





# Skip caffeine; opt for the stairs to feel more energised

*Walking up and down the stairs for even 10 minutes can make you feel motivated for the next time you have to sit staring at your computer screen*

A quick walk up and down a flight of stairs packs a more powerful and restorative buzz than a midday jolt of caffeine, new research suggests. Researchers from the University of Georgia (UGA) in the US found that 10 minutes of walking up and down stairs at a regular pace was more likely to make participants feel energised than ingesting 50 milligrammes of caffeine – equivalent to the amount in a can of soda.

"We found, in both the caffeine and the placebo conditions, that there was not much change in how they felt," said Patrick J O'Connor, professor at UGA's department of kinesiology. "But with exercise they did feel more energetic and vigorous. It was a temporary feeling, felt immediately after the exercise, but with the 50 milligrammes of caffeine, we did not get as big an effect," said O'Connor. The study aimed to simu-

late the hurdles faced in a typical office setting, where workers spend hours sitting and staring at computer screens and do not have time for a longer bout of exercise during the day. For the study, participants on separate days either ingested capsules containing caffeine or a placebo, or spent 10 minutes walking up and down stairs – about 30 floors total – at a low-inten-



sity pace. "Office workers can go outside and walk, but weather can be less than ideal. It has never rained on me while walking the stairs," said O'Connor.

"And a lot of people working in office buildings have access to stairs, so it is an option to keep some fitness while taking a

short break from work," he said. Study participants were female college students who described themselves as chronically sleep deprived – getting less than six and a half hours per night of shut eye.

To test the effects of caffeine versus the exercise, each group took some verbal and computer-based tests to gauge how they felt and how well they performed certain cognitive tasks. Neither caffeine nor exercise caused large improvements in attention or memory, but stair walking was associated with a small increase in motivation for work. The study was published in the journal *Physiology and Behaviour*. P11



## DAY IN DAY OUT

### What's on Around Town

#### (IM)POSSIBILITIES

A group show of paintings and sculptures of some of the most celebrated artists of the nation, the exhibition, (im)possibilities showcase how one can one can decipher the word impossibilities to read as i m possibilities. The names showcased in this exhibition has already proved that impossible is nothing and it is a privilege to celebrate their (im)possibilities.

**WHEN:** April 13 – May 13  
**WHERE:** Creativity Art Gallery, Hauz Khas Village  
**TIMING:** 11 am – 7 pm

#### FRAMING THE LIVING TRADITIONS

A collaborative photography project under the aegis of Neel Dongre Awards/Grants for Excellence in Photography (2017) by India Photo Achieve



Foundation, will showcase five photographers presenting different living traditions like The Art of Making Tanpura in Maharashtra and Muga & Eri Silk cultivation in Assam through distinctive artistic styles.

**WHEN:** April 21 – May 2  
**WHERE:** Kamla Devi Complex, IIC  
**TIMING:** 11 am – 7 pm

#### THE DANCE OF INDIA

Artist Sailesh Sanghvi will be showcasing his twelve works at the solo art exhibition. The collection shows the different types of dances across the India. The artist, in two different genres, acrylic canvas collages and paper collage, portrays the diversity of Indian dances in the cultural set-up through his work from street entertainment to staged performance.

**WHEN:** April 21 – 30  
**WHERE:** Bikaner House, Pandara Road  
**TIMING:** 6 pm onwards

#### TRACING NARRATIVES

Tracing Narratives is a traveling exhibition that attempts to create a lens through which the spectators evaluated the world of landscape designs and its many connotations in the present and near future.



Future Institute is hosting the Delhi stop of Tracing Narratives.

**WHEN:** April 1 – 24  
**WHERE:** India Habitat Centre  
**TIMING:** 11 am – 7 pm

## How to protect skin from sunburn



a stronger immune system against sunburns.

- ▶ Keep your skin hydrated not only externally but also internally by drinking a lot of water. Make sure you have at least seven to eight litres of water in summer. Hydrated skin is less prone to sun damage than dry skin.

- ▶ Wear the right clothes. Sometimes, you have to go outside even during the peak hours in summer, so the best way to prevent sunburn is covering yourself with appropriate clothing. Long-sleeve shirts and pants cover more of your skin than tank tops and shorts so they can help block the sun's rays.

- ▶ Use jojoba oil as it acts like a shield and helps in curing sunburnt skin. The fastest and safest cure for tanned skin is to apply jojoba oil. It is also rich in Vitamins E and B complex, and helps in repairing dry and damaged skin while soothing the burning sensation.

IANS

**STOCK UP COCONUT** oil, jojoba oil and drink a lot of water to keep sunburn at bay, say experts.

- ▶ Wear a sun block (at least SPF 30) especially in coastal areas or while you're in water as body tends to feel more burn in scorching heat when you are in water.

- ▶ You can use coconut oil on exposed skin after staying in the sun to soothe affected skin and avoid sunburns.

- ▶ Consuming Vitamin D rich foods like fermented cod liver oil help supplement Vitamin D balance in your body and build



## Your genes decide what you eat



**CAN'T STOP MUNCHING** on chocolates or other unhealthy snacks? Blame your DNA, say scientists who have identified gene variants that influence our foods choices and dietary habits.

Researchers from Autonomous University of Madrid in Spain analysed the genetics of about 818 men and women of European ancestry and gathered information about their diet using a questionnaire.

They found that the genes they studied did play a significant role in a person's food choices and dietary habits.

For example, higher chocolate intake and a larger waist size was linked to certain forms of the oxytocin receptor gene, and an obesity-associated gene played a role in vegetable and fibre intake, researchers said.

They also observed that certain genes were involved in salt and fat intake.

"Most people have a hard time modifying their dietary habits, even if they know it is in their best interest," said Silvia Berciano from Autonomous University of Madrid.

"This is because our food preferences and

ability to work toward goals or follow plans affect what we eat and our ability to stick with diet changes," Berciano said.

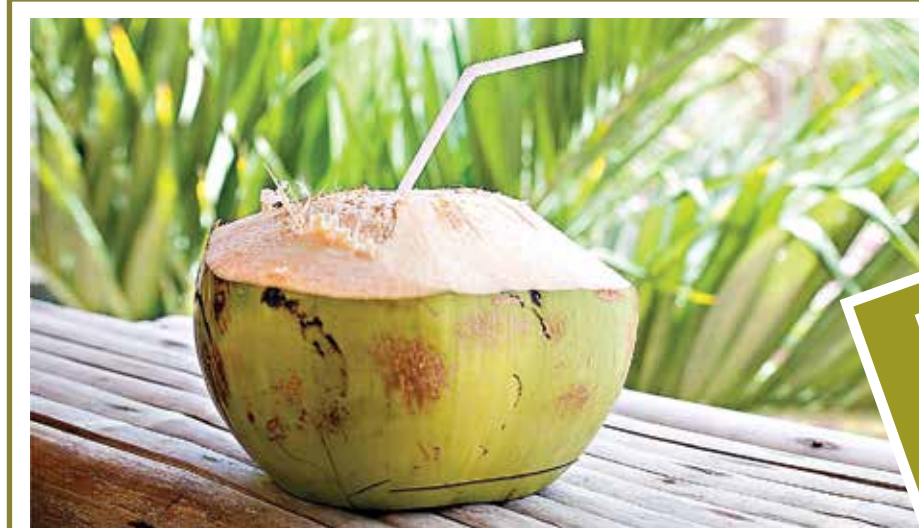
"Ours is the first study describing how brain genes affect food intake and dietary preferences in a group of healthy people," she said.

Nobody is eating exactly what you are. It is determined by the specific demands of your genetic signature, and it perfectly balances your micronutrient and macronutrient needs.

The findings could be used to inform precision-medicine approaches that help minimise

a person's risk for common diseases – such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer – by tailoring diet-based prevention and therapy to the specific needs of an individual, researchers said.

"The knowledge gained through our study will pave the way to better understanding of eating behaviour and facilitate the design of personalised dietary advice that will be more amenable to the individual, resulting in better compliance and more successful outcomes," Berciano said. P11



**A**void chances of acidity during the hot days by indulging in bananas, melons and coconut water, say experts.

**BANANAS:** It is the best antidote for acid reflux and is great for snacking purposes. Potassium in bananas produces mucous in the lining of the stomach, thus lowering the pH levels in the body. Also, bananas are high on fibre and a great source of roughage. Eating over-ripe bananas during summer is the best way to keep acidity at bay.

**MELONS:** Melons such as cantaloupe, musk melon and watermelon are high on anti-oxidants and fibre, and help avoid acid reflux and other stomach ailments by maintaining the mucous membrane. The cooling properties and high water content in these fruits help hydrate the

body and reduce pH levels. Other fruits such as apple and papaya are also great sources of fibre and aid in preventing acidity.

**COCONUT WATER:** This refreshing natural drink has cleansing properties that help flush out toxins from your body. Coconut water is also rich in fibre content and helps with regular bowel movements.

**COLD MILK:** Milk is another excellent way to combat acidity. Milk absorbs acid formation in the stomach, stopping any reflux or burning sensation in the gastric system. Anytime you feel an acid formation in the stomach or heartburn coming on, have a glass of plain cold milk without any additives or sugar.

**BUTTERMILK AND CURD:** Besides milk, other milk products (except cheese) like curd and buttermilk also provide relief from acid-



ity. These products cool the stomach and the natural bacteria in them do not allow acid formation. They help in keeping the overall digestive system healthy. Having curd and buttermilk regularly after meals is a great way to avoid chances of acidity in the long run too.

**SAY NO TO FOOD CARTS:** Though these should be avoided

round, they are definitely a strict no-no during summer season. Rise in temperature goes hand-in-hand with water scarcity, which in turn means compromise on washing properly in the kitchen. And that can have a bad effect on your system when you eat food that is not washed properly before cooking or cooked by hands that have been not thor-

oughly cleaned. Gastroenteritis, amoebic dysentery and diarrhoea are common during this time of the year.

**SWAP JUICE FOR WHOLE FRUIT INSTEAD:** In summer, you often spot house flies especially in markets near food vendors. They are major germ carriers and thus, people should be careful when having juice outside. Instead of cutting fruits or blending them into juice you should rather try to eat whole fruits to keep infections at bay. IANS















# Livelihoods at stake

Jitendra and Ishan Kukreti report on the economic implications of the Uttar Pradesh government's recent crackdown on slaughterhouses

Livestock rearing forms an integral part of the village economy, with both large and marginal farmers keeping animals to supplement their income and secure them against crop losses and other contingencies. According to the National Sample Survey Office report on agricultural households released in 2014, 12 per cent of the farmers' average monthly income of Rs 6,421 comes from livestock.

With no takers for his buffalo, the farmer whose wife killed herself may now have to let the animal go astray. "Feeding a cow or buffalo is an expensive affair. It requires at least five kg of dry straw worth Rs 50 every day," he says. The cost of keeping a buffalo, excluding manual labour and costly feed, comes to around Rs 30,200 a year, which is just half of a farmer's annual income of Rs 77,112.

Fearing that government action will make the sale of animal more difficult in the future, other farmers have begun distress-selling of their livestock, which means selling them off at throwaway prices. A 70-year-old marginal farmer from a village in Banda district walked 7 km to the weekly market only to find it "empty". He had come to sell his cow and calf for as low as Rs 2,500. "It is time to harvest the crop. We require cash to pay for labour and the transport of grains. But there are no buyers," he says.

Once the farmers sell animals, they pass through several hands before they land on our dinner plate. The largest group of those employed in meat sale consists of traders and intermediaries, who buy the animals from farmers and sell them to slaughterhouses.

Though the BJP government in UP insists it is following court orders, local media reports suggest that the ban has affected the licensed slaughter of buffaloes, goats, and chickens too. All is quiet at the weekly "Sunday" market in Banda town which sees a weekly trade of 150-200 buffaloes and some milch animals worth around Rs 20 lakh. Traders sit in groups and discuss news reports of violence against animal traders. "When the new government came to power, business first slowed down and then stopped," says the owner of the market. Another weekly market in Bakarganj in Fatehpur district is also empty on a Friday. More than 800 animals worth around Rs 2 crore is traded at the market every week. "I took a buffalo from a farmer in Himmatnagar village and walked 20 km to the market," says a 32-year-old trader from the district. "But there were no buyers. I gave it back to the farmer and asked him to wait till the situation improves."

The ban has affected some of the poorest and most oppressed communities in the Indian caste hierarchy. For instance, men of the Kaparia community, whose traditional occupation is broom making, are now mostly involved in the animal trade. On March 24,



Representational Image

a Kaparia group claimed that the police had seized their buffaloes and extorted Rs 40,000 without returning the animals. Now, other community members from a village in Banda district have decided to stay clear of animal markets. "We do not have money to pay the police. We will be sent to jail," says a Kaparia animal trader.

Shunned by most communities, the job of slaughtering is relegated to those who are at the lowest end of the social hierarchy. A slaughterer from the Muslim Qureshi community in Fatehpur district used to slaughter four to six buffaloes every week for Rs 500 each. But now, he fears the police will nab him. "On March 24, I was robbed by goons of Bajrang Dal while returning from the market. They were shouting and accusing me of cow slaughter," he says. There are 25 Qureshi households in his village. The village head did not allow Down To Earth to enter the village and claimed that all Qureshis had fled their homes. "I don't think the situation will improve soon, so I am asking them to look for another source of livelihood," he says. Yet, he admits that buffalo meat is an important part of the village diet. "It is

cheaper than mutton, chicken, and fish. We cannot afford any other meat in our wedding feasts," he says.

Animal slaughter is practised by Hindu communities too. A Khatik slaughterer and meat shop owner says, "My shop was closed down even though I have a licence. There are rumours that I also sell cow and buffalo meat. But I sell only goat meat." The Chikwa community also slaughters sheep and goat for a living. And given India's peculiar caste system, the Chikwas can be either Hindu or Muslim. A Hindu Chikwa slaughterer and seller says, "My licence has not been renewed though I applied for it six months ago." A Muslim Chikwa slaughterer says business has collapsed since the ban. "We used to earn Rs 500 a day by slaughtering goats. Now our earnings have stopped."

Overall, the meat industry provides direct employment to more than 2.5 million people, according to the All India Meat and Livestock Exporters Association. The number of those indirectly affected by the ban is estimated to be much higher.

Incidents of vandalism and harassment have also affected those involved in the trade

of milch animals. For instance, two trucks carrying 26 milch buffaloes were seized by vigilantes and shifted to open cowsheds on the outskirts of Banda town. The caretaker of the buffaloes says, "There is no facility of fodder and water for the animals at the shed. It will affect their milk yield and buffaloes will fetch a small price." The animals would have sold for more than Rs 12 lakh.

The slaughterhouse ban has impacted even tanneries. A man, who works at a tannery in Kanpur, cycles 60 km to and from Unnao every day. "There are no jobs in Unnao, and I have a family of six to feed," he says. All 50 households in his village in Unnao depend on Kanpur's tanneries, some of the oldest and largest in the country. The Small Tanneries Association estimates that illegal slaughterhouses provide around 40 per cent of all leather to small and medium enterprises and 10-20 per cent to big leather industries. The leather industry employs nearly half a million people in Kanpur alone.

#### A reality check

While the government must ensure that the meat industry meets all food safety and

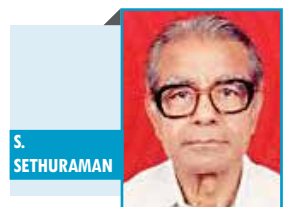
environment norms, it must caution against misinformation. BJP's election manifesto for Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections 2017 had stated that livestock numbers had fallen during the previous government because of illegal slaughterhouses. But the 19th Livestock Census of 2012 shows that Uttar Pradesh's cattle population increased by 2.4 per cent and buffalo population by 16 per cent compared to 2007.

Livestock is a major source of livelihood for the state's poor and curbs on animal trade will reduce the income of the rural population. A farmer from Banda says, "When the animals become unproductive, farmers replace them with productive animals. If the atmosphere of fear persists, the whole state will face the problem of stray animals and farmers will shy away from keeping milch animals. This will lead to a decrease in the state's milk production." With the Yogi Adityanath-led government promising to double the income of farmers in the next five years, it is the livestock economy that can provide the much-needed momentum.

DOWN TO EARTH  
(The views expressed are strictly those of Down to Earth.)

## Relentless political drama in TN

Fragile accord to save ruling AIADMK emerges



S. SETHURAMAN

Two power-driven factions of ruling AIADMK, a magnificent political structure that late J Jayalalithaa, popularly known as 'Amma', created in her lifetime, were nearly bringing down the edifice, before agreeing to a truce on April 22, though with substance yet to be negotiated.

For months as the rival groups, merrily engaged in their games, governance in Tamil Nadu was at a standstill, a State wracked by the worst drought and widespread water crisis in a hot summer.

This unprecedented political crisis in Tamil Nadu, also fiscally strained and highly indebted, was viewed more as an opportunity by M K Stalin, DMK leader, with credible numbers to step into a potential vacuum. The only other expectant force thirsting for political space, BJP has been equally active, so much so that other state parties saw the hand of BJP at the Centre manipulating the course of AIADMK developments in Tamil Nadu including a tax raid.

Income tax authorities raided the residence of one of the Ministers Vijayabaskar who was allegedly trying to arrange distribution of Rs. 86 crores among voters in RK Nagar, a North Chennai constituency, where by-election had been called for April 12 but cancelled subsequently amid widespread reports of cash distribution to voters.

Though denied by Central Ministers, Tamil Nadu matters critically for Prime Minister Narendra Modi both for the July Presidential elections and even more for his second enthronement in 2019, with a friendly AIADMK, given the significant numbers AIADMK command. (In 2014, the late Jayalalithaa took away 37 out of 39 TN seats in Lok Sabha). Both Panneerselvam (while in office) and his successor of the



Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami

Sasikala faction, Chief Minister E Palaniswami, have had meetings with Modi on state issues.

The three-month long crisis in Tamil Nadu was triggered when Chief Minister O Panneerselvam resigned in January and raised a banner of revolt against efforts of Amma's closest aide V K Sasikala, already General Secretary, to take over leadership of Government. And with the support of a majority, Sasikala met the Governor to stake her claim.

Panneerselvam (OPS) had the backing of about a dozen MLAs and some MPs and other senior cadres, and claimed he was engaged in a "Dharma Yudh" to see that Sasikala (now in jail after a Supreme Court verdict) and her nominee and family member Deputy General Secretary TTV Dhinakaran were thrown out of AIADMK. He has other tough demands.

In recent weeks, some of the Ministers (Sasikala faction) and the Panneerselvam group began to realise that in the evolving political situation with serious problems ahead including local body elections to follow within two months, they must try to restore the

original stature of AIADMK and stand united. Otherwise, the AIADMK Government cannot last its full term till 2021 and both factions will have to sink together.

Strangely, Panneerselvam, who hardly spoke or made decisions whenever Jayalalithaa had asked him to look after her portfolios, turned quite hawkish this time and set stiff preconditions for talks with the Palaniswami group. Apart from sacking Sasikala and family from the party, which has been agreed to by the Ministerial side, he also wanted a CBI inquiry into the treatment and circumstances of her demise on December 5 in Apollo Hospital.

The Palaniswami Government, with a majority of barely five or six MLAs, is highly vulnerable to confidence votes demanded by Stalin - and 11 MLAs of rival camp could also switch sides - and the Party also needs the frozen "Two Leaves" symbol, for local body elections.

Palaniswami has taken the initiative and offered to step aside in favour of Panneerselvam (being restored as Chief Minister) while he would settle for the party's highest post of

General Secretary. Both groups have formed seven-member teams with leading party leaders on both sides to thrash out remaining, some undoubtedly tough, issues.

Dhinakaran, already having to fight old and new cases in different courts for FERA violation and also his alleged attempt to bribe EC to ensure allotment of AIADMK symbol to Amma DMK which he sought to represent in the by-election, seems to have taken the new development in stride. He is yet to take soundings from Sasikala, serving her four-year jail term in a Bengaluru prison.

Panneerselvam had at an early stage taken the factional battles to the Election Commission raising the legitimacy of Sasikala's appointment as General Secretary in the first instance and thereby he could claim AIADMK symbol "Two Leaves" for his group candidate who was to face Dhinakaran (backed by Ministers of the Edappadi Palaniswami Government).

The Election Commission has given time till June 16 to the two factions in the AIADMK to submit the documents and affidavits supporting their claim

of numerical strength in the party to claim the two leaves symbol. It is unlikely that RK Nagar by-election would be held soon. The State electoral officer is under pressure from the High Court not to delay the local body elections deferred on more than one occasion, now likely by the end of May.

Radhakrishnan Nagar constituency had elected Jayalalithaa twice, once after her acquittal in the Disproportionate Assets Case by the Karnataka High Court in 2015 and again in the 2016 Assembly elections, which renewed her mandate for a second successive five-year term (2016-2021).

The unexpected cancellation of the RK Nagar bypoll was a shock not only to the rival camps battling for legitimacy, as the actual heir to Amma Jayalalithaa's legacy, but even more to the major opposition DMK leader M K Stalin, who had hoped to wrest the AIADMK stronghold for his party and turn it a vote of no-confidence against the Palaniswami Government.

Stalin has been desperately attempting to rally all political forces, other than BJP and two factions of AIADMK, and emerge as the principal political voice of the State's interests, especially the distressed farmers in Cauvery delta, awaiting the waiver of loans and other relief measures to meet the water crisis enveloping Tamil Nadu.

Now that the Palaniswami government ministers themselves, Dhinakaran says he is no longer doing work of the party. The latter was expected to meet Sasikala and discuss the future course of action. A few voices are still being raised in her support here and there. Panneerselvam already tastes victory in his "Dharma Yudh".

(The views expressed are strictly personal.)

The three-month long crisis in Tamil Nadu was triggered when Chief Minister Panneerselvam resigned in January and raised a banner of revolt against efforts of Amma's closest aide V K Sasikala, already General Secretary, to take over leadership of the government

tweet  
RETWEET

**ARVIND KEJRIWAL**  
@ArvindKejriwal

Reports from all over Delhi of EVM malfunction, people wid voter slips not allowed to vote. What is SEC doing?

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**KARUNA NUNDY**  
@karunanundy

Voted. Who runs the corporation will make a real difference to health, education, our daily lives. #MCDElections2017

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**AMIT MALVIYA**  
@malviyamit

Looking at @arvindkejriwal's tweets, it is amply clear that AAP is facing a Punjab / Goa kind of decimation in MCD also.

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**SHASHI THAROOR**  
@ShashiTharoor

Blaring loudspeakers have about as much to do with religion as compulsory chanting of "BharatMata Ki Jai" has to do with genuine patriotism.



## Maldives blogger stabbed to death in restive capital



**Male:** A liberal blogger, Yameen Rasheed, was stabbed to death in the politically restive Maldivian capital Male, his family members and colleagues said today. He was 29. Rasheed was found in the stairwell of his apartment with multiple stab wounds to his neck and chest today and died shortly after being taken to hospital, family members said. His blog, The Daily Panic, had a considerable following and was known for poking fun at politicians in the nation of some 340,000 Sunni Muslims.

"With The Daily Panic, I hope to cover and comment upon the news, satirise the frequently unsatisfactory politics of Maldives," he wrote on his blog. Rasheed is the third media personality to be targeted in the Maldives in the past five years. Blogger Ismail Rasheed, also known as Hilath, was stabbed and wounded by an unidentified attacker in 2012.

A journalist with the independent Minivan News, Ahmed Rilwan, was likely abducted in August 2014 and has been missing ever since. Exiled opposition leader and former president Mohamed Nasheed today demanded action on the latest killing of an independent journalist.

"President Nasheed is demanding an inquiry with international participation so it can't be swept under the carpet as usual," a spokesman for Nasheed told AFP. Political tension has mounted in the Maldives after a failed bid by the opposition to impeach the country's parliamentary speaker late last month.

The regime of President Abdulla Yameen has arrested the last Maldives opposition leader not to be in jail or in exile as part of a major government crackdown on rival politicians, who narrowly failed to seize control of parliament. AGENCIES

## Afghanistan declares national mourning day

ARMY BASE ATTACK

**KABUL:** The Afghan government declared Sunday as a national mourning day to pay tributes to scores of army personnel who died in a Taliban attack at a military base in Balkh province.

At least 10 Taliban militants disguised as army personnel on Friday sneaked in at 209 Shaheen Base Headquarters in Mazar-e-Sharif city, opening fire on unarmed and unsuspecting soldiers as they prayed at a mosque in the base.

"In order to pay tributes to the honourable and brave Afghan soldiers who martyred during Friday prayers in Shaheen 209 Corps mosque, the President declared Sunday as a National Mourning Day," a presidential palace statement said on Saturday.

The toll in the Taliban stealth attack continued to rise as of Sunday morning while there was no official statement on it. Local media cited officials as saying that the deaths have surpassed 150 and over 80 have been injured.

The toll was likely to rise as many of injured were in a critical condition, officials said. Several bodies were on Sunday morning handed over to their families or shifted to their houses.

"Special prayers will be held in the Presidential Palace mosque and at mosques across the country and the national flag will be at half-mast at home and Afghan diplomatic missions abroad," the statement said. The heavily armed militants in two military vehicles stormed the base after passing several security gates under the guise of carrying wounded persons to the base hospital.

**The toll in the Taliban stealth attack continued to rise as of Sunday morning**

President Ashraf Ghani on Saturday inspected the site and chaired an emergency security meeting at the base, ordering a serious investigation into the deadly attack.

He later visited the injured at the Corps hospital. "This terrorist attack is fully contradictory to all human values and Islamic teachings," the statement said.

The Taliban insurgency has been on the rampage since the beginning of 2015, as the Afghan forces assumed full responsibility of Afghanistan's security from the US and NATO troops. AGENCIES

# 'Britain's Conservatives to focus on Brexit, energy in poll'

**LONDON:** Britain's ruling Conservative Party's election manifesto will focus on Brexit and domestic concerns, such as strengthening the economy and putting a cap on energy prices, Work and Pensions minister Damian Green said on Sunday.

"The manifesto will deal with two big issues facing the country - one obviously is the Brexit negotiations ... but the other half, which is equally important, is indeed the domestic agenda," he told *ITV's Pevon* on Sunday program.

"There will be a lot about energy policy in the manifesto ... I think that people feel that some of the big energy companies have taken advantage of them with the tariffs."

Theresa May appeared on course to win a crushing election victory in June after opinion polls put support for her ruling Conservative party at around 50 percent, double that of the opposition Labour party. May's decision to call a June 8 election stunned her political rivals this week and a string of polls released late on Saturday suggested the gamble had paid off, with one from ComRes showing the party of Margaret Thatcher enjoying levels of support not seen since 1991.



May, appointed prime minister in the turmoil that followed Britain's vote to leave the European Union last June, said she needed the election to secure her own mandate and strengthen her hand for the Brexit negotiations ahead. She is also looking to capitalise on the disarray swirling around the Labour party, which has been riven with internal divi-

sion over its leader Jeremy Corbyn. Voters also appear to be switching from the anti-EU UKIP party, which helped campaign for Brexit, to May's Conservatives, which will likely deliver it.

"The announcement of a snap election has clearly focused the minds of the electorate," said James Crouch at pollster Opinium. In two other

polls, May's Conservatives also gained ground in Scotland at the expense of the Scottish National Party, potentially weakening the nationalists' demand for another independence referendum.

May has already warned her party not to take victory for granted, a message that was echoed by pollsters on Saturday.

National Grid confirmed that Britain had gone a full 24-hour cycle without using coal to produce any of the country's electricity, media reports said.

All electricity produced until late Friday night was generated from a mix of sources, but mainly gas fired and nuclear powered generating stations. Wind, biomass, and imported energy were also used on Friday, *Xinhua news agency* reported.

National Grid's Cordi O'Hara said: "To have the first working day without coal since the start of the industrial revolution is a watershed moment in how our energy system is changing."

"Britain benefits from highly diverse and flexible sources of electricity. Our energy mix continues to change and National Grid adapts system operation to embrace these changes." The 24-hour cycle started Thursday when a coal fires power plant at West Burton went offline.

"The 24 hour cycle was confirmed at 22.50 hours on Friday, after which we started to use coal-fired generation again. We can't (tell) when this new record will be broken," O'Hara said. AGENCIES

## Labour leader Corbyn says could suspend Syria air strikes if elected

**LONDON:** The leader of Britain's main opposition Labour Party Jeremy Corbyn said on Sunday he could suspend British involvement in air strikes against Syria if he was elected prime minister at a June 8 election. The veteran peace campaigner, whose Labour Party is around 20 points behind the ruling Conservatives in opinion polls, set out his position on a range of security and foreign policies, saying he would look again at Britain's nuclear deterrent and was against using nuclear weapons. His comments were pounced upon by the Conservatives, who said that Corbyn posed a threat to British security and was the best reason "for sticking with the strong leadership of [Prime Minister] Theresa May". Corbyn told the BBC's Andrew Marr Show that he believed that "the only solution in Syria is going to be a political one". "I want us to say 'Listen, let's get people around the table quickly' and a way of achieving that - suspending the strikes, possibly." The leftist leader, whose views on foreign policy have often been at odds with those held by other lawmakers in his party, also said he would have to consider whether he would authorize a drone strike against the leader of Islamic State to limit civilian casualties. May, who said she had called the early election to shore up support for her divorce plan with the European Union and heal divisions in the country, looks set to win a large majority, with some polls putting support for her party at 50%. May decided to call a snap general election because she feared Jeremy Corbyn was on the verge of resigning, Downing Street sources have said. There had been growing expectations the Labour leader would stand down after what was predicted to be a bad performance for the party in local elections. AGENCIES

## RACING WITH THE SUN



Runners make their way over Tower Bridge during the London Marathon on Sunday. AP/PTI

## China's Xi says be combat-ready amid South China Sea dispute

**BEIJING:** Chinese President Xi Jinping has underlined the need for building a combat-ready army and accelerate the building of the theatre joint combat command system, amidst the PLA flexing its muscles in the disputed South China Sea.

Xi, the ruling Communist party's General Secretary and the Central Military Commission's Chairman, made the comments while inspecting the Southern Theatre Command of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) on Friday and stressed building a strong army which should also avoid being corrupt. Xi, 63, viewed as the most powerful leader heading the party, military and the government will complete his first five year term this year and expected to be re-elected for

another five-year term during the 19th Party Congress to be held later this year.

He vowed to fight corruption and enhance the "sense of gain" among officers and soldiers of the 2.3 million-strong People's Liberation Army, the world's largest. Xi asked military personnel to strengthen their awareness in preparing for war, closely follow changes of situations and make unremitting efforts to enhance combat capabilities.

Xi required an accelerated building of the theatre joint combat command system, vigorous development of a new-type fighting force and simultaneous improvement of national defence strength and economic development, the official Xinhua news agency quoted him as saying. His com-

ments came amid China's maritime disputes with its South China Sea neighbours. China claims almost all of the South China Sea, including islands more than 800 miles from the Chinese mainland, despite objections from neighbours such as the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Vietnam.

Beijing has also created artificial islands in the area, outfitting some of them with military features. The issue is a source of ongoing tension and anger in the region. In his speech, Xi urged all military personnel to resolutely safeguard the authority of CPC Central Committee, unwaveringly follow the Party's leadership and combat corruption.

He asked all military personnel to greet the 19th CPC National Congress. AGENCIES

## 38 Indians detained in UK for visa breach in factory raids

**LONDON:** Britain's immigration officials have detained 38 Indians, including nine women, for overstaying their visas or working illegally after conducting raids in two clothing factories in the city of Leicester.

The UK Home Office Immigration Enforcement team raided MK Clothing Ltd and Fashion Times UK Ltd in the city in the East Midlands region of England last week and held 38 Indians and one Afghan man. Of those detained, 31 had overstayed their visas, seven had entered the country illegally and one was working in breach of their visa conditions, *Leicester Mercury* reported. The officials took 19 people into detention pending their removal from the UK while remaining 20 were ordered to report regularly to the Home Office while their cases are dealt with.

"Using illegal labour is not victimless. It cheats the taxpayer, undercuts honest businesses and denies legitimate job seekers of employment opportunities, said assistant director Alison Spowage, from East Midlands Immigration Enforcement.

"The penalties for businesses that do not play

by the rules are rightly severe. This operation, one of the largest-scale my team has conducted, sends a clear message that we have the resources to tackle immigration abuse.

All of our operations are intelligence-led and I would encourage people with detailed and specific information about illegal immigration to contact us, she said.

Immigration officials were accompanied by Leicestershire Police and HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) officers during the raids. The two firms could face fines of up to 20,000 pounds for each illegal worker if it is proven they did not take steps to establish their employees' legal status.

This translates up to 240,000 pounds for MK Clothing Ltd and 180,000 pounds for Fashion Times UK Ltd. The two factories are yet to comment on the raids.

Under UK immigration rules, employers are required to carry out details right to work checks on the employees they hire and are liable for hefty fines if they are found to have hired workers who do not have the legal right to work in Britain. AGENCIES

## Ready to strike US aircraft carrier; warns Aus of nuke strike if it toes US blindly: N Korea



**SEOUL:** North Korea said on Sunday it was ready to sink a US aircraft carrier to demonstrate its military might, as two Japanese navy ships joined a US carrier group for exercises in the western Pacific.

US President Donald Trump ordered the USS Carl Vinson carrier strike group to sail to waters off the Korean peninsula in response to rising tension over the North's nuclear and missile tests, and its threats to attack the United States and its Asian allies.

The United States has not specified where the carrier strike group is as it approaches the area. US Vice President Mike Pence said on Saturday it would arrive "within days" but gave no other details.

North Korea remained defiant. "Our revolutionary forces are combat-ready to sink a US nuclear powered aircraft carrier with a single strike," the *Rodong Sinmun*, the newspaper of the North's ruling Workers' Party, said in a commentary. The commentary was carried on page three of the newspaper, after a two-page feature about leader Kim Jong Un inspecting a pig farm.

North Korea has bluntly warned Australia of a possible nuclear strike if Canberra persists in "blindly and zealously toeing the US line".

North Korea's state news agency (KCNA) quoted a foreign ministry spokesman castigating Australian foreign minister, Julie Bishop, after she said the rogue nation would be subject to further Australian sanctions and for "spouting a string of rubbish against the DPRK over its entirely just steps for self-defence".

"If Australia persists in following the US moves to isolate and stifle the DPRK and remains a shock brigade of the US master, this will be a suicidal act of coming within the range of the nuclear strike of the strategic force of the DPRK," the report said. "The Australian foreign minister had better think twice about the consequences to be entailed by her reckless tongue-lashing before flattering the US." However, Australia and New Zealand stiffened their rhetoric against North Korea on Sunday after the threat. AGENCIES

## Fur coat worn by Titanic survivor sells for £150,000

**LONDON:** A fur coat worn by a first class stewardess when the Titanic sank in 1912 has been sold for £150,000 at an auction in the UK, almost double its original valuation of £80,000. Mabel Bennett, (33 then), was in her nightdress when the ship began to sink after hitting an ice berg. More than 1,500 passengers and crew died when the ship sank in April 1912, on its maiden voyage. She had put on the beaver lamb fur coat she owned to keep her warm as she boarded lifeboat, the *Telegraph* reported. Bennett died aged 96 in 1974 and was the longest living female member of the crew. She had passed the coat on to her great niece in the 1960s as she found it too heavy to wear. The fur coat and letter of provenance went under the hammer on Saturday at an auction at Henry Aldridge and Son in Devizes, Wiltshire. The coat had been on display in the US after it was sold by her family in 1999. AGENCIES

## Pope Francis criticised for comparing refugee centres to 'concentration camps'

**WASHINGTON:** Pope Francis has drawn criticism from a Jewish organisation for comparing European refugee holding centres to "concentration camps". The pontiff made the comparison during a visit to Rome Basilica where he met with migrants on Saturday. Recalling his visit to a refugee camp on the Greek island of Lesbos last year, he talked of encountering a Muslim refugee from the Middle East who told him how "terrorists came to our country".

According to *Reuters*, islamists cut the throat of the man's Christian wife because she refused to throw her cruci-



fix on the ground Pope Francis said: "I don't know if he managed to leave that concentration camp, because refugee camps, many of them, are of concentration (type) because

of the great number of people left there inside them". Soon afterwards, the American Jewish Committee (AJC) urged the pontiff "to reconsider his regrettable choice of words".

"The conditions in which migrants are currently living in some European countries may well be difficult, and deserve still greater international attention, but concentration camps they certainly are not," David Harris, the head of the AJC, said in a statement.

The Nazis and their allies erected and used concentration camps for slave labour and the extermination of millions of people during World War II. There is no comparison to the magnitude of that tragedy. "We respectfully urge the pope to reconsider his regrettable choice of words," he added. AGENCIES









**DHONI REMAINS THE MOST DESTRUCTIVE FINISHER: FLEMING**

**MUMBAI:** Former New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming said Mahendra Singh Dhoni remains the best finisher of the limited overs game, hailing the World Cup-winning captain after he turned the clock back with a destructive knock. India's most successful captain in both Tests and ODIs cracked a 34-ball 61 to steer Pune Supergiant to a last-ball victory over Sunrisers.

**CHINA BOWLED OUT FOR 28 IN WORLD LEAGUE QUALIFIER**

**BANGKOK:** China were humiliated as they were bowled out for 28 by Saudi Arabia and crashed to a 390-run defeat in a World Cricket League regional qualifier in Thailand. Saudi Arabia piled up 418 all out off their 50 overs before China's outclassed batsmen collapsed in just 12.4 overs as extras top scored with 13.

**MUMBAI INDIANS TO CELEBRATE SACHIN'S BIRTHDAY TODAY**

**MUMBAI:** IPL franchise Mumbai Indians would be celebrating the birthday of cricket legend and their 'icon player' Sachin Tendulkar who will turn 44 on Monday. The right-handed batsman was born here on April 24, 1973. "Mumbai Indians would be celebrating Sachin's birthday at the Wankhede stadium where the team will be taking on RSP" an MI source said.



**IPL Preview: High-flying Mumbai take on Pune in Maha derby clash**

**MUMBAI:** On a roll after a six-game winning streak, high-flying Mumbai Indians will take on a resurgent Rising Pune Supergiant, their only conquerors in IPL season 10, in a potentially high-voltage clash here on Monday.

Pune's last-ball, six-wicket victory on Saturday at home against defending champions Sunrisers Hyderabad was followed just over a 100km away at the Wankhede Stadium here by Mumbai's stout defence of a small total on a bouncy pitch against the misfiring Delhi Daredevils.

Table toppers Mumbai, thus, are in a perfect state of

mind to seek revenge for their first leg loss to their Maharashtra rivals in their opening game in Pune, their only defeat in this season so far.

That the Pune victory over Hyderabad was piloted by none other than the iconic Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who smashed an unbeaten 61 not out in 34 balls to steer the side home in the last ball, will not be lost on the Mumbai think-tank.

The timely return to form by the talismanic former Indian captain, along with Pune captain Steve Smith's strong show so far in the tournament, makes this duo formidable rivals for the Mumbai bowlers who



Pune will be looking at MS Dhoni to replicate the form that he rediscovered against Sunrisers

showed great skills in defending a small total of 142 against Delhi. It was a rare, forgettable

outing with the bat for Mumbai against Delhi and they must pull up their socks to confront

the threat posed by the Pune bowling attack on Monday.

Particularly interesting will be the battle between Pune's South African leg-spinner Imran Tahir and Mumbai skipper Rohit Sharma who once again fell to a wrist spinner yesterday against Delhi, playing across. Tahir had his number in the first leg clash in Pune and will be confident of causing the Mumbai captain's downfall on a track that offered excellent bounce and turn yesterday. Mumbai's major plus has been the depth in their batting and variety in bowling, as not many other teams are blessed with such a combination in the

league. Against Delhi, Mumbai batting failed to click although some batsmen like Kieron Pollard and Hardik Pandya got encouraging starts but could not convert them to big scores.

Although unlikely, Mumbai have the option of bringing back Ambati Rayudu -- who has started training with the team after recovering from his early-season injury. In bowling, Lasith Malinga has leaked runs in the previous two games, conceding over 50 each expectedly made way to Mitchell Johnson who bowled reasonably well and is expected to be retained against Pune on Monday.

**Injured Dwayne Bravo ruled out of entire IPL season**

**RAJKOT:** Gujarat Lions on Sunday suffered a setback after West Indies all-rounder Dwayne Bravo was ruled out of the 10th edition of Indian Premier League. Bravo is yet to fully recuperate from his left hamstring surgery after sustaining an injury in December during the Big Bash League.

Gujarat Lions Skipper Suresh Raina confirmed the development. The Gujarat franchise was expecting him to get fit during the later part of the season as he was travelling with the team while undergoing rehabilitation. "No Dwayne Bravo. He's been doing proper rehab and it might take three-four weeks, so he might be out of the tournament. So now we have to talk to the management and think about a replacement," Raina said at the toss.

**Bowlers help Kings XI Punjab slay Gujarat Lions**



Kings XI Punjab players celebrate the wicket of Gujarat Lions batsman Ravindra Jadeja

**RAJKOT:** Kings XI Punjab produced an all-round performance to finally arrest their slide, beating Gujarat Lions by 26 runs in a one-sided Indian Premier League encounter, here on Sunday.

Courtesy Hashim Amla's 65 and Axar Patel 34, Kings XI Punjab notched up 188 for seven after being invited to bat.

The much-criticised bowling attack then joined the party restricting Lions to 162 for seven as they won a match after losing four consecutive games on the trot.

Kings XI Punjab now have six points from seven games while Lions remain at the bottom with four points.

The dangerous Brendon McCullum missed a in-dipping full-toss from Sandeep Sharma to be adjudged plumb in-front.

Skipper Suresh Raina (32) and Aaron Finch (13) added 40 runs at a brisk pace with the India international hitting a flurry of boundaries. But it was Mohit Sharma, who bowled one wide and full outside the off-stump and Finch's uppish drive was taken by Marcus Stoinis. But what changed the game completely was skipper Glenn Maxwell's brilliant catch at the deep mid-wicket boundary.

Raina played the customary swat over cow corner but Maxwell kept his balance as he timed his jump to perfection.

The pitch showed signs of being two-paced and KC Cariappa got Ravindra Jadeja to play early and dived in-front to grab the return catch.

The big-hitting Dwayne Smith (4) also got out cheaply, becoming Axar's second victim of the match.

Cariappa then trapped Akshdeep Nath (0) in-front of the wicket to make matters worse as Karthik waged a lone battle.

Cariappa and Axar between them bowled eight overs giving away only 60 runs and most importantly got four wickets.

Earlier, Amla's sublime touch was complemented by an Axar cameo that powered Kings XI Punjab to a competitive 188 for seven against Gujarat Lions. Amla hit 65 off 40 balls with nine boundaries and two sixes to set the platform while Axar's 34 off 17 balls enabled the Kings XI Punjab to reach a fighting total after 20 overs. Shaun Marsh (30 off 24 balls) and Maxwell (31 off 18 balls) also made useful contributions.

**Brief scores: Kings XI Punjab vs Gujarat Lions:** KXIP: 188/7 (Hashim Amla 65, Axar Patel 34, KC Cariappa 2/24). GL: 162/7 (Dinesh Karthik 58, Suresh Raina 32, Andrew Tye 2/35).

**Dejected Raina says bowlers need to step up**

**RAJKOT:** After going down to Kings XI Punjab in an Indian Premier League (IPL) match on Sunday, dejected Gujarat Lions skipper Suresh Raina said his bowlers need to step up as they are lacking confidence in the middle.

Gujarat were beaten by Kings XI Punjab, who put up a strong all-round show to end their four-match losing streak with a 26-run victory.

Opening batsman Hashim Amla played a crucial knock of 65 as the visitors posted a challenging total of 188/7 in 20 overs.

In reply, Gujarat could muster only 162/7, largely driven by Dinesh Karthik (58 not out) as the eighth-placed team succumbed to its fifth loss in seven matches.

"You can't chase 190 every time. Bowlers have to do something. We haven't won any 4 p.m. games.

"It's a learning curve for us. Spinners have to step up," Raina said after the match.

"Nathu got cramps, so I had to bowl Smith in the second last over. The bowlers are lacking confidence. They are not executing on match day... they do well in the nets, but not on match day, he explained.

Raina, who scored 32 runs off 24 balls, also blamed the wicket for the defeat.

"We thought we could still chase it down, but while we were batting, the wicket got slower and Sandeep (Sharma) and Mohit (Sharma) bowled good slower balls and made it hard for us to hit," the skipper said.

"At this stage, I can't say anything. We have to go there. Couple of injury issues, but we have to win more games, we can't just talk in training. We'll go to Bengaluru, regroup and hopefully we can win," he added.

**Dark Knight: RCB exploit chink in KKR's armour**

**KOLKATA:** Yuzvendra Chahal rocked the middle order with a three-wicket burst as Royal Challengers Bangalore bundled out Kolkata Knight Riders for a modest 131 in their IPL clash at Eden Gardens, here on Sunday.

After coming on to chase, the measly total Bangalore lost three quick wickets in the space of 14 runs with skipper Virat Kohli, AB de Villiers and Manddeep Singh all making their way back to the pavilion.

Earlier, Virat Kohli opted to bowl and was in for a shock as KKR's new opener Sunil Narine hammered Samuel Badree for 18 runs in the opening over, hitting three fours and a six.

The next over, Gambhir had some tough time against Mills before using the Englishman's pace to guide the ball over third-man boundary.

It was raining boundaries and sixes as KKR raced to 39 in three overs before Mills finally gave the breakthrough dismissing KKR skipper for 14 when the ball kissed Gambhir's bottom-hand thumb and went to the wicketkeeper.

Narine though lived up



RCB's Yuzvendra Chahal with teammates celebrates the dismissal of KKR batsman Yusuf Pathan

to his new-found opening role pushing them to 65/2 in Powerplay but what unfolded next was a batting harakiri and the sellout Eden crowd switched loyalty Kohli and Co and kept chanting 'RCB, RCB'.

Narine slammed six bound-

aries and one six before holding out at deep square leg off Stuart Binny in the last over of Power Play.

Kohli introduced his ace spinner Chahal in the eighth over as the Haryana leggie bowled his quota at one go and rattled KKR who managed just

20 runs from 10 to 15 overs.

An alert Chahal quickly altered his line seeing Yusuf Pathan (8) stepping out for his first wicket and had him stumped while in the 12th over he struck twice to remove Manish Pandey (15) and

Colin de Grandhomme (0).

The home team lost five wickets for 28 runs with Chahal making the difference in his 4-0-16-3 spell while Pawan Negi (2/15) and Tymal Mills (2/31) added to their misery.

Left-arm spinner Negi took wickets of Nathan Coulter Nile (2) and Suryakumar Yadav (15) in successive balls in the 18th over while Sreenath Aravind cleaned up Kuldeep Yadav (4) to bowl KKR out in 19.3 overs.

This is for the first time KKR were bowled out by RCB who would be sniffing a second win in a row, as it's a big ask for Gautam Gambhir to defend the modest total.

Having been smashed by Narine in his first over, Badree returned to trap Uthappa LBW in his second spell, a twin blow for KKR in four balls with addition of one run.

**Brief scores: Kolkata Knight Riders vs Royal Challengers Bangalore: KKR:** 131 (Sunil Narine 34, Chris Woakes 18). **RCB:** Chahal (3/16).

**Selection headache: It's Ashish Nehra or Mohammed Shami for Champions Trophy**

**NEW DELHI:** The three-member selection committee will be fretting on India's bowling combination for the upcoming Champions Trophy with a clear toss-up for the fourth pacer's slot between Ashish Nehra and Mohammed Shami.

The cut-off date set by ICC for announcing the 15-member squad for the Champions Trophy in the United Kingdom is April 25 and it is expected that the squad will be named in the next few days.

The date of the selection committee meeting has not been finalised as some in the BCCI want the ICC issues pertaining to revenue sharing and governance to be resolved first.

While Ravichandran Ashwin is expected to start his training next week end, along with Ravindra Jadeja, looks an automatic selection in the spin department, it will be the fifth member of the pace attack who



will need some discussion.

Ashwin will get into the groove playing the two warm-up games when India land in the United Kingdom.

Death-overs specialist Jasprit Bumrah, swing bowler Bhuvneshwar Kumar and speed merchant Umesh Yadav are certainties in the squad of



15 subject to fitness.

So is Hardik Pandya, who will be there as the pace bowling all-rounder. This leaves one slot in the pace department for which there are two contenders -- Mohammed Shami and Ashish Nehra.

While Shami has been a potent bowler for India in Test

format, the last time he played an ODI match was during the World Cup semi-final against Australia at Sydney, back in 2015. In case of Nehra, it was even further back during the 2011 World Cup semi-final but the veteran left-arm pacer has since made another comeback in 2016 in the shortest format,

where he has been quite a success. But there is a slight catch over here. According to top BCCI officials, skipper Virat Kohli wants Nehra to be a part of the bowling attack. His vast knowledge is a big help for the younger pacers, not to forget his brilliant match-reading ability.

**Umar likely to make a return in Pak squad for Champions Trophy**

**KARACHI:** Enigmatic Pakistan batsman Umar Akmal is expected to make a comeback in the Pakistan squad for the ICC Champions Trophy to be held in England in June.

After being dropped for the tour to the West Indies on fitness grounds, the national selectors and team management are now considering Umar for a berth in the the Champions Trophy squad.

"Umar is a serious contender for a recall but his elder brother, Kamran Akmal is unlikely to be picked for the tournament as the selectors and management were not impressed with his efforts in the limited over matches in the West Indies, a well-informed source said.

"Kamran got seven innings in the West Indies to make his mark but unfortunately he failed and the selectors are now contemplating bringing back Azhar Ali into the ODI side to open with Ahmad Shahzad," the source added.

Kamran had earned a recall to the national team last month

after being on the sidelines since April 2014.

The source said that Umar is a serious contender as the selectors wanted a power hitter option in the top and lower order.

"Umar has also worked on his fitness since being dropped and has led Punjab well in the ongoing Pakistan Cup ODI tournament," he added.

Two rookie players who went to the West Indies for the ODI series and returned without playing a match, batsman Asif Zakir and all-rounder Fahim Ashraf are also expected to be given the axe for the Champions Trophy, a title Pakistan has never won since its inception in 1998. The source said that another all-rounder Aamir Yamin, who is doing well in the Pakistan Cup, could instead be given the allrounder's role in England but the selectors are yet to make a final decision on his inclusion. The selectors have to announce the 15-member Champions Trophy squad by the April 25 deadline.

**Amir takes five as rain ruins Jamaica Test**

**KINGSTON:** Mohammad Amir completed a five-wicket innings haul and West Indies captain Jason Holder reached a fifth half-century as the home side reached 278 for nine in their first innings on a rain-ruined second day of the first Test against Pakistan at Sabina Park. Only 11.3 overs were bowled in the entire day as inadequate covering from heavy overnight and early morning rain left damp patches on the pitch and a sodden area of the outfield, delaying the start of play by four hours.

By the time the showers returned in late afternoon with even greater ferocity, just 55 minutes play was possible during which Amir and Holder shone through the gathering gloom. After the home skipper and Devendra Bishoo extended their eighth-wicket partnership to 75 against the second new ball, Amir had Bishoo caught at the wicket for 28. He then bowled Alzarri Joseph without scoring to achieve his first five-wicket haul since returning to international cricket last year following a five-year ban for spot-fixing. Most impressive in the left-arm fast bowler's effort was his accuracy as reflected in figures of five for 41 off 24.3 overs before the show-ers swept across the ground and drove the players off the field for the last time for the day. Holder's defiance was also admirable, the captain reaching the half-century mark by hoisting debutant Mohammed Abbas for a straight six. He resumes alongside last man Shannon Gabriel on the third day, weather permitting, on 55 off 69 balls with two sixes and seven fours embellishing his defiant innings.



# Sonakshi doesn't believe in pleasing everybody



**MUMBAI:** Actor Sonakshi Sinha says she believes in doing things on her own terms and conditions as she has realised that making everyone happy through her work is not possible. The actor says just like anybody else, she too went through a phase where she was going all out to please others while neglecting her own happiness. "There are times in life when you reach a saturation point, trying to

*'If you like me, great, if you don't, it's fine. This is why I've been able to work on my own conditions and not succumb to any kind of pressure'*

"I think it's very flattering that people understand what you're capable of and they expect that from you. It's very flattering when people say 'oh you should do stuff like that, there's so much you can do, your potential is so much."

"It will happen in time, but just not on their (audience) time. It will happen on the right time, when I want it to happen and am ready to do it." In her career of more than half a decade, the actor has witnessed both highs and lows, something which she says she learnt to deal with looking at her actor-turned-politician father Shatrughan Sinha. "I've seen my father handle, success and failure, in a very dignified, calm and composed manner. He is unfazed by these things. The very fact that I've seen him do this, I have also imbibed the quality where things don't really faze me."

"It's okay if certain things didn't go as planned. We will try again with next

film. I don't get bogged down or bothered by these things (failure of films)," Sonakshi adds. The 29-year-old actor says in her family, she has been brought up in such a way that she treats failure and success equally. "When a film does really well, you won't see me going on rooftops and shouting about it; when it (film) doesn't work you won't see me sitting in a corner and dwelling about it."

"Life goes on, irrespective. Success and failure is part of everybody's life. Be it a student in school or even the prime minister, anyone. If there are no ups and downs, what kind of life is that?"

actor has witnessed both highs and lows, something which she says she learnt to deal with looking at her actor-turned-politician father Shatrughan Sinha. "I've seen my father handle, success and failure, in a very dignified, calm and composed manner. He is unfazed by these things. The very fact that I've seen him do this, I have also imbibed the quality where things don't really faze me."

"It's okay if certain things didn't go as planned. We will try again with next



**LONDON:** Actor Vin Diesel says he was privy to a secret script to play the role of Groot in the upcoming film *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol 2*. The 49-year-old actor says he a great time voice acting the character as he knew what the talking tree was trying to say, reported *Daily Star*.

"As an audience what you hear is, 'I am Groot', but he is expressing himself and you have to try and convey what he intends to say and his emotions in those three words. "I actually had a secret script where I was told what Groot was trying to say. That made him a lot of fun to voice," Diesel says. The *Fast and Furious 8* star adds it is always difficult to play the role. "Groot is always challenging to play," he says. The sequel to the *Guardians of the Galaxy* will hit the screens on May 5.

# Ram Gopal Varma takes a dig at National Awards

**MUMBAI:** Filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma has questioned the relevance of award functions, including the National Film Awards, by citing Aamir Khan's example. The 55-year-old director took to *Twitter*, where he called the actor "the greatest filmmaker" in the country and said his consistent absence from such events only reflects their importance today. "Fact that Aamir Khan, the greatest filmmaker of India does not attend any award events, including national award speaks, about those events," wrote Varma. The *Sarkaar* director further lauded Khan for continuing to deliver good content and not care about receiving awards.



The director, who often gets embroiled in controversies due to his remarks, said, "Highest quality films are made by Aamir and that he doesn't care to be measured by any Indian award committee, including National (Awards) speaks loud," he added. Recently, actor Akshay Kumar winning the National

Award for Best Actor for his role in crime drama *Rustom* was questioned by people. P11

# A mini 'Dil Dhadakne Do' reunion

**MUMBAI:** Priyanka Chopra is on a ten-day visit to India and the actor was seen spending time with filmmaker Zoya Akhtar and actor Ranveer Singh.

Ranveer, 31, who has worked with Priyanka in films like *Gunday*, *Dil Dhadakne Do*, and *Bajirao Mastani*, took to *Twitter* to share the pictures from their reunion.

"Mama Zo and Madam Mercurial #mygirls @priyankachopra #ZoyaAkhtar," the actor captioned the photo of three of them chilling.

After *Dil Dhadakne Do* Ranveer is all set to collaborate with Zoya once again for her next directorial venture *Gully Boy*, while Priyanka, 34, who has been busy with her projects in West, is yet to sign a Bollywood movie. P11



# Channing Tatum doesn't miss life as a stripper



**LOS ANGELES:** Actor Channing Tatum says he does not miss his former life as a stripper and insists there was nothing glamorous about it.

The 36-year-old actor, who drew inspiration from his past life as an exotic dancer for his role in the *Magic Mike* movies and the

newly launched 'Magic Mike Live' at Hard Rock Las Vegas, says he has no desire to return to the stage, reported *People* magazine.

"I don't miss anything about stripping. I stripped in Tampa for like 25 girls, at best. It wasn't glamorous whatsoever,



so there's nothing that I miss about stripping. This isn't stripping. This is a show," Tatum says. The actor also revealed why he decided to create a live show based on the movies in Vegas.

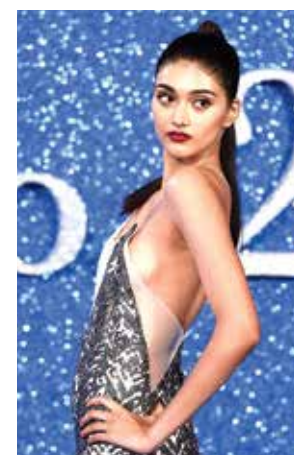
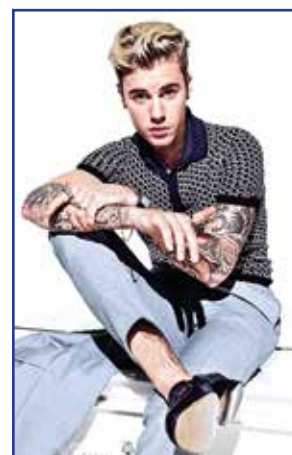
"People in general are coming because they know the movies and they think they're going to get something like they saw in the last film, and they're going to get all that."

"But I think they're going to get something else. We don't do live shows. We don't do that. With this, we didn't have any rules so we just started creating crazy s\*\*\* and no one told us that wasn't allowed." P11

# Neelam Gill to accompany Bieber for India gig

**MUMBAI:** Indian origin British supermodel Neelam Gill will be joining Grammy Award-winning singer Justin Bieber on his maiden India tour in May here. Bieber's highly anticipated India Purpose Tour will be held at DY Patil Stadium here on May 10.

Gill, who has become a muse of international fashion house Burberry and another fashion brand Abercrombie & Fitch, is expected to arrive on May 7 with Bieber, read a statement from *White Fox India* - the sole promoter of the tour in the country. The model, who



has also worked with rapper Kanye West, is looking forward to explore different fashion and entertainment opportunities in the country.

English actor-model Elarica Johnson, best known for her role in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, is also set to host Bieber's India gig. Apart from India, the Asia leg of the tour comprises Tel Aviv and Dubai. Bieber is touring in support of his fourth album 'Purpose', which debuted at number one in over 100 countries and has sold over eight million copies worldwide. P11

*'I'm not afraid to speak my mind'*



**LOS ANGELES:** Actor Freida Pinto says that speaking her mind can get her "into trouble" but she will still not shy away from sharing her views.

"I'm not afraid to speak my mind, and that can get me into trouble. For me (social and political activism) is the only thing that matters," Pinto says.

The 32-year-old, who stars in the Showtime miniseries 'Guerrilla', says she jumped at the opportunity to play the role of Jas, reported *People* magazine.

"As a female actor it is a lot harder to come across roles that explore every aspect of the character, not just her beauty. But Jas and I are similar in our passion," she says.

Pinto considers herself "really blessed" to have a career in Hollywood but is also aware of the fickleness of it all and how fleeting stardom can be. And despite any ups and downs she has had through her career, the actor says she would not go back and do anything differently. P11

# 'AVATAR' SEQUEL release dates confirmed

**LOS ANGELES:** Filmmaker James Cameron and Fox have set the release dates for the four *Avatar* sequels, with *Avatar 2* arriving on December 18, 2020. *Avatar 3* will open December 17, 2021, followed by a three-year break for *Avatar 4*, set for December 20, 2024.

*Avatar 5* will then open on December 19, 2025. The news was announced on the movie's official Facebook page. "Great to be working with the best team in the business! *Avatar* takes flight as we begin concurrent production on four sequels," Cameron said in the post. Cameron had announced a year ago at CinemaCon that he would make four *Avatar* sequels, promising that the films would start hitting theaters in 2018.

The filmmaker said last year that he had first envisioned two sequels but after meeting with the screenwriters, artists and designers, he realised that he had too much material for just



two films. He initially decided on three sequels, then jumped to four.

Cameron and Jon Landau are producing through their Lightstorm company. Returning cast includes Zoe Saldana, Sam Worthington, Sigourney Weaver, and Stephen Lang. The script was written by Cameron with Josh Friedman, Rick Jaffa, Amanda Silver, and Shane Salerno. P11

