rakhine state, where Muslims have been confined to camps since violence in 2012.

Gambia's Justice Minister, Abubaccr Tambadou, hailed the ruling as “a triumph for international justice”.

The case was argued last month by some of the world's top human rights lawyers, with Myanmar’s civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi attending the hearings to ask judges to dismiss it.

Moments before the court began reading its ruling, the *Financial Times* published an article by Suu Kyi, in which she said war crimes may have been committed against Rohingya Muslims but refugees had exaggerated abuses.

ICJ rulings are final and binding, but countries have occasionally flouted them, and the court has no formal mechanism to enforce them.

# Residents of China’s virus-hit Wuhan call for support

People in the locked down city fear about food shortages

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WUHAN

Wuhan residents called for help and shared worries of food shortages Thursday, with streets in the virus-hit central Chinese city left deserted after it was put on lockdown.

Planes and trains out of Wuhan – the outbreak epicentre of the SARS-like virus – were cancelled, with public transport also suspended as authorities told residents not to leave in a bid to control the spread of the virus.

Streets decorated for Chinese New Year festivities in the city of 11 million were empty, with the few who ventured outside wearing masks as ordered by authorities.

The neighbouring city of Huanggang was also placed on lockdown from Thursday night.

Travel closures were also imposed on roads, rail or public transport in three other nearby cities.

In Wuhan, guests at one hotel were checked for fevers and handed anti-bacterial gel, and told breakfast would be served to rooms.

Some residents said they were on the “verge of tears”



Controlling the outbreak: Travellers outside a railway Station in Wuhan after trains out of the city were suspended. •AP

as they read news of the lockdown, adding that their families’ lives were “threatened constantly and the target of online abuse”.

“We consciously avoid going out, disinfect diligently and wear masks,” wrote one user in a social media post.

“But there is a lack of food and disinfectants, and we need more resources. We hope everyone can understand that we are feeling as though it is the end of the world.

One user said: “Could the government help to resolve the issue of resources? Can we control food prices?”

Many Internet users from outside the city expressed for residents, urging them to stay safe.

## WHO: virus not a global health emergency

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
GENEVA

A deadly virus outbreak that has prompted China to lock down some 20 million people does not yet constitute an international public health emergency, the World Health Organization determined on Thursday.

“This is an emergency in China, but it has not yet become a global health emergency,” WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

# India helps Maldives tackle measles outbreak

It despatched over 30,000 doses of measles and rubella (MR) vaccine to the island nation

MEERA SRINIVASAN  
COLOMBO

India has stepped in to help the Maldives tackle a recent outbreak of measles, identified at a government hospital about three weeks ago. The Indian Embassy in Male on Thursday handed over 30,000 doses of measles and rubella (MR) vaccine to the Maldivian Health Ministry.

The outbreak comes less than three years after the World Health Organisation declared the Maldives measles-free. As many as six persons have so far been affected by the contagious viral infection. Following the development, health authori-

ties in the Maldives said they have intensified the vaccination drive, to prevent the infectious disease from spreading further.

### Preventive measures

“The first case was identified on January 9. Since then we have stepped up screening and preventive measures to ensure we contain it,” Minister of State for Health Shah Abdullah Mahir told *The Hindu* over telephone. “On rare occasions, there could be an outbreak of a disease considered to have been eradicated in a country. However, if we contain it swiftly and effectively, we will not

lose the eradication status,” he said.

The six cases of measles so far identified are from Hulhumale – the reclaimed island adjoining capital Male – and capital Male, according to the Minister, who is heading a task force to handle the outbreak. The Maldives, he said, is observing 2020 as the year of public health, when an unexpected public health challenge emerged. “With our ongoing vaccination and re-vaccination drives, we hope to be able to contain it soon. We are grateful for the support from the Indian government at such a time,” he added.

The vaccine provided by India reached Male within 72 hours after the government made a request, a statement from the Indian Embassy said, adding that Minister of Health Abdulla Ameen presented a certificate of appreciation to Indian Ambassador Sunjay Sudhir, thanking the Government of India for the “gesture of goodwill and solidarity.”

### MoU on health

The Indian government’s initiative comes even as the two countries implement the Memorandum of Understanding on Health cooperation – signed during Prime

Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Male in June 2019. Secretary-level delegations met in Male early January to draw a roadmap for cooperation, in capacity building and training of doctors and medical professionals, disease surveillance, training of mental health professionals, setting up of digital health capacities in Maldives, officials said.

India is also helping build a 100-bed Cancer Hospital in Hulhumale as part of its \$800 million Line of Credit to the island nation, a popular tourist destination and home to over 4,00,000 people.

## FATF: China says Pak. made progress

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BEIJING

China, which hosted a key meeting of the international terror financing watchdog in Beijing, said on Thursday that Pakistan has made “visible progress” to strengthen its counter terrorism financing system, which should be encouraged by the world community.

The Financial Action Task Force’s (FATF) Asia Pacific Joint Group met in Beijing to scrutinise Pakistan’s progress to adopt stricter laws against terror financing and money laundering. China is the President of the FATF and co-chair for Asia Pacific Joint Group.

A Pakistani delegation led by Minister for Economic Af-

fairs Division Hammad Azhar is in Beijing to brief the task force on the steps taken by it.

“Pakistan has made great efforts to strengthen its domestic counter terrorism financing system with visible progress. Its political will and active efforts should be encouraged by the international community,” he said.

## ELSEWHERE



### Isabel dos Santos charged with fraud

LUANDA Isabel dos Santos, the tycoon daughter of Angola’s former President, has been charged with money laundering and mismanagement. One of five named suspects has been found dead in Lisbon. •AFP

### Queen gives assent for Britain to leave EU

LONDON Queen Elizabeth II gave her assent on Thursday for Britain to end its decades-long involvement in the European Union and seek a more independent but uncertain future at the end of the month. •AFP

## MPs approve sweeping Putin reforms

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
MOSCOW

Russian lawmakers on Thursday unanimously approved a sweeping constitutional reform Bill put forward by President Vladimir Putin in its first reading, after less than two hours of debate.

All 432 lawmakers present in the lower house State Duma voted in favour of the Bill, just three days after the amendments were presented to Parliament. “This was a powerful show of unity,” Duma speaker Vyacheslav Volodin said after the vote, adding that the key second reading was expected on February 11.

## U.S. steps up scrutiny of pregnant visa applicants

New rules aim to limit ‘birth tourism’

REUTERS  
WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump’s administration rolled out a new rule on Thursday that aims to limit “birth tourism” by women who enter the U.S. on tourist visas with the intention of obtaining citizenship for their babies born on American soil.

Under the State Department regulation, which will take effect on Friday, pregnant women applying for visitor visas could be required to prove they have a specific reason for travel beyond giving birth, such as a medical necessity.

Mr. Trump has often criticised the right to citizen-

ship for any person born in the U.S., which applies even to children born to tourists. But scrapping that right would require a change in the U.S. Constitution.

No U.S. law bars foreign women from travelling to the U.S. to give birth, although consular officers previously could require visitors to prove they have the financial means to pay for a medical procedure if that is the reason for the trip.

The final rule says consular officers must scrutinise female travellers to determine whether they might be pregnant, but does not explain how officers will make such determinations.

# Ami Bera slams Trump’s India policy

It’s an abdication of American leadership, says Democratic Congressman

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN  
WASHINGTON

As election season gets under way in the U.S., Democratic Congressman Ami Bera called the Trump policy towards developments in India such as Kashmir and the “citizenship test” an “abdication of American leadership”. He made the remarks during a call with reporters as part of outreach to the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community for former Vice-President Joe Biden’s 2020 campaign for the presidency.

As the new head of the important U.S. House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and Nonproliferation, Mr. Bera’s com-

ments have significance for U.S.-India relations. The Subcommittee, under its former chairman Brad Sherman, held a hearing on Kashmir following Parliament’s abrogation of Article 370 last year.

“The Trump administration has been wholly silent on some of what’s happened in Kashmir as well as some of what’s happening with the citizenship test. Under a normal administration, America would be using its influence and dialogue in opening those channels of communication,” Mr. Bera said, reiterating that India’s strength is its secular democracy.

“I would argue that India should not lose that secular



Ami Bera

democracy because that is what separates it from other states and other countries. You don’t hear Donald Trump out there talking about it or even Secretary Pompeo. I think it’s not up to us to tell other countries

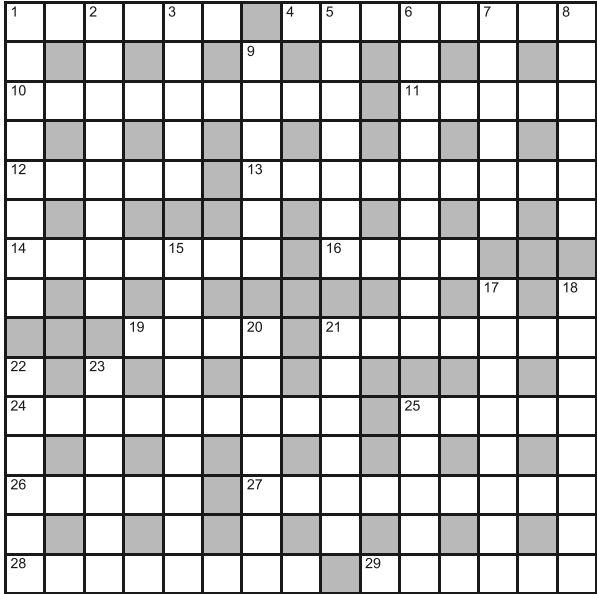
what to do but with strong allies, we certainly can have those conversations and that dialogue,” he said.

The Congressman also confirmed that he had conveyed his concerns – particularly on Kashmir being opened up to the press and diplomats – to the Indian government privately, in addition to using public channels.

He also said that there was bipartisan support in the U.S. Congress for a strong U.S.- India relationship. “Vice-President Biden, President Obama talked about... the U.S.- India relationship potentially being the defining relationship in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.”

## THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12840

Log on to crossword.thehindu.com for more puzzles



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### ACROSS

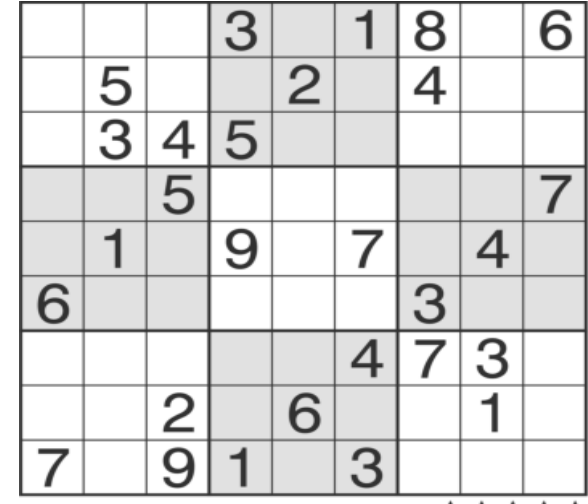
- 1 Rob Lincoln, an old African President (6)
- 4 Mostly not against burning coal this month (8)
- 10 Small, perfect rings in iodine (9)
- 11 Dance beat with energy (5)
- 12 City’s duck lover (5)
- 13 Step in sepulchre to sit (9)

(set by Sunnet)

- 14 Beg short candidate to have a meal (7)
- 16 Beam of sun plotted in axes (1-3)
- 19 Language of beautiful Uzbekistan is written from right to left (4)
- 21 Because note is true (7)
- 24 A big discount to help if car is wrecked (4-5)
- 25 A small change to land at the mouth of the river (5)
- 26 Awkwardly bears a sword (5)
- 27 Guerrilla changed sides freely but remained the same (9)
- 28 Noel’s duel with Yeti was choreographed (8)
- 29 Claimed road had deteriorated at first (6)

- 5 Clear cut strain (7)
- 6 Please get in line without resistance (9)
- 7 Determined that inner room’s not raised (4,2)
- 8 Settled and cheered (6)
- 9 Project to capture story of tragic heroine (6)
- 15 Outfit organized meet up in and around Quebec (9)
- 17 Cut quarters became ineffective (4,4)
- 18 Went and fixed (8)
- 20 Integrated one providing that is dead (7)
- 21 A riser’s rough range (6)
- 22 Blender to add a little bit of yeast to get fermented liquor (6)
- 23 Catholic girl’s shy (6)
- 25 Perhaps 2 love it (5)

## SUDOKU



### Solution to puzzle 12839

THWART ELEPHANT  
CONSTRUCT RETIE  
IDEO A EL UN  
TIGER GARROTTED  
U A G A J E Y  
REPLICCA LYNX  
N S R F E I M  
S J WOLF CADENCE  
S J N L R T T S  
LOATHSOME GUESS  
I C H O U A R R A  
POKER N O S M O K I N G  
U A S C E V U O E  
P I L L F E R E D Z I E B R A S

### Solution to yesterday’s Sudoku

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

## FAITH

### An exemplary guru

Narada stands out as an exemplary guru to all those in search of salvation with his extraordinary bhakti, owing to which he enjoys a close relationship with God. Narada has played a very significant role in fostering bhakti rasa and Bhagavata dharma and has shown how God is attainable through devotion, pointed out Sri Ramanujam in a discourse. Narada is Guru to the illustrious line of devotees that includes sages such as Valmiki, Vyasa, etc, celestial beings, kings, child devotees such as Dhruva, Prahlada, and so on.

Valmiki is actually born as Ratnakara, and lives the life of a robber. But by the influence of Narada, he rejects his evil ways and becomes his faithful disciple. It is interesting that Narada instructs him to perform penance by chanting the name Ma-ra which means to kill. But the continuous chanting becomes effective meditation on Rama Nama by God’s grace, just as the subtle grace that enables even the random sowing of seeds to sprout and grow. The penance of the robber-turned-devotee becomes doubly valuable when it is done with total faith in the words of the guru and with sincerity. In course of time, huge anthills grow around him and Narada helps him to come out. Narada names him Valmiki, meaning one born of an anthill and also imparts the teachings of the scriptures to him. He relates the greatness of Rama and encourages him to write the Ramayana. Brahma showers his grace on him and he becomes the first poet. He also becomes the foremost of ascetics.

In the case of Dhruva, Narada guides the young boy in the intricacies of austere penance that even an adult would find challenging. He teaches the boy to meditate on the Lord’s form and also imparts the Dwadasa mantra. Narada guides him and acts as link between him and God literally.