

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

WHY INDIA LAGS IN FIGHTING HUNGER
 BY HARSH MANDER
 PAGE 10

BUSINESS AS USUAL



MAHARASHTRA GOVT FORMATION

Sena drives a hard bargain, tells BJP:
 Rotate CM post, give it to us in writing

Both sides call on Governor separately, formal talks after BJP elects its leader

SHUBHANGI KHAPRE & VISHWAS WAGHMODE
 MUMBAI, OCTOBER 28

MAHARASHTRA CHIEF Minister Devendra Fadnavis and senior Shiv Sena leader and Minister for Transport Diwakar Raote Monday called on Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari separately to apprise him of the po-

litical developments in the state. With Sena stuck on its demand for a 50:50 power sharing formula and the Chief Minister's post, the alliance partners are yet to formally stake claim to form the government. In the 288-strong Legislative Assembly, re-sults for which were declared on October 24, BJP won 105 seats and its ally Shiv Sena 56. Addressing the media after



Fadnavis with Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari, Monday. PTI

meeting the Governor, Raote said, "The Shiv Sena will not accept anything less than the 50:50 formula — this includes a two-and-a-half year tenure through rotation for the post of CM. It wants everything in writing from the BJP." The BJP, on its part, is willing to offer the post of Deputy Chief Minister and the Revenue portfolio, an important ministry that handles all land-related issues in the state. It has been four days since the results, but the pre-poll alliance

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



At the site where Baghdadi was killed near the village of Barisha, in Idlib province, Syria, Sunday. AP

Day after Baghdadi death, his likely successor killed in American airstrike

BEN HUBBARD & KARAM SHOUMALI
 BEIRUT, OCTOBER 28

A DAY after an American raid killed Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, a separate attack killed the man who was considered his likely successor, according to the leader of a Syrian Kurdish militia and a Syrian activist.

The spokesman, known by his nom de guerre Abu Hassan al-Muhajir, was being smuggled across northern Syria in the back of an oil tanker truck when it was hit by what witnesses said they believed to be an American airstrike, according to Hussein Nasser, an activist who said he had

Baghdadi detonated suicide vest

spoken to people at the scene. Mazlum Abdi, the head of a Kurdish-led militia that fought the Islamic State with the United States, wrote on Twitter that Muhajir had been killed Sunday in an operation coordinated between his forces and the United States. American officials could not immediately confirm reports that Muhajir had been killed.

The spokesman issued his last statement in March, calling for retaliation for the killing of 50 Muslims in New Zealand by a white supremacist.

Little is known about him, including his real name and

EXPLAINED

Big boost in war against terror

THE KILLING of Baghdadi, and his likely successor, is a major boost for Donald Trump, whose pullback of US troops from north-east Syria raised a storm of criticism. It also comes as a relief for anti-terror operations globally — in India, the IS has not emerged as a key threat. Apart from large-scale attacks, Baghdadi's leadership supported "lone wolf" acts of violence that made it harder for law enforcement to prevent.

INSIDE



PAGES 13, 14

Education policy dilutes assurance on RTE up to Class 12

RITIKA CHOPRA
 NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28

THE HRD Ministry has tweaked the draft National Education Policy (NEP) to dilute the provision on extending the Right to Education (RTE) Act up to Class 12 and also include three years of early childhood education.

The final policy document states that the RTE Act "will be considered for extension" — as opposed to the draft, which assured extension.

The draft NEP was submitted by a group of experts, led by former ISRO chief K Kasturirangan, to the HRD Ministry in June, and uploaded online for public feedback. The government received 2 lakh suggestions and is set to seek the Cabinet's approval for the final 50-page policy.

The final NEP has also tweaked the suggestion in the draft policy on starting a National Tutors Programme (NTP) and Remedial Instructional Aides Programme (RIAP). Both were meant to strengthen basic reading and mathematics skills.

Under NTP, the best performers in each school would have been roped in for up to five hours a week as tutors during school hours for fellow students who need help. RIAP was a 10-year project to draw instructors — especially women — from local communities to help students who have fallen behind and bring them back into the fold.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EU MPs head to J&K today, angry Oppn tells Govt you didn't allow us

At lunch hosted by NSA, leaders of PDP, Cong & BJP meet lawmakers

SHUBHAJIT ROY, MANOJ CG & BASHAARAT MASOOD
 NEW DELHI, SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 28

WEEKS AFTER a US Congressman was denied permission by the government to visit Jammu and Kashmir, a delegation of 27 members of the European Parliament is set to visit the state Tuesday.

Members of European Parliament (MEPs) met Prime Minister Narendra Modi at his residence Monday, and were briefed separately by National Security Advisor Ajit Doval.

The Prime Minister, while welcoming the delegation to India, "expressed the hope that they have a fruitful visit to various parts of the country, including to Jammu and Kashmir," a statement by the Prime Minister's Office said.

"Their visit to Jammu and Kashmir should give the delegation a better understanding of the cultural and religious diversity of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with a delegation of EU MPs in New Delhi, Monday. Reuters

Brexit to anti-immigrants to Crimea: 22 of 27 lawmakers represent Europe's Right

SHUBHAJIT ROY
 NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28

OF THE 27 members of the European Parliament visiting India, at least 22 belong to right-wing or far-right parties in UK, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia. They are broadly anti-immigration in Italy, in favour of Brexit in the UK, and against migration and belong to Marine Le Pen's party

in France, and the far-right and anti-establishment Alternative für Deutschland in Germany.

These include:

■ A lawmaker from Poland who was sacked from the EU Vice-President's post for making a slur with Nazi connotations.

■ A lawmaker from France who had accompanied Russian officials and had supported the Russian annexation of Crimea. He was also accused of turning a blind eye to human rights viola-

tions in Azerbaijan, and was perceived as an apologist for the ruling Aliyev regime.

■ A lawmaker from Poland who tweeted with the hashtag "#WhyNotSvastika" — a reference to the Nazi-associated swastika symbol — joining a protest against Soviet-themed merchandise available on Amazon.

■ Another lawmaker who, in a tweet, wondered "why there

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

WORLD



EU NATIONS AGREE TO DELAY BREXIT UNTIL JANUARY 31
 PAGE 13

CITY



POLLUTION LOWER THAN LAST DIWALI, BUT AIR STILL POOR
 PAGE 4

In Andhra, shortage of sand stalls construction, 3 suicides in a month

REENIVAS JANYALA
 HYDERABAD, OCTOBER 28

THE DELAYED rollout of a new sand-mining policy by the YSRCP government has led to nearly 30 lakh workers in the construction industry losing out on employment over the last 4-5 months with an acute shortage of sand stalling most building activity.

The crisis was brought into sharp focus Monday when a video surfaced of a plumber, moments before he committed suicide. Police said the video was shot by Polepalli Venkatesh, who used to work at building sites and hanged himself at his home in Guntur's Gorantla village on October 2.

In the video, which was found on Venkatesh's phone Sunday by his wife who submitted it to po-



Plumber recorded a video before suicide

lice, he said he was unable to find work for the last 3-4 months and was in severe financial difficulty. "I am totally ashamed of myself because I am unable to take care of my family due to financial problems... for several months, there is no work, there is no income. My financial condition is very precar-

ious," he said in the video. This is the third suicide this month in the YSRCP-ruled state that the victims' families are blaming on loss of livelihood due to sand shortage.

On October 25, C Nagabrahmaj, a 34-year-old mason of Sangam Jagarlamudi village in Guntur, hanged himself at his home. On the same day, P Venkat Rao, a construction worker, hanged himself in Guntur town citing financial difficulty due to lack of work.

Immediately after coming to power in May 2019, Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy cancelled the sand policy of the previous TDP government while accusing it of aiding the sand mafia. However, his government did not announce a new policy

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

CRAJA MOHAN

"AMERICAN LOBBY!" was Professor Stephen Philip Cohen's exclamation when I ran into him at the India International Centre in Delhi in the autumn of 2005 just a few weeks after India and the United States unveiled their civil nuclear initiative. His finger was pointed at me. His tone was one of mock accusation but his eyes were twinkling.

Steve, who passed away Sunday at age 83, was remarkable on the utterly surprising support he found in a significant section of the Indian strategic

community for improved relations with the United States, especially from those, including me, who were locked with him in fierce arguments about nuclear issues in the past. After all, the historic nuclear accord radically changed the Indian discourse on the United States.

For Steve and a whole generation of American scholars of India, the idea that Delhi and Washington could be friends, let alone partners, was an incredible one. What is taken for granted today was an impossible proposition less than two decades ago. Steve, an expert on South Asia, and his cohort saw

ties between India and the United States deteriorate rapidly from the late 1960s and hit a nadir in the 1970s. And the brief efforts to revive them by Indira Gandhi, and later by Rajiv Gandhi in the 1980s, seemed impossible to sustain.

Amid India's intellectual xenophobia of those years, any American scholar like Steve was suspected to be a "CIA Agent". For the American academics wanting to engage Delhi, "anti-Americanism" appeared to be part of the Indian elite's DNA. Worse still, that generation's pessimism about India's long-term prospects became stronger



STEPHEN P COHEN
1936-2019

than ever before.

As official India turned hostile to American academics and denied them visas since the 1970s, China was embracing America. Within a few years, the once flourishing India studies departments in US universities began to fold and Chinese studies began to gain rapid traction. Steve held his faith during the hard "India winter" that gripped American academia.

Steve's small centre at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, became the oasis for strategic studies on India and South Asia. Steve turned out a steady trickle of South Asian

scholarship and among his students were Sumit Ganguly and Kanti Bajpai, now established academics in their own right. Beyond his enclave in Illinois, Steve was ready to assist and advise anyone, anywhere, interested in studying India and South Asia.

When the Institute of South Asian Studies, which I now head, was set in up in the National University of Singapore a decade-and-a-half ago, Prof Stephen Cohen was among the first it turned to. After he moved to Brookings Institution in Washington DC, his office and home were open to all comers

from the Subcontinent. At lunch on Tuesday afternoons, he would hold court at the Brookings Canteen, ready to entertain scholars from and on South Asia.

Through his long academic career, Steve struggled to disabuse Indians of their many conspiracy theories about American policy-making. He referred to his brief stint in the US State Department to argue that it was chaos and ignorance rather than a grand design that often drove US policies towards India. Steve also strove to help American officials and scholars to look

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2