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3 girls go missing from Vanasthalipuram

Three minor girls of a family have gone missing from Vanasthalipuram. The three sisters are alleged to have been kidnapped by their relative Ramesh, a resident of Pragati Nagar.

The girls' parents searched for them relatives and friends but in vain following which they approached the Vanasthalipuram. The police registered a case and are investigating. On Wednesday, a 14-year-old girl went missing from her house in Uppuguda. The girl is a student and resident of Rakshapuram in Uppuguda under the Chatrinaka police station limits.

2,909 fresh positive cases, 6 deaths in Telangana

Telangana registered 2,909 fresh coronavirus positive cases and six deaths until 8 pm on Friday pushing the total count to 3,24,091 and the fatalities to 1,752. Meanwhile, the total number of recovery cases went up to 3,04,548 with the recovery of 584 persons in a single day. At present, there are 17,791 active cases out of which 11,495 are in-home or institutional isolation. Between Thursday and Friday, around 1,11,726 tests were conducted of which, the results of 2,909 turned positive and the reports of 4,533 are awaited. So far, 1,08,73,665 tests have been conducted in the state.

KTR to tour Warangal on April 12

INDIAN CHRONICLE BUREAU

HYDERABAD, APRIL 10

Minister for IT and MAUD KT Rama Rao will tour Warangal on April 12. As a part of his tour, he will lay the foundation for several development works and also inaugurate the completed projects under the Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation (GWMC) limits. Ministers Errabelli Dayakar Rao, Satyavathi Rathod along with Government Chief Whip Dassam Vinay Bhaskar and former Mayor Gunda Prakash Rao and officials held a review meeting on the tour programme here on Friday.

The Ministers discussed the decisions taken at a recent meeting with Minister KT Rama Rao in Hyderabad and the progress of the respective projects with the municipal authorities. Dayakar Rao said a total of 95,000 tap connections had been given as the GWMC decided to supply drinking water to each household from this Ugadi. He directed the municipal authorities to ensure tap connections to all houses and provide tap connection for a fee of Re 1 for the BPL families living in the slums. An estimated Rs 1,000 crore were spent under Mission Bhagiratha scheme under GWMC limits.

The ministers directed the officials to make arrangements for the laying of foundation stones and inaugurations for the development projects including inaugura-



tion of double bedroom houses, distribution of 'land pattas' to the landless poor, foundations for 'Vaikuntadhamams', storm water canals and roads. The Warangal Railway Over Bridge is also likely to be inaugurated.

BJP shares audio chat of Prashant Kishor praising Modi

Kolkata: GNS News Agency, April 10

A political controversy erupted in West Bengal during the fourth phase of the elections when BJP's IT cell released an audio tape of Trinamool' election strategist Prashant Kishor where he was heard saying a 'ClubHouse' chat that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is hugely popular in West Bengal and this is one of the factors that will decide which party sweeps the state. BJP's IT cell chief Amit Malviya claimed that Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's election strategist Prashant Kishor had accepted the BJP's victory. Malviya shared the audio of Prashant Kishor's discussion on the ClubHouse platform on social media. In this, Kishor is chatting with some journalists.

In a public chat on ClubHouse, Mamata Banerjee's election strategist concedes that even in TMC's internal surveys, BJP is winning. The vote is for Modi, polarisation is a reality, the SCs (27 per cent of WB's population), Matuas are all voting for the BJP, Amit Malviya- National in-charge of BJP's Information & Technology department wrote in his tweet. In the audio, Kishor is saying that on a public chat at the clubHouse, Prashant Kishor admitted that BJP is winning in TMC's internal survey too. People are voting for Modi and polarization has taken place. SC and Matua, 27 per cent of Bengal's population all voted for the BJP.

Another candid admission by Kishor is that -- all that the Left, Congress and TMC ecosystem have done in the last 20 years is Muslim appeasement. Implication? It has resulted in resentment on the ground. The speakers had not realised that the chat was public, Malviya wrote. That moment when Mamata Banerjee's strategist realised that the ClubHouse room was open and his admissions were being heard by the public at large and not just a handful of Lutyens journalist. Deafening silence followed, Malviya added

Prashant Kishor was immediate to react. "I am happy



that the people of BJP are taking my clubHouse chat more seriously than the statements of their leaders. I appeal to them to release the entire conversation except for some part of the chat. In the part that has been released, the question was being answered about how BJP is getting 40 per cent votes and how it has been thinking that the BJP is winning. He also said through social media that the BJP will not be able to cross the 100 mark in Bengal elections" Kishore tweeted.

India-China border dispute talks lasted 13 hrs



New Delhi: GNS News Agency, April 10

Talks between Indian and Chinese military delegates over the disengagement in Eastern Ladakh at various friction points lasted for 13 hours. The dialogue that started at 10.30 a.m. ended at 11.30 p.m. They discussed disengagement at friction areas like Hot Springs, Gogra and the 900 sq-km Depsang plains. The 11th round of the Corps Commander talks at Chushul took place after almost a two-month gap.

The Indian military delegation was led by Lieuten-

ant General P.G.K. Menon, Commander of the 14 Corps based in Leh. The focus of the talk is disengagement on other friction points. After Pangong lake disengagement, both the countries have planned to carry out disengagement on other friction points like Gogra, Hot Springs and Depsang "The military dialogue is still on and it is important that before the onset of summer de-escalation takes place at Line of Actual Control (LAC). Both sides need retreat to original positions for things to ease," said a senior Indian Army officer.

The build-up in Depsang was not being considered as part of the current stand-off that started in May 2020 as escalations here took place in 2013, India has insisted during recent military commander meetings to resolve all issues across the LAC. On February 20, Indian and Chinese military held the 10th round of military dialogue to deescalate tension at the LAC. So far, the disengagement process at both banks of the Pangong Lake has taken place.

It was on February 10 that China made an announcement that New Delhi and Beijing had agreed to disengage at Pangong Lake. As per the agreement, Chinese troops moved back to Finger 8 and Indian troops pulled back to the Dhan Singh Thapa post between Finger 2 and 3 of the north bank of Pangong Lake. A temporary moratorium on military activities, including patrolling to the traditional areas.

The mountain spur jutting into the lake is referred to as Finger in military parlance. The north bank of the lake is divided into 8 Fingers. India has claimed its territory till Finger 8 and China dispute it claims till Finger 4. India and China are engaged in a year long stand-off at the LAC. The confrontations began on the north bank of Pangong Lake as Chinese incursions increased in May last year.

Rafale row: India suffered 21k crore loss, says Congress

New Delhi: The Congress on Friday questioned the Narendra Modi-led government over the explosive revelations made by a French news portal in the Rafale deal alleging that there was 'massive corruption' and 'loss to public exchequer of at least Rs 21,075 crore. The remarks came after a French news portal mediapart.fr in a three series investigation claimed that it was in possession of documents that showed Dassault Aviation, which manufactures the Rafale jet, and its industrial partner Thales, a defence electronics firm, paid a "middleman" several million euros in "secret commissions" in connection with the Rs 59,000 crore deal for 36 jets for the Indian Air Force (IAF).

Addressing a press conference here Congress national media in-charge Randeep Singh Surjewala said, "The scandalous expose of



facts and string of documents have uncovered a concerted collusion to defraud the public exchequer as also massive corruption." Firing salvos at the BJP-led central govern-

ment, Surjewala said, "Isn't it correct that the 'Indian Negotiating Team' (INT) on August 10, 2015 arrived at a benchmark cost of Euro 5.06 billion for 36 Rafale fighter jets including weaponry package etc. Is it now

not proved by the document released by the French News Portal, who has accessed Enforcement Directorate (ED) documents recovered from the middlemen?"

India reports 1,45,384 new Covid cases; 794 deaths

New Delhi: India has reported 1,45,384 new Covid-19 cases and 794 deaths in the last 24 hours, the Health Ministry said on Saturday. India is now the fourth-worst Covid-hit country worldwide after the number of active cases rose to 10,46,631. The death toll stood at 1,68,436 the Health Ministry said. A total of 77,567 patients recovered in the last 24 hours, taking the number of recoveries to 1,19,90,859 with a recovery rate of 90.80 per cent. The Health Ministry said that a total of 11,73,219 samples were tested in the last 24 hours. So far, 25,52,14,803 samples have been tested. A total of 34,15,055 people were vaccinated in the last 24 hours taking the total vaccination count to 9,80,75,160.



RT-PCR tests to start in Chhattisgarh airports, railway stations

Raipur: Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel has said the state government will start the RT-PCR testing at airports and railway stations in the wake of rising Covid-19 cases. "Necessary steps are being taken for expansion of Covid screening, treatment and vaccination facilities," Baghel said here on Friday during a meeting. He had held a virtual meeting with the editors of various media houses on Friday and sought suggestions regarding the prevention of Covid-19, and economic activities to be conducted.

Baghel said he has requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to set the minimum age of vaccination to 18 years. The chief minister said an initiative will soon be taken to fix the rates of Covid-19 test, and treatment of corona positive patients in private hospitals. In Chhattisgarh, 1,435 tests per 10 lakh population are being done every day, while the national average for the same is 929 tests per 10 lakh popu-



lation per day, it was said during the meeting.

The percentage of RT-PCR tests in the month of October 2020 was 26 per cent, which has increased to 40 per cent in April 2021. A total of 36 specialized Covid hospitals and 66 Covid care centres have been established by the state government to provide treatment to the Covid-19 patients. Besides, 78

The first dose of vaccination has been given to 87 per cent of the health workers, 84 per cent of the frontline workers and 43 per cent of the beneficiaries aged above 45 years.

private hospitals in the state have also been authorized for Covid-19 treatment. Till April 8, a total of 37,27,552 vaccine doses have been provided to the people in the state. The first dose of

vaccination has been given to 87 per cent of the health workers, 84 per cent of the frontline workers and 43 per cent of the beneficiaries aged above 45 years.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Sustain economic recovery

World Bank president David Malpass has named India among the three nations — the others being the US and China — which are setting the pace for faster global growth on the back of strong rebounds. This is an acknowledgment of India's encouraging economic recovery, even as the country is battling the second wave of the pandemic. Citing the revival of private consumption and investment, the World Bank recently scaled up its projections for India's GDP growth to 10.1 per cent for 2021-22, considerably up from 5.4 per cent that it had forecast in its January report. However, the international financial institution hastened to add that in view of the uncertainty caused by the resurgence of Covid cases in the country, the real GDP growth for this financial year could range from 7.5 to 12.5 per cent. Malpass has made it clear that faster approval and rollout of vaccines are vital for safeguarding national as well as global interests.

The biggest challenge for India is to intensify the vaccination campaign and at the same time ensure that the restrictions that hamper economic activity are kept to a minimum and done away with once the situation improves. Already, the stringent curbs imposed by some states have started disrupting businesses, taking a toll on inter-state as well as intra-state movement. The lockdowns of 2020 demonstrated bitterly that preventing millions of people from plying their trade was a self-defeating exercise with far-reaching ramifications. The focus should be on enforcing compliance with Covid safety protocols rather than forcing business establishments to suspend or scale down operations.

According to the International Monetary Fund, India's debt-to-GDP ratio rose from 74 per cent to 90 per cent during the pandemic, but it is expected to drop to 80 per cent gradually. This is another validation of the country's fightback on the economic front. With the worldwide debt-to-GDP ratio nearing 100 per cent, India must consolidate its position with judicious moves and vindicate the confidence reposed in it by global financial bodies.

DLSA, Warangal: Oldest land dispute settled in National Lok Adalat

Warangal : In National Lok Adalat held on 10-4-2021 at District Court Complex, Warangal among the hundreds of cases settled, one significant old civil case settled relate to a land dispute which sustained for more than 24 years in the Civil Court. The dispute was for open land to an extent of 290 squar yards in Survey no. 1260 situated at Kumarpally village, Hanamakonda. The case



was filed in the year 1997 and parties were at loggerheads by filing one case each. The original parties died during the pendency of litigation and the legal heirs are contesting the cases. The trial court decreed one suit and dismissed other suit in the year 2006. The parties preferred two appeals in the year 2007 and were fighting the litigation. It was at the intervention of Presiding Officer Smt Y. Padma, IV Additional District Judge, Warangal, mediation session were conducted with co-operation and support of both parties Advocates Sri B.Rajendra Kumar and Y. Manohar Rao. Finally, the parties agreed for amicable settlement of the dispute. In the settlement terms, the adverse party agreed to receive 80 square yards land out of total 290 square yards land and the matter was referred to Lok Adalat Bench. The parties and their counsels were happy for settling the long pending dispute that survived for more than 24 years with the scope for more time being taken if the matter was carried in the appeal.

Sagar bypoll: Mahmood Ali urges minority communities to support TRS candidate

INDIAN CHRONICLE BUREAU
HYDERABAD, APRIL 10

Home Minister Mohd Mahmood Ali on Friday urged the minorities to vote for TRS candidate Nomula Bhagath in the by-elections to Nagarjuna Sagar Assembly Constituency to support the leadership of Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao, who was committed for their welfare.

Speaking at a meeting of minorities held at Peddavoora in Nagarjuna Sagar Assembly constituency, Mahmood Ali said that the state government has taken up several schemes for the welfare of the minorities. The Chief Minister has accorded second language status to Urdu in the state, he pointed out. "In addition to officially conducting Ramzan festival, the state government is extending honorariums to Imams and Mouzams. The government is also extending financial assistance for the purposes of marriages of Muslim women under Shaadhi Mubarak," he added. He stated that the state government was also extending financial assistance to the minority students to pursue higher education courses in foreign under overseas education scheme. Thousands of minority students were getting educational facilities through minorities residential schools, which were set up by the TRS government, he said. Minorities should support the TRS keeping in mind its commitment towards their welfare, he urged.

IT MSMEs policy to be out soon: Jayesh Ranjan

INDIAN CHRONICLE BUREAU
HYDERABAD, APRIL 10

In order to facilitate and handhold MSMEs in the IT sector, the Telangana government is all set to formulate a policy for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) soon, a top official said. Telangana IT and Industries department principal secretary Jayesh Ranjan also advised that the IT MSMEs must expand their horizons and look at unexplored geographies to provide their services. Terming the pandemic period as the new Y2K — wherein large Indian IT companies played a key role — the principal secretary said that now IT industry has become democratised and there are many companies providing services much better than large enterprises.

"The IT industry in Hyderabad is an important global centre and the transition during the Covid-19 period has happened smoothly. Many compa-



nies have been able to reach productivity and recruitment targets. In this, MSMEs have played major role and the real contribution has come from these companies. A few niche companies have emerged during this period," he said.

Ranjan, who was speaking at the 2nd edition of Hysea BizSummit with an overarching theme, 'Expanding Growth Horizons in the new Normal', added that the government is keen

to work with MSMEs and startups in the domains of agriculture and education. He also mentioned that along with industry associations, the government is looking at providing skilling and upskilling opportunities to MSMEs.

Meanwhile, Hyderabad Software Enterprises Association (Hysea) president Bharani Kumar Aroll said, "MSMEs are the hotbed of innovation and about 80 per cent of our member companies are

from this segment. About 1,500 IT MSMEs are present in Hyderabad, employing 50 per cent of the total 6.5 lakh IT employees. We have made some recommendations to the State government on the upcoming IT policy from the MSME committee. These include a purchase support, subsidized office space for MSMEs, construction of dedicated IT towers and creation of financial instruments for capital infusion."

High Court holds detention illegal

INDIAN CHRONICLE BUREAU
HYDERABAD, APRIL 10

A two-judge panel of Justice A Rajashekar Reddy and Justice Shameem Akhtar held detention of Syed Arif, Chowh Ibbu, and Syed Osman as illegal. The panel was dealing with a habeas corpus petition filed by their family members. The petitioners belonging to Nizamabad challenged the illegal detention in the Chanchalguda central prison by the Commissioner's order of October 2020. They argued that the three were falsely implicated and their right to freedom of life was infringed. A detailed order is awaited.

Payment case

Justice K Lakshman ensured that persons who failed to make payments in a commercial transaction should not be arrested. The failure is sighted as a consequence of the pandemic. The judge was dealing with a writ petition filed by the representatives of Dynere Engineering Pvt Ltd, Cira Renewable Energy Pvt Ltd, and by one, Truiban Vaddi. They said one Amit Sharma had initiated a criminal proceeding against them for the offence of cheating. The petitioners pointed out that they utilised the services of Amit Sharma for carrying out certain work in the Uttar Pradesh prisons. The petitioners made 75% of the payment and were unable to pay the remaining as they did not receive the amount from UP prisons. The case was adjourned by four weeks.

Govts told to clear firm's dues

A panel comprising Justice MS Ramachandra Rao and Justice K Lakshman ensured payment of Rs 40.3

crore to Agni Aviation Consultants Partnership firm due from the government for carrying out rain seeding operations. The petitioners had filed a writ plea making the claims of the said amounts against the erstwhile governments of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The panel directed D Venkateshwar Rao, Joint Secretary, Telangana, to pay Rs 16.8 crore. A contempt was filed by Agni Aviation previously pleading the court to direct the two State governments to comply with the court's order. The counsel for the Telangana government informed that the budget release order had been passed, and the Finance Department had approved the same. The counsel sought more time to deposit the amount. Meanwhile, the Government Pleader for AP submitted that they had paid the amount. The panel will hear the matter on April 16.

Report on dumpyard sought

A two-judge panel, comprising Chief Justice Hima Kohli and Justice B Vijaysen Reddy, appointed Senior Counsel S Satyam Reddy as amicus curie to assist the court in a case pertaining to Jiyaguda dumpyard. The panel made it clear to the amicus curie to visit Jiyaguda dumpyard if necessary and file a report regarding the installation of machinery and lifting of the waste. The court was dealing with a letter addressed to it by Pavan Kumar Kasturi as a taken up PIL. He pointed out that the area was being filled with garbage, including human excreta that is cleared from private septic tanks, animal carcasses and litter from various divisions in the city. Pasham Krishna Reddy, standing counsel for the GHMC, reported that modern machinery was installed at the premises and the waste was being transported to other places, and the place was cleaned now. The court adjourned the matter to July 15.

SCCL plans to set up 350 MW floating solar power plant on LMD

INDIAN CHRONICLE BUREAU
HYDERABAD, APRIL 10

Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) Chairman and Managing Director N Sridhar here on Friday said that proposals pertaining to setting up of 350 MW floating solar power plant on the waters of Lower Manair Dam in Karimnagar, were submitted to the State government.

The SCCL appointed an agency for conducting a feasibility study for establishing the plant before preparing a detailed project report (DPR). Water levels in Lower Manair Dam for the last 20 years, inflows data and sedimentation along with other details were submitted to the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI).

Officials from the SECI will be visiting the dam next week for a detailed study, Sridhar said at a reviewing meeting conducted here. A DPR would be prepared after exploring the possibility of the floating plant at the dam for getting permission, he added. He asked SCCL Director (Electrical and Maintenance) D Satyanarayana Rao to lay a special focus on setting up of floating solar power plant on the dam. The floating solar plant will be in addition to the 300 MW solar power plants being constructed at nine places in Singareni in three phases.

Sridhar asked officials to complete the installation of power plants by October end and synchronise them with the TS Transco grid. Reviewing the installation of

Bike thief arrested in Nizamabad

INDIAN CHRONICLE BUREAU
HYDERABAD, APRIL 10

The police on Friday nabbed a thief and seized 26 bikes from him, which were stolen from different locations under various police station limits of Nizamabad district. The arrested was identified as Mohammed Ahmed Hussain.

According to the Nizamabad DCP G Srinivas Kumar, Hussain stole bikes and sold them off to the mediators. Recently, he had stolen a bike belonging to a dermatologist residing at Khaleelwadi of Nizamabad city when the latter parked his bike in front of his hospital on April 1.

Based on a complaint, the police took up the case. During the investigation, the police were conducting a patrol near the Bodhan bus stand area on April 9 and found a person who tried to flee on his two-wheeler upon seeing the police vehicle. The police suspected him and took him into their custody.

On questioning, he identified himself as Mohd Ahmed Hussain and confessed that he was trying to escape from the police as he was riding a stolen vehicle. During the investigation, the police discovered that he was involved in the theft of 26 two-wheelers from various police station limits of Nizamabad district.

Maskless people will fined: Khammam CP

INDIAN CHRONICLE BUREAU
HYDERABAD, APRIL 10

The Commissioner of Police (CP) Vishnu S Warrior directed the police officials to strictly implement the guidelines issued by the State government to contain the spread of Covid-19.

Referring to Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao's instructions given on Thursday to the police to impose a fine of Rs 1,000 for not wearing face masks, the CP on Friday said those venturing out without wearing masks in public places, RTC buses and private vehicles would have to pay the fine.

Warrior wanted the police department to carry out awareness programmes in coordination with health, revenue and municipal departments and non-government organisations on the importance of face coverings.

Public should explain people about the dangers faced during the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic and the need of precautionary measures in the wake of the ongoing Covid-19 second wave, the CP noted.

Meanwhile, the municipal officials in erstwhile Khammam have been imposing fines for violating Covid-19 protocols. Kothagudem municipal officials have so far imposed fines on around 2,000 shopkeepers and individuals for not wearing masks.

On Friday, Kothagudem Tahsiladar Ramakrishna and Municipality ASO Ramesh Chandra conducted inspections at a cinema hall and imposed a fine of Rs 10,000 on the theatre management for failing to maintain physical distancing and ensuring the audience wear face masks during the screening of a movie.

Disqualify MLAs involved in drug scandal: Uttam Kumar Reddy

INDIAN CHRONICLE BUREAU
HYDERABAD, APRIL 10

: Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee president and MP N Uttam Kumar Reddy on Friday demanded Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao to disqualify four MLAs from the Assembly for allegedly being involved in a drug scandal.

Accompanied by AICC official spokesperson Dasoju Sravan and Telangana Fishermen Congress chairman Mettu Sai, he addressed mediapersons at Gandhi Bhavan here and charged that Bangalore police had recorded the statement of a prominent businessman, who informed that four TRS MLAs were involved in the drug scandal. The TPCC president alleged that TRS had colluded with the BJP and has been trying to cover up the case.

"If BJP has not colluded with the TRS, why is it not exerting pressure on the Karnataka government to initiate action on the four TRS MLAs," Uttam Kumar Reddy questioned and added that the Congress party would meet the Governor and submit a memorandum in this regard.

He appealed to the people of Telangana, particularly voters in Nagarjuna Sagar Assembly constituency to notice the TRS government's arrogance of power and money.

Uttam Kumar Reddy also alleged that Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao had colluded with Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy and was permitting the diversion of River Krishna water at Srisailem to Andhra Pradesh. He stated that the Chief Minister did not utter a word when the AP government raised the level of Pothireddy Padu and taken up construction to draw water at Sangameswara.

Drama Juniors – The Next Superstar' the most awaited reality show returns with the new year

Khammam:

This year, the festival of Ugadi will mark the beginning of a new, much-awaited chapter. Drama Juniors, a show that has effortlessly celebrated its triumph of four consecutive successful seasons, is back on the small screen with a novel season Drama Juniors – The Next Superstar. With the unique and laudable digital auditions that were hosted, talent across the Telugu states participated wholeheartedly from the safety of their homes.

The distinguished format of Drama Juniors, in its current season, not just celebrates the skill of acting but compliments the passion and determination with which the young aspirants imbibe this skill. Marking new beginnings with the handpicked, most-deserving contestants starts April 11th, every Sunday at 8: 00 PM. This season promises to bring alive a never-seen-before entertainment quotient – a celebration of theatre in all its glory. The talented Pradeep Machiraju will be adding his wit and charm to the show as he grabs the mantle as the host.



It will be a season of many firsts as the Creative Team builds an exciting and esteemed judges' panel. None other than the Maverick Director, Actor, Musician, and Writer - S.V. Krishna Reddy, who made a mark on Telugu Cinema will be seen making his television debut as a judge. Joining India on the panel will be the 'Queen of Melody' of South Indian Cinema – Singer Sunitha and Renu Desai – the Actor and Producer swap to the other side of the table to be the judge!

IT inspector flees abandoning Rs 5 lakh bribe money, nabbed by CBI after chase in Mumbai

New Delhi: GNS News Agency, April 10

A Bollywood-style foot-chase for over a kilometre on the streets of Mumbai by a CBI official led to the arrest of bribery-accused Income Tax Inspector Ashish Kumar who had abandoned Rs five lakh cash on the road before his unsuccessful dash.

The event unfolded on Thursday around 10 pm at Goregaon East in front of Dindoshi Fire Station where the CBI team had laid a trap after getting a complaint that Ashish Kumar and two other Income Tax inspectors — Dilip Kumar and SN Rai — have allegedly demanded Rs 15 lakh the bribe from a person whom they had raided recently, officials said.

All the three accused posted at Ballard Pier office of Income Tax were separately demanding bribes from the person to cover up his alleged tax violations, they said.

During the verification process, the CBI concluded that all the three were assuring the person that they can manage his case in exchange of a bribe.

According to CBI officials, Ashish Kumar and the complainant had agreed the bribe amount will be paid in the latter's car in front of Dindaushi Fire Station in

Goregaon.

On Thursday night, Kumar entered the vehicle, took the money, kept it in his bag and as soon as he came out spotted the CBI officers approaching him. Sensing that his imminent was imminent, he threw the bag containing Rs five lakh on the road and started running, they said.

CBI PSI Vineet Jain gave a chase through the traffic and busy street for over a kilometre before outrunning the Ashish Kumar. He has been taken into custody, the officials said.

Another Income Tax Inspector Dilip Kumar was also arrested red-handed while allegedly receiving a bribe of Rs 10 lakh from the complainant. The third inspector, S N Rai, has also been booked but not arrested yet, they said.

"Searches at two places in Mumbai and one place in Delhi at the residential and office premises of accused are being conducted. This led to the recovery of cash of Rs 7 lakh and incriminating documents relating to an investment in commercial and residential properties from one of the accused," CBI spokesperson R C Joshi said.

One more body recovered from Uttarakhand's Tapovan tunnel; toll rises to 78



Gopeshwar: More than two months after the glacial disaster in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district, one more body was recovered from the Tapovan tunnel, pushing the toll in the tragedy to 78, officials said on Friday.

Rescue teams recovered another body from the main tunnel at the Tapovan-Vishnugad hydel project on Thursday, Chamoli District Disaster Management Officer N K Joshi said.

An avalanche on February 7 had caused large-scale damage to the project besides totally demolishing the

Rishiganga hydel project at Raini village in the district.

Seventy-eight bodies and 35 human body parts have been recovered so far from different places hit by the disaster, Joshi said, adding that 47 bodies have been identified.

DNA samples of the bodies which have not been identified are being preserved, he said.

As many as 126 people are still missing since the tragedy.

CBSE irresponsible to force students to take exams: Priyanka Gandhi

New Delhi: Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Friday said it is irresponsible on the part of the CBSE to force students to appear for Board examinations and demanded that the exams be either cancelled or rescheduled in view of the COVID-19 situation in the country.

She said the Board exams should be either cancelled or be held in such a manner that it does not require the physical presence of students.

"It is downright irresponsible of boards like the CBSE to force students to sit for exams under the prevailing circumstances. Board exams should either be cancelled, rescheduled or arranged in a manner that does not require the physical presence of children at crowded exam centres," she said on Twitter.

The Congress leader said the exam pressure will affect the mental health of children.

"While corona is ravaging our country again, the added pressure of exams is bound to affect the mental health of children. Our education system needs to drastically alter its attitude and start reflecting sensitivity and compassion towards children rather than just talk about at their conclaves and conferences," she said.

According to the revised date sheet for CBSE board exams 2021, the Class 10 exams would be held between May 4 and June 7 and those for Class 12 would be held between May 4 and June 15.

India is seeing over one lakh cases everyday for the past few days and on Friday morning, the country reported almost 1.32 lakh new COVID-19 cases, as per official data.

There have been demands from students for holding online examinations and over one lakh students have



already signed a petition to the CBSE in this regard.

CBSE officials, however, said as per COVID guidelines exam centres across the country have been increased by 40-50 per cent to ensure social distancing among students.

Sale of platform tickets stopped at 6 Mumbai stations: Central Railway

Mumbai: The Central Railway has stopped the sale of platform tickets at its six long-distance train stations, including Mumbai CSMT, from immediate effect to avoid unnecessary rush in view of COVID-19, an official said on Friday.

Central Railway chief spokesperson Shivaji Sutar said besides Mumbai CSMT, they have stopped issuing platform tickets at LTT, Kalyan, Thane, Dadar and Panvel stations from where long-distance trains operate.

He said the decision has been taken to avoid unnecessary rush at these stations.

"The decision has been taken to avoid unnecessary crowding and ensuring social distancing at stations



Earlier last month, the

Bombay HC extends interim relief for Arnab Goswami in suicide abetment case



Mumbai: The Bombay High Court on Friday extended its earlier order granting interim protection to Republic TV Editor-in-Chief Arnab Goswami and exempted him from appearing before a magistrates court at Alibag in Raigad district in connection with an abetment to suicide case.

Goswami and two others Firoze Sheikh and Nitish Sarda are accused of abetting the suicide of Alibag-based interior designer Anvay Naik in May 2018 over alleged non-payment of dues by the companies of the accused persons.

The trio has moved the high court seeking to quash the FIR and subsequent charge sheet filed by the police against them.

They had sought interim protection and exemption from appearance before a magistrates court in Alibag, a coastal town in Raigad district located around 100 km from Mumbai.

The accused persons have to appear before the magistrates court for committal of trial in the case to a sessions court.

The high court had on March 5 granted the three accused persons exemption from appearance before the court and said it would hear the petitions on April 16.

Goswami's counsel Sanjog Parab on Friday told the court that since April 16 has been declared as a holiday by the high court, the petitions could be heard later.

The interim order granting the petitioner (Goswami) exemption may be extended as the next date before the magistrate is April 26, Parab said.

A division bench of Justices S S Shinde and Manish Pitale agreed and said it would hear the petitions on April 23.

Accordingly, we extend the interim relief of exemption from appearance until further orders, the court said.

Goswami and the other two accused were arrested on November 4, 2020.

After the arrest, they had sought urgent bail from the high court which rejected their pleas following which they moved the Supreme Court.

The apex court granted the trio bail on November 11, 2020.

How an alcohol-addicted village became a model for organic farming

Uttar Pradesh: From being a village with a high unemployment rate, whose natives were heavily dependent on alcohol, to becoming a model for SRI (System of Rice Intensification) and organic farming, the transformation of Kailashnagar, a tiny forest village in the Bahraich district of eastern Uttar Pradesh, has been phenomenal. Kailashnagar is today completely free of alcohol and is setting new records in SRI — a low-water farming methodology aimed at increasing the yield of rice, and organic farming.

The villagers of Kailashnagar have come a long way. For decades, the occupants of this tiny forest village were known for being alcoholics. Out of the 350 villagers, 57 men, 40 women and 40 children had some degree of alcohol dependence. Very few people had jobs, and most of them made ends meet by cutting trees and selling timber.

About a decade ago, members of the Development Association for Human Advancement (DEHAT), an NGO that works with vulnerable communities, saw a huge crowd at a liquor shop in the Bichhiya market close to Kailashnagar. They filed an RTI to find out how much alcohol is consumed in the area and were shocked to find that every year people from the five surrounding villages spend close to Rs 22 lakhs. This figure did not take into account the illicit liquor being made and sold here.

Jitendra Chaturvedi, Chief Executive at DEHAT, informed the villagers of the amount spent on alcohol. The villagers were appalled by the figures and vowed to never touch alcohol again. The first one to give up alcohol was Geeta Prasad, who was infamous for his love of liquor. Inspired by him, many of the other villagers followed suit. Liquor producers in the village voluntarily disbanded their facilities and to ensure that no one takes



to liquor again.

Now that liquor consumption had stopped, the villages began to look for better means of livelihood. But the options were limited since Kailashnagar was in forest land. Soon,

they wondered why they could not use their own land for farming. Members of DEHAT came in and helped the locals understand the basics of agriculture. DEHAT also organised training for the farmers from different insti-

tutes in new methods. They also learnt to improve yield without the use of chemicals. Over the next few years, they grew a variety of crops and the once poverty-stricken village began to prosper.

India sees biggest surge in people spending time on apps

New Delhi: Amid remote work and learning as billions stay home during the pandemic, consumers are spending 4.2 hours a day on apps globally on average, up 30 per cent compared to two years prior. The biggest surge has been spotted in India as consumers spent 80 per cent more time in apps in Q1 2021 than they did in Q1 2019 in the country.

In the January-March period this year, daily time spent passed four hours in the US, Turkey, Mexico and India for the first time. In Brazil, South Korea and Indonesia, it was more than five hours.



"If we live in an attention economy, then there's no doubt where people are currently directing their eyeballs. Our new data for Q1 2021 reveals that consumers are spending more time than ever in apps — and the surges in some countries have sent daily dwell times past five hours," app analytics firm App Annie said in a report on Thursday.

The top apps by downloads, consumer spend and monthly active users (MAUs) across Apple App Store and Google Play were TikTok, YouTube and Facebook in the January-March quarter.

"In Western markets, we can trace the rise of the two market-leading secure messaging products: Signal and Telegram. Signal places first in the UK, Germany and France, and fourth in the US," the report mentioned.

Meanwhile Telegram appears at ninth spot (the UK), fifth (France) and seventh (the US).

As in so many areas, China's breakout app chart is unique and quite different from the rest of the world.

"If there's a theme within it, it's the emphasis on video sharing and editing. TikTok is at number 1, while Kwai is at 2. Meanwhile CapCut — a video editing app for TikTok is at 7. iQIYI, a video streaming service, places at 3," the report said.

Indian app MX Takatak, a local alternative to TikTok, was also seen as the fastest growing app by downloads in the quarter.

35 Taliban militants killed in Afghanistan

Kabul: GNS News Agency, April 10

At least 35 Taliban militants were killed and 33 others injured in Afghan Army offensives in Faryab and Baghlan provinces, the Defence Ministry said in a statement on Saturday. In Faryab, 26 militants were killed and 33 wounded after the Afghan Air Force conducted airstrikes on a Taliban position in Sarchakan village of Gurziwan district, Xinhua news agency quoted the statement as saying.

In Baghlan, nine Taliban militants died after the Afghan National Army launched a special operation in Dand-e-Shahabuddin locality. The victims included six Taliban divisional commanders, the statement said. A handful of weapons, ammunition and several vehicles were also destroyed during the offensives, the Ministry added. The militant group is yet to make comments on the development.

Kamala Harris condemns 'inexplicable' violence at Capitol



Washington: E GNS News Agency, April 10

Vice President Kamala Harris on Friday condoled the death of US Capitol Police Officer William Evans, saying that he "made the ultimate sacrifice protecting the Capitol and those who work there on behalf of the American people." Evans died while another police officer was hospitalized after a car crashed into a security barrier at the US Capitol complex after which the driver lunged towards the officers with a knife, police said. The officers opened fire and the suspect was shot dead. "Officer Evans, his family, and all those who knew him are in our hearts and prayers. We mourn with them during this difficult time," the US vice president said in the statement.

"Doug and I are grateful for the Capitol Police, the National Guard Immediate Response Force, and everyone else who responded swiftly to today's attack," Harris, who served in the Senate for four years, said. "And we continue to be proud of the courageous men and women who defend the Capitol, especially during a challenging period when they have faced two violent and deadly attacks," she said.

Harris also said, "In an inexplicable act of violence, a brave US Capitol Police Officer, William Evans, was killed in the line of duty while another officer fights for his life. Officer Evans made the ultimate sacrifice to protect the Capitol. Our hearts go out to his family and loved ones." Earlier on Friday, the White House flag was lowered to half-staff following the death of the 18-year US Capitol Police veteran. US President Joe Biden reacted to the incident saying he and first lady Jill Biden were heartbroken.

"Jill and I were heartbroken to learn of the violent attack at a security checkpoint on the US Capitol grounds, which killed Officer William Evans of the US Capitol Police, and left a fellow officer fighting for his life," Biden said. "We send our heartfelt condolences to Officer Evans' family, and everyone grieving his loss. We know what a difficult time this has been for the Capitol, everyone who works there, and those who protect it," the President said.

The US Capitol went into lockdown on Friday (local time) after the incident at the North Barricade vehicle access point along Constitution Avenue outside the iconic building. Federal and Law enforcement sources told CNN that the suspect in the attack was 25-year-old Noah Green from Indiana.

"It is with profound sadness that I share the news of the passing of Officer William 'Billy' Evans this afternoon from injuries he sustained following an attack at the North Barricade by a lone assailant," Acting Police Chief Yogananda Pittman of the US Capitol Police (USCP) said.

"Just after 1 pm, a man in a blue sedan rammed his vehicle into the North Barricade at the US Capitol, striking 2 USCP officers. The Department immediately locked down the Capitol Campus," according to a statement by the US Capitol Police. "The man exited the vehicle with a knife and ran toward our officers. At least one officer drew their weapon and shot the suspect. One USCP officer was transported by a USCP cruiser to the hospital. The second USCP officer was transported by DC Fire and EMS. The suspect was also transported by DC Fire and EMS to the hospital where he succumbed to his injuries around 1:30 pm," the police said. The incident follows recent ramping down of some additional protective measures that were put into place after the January 6 insurrection at the Capitol Hill complex.

Most populated Canadian province to enter 4-week shutdown

Toronto: GNS News Agency, April 10

Canada's most populous province of Ontario announced that it will impose a four-week shutdown starting from Saturday onwards due to the worsening Covid-19 situation.

The shutdown comes as Ontario's Covid-19 Science Table released new modeling data on Thursday showing that without a new order, the province will be unable to curb the spread of variants, reports Xinhua news agency. If no further public health measures are implemented, daily Covid-19 cases could rise to 6,000 by the end of April, according to the data.

Under the Ontario government's guidelines for shutdown, in-person dining will be shuttered again and further gathering restrictions will go into effect across Ontario; personal care services and gyms will be closed.

SpaceX rocket debris lands on man's farm in United States

San Francisco: GNS News Agency, April 10

In a bizarre incident, a farm owner in the US was left in shock when a pressure vessel from a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket fell on his property in Washington State, leaving a "4-inch dent in the soil." In a normal course, most second stage parts either hang out in orbit for years or re-enter Earth over the ocean. The debris was identified as Composite-Overwrapped Pressure Vessel (COPV) from the breakup of a Falcon 9 second stage over Oregon and Washington State on March 26, reports The Verge, quoting local officials.

The stage re-entered the atmosphere in an unusual spot in the sky after sending a payload of

SpaceX's Starlink satellites to orbit.

The farm owner in Grant County, Washington State, found the pressure vessel and reported it to the Grant County Sheriff's Office. "Neither the property owner nor our sergeant is rocket scientist, of course, but judging from what had happened a few days prior, it looked to them like it was possibly debris from the Falcon 9 reentry," Grant County Sheriff's Office spokesperson Kyle Foreman was quoted as saying in the report. A sergeant then called Elon Musk-run SpaceX, which confirmed the remnant of the rocket belonged to the company and dispatched its workers to retrieve the debris.

"Of course, we didn't have a protocol for this, so



we just erred on the side of returning someone's property to them," Foreman said. A COPV is a part of the Falcon 9's second stage, the smaller section of the rocket that detaches from the main stage at the edge of space and boosts satellites farther from Earth. The COPV stores helium at pressures of nearly

6,000psi, which is used to pressurise the second stage's large tanks of propellant. According to Jonathan McDowell, an astrophysicist at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, re-entries of this kind happen every couple of weeks but it is "just unusual that it happens over a densely populated area".

Man rams car into US Capitol; 1 officer killed, another injured

Washington: GNS News Agency, April 10

A Capitol Police officer was killed and another injured after a man rammed his car into a security barrier outside the US Capitol and then got out of the vehicle and lunged towards the officers with a knife, setting off a major security scare nearly three months after the January 6 insurrection by pro-Trump supporters. The 25-year-old suspect, identified as Noah Green, was shot dead by the Capitol Police.

"The incident happened around 1:02 PM on Friday (local time), when the suspect rammed his car into two of our officers and then hit the north barricade barrier. The suspect exited the vehicle with a knife in hand," Acting Capitol Police Chief Yogananda Pittman told reporters at a news conference.

At that time, the Capitol Police officers engaged that suspect, she said. "He did not respond to verbal commands. The suspect did start lunging toward US Capitol Police officers, at which US Capitol Police officers fired upon the suspect. At this time, the suspect has been pronounced deceased," Pittman said. Two US Capitol Police officers were transported to two different hospitals. One of them succumbed to his injuries, she said.

It was the second line-of-duty death in three months at the US Capitol Police department which bore the brunt of the unprecedented January 6 insurrection. President Joe Biden said that he and the First Lady "were heartbroken" to learn of the violent attack at a security checkpoint on the US Capitol grounds, which killed William Evans of the US Capitol Police, and left a fellow officer fighting for his life.



William "Billy" Evans, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said in a dear colleague letter. At a news conference, Washington DC Metropolitan Police Department Chief Robert Contee said that investigation was on and at this time it does not appear to be an ongoing threat.

"Obviously, we're in the very early stages of our investigation. We need to obviously understand the motivation behind this senseless act," he said. "It does not appear to be terrorism related," he said. Pittman said that the suspect, Green, was not known to the police before Friday's attack. A review of Green's social media shows he posted in the weeks prior that he had lost his job and suffered medical ailments, and said he believed the federal government was targeting him with "mind control." Less than two hours before he was shot and killed, Green posted a number of Instagram stories on an account that appears to belong to him, including links to other Instagram videos of Nation of Islam leader Minister Louis Farrakhan speaking, CNN reported.

"The U.S. Government is the #1 enemy of Black people!" a caption on one video read. In another post on the Instagram account, Green wrote last week that he believed Farrakhan had

Evans, his family, and all those who knew him are in our hearts and prayers. We mourn with them during this difficult time," Vice President Kamala Harris said.

"On this Good Friday, considered to be the saddest day of the year for some people of faith, our grief is deepened by the death of US Capitol police officer

saved him "after the terrible afflictions I have suffered presumably by the CIA and FBI, government agencies of the United States of America." Meanwhile, Indian-American Congressman Ro Khanna, who was stuck in the car when the incident happened, said the incident brought back memories of the insurrection on January 6. "I had just stepped out of my Cannon office, and I was going to get Chinese food. And when I came back,

I had a frantic call from someone on my staff saying, get away, get away. There's an incident. And, honestly, it did bring back memories of January 6," he told CNN in a live interview from his car.

Khanna said that he talked to one of the officers, and they said, go into your car and everything is shut down. "So, I have just been in my car. And there are members. I mean, I'm heading back to my district early next week, but there are a few people still here. And it's really sad, because I had thought, once the barriers were removed, that we were moving back to some sense of normalcy.

"But this just shows the level of risk that there still is, and really sad that this is happening at the Capitol," Khanna said. Attorney General Merrick Garland said that the Washington Field Office of the FBI is assisting the Metropolitan Police Department with their investigation of this tragic attack.

Former president Donald Trump faced the charge of incitement of insurrection over the deadly January 6 assault of the US Capitol by his supporters. The incident left five people, including a police officer, dead.

Suez Canal to seek over \$1bn compensation for losses caused by ship

Cairo: GNS News Agency, April 10

Egypt's Suez Canal Authority (SCA) said that it will seek over \$1 billion in compensation for the losses caused by the massive container ship which had blocked the vital waterway since March 23.

The compensation for the losses and damages "will reach over \$1 billion dollars" Xinhua news agency reported citing SCA chairman Osama Rabie as saying. "This is the right of the state and we will not give it up." The 224,000-tonne Panama-flagged ship, Ever Given, was grounded on March 23 after it had veered off its course in a single-lane stretch of the canal during a sandstorm.

It was refloated six days later through the efforts of the SCA in cooperation with the Dutch firm Boskalis and its emergency response team SMIT Salvage hired by Ever Given's owner. The SCA chairman explained that the compensation demanded by the authority is not only for the financial losses caused by six-day navigation suspension, but includes the expenses of using dredgers and tugboats and the physical damage caused during the salvage process.

Egypt resumed navigation in the canal several hours after the Ever Given was freed and re-floated on Monday,

after which many of the 422 ships that have been kept waiting started to cross the waterway. By Saturday at most, all 422 delayed ships will have crossed the Suez Canal, according to Rabie. Linking the Mediterranean Sea with the Red Sea, the Suez Canal is a major lifeline for global sea trade since it allows ships to travel between Europe and South Asia without navigating around Africa, thereby reducing the sea voyage distance between Europe and India by about 7,000 km. Some 12 per cent of the world trade volume passes through the man-made canal. At least 18,840 ships passed through the canal last year. The Suez Canal provides one of Egypt's main sources of income, alongside tourism and remittances from expatriates. Revenue from the waterway reached \$5.6 billion last year.



Global Covid-19 caseload tops 130 million mark: Johns Hopkins University



Washington: GNS News Agency, April 10

The overall global Covid-19 caseload has surpassed the grim milestone of 130 million as the pandemic is still raging, while the deaths have surged to more than 2.86 million, according to the Johns Hopkins University. In its latest update on Saturday morning, the University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) revealed that the current global caseload and death toll stood at 130,114,348 and 2,836,446, respectively.

The US is the worst-hit country with the world's highest number of cases and deaths at 30,606,649 and 554,069, respectively, according to the CSSE. Brazil follows in the second place with 12,910,082 cases and 328,206 fatalities. The other countries with more than two million confirmed coronavirus cases are India (12,303,131), France (4,802,457), Russia (4,511,973), the UK (4,367,956), Italy (3,629,000), Turkey (3,400,296), Spain (3,291,394), Germany (2,871,724), Colombia (2,428,048), Poland (2,387,511), Argentina (2,373,153) and Mexico (2,244,268), the CSSE figures showed.

In terms of deaths, Mexico comes in the third place with 203,664 fatalities. Nations with a death toll of over 50,000 are India (163,396), the UK (127,058), Italy (110,328), Russia (97,986), France (96,438), Germany (76,871), Spain (75,541), Colombia (63,777), Iran (62,876), Argentina (56,023), Poland (54,165), South Africa (52,946) and Peru (52,161).

China reacts to India, says shared all data with WHO to probe Covid origin



New Delhi: GNS News Agency, April 10

China said on Thursday that it has shared all data and analyses with the experts of the World Health Organization (WHO) tracing the origin of Covid-19, and it is ready to continue working with global experts to jointly study and analyse the data.

The joint study group of WHO and China to trace the origin of Covid-19 released a report two days ago, in which it flagged that more data will be made available to the investigators by Beijing. A day after the report was released, India had demanded a comprehensive and expert-led mechanism to expeditiously investigate the origin of coronavirus. The US, the UK and several other countries have also voiced their concerns over the findings.

Reacting to India's demand, China said that they had twice invited WHO experts for the study of the origin of Covid-19 and offered necessary facilitation for the team's work, fully demonstrating its openness, transparency and responsible attitude. China further said that the joint study group tracing the origin of Covid-19 has unanimously agreed that the allegation of a 'lab leak' is extremely unlikely. The experts of the joint mission made field trips to several institutions, including the Hubei Provincial Center for Disease Control, the Wuhan Center for Disease Control and the Wuhan Institute of Virology, besides visiting the biosafety laboratories, and had in-depth and candid exchanges with the experts there.

"Members of the mission unanimously agreed that the allegation of lab leaking is extremely unlikely, and this is an important scientific conclusion made clear in the joint study report released this time," said the spokesperson of the Chinese Embassy. The spokesperson also said that as for the question of further research, the experts of the WHO mission said that there has always been speculation about lab leak, and work could be done with laboratories around the world if there is further evidence that the hypothesis needs to be reassessed. The experts also said that the virus may have been spread in places other than China early on, and a global perspective is needed to carry out the origin-tracing work. "The report also proposes multiple tasks to be conducted worldwide. We hope relevant countries can cooperate with the WHO expert mission in an open, transparent and responsible manner like China did," the spokesperson said.

As for the issue on accessing raw data, after China and WHO agreed on the terms of reference in July last year, China carried out data collection, collation and analysis in accordance with the suggestions of the foreign experts. The Chinese authorities gathered relevant institutions and several hundred scientists to collect, collate data and conduct initial analysis, and presented item by item raw data of particular concern to the WHO experts. The international experts have also said on many occasions that they had full and candid discussions with the Chinese side with regard to data issues.

As the medical files contain a large amount of information which concern personal privacy, the relevant data are not allowed by the law to be copied or taken abroad, which is a common practice in many countries. The international experts said they completely understand the situation, the spokesperson said. Going forward, China stands ready to continue working with international experts to jointly study and analyse the data. The spokesperson further pointed out that the study of origins is a matter of science. To politicise this issue will only severely hinder global cooperation in study of origins, jeopardise anti-pandemic cooperation, and cost more lives. It would run counter to the international community's aspiration for solidarity against the virus.

Income tax, corporate tax mop up exceeds revised estimates in FY21

New Delhi: GNS News Agency, April 10

Income tax and corporate tax collections at Rs 9.45 lakh crore in the fiscal year ended March 31 exceeded the revised target by 5 per cent but were 10 per cent lower than the direct tax collections in the previous year, tax department head said on Friday. The government had projected Rs 13.19 lakh crore from direct taxes in the budget for 2020-21 presented on February 1 last year. This was before pandemic took roots; and post it pummeling the economy, the target — called revised budget estimate — was lowered to Rs 9.05 lakh crore.

Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) chairman P C Mody said his department has exceeded the revised estimate (RE) despite issuing substantial refunds in the 2020-21 fiscal (April 2020 to March 2021). Direct tax collections, which consist of income tax and corporate tax, in 2019-20 fiscal was Rs 10.49 lakh crore. As per the provisional figures released on Friday, collection in 2020-21 is Rs 9.45 lakh crore. The target for current fiscal has been set at Rs 11.08 lakh crore. The collection for just concluded 2020-21 fiscal was 5 per cent higher than the RE, but was 10 per cent lower than the mop up in 2019-20.

During the 2020-21 fiscal, the net corporate tax collection stood at Rs 4.57 lakh crore, while net personal income tax was Rs 4.71 lakh crore. Rs 16,927 crore came from securities transaction tax (STT). The gross direct tax collection in the last fiscal stood at Rs 12.06 lakh crore. After taking out the refunds of Rs 2.61 lakh crore, the net mop up stood at Rs 9.45 lakh crore. There has been a 42 per cent growth in the refund issuance. "Net direct tax collections for the FY 2020-21 have shown an upswing, despite the inherent challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy," a Finance Ministry statement said. A lot of measures have been taken to ease compliance burden and provide better taxpayer services, Mody said, adding that this got reflected in the tax collection for last fiscal.

He hoped that same spirit in tax collection would continue in the current financial year. Transparent and fair taxation system gives us the confidence, apart from revival of the economic activity, despite the difficult times, that we will be able to meet the current targets as well, Mody added.

ICRA chief economist Aditi Nayar said the direct tax collections appear to have contracted by a modest 3.5 per cent in March 2021, suggesting the back-ended release of refunds. "Regardless, with direct and indirect tax collections exceeding the Revised Estimates, we expect the fiscal deficit to be limited to Rs. 17.0-17.2 trillion



for the just-concluded fiscal. With the contraction in direct taxes in FY2021 limited to 10 per cent, the growth target for FY2022 as per the Budget Estimates is now around 17 per cent, only modestly higher than the projected nominal GDP growth," she added.

India Ratings and Research chief economist Devendra Kumar Pant said, "The economy is slowly recovering and with 3QFY21 registering positive growth after two consecutive quarters of negative growth, the numbers are more on expected lines. This along with indirect tax collections for FY21 suggests that fiscal deficit in FY21 may be lower than the revised estimate, provided there is no slippage on expenditure side."

Mody said that the Vivad Se Vishwas scheme has netted about Rs 54,000 crore so far and the last date for payment under the scheme is April 30. "One third of the disputes have been settled under the scheme. I don't think there is any necessity for any similar scheme," he said when asked if the government was planning any such scheme this year. The Vivad Se Vishwas scheme provides for settlement of disputed tax, interest, penalty or fees in relation to an assessment or reassessment order on payment of 100 per cent of the disputed tax and 25 per cent of the disputed penalty or interest or fee.

Centre directs fertiliser firms not to hike MRP of non-urea fertilisers

New Delhi: GNS News Agency, April 10

The Centre on Friday directed fertiliser companies not to increase the maximum retail price (MRP) of non-urea fertilisers such as DAP and asked them to sell at old rates. A direction in this regard was issued to fertiliser companies in a high-level meeting on Thursday in the wake of an increase in domestic retail prices of non-urea soil nutrients in line with the global market.

Retail prices of non-urea fertilisers such as di-ammonium phosphate (DAP), Muriate of Potash (MoP) and NPK are decontrolled and are determined by manufacturers, while the Centre gives them fixed subsidies each year. "The Government of India had called a high-level meeting and directed fertiliser companies not to increase the price of DAP, MoP and NPK and fertiliser companies agreed with it," Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilisers Mansukh Mandaviya said.

The fertiliser companies have been asked to sell the complex fertilisers at old rates. "Farmers will continue to get DAP, MoP and NPK nutrients at old rates," he said. The Minister separately tweeted that "Giving priority to the interest of the farming community, there won't be any in-

crease in prices of fertilisers".

In view of the sharp rise in global prices of raw materials, domestic fertiliser companies and cooperatives have increased the retail prices of DAP and other complex fertilisers. For instance, KRIBHCO, MCFL, Zuari Agro Chemicals, Paradeep Phosphates have increased retail prices of DAP to Rs 1,700 per bag with effect from April 1. Similarly, Chambal Fertiliser and Chemicals Ltd (CFCL) has hiked DAP rates to Rs 1,600 per bag, and Indoram India Pvt Ltd to Rs 1,495 per bag from Rs 1,200 per bag.

However, fertiliser cooperative IFFCO, which has printed a new rate of Rs 1,700 per bag on the fresh stock of DAP, on Thursday clarified that it was a tentative cost and not meant for sale to farmers. IFFCO spokesperson had said the cooperative will sell the old stock of 11.26 lakh tonne of complex fertiliser at an old rate of Rs 1,200 per bag. "I have instructed our marketing team to sell only previously packed material with old rates to farmers. We always take decisions on farmer's first approach," IFFCO CEO and managing director U S Awasthi had tweeted. DAP is a widely used fertiliser by farmers after urea in the country.

"The new BRAVIA X80J lineup powered with Dolby Vision is an HDR solution that creates an immersive, engaging cinematic experience in your home bringing scenes to life with striking highlights, deeper darks, and vibrant colours," the company said in a statement.

"With Dolby Atmos, sound from the new BRAVIA X80J 4K televisions come from above as well as from the sides so you can hear objects moving overhead with more realism for a truly multi-dimensional experience," it added.

The series comes with a wide colour gamut and unique TRILUMINOS PRO algorithm that can detect colour from saturation, hue, and brightness to reproduce natural shades in every detail.

Apple Home Kit and AirPlay support integrates Apple devices like iPads and iPhones with Sony TV for effortless content streaming, the company said.

The series also features an in-built microphone for viewers to have a truly hands-free experience.

Users can simply talk to the TV using the Google Assistant to find what they want quickly, or to play TV shows, movies, and more without using the TV remote.

The company said that, currently, the 65-inch model of the newly launched TV series is available across all Sony centres as well as major online and offline stores. The availability of other models will be announced soon.

Sony launches BRAVIA X80J Google TV series in India

New Delhi: Sony India on Friday unveiled all-new X80J Google TV series with 4K Ultra HD LED display at Rs 1,30,000.

The new X80J TV series is available in 189 cm (75-



inch), 165 cm (65-inch), 140 cm (55-inch), 126 cm (50-inch) and 108 cm (43-inch).

The new lineup integrates Google TV that allow users to browse upto more than 700,000 movies and TV episodes from across your streaming services.



MacBook, iPad production delayed over global chip shortage

San Francisco: GNS News Agency, April 10

Apple has delayed the production of some MacBook and iPad models due to the global chip shortage.

According to Nikkei Asia, chip shortages have caused delays in a key step in MacBook production the mounting of components on printed circuit boards before final assembly.

The report, citing industry sources and experts, said the delays are a sign that the chip shortage is growing more serious and could impact smaller tech players even more heavily.

Some iPad assembly, meanwhile, was postponed because of a shortage of displays and display components, the report said.

Production plans for Apple's iconic iPhones have so far

not been affected by the supply shortage, although the supply of some components for the devices is "quite tight".

Apple rival Samsung Electronics recently confirmed that the chip shortage could be problematic for the company in the April to June period, adding that it has teams of employees working around the clock to resolve the issue, the report said.

Apple sells around 200 million iPhones, more than 20 million MacBooks, 19 million iPads, and more than 70 million pairs of AirPods a year — all rank within the top five globally in their respective consumer electronics segments — making the company one of the world's most powerful procurement forces.

Hyundai expands key plant suspension on chip shortage

Seoul: Hyundai Motor said on Friday it will temporarily suspend another domestic plant next week due to an electronic parts shortage.



Hyundai will halt the operation of the Asian plant, 100 kilometers south of Seoul, which produces the Grandeur

and Sonata sedans, from Monday to Tuesday, a company spokesman said over the phone.

Previously, the country's biggest carmaker said it would suspend the No. 1 plant in Ulsan, 414 km southeast of Seoul, which produces the IONIQ 5 all-electric car and the Kona subcompact SUV, due to a lack of chip parts from April 7-14.

The suspension comes amid a lack of semiconductor parts used in the Kona's front vehicle camera system and a problem in Hyundai Mobis Co.'s production line, which rolls out the traction motor for the IONIQ 5.

With the production suspension, the company expects production losses of 6,000 units of the Kona and 6,500 units of the IONIQ 5, reports Yonhap news agency.

On top of the suspension plans, Hyundai reduced overtime work on the first weekend of this month at the No. 3 Ulsan plant, which produces the Avante compact, due to a lack of electric control units (ECUs).

The carmaker will also cancel overtime work at the No. 3 Ulsan plant this weekend due to parts problems, the spokesman said.

Hyundai has seven domestic plants — five in Ulsan, one in Asan and one in Jeonju — and 10 overseas plants — four in China and one each in the United States, the Czech Republic, Turkey, Russia, India and Brazil. Their combined capacity reaches 5.5 million vehicles.

OnePlus 9R 5G brings top-class gaming to Indian fans

New Delhi: A formidable player in the premium market in India, smartphone brand OnePlus has now listened to the gaming community in India with 9R 5G that is offering smooth scrolling, immersive gaming controls with solid internals and better viewing experience.

The mobile gamers both entry-level and hardcore ones in the country seek solid internals to back up demanding games and the latest device in the OnePlus 9 series aims to deliver a fast and smooth flagship experience, featuring Qualcomm Snapdragon 870, 120Hz Fluid AMOLED Display and Warp Charge 65 technology for hours of seamless gaming.

The 6.55-inch OnePlus 9R 5G will be available in Carbon Black and Lake Blue colours for Rs 39,999 (8GB+128GB) and Rs 43,999 (12GB+256GB) from April 14 (for Amazon Prime members and OnePlus Red Cable Club members) while open sales will begin from April 15 across online and retail channels with some exciting offers.

Let us dig deeper into what the Lake Blue (12GB+256GB) variant has in store for the gaming enthusiasts.

First thing that will impress you is the 240Hz touch sampling rate, allowing you to simultaneously use up to five fingers for faster, smoother gaming.

Furthermore, the device features an "X-axis linear motor", which can be easily tuned to produce excellent dynamic vibration, simulating different styles of in-game vibrations to provide an immersive gaming experience.

It house dual stereo speakers that deliver an intense, life-like 3D soundscape, and Dolby Atmos audio further elevates situational awareness with augmented directional audio cues.

The OnePlus 9R 5G offers multi-layer cooling system so that the device does not heat up during gaming.

The system uses a graphite and copper lined vapour chamber. The device also has 14 temperature sensors, constantly monitoring the temperature of the device, keeping the internals and the back of the device cool even when the game heats up.

Play 'Crash Bandicoot: On the Run', 'Dungeon of the Endless: Apogee' or 'Abysswalker,' and the performance will leave you stunned.

Furthermore, the 'Pro Gaming Mode' optimises the system resources and minimises unwanted distractions, so that games perform at their best.

While enabled, it restricted background apps, reduced lag and improved the overall gaming experience.

The Qualcomm Snapdragon 870 mobile platform offers processing speeds that are 12.6 per cent faster than the previous generation.

In addition, the UFS 3.1 flash storage delivers nearly 3 times faster performance than UFS 3.0 and 10 times faster than a standard microSD card, surpassing even a PC-based SATA SSD running at 540 MB/second, empowering users to multitask with ease.

The 'Warp Charge 65' technology claims to give a day's charge in 15 minutes, and fully charges from 1-100 per cent in just 39 minutes (In our case, it took nearly 45 minutes to fully charge the device).

The large 4,500mAh battery utilises an improved dual-cell design to cut down on the charging speed.

The quad main camera at the rear (48MP+16MP+5MP+2MP) features a customised 48MP Sony IMX586 sensor that ensures faster focus speeds and greater colour accuracy, reducing motion blur in videos.

The 'Nightscape Mode' features intelligent multi-frame processing, adds clarity and detail to bright spots.

The main camera also features enhanced OIS for greater image stability. The ultra-wide camera uses a 16MP sensor and a 123-degree ultra-wide angle that will allow you to capture good panoramic shots. The device also features a 5MP macro lens, while a dedicated monochrome camera works with the main camera for detailed and layered black and white photos. It houses a 16MP selfie camera.

Salma Hayek joins cast of Ridley Scott's 'House of Gucci'



Los Angeles: Salma Hayek is the latest A-listener in the cast of veteran filmmaker Ridley Scott's "House of Gucci". The much-awaited movie will feature pop star Lady Gaga as Patrizia Reggiani, the ex-wife of Guccio Gucci's grandson Maurizio Gucci (to be played by Adam Driver).

Reggiani was abandoned after 12 years of marriage by Maurizio Gucci in 1985 for a younger woman. She was tried and convicted of orchestrating her ex-husband's assassination on the steps of his office in Italy in 1995. She got the nickname the Black Widow during the trial and served 18 years before being released from prison in 2016.

Hayek will essay the role of Pina Auriemma, who was a clairvoyant friend of Reggiani, reported Deadline. She joins the cast which also includes Al Pacino, Jeremy Irons, Jared Leto and Jack Huston.

"So happy to have my good buddy Salma join our wonderful cast. I've been talking with her about this Gucci project for 20 years. Now it's happening and she is a part of it. Rid and I are thrilled," producer Giannina Scott said.

The MGM film has script by writer Roberto Bentivegna. It will be produced by Ridley and Giannina Scott's Scott Free Productions banner. Hayek most recently featured in Amazon movie "Bliss" and will next be seen in Lionsgate's "The Hitman's Wife's Bodyguard". She will also star in Marvel Studios' upcoming tentpole "The Eternals".

Actress Eiza Gonzalez on makeup: Less is more for me



Los Angeles: Actress Eiza Gonzalez is a big fan of experimenting with her beauty regimes, and she likes to put on minimal makeup. "It's really become less is more for me. Obviously when you're younger, you feel excited about the fact that you can wear makeup and start doing adult stuff. I really took advantage of that growing up," the actress said, according to contactmusic.com.

She added: "And then, now, to me it's just about feeling more comfortable in my skin and experimenting. I don't like to always play it safe. I'm getting older and becoming more versatile, more multifaceted when it comes to my look." Changing one's look is one of the "coolest things" one can do as an actress, she said.

"I think that's one of the coolest things about being an actress, playing with your image, changing your look around, and become different people," said Eiza. She added that she likes to try different hairstyles, too. "It's the same with hair, I like to play with it. I go short. I go long. I go blonde. I go brunette. I enjoy just becoming different women," she said.

Enjoy celebrity cricket with 'Zee Telugu Vaari Paata'

Zee Telugu has come up with 'Zee Telugu Vaari Paata' this Sunday April 4 at 6 pm where the stars of the channel will get down on the field to win the coveted trophy.

What happens when television celebrities enter the game of cricket? What you get is an event full of drama coupled with fun. With an aim to add exuberance and keep the audience enthralled, Zee Telugu has come up with 'Zee Telugu Vaari Paata' this Sunday April 4 at 6 pm where the stars of the channel will get down on the field to win the coveted trophy.

In India, cricket is a passion, a celebration, a religion! And your favourite families on television are all set to bring you the most entertaining cricket tournament of this season! In an exciting coup, Zee Telugu will have the most sought-after actors from all its shows come together on a cricket field, be split into two teams lead by Nirupam Paritala and Kalki Raj.

Every year, the auction in the real league brings with it a lot of excitement and thrill. Franchisees splurge large sums of money to seal a deal, while some players fail to find a bidder. Following the same lines, both the captains of the teams Nirupam and Kalki bid for their members and the guests such as Siddharth, Vishnu Priya, Amardeep, Sindhura, Vasudha, Satya, Siri, Anusha Hegde, Prathap, Akarsh Byramudi, Navya, Sri Priya, Sunandha and Sidhu.

The exuberant Sreemukhi will be the host of the entire jamboree. Joining these actors in their entertainment quotient would be Saddam who along with Sreemukhi will entertain the audience with their amazing commentary skills. SRGMP - The Next Singing Icon winner Yasaswi and runner-up Bharat would set the stage on the fire with their musical act while Komali mesmerises everyone with her singing talent followed by crackling comedy skits from Saddam - Riyaz along with Pandu and some amazing dance performances by your favourite actors.

Taylor Swift announces 'Fearless' bonus tracks with anagrams

Washington: Feeding into Swifties' love of Easter eggs and delving deeper into potential hidden meanings, singer-songwriter Taylor Swift shared a cryptic video announcing her 'Fearless' bonus tracks. Swift's fans were in a social media frenzy on Friday after the singer dropped a teaser ahead of the release of Fearless (Taylor's Version).

The Grammy-winning hitmaker posted a mysterious video on her social media where a series of scrambled letters come out of an animated gold vault as cryptic music played in the background.

Along with the video, she wrote, "The vault door is about to be as unhinged as you'll think I am after you watch this video. Level: Expert. Happy decoding." Her most dedicated fans accepted the challenge and



decoded the video within minutes of her post with some believing that the star is hinting at the song titles of her six never-before-released tracks from the new album — and perhaps a new track with singer Keith Urban. "This is what I've decoded. One of the songs features KEITH URBAN," one fan wrote.

The two have previously collaborated on his track 'Highway Don't Care'. Many fans think the

following new songs will be included on the Fearless re-release: 'You All Over Me' featuring Maren Morris, 'We Were Happy', 'Bye, Bye, Baby', 'That's When', 'Mr. Perfectly Fine' and 'Don't You'. One Twitter user speculated that 'Bye, Bye, Baby' is "Probably the new name of 'One Thing' — and several other Twitter users have been reacting to Swift's vault challenge with hilarious memes. Last week, Swift dropped 'You All

Over Me (From the Vault)' featuring Maren Morris. It marks the first of the new six tracks that will appear on the upcoming Fearless (Taylor's Version) — set to debut this month, reported People magazine.

Fearless (Taylor's Version) will feature re-recordings of 20 songs from her sophomore album Fearless.

Former Nashville record company Big Machine Label Group (where she first signed at age 15) previously owned the rights to the album following its November 11, 2008 release. As per People magazine, during an appearance on Good Morning America in February, Swift revealed that the six new additions "almost made [it on] the original Fearless album." Fearless (Taylor's Version) will release on April 9.

Jacqueline Fernandez launches new campaign by beauty brand



New Delhi: Bollywood actress Jacqueline Fernandez has launched Lotus Herbal's new campaign 'Go Glow Girls' which is a nationwide hunt to choose four new faces from across India, who will be represent the brand on social media platforms for the next two months.

Jacqueline Fernandez, who is the brand ambassador of the beauty brand, says: "This is a fun peppy campaign and it's wonderful that Lotus WhiteGlow is creating a platform where budding talent can showcase their creative skills. It's a perfect medium to connect with young aspirational women and I am really looking forward to seeing the new Glow Girls."

Women need good representation in cinema, says Bhumi Pednekar



New Delhi: Bollywood actor Bhumi Pednekar on Thursday talked about the importance and need for a good representation of women in cinema and how through her work she has always strived to bring light to the real women of our society.

The ace actor, who has time and again shown that she is inclined to choose social entertainers through her versatile performances in films like Toilet - Ek Prem Katha, Shubh Mangal Saavdhan, Bala, Dum Laga Ke Haisha, among others, talked about why women need good representation in cinema. She said, "I often choose films that have a strong social message but I also think of picking projects that will do commercially well. This is important because such films need to reach out to a lot of people to drive home the message and intent. I try going for cinema that kind of balances both."

Speaking about her movie Toilet - Ek Prem Katha, Bhumi added, "When you think about Toilet, it is one of my most commercial, socially-relevant films. But the kind of reach the film had or the kind of impact the film had, I was amazed. After the movie released, there were campaigns where fathers and mothers were at the forefront saying 'no toilet no bride'."

That was honestly fantastic." She further talked about her other films and said, "Ayushmann and I did a film together — Shubh Mangal Saavdhan — that speaks of human sexuality and that is something that is not spoken about. I did Lust Stories that speaks about the gender gap, class divide and woman sexuality which is something that is not spoken at all. Women are shown as people that have no desires — no ambition, no sexual desires and that is something I again want to change."

"Through my cinema, I try portraying women that exist, women that are real. Women need good representation in cinema. I see women not having the correct representation on-screen. It really affects me," Bhumi concluded. The 31-year-old actor, who was last seen in Amazon Prime's horror thriller Durgamati, will be soon seen in her upcoming rom-com drama Badhaai Do opposite Rajkumar Rao. The movie directed by Harshvardhan Kulkarni is slated for a September release this year. Besides this, she also has Karan Johar's multi-starrer Takht in the pipeline.

'Sita On The Road' on ZEE5



ZEE5 has been promising when it comes to offering unlimited entertainment to its viewers. During the pandemic, it has premiered direct-to-digital releases, original web series, and various movies to keep the Telugu audience engaged. And now, it is all set to bring to its viewers 'Sita on the road.'

Starring actors Kalpika Ganesh, Khatera Hakimi, Gayatri Gupta, Nesa Farhadi and Uma Lingaiah, Sita On The Road will be premiered on ZEE5 from today. Directed by Praneeth Yaron, the movie deals with the lives of woman. It has been streaming already on ZeePlex from the first week of March. Sita On The Road is about five women and the testing times they face in their lives. The film, in telling their stories, talks about the issues faced by women in our society, how they face them, and beyond. How do the five female characters cross paths? What are their individual stories? This is narrated in an exciting way in the film. The performances, the music and the background score of the film have been critically acclaimed. Praneeth Yaron, besides directing the movie, has also written its story, dialogues and screenplay along with composing the music.

Ananya and her 'chill style'

Twenty-two-year-old Ananya Pandey's Instagram profile is a riot of colours, from fitness clips, yoga poses, throwbacks from her childhood and vacations; it's colours every way. And it was this love for colours that resonated with her when she turned showstopper for designer Ruchika Sachdeva as she closed FDCI X Lakme Fashion Week in the grand finale held recently.

Held in a phydigital format, Ananya says she was always keen to be a part of new experiences and found it exciting to walk the ramp in such a format. "Ruchika's design is very unique and she has a story to tell with every piece that she creates. What resonates with me is her love for colour and very bold design structure," says Ananya. The grand finale saw her sashay down the ramp in a multi-hued pleated skirt with a yellow balloon-sleeved crop top.

While the young actor has walked the ramp previously, stage fright is something she faces every time. "I have stage fright; I prefer not to deal with it, I just wing it," she quips. Like everyone, she is learning to work with new normal and reveals what she learnt during the lockdown. "It taught me that I have to watch at least two movies everyday (laughs)



and I need to spend more time with my family."

But, now the lass is busy with Liger and Shakun Batra's next film where she will be working alongside Deepika Padukone and Siddhant Chaturvedi. Liger sees her opposite actor Vijay Deverakonda.

"My character in Liger is very similar to my personality, but a tad more dramatic. Vijay is very nice, and really sweet. I'm a fan of him as an actor," shares Ananya. She is keen to work in southern cinema and rattles out names of directors she would love to work with.

"Yes, definitely I want to work in the south film industry. There is so much exciting work being done

here. I would love to work with Shankar, Rajamouli sir, I'm getting to work with Puri Jagannadh sir, Prabhu Deva — the list is too long," adds Ananya.

AnanyaQuiz her about what she has learnt from each film she has worked in, and she says, "Honestly, since I started working so young, everything I have learnt has been on sets. Especially with Student of the Year 2, everyone contributed so much to that. Puneet, Tara, Tiger, they all taught me different things. I learnt about camera work, positions, lighting... I feel that I learn something new every single day in a field I love a lot."

She is pragmatic about her career so far. "I

want my journey to be constant and don't want to get complacent. I don't want to feel like I have reached some destination and keep challenging myself with different roles and keep receiving love from the audience. That's important to me," she says.

And does her father Chunky Pandey pitch in with advice on projects? I do discuss projects with my parents. With my dad, I get to hear the perspective of an actor who has worked in the industry for so many years. It's very helpful to listen to his opinions and advice and learn from the things he has done in the past. But both my parents also give me space to make up my mind and take the final decision," she states.

Wild Dog: Nagarjuna shines in this thrilling entertainer



From love triangles, tragedy, woman suffering tales, and family dramas, Telugu cinema now catches up with "catch the terrorist". Inspired by real events (read India's Most Wanted) Wild Dog deals with the NIA getting the better of a wanted terrorist. In a cinematic drama of this genre, facts and history do get blurred at the pedestal of thrill and entertainment.

Unlike India's Most Wanted (Raj Kumar Gupta) starring Arjun Kapoor, the script here (written by director Ashishor Solomon and Kiran Kumar) is far tighter. It does not deal with the families and the route to terrorism. We globally have positioned ourselves in the convenient slot where the mass killer needs to be killed. No question asked. No explanations offered. Historically, law too, like the terrorist,

outfits and hungry eyes. By about half time, they nearly have their man Khalid (Bilal Hossain) but too early, so he gives them a slip and moves to Khatmandu. From Hyderabad to Mumbai to Khatmandu are the terrorist junctions for the most wanted.

Vijay Varma gets suspended and his team dispirited. Enter Arya Pundit (Saiyami Kher), a RAW inspector in Khatmandu. She takes the assistance of local inspector Lakshman (Kelly Dorji) to nab the culprit. However, Khalid has his contacts with the top political bigwigs, including minister Mirza Baig (Avijit Dutt). It is at a wedding at the minister's house that the finale gets kick-started leading finally to how the team headed by the Wild Dog succeeds in bringing the terrorist home. Even as you get into the comfort of your seats, the script heads straight to shootouts aplenty, punches and wrestling, some shots in the Old City, some templates from Mumbai and off to Khatmandu. Rough terrains constitute a nice backdrop to this terror drama where cinematographer Shaneil Deo plays as important a role as a stuntman does to

keep the viewer engrossed. Debutant director Ashishor Solomon shines with promise. Yes, templates aplenty, clichés galore help push the straight jacket perception of scheming terrorists and brave heart policemen. The cast disappoints. Most of them have wooden expressions in the name of carrying a macho image. Prim beyond his age, Nagarjuna is physically well-prepared for the role. Interesting that film producer Niranjan Reddy digs into politico-patriotic history and invests. Remember he had an interesting outing with Ghazi, and earlier Gaganam. In the air, under water and now the rough terrains.

The investments by the young filmmaker seem to be studied. Elsewhere, he has a reputation of being thoroughly professional. Obviously garnering a similar space here too. In terms of product at Telugu cinema, its style quotient is high, temperamentally well-balanced. It also does away with the usual song and dance scenes or sidekick humour. It is arguably the best that's reached the theatres in the post-Covid scenario. Go for it if you like thrillers.

High-sugar diet in adolescence can impair memory later

New York: High intake of sugar-sweetened beverages during adolescence can affect brain development and cause impairments in learning and memory in adulthood, shows a study conducted on rodents.

While previous research linked high-sugar diets with obesity and heart disease and even impaired memory function, less is known about its effects on mental development particularly on the hippocampus brain region critical for learning and memory.

The new findings, published in the journal *Translational Psychiatry*, showed that higher consumption sugar during early life increased the level of parabacteroides — a type of gut bacteria. The higher the level of parabacteroides, the worse the animals performed in the memory and learning task.

For the study, the team gave juvenile rats their normal chow and an 11 per cent sugar solution, which is comparable to commercially available sugar-sweetened beverages. The rats were then subjected to a hippocampus-dependent memory task designed to measure episodic contextual memory, or remembering the context

where they had seen a familiar object before.

"We found that rats that consumed sugar in early life had an impaired capacity to discriminate that an object was novel to a specific context, a task the rats that were not given sugar were able to do," said lead author Emily Noble, Assistant Professor at the University of Georgia in Athens, US.A

"Early life sugar consumption seems to selectively impair their hippocampal learning and memory," Noble said. Additionally, the researchers experimentally increased levels of parabacteroides in the microbiome of rats that had never consumed sugar. Those animals showed impairments in both hippocampal dependent and hippocampal-independent memory tasks.

"(The bacteria) induced some cognitive deficits on its own. We found that the bacteria alone was sufficient to impair memory in the same way as sugar, but it also impaired other types of memory functions as well," Noble said. She noted that future research is needed to better identify how the gut bacteria alters development of the brain.

Study identifies possible Covid drugs

New York: A team of researchers has identified nine potential new Covid-19 treatments, including three, that were already approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for treating other diseases.

The study, published in the journal *Cell Reports*, screened thousands of existing drugs and drug-like molecules for their ability to inhibit the replication of the Covid-19-causing coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2.

Of the nine drugs found to reduce SARS-CoV-2 replication in respiratory cells, three already have FDA approval — the transplant-rejection drug cyclosporine, the cancer drug dacomitinib, and the antibiotic salinomycin. "Our discoveries here suggest new avenues for therapeutic interventions against Covid-19, and also underscore the importance of testing candidate drugs in respiratory cells," said researcher Sara Cherry from the University of Pennsylvania.

For the study, the researchers assembled a library of 3,059 compounds, including about 1,000 FDA-approved drugs and more than 2,000 drug-like molecules that have shown activity against defined biological targets. They then tested all of these for their ability to significantly inhibit SARS-CoV-2 replication in infected cells, without causing much toxicity. Initially, they performed antiviral screens using cell types they could grow easily in

the lab and infect with SARS-CoV-2, namely African Green Monkey kidney cells, and a cell line derived from human liver cells. With these screens, they identified and validated several compounds that worked in the monkey kidney cells, and 23 that worked in the human liver cells. Hydroxychloroquine, which is used as a malaria drug, and remdesivir, were effective in both cell types. Since SARS-CoV-2 is mainly a respiratory virus and is thought to initiate infections via airway-lining cells, the researchers sought a respiratory cell type that they could infect experimentally with the virus. They eventually identified a suitable cell line, Calu-3, that is derived from human airway-lining cells.

They used these respiratory-derived cells to test the antiviral compounds identified through the human liver cell screen, and found that only nine had activity in the new cells. The nine did not include hydroxychloroquine. The nine antivirals active in respiratory cells did include salinomycin, a veterinary antibiotic that is also being investigated as an anticancer drug; the kinase enzyme inhibitor dacomitinib, an anticancer drug; bementinib, another kinase inhibitor now being tested against cancers; the antihistamine drug ebastine; and cyclosporine, an immune suppressing drug commonly used to prevent the immune rejection of transplanted organs.

Why some cancer drugs may be ineffective

New York: Researchers have found a possible explanation for why many cancer drugs that kill tumour cells in mouse models won't work in human trials.

In the study, published in the journal *Nature Communications*, researchers reported the extensive presence of mouse viruses in patient-derived xenografts (PDX). PDX models are developed by implanting human tumour tissues in immune-deficient mice, and are commonly used to help test and develop cancer drugs.

"What we found is that when you put a human tumour in a mouse, that tumour is not the same as the tumour that was in the cancer patient," said researcher W. Jim Zheng from the University of Texas. "The majority of tumours we tested were compromised by mouse viruses," Zheng added.

Using a data-driven approach, the researchers analyzed 184 data sets generated from sequencing PDX samples. Of the 184 samples, 170 showed the presence of mouse viruses. The infection is associated with significant changes in tumors, and the researcher said that could affect PDX as a drug testing model for humans.



"When scientists are looking for a way to kill a tumour using the PDX model, they assume the tumour in the mouse is the same as cancer patients, but they are not," Zheng said. "It makes the results of a cancer drug look promising when you think the medication kills the tumour — but in reality, it will not work in human trial, as the medication kills the virus-compromised tumor in mouse," Zheng added.

'Covid vax in 3rd trimester can transfer antibodies to baby'

New York: Waiting to get vaccinated for Covid-19 after your delivery? According to a new study, mothers who get vaccinated against coronavirus earlier in their third trimester are more likely to pass protective antibodies to their newborn babies. The small study, published in the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*, analysed the blood of 27 pregnant women who had received either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine in their third trimester and the umbilical cord blood of their 28 newborns (26 singletons, one set of twins).A

After receiving vaccination, women mounted a robust immune response suggesting that the vaccine will protect pregnant women from Covid-19, said the researchers from Northwestern Medicine in Illinois, US. Additionally, in most patients, a longer period of time (latency) between vaccination and delivery was associated with a more effective transfer of Covid antibodies to the newborn baby.

Only three infants (including the set of twins) did not have positive antibodies at birth, and those two women had received their first vaccine less than three weeks prior to delivery. Women who received the second dose of the vaccine before they delivered also showed an increased likelihood of transferring antibodies to their baby, the study found.

"This just gives extra fuel for people who are on the fence or just think, 'Maybe I'll wait until after I deliver,'" said Emily Miller, Assistant Professor and physician at



Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. "We strongly recommend you get the vaccine while pregnant. But if you're fearing vaccination might harm the baby, these data tell us quite the opposite. The vaccine is a mechanism to protect your baby, and the sooner you get it, the better," Miller said.

The study builds another published research that found similar findings in 10 umbilical cord samples. Vaccinating women even earlier in their pregnancies (first or second trimester) may also lead to a higher efficiency of antibody transfer. However, it is still too early to test how well or how long the passively transferred antibodies will continue to protect babies after delivery, Miller said.

Books to read this April

New Delhi: As the year heralds the season of warmth, one may be tempted to spend sunny afternoons inside, in the company of good storytelling. IANSLife curates a list of reads you can curl up with this summer.

'Happy Moments' by Meik Wiking

Happy memories do not have to be reserved for big life events. Drawing on global surveys, behavioural science experiments and data gathered by The Happiness Research Institute in Copenhagen, Meik shows how we can turn ordinary experiences into something extraordinary. Whether it's eating dinner at the table rather than in front of the TV, exploring a new part of your neighbourhood, or planning how you're going to celebrate your small wins, this book will help you find the magic in the everyday, and create memories you will cherish forever.

'Marriage in the Time of Corona' by Arbind Bhatia

The book follows the travails of an affianced couple over a fortnight as they struggle to tie the knot in early 2020 — a watershed time in global history, when the horrific effects of the Coronavirus pandemic are just making their presence felt worldwide, and nations follow one another into lockdown mode, much like dominoes falling in tandem.

The groom is a westernized Sikh of Indian descent, who has returned to his birthplace for his nuptials with his Buddhist Thai bride in tow. After two failed previous attempts at getting hitched, this is now their third attempt to wed.

However, even this is in jeopardy as the bride's family is prevented from attending as travel restrictions begin to shut down the world, and other crises create more hurdles in their path. Flashbacks interspersed throughout the book highlight the relationship history of the couple. Events during the chaotic



As the year heralds the season of warmth, one may be tempted to spend sunny afternoons inside, in the company of good storytelling

fortnight showcase familial relationships and interactions in the backdrop of inter-religious marriages, and their marked lack of acceptance in India, even in these contemporary times.

'All You Need is Josh: Inspiring Stories of Courage and Conviction in 21st Century India' by Supriya Paul

In a world filled with cynicism, few stand tall, carving their own path to success with courage, determination and grit. All You Need Is Josh brings to you stories of such unique individuals across India of the aspiring astrophysicist who wanted to walk on the moon; the first person with a disability to top the civil services examinations; the domestic help who is now a published author; the army officer who amputated his own leg; the transgender woman who was expelled from her house; the Dalit child bride who now runs a business worth Rs1,000 crores, and many more. Filled with anecdotes and life-changing missives, these stories will remind you that it does not matter the circumstances into which one is born what matters most is having the

Josh to overcome all odds and chase your dreams.

'The Tonic' by Mayur Sudhakar Sarfare

Set in the year 1992, *The Tonic* is an emotionally wrenching tale of an unlikely friendship between Masher and Raem, two young outcasts with psychological deficiencies. We see through their eyes what the riots do to them and the people of Bombay, which mysteriously connects decades later to the life of a media tycoon cum atheist, who has genocidal plans for the religious! Mumbai, 2017:

Reymerg D'Souza, a media tycoon and powerful militant Atheist, harbors an ominous plan to cleanse the country from religion. Avantika Das, an investigative journalist, partners with a suspended cop to embark on a perilous journey to expose Reymerg's darker agendas. Back in 1992, two young misfits are drawn together by the ravages of an approaching Hindu-Muslim riot. Masher, a diffident teenager with a speech disorder is forced into participating in an annual elocution contest held in his school.

During this period, he befriends Raem, a twenty-one-year-old recluse of foreign descent, who gifts him a packet of mysterious chocolate pills.

The pills magically begin to embolden their lives. They begin to win moments and people. A Tonic that turns them from being misfits to Stupefiers.

'Billions Under Lockdown: The Inside Story of India's Fight Against Covid-19' by Abantika Ghosh

When WHO first declared COVID-19 a global pandemic in March 2020, there was a great deal of apprehension about how India — the country with the highest TB cases and diabetes, inadequate health infrastructure and a population of 1.3 billion — would fare. Between the Janata Curfew and the first vaccinations, a massive machinery has been working as seamlessly as possible to make sure that, despite some missteps and missed infections, India conquers what has been the greatest challenge the world has encountered in decades.

Studying Shakespeare could help medical students connect with patients



Study of Shakespeare's plays may be a creative way of enhancing empathic approaches in medical students.

Washington: A palliative care doctor has suggested that studying Shakespeare's plays could help medical students connect more closely with their patients. Writing in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, Dr David Jeffrey, of the Department of Palliative Medicine at the University of Edinburgh, investigated how the playwright's empathic approach — the ability to understand and share the feelings of another — can enhance the patient-doctor relationship.

Dr Jeffrey stated that the idea that emotions are disruptive and need to be controlled is deeply ingrained in medical education and practice, contributing to doctors distancing from patients. The

coronavirus pandemic, with the need for personal protection, social distancing and video consultations has, he says, created challenges to establishing empathic relationships between patients and doctors.

He argued that a study of Shakespeare's plays may be a creative way of enhancing empathic approaches in medical students. Drawing on references from *The Tempest*, *As You Like It* and *King Lear*, he wrote, "It is remarkable that Shakespeare's work remains relevant today. It seems that he had an ability to anticipate our thoughts, particularly in times of crisis."

Dr Jeffrey described the way Shakespeare depicts the world from the

other person's point of view, not just their understanding, but their emotions and their moral perspectives. This approach, he wrote, creates a space for interpretation and reflection, to experience empathy. "Creating such a space for reflection is a central part of clinical practice and medical education," he stated.

He added, "Shakespeare speaks through times of crisis, underlining the centrality of empathic human relationships. Medical humanities are often on the fringes of medical education but should be central to medicine culture change. A special study module would be one way of introducing Shakespeare studies to the undergraduate curriculum."

Give your skin a summer detox



It's the beginning of summer. Heat, environmental pollution, hectic lifestyle, unhealthy dietary habits and contaminated water makes the skin lifeless, tired and extra dull. Pollutants and dirt from the environment clog your pores, and toxins from your diet can make your complexion turn darker. What is the solution?

If your skin isn't looking or feeling as good as you would like, a summer skin detox is a great way to help restore your skin to a more vibrant and healthy state. Glowing, radiant skin starts from within — which is why you should consider forgoing some trigger foods like dairy, sugar, alcohol, processed food and coffee during your skin detox.

Bring about changes in your diet. Foods rich in fibre and antioxidants like dark leafy greens, cabbage, beets, apples, garlic and onions are known for their skin-cleansing properties. Include raw, natural foods and fresh fruit and vegetable juices. Not only do they detoxify the system by promoting the elimination of wastes, but also bring about a sense of well-being.

Include fresh fruits and lightly-cooked vegetables, unprocessed cereals, sprouted grains, nuts, seeds, yoghurt in your diet. Fresh juices of fruits and vegetables are the richest sources of vitamins, minerals and enzymes.

Stay off "congesting" foods like animal fats, dairy products, white bread, fast foods, and sugar.



SSGF Hyderabad emerge champions

Hyderabad: Riding on Noman Mirza's 6/22 and Ashwin Sooraj's 62-run knock, SSGF Hyderabad thrashed SSGF Anantapur by 63 runs to emerge champions of the Bharat Ratna Dr BR Ambedkar Junior National T-20 Cricket League, conducted by School Sports & Games Federation at the RDT International Stadium in Anantapur, on Friday.

Brief Scores: SSGF Hyderabad: 173/7 in 20 overs (Ashwin Sooraj 62, S Akash 51, Rahul Reddy 32, Rishi

Kanishka 28; Kiran 3/16) bt SSGF Anantapur in 18.2 overs (Bharghav 43; Noman Mirza 6/22, Sumadhur 3/16).

Awards: Most Valuable Player: Rahul Reddy; Player of the Tournament: Ashwin Sooraj; Best Batsman: Akash S; Best Bowler: Nomaan Mirza; Best Fielder: Sravan G; Best Wicket-Keeper: Ramcharan P; Best All-rounder: Sumadhur M; Game Changer Award: Rishi Kanishka; Emerging Player: Abhiram, Samridh; The Spirit of Cricket Award: Rahul Macha; Promising Player: Ameer, Meeth.

Kiran, Mamatha clinch tenpin titles

Hyderabad: Kiran Kumar and G Mamatha clinched men and women's titles respectively in the Telangana State Ranking Tenpin Bowling tournament, held at Funcity, Madhapur.

In the men's final, Kiran defeated Mohammed Afsar 2-1 for the title. In the women's category, top seed Mamatha got the better of second seed Jyothi 2-0.

Results: Final: Men: Kiran Kumar bt Mohammed Afsar 2-1;

Women: Mamath bt Jyothi 2-0;

Semis: Men: Mohammed Afsar bt Wivek Singh 2-1; Kiran Kumar bt Ram Dinesh 2-1.

Special Prizes: Highest Average in 6 game block (Men's category): Wivek Singh (193.5); Highest Average in 6 game block (Women's category):



Mamatha (152); Highest game of the Tournament (Men's category): Ram Dinesh (269); Highest game of the Tournament (Women's category): Mamatha (195).

Hopefully we can continue from where we left in Dubai, says Rohit

Chennai GNS News Agency, April 10

: Ahead of the 2021 Indian Premier League opening clash against Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB), defending champions Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit Sharma said the feeling in the camp is absolutely electric and upbeat and players are raring to go in pursuit of their sixth title.

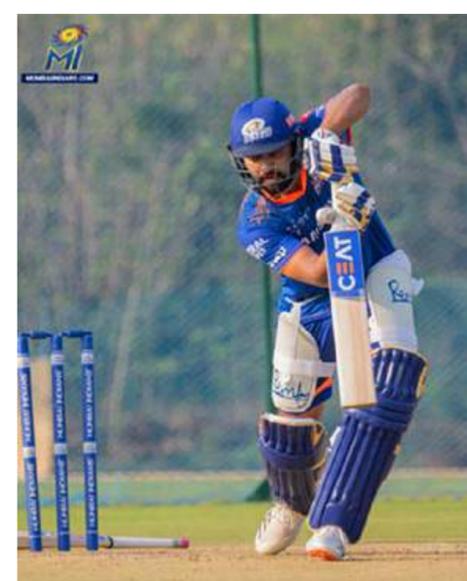
"The feeling in the camp is absolutely electric and upbeat. It is the start of the new season, we all know that. The guys are very excited to get going. We've got some new faces in the squad as well which is exciting. IPL is always an exciting time and coming off from playing a lot of cricket as well. So, looking forward to get going. I think it is going to be a good one this year as well. Hopefully, we can do the right things. We can continue from where we left in Dubai," Rohit said in a video posted by the MI on their official Twitter handle.

Talking about New Zealand trio of Trent Boult, Adam Milne, and Jimmy Neesham, who recently got out of the quarantine after arriving in India last week, the skipper said they are a great addition to the side and he is expecting the same things from Boult this season.

"I'm pretty sure they all are excited to just get out on the park. They have been in quarantine for seven days and I know how it feels when you come out the first day. It is nice just to get to breathe fresh air and get to be on the park and do what you love. So, I'm sure those three guys are feeling the same. It is good to have Jimmy Neesham for the first time in the MI squad and Adam Milne, who's been part of the MI before. Good to have him back as well. Of course, Trent who played a big part last season for us, we expect nothing less from him this year as well," Rohit said.

The 33-year-old opening batsman further added that Piyush Chawla gives the side variety in their squad which they were looking for.

"He is quite experienced in terms of playing IPL games. He has been around for a number of years now and knows exactly what this team expects him to do. I'm pretty sure that he is going to be able to live by that because of his experience and the number of wickets he has taken



The feeling in the camp is absolutely electric and upbeat. It is the start of the new season, we all know that. The guys are very excited to get going. We've got some new faces in the squad as well which is exciting.

in the IPL. He brings the variety in our squad which were looking for. I've played with him since my U-19 days so I know him pretty well, he knows me well. It is going to be good camaraderie between both of us on the field," he concluded.

My batting position at the top-order will give right balance: Kohli

New Delhi: Ahead of the opening clash of the 14th edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) against defending champions Mumbai Indians, Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) skipper Virat Kohli feels him batting at the top will give the right balance to the squad.

Before the start of the tournament, Kohli had said that he will open the innings for the RCB. He opened for India in the last T20I against England and played an unbeaten knock of 80 off 52 balls at the Narendra Modi Stadium.

"I had spoken to Mike (Hesson) and Simon (Katich) last year that I would like to open in IPL 2021 and I would go into that headspace, luckily things happened in a way that I got to open in the last game against England and ended up getting a good score which gave me the confidence to step into this role so I can probably do it again.

"That experience was very important heading into this IPL, knowing I am sorted with my game at the top of the order and then now let's create that balance in the team. My batting and those things are taken care of," Kohli said in a video posted by RCB on their official Twitter handle.

Commenting on his decision to speak to AB de Villiers when he was going through a bad patch, Kohli said: "It's amazing when you have played for so long, you can go into a zone where you feel like you cannot even score a run. There is such a lack of clarity in your mind and there are too much thoughts going around. It is all external factors you are thinking of and that is creating more confusion.

"So I thought I will take another point of view because I have seen ABD play, every innings he has got the same intensity and passion. He is never addicted to getting scores and he is always thinking about the team situation. I asked him when in doubt, what do you do? The simplest of the advice one can get and he said just watch the ball."

Kohli further added that it is not easy to be consistent with the form in such a long career and added that he takes one ball at a time.

"There are many factors, when you have so much expectation from yourself, having done it for 10-12 years at the same level, when things are not going your way, you become desperate. I am human at the end of the day and I also want to be in a space where I am told just enjoy your game. You do not expect anyone else to understand, you have to decide yourself that I am going to hit the ball, to hell with everything and repercussions," he said.

The skipper also talked about the new face in the support staff and his role in the side.

"This time around Sanjay Bangar has been added to the support staff. Amazingly balanced man, very very



sane head on his shoulder and gives good advice to the team. Speaks the right kind of language at the right time to the youngsters especially to how to get them in the best space. He brings a balanced point of view. We feel more confident that we are more in tune with our system and process. We got the strongest squad this time around if we follow those things, good things are gonna happen again. We would like to go all the way to the final destination," Kohli said.

When asked about his 13-year-long association with the RCB, Kohli said, "We have reached the final thrice, we have reached the finals of the Champions League which used to happen once. We played four finals, we played two or three semifinals as well. Just the fact that we have not finished the job in the IPL, we are one of the most loved teams across the tournaments. Me as an individual I never felt like move away from this system just because I haven't won the title and that happens because things have been so organic."

NZC monitoring travel ban situation and in contact with IPL franchises

Wellington: New Zealand Cricket (NZC) is monitoring the situation regarding the travel ban from India due to the surge in the coronavirus cases and are in contact with the Indian Premier League (IPL) franchises.

New Zealand on Thursday temporarily suspended entry for all travellers from India following a surge in COVID-19 cases arriving from there, local media reported.

The ban comes after it was reported that 17 of the 23 new COVID-19 cases in managed isolation announced on Thursday had arrived from India. The ban will commence on Sunday and will remain in place until April 28, New Zealand Herald reported.

"We're monitoring the situation and are in contact with the IPL franchises to keep the lines of communication open, because the tournament's due to go for some time," New Zealand Herald quoted NZC public affairs manager Richard Boock as saying.

"We're prepared to discuss all contingencies, if the situation warrants. For argument's sake, if it occurred with one of the test players, it might make more sense for them to continue on to England [for the test tour and world championship final]," he added.

Eight Kiwi players are currently in India for the 14th edition of the IPL which gets underway from Friday with defending champions Mumbai Indians taking on Royal Challengers Bangalore in Chennai.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern too has come out and said the safety of these eight players: Kane Williamson, Trent Boult, Mitchell Santner, Kyle Jamieson, Jimmy Neesham, Tim Seifert, Adam Milne and Lockie Ferguson-is NZC's responsibility.



"Ultimately these decisions around travel into high-risk countries generally will come down to individuals, but also if it's a workforce, their employers. So those are judgements they need to make," she said at yesterday's announcement.

Euphoria is missing as IPL kicks off today

Hyderabad: All the euphoria that is usually associated with the start of a new IPL season is missing this year, thanks to the dreaded Covid-19 that is casting a shadow over the richest cricket tournament. Instead there is a lot of uncertainty and nervousness.

The IPL-14 begins from Friday with defending champions Mumbai Indians taking on Royal Challengers Bangalore at Chennai but the BCCI, the eight franchises and the players are sitting on the edge as dark clouds in the form of Covid-19 are hovering over the tournament.

The BCCI has taken a big gamble of pulling it off amid the second wave of Covid-19 crisis and has not hinted of any plans to move the tournament to the UAE like they did it last year. The IPL-13 in the UAE went uninterrupted though it was held in the month of September and October.

This time the BCCI took the courage to host the IPL in India because of their successful England series at home in all the three formats. Even it allowed 50 per cent attendance after the first Test in the four-Test series. The

T20 series saw a near full house at Narendra Modi Stadium before better sense prevailed to conduct the match without spectators.

Now this IPL-14 will be played in front of empty stadiums and also only it will be played in six venues — Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkata and Bengaluru. Ahmedabad and Delhi. Cities like Hyderabad and Mohali were given a skip although Hyderabad and Indore have been named as stand-by venues. There will be 56 matches in the league phase and there will be no home advantage to any of the franchises. All the playoff matches, including the final, will be held in Ahmedabad.

However, the tournament had a few nervous moments like the 12 groundsman testing Covid-19 positive at Wankhede Stadium and players like Delhi Capitals' Axar Patel, Devdutt Padikkal, Daniel Sams (both Royal Challengers Bangalore) and Nitish Rana (Kolkata Knight Riders) too testing positive. However, Padikkal and Rana have since tested negative.