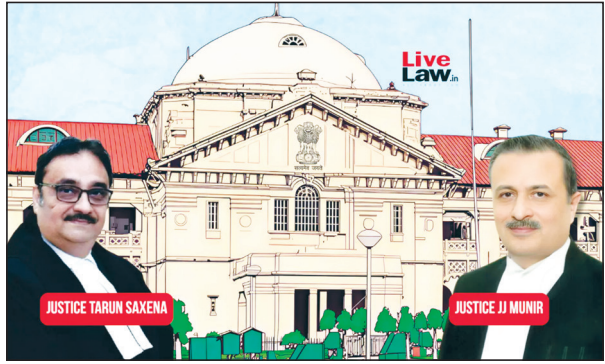


Constitutional functionaries like MPs, Ministers, judges entitled to 'Hon'ble' honorific: Allahabad HC

PRAYAGRAJ: The Allahabad High Court has clarified who is entitled to be addressed with the honorific 'Hon'ble', observing that the prefix is meant for constitutional functionaries exercising sovereign functions. A division bench of Justices J J Munir and Tarun Saxena said that the honorific cannot be used by civil servants, irrespective of rank, if they do not hold a sovereign constitutional office. "The honorific 'Hon'ble' is to be appended to the names of constitutional function-



aries who exercise sovereign functions of any of the three organs of the government," the bench said in an order dated April 30. "Ministers of the Central and

state governments, judges of the Supreme Court and high courts, speakers and chairpersons of Parliament and state legislatures, and members of Parliament and state assemblies are entitled to the use of this honorific," it said. The court said that anyone entitled to the use of the honorific must be addressed accordingly as per established protocol. The observations came while hearing a writ petition filed by one Harshit Sharma. During the earlier hearing,

the court took note of the Uttar Pradesh Police not using the honorific before the name of BJP MP and former Union minister Anurag Thakur in an FIR lodged in Mathura. The court had directed the additional chief secretary (home) to explain the lapse. In response, the state government submitted an affidavit stating that instructions had been issued to the senior superintendent of police, Mathura, on April 2, 2026, to conduct a preliminary inquiry.

Moving bus catches fire in Faridabad; Driver, lone passenger escape unhurt

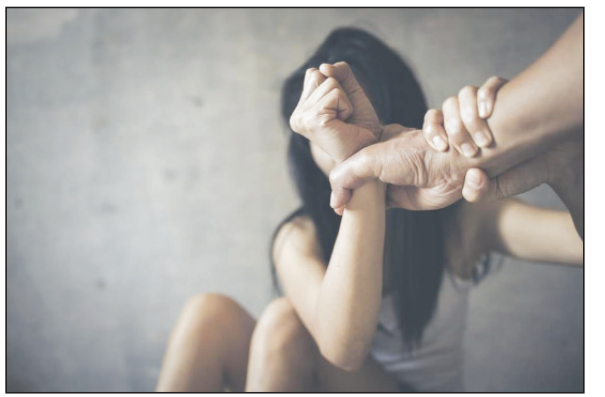
FARIDABAD: The driver and the lone passenger of a moving city bus had a miraculous escape as the vehicle caught fire near a village here on Tuesday afternoon, police said. The incident took place near Gharauda village on Manjhawali Road, under Tigaon police station limits. Preliminary investigations indicate that a short circuit in the wiring caused the fire, police said. There was only one passenger in the bus at the

time. The driver managed to get him out in the nick of time, before the flames engulfed the bus. The driver, Manohar, said he operates bus number 0909 on the Manjhawali-Ballabgarh route. On Tuesday afternoon, he was returning to Ballabgarh bus depot with a single passenger in the vehicle when he noticed smoke jetting out of the engine. "As the bus approached Gharauda village, the engine started spewing

thick smoke and sparks. I immediately stopped the bus and got the passenger off the vehicle," Manohar said. "The fire quickly engulfed the whole bus. I alerted the police and fire brigade, but the bus was completely consumed by flames before the fire brigade arrived," he added. On receiving the information, a Dial 112 team arrived at the scene. A senior police officer said no casualties were reported.

Sexual assault: Five arrested in two separate cases in Mathura

MATHURA: Police have arrested five people, including an auto-rickshaw driver and a 68-year-old man, here in connection with two separate cases of sexual assault involving minors, officials said on Tuesday. In the first case, four youths were sent to jail for allegedly kidnapping and gang-raping two minor sisters. Deputy Superintendent of Police (Sadar) Pitam Pal Singh said the girls, aged 17 and 15, went missing on April 30 after visiting an ashram in the Vrindavan area. According to the victims' statement, an auto-rickshaw driver named Sameer lured them into his vehicle



on the pretext of taking them to Mathura. He allegedly took them to a hotel in the Dhaulipalya area, where he and his associates raped them, police said. The girls were later forced

Sameer and his accomplices, Shiva, Krishna, and Rupesh. In a separate incident within the Refinery police station limits, an elderly man, Laxmikant, was arrested for allegedly raping a 10-year-old girl. The incident occurred on Monday when the child's parents were away at work. Police said other children in the vicinity witnessed the act and raised an alarm, leading villagers to catch the accused and hand him over to the police. Officials confirmed that the accused was booked under sections of the BNS and relevant sections of the POCSO Act. Investigations in both cases are underway.

Himanta likely to submit resignation to Guv today

GUWAHAATI: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma is likely to meet the governor on Wednesday and submit his resignation, paving the way for the formation of a new government, an official source said. Speaking to reporters here, Sarma said he will call on Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya once the election results are officially submitted to the latter. The official source said the state's chief electoral officer is scheduled to submit the final results to Acharya on Wednesday forenoon. The NDA swept to a third successive term in the state by securing 102 seats in the 126-member state assembly. The BJP won 82 seats, while its allies Assam Gana Parishad and Bodoland



People's Front bagged 10 constituencies each. Sarma was projected as the chief ministerial candidate of the ruling alliance before the polls. "I will meet the governor and hand over my resignation after the results are submitted to him. It will pave the way for the formation of a new government," he said. Sarma further said that meeting of the newly elected BJP MLAs will be convened as per instructions of J P Nadda and Nayab

Singh Saini, who have been appointed as central observer and co-observer, respectively, for selection of the leader of the legislative party. "I will talk to Nadda ji and call the MLAs as per the date set by him," the CM said. "With it, the government formation process will start," he added. Sarma further said there may not be the leader of the opposition position in the new assembly as the single-largest party in the opposition, Congress, has 19 MLAs, whereas at least 22 legislators are required for a party to get that position. "Hence, according to constitutional norms, there will be no leader of the opposition. But all the parties will have their own legislative party leaders," he added.

Police form SIT to probe fake birth certificate cases in Maha

MUMBAI: The Mumbai Police have constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe cases involving alleged bogus birth certificates obtained through forged documents in the city, officials said on Tuesday. The city's civic authorities have found that more than 87,000 bogus birth certificates were allegedly issued between 2024 and 2026 by manipulating official records. Mayor Ritu Tawde separately said she has directed Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) officials to cancel 87,347 certificates issued over the past two to three years, and to initiate a police investigation into the matter. The Mumbai crime branch

earlier launched an investigation after receiving a large number of complaints suggesting fraudulent birth certificate registrations. However, given the seriousness of the issue, Mumbai Police Commissioner Deven Bharti ordered the formation of the SIT for a thorough investigation into the offences and complaints received, the official said. The SIT will be headed by the joint commissioner of police (crime) and will include senior officers from the crime branch, special branch and detection units, he said. Notably, BJP leader Kirit Somaiya had alleged that bogus birth certificates were being issued to illegal Bangladeshi

immigrants and Rohingyas in parts of Maharashtra as part of a scam. Meanwhile, Mayor Tawde on Tuesday presided over a meeting at the civic headquarters and reviewed the BMC's response to the alleged birth certificate issuance scam. The meeting was attended by civic officials and also Somaiya, a former MP from Mumbai. Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Tawde said she has directed officials to cancel 87,347 birth certificates issued over the past two to three years, and to initiate a police investigation into the matter. After the alleged scam came to light, the civic body suspended a medical health of-

ficer and transferred three other officials pending further inquiry, she maintained. Somaiya described the alleged scam as one of the largest in the country, claiming birth certificates were issued through the SAP (document management) system under the pretext of making minor corrections. Though the centralised Civil Registration System (CRS) is mandatory for birth certificate registration since January 1, 2016, the BMC issued such documents through SAP system, the BJP leader claimed. Somaiya claimed the BMC has accepted irregularities in issuance of birth certificates, but it attempted to cover up the matter.

Punjab Congress leader alleges 'Panjiri scam', demands probe

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Congress leader Tina Chaudhary on Tuesday sought an investigation into the alleged "panjiri scam", accusing the AAP government of giving contracts for its supply to four private companies. Chaudhary alleged that these four companies supplied substandard quality of 'panjiri', directly endangering the health of poor children and pregnant women. Panjiri is a traditional Punjabi sweet, made by roasting wheat flour in 'desi ghee'. The Congress leader alleged that the procurement and supply of panjiri meant for lactating mothers and infants through Anganwadis involved irregularities.

The sweet and other food items are supplied under the Integrated Child Development Services programme to ensure adequate nutrition to infants, adolescent girls and pregnant mothers. Chaudhary claimed that low-quality items were procured at inflated prices, causing a loss to the state exchequer. Despite the chief minister holding the charge of the Punjab State Cooperative Supply and Marketing Federation (Markfed), the government deliberately awarded contracts for panjiri and other food supplies to private companies, she alleged. The Punjab Congress spokesperson said that during the previous

Congress government, panjiri was prepared using 'desi ghee' and supplied at approximately Rs 91-92 per kilogram, whereas the current government supplied "low-quality" panjiri allegedly made with refined oil. Despite its lower production cost, it was procured at higher prices, "clearly indicating corruption and commission-based practices", she claimed and demanded a fair and impartial investigation and punishment for those responsible. Choudhary demanded that the supply of food items for Anganwadis should once again be routed through government institutions like Markfed.

Bhagwant Mann meets President, seeks disqualification of defecting Punjab RS MPs



NEW DELHI: Punjab's political battle over defections escalated on Tuesday as Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann met President Droupadi Murmu and demanded the immediate cancellation of the Rajya Sabha membership of what he termed "Punjab de Gaddar" MPs who recently switched allegiance to the BJP. In a major show of political unity, Mann arrived in Delhi along with all AAP MLAs from Punjab and submitted a memorandum signed by the legislators at Rashtrapati Bhavan, alleging that the defections amounted to a "murder of democracy" and a betrayal of Punjab's mandate. Addressing reporters after meeting the President, Mann said, "I've submitted a memorandum signed by all MLAs from Punjab at Rashtrapati Bhavan and urged the President to take action." Launching a sharp attack on the BJP, the Punjab Chief Minister said, "The BJP has only two MLAs in Punjab, yet its Rajya Sabha MPs have become dix-mocracy." Describing the defecting MPs as "not elected but selected," Mann said, "These seven MPs aren't elected but selected. Their move to another party is

not patriotism but betrayal of Punjab." He challenged the MPs to seek a fresh mandate from the people, saying, "If these seven MPs who joined the BJP truly have patriotism in their hearts, they should resign and contest elections to enter Parliament." Mann also accused the defectors of intimidating people by citing the BJP's political strength across the country. "These MPs who have betrayed Punjab are threatening people by citing the BJP governments in 21 states. Punjabis will give them a befitting reply," he said. Warning that political affiliation would not shield anyone from legal action, Mann asserted, "Joining the BJP doesn't grant anyone a protective shield. If anyone does wrong, the Punjab government will register a case." The Chief Minister further alleged misuse of central agencies by the ruling party at the Centre. "Misuse of ED and CBI to 'clean' tainted leaders in BJP's 'washing machine' is an assault on democracy," he said. Taking aim at alleged attempts to engineer defections, Mann said, "BJP's 'Operation Lotus' tactics will never succeed in Punjab. Punjabis never tolerate betrayal."

Faridabad fair death: Owner of collapsed swing nabbed, released

FARIDABAD: Police here have arrested the owner of a swing which collapsed last month, leading to the death of an inspector and injury to 12 others, an officer said on Tuesday. Meerut resident Shubham Gupta, the primary owner of the Tsunami swing set up at Surajkund International Crafts Fair, was arrested on Monday, the officer said. He was released on bail by a city court. Swing agency owner Mohammad Shakir, manager Nitesh, and swing operator Adnan were nabbed earlier. Police Inspector Jagdish Prasad was killed, and 12 others were injured when a swing collapsed at the Surajkund fair on February 7. In the wake of the tragedy, the Faridabad police commissioner formed a Special Investigation



Team (SIT) to investigate the matter. A case of culpable homicide was filed against the owner and operators of the swing agency, which was later upgraded to death by negligence. The SIT has filed a charge sheet in court in this case. A senior investigating officer of the SIT said that a supplement-

ary charge sheet will be filed after questioning Gupta. According to the SIT officer, Gupta had been issued several notices to participate in the investigation, but he did not join, which led to his arrest. The swing set up at Surajkund International Crafts Fair, was arrested on Monday, the officer said. He was released on bail

by a city court. Swing agency owner Mohammad Shakir, manager Nitesh, and swing operator Adnan were nabbed earlier. Police Inspector Jagdish Prasad was killed, and 12 others were injured when a swing collapsed at the Surajkund International Crafts Fair on February 7. In the wake of the tragedy, the Faridabad police commissioner formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to investigate the matter. A case of culpable homicide was filed against the owner and operators of the swing agency, which was later upgraded to death by negligence. The SIT has filed a charge sheet in court in this case. A senior investigating officer of the SIT said that a supplement-

Bus catches fire in Udaipur; no one hurt

UDAIPUR: A private sleeper coach bus caught fire in Rajasthan's Udaipur on Tuesday, triggering panic among passengers, police said, adding that no casualties have been reported. The incident occurred on Bali-cha Road when the bus, carrying 38 passengers, was on its way to Mumbai from Rajasamand, SHO Goverdhan Vilas Rajendra Singh said. He said that the driver spotted a minor fire in the engine and immediately stopped the bus. All the passengers rushed out of the vehicle. Flames engulfed the bus within minutes. He said that all occupants, including around 10 women, managed to escape safely. Fire brigade teams reached the spot and brought the blaze under control after efforts, but the bus was completely gutted. Belongings of several passengers were destroyed in the fire.

2 Indian journalists win Pulitzer Prize for highlighting cyber fraud

NEW YORK: Indian journalists Anand RK and Suparna Sharma have won the prestigious Pulitzer Prize for their work highlighting digital surveillance and cyber fraud. Anand and Sharma won the award, announced on Monday, in the Illustrated Reporting and Commentary category. They share the award with Natalie Obiko Pearson of Bloomberg. According to The Pulitzer Prizes website, the award-winning work titled "trAPPed", produced for Bloomberg, narrates the "riveting account" of a neurologist in India who was held under a "digital arrest" through her phone, using a blend of "visuals and words" to underscore the "growing global challenges of surveillance and digital scams".

Arunachal Governor stresses on timely execution of infra projects, tech-driven planning

ITANAGAR: Pradesh Governor Lt Gen K T Parnaik (Retd) on Tuesday stressed strict adherence to timelines in infrastructure projects and called for greater use of technology, including geospatial tools and artificial intelligence, for efficient and data-driven governance. During a review meeting with Chief Minister Pema Khandu at Lok Bhavan here, the governor emphasised that meticulous planning and efficient execution are essential to ensure development initiatives

deliver timely and tangible benefits without delays or cost overruns, an official statement said. Highlighting the transformative potential of technology, he advised the state government to leverage modern tools, particularly geospatial technologies integrated with artificial intelligence, to enable real-time monitoring of development projects, strengthen security assessment and support informed planning. Parnaik also sought the state government's support in

promoting social initiatives, including encouraging amateur photo clubs, mapping orphanages and supporting NGOs such as 'Let's Speak Arunachal'. On the security front, the governor and the chief minister reviewed the law-and-order situation in the Tirap-Changlang-Longding (TCL) districts and underscored the need for early implementation of border fencing to enhance national security and public confidence. They further discussed key as-

pects of social development, including youth empowerment, promotion of tourism, encouragement of sports and games, and intensifying cleanliness drives across the state. The meeting also included a comprehensive review of the state's development trajectory, with particular focus on monsoon preparedness and timely execution of ongoing projects. Khandu apprised the governor of various developmental activities being undertaken by the state government.