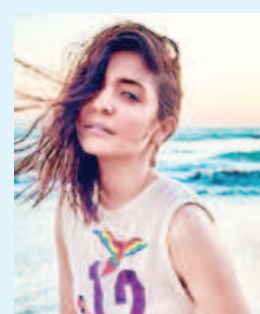




TWEET PATROL


ANUSHKA SHARMA
@ANUSHKASHARMA

As our country battles the second wave of Covid-19, and our healthcare systems are facing extreme challenges, it breaks my heart to see our people suffering. So, Virat and I have initiated a campaign #InThisTogether, with Ketto, to raise funds for Covid-19 relief.



AFFORDABLE MOTHER'S DAY FASHION STYLES

MOTHER'S DAY

There's a great deal of pressure on all of us when it comes to Mother's Day gift thoughts. You need to discover something she'll utilise constantly, however it can't be rigorously utilitarian. It ought to likewise have a nostalgic twist. Be that as it may, over thinking it just makes the entire process harder. Generally, Mother's Day shopping has for the most part been a last-minute thing, yet with COVID constraining everybody inside, planning has become an important piece of the festival. A big part of Mother's Day customers are utilising their cell phones to make buys, and six of every ten customers said they wanted to look for Mother's Day endowments Online.

Indian mothers generally have a knack for ethnics. Clothing in general is their most preferred. For them having more is never enough. Therefore this can be a righteous choice this year. If you are too one of the above out on online shopping, don't worry we've got you covered. Look down at affordable fashion styles for your mother. Here is a list of 6 most affordable Mother's day Fashion styles by Anuj Mundra, Chairman & MD of Nandani creation Limited

Palazzo Set

Festivities do not need to be a grand affair; all it takes are some positive vibes and cheer to celebrate any occasion. From popular pastel shades to glossy sequins, give your mother a closet of stylish twist with the trendi-

est of styles. Wide range of palazzo sets are available, both online and offline.

Suits

With the onset of summers, Suits are most preferred by women in this heated weather. Ranging from cotton made for daily wear to embroidered for party wear, Suits can be your go-to gift for your mother this season.

Lounge wear

With the current situation going on, everybody is confined indoors. Utility of lounge wear weighs slightly higher than the party wears. You can have a look over the market with really comfortable and quirky lounge-wears for your mother this summers.

Dresses

Now if your mother prefers perfect mix of western with ethnics, you can always opt for dresses. A-line dresses are generally available knee-length and below. Western in the category of 'dresses' is the best option to pick in the summer season because due its comfort, designing, and versatile gives the best results.

Kurtis/Kurta Sets

There is not only one reason to pick Kurti, there are so many advantages to choose Kurti: it is durable, comfortable and exclusive. You can choose from Anarkali Style Exclusive Cotton Kurtis to Straight Fashionable Long Kurtis. Kurtis are most preferred summer-friendly piece of clothing.

Shirts/Tops

If your mother prefers western wear more, you can always opt for tops and shirts for her. You can choose from a wide variety to style with her bottoms. Western wear are specifically preferred in summer season as they are extremely comfortable.

With mother's day round the corner, we hope to have helped you with the best mother's day gifts for your mother this season. Choose anything with utmost feelings and she'll like everything.



Create memories with your Mom

GRUSHA KHANNA

There is no specific day to show your love to your mother or it doesn't require just a single day to show your mother how much you love her. But never keep yourself away from making her feel special on this day as well. With the pandemic we have come up with few personalised ways of making your mother feel special.

Bake a cake: Instead of ordering a cake you can bake a cake in your kitchen. One of the easiest and simple ways of preparing cake is with these 5 ingredients: Biscuits, Eno Powder, Sugar, Milk and Butter

- Grind the biscuits you want to make the cake from such as Parle G, Hide and Seek or any other.
- Pour the mixture in a bowl and add sugar accordingly and ½ teaspoon salt in it.
- Add milk and mix it well it drops smoothly from the mixing spoon. Then add 1 tea spoon Eno and a small piece of butter and mix it well.
- Take an aluminum utensil and grease it with butter and pour the batter into the container. Pre-heat a Flat Pan for 5 mins and place it on the pan for 20 mins approx and don't forget to cover it with a lid.
- Now decorate it accordingly and surprise your mother.

Homemade card: Instead of buying a mother's day card prepare your own card at home. You can prepare a personalized card for your mom and make her feel special. Our moms don't fall for those expensive gifts the fall for the efforts that we do to make them feel special. So prepare something simple yet mesmerizing.

Wall hanging: You can prepare a wall hanging frame with the help of ice-cream sticks, like you use to do it in your childhood days. You can surf the internet and find various tutorials for the same. Just select 3-4 good images of you and your mom.

Day off: Mothers are a highly dedicated member of the family that doesn't take off even if they are not well. They are active throughout the year 24x7. So just give them a day off by - Preparing Breakfast for them, lunch and even dinner. Treat her like she is the queen and obey all their orders and wishes.

Mothers take a lot of pain and go through a lot to bring a child into this beautiful world. So it is their child's duty to make his/her mother feel proud of having a son / daughter like them. Always treat your mom with respect and love.

Six ways to fix a gummy smile

N LOTHUNGBENI HUMTSOE

Everyone tends to experience something they are self-conscious about. For some people, a gummy smile which is known as an excessive gingival display is their biggest insecurity. The showing of excessive gum tissues above the top enamel can often make their smile seem less attractive.

Research has found that as much as 25 percent of the population, particularly women, tend to have an excessive gingival display. A gummy smile can be caused due to an irregular tooth eruption, jaw development problem, an inappropriate bite, an upper lip that is too short, or a hyperactive upper lip. Extremely enlarged gums known as gingival hypertrophy and an overgrowth of the upper jaw known as vertical maxillary excess can also make the gums bulge out.

A gummy smile can certainly be fixed, but the treatment type will depend on the factors that have been causing the excessive gingival display. Dr Karishma Jaradi, Head Dental Surgeon at Dentzz Dental shares some treatment options that will facilitate creating a gorgeous and healthy smile:

Orthodontic treatment

If your gummy smile is mild and is a result of orthodontic issues like an improper bite or minor jaw problems, undergoing a simple orthodontic procedure can help. Orthodontics such as braces will facilitate in correcting the jaw and bite issues which can aid in making your gums appear better while you smile.

Veneers or crowns

Some patients might consider their upper set of enamel to appear too short which affects the amount of gum tissue that is visible when smiling. This can be a result of wear and even genetics. In such a case, simple yet effective dental restorations like veneers or

dental crowns can be used to make your teeth appear longer. This will facilitate in balancing out your teeth and gums, making your smile appear less gummy.

Crown-lengthening procedures

Also known as Gingivectomy, crown lengthening treatments are aesthetic procedures that are performed to extend the crown when enamel look short. In such treatments, the gum tissue or bone is extracted to expose more of the tooth, enabling the gums to withdraw into their appropriate position. This will bring about proportion to your teeth and gums both.

Jaw aesthetics

In cases where the jawline appears to be too large typically more than 7mm of gum exposed, a bone shortening treatment known as Orthognathic surgery may be executed by an expert or-

thodontist and oral surgeon. This procedure includes surgically moving the entire jaw in the upward direction.

Lip aesthetics

If you have been suffering from a short or hyperactive upper lip, more of your gum will be visible when you smile. A lip repositioning procedure can assist in making your smile look less gummy.

Laser gum contouring

Gum contouring is a minimally invasive aesthetic dental procedure that involves the gentle yet accurate reshaping of the gum line. Making use of specialized dental lasers, your dental expert can remove the additional gum tissue. The remaining tissue is then reshaped to facilitate exposing more of your teeth, helping to avert a gummy smile.



#MomsGotTalent: Celebrating the superhero that kept us going with

As part of this campaign the platform is also running a contest where users will upload their videos that showcase any talents/qualities that their mothers can demonstrate. The video then has to be uploaded on their Trell profiles and personal social media handles tagging @trell.community with the #MomsGotTalent. One winner gets an opportunity to be the next big Trell and Top 3 winners get a Trell Shop Gift Hamper.

Mommy creator Shifa Merchant will be creating videos about being a traveller mommy who became a mother during a pandemic and what it taught her, while Shrima Rai and Simone Khambatta will take us through their influencer journeys, Tamil

creator Swetha Rao and Monica Premkumar will tell us how to match mommy and daughter outfits and a mom and baby workout respectively.

Trell creators will also dedicate content to their moms on mother's day. Cline Vergheese, a Happiness Coach will talk about three things that we learn from Indian mothers, Geetika Chakravarti will recreate one of her mom's old looks, Rohil Jethmalani will get his mom to do Qi Gong from which Tai Chi emerged, Gia Kashyap will share skincare routine that she learnt from her mom, Shilpi Saha will recreate her late mother's old looks, Nitya Naresh will give with her mother on her favorite songs, Hindi cre-



ators Shilpi Gupta and Ridhi Jain will showcase makeup looks on mom and how to reuse mom's old sarees to create fresh looks respectively. Bengali creators Deepanwita Bera and Priyanka Bain will be doing a special Mom & Daughter Workout and a Mom and Daughter skin care routine. By sharing their creations creators will also engage with users and give them ideas on how they can celebrate Mother's day.

Ovarian Cancer Day

Cancer is never a happy subject to contemplate. But despite the spectre of it in all our lives, we now have the scientific tools to fight back. Ovarian cancer is a particularly harmful and misunderstood form of the disease. Ovarian Cancer Day, therefore, is an opportunity to bring women together from across the globe to raise awareness and help fight this condition.

Ovarian cancer is a major disease, responsible for some 140,000 deaths globally every year. However, as with many other gynaecological disorders, it is not particularly well understood, especially in some developing regions. For that reason, the charity, Target Ovarian Cancer, spearheaded Ovarian Cancer Day, a global initiative to highlight the plight



of women with the condition and provide hope.

Ovarian Cancer Day, the organization's hope, will help to encourage governments and pri-

vate institutions to dedicate more resources to the field. With enough money and scientific investigation, survival rates can improve, just as they

have
f o r
other forms
of cancer.

Ovarian cancer occurs in the ovaries – the sac-like structures containing human egg cells in women – causing a host of complications. Women with the condition typically develop bloating, difficulty eating, pain in the abdominal area, and an increased need to urinate. Even though ovarian cancer is the eighth most common in the world, medics still frequently misdiagnose it. There is a need, therefore, for greater awareness and improved diagnostic equipment.

THIS DAY IN
HISTORY
with
HANS INDIA

Delhi Police recover 96 O₂ concentrators from Khan Market eatery



NEW DELHI

A DAY after the Delhi Police arrested four people and seized 419 oxygen concentrators, on Friday continuing their search-op recovered 96 concentrators from South Delhi's famous Khan Chacha Restaurant.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) South Delhi Atul Bhatia said: "We have recovered 96 oxygen concentrators from Khan Chacha Restaurant in Khan Market area."

Earlier in the day, Bhatia said that the police have recovered nine more concen-

trators.

The police action comes a day after it seized 419 concentrators being sold at exorbitant rates online.

As per the police, after back to back incidents of illegal marketing of oxygen concentrators, "major outlets in Delhi are on Delhi Police's radar and the investigation against the nexus of restaurants is under way," said sources in Delhi Police.

On Thursday, police recovered 419 oxygen concentrators after conducting raids at Nege Ju Restaurant and Bar in the central market of Lodhi Colony. The

owner of the two restaurants is the same and is yet to be brought for questioning as his whereabouts remain unknown.

Police said during the raid on Thursday invoices of recovered oxygen concentrators were found in the laptop. Stickers of maximum retail price (MRP) indicating prices of Rs 69,999 per concentrator were also recovered.

Police sources say they are probing into what could possibly be a larger nexus of multiple restaurants.

As per police sources, the arrested accused have

claimed that they imported the Oxygen Concentrators from various countries in large numbers and then sold them at a marked up price.

On Thursday, Bhatia said that during area patrolling, it came to know that Nege Ju Restaurant and Bar having address at central market Lodhi Colony was found open and some suspicious activity was going on.

"After searching the restaurant one person was found sitting on a laptop and he was getting orders online for oxygen concentrators by Xpect Everything online portal and on searching the

restaurant premises, a total of 32 boxes of Oxygen Concentrators having capacity of 9 litre and 5 Litre each and one box of thermal scanner and another box containing N95 masks were found," he had said.

Bhatia said that after verification it was found that the owner of the restaurant and bar is Navneet Kalra.

He said that a case was registered under several sections of IPC, Essential Commodities Act and Epidemic Diseases Act and four accused persons -- Gaurav, Satish Sethi, Vikrant and Hitesh were taken into cus-

tody. Bhatia said that on detailed interrogation, the accused persons disclosed about their warehouse in Khullar Farm, Mandi Village.

"On further investigation, a search was conducted and 387 more units of Oxygen Concentrators were recovered which were being sold at exorbitant rates in black market," he said, adding that invoices of these oxygen concentrators being sold over Rs 70,000 were also recovered.

He said that stickers of MRP indicating high prices were seized.

Himachal HC denies bail to rape accused

SHIMLA

HIMACHAL Pradesh High Court rejected a bail plea of a 26-year-old man accused of raping a 17-year-old girl and said, "No means no — the simplest of sentences has become the most difficult for some men to understand."

Justice Anoop Chitkara said, "The simplest of sentences have become the most difficult for some men to understand. No does not mean yes, it does not mean that the girl is shy, it does not mean that the girl is asking a man to convince her, it does not mean that he has to keep pursuing her".

The order says "The word 'NO' doesn't need any further explanation or justification. It ends there, and the man has to stop. Be that as it may, the victim, in this case, said no to the accused when he started touching her, but he continued. It nowhere implies consent, or zeal and desire to explore and feel each other in romantic love".

The accused Suresh Kumar who was arrested in Sirmaur district on December 18, 2020 for raping a girl who was known to the victim.

The victim was waiting for the bus at the bus stand on December 17, 2020, when the accused reached her and offered a lift to drop her at home.

The victim boarded the vehicle in good faith but Kumar took her

to a secluded place where he started touching the victim inappropriately.

The girl said 'NO' to him but instead, the accused told her that if she would cry, then he would force himself upon her. He then also asked her if she would marry him, to which the girl said no. After that, the accused undressed the victim and had sexual intercourse with her.

Later he left for Solan, and the victim came home by bus. On reaching home, she narrated the entire incident to her mother, and thereafter a complaint was lodged with the Rajgarh police, leading to Kumar's arrest under section 376 IPC and section 4 of the POCSO Act.

The court rejected the arguments of the counsel for the petitioner that the victim was known to the accused and she had admitted her friendship too and thus if any sexual intercourse had taken place, it was with the consent of the victim.

"The question involved here is what prompted the girl to inform her mother about the incident. It is not the case that she reached home late in the night or that her parents questioned her or started a search looking for her. She would have kept it discreet because, as per her version, no one had noticed them", said Justice Chitkara.

Hand over O₂ plants to military: Har Min



CHANDIGARH

HARYANA Home Minister Anil Vij on Friday said the work of administration and arrangement of oxygen plants should be handed over to the military and the paramilitary for their safe and smooth functioning.

Vij said this step should be taken to deal with oxygen-related problems being faced at present, adding that such a step would be immensely helpful as

even if one plant stops, then it may adversely affect the health of Covid patients.

"The state government is continuously making efforts to distribute oxygen as per requirement in all hospitals of the state. With the assistance of the Central government, 60 oxygen plants will be set up in government hospitals with a capacity of 30, 50, 100 and 200 beds in the state," he said in a statement.

The minister said work is

presently going on to set up six oxygen plants in government hospitals. After Ambala, oxygen plants will soon start functioning in Panchkula, Faridabad and Hisar towns. He said the production at oxygen plants installed in Karnal and Sonapat towns has started. Along with this, work is going on continuously to make government hospitals self-sufficient in oxygen. On vaccinations, Vij said the state is fully prepared to vaccinate the children.

'Gurugram hospitals with 50 beds capacity to set up oxygen plants'



GURUGRAM

GURUGRAM Deputy Commissioner Yash Garg has asked all the hospitals with more than 50 beds capacity to manage their own liquid oxygen requirements.

For this, they can either set up a liquid oxygen plant or arrange a Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA), he said. Garg chaired a virtual Covid review meeting on Friday. "To fulfil oxygen needs in Gurugram it is planned to set up 6 oxygen plants in the district. Besides, the administration is also trying to set up an oxygen plant under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). "Till such time these plants are operational, the administration is also arranging oxygen concentrators to increase the supply of oxygen. The administration has already got about 50 concentrators and efforts are on to arrange 250 to 300 concentrators in the next 7 to 8 days," Garg said. Gurugram Civil Surgeon Virender Yadav who also attended the meeting informed that PSA based 1,000 LPM

oxygen plants will be set up at the Civil Hospital in Gurugram. In addition, PSA based LPM plants will be set up at Sub Divisional Hospitals, Sohna and Pataudi.

Garg assured that the Covid patients currently admitted in the city's hospitals registered with the district administration will not face oxygen shortage.

Regarding the supply of the injections Remdesivir and Tocilizumab, Garg informed that the state government has decided that it will issue the quota of Remdesivir injections for each district which will be distributed to the hospitals by the civil surgeon according to the number of patients. For injection Tocilizumab, the government has constituted a 3-member committee under the chairmanship of Dr Dhruv Chaudhary, senior physician at PGIMS Rohtak. This committee will release an injection after seeing the patient's prescription which will come from PGIMS Rohtak itself. These injections will not be available with the private stockists.

SC declines to entertain DJB plea on water shortage against Haryana



NEW DELHI

THE Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain the Delhi Jal Board's (DJB) plea against the Haryana government in connection with the shortage of water supply to the national capital, and asked it to approach the Upper Yamuna River Board.

A three-judge bench of Justices L. Nageswara Rao, A.S. Bopanna and V. Ramasubramanian granted liberty to the DJB to approach the Upper Yamuna River Board, with their prayer relating to allocation of water to Delhi. It asked the board to con-

sider the representation made by the DJB, clarifying that the top court is not expressing any opinion on merits of the case.

The observations were made by the top court during the hearing of an application by the DJB seeking directions to the Punjab and Haryana governments to stop the discharge of untreated pollutants causing rise of ammonia levels into the Yamuna river, and also ensure there is enough supply of water from Haryana side to the national capital. At the beginning of the matter, the top court informed the DJB's counsel that it has seen the committee's

report.

"If you want us to pass an order on merits which may not be in your interest, we will hear you, otherwise we'd suggest please go to the Upper Yamuna River Board and make your suggestions. If you still insist, we will hear you and pass orders."

The DJB has maintained that shortage in water supply may affect supply to hospitals, and urged the top court to fix a specific timeline in which the board may decide their grievance, preferably within 10 days, as beyond that, there may be difficulty. The counsel insisted that there is a genuine problem of water

in the national capital and the top court could at least direct that Haryana side should provide whatever maximum they can provide.

At this, the top court responded: "Whatever they have to, they are providing, and they are providing more according to the report."

During the hearing, the bench noted that the DJB should go to the monitoring body and make a request to it. "You can't keep coming here and telling us there is no water in Delhi. You asked us to appoint a committee, and we did. The ground reality appears to be different," it noted.

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SINCE 1981

మీ కలలకు సాకారం

సరైన సమయంలో చక్కని నిర్ణయం మంచి ఫలితాలను అందించింది

నా ఎంపిక కపిల్ చిట్స్ ఇప్పటికీ వెన్నంటే ఉంది.

ISRAEL and Greece have become stronger friends now. Each has its own interest in its mind, but, the impact is showing up already. Vaccinated Israeli tourists are now allowed to sun themselves on Greek beaches thanks to a Covid-19 green card agreed on by leaders in Athens and Tel Aviv. But, Israel means business in everything including in cultivating friendships. This is proven by yet another development wherein apart from holidayers, even Israel defence contractors are crossing over. They are working on a \$1.68 billion project awarded to Israel's Elbit Systems last year to build and operate a new air force training school in Kalamata, Greece.

Together, the defence ties and tourist flows symbolise an emerging partnership between Greece and Israel that is taking root under the backdrop of Israel's rapprochement with Arab neighbours and a more assertive Turkish foreign policy under President Re-

Israel's 'expansionist' moves

cep Tayyip Erdogan. Since the late 2000s relationship has progressed with leaps and bounds between the two. Reports from Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security also prove the point while echoed those sentiments. Israel and Greece, along with neighbouring Cyprus, established the tripartite framework in 2016 under which the three countries engage in regular high-level summits each year in Nicosia.

One of the original goals of the tripartite was to advance the EastMed Gas Pipeline. The project is designed to carry Israeli and Cypriot gas to Europe through waters disputed with Turkey. It is now clear that the relationship is not just about gas. If one looks at the text coming out of the tripartite statements the agenda is very

broad. Energy ministers of the three countries signed a memorandum of understanding in March to lay an under-sea cable, the EuroAsia Interconnector, linking the energy grids of Cyprus and Israel with the European continent.

Promoting tourism in the region is another area where the Mediterranean neighbours seek to cooperate. The speed with which Greece and Cyprus rolled out a vaccine green card with Israel, demonstrates this priority. The bonhomie might come as a surprise to some as it has not been noticed among these countries in the past. In 1990 Greece was the last European Union country to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel. One reason for this was the closest thing Israel had to a strategic community was with the only other nearby, non-Arab state, Turkey.

Greco-Israeli relations were second to relations with the Turks. At one point in time, Turkey had de facto veto power over Israeli arms sales to Greece and enjoyed the full support of the Jewish lobby in Washington, DC, which practically maintained good relations between US and the Turks. Many analysts point to the Mavi Marmara attack in 2010 as the turning point in the relationship. Israeli forces killed 10 Turkish citizens trying to break the country's blockade of Gaza. Nachmani said ties had been fraying for years before that as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan turned his attention more towards the Middle East and away from Europe.

Israel's perspective of Turkey changed after this attack and the Arab Spring. This caused Israel to reassess the nature of their ties. The latest friendship of Israel with Greece should only be expected due to the Turkey's plans of hegemony in the region.



History of pandemics

OJJUS CHAWLA

AS we all know, a pandemic is an epidemic of an infectious disease that has spread across the world and created havoc. For instance, you might have heard this term when COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic by the WHO. Although the history of pandemics is quite long and extensive, from the 1918 Spanish Flu to COVID-19 now, pandemics have always impacted life as we know it. It all started with the earliest recorded pandemic which happened during the Peloponnesian War. After it affected Libya, Ethiopia and Egypt, it not only crossed the Athenian walls but also lay siege to the Spartans -- as many as two-thirds of the population died of it. Even though this was the first ever pandemic, it was not as deadly in comparison to other subsequent pandemics.

One of the worst pandemics was "The Plague of Justinian". The number of deaths is unknown. It was the beginning of the first Old World pandemic of plague, the contagious disease caused by the bacterium Yersinia pestis. It started in 541 AD and ended around 750 AD. Scientists believe that the Plague of Justinian spread through fleas. Studies indicate the plague may have originated in China or India and was then transported to the fertile valleys of Egypt through trade routes since technology and medicines were quite old and some had not yet been discovered. Surprisingly, the plague doctors had to guess as to what might end this pandemic. They attempted treatments such as vinegar and water or told the patients to carry flowers around all day, but they all failed.

Now, let's come to one of the major pandemics, the 'Spanish Flu'. The Spanish Flu, which is also known as the 1918 Influenza virus, was an unusually deadly influenza pandemic caused by the H1N1 influenza virus. Lasting from February 1918 to April 1920, it infected 500 million people -- about a third of the world's population at the time -- in four successive waves. By the summer of 1919 the flu pandemic came to an end, as those that were infected either died or developed immunity.

History tells us that the worst pandemic recorded to date is 'Black Death', which killed roughly over 75-200 million people. Black Death was essentially a bubonic plague pandemic occurring in Afro-Eurasia from 1346 to 1353. It was present mainly in Eurasia and North Africa. This plague was also caused by the Yersinia pestis. It was spread around through fleas. These bugs picked up the germs when they bit infected animals, then passed them to the next animal or person they bit. This pandemic eventually ended through the implementation of quarantines, that's right, the same quarantine that we are currently stuck in. The uninfected would typically remain in their homes and only leave when it was necessary, while those who could afford to do so would leave the more densely populated areas and live in isolation. I believe that if this same faith and patronage are to be followed now, the current COVID-19 cases will drop and we can return to normalcy.

Coming to the West African Ebola virus epidemic, which started on Dec 26, 2013 and ended by Jun 9, 2016, it killed over 11,323 people. It was deadly and dangerous and people again had no clue about the symptoms or how to stay safe from the virus. Researchers and scientists eventually found a solution i.e., a vaccine.

On December 31, 2020, the first-ever coronavirus case was recorded. As we all know, 'CO' stands for corona, 'VI' stands for virus and 'D' for disease. The coronavirus originated in Wuhan, China and from there it travelled and spread across the globe. The cause of the coronavirus is unknown but that doesn't change the fact that it is fatal and destructive. In 2020, when the first lockdown happened, we were all quite alarmed and frightened as to where this would lead and how we would manage. We didn't realise that it was just the tip of the iceberg. Now that it's 2021, the situation has not gotten better but worsened. The cases are higher than ever, people are dying and in need of oxygen or plasma. In India, things are not looking good but we can also curb this situation and help out each other in these difficult times by donating plasma or money or even basic supplies, volunteering virtually. There is always something you can do to help others.

Although this article doesn't even come close to capturing all the deadly and disastrous pandemics, what we do know is that these pandemics have brought untimely deaths of our near and dear ones and a lot of pain and suffering to mankind. Not only this, but pandemics are also known to create havoc in human civilizations and disrupt life as we know it. But what I have learnt is that in the midst of a pandemic, there is always a greater sense of unity amongst the people also bringing out the goodness and kindness in people. As history is witness, we always end up adapting to such situations and find a solution to make it out of these pandemics. So, with this we must realise that a crisis can bring misery, difficulty and death, but it also brings forth hope, the strength of human spirit, the goodness of the human heart, and formidable will to say: "The show must go on."

(Ojjus Chawla is a student of Class 10, Modern School, Barakhamba Road)

Listen to public health experts to tackle Covid



V RAMU SARMA

AS the world's daily count of new cases of Covid-19 is falling, India is surging and scientists are already expressing concern over the possibility of third wave. They feel that if the Governments ignore the warning as it happened during the second wave, it would surely be a sort of tsunami. This could result in unimaginable loss of life. This report was sent to the Director, National Centre for Disease Control Dr Sujit Kumar Singh.

Unfortunately no one seems to be talking about this impending danger. The Scientists claim that they had warned the Centre in February or March about the second wave and it was told that unless the medical infrastructure was ramped up and precautions taken, the cases would surge at rapid speed as new mutants were being noticed. But neither the high profile political executive nor the media reacted to it the way they should have and now we are facing problems like providing adequate beds, oxygen and drugs like Remdesivir.

The crisis the country faced during the first wave might not have been foreseen and we do not know from where and how the virus originated but as far as the second wave is concerned it's purely a making of the political executive. Just as a captain of any team has to accept the responsibility if the team loses the match, the NDA government too needs to accept that together the Centre and State governments had failed in reducing the impact of second wave. Now a stage has come where the neighbouring tiny country Sri Lanka also started feeling threat from India and has cancelled air traffic between the two countries.

They ruling parties across the State did not prepare the administration and people to effectively face the challenge of second wave but instead encouraged mass gatherings at

festivals and political rallies, including in a closely contested battleground in different states.

As a result, the country which was positioning itself to help other countries, having exported more than 66 million doses of vaccines, is today looking towards other countries for vaccine.

This situation arises close on the heels of the announcement of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi at World Economic Forum that India had saved the world from major tragedy and the claim of the Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan that India had kicked out the virus and we are now again struggling with new mutants.

But instead of accepting that yes there was a slip, a lot of PR activity is on to say that Governments are doing their best and are now well prepared.

Unfortunately, neither the central government nor the State governments are willing to accept criticism. In the last six years all governments have indulged in media management. The media has either been won over in some cases and/or have been put under pressure not to carry negative news. What news agencies like BBC or Bloomberg are saying, our media is not able to express.

Some State governments like Andhra Pradesh Government has even created confusion on the variant N 440 K which according to the advisor of the CCMB Dr Rakesh Mishra is a rogue virus and spreads 10-15 per cent faster. But this has been contested by another team of scientists saying it was found in January itself and is now getting weakened.

The media feels that its job is over by reporting what the government says and to authenticate their version take the opinions of scientists. There is also a growing opinion that media is more focusing on dying people and burning pyres 24x7. While they should point out wherever facilities were not

reaching the patients but along with that they should suggest solutions like reporting about the success stories of those who survived and how they could give a boost not only to their immunity but also their morale. Media should motivate the man on the street to follow health protocols like wearing of mask and encourage everyone to serve.

No Indian media is showing courage to say 'look boss it's the failure of governments' as they not only held elections to different State Assemblies like West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Assam and by elections in states like Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

As people across India battled the virus, politicians were still holding rallies. The media too has to take the



The crisis the country faced during the first wave might not have been foreseen and we do not know from where and how the virus originated but as far as the second wave is concerned it's purely a making of the political executive. Just as a captain of any team has to accept the responsibility if the team loses the match, the NDA government too needs to accept that together the Centre and State governments had failed in reducing the impact of second wave. Now a stage has come where the neighbouring tiny country Sri Lanka also started feeling threat from India and has cancelled air traffic between the two countries

blame as even though the surge in cases was clear, it could not say that governments are being callous and in denial mode. No Minister or public representative was questioned why they were not wearing a mask.

Today when people are facing acute shortage of drugs, oxygen, beds and even indigenous vaccine, all governments are indulging in knee-jerk reaction. Initially, both the Central and the State governments refused

to accept that cases were surging and now they are making tall claims that they have enough infrastructure in place. But then their statements do not match with the ground reality and it is the doctors, nurses and front-line warriors who are under tremendous pressure and stress. In their eagerness to show that they have been managing the situation in most efficient manner all governments are fudging figures.

Quoting Mihir Sharma, a columnist for Bloomberg, the BBC commented, "As is typical in India, official arrogance, hyper-nationalism, populism and an ample dose of bureaucratic incompetence have combined to create a crisis." Certainly, it was a bold comment but what he too failed to say was that Indian media blinked at what was happening. Why did the media blink? Well that's a different story. They allowed themselves to get managed by the political executive. It's time, the leaders look out of their ivory towers and listen to what the public health experts say. They point out that having seemingly contained

work. Though there are instances where ambulances are charging a bomb to carry the dead bodies, the public representatives do not show as much interest in trying to address the problem but would vie with each other if anyone criticises their leader whether it be the Prime Minister or the Chief Minister.

The only solution to checkmate the third wave according to Scientists is to go in for massive vaccination program. The Centre and State governments should take it up in mission mode. Vaccination and usage of masks and following health protocols will help in preventing the third wave from being a serious one. Vaccination apart from building immunity levels among the beneficiaries will also reduce the emergence of new mutants and the in the process the existing variants would become weak.

Experts say, "We can't freeze human life. If we can't physically distance in the crowded cities, we can at least make sure everyone wears a proper mask. And wear it properly. That's not a big ask."

Lets hope that the Central and State Governments will put politicking on back burner, for-

LETTERS

KCR vs Eatala: Caution advised

IT is true that individuals from several backgrounds make a political party strong. No single individual can take the credit for building a party like TRS in Telangana. It is also equally important no party leader like Eatala Rajender who is a minister of Health in the Chief Minister K Chandrabab Naidu's cabinet, for the nineteen or more years, cannot be undermined and to be jettisoned from the ministry, just like that on the land grabbing case that is alleged against him, without giving him a fair hearing by the Chief Minister. This



will send a negative message to the people of Telangana who are aware of the political background of each and every minister in the cabinet.

If Eatala's removal is based on the land grabbing allegation, the people of Telangana know that Eatala is not the only one to be blamed against the charge, as there are many others too, with similar blemishes and allegations. If the allegation is to be sincerely probed, there will barely be any minister above board that includes KCR and family. Any rash and irrational step to remove a senior member in the party will not augur well for the party at a time when TRS is attempting to consolidate the party position in the State.

K V Raghuram, Wayanad

BJP out of tune with public mood

IN all the elections held of late the BJP is either losing or it is failing to get desired result forcing it to adopt undemocratic means to form government even after visibly losing. Such repeated falls and the recent failure in the much hyped election in West Bengal should be seen as strong resentment of the people over its policies and programmes. The economy of the country started its downward trend from the very year of this party assuming office. Even before coming out of the perils of dwindling economy the pandemic got the nation in its firm grip. But the ruling dispensation has utterly failed in tackling both the devils.

Instead of attending to the crisis properly the rulers were found to be in euphoric mood with passing of certain Bills with far reaching impacts related to power, agriculture, education, wealth creating working class and so on. The anger of the people shown through elections outcome is not taken into cognisance at all.

At least now the party is expected to understand the mood of the people and work hard to provide livelihood to the poor mass and employment to the educated youth. It is also a strong signal not to proceed with its programme like 'One

nation one election, one nation one party one culture' etc. People are longing for the government to govern.

A G Rajmohan, Anantapur

A divorce much followed

THE obsession of the middle class with the rich and famous has led to a lot of interest in the divorce proceedings of Melinda and Bill Gates. There is a flood of memes on the social media which indicate the level of interest of the common people. The marriage has had a longer shelf life than most western unions and the cause for this separation is not clear. The division of the assets is of great interest to people and is a reflection of the priorities of society today. For most Indian divorce is unacceptable, but at 65 is incomprehensible!

Anthony Henriques, Mumbai

Right decision by SC

IT refers to Supreme Court justified order dated 05.05.2021 turning down reservation for Marathas in Maharashtra holding that total reservation cannot exceed 50-percent. Vote-bank politics make state-governments pass useless legislations requiring reservation to more categories which may exceed upper-limit of 50-percent total reservation, very well knowing that Supreme

Court will turn down any legislation. Such politics on reservation unnecessarily creates unrest and lawlessness in sections which are affected by Supreme Court order.

Complete policy of reservation is in itself a big failure when it could not homogeneously mix people of reserved-categories in the society in stipulated 15 years initially fixed by constitution-makers and now for more than seven decades after independence. In present era, policy of reservation is itself responsible for alienating persons of reserved categories from normal society by making them identified separately.

Reservation if to be continued indefinitely, all reserved categories like SC, ST or OBC should be merged into one single category with an annual review of progress or benefits made by different casts or tribes by virtue of Reservation. Communities with maximum postings or admissions may be deleted from reserved categories by taking these as creamy layers. Also since backwardness in reserved categories is due to their generally having large families, benefits of reservations may be reserved for persons or families with upto two children only.

Subhash Chandra Agrawal, Delhi

Avoid witch-hunt in West Bengal

IT is deplorable that the post-poll violence in West Bengal has taken 16 lives of poor karyakartas belonging to warring political parties TMC and BJP. The attack on the convoy of Union minister who is on fact finding mission, one day after Didi's take over as CM, is condemnable for two reasons. (Union min's convoy attacked in Bengal, TH1, 7 May) . First of all, law and order is state subject and there was no need for Centre's interference because a highly competent, third time CM is at the helm of affairs and therefore should have allowed time for Didi to crush the monster with iron hand.

Secondly, this blame game, and fact finding missions by BJP teams will add fuel to the existing fire. It will be useful for motivated campaigns and mudslinging on each other, but not serve the purpose of peace and tranquility. Therefore the BJP and TMC should give up violent politics and choose Gandhian path of non-violence to establish peace in WB.

P H Hema Sagar, Secunderabad

thehansreader@gmail.com

Former MLA meeting Eatala leads to political speculations

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

FORMER MLA Enugu Ravinder Reddy, who participated in Telangana agitation and also close aide of Finance Minister T Harish Rao, is likely to join hands with senior leader Eatala Rajender as the former met Eatala and expressed solidarity.

Enugu Ravinder Reddy made his political entry in 2004 with the TRS from Yellareddy Assembly constituency. He has been with the TRS during the days of Telangana agitation. He lost the election in 2018 to Congress candidate J Surender. Since then Ravinder Reddy was away from active politics as the MLA was given all the importance in the party. Ravinder Reddy's meeting with Eatala has led to speculations in political circles because he is



closely associated with Finance Minister Harish Rao.

Though Surender and Ravinder were at loggerheads in the constituency and the present MLA

had supremacy, the ex-MLA maintained relations with Harish Rao. Later, he maintained relationship with Rajender and took up development activities in his

constituency through the Minister.

It was said that Ravinder Reddy was forced by his followers to join BJP and give a shock to the TRS. However, its learnt that the ex-MLA told them that this was not the right time and adopted a 'wait and watch policy'.

According to the analysts, the TRS leadership would not like this, which was trying to isolate Eatala Rajender in the constituency. The party has already entrusted the responsibility to Captain Lakshmikantha Rao to keep the flock together. The TRS leader has been getting support from various quarters.

On Thursday, former MP Konda Vishweshwar Reddy met Rajender at his residence in Shameerpet. The former MP said that he met Rajender as his wife Jamuna is their relative.



Education Minister Sabitha Indra Reddy distributing Kalyana Lakshmi cheques to the beneficiaries at Jalpally municipality of Maheshwaram constituency on Friday

Sabitha distributes Kalyana Lakshmi, Shaadi Mubarak cheques

HANS NEWS SERVICE
MAHESHWARAM

EDUCATION Minister Sabitha Indra Reddy distributed Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak cheques to the beneficiaries at Jalpally municipality of Maheshwaram constituency on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak is a welfare scheme of the government for providing financial assistance to the poor parents to perform their daughters marriage. 'The scheme gives financial assistance and is aimed at preventing child mar-

riages and support marriage expense for financially distressed families. The beneficiaries should utilise the opportunity properly. No matter what dire situation we face, no welfare scheme will be stopped in the State,' the Minister informed. Local TRS leaders and others were present.



District Collector Pausumi Basu enquiring about the house-to-house survey at Rampur Thanda on Friday

Collector visits Rampur Thanda

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIKARABAD

DISTRICT Collector Pausumi Basu on Friday visited Rampur Thanda in Dharur mandal and inspected the house-to-house survey of Covid-19 victims.

After examining the survey conducted by the village secretary and Asha workers, the Collector said that those suffering with fever, cough and cold should be identified and their details should be handed

over to the medical department.

She also said that all arrangements should be made to provide Covid-19 medicine kits to them as soon as possible. She advised people to take proper care by following social distancing. Sarpanches should cooperate with the secretaries and Asha workers to prepare for the house-to-house survey, the Collector added. DI P O Anita, Sarpanch, Village Secretaries, Asha Workers and others were present.

Newly elected Municipal chairperson takes oath

HANS NEWS SERVICE
SHADNAGAR

BATUKA Lavanya Devender Yadav, the first Municipal chairperson of newly formed Kothur municipality took oath on Friday. RDO Rajeshwari and Returning Officer administered the oath of office to Batuka Lavanya Devender Yadav as Mayor, Doli Ravinder as vice-chairperson as well as all ward members on the occasion. State Minister Satyavathi Rathod and MLCs Vanidevi and Baswaraj Saraiya registered their votes as ex-officio in Kothur Municipal Chairman election.

In all, 12 Ward members, seven TRS ward members and five Congress ward members assumed charge and with ex-officio votes, TRS increased its count to 10. Animal Husbandry & Fisheries Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav, Excise Minister Srinivas Goud and ST Welfare & Women and Children Welfare Minister Satyavathi Rathod along with MLC Vani Devi and Local MLA Anjaiah Yadav attended the election process.

Local TRS leaders and other officials were also present.



The car that overturned on PVNR flyover in Hyderabad on Friday

Car overturns on PVNR flyover

HANS NEWS SERVICE
RAJENDRANAGAR

A few persons were injured after a XUV 500 was overturned on PV Narasimha Rao flyover heading towards Rajiv Gandhi International Airport on Friday afternoon. The incident took place at 281 Pillar on the flyover.

According to the details, the car was travelling going Mehdiapatnam to Rajiv Gandhi Inter-

national Airport when the accident took place. The vehicle hit the median of the flyover and also toppled over an electric pole. All the injured were immediately shifted to hospital.

On receiving information, Rajendranagar police reached the spot and cleared the traffic. Later, with the help of a crane, the vehicle (XUV 500), which was blocking the road, was taken away.



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy reviews paddy procurement, door delivery of ration and related issues at his camp office on Friday

CM orders activation of Agri Advisory Boards

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy directed the officials to activate agriculture advisory boards and create awareness on all aspects to the board members ensuring they support farmers at all times starting from crop planning.

During a review at camp office here on Friday, the Chief Minister said agriculture advisory boards should function in coordination with Rythu Bharosa Kendras and added that women farmers should be involved in all the activities. He said civil supplies minister will monitor the responsibilities and functioning of these committees and added that no farmer should be troubled in this regard. The advisory boards should inform the farmers beforehand on crops to be grown so that they could be procured. He said farmers should be made aware of alternative crops to be cultivated if paddy is not profitable due to various reasons and instructed the officials to ensure the income of farmers is not reduced.

The Chief Minister said there should be no involvement of millers in paddy procurement and only officials should know the details of crop going to the millers. He said

district collectors should procure gunny bags if necessary and added that meters are available at RBKs to measure moisture content during paddy procurement.

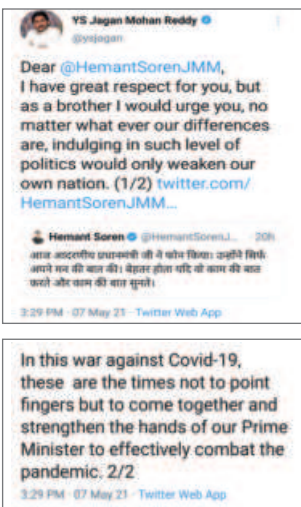
He said district should be taken as a unit and paddy should be sent to mills on that basis. Paddy procurement should be done in time as promised earlier and the whole process has to be done by the government. The Chief Minister said civil supplies department also should own RBKs as it is department's responsibility to supply the seeds as requested by the farmers and added that agriculture department should ensure farmers are not cheated in terms of quality. He said both the departments should work collaboratively from e-cropping to marketing of the crop.

He said there should not be any mistake in door delivery of PDS rice and added that mobile dispensing units should ensure no one misses the ration. Distribution of rice should be completed in stipulated time, he said and asked the officials to procure required weighing scales. He directed the officials not to compromise over the quality of rice and asked them to prepare an action plan for taking ration at village/ward secretariat in case they miss to

take at doorstep. The officials informed the Chief Minister that the government has set a target to procure 45.20 lakh tonne paddy in this (2020-21) rabi season and added that it would be 15 per cent more compared to last year. They said paddy production would be estimated at 65.23 lakh tonne this year and they were procuring 50,000 metric tonne paddy per day currently, which would be increased to 70,000 tonne soon.

The officials of civil supplies department said paddy procurement centres (PPCs) would set up counters at RBKs and the farmers who want to sell their produce should register in the counter and get a coupon with details of date of procurement. The staff of PPCs would go to farmers and procure the crop at farm gates, they said.

Civil supplies minister Kodali Sri Venkatswara Rao, agriculture special chief secretary Poonam Malakondaiah, civil supplies commissioner Kona Shasidhar, Civil Supplies Corporation vice-chairman and managing director A Surya Kumar, agriculture commissioner H Arun Kumar and other officials were present.



Jagan faults Jharkhand CM for his jibe at PM

AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy on Friday lashed out at his Jharkhand counterpart Hemant Soren for his jibe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Jagan took exception to a tweet by Soren in which the latter took a dig at the Prime Minister saying he only spoke 'Mann ki Baat' and that it would have been better if he had discussed business. Soren was referring to the Prime Ministers telephonic conversation with him on Thursday evening on the Covid-19 situation in Jharkhand. Taking to Twitter on Friday, Jagan said: "Dear @HemantSorenJMM, I have great respect for you, but as a brother I would urge you, no matter what ever our differences are, indulging in such level of politics would only weaken our own nation. (1/2) twitter.com/HemantSorenJMM..."

While Soren did not react to Jagans tweets, Congress MP Saptagiri Ulaka countered the AP CM, saying "Really sad to learn son of such a tall leader from Congress late Shri Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy ji is now playing doodle-doodle with Modi for petty politics fearing CB, ED raids. Grow up @ysjagan, you are a CM now."

Sajjala accuses Naidu of tainting State's image

- Blames TDP chief's 'new strain' of virus claims for the curbs imposed by Delhi and Odisha on travellers from AP
- Claims that Naidu is deliberately ignoring the facts and carrying out his false propaganda despite CCMB director saying that the N440K is not a deadly one and nothing new
- Asserts that the State has the capacity to administer 6 lakh doses a day if vaccines are available



Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

YSRCP general secretary and Government Adviser (Public Affairs) Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy came down heavily on TDP president N Chandrababu Naidu for carrying out 'malicious propaganda' against the state on the new strain of virus, due to which the governments of Delhi and Odisha have already imposed restrictions on the people travelling from Andhra Pradesh.

Addressing a press conference here on Friday, Ramakrishna Reddy said that Chandrababu had come up with an absurd idea of spreading rumours on N440K strain, to defame the government and take revenge on people for rejecting him in the elections.

With these restrictions, people from Andhra will be sent to quarantine for 14 days in states like Delhi and Odisha, causing them inconvenience, he said.

The YSRCP leader said that Chandrababu Naidu has been doing this with no basic knowledge on science or medicine with the sole agenda to tarnish the image of government. Although CCMB director has been saying that the N440K is not a deadly one, nothing new

and was already found in other states like Kerala and Karnataka, Chandrababu intentionally ignored the facts and took up false propaganda. He lambasted the Opposition leader for portraying people from Andhra Pradesh as super transmitters of Covid-19 to other states and said that cases should be filed against Chandrababu for spreading rumours in these tough times causing inconvenience to the people.

As the Leader of the Opposition, Chandrababu has to give advice to the government, but it has become a habit to criticise whatever the government is doing, he added. Further, Ramakrishna Reddy said that Chandrababu has been staying in other state and trying to gain from politicising these sensitive issues. "Naidu, who boasts about his 40 years experience, should have acted responsibly and built confidence among people," he said. Ramakrishna Reddy said the Chief Minister has already written letters to the Centre asking for 25 lakh doses of vaccines.

Like no other state, Andhra Pradesh has administered over 6 lakh doses of vaccine in a single day and has a capacity to continue it at the same pace if enough vaccine doses were supplied.

Govt staff working hours relaxed

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

TAKING in to consideration the surge in Covid cases, the state government issued orders allowing the employees of all departments of the Secretariat, heads of departments (HoDs), district offices and sub-district offices to report for work from 8 am to 11.30 am. The heads of departments shall take stock of the work and decide on how many employees have to stay back in the office and arrange passes for them if it is beyond 12 noon.

Issuing the orders, Chief Secretary Aditya Nath Das said, however, these timings are not applicable to departments of essential services or Covid management like medical and health department, energy, municipal administration and urban development and panchayat raj. He said that the orders will come into force with immediate effect.

State sees 17,188 new cases, 73 deaths

Chittoor tops with 2,260 infections in 24 hours

AMARAVATI

STATE'S cumulative coronavirus tally shot up to 12,45,374 as 17,188 fresh cases were added in the 24 hours ending 9 am on Friday. The total recoveries went up to 10,50,160 after 12,749 more infected persons got cured, according to the latest bulletin. With 73 fresh fatalities reported in a day, the gross toll touched 8,519, the bulletin said. Only Chittoor district reported 2,260 fresh Covid-19 cases in 24 hours while seven districts added between 1,300 and 1,900 each. Five districts reported less than 1,000 new cases each. Vizianagaram reported the highest of 11 deaths, Visakhapatnam 10, East Godavari eight, Chittoor seven, Krishna and Guntur six each, Kurnool, Prakasam and West Godavari five each, Nellore and Srikakulam four each and Anantapuram two in a day.

‘Charged ₹1.20 lakh to take patient from Gurgaon to Ludhiana’

Ambulance driver agreed to charge ₹20K less after being told that family had O2 stock with them

CHANDIGARH

An elderly COVID positive woman was charged a whopping Rs 1.20 lakh by a private ambulance for an about 350 km journey from Gurgaon to a hospital in Punjab's Ludhiana, her family has alleged.

The woman's son-in-law said on Friday that after failing to find a bed for her in Gurgaon, they decided to take her to Ludhiana on May 3 where they had found a bed at a hospital. "My mother-in-law's oxygen saturation level was very low due to Covid. I was searching for a hospital bed in Gurgaon but was unable to find one. Meanwhile, my wife told me that there is a bed available in a hospital in Ludhiana after which we decided to rush her there," the woman's relative told reporters. The woman's daughter also told reporters in Ludhiana

that as ambulances were not readily available, they somehow managed to contact one Delhi-based operator who agreed to take the patient to Ludhiana but demanded Rs 1.40 lakh initially.

However, he agreed to charge Rs 20,000 less after being told that the family had the oxygen stock with them. An amount of Rs 95,000 was paid to the ambulance operator as advance while the remaining Rs 25,000 was paid immediately upon reaching Ludhiana, the patient's daughter said. She said even when she pleaded that the amount being charged was quite high, it did not have much affect on the ambulance operator. She said the ambulance operator's driver even issued her a receipt for Rs 1.20 lakh.

Later, someone from her family put this receipt over social media after which it was widely shared and mat-



ter reached the Delhi Police and a case was lodged. Several patients who are unable to find beds in the Delhi-NCR region are rushing to hospitals in various cities of Punjab and Haryana.

There have been reports that many private ambulances were allegedly fleeing patients. A day earlier, the Haryana Police had said it will provide 440 vehicles, 20 each to the state's 22 districts, to be used as ambulances for the needy COVID-19 patients.

The COVID-19 Hospital Transport Service (COV-HOTS) is being provided free of charge as instances of shortage of ambulances and over-charging have been noticed, the Haryana Police had said in a statement on Thursday. These vehicles are being given to the districts on a temporary basis to transport needy patients from their homes to hospitals and also drop them back once

they have recover, it said.

Meanwhile, the Congress-affiliated National Students' Union of India (NSUI) on Friday launched a free ambulance service to take COVID-19 patients to hospitals. The facility will be available for all patients in Delhi from Friday evening and people can avail it by calling on 9756266887, 9560000910 and 9169515455, the union said in a statement. There will be two ambulances and these will have oxygen support, it said, adding that the service will be free of cost for coronavirus patients. NSUI national president Neeraj Kundan said, "In these difficult times, it is important that each one of us realises our responsibilities. Our 'Sahyog Campaign' is not just an initiative to help people in need but also a message for youngsters in society to contribute as per their capacity." PTI SLB

WINDOWS

3 injured in grenade attack

SRINAGAR: Three people, including two security personnel, were injured in a grenade attack in Srinagar on Friday, police said.

Police said militants hurled a grenade at CRPF troopers belonging to 36 Battalion in Nawa Bazar area of old Srinagar.

"The grenade exploded, injuring three persons - police constable, Fayaz Ahmed, a CRPF jawan identified as Harish Kumar, and a civilian identified as Haziq Ali, belonging to Chanapora area of Srinagar city.



A health worker searches for photographs on her phone to show it to the relatives of a Covid-19 patient, at a State Government run hospital in Kolkata on Friday

Waze allowed to get pills

Mumbai: A special court in Mumbai directed the Talaja jail authorities to provide medicines and a few items of daily need to suspended police officer Sachin Waze.

Waze, arrested in connection with the recovery of an explosives-laden SUV near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's house and death of Thane businessman Mansukh Hiran, is currently in judicial custody.

He had moved the court, seeking a T-shirt and pair of jeans, sports shoes, washing powder, sugar and salt jars, salt packets, bath soap, spectacles and medicines inside prison.

India records highest-ever tally of 4.14 L cases

Panel considers increasing interval between 2 Covishield doses, decision next week

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI

WITH a record 4,14,188 new coronavirus infections being reported in a day, India's total tally of COVID-19 cases climbed to 2,14,91,598, while the active cases crossed the 36-lakh mark, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Friday.

The death toll has increased to 2,34,083 with 3,915 fatalities being reported in a span of 24 hours, the data updated at 8 am showed. Registering a steady increase, the active cases have increased to 36,45,164 comprising 16.96 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate has dropped to 81.95 per cent.

An expert panel of the government is considering increasing the gap between two doses of Oxford-AstraZeneca's Covishield vaccine. The panel is reviewing new evidence from international studies that suggest the vaccine's efficacy is improved if the interval between the two doses is longer. The committee is likely to take a decision next week.

The recommended interval between the two doses of Covishield, manufactured by Pune's Serum Institute of India (SII), was increased from four-six weeks to six-eight weeks in April.

The Union Health Ministry requested all the States and Union Territories to prioritise the beneficiaries of the second dose of the vaccine.

"From the side of the Union Health Ministry, we requested all the states/UTs to prioritise the beneficiaries of the second dose and ensure the timely completion of the recommended vaccination schedule," Additional Secretary (Health) Arti Ahuja said.

The Supreme Court said it will not leave Karnataka citizens in the lurch as it refused to interfere with the Karnataka High Court order asking the Centre to increase the daily oxygen allocation for the state from 965 MT to 1200 MT for treating COVID-19 patients. A bench of justices D Y Chandrachud and M R Shah said the high court's interim order of May 5 is a "well calibrated, deliberated and judicious exercise of power", and does not preclude mutual resolution between the Centre and the state government.

The apex court said: "The order of the High Court is based on the need to maintain at least a minimum requirement as projected by the State Government until a decision on the representation is taken and the High Court is apprised.



Beneficiaries in the age group of 45 and above get vaccinated, at a drive-in camp at Nerul, Navi Mumbai on Friday

Prioritise vaccinations for 45+: Centre to States

Can't leave Karnataka citizens in lurch, says SC

Chhota Rajan alive: AIIMS

NEW DELHI: Underworld don Chhota Rajan is still alive. He is admitted at AIIMS for treatment of COVID19: AIIMS official.

It was reported widely that the gangster had died of Covid-19 at the AIIMS, Delhi. However, the hospital clarified that the Chhota Rajan is still alive and is admitted at AIIMS for treatment of the virus.

Rajan, 62, was admitted to the hospital on April 26 after he was confirmed to have contracted the coronavirus infection.

The gangster was lodged in the high security Tihar jail since his extradition from Indonesia back in 2015.

Maha Min: No supply of Covaxin

MUMBAI: Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope on Friday alleged that most of the pharmaceutical companies are not supplying the mandated quantity of Remdesivir to the state.

Of the total number of Remdesivir vials that the Indian government has received as part of the US aid, Maharashtra managed to get 52,000 vials, he added. According to him, except Hetero Labs, no other pharmaceutical company is supplying Remdesivir as per the fixed quota.

"There is no supply of Covaxin and if we don't get the supply we have to transfer vaccines allotted to 18-44 yrs to 45 years and above age group."

Mamata to Modi: Increase O2 supply

KOLKATA: Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee wrote to PM Narendra Modi, seeking increased supply of medical oxygen for Covid-19 treatment. Banerjee also said that the Centre hiked oxygen allocation for other states out of the total production in Bengal, despite its enhanced requirement. The chief minister said daily consumption of oxygen in her state has gone up to 470 MT in the last 24 hours and is expected to increase to 550 MT per day in about a week. "I would request you to kindly have the allocation of medical oxygen reviewed and instructions issued for an immediate allocation of at least 550 MT per day of MO," she said .

‘My relative couldn't get a bed because he wasn't Chhota Rajan'

MUMBAI: Actor Irrfan Khan's wife, Sutapa Sikdar, had penned a note on Facebook after the death of a relative due to Covid-19. She wrote in her note that she was unable to find a hospital bed for him, amid an acute shortage of resources in New Delhi.

Sutapa wrote on May 4, "I posted day before for help for my relative Sameer Banerjee. Today he left us. We couldn't set up an ICU at home in Delhi the capital of India. And we couldn't get a bed in the hospital. My gratitude to all the covid warriors who helped. I will never forget you all, my blessings to you all till I live."

She continued, "I will never forget sameer's smile. I will cherish my adolescent memories with him. I will never ever forget that I couldn't get a bed in ICU for him because he was not Chota Rajan. He was an honest man. I will not forget this mayhem in Delhi."

Meanwhile, three days after eight Asiatic lions in Hyderabad tested positive for COVID-19, the Delhi zoo on Friday said it has sent samples of some animals, including a lion, to the Indian Veterinary Research Institute in Bareilly "as a precautionary measure".

Zoo Director Ramesh Pandey said all protocols are being followed as per the guidelines of the Central Zoo Authority. "We are vigilant and doing the needful. Samples of some animals, including a lion, have been sent to IVRI. Nothing adverse has been informed or reported so far. Detail reports are awaited," he said in a statement.

"The animals haven't shown any COVID-19 symptoms. Samples have been collected as a precautionary measure," Pandey said, without elaborating. Sanitization drills at the zoo have been going on since the pandemic began last year. "After COVID-19 phase, the zoo went through avian influenza sanitisation drills and now all protocols are being followed for SARS-COV-2," he said.

Lawyer on EC's panel resigns over values

NEW DELHI: One of the lawyers in the Election Commission's panel of counsels for the Supreme Court has resigned saying his values "are not in consonance" with the poll body at this point.

Mohit D Ram, who had been on the Election Commission's counsel panel since 2013, said in his resignation letter: "I have found that my values are not in consonance with the current functioning of the EC; and hence I withdraw myself from the responsibilities of its panel counsel before the Supreme Court of India."

He described representing the Election Commission "a cherishing milestone" of his career.

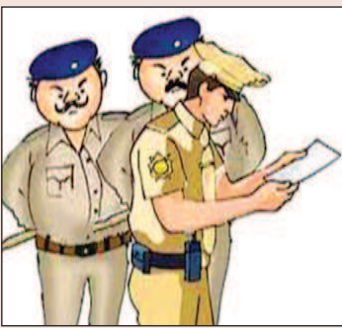
Ram's resignation comes after the Election Commission fought a case in the Supreme Court requesting that the media be stopped from reporting court observations. The Election Commission's objection involved the Madras High Court recently commenting that the poll body was singularly responsible for the Covid surge and "should be booked for murder" for not stopping election rallies in the last two months. The comment was not in the final order.

Nine arrested persons found in one lock up, cops face action

PUNE: The police personnel at Pimpri Police Station in Pune are in for trouble after Police Commissioner Krishna Prakash, in a surprise check, found as many as nine persons, arrested on different charges, crammed in one lock up, according to Indian Express report.

The police commissioner has taken serious note of the violation of the social distancing norms and has sought explanation from them.

"We have sought an explanation from the Pimpri police for putting as many as nine persons in one lock up. This is a clear violation of the social distancing norms and the Covid-19 appropriate behav-



iour. Instead of setting an example before the society, the police were themselves found violating the laid-down norms," the police chief said.

"Based on their explanation, we will decide what disciplinary action should be taken against the police personnel at Pimpri police station," said Prakash.

Not just for violating Covid-19 protocol, but the police personnel at Pimpri police station also face action for behaving insensitively with a "couple" who complained against the exorbitant rate sought to be charged by ambulance service for taking a patient to the hospital.

Soren's tweet targeting PM Modi draws flak

NEW DELHI

A tweet by Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren taking a dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi has not gone down well with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and some others in the political circles.

In a tweet, Soren had alleged that the Prime Minister did not listen to him during a phone call to discuss the Covid-19 situation.

On Thursday, Modi spoke to the Chief Ministers of Jharkhand, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana over the prevailing Covid-19 situation in their respec-

tive states. "Respected Prime Minister called today. He only spoke his 'Mann Ki baat'. It would have been better if he had talked about the work done and listened to the other side," Soren tweeted at 11.19 p.m. on Thursday.

Within an hour, Assam Health Minister and BJP leader Himanta Biswa Sarma tweeted: "Your tweet is not only against basic dignity, but also to make fun of the suffering of the people of the state for whom the Prime Minister called you to know about. You have lowered the dignity of the Chief Minister's post."

SC refuses to interfere with Central Vista, asks HC to decide

NEW DELHI

CITING that the Delhi High Court is already seized of the matter, the Supreme Court on Friday declined to interfere with the Central Vista redevelopment project.

A bench comprising Justices Vineet Saran and Dinesh Maheshwari granted the petitioner liberty to mention the matter before the Chief Justice of Delhi High Court for early hearing.

The bench also asked the high court to preferably consider the plea for an early hearing. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, submitted that the high court has kept the matter for hearing on May 17.

Senior advocate Sidharth Luthra, representing

the petitioners, argued: "We are facing a humanitarian health crisis. If this project is deferred by four to six weeks nothing will happen." He added that the IPL has already been suspended and we are facing an unprecedented Covid-19 crisis.

Mehta submitted that the petitioner coming to court by way of a PIL and filing a Special Leave Petition (SLP) against an adjournment order of the high court raises serious doubt.

Mehta said that an appeal against an adjournment would set a wrong precedent.

Luthra contended before the bench that when human life is concerned, government has to protect. He added that from April to May, the positivity rate of Covid-19 in Delhi has increased and number of deaths due to Covid-19, have gone up.



Calling the Central Vista project a "criminal wastage", former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Friday urged the Narendra Modi government to focus more on people's lives.

"Central Vista is criminal wastage. Put people's lives at the centre -- not your blind arrogance to get a new house," he said in a tweet.

The Congress and the several opposition parties have questioned the need of the new Parliament building, and suggested that all resources should be put to fight Covid-19 pandemic.

On Friday, India recorded 4.14 lakh fresh cases of Covid with 3,915 deaths in the last 24 hours.

Rahul Gandhi's remarks on Friday came three days after the reports of Central Public Works Department (CPWD) has informed a government-ap-

pointed expert panel that the construction of the Prime Minister's residence under the ambitious Central Vista project will be completed by December 2022.

The CPWD, which is the project developer, had informed the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) that the expansion of the Parliament building and the construction of a new Parliament building will be done by November 2022 and the Prime Minister's residence will be constructed by December 2022.

The Ministry of Environment has already granted the clearance for the expansion and renovation of the existing Parliament building, which is part of the Rs 13,450 crore Central Vista Redevelopment Project.

TODAY'S QUOTE

SBI, EBI invests €100 million in SME's

“SBI inks pact with European Investment Bank to pump 100 million Euro's in equity financing into Indian small businesses focused on climate change and sustainability. We have created 'Neev Fund II' for taking ahead this partnership and EIB's first private equity investments in India

—Dinesh Khara, SBI chairman



ACQUISITION

Sonova acquires German's Sennheiser

Swiss hearing care solutions provider Sonova has acquired the consumer electronics business of German audio brand Sennheiser for an undisclosed sum, the companies announced on Friday. Subject to regulatory approval, the plan is to complete the transfer of the business to Sonova by the end of 2021.

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)

US Dollar	74.33	South	
Euro	89.77	African Rand	5.94
UAE Dirham	20.64	Hong Kong Dollar	10.9
Thai Baht	2.59	Japanese Yen	0.78
British Pound	103.49	New Zealand Dollar	53.68
Australian Dollar	57.74	Saudi Riyal	21.58
Canadian Dollar	61	Swedish Krona	10.07
Swiss Franc	81.92	Singapore Dollar	56.35

DELHI SATURDAY 8 MAY 2021

BIZ BRIEFS

Mahindra's design centre

Mahindra Group announced the setting up of an advanced design centre for mobility products in the UK. Mahindra Advanced Design Europe (MADE) is being set up in the West Midlands, and the new Centre of Excellence (CoE) will be a part of the Mahindra global design network that includes the Mahindra Design Studio in Mumbai, and Pininfarina Design in Turin (Italy), Mahindra & Mahindra. It also supports the creation of highly skilled design roles, drawing from colleges in the UK and Europe. "MADE is a strategic enhancement of Mahindra's global design capabilities and renews its commitment to bring to its customers, sophisticated, authentic SUVs with an unmissable presence," it added. The new design centre will further sharpen Mahindra's distinctive product designs and differentiated technology offerings to efficient connected car experiences, M&M said.

Fino enhances limit to Rs 2L

In line with RBI's revised guideline Fino Payments Bank has increased the end of the day account balance limit to Rs 2 lakh for its customers. The bank, which became profitable in the fourth quarter of FY20, went live with the enhanced limit effective 1st May 2021. As per the initial payments bank guidelines issued by RBI in 2014, the deposit limit was set at Rs 1 lakh. "Following RBI directive, we have updated our processes and systems and went live on 1st of May. The increased deposit limit allows our customers to save more money in their account. Further, our existing sweep account mechanism continues with our partner bank wherein customers can save funds in excess of 2 lakh," said Ashish Ahuja, COO, Fino Payments Bank.

MARKET RALLIES ON STRONG Q4 RESULTS

Sensex climbs 257 points, Nifty zooms 98 points

MUMBAI

EQUITY benchmarks stretched their winning streak for the third session on Friday as robust corporate results and positive global cues propped up risk appetite despite the Covid-19 overhang.

A strong recovery in the rupee, which zoomed 27 paise against the US dollar, also bolstered investor sentiment, traders said. The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 256.71 points or 0.52 per cent to finish at 49,206.47.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty rose 98.35 points or 0.67 per cent to 14,823.15. HDFC was the top performer in the Sensex pack, spurting 2.70 per cent, after reporting a 31 per cent jump in consolidated net profit at Rs 5,669 crore for the March quarter. M&M, Bajaj Finserv, NTPC, Bharti Airtel, ITC, ONGC and UltraTech Cement were the other prominent winners, rising up to 2.68 per cent.

On the other hand, Bajaj Auto, Bajaj Finance, Infosys, Kotak Bank and ICICI Bank tumbled up to 2 per cent. During the week, the Sensex ad-

vanced 424.11 points or 0.86 per cent, and the Nifty jumped 192.05 points or 1.31 per cent. Market opened with a gap up tracking heavyweights gains and was able to maintain its optimism to the end, supported by the global market.

Global bourses were largely positive as easing restrictions on movement in the US and Europe along with the expectation of better US job data signalled a faster economic rebound in the western markets. "Metal stocks are continuing their upbeat movement on improved sectoral outlook while mid-cap stocks underperformed their peers," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

BSE metal, basic materials, telecom, power, realty, oil and gas, utilities and finance indices rallied up to 5.29 per cent, while consumer

durables, capital goods and IT ended in the red. Broader BSE midcap index slipped 0.04 per cent, while the smallcap gauge rose 0.15 per cent. India reported a record 4,14,188 new coronavirus infections in a day, taking the total tally of Covid-19 cases to 2,14,91,598, while the active cases crossed the 36-lakh mark, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Friday.

The death toll has increased to 2,34,083 with 3,915 fatalities being reported in a span of 24 hours. Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai and Hong Kong were in the red, while Tokyo and Seoul ended on a positive note. Stock exchanges in Europe were trading with gains in mid-session deals. Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.25 per cent lower at \$67.92 per barrel. The rupee gained for the second straight day and closed 27 paise higher at 73.51 against the US dollar. Foreign institutional investors were net buyers in the capital market on Thursday as they purchased shares worth Rs 1,222.58 crore, as per exchange data.



Tata Steel posts ₹7,162 cr net in Q4

NEW DELHI

TATA Steel on Wednesday posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 7,161.91 crore for the quarter ended March 2021, mainly on account of higher income. The company had reported a net loss of Rs 1,615.35 crore in the year ago quarter, Tata Steel said in a BSE filing. During January-March 2021, the company's total income jumped to Rs 50,249.59 crore from Rs 37,322.68 crore earlier.

Total expenses rose to Rs 40,052 crore from Rs 35,432.42 crore in the January-March pe-

riod of 2019-20. On a standalone basis, Tata Steel reported a Rs 6,593.54 crore net profit during the January-March quarter. The company had clocked a standalone net loss of Rs 436.83 crore in the year-ago period. Its total income grew to Rs 21,392.34 crore from Rs 14,182.79 crore a year ago. Tata Steel said its board has also recommended a dividend of Rs 25 per fully paid-up ordinary share of Rs 10 for the financial year ended March 31, 2021. The dividend payout is subject to the approval of shareholders at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the company scheduled for June 30, 2021.



HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

KEEPING in view the safety of its customers during the current pandemic situation, LIC has given following relaxations in various claim settlement requirements to make the processes easier and hassle-free.

To facilitate speedy settlement of death claims in the prevailing situation where death has occurred in a hospital, in lieu of Municipal death certificates, LIC has allowed alternate proofs of death such as: death certificate, discharge summary/death sum-



mary containing clear date and time of death issued by Govt/ESI/Armed Forces/Corporate Hospitals and countersigned by LIC class I officers or development officers of 10 years standing

along with

cremation/burial certificate or authentic identifying receipt issued by the relevant authority.

In other cases, death certificate issued by the Municipal Department will be required as earlier.

For annuities with return of capital options, production of life certificates is waived for annuities due up to October 31, 2021, besides accepting life certificates sent through email in other cases. LIC has also introduced Life certificate procurement through video call process.

To address the difficulties experienced by policyholders in

RBI liquidity push will augment health infra

MUMBAI

THE Rs 50,000-crore liquidity window offered by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to banks under priority-sector lending to augment Covid-19 healthcare infrastructure will help raise treatment capacity, and availability of medicines and medical equipment, in India, Crisil said on Friday. Hospitals could be among the biggest beneficiaries as the incremental funding can potentially increase bed capacity in the country by 15-20 per cent, the ratings agency said.

Loans under the scheme, for tenures up to 3 years, are available to banks at the repo rate till March 31, 2022. Such loans would also be classified under priority sector. Consequently, banks are expected to extend these loans below current interest rates for companies engaged in health care activities. These include makers and suppliers of vaccines and drugs; hospitals; pathology labs; suppliers of oxygen; makers of emergency medical equipment; logistics firms; and Covid-19 patients. As many as 354 CRISIL-rated companies with aggregate bank exposure of Rs 40,000 crore will be eligible for such loans.

LIC eases claim settlement norms



Global realty sentiments improved

MUMBAI

THE sentiment in the real estate markets globally improved in the first quarter of 2021, according to a report by RICS. The results of the Q1 2021 RICS Global Commercial Property Monitor (GCPM) point to a gradual improvement in sentiment in the real estate market as hopes for economic recovery gather momentum.

It noted that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) at its April meeting upgraded the forecast for global growth for 2021 to 6 per cent (from 5.5 per cent previously) and for 2022 to 4.4 per cent (from 4.2 per cent). "Meanwhile, the headline RICS metric (GCPSD) capturing confidence in global real estate climbed from (-)27 to (-)18. This is the least negative reading since Q4 2019 and compares with a low of (-)37 in Q2 2020," the report said.

The Asia Pacific sentiment indicator leads the pack at '(-)15' (as against '(-)25') in the previous three-month period. The feedback for Europe shows sentiment at '(-)19' (previously '(-)26'), the Americas at '(-)20' (against the period reading of '(-)29') and Middle East and Africa at '(-)22' (from '(-)25'). The latest results continue to show investor sentiment running ahead of the occupier market, it said. The global indicator for the former came in at '(-)10' compared with '(-)19' in Q4 2020.

COVID CRISIS

Builders seek support from Reserve Bank

NEW DELHI

REALTORS' apex bodies CREDAI and Naredco have demanded that the RBI should consider allowing loan restructuring, interest moratorium, and additional liquidity support for the real estate sector.

They welcomed the various steps taken by the RBI on Wednesday such as allowing certain individual and small borrowers more time to repay debt and permitting banks to give priority loans to vaccine makers, hospitals, and Covid-related health infrastructure. However, the two associations as well as property developers and consultants urged the RBI to announce measures to support the realty sector in dealing with the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. Housing sales plunged by 40-50 per cent during 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The revival in demand, witnessed from October last year, received a major setback with an outbreak of the second wave in late March of this year.

"CREDAI urges and expects that similar measures which shall address concerns of large businesses and labor-intensive sectors like real estate will be announced in days to come," CREDAI National President Harsh Vardhan Patodia said in a statement. He demanded that the RBI should make accounts that are classified as



SMA 1 and SMA 2 eligible for restructuring and interest moratorium.

Patodia said additional liquidity should be provided for the development of real estate projects. "The aftereffect of the second wave will last for a much longer period because of the exponentially large number of infections and deaths and the true impact is, yet to be assessed. Hence, proactive measures, much larger than those announced during the first wave of the pandemic last year, are the need of the hour," he said.

Naredco President Niranjan Hiranandani hoped that the RBI will also consider industries like real estate, which need similar support during these challenging times. "We look forward to actions that are sequenced, calibrated, and well-timed so as to reach out to industries like real estate," he added. Anshuman Magazine,

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, India, South-East Asia, Middle East and Africa, CBRE, termed the announcement of restructuring of loans for small borrowers as a proactive move, which would prevent asset downgrade and also avoid relief to lenders.

Dhruv Agarwala, Group Chief Executive Officer, Housing.com, Makaan.com and PropTiger.com, said the real estate sector was anticipating steps such as assistance in loan restructuring and a moratorium to help it get through these difficult times. "In its next announcement, the RBI should take into consideration the needs of the real estate sector," he added.

Anarock chairman Anuj Puri said, the RBI's decision to allow loan restructuring for individuals and MSMEs (Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises) hit by the second Covid-19 wave will help prevent home loan defaults.

B'luru slips to 40th rank in global price rise list

NEW DELHI

BENGALURU has slipped four positions to rank 40th globally in annual price appreciation of luxury residential properties, according to real estate consultant Knight Frank. In its 'Prime Global Cities Index Q1 2021' report, Knight Frank mentioned that New Delhi and Mumbai, too, slipped one spot each to rank at 32nd and 36th, respectively. In the last report, Delhi was at 31st position, while Mumbai ranked 35th and Bengaluru 36th.

Bengaluru witnessed a fall of 2.7 per cent year-on-year (YoY) in prime residential prices during January-March 2021, leading to a fall in its ranking on the global list. In New Delhi, the prices fell marginally by 0.2 per cent YoY to an average price of Rs 33,572 per sq ft in Q1 2021. Mumbai's prime residential market registered a decline of 1.5 per cent YoY in the January-March quarter with an average price of Rs 63,758 per sq ft.

Prime residential property is defined as the most desirable and most expensive property in a given location, generally defined as the top 5 per cent of each market by value. The Prime Global Cities Index is a valuation-based index tracking the movement in prime residential prices in local currency across 45+ cities worldwide. Shenzhen ranked 1st with 18.9 per cent annual change for the period Q1 2020 - Q1 2021.



Dubai luxury home market soars

DUBAI

AFTER nearly three decades in London, Christophe Reech was fed up with the city's pandemic lockdowns. This spring, he sold his luxury townhouse and jetted off to the desert sheikhdom of Dubai to start a new life with his family. There was no turning back, he said. The French business magnate's super wealthy foreign friends were doing the same, driving an unprecedented surge in sales of Dubai's most-exclusive properties.

"Here in Dubai, there's only one strategy: Business as usual," said Reech, the chairman of an eponymous group that owns real estate and financial technology companies. The philosophy is simple: "Let's make sure everyone's vaccinated and keep everything open." "Of course that attracts people like me," he said.

As vaccines roll out unevenly worldwide and waves of infec-

tions force countries to extend restrictions, foreign buyers flush with cash have flooded Dubai's high-end property market, one of the few places in the world where they can dine, shop and do business in person. They're snapping up record numbers of luxury villas and penthouses, sending prices rocketing in this boom-and-bust market. Sales of Dubai's upscale properties, once slow, soared 230 per cent in the first quarter of 2021, compared to the same period last year. Prices in some top-end areas rose as much as 40 per cent, according to Property Finder, the country's largest real-estate website.

A record-breaking 90 properties worth 10 million dirhams each (USD 2.7 million) changed hands last month, on top of 84 in March, surpassing heights hit eight years ago, according to real estate consultancy Property Monitor. For comparison, there were 54 such transactions in all of 2020.

BCCI has a case to answer on IPL disaster: Gideon Haigh

SYDNEY

THE Indian Premier League (IPL) was increasingly becoming an emblem of the Indian government's apathy and sport's insularity from the raging second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in India before it was postponed, said renowned cricket writer Gideon Haigh.

The initial round of IPL matches were held in four cities, including Ahmedabad and New Delhi, where the medical infrastructure is on the verge of collapse due to the increasing number of Covid patients.

Haigh, in his column for The Australian newspaper, wrote that it was strange that

the IPL's line was that it was playing on for "humanity" when the Indian government had claimed at the start of the year that it had defeated coronavirus.

"...there was just the chance for the IPL to extract some legitimacy from the crisis, by putting its shoulder to the wheel of emergency relief. A few players made charitable donations; three franchises pledged funds. Good for them," he said.

"But then it all rather petered out, and from the BCCI there was two-thirds of diddly squat, just a bizarre effusion from the IPL's CEO, who told its participants that they were playing for 'humanity' -- the same humanity, puzzlingly, that India

had already saved."

Haigh came down hard on the Board of Control for Cricket in India.

"So the world's richest cricket competition stumbled on, increasingly an emblem of the Indian government's apathy and sport's insularity, without so much as a black armband or minute's silence let alone a financial or infrastructural contribution to relieving the burdens of its suffering fans -- until the expensive cordon sanitaire was breached and we know the rest," he wrote.

The BCCI was forced to postpone the IPL this week after the bio-bubbles in New Delhi and Ahmedabad burst, when multi-

ple cases of Covid-19 came up in four of the eight competing franchises.

In the days since, BCCI president Sourav Ganguly and other officials have said that the board was taken by surprise the way the number of Covid-19 cases exploded in the country. This brings up the question of what kind of medical council the BCCI took before holding the IPL, said Haigh.

"Kind of makes you wonder. What counsel did the BCCI take about the COVID environment? As distinct from its uncanny intuition about the national spirit," he asked. "Might its go-to counsel on epidemiology have been that noted ex-

pert Narendra Modi, who as recently as two months ago was declaring victory over COVID, and that India had 'earned the confidence of the whole world' and 'saved humanity'."

Haigh began his column with: "Can an annus mirabilis also be an annus horribilis? The BCCI is testing the possibility."

And he ended it with: "We must now hope that 2021 does not become an annus terribilis for cricket itself." (IANS)



EUROPA LEAGUE

Man United cruise into final, Arsenal lose to Villarreal

ROME

MANCHESTER United lost 2-3 to Roma in second leg of the semi-final of Europa League but cruised through to the final on the basis of an 8-5 aggregate victory.

But it will not be Premier League rivals Arsenal they meet in Poland's Gdansk on May 26, rather Spaniards Villarreal, who are in a first major final after a goalless second leg in London, DPA reports.

The Yellow Submarine, as Villarreal are known, gained revenge for their 2006 Champions League semi-final loss to Arsenal with a 2-1 aggregate triumph while United dominated Roma 8-5. Manchester United's entry to the final means the club could claim both of the major European titles this year as neighbours Manchester City face Chelsea in the Champions League final three days later.

Only the city of Milan has managed this feat, when AC Milan won the Champions League and Inter Milan the UEFA Cup in 1994.

United survived an early scare when their former player Henrikh Mkhitaryan headed wide but Edinson Cavani, with his third chance in the game, smashed in the 39th minute opener to settle their nerves.

He had previously lobbed onto the bar and had a shot saved by keeper Antonio Mirante.

And it was Cavani's simple header from Bruno Fernandes' cross midway through the second half which ultimately put the tie beyond doubt. "It's a great achievement," United captain Harry Maguire told BT Sport.

"Obviously we didn't win the game tonight which is disappointing but we did

Cavani scored twice in each game while De Gea produced some fine saves as Utd advanced 8-5 on aggregate

the hard work in the first leg."

Roma, who will be coached by former United boss Jose Mourinho next season, deservedly levelled when Edin Dzeko headed in from close range and soon after Bryan Cristante fired in on the hour.

United keeper David de Gea, recalled for Europa League fixtures, made some impressive saves from Pedro and Mkhitaryan when a third goal could have sparked a comeback. Teenager Nicola Zalewski did grab the winner on the night but his deflected debut goal offered only late consolation.

"We had some great European nights this season with some big wins," Cristante told UEFA.com. "It's a pity for that second half in Manchester."

"Tonight we still had a few goals to score but we exit the competition with our heads held high." Ole Gunnar Solskjaer had lost his previous four semi-finals as United manager but could finally taste victory.

Villarreal also ended a last four hoodoo as they had lost all five of their previous semi-finals in various competitions. Coach Unai Emery, a former Arsenal manager, won three Europa Leagues with Sevilla and is on the brink of glory once more.

"Villarreal have missed out on so many

semi-final chances to reach the final but now, finally, we've done it,"

said defender Pau Torres. "It's time to enjoy right now but immediately important to prepare the final really well because that's a historic opportunity."

They almost repeated their early goal from the first leg but keeper Bernd Leno saved well from Samuel Chukwueze, who was later carried off injured.

Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang hit the post in the first half for Arsenal with a curling shot and headed onto the woodwork with his last involvement before being substituted 10 minutes from time due to lingering effect of a malaria infection. But Villarreal held on to claim a historic date with United later this month and Arsenal -- a lowly ninth domestically -- face a bitterly disappointing conclusion to the campaign.

"We are devastated, really disappointed but we have to congratulate Villarreal on reaching the final," said Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta. (IANS)



Arsenal's Hector Bellerin (front) and Villarreal's Paco Alcacer challenge for the ball during the Europa League semifinal second leg match at the Emirates stadium in London, England

Chhetri-led Bengaluru FC leave for Maldives to play Club Eagles

BENGALURU

INDIAN Super League (ISL) side Bengaluru FC have departed for the Maldives to take on Club Eagles in the AFC Cup play-off tie in Male, Maldives, on May 11.

The club tweeted early morning, "The Blues (Bengaluru FC) are en route to the Maldives, where a clash against Eagles FC stands between them and passage to the #AFC Cup 2021 Group Stages. Come on, BFC!"

The Sunil Chhetri-led side had crushed Nepalese club Tribhuvan Army FC

5-0 in their AFC Cup Preliminary Round 2 clash and were scheduled to take on the winner of the match between Club Eagles and Abahani Limited Dhaka.

But the Bangladesh club withdrew from the AFC Cup Qualifiers due to the deteriorating Covid-19 situation in the country, thus giving Club Eagles an easy path into the play-off tie.

Bengaluru FC will be firm favourites to win against Club Eagles and book a place in the 2021 AFC Cup Group Stage after their crushing win over Tribhuvan Army FC in Goa on April 16.



Brazilian Cleiton Silva and Rahul Bheke had scored a brace each, while Chhetri too had got his name on the score-sheet after returning from a bout of Covid-19.

The ISL team's 52-year-old German coach Marco Pezzaioli has said that while the AFC Cup play-off is an ongoing campaign, he is looking ahead to the new ISL season.

"We prepare for what we want to develop. Of course, the focus is on the match (in Maldives) but I want to see a better team for the new (ISL) season. Now for me, it's like a pre-season, and I will take every minute with the team," the German tactician said. (IANS)

TOUR OF ENGLAND

Hardik not considered; Kuldeep, Saini dropped

NEW DELHI

HARDIK Pandya was not considered for selection as "he is still not in a position to bowl", while a fit-again Ravindra Jadeja made his way back to a 20-strong Indian squad announced on Friday for next month's World Test Championship final against New Zealand and a five-match series against England.

Along with Jadeja, batsman Hanuma Vihari and senior pacer Mohammed Shami also walked back into the side after missing the home series against England due to injuries. All three had endured injuries during the away series against Australia earlier this year when India recorded one of their best triumphs.

Hardik, who was with team during the home series against England but did not play, has not been picked because he is not fit enough to do the job with the ball. He can play as a specialist batsman in the shorter formats but has to bowl for a place in the Test team.

The selectors also picked four standby players -- Abhimanyu Easwaran, Prasidh Krishna, Avesh Khan, and Arzan Nagwaswalla, the BCCI stated in a press release.

Opener Easwaran and pacer Avesh Khan were also with the team during the England series while the extra pace did it for IPL regular Prasidh Krishna and Gujarat left-arm fast bowler Arzan Nagwaswalla, who had a stellar 2019-20 season. He is the only Parsi cricketer currently playing at the first-class level in India.

The 23-year-old left-arm pacer has 62 first-class wickets to his credit in 16 matches that he has played since his debut in 2018. K L



Ravindra Jadeja

Rahul, who underwent a surgery after being diagnosed with acute appendicitis, and Wriddhiman Saha, infected with COVID-19 during the recently-suspended IPL, have been included subject to fitness.

Out-of-form spinner Kuldeep Yadav and pacer Navdeep Saini have been left out of the squad, which is expected to depart for England for the twin assignments in the third week of this month. Axar Patel has expectedly retained his place as the third spinner after a successful debut series against England.

Batting star Prithvi Shaw has not managed to impress the selectors with his white-ball form and has been overlooked. Also ignored was Bhuvneshwar Kumar, whose fitness woes continue to come in the way of a consistent run.

The WTC final against the Black Caps will be held from June 18 in Southampton followed by the Tests against England from August 4. The Test series against England will start in Nottingham, followed by matches at the Lord's (August 12 to 16), Leeds (August 25 to 29), The Oval (September 2 to 6) and Manchester (September 10 to 14).

INDIA'S SQUAD: Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Mayank Agarwal, Cheteshwar Pujara, Virat Kohli (Captain), Ajinkya Rahane (vice-captain), Hanuma Vihari, Rishabh Pant (wicket-keeper), Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Jasprit Bumrah, Ishant Sharma, Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Siraj, Shardul Thakur, Umesh Yadav, KL Rahul (subject to fitness clearance), Wriddhiman Saha (wicket-keeper; subject to fitness clearance). Standby players: Abhimanyu Easwaran, Prasidh Krishna, Avesh Khan, Arzan Nagwaswalla. (PTI)

Indian shooters to take part in World Cup

NEW DELHI: The last shooting World Cup before the Tokyo Olympics will be held in Osijek, Croatia from June 22 to July 3 and the Indians are set to take part in that event as they would be training in the European country at that time. The combined World Cup is being organised in place of the one earlier scheduled to be held in Baku, Azerbaijan (from June 21 to July 2) but cancelled due to a surge in COVID-19 cases in that country. "Osijek, Croatia, will host the last ISSF World Cup before Tokyo 2020. The competitions will take place from June 22 till July 3, 2021. The programme will include individual, Mixed Team and Team events in Rifle, Pistol and Shotgun Olympic events," the International Shooting Sport Federation said in a statement on Friday. A 15-member Olympic-bound Indian team will leave for Zagreb, Croatia on May 11 to take part in the European C'ship to be held from May 20 to June 6. (PTI)

Rowers win Olympic quota place

NEW DELHI: The Indian rowing team comprising Arun Lal Jat and Arvind Singh won the Tokyo Olympic quota place in men's lightweight double scull event at the World Rowing Asia and Oceania Olympic and Paralympic Qualification Regatta in Tokyo on Friday. The Indian team covered the 2000-metre course in six minutes 36.92 seconds to finish second behind host Japan who clocked six minutes 34.70 seconds. Uzbekistan were third. The top three teams won Olympic quota places.

David Villa joins ISL club Odisha FC

BHUBANESWAR: Indian Super League (ISL) side Odisha FC have brought on board Spanish football legend David Villa, who has joined the club's Football Committee, and will head the global football operations of the club. "The 39-year-old will be assisted by a dedicated team called DV7 (David Villa 7), which will have, among others, the former Odisha FC head coach Josep Gombau and Victor Onate.






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