

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

HYDERABAD | SUNDAY | 27 OCTOBER 2019

WEATHER

Max: 31.1 °C
Min: 23 °C
RH: 65%
Rain: Traces
Forecast: Cloudy sky.
Rain, thundershowers likely. Max/Min 32/23°C



SUNDAY CHRONICLE

LUXURY LABELS ARE BRANCHING OUT TO HOMECARE, FOOTWEAR

SHINING BRIGHT, THIS FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

CHILE MARCH BEARS STARK RESEMBLANCE TO INDIA

>> PG 9

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DC wishes its readers a happy and prosperous Diwali



Devotees light thousands of earthen lamps on the bank of the Saryu river during Deepotsav celebrations, on the eve of Diwali, in Ayodhya on Saturday. — PTI

HOLIDAY NOTICE | The offices of Deccan Chronicle will remain closed today for Diwali. There will be no edition on Monday, Oct. 28, 2019

Khattar to head coalition regime

To take oath of office as Haryana CM today, Dushyant Chautala to become his deputy

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 26

The BJP-Jannayak Janata Party coalition government will take oath on Sunday, a day after BJP president Amit Shah announced his party's alliance in Haryana with the Jat-dominated party. Interim chief minister, Manohar Lal Khattar, will be sworn-in as the next chief minister of the state, while the JJP's Dushyant Chautala will be his deputy.

After facing severe criticism over seeking support of controversial leader Gopal Kanda, the BJP was forced to clarify that it will not take the support of the Haryana Lokhit Party legislator. Kanda is facing two abatement of suicide cases, including that of a former female employee and her mother.

"I want to clarify one thing — the BJP is not going to take the support of Kanda," said Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Saturday. He was in Chandigarh for the BJP's legislative meeting as a Central observer.

In the just-concluded Assembly polls in the state, the BJP bagged 40 seats, six short of a simple majority. Other than the JJP's 10 MLAs, the BJP also has the support of seven Independent MLAs. Earlier in the day, the BJP legislative party met in Chandigarh and elected Mr Khattar as the legislative party leader. He then met Haryana Governor Satyadeo Narain Arya and staked claim to form the government in the state. Mr Chautala accompanied him. "The governor has invited us to form the government on Sunday," Mr Khattar said after meeting.

The oath-taking ceremony will take place at 2.15 pm on Sunday, the day Diwali will be celebrated across the country.

Mr Khattar said that Mr Chautala will also take oath as the deputy CM.

Dy CM's dad to be released on parole

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 26

Immediately after Dushyant Chautala's Jannayak Janata Party (JJP) extended its support to the BJP, its founder Ajay Chautala has been granted furlough for a period of 14 days.

Ajay Chautala is the father of Dushyant Chautala. He was lodged in the Tihar jail after he was convicted in a teacher recruitment scam in 2013 along with his father and former chief minister and INLD leader Om Prakash Chautala and 53 others, including two IAS officials.

After being expelled from the Indian National

Lok Dal (INLD) in 2018, Mr Dushyant Chautala and his father Ajay Chautala founded the JJP.

Dushyant Chautala is the great grandson of former deputy prime minister Chaudhary Devi Lal. Ajay Chautala is scheduled to leave the Tihar jail on Sunday. According to a prison official, Ajay Chautala has been granted a two-week furlough and it will start from the day he will step out of the jail premises.

The development comes on a day the BJP staked claim to form the government in Haryana after Mr Chautala's party offered support to the BJP.

Sena seeks share in CM's tenure

DC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, OCT. 26

Newly-elected Shiv Sena MLAs on Saturday demanded written assurance from the BJP on sharing the Chief Minister's post for two-and-a-half years each. They also pushed the case of Aaditya Thackeray for the Maharashtra CM post.

"We want the BJP to give us in writing how power would be shared. In earlier discussions, it was decided that chief minister's post would be shared equally. We want the chief minister's post for a period of two-and-a-half years. Uddhav, however, will take the final call. We have passed a one-line resolution, giving him full powers to take decisions," Shiv Sena MLA Pratap

Sarnaik told reporters, after Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray met newly-elected party MLAs on Saturday.

He said Uddhav also made it clear to them that he had "other options", but was not interested in exploring them since the BJP and the Sena are bound together by the "Hindutva ideology".

The Congress and NCP leaders have also started making overtures to the Sena, though both parties do not want to take an initiative in holding talks with the party.

Reacting to the Sena's demand, Congress leader Vijay Wadettiwar said, "It is up to Shiv Sena to decide if they want a five-year CM or wait for the BJP's response on 2.5-year CM demand."

TEWARI: CONFER BHARAT RATNA ON BHAGAT SINGH

New Delhi, Oct. 26: Congress leader Manish Tewari has urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to confer the Bharat Ratna on freedom fighters Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev. In a letter to Mr Modi, he also requested him to formally confer the honorific title of Shaheed-E-Azam on them and dedicate the Chandigarh airport to the memory of Bhagat Singh.

"I would like to draw your kind attention towards the fact that Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev inspired an entire generation of patriots by their unrelenting resistance to British Imperialism and later their supreme sacrifice on the 23rd of March, 1931," the MP from Anandpur Sahib in Punjab said.

"It would be in the fitness of things that if on 26th of January, 2020 all three of them are honoured with the 'Bharat Ratna'. This gesture would touch the hearts and souls of 124 crore Indians," the Congress leader said, in his letter dated October 25.

His suggestions come in the wake of the BJP unit in Maharashtra demanding that the Bharat Ratna be conferred on Hindutva ideologue Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, which triggered a row. — PTI

RTC's talks with striking staff hit merger block

RAJESWARI PARASA | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 26

The Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) joint action committee (JAC) announced that the RTC strike will continue, as talks initiated by the management at Errum Manzil failed on Saturday.

The RTC JAC leaders emerged midway from the talks alleging that the committee comprising the managing director, Sunil Sharma, and CM's secretary, Sandeep Sultania, among others, was not looking for solutions but was merely buying time to satisfy the High Court,

which had instructed it to initiate talks.

Only 21 demands were tabled while the JAC demanded a discussion on all 26 demands, during the two-hour meeting. It yielded no results and the deadlock continued with the walkout by JAC leaders.

Of the four JAC leaders allowed in the meeting, Ashwathama Reddy alleged the government had no intention to resolve the issue.

"The JAC wanted a discussion on the TSRTC merger as well, which is impossible and is not listed in the 21 demands," Sunil Sharma said. "When we told them this, they

huddled outside and then said they were not ready for further discussion," Mr Sharma said.

The JAC is planning a "Chalo Collectorate" on Monday and a large-scale public meeting for RTC employees, political leaders and the general public in Saroornagar on October 30. In several depots, RTC employees and their families sat on hunger strike on Saturday.

On Diwali, teacher A. Narsi Reddy, an MLC, will sit on hunger strike from 9 am at Dharna Chowk near Indira Park as well, demonstrating the support of the teachers' unions.

KCR thanks Huzurnagar with ₹100cr

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 26

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao on Saturday gave a ₹100-crore gift hamper ahead of Diwali to thank voters in Huzurnagar for handing out a thumping victory for the party in the byelection.

Mr Rao made the announcement at a public meeting at Huzurnagar after TRS candidate S. Saidi Reddy won the byelection by 43,358 votes against the Congress'

Nallamada Padmavathi Reddy. He had to cancel a campaign visit due to the rain.

He kept off politics, saying he would not speak much about Opposition leaders and their politics as it was a happiest occasion.

Mr Rao announced ₹25 crore for the Huzurnagar municipality and ₹15 crore for Nereducharla. Each of the 134 gram panchayats in the constituency is to get ₹20 lakh, and the seven mandal headquarters ₹30

lakh. An outer ring road would be built for Huzurnagar and tank bund for the lake in the town.

He said the constituency would be declared a revenue division and a subordinate court would be set up in Huzurnagar after consultation of the Chief Justice. For the consider-

able tribal population, Mr Rao promised a residential school and a Banjara Bhavan.

He said about 600 lift irrigation schemes which being controlled by the Irrigation Development Corporation, societies, individuals and NGOs will be taken under the direct control of the government to relieve the burden on the farmers. The government would supply water from the Krishna and Godavari water as soon as possible.

DHANTERAS GOLD SALES DROP 50%

Gold sales have halved in Hyderabad on Dhanteras due to high prices and economic uncertainty in the country. Across India, sales dipped by 30%.

REPORT ON PAGE 3

DIWALI | BLUES

Retailers say people have curtailed spending, wholesalers are not offering them credit

Festive season fails to bring cheer to traders

ADITYA CHUNDURU | DC
HYDERABAD, OCT. 26

In Kushal Market, a traditional marketplace in Koti, men who have for decades sold clothes worth lakhs, this year lie in wait for customers. But on the day before Diwali, most were glued to YouTube on their mobiles, hunting for watchable videos. There was no 'festive rush' here. It was the same story

across the twin cities, in Badichowdi, Abids and General Bazaar. Traders, both retail and wholesale, complained that business was slow for months. September, with the major festivals of Diwali and Dasara, was similarly disappointing. Most activity in these markets was on the roads: customers perused the flowers and earthen lamps, but ignored the shops behind.

Badri, owner of an apparel shop in General Bazaar, said, "Dasara is usually the busiest time in Telangana, more so than Diwali. However, business was slow even then. We had expected this. We didn't think the market would pick up." Other traders agreed. "It has been slow for nearly two years. Dasara was disappointing. We didn't expect sales for Diwali," said a readymade

garments' retailer near Gokul Chat in Koti.

Akshath, who owns a saree and dress shop in Badichowdi, claimed his business had dropped 40 per cent from two years ago. The market had not been the same since demonetisation and the GST implementation, both within a span of six months. "Customers are fewer," he said. "I don't have liquidity for my busi-

ness anymore. It is difficult for retailers like me to get credit from wholesalers. They don't trust us. They ask us to pay for supplied goods as soon we can, often in less than two months." Earlier, wholesalers gave them more leeway, he added. "Today, I only take goods that I am sure of selling. I am not taking risks," he said.

Akshath added that factors like the TSRTC

employees' strike and the Metro construction in Badichowdi had also affected his business.

A hosliery shop owner in Abids claimed he had trouble getting regular supply. "The stocks aren't selling as quickly as they used to. Wholesalers are not supplying goods, for they know we cannot sell it in time for our payment schedules," he said.

Pawan Bansal, president of the Garments Manufacturers and Wholesalers Association (IS), admitted that wholesalers had made credit lines tighter. This was because of the reduced buying power of customers. "Earlier, when we supplied to a retailer, we were sure of getting our money within 60-75 days," he said.

Page 5: Traders face trust deficit

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FREDERICK THE GREAT

MAX BORN

Diplomacy without armaments is like music without instruments

I am now convinced that theoretical physics is actually philosophy

LETTERS

SHINE TRAGEDY

The authorities wake up only after a tragedy and lives are lost. The Shine hospital case is the latest. The boat tragedy in Godavari was another recent incident. Earlier when City Light hotel collapsed the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation swung into action and notices were served on many dilapidated buildings. After the fire accident in a coaching centre in Surat the authorities sealed around 300 coaching centres in the twin cities. In most of the cases, owners are arrested or penalised and a few officials down the line are made scapegoats. But the higher officials relaxing in air-conditioned chambers, who are supposed to implement the guidelines on the ground, go scot-free.

Varghese George
Secunderabad

NEW REVENUE ACT

During general elections, Chief Minister K. Chandrababu Naidu has announced that soon he will bring the New Revenue Act to fix malpractices and corruption in MRO offices and do justice to the pattadars who are victimised. It's more than 10 months now but the new Act has not yet been taken up. The delay is making land-grabbers flourish at the cost of pattadars with all support from corrupt MRO offices and the sleeping RR district collector office which has gone into hibernation. I request Mr Rao to bring the promised new Act at the earliest.

R.S. Murty
Hyderabad

HUZURNAGAR LESSON

The result of the Huzurnagar byelection has a lesson for the Congress and the BJP. The TRS is difficult to be defeated even with high-pitch criticism of the dictatorial attitude of Chief Minister K. Chandrababu Naidu. The Opposition should focus on evolving manifestoes with focus on voters to attract them instead of banking on anti-incumbency.

M.V. Nagavender Rao
Hyderabad

APT CARTOON

Mr Subhani's cartoon (DC, Oct. 19) correctly depicts the state of the banking system in India. Though the present dispensation at the Centre has been in power for more than five years, it still blames the UPA government for every malady in the financial sector, ignoring the ill effects of demonetisation on the economy. A spurt in deposits (due to demonetisation) had shrunk the profitability of banks as lending cannot increase overnight. This directly affects the profitability of banks and in turn their shareholders. Instead of strengthening the loan recovery system with provision for punitive action against defaulters, we are writing off bad loans to project a better balance sheet and this will send wrong signals to honest borrowers. Depositors also feel unsafe.

S. Nageswara Rao
Hyderabad

Every Monday the best letter of the week wins ₹300. Email your letters to info@deccanmail.com, editor@deccanmail.com, or fax them to 27805256. You can also send them to Editor, Deccan Chronicle, 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad-500 003.



Krishna Shastri Devulapalli
Off the beaten track

No humour please, we're Indians using Facebook

Who doesn't love food. Or who doesn't have clueless friends, for that matter. A well-meaning buddy of mine, not a particularly bright one, though, recently included me on this Facebook group, 'WineDineMine', dedicated to all things food, liquor and, I guess, are. Only thing, it was meant exclusively for those who live north of the Vindhyas. And I live in a quaint little town called Madras, which is 50km or so north of the historic Chinese city of Mahabalipuram, India's hub for plugging.

Well, anyway, every day, I got into checking out things like "Can you recommend a good place for baba ganoush in Gurgaon?" to "I need a caterer for 50 people asap to serve authentic Indian-Chinese food for Japanese tourists". It was an active, buzzing site. Made my day a bit lighter. And hungrier.

Recently there was this post: "Hi, Friends... wanted master cook who can prepare Mughlai dishes for my restaurant in Patna. Anyone interested, please respond."

Two days later, when I checked out of curiosity, there was not a single response. I felt bad for the gentleman, one Mr A. Gupta, and decided to respond. I had been part of this group for a year and hadn't engaged even once. I thought maybe it was time for me to step up to the plate. (You saw what I did there? I said 'plate' and this is a food-related group. LOL!)

"I am interested," I said.
"Please give details," he said.
Me: What details?
AG: Your bio, etc.

Me: I write non-best-selling books, like R.D. Burman songs and long walks on the beach when the Velankanni festival is over and done with. I have good hair but I dye it. What about you?

AG: Thanks for those details. But could you please tell me about your catering/cooking experience?

Me: Sure. I could do that. I don't want to have any secrets from you.

AG: Okay... er... I'm waiting.

Me: Well, I cater to middlebrow readers. The Bengali and Malu bigwigs of Delhi publishing won't give me time of day. As for cooking, I'm quite good at chopping onions really fine. I do it whenever our cook doesn't turn up.

AG: You own a restaurant?

Me: Why would you think that?

AG: You just said your cook...

Me: I'm talking of Devaki, the lady who makes our grub at home...

AG: Can she cook Mughlai?

Me: No. She is from the deep south. She can make a killer Gobi Manchurian, though.

AG: Which part of Patna are you from?

Me: I'm from Besant Nagar, Chennai. I just told you about the Velankanni festival. ROFL! Why would you think I'm from Patna?

AG: Then why are you talking to me at all? I don't see how any of this has to do with my requirements...

Me: But you said "Anyone interested, please respond".

AG: So you ARE interested?

Me: Of course I am. Why would I respond otherwise? I'm not mad or jobless, you know.

AG: Sorry... I am confused. Are you a Mughlai cook? Or is this Devaki person one? And you don't mind moving here?

Me: Neither. I just told you I'm a writer. And why would Devaki move to Patna? Don't get ideas, okay?

AG: Then why the f@#k are you having this conversation, you moron?

Me: Hey, listen, Mr Gupta. No need to be rude, okay. I was interested. So I contacted you.

AG: Saalaa... whathef@%&k are you interested in? Tell me, man!

Me: I'm interested that you are in Patna and want a Mughlai cook. I want the backstory. What happened to your previous cook? Did you have a previous cook at all? Or is this your first brush with Mughlai? When did you start your business? What are the challenges of making Mughlai food in Patna? Do you think you are better off setting up a Chinese restaurant? Are you lonely? Are you a dog person or a cat person? Who do you think suited Dev Anand better? Kishore Kumar or Rafi? That kind of thing.

AG: Give me your phone number. I'll call and explain in detail, you \$#% ...

Me: Bfn. Someone is at the door.

I tell you, people can be so rude.

Krishna Shastri Devulapalli is a humour writer, novelist, columnist and screenwriter

Editor's Note — On Sundays the Deccan Chronicle will no longer carry its two edits. Instead, we will carry a regular feature by selected contributors. This will relate to issues of the day, or just slices of life. Hope it enriches your Sunday reading experience.

Exit Nadda, enter Baluni?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to opt for a Cabinet reshuffle soon. The BJP is set to have J.P. Nadda as its full-time party chief before the year-end. In the process some leaders from the party are set to join the government while there is a possibility of few leaving the government and opting for party work. Mr Nadda, for instance, is himself a Union minister. Anil Baluni, a young Rajya Sabha member and BJP functionary from Uttarakhand, is likely to join the government as he is seen as a challenger to Uttarakhand chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat.

INC under I-T scanner

The Congress recently survived a major scare. It so happened that income tax department officials reportedly came knocking asking some 24 Akbar Road staffers some

Priyanka to power Udaipur awakening

searching questions regarding financial transactions. While everyone in the party is tightlipped about it, some see the income tax department investigations as "routine" and a part of the ongoing investigation against the chief accountant of the party.

Congress regrouping

Buoyed by good performances in Haryana and Maharashtra, the Congress leadership is toying with the idea of holding an All India Congress Committee session in Udaipur in Rajasthan. Congress chief Sonia Gandhi has recently constituted a group to sharpen the party's ideological stance on key socio-economic and political issues. Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is part of the panel and reportedly giving out some substantial and



By WAQYANAWIS

practical suggestions. Party insiders say January 2020 may see the

Rajasthan unit of the party hosting the jamboree.

Kanda is in luck!

Forty seems to be a lucky number for Gopal Goyal Kanda, a controversial Independent MLA from Haryana, accused of rape leading to the death of an airhostess. In 2009, Mr Kanda had teamed up with the Congress when the Bhopender Singh Hooda-led Congress had hurriedly merged Haryana Janhit Congress to have another term in office. Mr Kanda was made minister till controversy had him arrested and removed from the ministerial chamber.

Interestingly, the Congress tally in 2009 had come down from 67 seats while the INLD had jumped from nine seats to 31 in 2009. The mandate was

clearly against the Congress, but they still managed to form government with the support of Independents and the Haryana Janhit Congress.

'Protectionist' Pawar

Would Sharad Pawar contemplate a merger of his Nationalist Congress Party with the Congress Party? Apparently, Rahul Gandhi and Mr Pawar are serious about coming together and Sushil Kumar Shinde is working out the details. But there is a catch. Mr Pawar and the NCP are willing to consider a political reunion but are unwilling to transfer assets such as buildings, properties and so on that are carefully guarded by a variety of trusts. This hiccup is leading to a yawning trust deficit...

The writer is a keen observer of the goings-on in backrooms of power



Rare honour

London's Natural History Museum said a minute species of beetle is being named *Nelloptodes gretae* in honor of climate activist Greta Thunberg



As bishop of this diocese, I ask forgiveness from those who have been offended by this — Pope Francis on Amazon statue theft

BRIEF

Death toll climbs to 42 in Iraq

Baghdad: The death toll from protests in Iraq has climbed to 42 after a senior government official in the country's south said 12 protesters died in a fire they started while storming the office of powerful militia during a rally there a day earlier. The anti-government protests erupted after leaderless, spontaneous revolts were violently quelled earlier this month in the war-torn country. The southern official says that in Diwaniyah town, bodies were being removed from a building belonging to a powerful militia where the protesters set it on fire. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't allowed to talk to reporters. In Baghdad, protesters gathered again in the central Tahrir Square but there were no immediate reports of violence.

Fire danger for millions in CA

San Francisco: Millions of Californians were preparing to live in the dark again as the state's largest utility warned it may cut power for the third time in as many weeks because of looming strong winds and high fire danger. Pacific Gas & Electric will decide whether to blackout 8,50,000 homes and businesses in 36 counties for 48 hours or longer throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, wine country and Sierra foothills. The two previous shutdowns were done amid concern that gusty winds could foul or knock down power lines and spark devastating wildfires. Weather forecasts called for record strong winds to lash much of the region over the weekend, with some gusts hitting 85 mph. PG&E's warning came as firefighters battled flames in Northern and Southern California. A blaze destroyed at least six homes in the Santa Clarita area near Los Angeles and prompted evacuation orders for up to 50,000 residents, although some were allowed back home after Santa Ana winds began to ease.

DIWALI IN U.S. IS RELIGIOUS LIBERTY: DON

Washington, Oct. 26: Sending Diwali greetings to Hindus, Jains, Sikhs and Buddhists, US President Donald Trump said that the observance of the festival of lights throughout America is an important reminder of the significance of the country's core tenets — religious liberty. A day earlier, Trump celebrated Diwali in the Oval Office with a small group of Indian-Americans. "The observance of Diwali throughout America is an important reminder of the significance of one of our Nation's core tenets — religious liberty," Trump said in a statement ahead of the Diwali celebrations in India, the US and across the world. "My Administration will continue to defend the rights enshrined in our Constitution that enable people of all faiths to worship according to their beliefs and conscience," he said. "As Diwali commences, Melania and I wish those observing the Festival of Lights a blessed and happy celebration," said the US President. For many Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, and Buddhists in the US and around the globe, this sacred period is an opportunity to commemorate the victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance, he said. "Throughout this holy time, members of these faiths engage in prayer, light diyas and lanterns, and partake in traditional feasts and other festivities with friends and family," he said.



As many as a million Chileans protested peacefully in Santiago in the biggest rallies yet since violence broke out a week ago over entrenched inequality in Chile. — AFP

Deja vu for Indians

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC HYDERABAD, OCT. 26

When Chileans woke up on October 20, they were under their first curfew since 1987. The cascading effect began on October 4, when the government announced a hike in the subway and bus fares. This echoes happenings in India, where people are vociferous about sky-rocketing prices and the curbing of civil rights. Residents like Pablo Abufom of the Solidarity Movement recount to *Deccan Chronicle*: "High school students began organizing what they called a 'massive evasion',

collective fare-dodging in subway stations. From October 14th, more joined their protest, and by the 17th the subway service was suspended several times during the day. By the 18th, almost the entire subway network — 136 stations, transporting approximately 2.6 million people daily — were suspended. Masses were spontaneously protesting in the streets of the capital Santiago and several stations set ablaze. The president declared a state of emergency in the city, restricting some civil liberties like the rights to freely move and assemble,



Pablo Abufom

and military units were deployed. By the 19th, protests spread to other cities, to which the government responded with more Emergency declarations." What are the civil soci-

eties reacting to this matter? Several Human Rights organizations (National Human Rights Institute, Instituto Nacional de Derechos Humanos, INDH) are offering daily reports of people injured, killed, and detained. As of Thursday, the Association of Physicians of Universidad de Chile have confirmed 24 people killed (13 shot by armed forces), 39 severely wounded by gunshots, 23 severely wounded (hit by cars), 62 severe eye trauma, and 5,845 arrested since October 18th (the night Emergency was declared). Forces comprised 19,461

police and military members deployed throughout Chile, as per the Ministry of Interior, National Association of Physicians, and the National Attorney Office. Pablo Abufom, an activist for a new pension system, says: "The government's response has been twofold: Emergency (including deployment of military and curfew, which resulted in killings and illegal arrests) and an attempted 'National Agreement' with conservative and centrist political parties." Despite these efforts, people in several cities, especially Santiago, have

defied curfew and have implicitly rejected the agreement by calling for new demonstrations and continuing to march. Today a new march was called by the National Confederation of Trade Unions. Today, people were mulling gathering downtown for a new march. It was expected to be a massive demonstration today. There has also been a call for a constituent assembly, and several neighbourhoods in Chilean capital Santiago and other cities are establishing neighbourhood assemblies to organize their safety, protests, and supplies.

US troops going to Syria oil fields

Brussels, Oct. 26: The United States will send armored vehicles and combat troops into eastern Syria to keep oil fields from potentially falling into the hands of Islamic State militants, US defense secretary Mark Esper said. It was the latest sign that extracting the military from Syria is uncertain and complicated. Though Trump repeatedly says he is pulling out of Syria, the reality on the ground is different. Adding armoured reinforcements in the oil-producing area of Syria could mean sending several hundred US troops, even as a similar number are being withdrawn from a separate mission closer to the border with Turkey. Esper described the added force as "mechanised," which means it likely will include armoured vehicles such



Mark Esper

as Bradley armoured infantry carriers and possibly tanks. This would introduce a new dimension to the US military presence, which largely has been comprised of special operations forces not equipped with tanks or other armoured vehicles. Meanwhile, Russia accused the US of "international banditry" after Washington announced its intention to protect Syria's oil fields which are controlled by Kurdish forces. — AP

Pentagon snubs Amazon, gives Microsoft \$10b deal

San Francisco, Oct. 26: The Pentagon awarded Microsoft a \$10 billion cloud computing contract, snubbing early front-runner Amazon, whose competitive bid drew criticism from President Donald Trump. Bidding for the huge project, known as Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure, or Jedi, pitted leading tech titans Microsoft, Amazon, Oracle and IBM against one another. The giant contract has attracted more attention than most, sparked by speculation early in the process that Amazon would be the sole winner of the deal. Oracle and IBM pushed back with their own bids and also formally protested the bidding process last year. Oracle later challenged the process in federal court, but lost. Trump waded into the fray in July, saying the



administration would "take a very long look" at the process. Trump has frequently expressed his ire for Amazon and founder Jeff Bezos, who also owns the *Washington Post* newspaper

will store and process vast amounts of classified data, allowing the US military to use AI to speed up its war planning and fighting capabilities. A cloud strategy document unveiled by the defense department last year called for replacing the military's "disjointed and stove-piped information systems" with a commercial cloud service "that will empower the warfighter with data and is critical to maintaining our military's technological advantage." The Pentagon emphasized that the process was fair and followed procurement guidelines. It noted that over the past two years, it has awarded more than \$11 billion in ten separate cloud-computing contracts, and said the Jedi award "continues our strategy of a multi-vendor, multi-cloud environment." — AP

HUMAN | SMUGGLING ■ Migrants gamble their lives as safer routes are closed

Ex-refugee recounts dangers of trafficking

London, Oct. 26: Ahmad Al-Rashid knows what it was like for the 39 people who were found dead in the back of a truck in southeastern England this week. He's been there. The 29-year-old Syrian refugee found himself gasping for breath inside a refrigerated shipping container with a group of migrants and a load of frozen chicken when a planned trip across the English Channel turned into hours of terror in 2015. The truck hadn't even left the French port of Calais when someone

heard the cries of the desperate migrants and opened the doors. "They don't see you as a human being. They see you as a commodity, as money, as an object, and this is it," he said. "Never, ever, trust them. I mean, I had to put my faith in them and I regretted it." This week's tragedy brought the terror of his own experiences flooding back, he said. Rashid told his story to *The Associated Press* so people understand that migrants and refugees gamble their lives in



Ahmad Al-Rashid

sealed trucks and leaky rafts because safer routes have been closed to them. They take risks because, he said, they feel like they have no other choice. "No one puts their life in danger for no reason,"

Rashid said. "People do this out of desperation." VIETNAMESE AMONG VICTIMS IN UK TRUCK Police investigating the deaths of 39 people in a truck near London said they had arrested three more suspects on suspicion of human trafficking amid signs that some of the dead may be Vietnamese. As forensic experts began the process of identifying the victims, the Vietnamese embassy in London said families from the southeast Asian coun-

try had got in touch about missing relatives. There were growing concerns at least 10 of the victims could have been from Vietnam. Hoa Nghiem from Human Rights Space, a civic network based in Vietnam, said that Pham Thi Tra My, 26, had sent a text message to her mother saying she could not breathe at about the time the truck container was en route from Belgium to Britain. Beijing has said the nationalities of victims had not yet been confirmed. — AP

NAWAZ SHARIF SUFFERS ANGINA ATTACK

Lahore, Oct. 26: Former Pakistan prime minister Nawaz Sharif on Saturday suffered angina pain while undergoing treatment at a Lahore hospital, according to a media report.

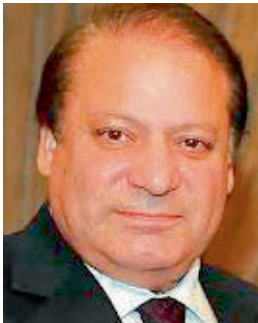
Angina is a type of chest pain caused by reduced blood flow to the heart. Sharif suffered angina pain in the morning while undergoing treatment at the hospital, *Dawn News* reported quoting Services Institute of Medical Sciences Principal Dr Mahmood Ayaz.

Ayaz refuted reports in a section of media that the 69-year-old Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader has suffered a heart attack.

Earlier in the day, Sharif's lawyer Khawaja Haris claimed that the former premier had suffered a "minor heart attack" last night and that his "life is in danger".

Ayaz said Sharif's platelet count is now rising. He is administered around 16 injections of intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIg) every day. The Lahore High Court granted bail to Sharif, who is undergoing treatment, after being diagnosed with an acute immune disorder, which reduced his blood platelet count to dangerous levels.

The three-time premier was in Kot Lakhpat jail but early this month was sent to the custody of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), which is probing the Sharif family in the Chaudhry Sugar Mills case. Sharif's daughter Maryam Nawaz, 45, is also under treatment at the same hospital. — PTI



Nawaz Sharif

RELEASE MUELLER DOCUMENT: JUDGE

Washington, Oct. 26: A US judge validated the legality of the Democratic-led impeachment inquiry against President Donald Trump and ordered his administration to hand over an unredacted copy of former special counsel Robert Mueller's report detailing Russian

meddling in the 2016 election. US district judge Beryl Howell, handing a major victory to the House of Representatives, undercut an argument that Donald Trump's fellow Republicans have made in attacking the impeachment inquiry. — Reuters

SUDOKU puzzle grid with clues and solutions. Includes 'WHAT TO DO' instructions and 'YESTERDAY'S ANSWER' for a previous puzzle.



