



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 J 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 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

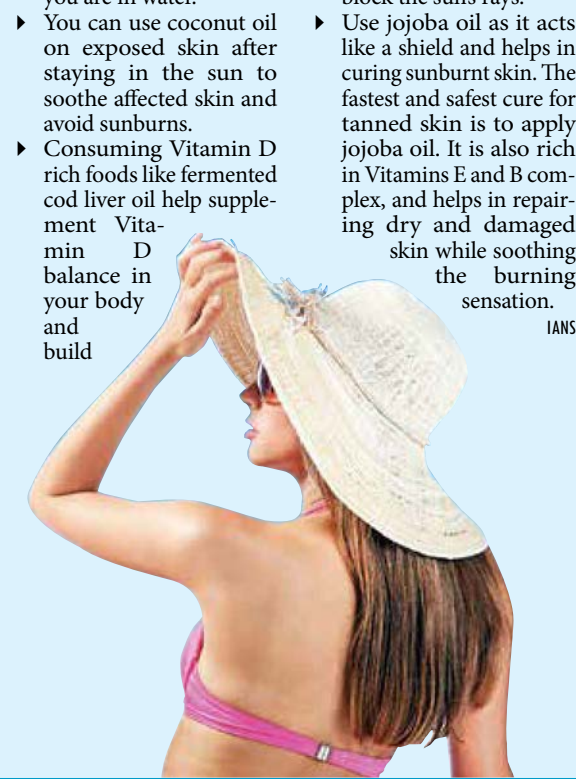


a stronger immune system against sunburns.

- ▶ 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



Avoid 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

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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 fro 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

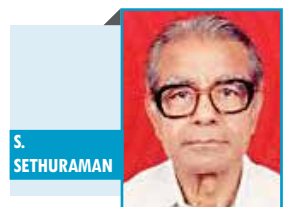
environment norms, it must caution against misinformation. BJP's election manifesto for Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections 2017 had stated that livestock numbers had fallen during the previous government because of illegal slaughterhouses. But the 19th Livestock Census of 2012 shows that Uttar Pradesh's 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 Jayalithaa, 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 Jayalithaa 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 Jayalithaa 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 Jayalithaa 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 Jayalithaa'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?

KARUNA NUNDY
@karunanundy

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

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.

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.

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

"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

'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'

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?"

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.

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.



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."



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.



'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.

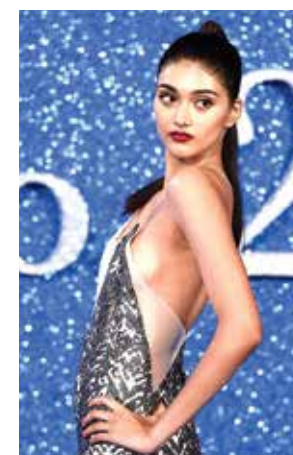
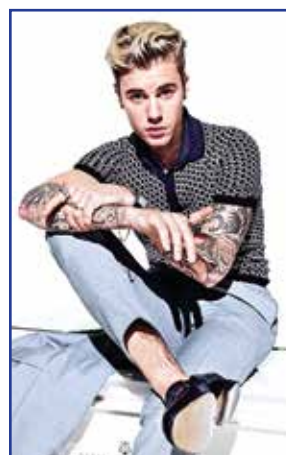
"As a female actor it is a lot harder to come across roles that explore every aspect of the character, not just her beauty. But Jas and I are similar in our passion," she says.

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.

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.

'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.

