

IN BRIEF


Brazilian physicist wins \$1.4 mn Templeton Prize

WASHINGTON
Brazilian physicist and astronomer Marcelo Gleiser has been awarded the 2019 Templeton Prize, worth \$1.4 million, for his work blending science and spirituality. The theoretical physicist is of the view that science and religion are not enemies. Mr. Gleiser has described science as a spiritual quest to understand the origins of the universe and life on earth. REUTERS


U.K. returns stolen ancient tablet to Iraq

LONDON
A 3,000-year-old carved stone tablet from Babylonia, which promises a curse on those who would destroy it, is to be flown home from Britain after it was looted during the Iraq War. British Museum chief Hartwig Fischer handed over the priceless work to Iraqi Ambassador Salih Husain Ali during a ceremony here. AFP


Netflix says it will not join Apple TV service

LOS ANGELES
Netflix Inc will not make its TV shows and movies available through Apple Inc's upcoming video offering, Netflix chief executive Reed Hastings has said. "We prefer to let our customers watch our content on our service," Mr. Hastings said. REUTERS

At home



Daily bread: House sparrows exploring feeder boxes installed along the wall of a building on the Beach Road in Puducherry. World Sparrow Day is celebrated every year on March 20. *S. KUMAR

Honey as a pollution detector? It's a sweet idea

VERONIQUE GREENWOOD

Tree rings can tell scientists what the atmosphere was like when the tree was young. Lichens can reveal local air pollution levels. Now, scientists in Canada report that honey carries a message, too.

A survey of urban beehives around Vancouver, which was published recently in *Nature Sustainability*, showed that the hives' honey contained minute levels of lead, especially downtown and near the city's port. The readings suggest that honey can be a sensitive indicator of air quality.

The project began when Hives for Humanity, a non-profit, asked Dominique Weis, a co-author of the paper, to check the honey



Scientists may be able to measure air quality by analysing honey. *AP

for lead and other substances. Bees are known to pick up trace amounts of metals, which settle on leaves and flowers from the air, as they forage for pollen. The results showed very small levels of lead, and traces of iron and zinc.

Going forward, scientists may be able to track improvements or declines in air quality by monitoring the beehives and analysing the honey. NY TIMES

In a first, woman bags Abel Prize for maths

Karen Uhlenbeck pioneered geometric analysis and gauge theory

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
OSLO

The Abel Prize in mathematics was on Tuesday awarded to Karen Uhlenbeck of the U.S. for her work on partial differential equations, the first woman to win the award, the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters said.

"Karen Uhlenbeck receives the Abel Prize 2019 for her fundamental work in geometric analysis and gauge theory, which has dramatically changed the mathematical landscape," said Abel Committee chairman Hans Munthe-Kaas.

"Her theories have revo-



Karen Uhlenbeck

lutionised our understanding of minimal surfaces, such as those formed by soap bubbles, and more general minimisation problems in higher dimensions," he said.

Ms. Uhlenbeck, 76, is a visiting senior research

Alcoholism reversed in mice: study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BOSTON

Scientists claim to have successfully reversed the desire to drink in alcohol-dependent rats, paving the way for future therapies to treat alcoholism in humans.

The team was able to use lasers to temporarily inactivate a specific neuronal population, reversing alcohol-seeking behaviour and even reducing the physical symptoms of withdrawal. "This discovery is exciting – it means we have another piece of the puzzle to explain the neural mechanism driving alcohol consumption," said Olivier George, an associate professor at Scripps Research Institute. The study was published in the journal *Nature Communications*.

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Artistes today resorting to pre-censorship: Bhatt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Veteran director Mahesh Bhatt on Tuesday said that the Indian Constitution may have given people the right to freedom of expression but in the current era, filmmakers and writers are resorting to pre-censorship.

Mr. Bhatt, who was attending the trailer launch of *No Fathers in Kashmir*, which features his wife Soni Razdan, said it saddens him that the film had to face difficulty in getting clearance from the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).

"There is a climate of pre-censorship that a filmmaker and writer thinks 10 times



Mahesh Bhatt

before he puts pen to paper on what he should be writing, whether the CBFC will allow it to pass or not... This is a country born out of love for free speech and freedom of expression is a constitutional right," he said. Mr. Bhatt added that he stood by director Ashvin Kumar as he believed in his vision.

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