

AT A GLANCE

Tremor felt in Hooghly

KOLKATA: An earthquake of moderate intensity measuring 5 on the Richter scale hit West Bengal's Hooghly district this evening, the meteorological department said. No damage to property or casualty was reported, the police said. The earthquake that occurred at 6.33 pm had its epicentre at a depth of 10 km in the Hooghly district, around 40 km from here, the Met department said.

Chidambaram moves court against CBI

NEW DELHI: Former Union minister P Chidambaram today moved a Delhi court alleging that the CBI is leaking parts of the charge sheet in the Aircel-Maxis case to the media "to sensationalise" the issue and "make mockery of judicial process". Special Judge OP Saini issued notice to the agency and sought its response by October 8. In the application, moved by advocates P K Dubey and Arshdeep Singh, the Congress leader alleged that the CBI was not interested in a fair trial in the court of law and only wanted trial by the media.

FB bans Myanmar military chief

YANGON: Facebook has said that it is banning Myanmar's powerful military chief and 19 other individuals and organisations from its site to prevent the spread of hate and misinformation. The social media giant was heavily criticized for permitting itself to be used to inflame ethnic and religious conflict in the country, particularly against minority Rohingya Muslims. It has been accused of being lax in fighting online misinformation and manipulation in many countries, but Myanmar is one where it has been most closely tied to deadly violence.

Chandrayaan-2 to be launched in Jan

NEW DELHI: Chandrayaan-2, ISRO's "most complex mission", is scheduled to be launched in January next year after experts suggested changes to avert failure, its chief K Sivan said today. Addressing a press conference, he said the project was reviewed by eminent experts who suggested some changes in entering the orbit and in landing the rover. These were also the steps taken by China while executing its moon mission programme, Sivan said.

Police raid homes of Left-wing activists, lawyers in several states, arrest at least 3 for suspected Maoist links

PUNE, AUG 28 /-/- Pune Police today raided the homes of prominent Left-wing activists in several states and arrested at least three of them for suspected Maoist links, sparking a chorus of outrage from human rights defenders. The raids were carried out as part of a probe into the violence between Dalits and the upper caste

reshwara at Koregaon-Bhima village near Pune after an event called Elgar Parishad, or conclave, on December 31 last year. The arrests are "a dangerous sign of a government that fears it is losing its mandate and is falling into panic. That lawyers, poets, writers, Dalit rights activists and intellectuals are being arrested on ludicrous charges," award-winning author Arundhati Roy told newsmen agency PTI. Near simultaneous searches were carried out at the residences of prominent Telugu poet Varavara Rao in Hyderabad; activist Viron Gonzales and Arun Ferreira in Mumbai; trade union activist Sudha



Social activist Sten Suami (R) talking to mediapersons after Maharashtra police team raided her residence in Namkum near Ranchi.

Bhardwaj in Faridabad and Chhattisgarh; and civil liberties activist Gautam Navalkha in New Delhi, a senior police official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. Subsequently, Rao and Bhardwaj were arrested, the official said. In New Delhi, Navalkha was also arrested in New Delhi but the Delhi High Court ordered police not to take him out of the national capital at least until Wednesday. The High Court was hearing a habeas corpus petition filed on behalf of Navalkha by his advocate Warisha Farasat after he was picked up from his Delhi home this afternoon by the Maharashtra police. According to unconfirmed reports, others whose residences were raided are Susan Abraham, Krasanthi Tekula, Father Stan Swamy in Ranchi and Anand Telumbde in Goa. Koregaon-Bhima occupies a central place in Dalit history - it witnessed a major battle in which the Peshwa rulers were defeated by the British

army, comprising a large number of Dalit soldiers, on January 1, 1818. Every year the anniversary of the battle is marked by thousands of Dalits assembling in Pune and marching to Koregaon-Bhima to war memorial. Police say the speeches made at the conclave on December 31, a day before the 200th anniversary of the battle, were one of the triggers for the violence. Sunday's events mirrored simultaneous raids conducted in June when five activists were arrested in connection with the Koregaon-Bhima violence. Rao's name had figured in a letter which the Pune police claimed to have

seized during searches at the premises of one of the five people arrested in June in connection with the Elgar Parishad. The five were accused of having close Maoist links, according to an FIR registered at the Vishrambaug Police Station after the event. In June, Dalit activist Sudhir

However, outgoing Joint Commissioner of Pune Police Ravindra Kadam, had said on August 2 that no Maoist links were found in the Koregaon-Bhima violence. He had, however, said an anti-fascist front, formed by the Maoists to oppose the policies of the current government, was behind the Elgar Parishad. Today's arrests were condemned widely. "Fascist fangs are now openly bared," tweeted lawyer Prashant Bhushan. "It is a clear declaration of emergency. They are going after anyone who has spoken against the government on rights issues. They are against any dissent," Bhushan said. Noted historian Ramachandra Guha called the action "absolutely chilling" and demanded the intervention of the Supreme Court to stop this "persecution and harassment" of independent voices. "Sudha Bharadwaj is as far from violence and illegality," tweeted Guha.(PTI)

Voters have right to know criminal antecedents of candidates: SC

NEW DELHI, AUG 28 /-/- The Supreme Court today said the voters have a right to know the antecedents of candidates and the Election Commission should be asked to direct political parties to ensure that persons, facing criminal charges, do not contest by ticket using their political symbols. D Y Chandrachud and Indu

Election Commission to the political parties. "They (people facing criminal charges) can contest elections, but they will not contest on the party ticket because he has this kind of stigma," the bench said. Referring to the concept of presumption of innocence until a person is proven guilty, Venugopal said

Mamata mocks at BJP over 'Atal Kalash Yatra'

Accuses ruling party of resorting to politics of killing

KOLKATA, AUG 28 /-/- West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee mocked the BJP today for disrespecting former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee by undertaking the "Atal Kalash Yatra" and trying to gain political mileage out of it. The BJP leadership, in a counter, said Mamata should desist from talking much "time and again to serve her own political purpose". Addressing a rally here, she said: "I have never seen such a shameless party. We (TMC) might have ideological differences but we respect Atalji. They (BJP) are even

the BJP during the last panchayat polls to put pressure on people to vote in its favour. "The BJP had won just a few seats in the panchayat election in the erstwhile Maoist hotbed of Jangalmahal by resorting to politics of killing. The former CPI(M) goons are now working for them," she said at a rally here on the occasion of the Trinamool Chhatra Parishad (TMC students' wing) foundation day. Mamata said her government will not allow National Register of Citizens exercise in the state under any circumstances. "We will not allow NRC exercise in Bengal. They (BJP leaders) are challenging us. If we are challenged, we will give them a fitting reply," she said. Mamata said she will not "tolerate" if a citizen is wrongfully tagged a foreigner here. "We are Bengal tigers, we will not tolerate if an Indian citizen is dubbed a foreigner," she asserted. Referring to the increase in the number of NPA's during the



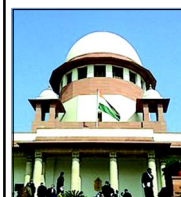
Chief minister Mamata Banerjee addressing the rally at Mayo Road - Shyamal Mitra

doing politics with Atalji's ashes. "They (BJP) are basically disrespecting him (Vajpayee). This is shameful," she said. Hitting back at the West Bengal chief minister, BJP state president Dilip Ghosh said: "She should not talk much about Atalji. We all know what happened when the TMC was part of the NDA government from 1996-2004. We have seen how she betrayed him (Vajpayee) to serve her own political purpose." BJP national secretary Rahul Sinha urged Mamata to refrain from indulging in politics over Atal Bihari Vajpayee. "When Atalji was Prime Minister, he had visited your home and even met your mother. So keeping that in mind, please don't try to politicise his death," he said. The chief minister today mounted a scathing attack on the BJP and said the party has resorted to "politics of killing" in the state and is using central agencies against opposition parties in the country. Referring to the panchayat polls in the state, Mamata said BJP members are working in connivance with goons who had earlier served the CPM.

Referring to the increase in the number of NPA's during the BJP rule, the chief minister claimed its number under the NDA is much higher than under the UPA regime. Continuing her tirade against the BJP, she said: "We don't want foreign funds, but why is the BJP so interested in foreign funds?" The Lok Sabha had passed a Bill to exempt political parties from scrutiny on foreign funds. "BJP is trying to dictate terms on each and every thing from what we should eat to what we should wear. Who are they to decide," she said.

The TMC supreme, who was in the forefront of the campaign to oust the BJP from power, said she will fight tooth and nail to defeat the saffron party in the 2019 general elections. "Besides money and muscle power, the BJP is using Central agencies against leaders of opposition parties. Our motto will be to remove the party from power in the 2019 Lok Sabha election," the chief minister said. She urged students to keep a close watch on fake news being circulated on Facebook and Twitter by the "troll army of the BJP". "Keep a close watch on fake news that BJP circulates on Facebook and Twitter. If they spread fake news counter it. Don't let them get away with fake news," she said. (PTI)

Apex court orders re-verification of 10 per cent of people excluded from Assam's NRC



NEW DELHI, AUG 28 /-/- The Supreme Court today ordered re-verification of 10 per cent of the people in Assam who were excluded from draft National Register of Citizens (NRC)

published recently. A bench of Justices Ranjan Gogoi and R N Nariman said the re-verification of those excluded from NRC was a "sample survey" for the draft NRC, as it pointed out certain contradictions in the Centre's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the filing them. The top court raised doubts over the Centre's proposal to allow a claimant to change his legacy document for inclusion in the draft. The second draft NRC list was published on July 30 in which out of 3.28 crore people, the names of 2.89 crore were included. The names

of 40,70,707 people do not figure in the list. Of these, 37,59,630 names have been rejected and the remaining 2,48,077 are on hold. On July 31, the apex court had made it clear that there will be no coercive action by authorities against over 40 lakh people, whose names do not figure in the NRC while observing that it was merely a draft. It had then asked the Centre to formulate modalities and the SOPs including timelines for deciding claims and objections arising out of the publication of the draft. Earlier, the apex court had asked the Assam NRC coordinator to place before it the data of district-wise percentage of population excluded from the draft in the state. On August 14, the Centre had told the apex court that

distinct IDs will be created by collecting biometric details of 40 lakh people filing claims and objections with respect to the NRC. It had said that after the publication of the final list of NRC, those people whose names will figure in it will be given usual Aadhaar number as applicable to legal residents in the country. The first draft of the NRC for Assam was published on the intervening night of December 31 and January 1 in accordance with the top court's direction. Names of 1.9 crore people out of the 3.28 crore applicants were incorporated then. Assam, which had faced influx of people from Bangladesh since the early 20th century, is the only state having an NRC which was first prepared in 1951. (PTI)