



**JOSS WHEDON KIND OF THREATENED MY CAREER, SAYS GAL GADOT**  
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**ENOUGH OF THE CONDESCENSION**  
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**AMITABH BACHCHAN DONATES RS 2 CRORE TO COVID-19 CARE FACILITY IN DELHI**  
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# SummitTIMES

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ON TOP OF THE NEWS

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## Sunday breather gives Sikkim only 46 new cases

**SUMMIT REPORT**  
**GANGTOK, 10 MAY:**

With no RT-PCR testing carried out on Sunday since that is the day that both of Sikkim's VRD Labs take a day off, the daily caseload of novel coronavirus artificially came down to 46 today. The previous 24 hour period, it may be recalled, had given Sikkim 227 new cases.

The testing of 135 samples by RAT and CBNAAT on Saturday returned 46 positive cases. Of these 46 cases, 24 were reported from East District, seven

from West District, nine from South District and six from in North District. While the test positive rate is high, it must also be borne in mind that most of these tests on Sunday would have been opted either by people coming to hospital with Covid-like symptoms or primary contacts displaying symptoms. Chances of testing positive will always be high in this segment.

Meanwhile, Sikkim's COVID-toll also climbed to 169 today

with Coronavirus claiming two more lives in the 24 hour period covered in the Daily Report of Covid prepared by the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme of the Health Department.

Details of the cause of death could not be confirmed at the time of writing this but one of the deaths was reported from STNM Hospital while a Covid-positive person passed away while in home isolation in South Sikkim.

There are now 2,540 active

cases of coronavirus in the State, of whom nine are currently in ICU at STNM Hospital and 04 in the ICU facility at Central Referral Hospital, Tadong.

On the other hand, the number of recovered cases of COVID-19 today crossed the 7000-mark with 139 more people discharged from home isolation and cleared to return to normal life. The number of Covid recoveries now stands at 7,008. Sikkim's tally of confirmed cases of COVID-19 stands at 9,924.

## Yuksam Covid Warriors bring panchayats and civil society together against the virus

**PRITAM LAMA**  
**YUKSAM, 10 MAY:**

With an aim to contain the spread of Novel Coronavirus, the gram panchayats and civil society members of Yuksam have banded together for form "Yuksam COVID Warrior Team" in a move to collaborate against the pandemic. While the group has been around since the first nationwide lockdown, its work has become more hectic now.

The group carried out a daylong sanitization drive covering Yuksam today. They are aiming to make Yuksam Covid-free. Speaking to media-persons today, Keshar Kumar Khatriwada who has been actively involved in the initiative explained that the team has been formed with the aim to contain the virus and to lend a helping hand to the government's efforts to combat



Covid.

Panchayat president in-charge, Bhim Bdr Gurung, further informed that the Yuksam Gram Panchayat is taking up the Covid challenge on mission mode, and now that it has the support of civil society organisations and local NGOs, they are confident that this challenge will be overcome.

Around 50 shops and vegetable outlets were sanitized at Yuksam today.

Similar drives will be carried out every alternate day, it is informed.

An awareness and sensitisation drive was also undertaken.

Close consultation is also being maintained with the State Government and the district

administration to ensure that the partial lockdown is not violated, and norms of social distancing scrupulously followed to contain the spread of the disease.

The group has also opened a WhatsApp group to keep communication channels open and responsive.

A founding member of the Yuksam COVID

Warrior Team, Pema Norbu Bhutia, adds that the group was born from the realisation that civil society organisations need to step up and support efforts to beat Covid.

During the first lockdown, the group kept busy with providing rations and essentials to those in need and has been activated again because if the second wave.

## Total vehicle registrations in India slips 30 pc to 1,52,71,519 units in 2020-21: FADA

**NEW DELHI, MAY 10 (PTI):** The total vehicle registrations in India fell by 29.85 per cent to 1,52,71,519 units in financial year 2020-21, the lowest in the last eight years, the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) said on Monday.

Total vehicle registrations were at 2,17,68,502 units in fiscal year 2019-20. All categories of vehicles, except tractors were in red in FY21 with two-wheeler (2W), three-wheeler (3W), commercial vehicles (CV) and passenger vehicles (PV) falling by 31.51 per cent, 64.12 per cent, 49.05 per cent and 13.96 per cent respectively -- the lowest in last eight years and way below the FY13 levels, FADA said in a statement.

Passenger vehicles (PV) registrations were at 23,86,316 units last fiscal, as against 27,73,514

units in FY20, down 13.96 per cent, while those of two-wheelers dipped 31.51 per cent to 1,15,33,336 units as compared to 1,68,38,965 units in the previous fiscal.

Three-wheeler registrations in FY21 were down 64.12 per cent at 2,58,174 units, as compared to 7,19,594 per cent in FY20, while CV registrations were at 4,48,914 units as against 8,81,114 units, a decline of 49.05 per cent, FADA said.

Tractor registrations, however, grew by 16.11 per cent last fiscal at 6,44,779 units as compared to 5,55,315 units in 2019-20, it added.

As for April 2021, FADA said since India was under complete lockdown in April 2020 and not a single vehicle could be sold, a year-on-year comparison is not possible.

When compared to the previous month

of March, FADA said in April 2021 total vehicle registrations were down 28.15 per cent at 11,85,374 units versus 16,49,678 units.

PV registrations were down 25.33 per cent at 2,08,883 units in April, as against 2,79,745 units in March this year, while those of 2W declined by 27.63 per cent at 8,65,134 units, as against 11,95,445 in the previous month, it added.

Registrations of CV were at 51,436 units in April as compared to 67,372 units in March, down 23.65 per cent. Tractor registrations also witnessed a dip of 44.58 per cent last month at 38,285 units, as compared to 69,082 units in March this year, the automotive dealers body said.

Commenting on the current situation, FADA President Vinkesh Gulati said, "India is currently facing one of its toughest times with the second

wave of COVID creating havoc in everyone's life. This time, the spread is not only limited to urban markets but has also taken rural India in its grasp."

Auto registrations in April witnessed double-digit fall as most of the Indian states started going under lockdown, partial as well as full, beginning April 5 onwards, he added.

"Unlike last year, the lockdown this time around has been imposed by state governments and not the Central government. Due to this, there have been no relief announcements which have come out till now either by the Center or the RBI and auto Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs)," Gulati said.

Asking automobile manufacturers to handhold their dealers the way they did last year during the first phase of the pandemic, he said

the current "situation is very grim in most states and dealer principals as well as their teams are fighting for their survival from COVID".

"FADA also requests OEMs to not burden dealers with high billings in all the states where lockdown has been announced," Gulati said, while also asking the government "to come out with a financial package, the way they did last year".

He further said, "we also request the RBI to come out with guidelines/notifications for relaxation of loan repayment equivalent to the tune of number of days of lockdown each state has announced."

On the near-term outlook, FADA said the first nine days of May has seen extremely lean sales due to lockdown announced by the majority of states as dealership outlets remained closed.

## Cipla to make, sell Eli Lilly's Baricitinib drug for Covid treatment



**NEW DELHI, 10 MAY [REUTERS]:** Indian drugmaker Cipla Ltd said on Monday it had entered into a licensing agreement with U.S. company Eli Lilly and Co to make and sell Lilly's arthritis drug baricitinib for the treatment of COVID-19 patients.

The agreement comes at a time when India is struggling with a catastrophic second wave of the pandemic, leading to an acute shortage of coronavirus medicines such as remdesivir and tocilizumab.

Baricitinib has been given restricted emergency use approval by India's drug regulator for use in combination with remdesivir for the treatment of hospitalised COVID-19 adult patients requiring supplemental oxygen, Cipla said in a filing to stock exchanges.

In November, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration initially gave

Eli Lilly an emergency use approval for baricitinib in combination with remdesivir to treat COVID-19 patients.

Cipla's deal with Lilly expands the Indian drugmaker's portfolio of COVID-19 drugs. Aside from remdesivir and tocilizumab, the company also offers antiviral drug favipiravir, used to treat patients with moderate to mild COVID-19.

Last week, Cipla said it would be the local distribution partner for a COVID-19 antibody drug cocktail developed by Roche and Regeneron, after the therapy got emergency use approval from India's drug regulator.

India has posted more than 400,000 daily coronavirus cases for the past four days, and its total infections have reached nearly 22.30 million, the second highest number of cases in the world after the United States.

## Petrol, diesel prices at record highs; Petrol crosses Rs 100-mark in Maharashtra

**NEW DELHI, MAY 10 (PTI):** Petrol and diesel prices on Monday hit record highs across the country after rates were increased for the fifth time in a week, following which Maharashtra joined Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh in the league of states where petrol rates breached the Rs 100-a-litre mark.

Petrol price was hiked by 26 paise a litre and diesel by 33 paise per litre, according to a price notification by state-owned fuel retailers.

This was the fifth increase in prices since May 4, when the state-owned oil firms ended an 18-hiatus in rate revision during assembly elections in states like West Bengal.

The increase took petrol and diesel prices to their highest-ever level. In Delhi, petrol now comes for Rs 91.53 per litre and diesel is priced at Rs 82.06 per litre.

While petrol prices had crossed the Rs 100-mark in some places in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh a few days back, Maharashtra's Parbhani joined the league on Monday. Petrol in Parbhani was priced at Rs 100.20 a litre, while in

Bhopal it came for Rs 99.55 a litre.

The fuel is sold at Rs 102.42 a litre in Sri Ganganagar district of Rajasthan and at Rs 102.12 in Anuppur of Madhya Pradesh.

This is the second time this year that rates in some parts have crossed the Rs 100-a litre mark. Rates had breached the physiological mark for the first time in mid-February.

Fuel prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes such as VAT and freight charges. Rajasthan levies the highest value-added tax (VAT) on petrol in the country, followed by Madhya Pradesh.

In five increases in the last one week, petrol price has risen by Rs 1.14 per litre and diesel by Rs 1.33 - more than neutralising all of the reduction that came between March 24 and April 15.

After raising petrol price by a record Rs 21.58 per litre and diesel by Rs 19.18 since the government raised excise duty to an all-time high in March last year, state-owned fuel retailers, IOC, BPCL and HPCL had reduced petrol price by 67 paise a

litre and diesel by 74 paise per litre effected between March 24 and April 15.

Oil companies, who have in recent months resorted to unexplained freeze in rate revision, had hit a pause button after cutting prices marginally on April 15. This coincided with electioneering hitting peak to elect new governments in five states including West Bengal.

No sooner had voting ended, oil companies indicated an impending increase in retail prices in view of firming trends in international oil markets.

They said prices have been on a continuous uptrend since April 27, crude oil price is hovering near USD 70-per-barrel mark.

Central and state taxes make up for 60 per cent of the retail selling price of petrol and over 54 per cent of diesel. The union government levies Rs 32.90 per litre of excise duty on petrol and Rs 31.80 on diesel.

In Mumbai, the petrol price was hiked to Rs 97.86 a litre on Monday from Rs 97.61, while diesel rates were increased to Rs 89.17 from Rs 88.82, the price notification showed.



**CORRECTION:** The news-report headlined, “Former Minister Neeru Sewa becomes Doctor of Philosophy,” published in SummitTimes edition dated 10 May, 2021, mistakenly introduced Ms Sewa as the first woman Minister of Sikkim. She was instead the lady to be elected Zilla Upa-Adhakshya two years earlier. The first woman to become Minister in Sikkim was R Ongmu. The error is regretted.

-Editor

## Country paying horrendous price for government's neglect: Sonia Gandhi

**NEW DELHI, 10 MAY [NDTV]:** Congress president Sonia Gandhi today expressed concern about a third Covid wave and said the country is paying a “horrendous price” for the government’s “neglect of the pandemic” and “willful patronage of super-spreader events” at a meeting of the Congress Working Committee (CWC), the party’s top decision-making body.

“Scientific advice has been willfully ignored and the country is paying a horrendous price for the Modi government’s neglect of the pandemic, indeed its willful patronage of super-spreader events that were allowed for partisan gains,” she said in her opening remarks.

“The public health system across the country has all but collapsed. Vaccination coverage is woefully short of need and not expanding at the rate at which it must. The (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi government has abdicated its responsibility. It has obliged the states to bear the cost of vaccinating the hundreds of millions in the 18 to 45 age group,” she said.

Criticising the Centre for not bringing free vaccination for all but going ahead with the grand Central Vista project, she said, “Every expert has

said that it would have made more sense and it would have been financially more equitable for the Centre to bear the costs. But we know Modi government has other priorities, pursuing grandiose projects against the force of public opinion and the face of widespread criticism.”

She said the “single-most important need” right now is to rapidly expand vaccination coverage and ensure that no eligible citizen gets left out.

Asserting that the Congress “stands prepared” to work with the centre in this “most important and urgent of tasks”, she said, “We have repeatedly urged the Modi government to call an all-party meeting to demonstrate national will and resolve.”

The Congress president thanked the international community for extending assistance to India in this hour of need.

“That we should be placed in such a position reflects the monumental arrogance, incompetence and vain triumphalism of the ruling establishment,” she said.

The Congress president’s sharp remarks came as India today reported 3,66,161 Covid cases and 3,754 deaths over the past 24 hours.

# MYM distributes masks and sanitizers in Siliguri



## SUMMIT REPORT

**RANGPO, 10 MAY:**

Marwadi Yuva Manch, Siliguri, distributed masks and sanitizers at all traffic points in Siliguri today.

MYM-Siliguri is also providing meals for 90 Covid-positive people every day and contributing with services like arranging blood, oxygen, medical information, etc.

## Mucormycosis: The deadly ‘Dark Fungus’ threatening India’s Covid patients

**HARISH PULLANOR**

**NEW DELHI, 10 MAY**

**[NDTV]:** The COVID-19 pandemic in India has catalysed a fungal infection into a dangerous disease disfiguring scores -- when it is not fatal. So much so that the country top medical research body has come out with an advisory on the screening, diagnosis, and management of the disease.

The infection, mucormycosis or “dark fungus”, mainly affects people on medication for other health problems that reduces their ability to fight environmental pathogens, according to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

“Sinuses or lungs of affected individuals get affected after fungal spores are inhaled from the air,” ICMR has said. “This can lead to serious diseases with warning sign and symptoms that include pain and redness around eyes or nose,



fever, headache, coughing, shortness of breath, bloody vomits, and even an altered mental status.”

While its exact incidence in India is yet unknown, its prevalence is estimated to be around 70 times higher in the country than anywhere else even under normal conditions, according to a research paper released by the Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute.

In the past month-and-a-half alone, Mumbai’s Lokmanya Tilak

Municipal General Hospital And Medical College, or simply Sion Hospital, has reported 30 patients with this fungal infection. Of these, six lost their lives and 11 patients had to get one of their eyes removed.

“It starts from the nose and eyes, and spreads to the brain,” according to Ranuka Bradoo, the ENT department head at Sion Hospital.

Among the many conditions and factors that predispose a patient to mucormycosis, three of

the most important are uncontrolled diabetes, injudicious use of steroids, and prolonged stay in intensive care units.

Doctors are advised to monitor patients’ glucose levels and to use clean, sterile water in humidifiers used for oxygen therapy.

“Experts have warned that the sheer size of India’s outbreak is bound to generate new virus mutations and after-effects from the virus that may not have been seen elsewhere,” a Bloomberg report said.

## Vaccination only long-term solution to India’s Covid crisis: Dr Fauci

**WASHINGTON, 10 MAY [PTI]:** Getting people vaccinated is the only long-term solution to the current COVID-19 crisis in India, America’s top public health expert Dr Anthony Fauci said on Sunday as he called for scaling up manufacturing of coronavirus vaccines both domestically and globally to fight the deadly pandemic.

“The endgame of this all...is going to be to get people vaccinated... India is the largest vaccine-producing country in the world. They’ve got to get their resources, not only from within, but also from without,” Fauci, who is the Chief Medical Adviser to US President Joe Biden, told the ABC News in an interview.

“That’s the reason why other countries need to chip in to be able to get either supplies to the Indians to make their own vaccines or to get vaccines donated. One of the ways to do that is to have the big companies that have the capability of making vaccines to really scale up in a great way to get literally hundreds of millions of doses to be able to get to them,” he said.

Responding to a question, Dr Fauci said that India needs to immediately build makeshift field hospitals like what China did a year ago.

“You’ve got to get that. You can’t have people out in the street not having a hospital bed. The oxygen situation is something that was really critical. I mean, to have people not have oxygen is really tragic, what’s going on over there,” he said.

The 80-year-old physician and immunologist, who serves as the director of the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases said there is an immediate problem of hospital beds, oxygen, PPE and other supplies.

“Then there’s the problem of looking forward to

how are you going to shut this down, how are you going to turn it around, how are you going to break the chain of transmission?” he said, underlining the need for a countrywide lockdown to arrest the spread of the virus.

“Vaccines is one of them but there are other ways too, like shutting down the government. I have advised them in the past that you really need to do that. You’ve got to shut down. I believe several of the Indian states have already done that, but you need to break the chain of transmission. And one of the ways to do that is to shut down,” the top American doctor said.

Fauci, in an exclusive interview to PTI last week, had termed the situation in India “very desperate” and suggested that the government marshal all its resources, including the armed forces, to immediately build makeshift field hospitals, and urged other countries to help with not only materials but also personnel.

He called for a nationwide lockdown, not necessarily for six months but “for a few weeks” to break the “continuity and transmission of infection.”

He also recommended mass vaccination to arrest the current spread of the deadly disease across India.

India is struggling with an unprecedented second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic with more than 4,00,000 daily new coronavirus cases being reported in the past few days.

China reported the first COVID-19 case in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in late 2019 and since then the deadly disease has become a pandemic, affecting more than 157,789,300 people and over 3,285,200 deaths worldwide.

# “In God’s Hands”: Tens of millions plunge into poverty in Covid-hit India

**ANIRBAN NAG & SWANSY AFONSO**

**NEW DELHI, 10 MAY [BLOOMBERG]:** After dipping into his savings to weather India’s snap pandemic lockdown last March, Manoj Kumar was just getting his head above water again earning 600 rupees (\$8) a day as a construction worker in the tourist hotspot of Goa.

He’d squandered away enough for a trip last month to his native village in Bihar some 1,490 miles away for a wedding. He’s still there, stuck in one of the nation’s least developed states, as a fierce second Covid-19 wave triggers the world’s worst health crisis and prevents his return. On a lucky day, he’ll land some odd jobs that fetch him as much as 300 rupees. But there aren’t too many of those chores left. So he’s taking loans to feed and clothe his wife and three kids.

“It is all in God’s hands now,” said Kumar, who’s told his wife to curtail spending on items such as lentils, cooking oil and clothes. “I don’t know when I will return. My family is worried and doesn’t want me to go back as the cases are also rising in Goa.”

Kumar, 40, is one of the millions of migrant workers who form part of India’s vast unreported informal sector, which accounts for half of its \$2.9 trillion, domestic demand-driven economy. A protracted Covid wave is shrinking incomes and wiping out savings of people like Kumar, posing the risk of a double whammy for Asia’s third-largest economy that’s still struggling to recover from last year’s pandemic-induced recession.

The government estimates India’s gross domestic product shrank 8% in the year ended March, its biggest contraction since 1952. Many economists are cutting their forecasts for the current fiscal year as rising unemployment and dwindling savings dim the chances of a double-digit growth. Shaun Roache, chief economist for Asia Pacific at S&P Global Ratings, slashed his prediction to 9.8% from 11% earlier. Fitch Solutions sees the economy expanding by 9.5%, a projection that’s below the Bloomberg consensus of around 11%.

“A drawn-out Covid-19 outbreak will impede India’s economic recovery,” Singapore-based Roache said. “The country already faces a permanent loss of output versus its pre-pandemic path, suggesting a long-term production deficit equivalent to about 10% of GDP.”

With the latest surge caused by a new coronavirus strain, total infections in India have risen to 21.89 million, a third of which were added just in the past three weeks alone. Daily death count hit a record at 4,187 on Saturday. Experts have warned the crisis has the potential to worsen in the coming weeks, with one model predicting as many as 1,018,879 deaths by the end of July, quadrupling from the current official count of 238,270.

**HARSH AND SUDDEN**

As new travel restrictions are put in place in some of the nation’s biggest economic centers to contain the outbreak, India’s poor are likely to bear the

brunt again, just as they did in 2020. They have yet to recover from the lockdown ordered by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in late March last year. The harsh and sudden measure sparked an exodus of migrant workers from cities such as Mumbai and New Delhi, as they trekked hundreds of miles to reach home.

People like Kumar typically work without contracts and often for a pittance. The so-called informal economy in India employs approximately 411 million workers, according to calculations by Jeemol Unni, a professor of economics at Ahmedabad University, who relied on surveys by the government’s National Statistical Office to arrive at the number. While the low-paying farm sector employs the bulk of them, construction comes second with about 56 million.

Unprotected by unions and politicians, these laborers often miss out on handouts from governments. After meeting daily expenses, they are left with little to pay for health care and medicines -- a risky situation especially when a pathogen is taking lives and sending thousands to intensive care at overcrowded hospitals running short of beds.

**DIP IN SAVINGS**

Economists warn depleting household savings and falling incomes will have an impact on domestic consumption, which accounts for almost 60% of GDP. A study by Nikhil Gupta, an economist at Mumbai-based brokerage Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd., found that India’s

household savings dropped to 22.1% of GDP in the quarter through December, from 28.1% in the three months ended June last year. Full-year numbers show India’s savings growth lagged behind the likes of the U.S., the U.K. and Japan, he said.

“A slower rise in household savings, coupled with similar or slower decline in consumption, confirms weak income growth in India,” Gupta said. “If so, the contribution of pent-up demand in growth recovery would also be limited in India compared with other nations.”

Data showed April jobless rate increased to nearly 8% from 6.5% in March, with more than seven million exiting the workforce last month, according to data from Center for Monitoring Indian Economy Pvt., a private research firm.

As a result of all the turmoil that started last year, income inequality is deepening in India. A study by Pew Research Center has shown an estimated 75 million people slipped into poverty since the pandemic began. The second wave is set to crush some more. For the study, Pew considered daily incomes of 150 rupees or less as poor, 151 to 750 rupees as low income and 3,750 rupees and above as high income.

A study by the Azim Premji University in Bangalore showed even more alarming numbers. About 230 million individuals slid below the national daily minimum wage threshold of 375 rupees during the pandemic, it said.

Though India could still emerge as one

of the fastest growing economies in the world, it will also be one of the most unequal countries, Oxfam, a non-profit organization said.

Stephen Schwarzman, chairman of Blackstone Group Inc., said in an interview last month that he’s “confident” of the long-term prospects of India. The private-equity firm, which has plowed billions of dollars into the country and owns many of the nation’s big office towers, said it would be accelerating its activities in the country. “We will be investing more in the next 10 years than we have invested in the previous period,” he said.

Duvvuri Subbarao, a former governor of India’s central bank, said the strife faced by the informal-economy workers could hurt India’s long-term growth prospects. “Inequalities have intensified because the formal sector has nearly normalized while the informal sector remains distressed,” he said.

Slower growth would be bad news for workers like A.K. Singh, who was a cook for a monthly salary of about 20,000 rupees in a restaurant in Mumbai. He fled recently to his home town of Gorakhpur in northern India to start a tire business, for which he’s waiting for a loan.

“I used some of my savings and money I received from my last salary,” he said. “But there’s a lockdown here too for the past week. My shop was hardly open for two days during the week. What will we earn out of that?”



# Advisory on sucking pest management in orchids

NS KALAIVANAN & RAMPAL

The present-day weather parameters in Sikkim are fluctuating with more variations in the temperature, sunshine hours, sun light intensity and relative humidity in a day. The intense sunlight intensity, more sunshine hours and high air temperature makes crops weak and tender. These environmental factors are also conducive for the faster multiplication rate of sucking pests and results in the outbreak of sucking pests. These sucking pests make the orchid cultivation unproductive in the upcoming flowering season as the food reserves and nutrients are derived out of the plants.

These sucking pests remain associated with the orchid plants and damage the flowers in the flowering season as well. Also, the sucking pests like scales will be in their young stage in this time and it is a right period to destroy the insects, as once they mature with formation of a thick hard coat over their body that will be difficult to contain them. So, proper management of these sucking pests is most important to ensure plant health and good



flowering.

Mites, Scale insects, Aphids, Thrips and Mealy Bugs are the common sucking pests found on orchids during this hot weather. The visible symptom of these sucking pests includes white silvery appearance and web-

bing of leaves (mites); narrowed and tender leaves, white cottony growth over bulbs (scales and mealy bugs); yellow patches on young leaves with circular blackening on the dorsal surface of leaves (thrips).

These pests suck the plant sap from the plants and causes, leaves tender, short and yellow, which leads to reduced growth and stunting of orchid plants; pests like aphids and thrips sucks the sap from floral buds and cause premature dropping of buds and makes the flowers to loss pigmentation with spots on the point of sucking, that reduces the marketability of flowers.

Though specific management practices are available for each insect pest, in general the recommended practices will be carried out to reduce these sucking pests' infestation. The loss of turgidity in orchid leaves pre-dispose the plants to these sucking pests, so maintaining proper water level in the plants is foremost. As precaution measures, maintain good hygiene and sanitation like removal of weeds; irrigate the

plants minimum weekly twice; provide proper ventilation and adequate spacing between the orchid pots; observe the plants clearly for presence of any insect's appearance or movement. In general, prophylactic spray of Neem oil (Azadirachtin) 0.003 EC at the rate of 5 ml/litre or Artemisia leaf extract (1:10) can be given. Once infestation is noticed, follow the specific management practices of, mites-spray the plants with plain water twice a day; Scales-rub the infested leaves/bulbs with toothbrush or cotton swab dipped in 70% isopropyl alcohol or any detergent solution. Once infestation of these sucking pests is noticed, immediately spray Neem oil (Azadirachtin) 0.003 EC at the rate of 5 ml/litre of water twice at 15 days interval. When orchids are taken care from the initial days, the infestation of these sucking pests can be minimized. [PIB]

[NS Kalaivanan is Scientist (Plant Pathology), ICAR-NRC for Orchids, Pakyong; Rampal is Director (Acting), ICAR-NRC for Orchids, Pakyong]

## Chisopani FC undertakes sanitisation drive



SUMMIT REPORT  
GANGTOK, 10 MAY:

A cleanliness and sanitization drive was carried out by Chisopani Football Club [CFC] in collaboration with Kanchenjunga Sangh of South Sikkim on Sunday. The drive was started from Chisopani and covering a distance of about a kilometer culminating at CCCT, Berbotey.

CFC president, Dik

Bahadur Chettri, informed that the main reason was to continue keeping the public spaces here free of virus.

"We see the entire world reeling under the Covid-19 pandemic with our country facing a huge health crisis. Sikkim too is going through testing times with positive cases surging each new day and increasing fatalities. For these reasons

we took this initiative of cleaning and sanitizing our premises," he said.

Apart from engaging in sports, Chisopani FC has been actively engaged in social service and has a monthly schedule of such activities.

Sunday's initiative has joined by the executive, players and other members of the club along with local residents.

## SIRD prepping community-based workforce to combat Covid in rural Sikkim

GANGTOK, 10 MAY (IPR):

The State Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj has been undertaking extensive capacity-building training programme virtually with the help of the experts from the Health Department, Government of Sikkim to create a community-based workforce.

This is being arranged to better utilise the potential workforce available and promoting workforce growth in quantity and quality which will be beneficial to approach the crisis to a great extent. Along with the efforts made by the government, public cooperation is necessary. The idea behind the initiative is to train Self Help Groups, NGOs, CBOs and youths to handle the crisis at ground zero, easing the pressure on the health workers.

In this regard, a virtu-



al training was conducted wherein they were informed about home-based bedside assistance, proper sanitisation methods, especially during home-based care, proper handling of bio-medical wastes etc. The individuals are being trained and informed to create an efficient workforce during emergencies. The training also aims to impart understanding between societies and communities so they support and guide each other and provide the correct informa-

tion regarding which can be integral, particularly during the time of the pandemic.

The training aims to provide the right kind of knowledge to the groups who can spread the correct information and can help resolve the spread of false news. Panchayats, VCMC, Self Help Groups, NGOs, CBOs and Teachers were selected for the training as their active schedule and connection at the grassroots and community level can help is

the dissemination of the message effectively in a broader spectrum.

Some of the important issues which will be covered during the virtual training session with the stakeholders are as follows.

\*Do's and don'ts for Caregivers

\*Preventing and addressing Social Stigma

\*Waste Management at Household Level

\*Vaccination drive, Mental Health,&

\*Sanitisation.

## IPR's finishing Covid awareness miking in South Sikkim

NAMCHI, 10 MAY(IPR):

Miking on dissemination of awareness and information which the South District team of Information and Public Relations Department had undertaken since 13 April concluded today. The team circulated COVID-19 related information in urban and rural areas of the district.

The miking was undertaken to create awareness amongst the masses



regarding the second surge of COVID-19, the importance of vaccination and other SOPs laid by the State Government. The focus of this awareness campaign is to urge the public to visit their nearest health care center to get vaccinated and also to follow the guidelines issued by the State Government to prevent the spreading of second wave of Covid-19.

## Suwendu Adhikari elected Opposition Leader in West Bengal Assembly

KOLKATA, 10 MAY [PTI]:

The BJP on Monday unanimously elected Suwendu Adhikari as Leader of Opposition in the new West Bengal Assembly to take on Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in the house.

Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad announced Mr Adhikari's name as leader of the BJP legislature party in the assembly after a meeting of the legislators at the party's Hastings office.

The saffron party has emerged as the main opposition party winning 77 seats in the 294-member house.

Mr Adhikari has been preferred by the saffron party ahead of senior party leaders like Mukul Roy, who also got elected from Nadia constituency, to take on Ms Banerjee in the house.

The ruling TMC bagged 213 seats while Indian Secular Front emerged victorious in one assembly segment

and an Independent R S Lepcha, belonging to the Binay Tamang faction of the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) won from Kalimpong.

Congress and the Left party drew a blank.

Voting in two assembly segments will take place in future.

Since BJP has the overwhelming numbers in the opposition camp, Mr Adhikari becomes the leader of opposition in the house, party President Dilip Ghosh later told reporters at a media briefing.

While 22 MLAs present at the meeting pledged support to Mr Adhikari, those absent were either on the side of the workers facing TMC attack in the districts while two are down with COVID, Ghosh said when asked about the reason why not all the MLAs were present at the meeting.

"If others don't oppose the selection that

means they are supporting the name proposed. It is not mandatory for every single legislator to pledge support vocally," Mr Adhikari, who was present, said.

Senior leader Mukul Roy, who was elected from an assembly segment in Nadia district, said "Suwendu will lead BJP to greater height in the house and fight the misdeeds of ruling party in state."

Mr Roy once considered number two in the TMC, was the saffron party's chief architect in driving away many legislators from the ruling camp to them.

Mr Adhikari said "I have been MLA since 2006. I have seen arrogance of the then CPI(M) led regime. We have to constructively perform the role of opposition in the assembly adhering to parliamentary norms."

He said the BJP will continue to take up the issue of Trinamool Con-

gress attack on political rivals, the terror unleashed by the TMC and fight for democratic right of every citizen.

Union minister and senior BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad and Bhupendra Yadav were the observers at the election of Adhikari as BJP legislature party leader.

Mr Adhikari had won the elections from Nandigram assembly seat, defeating his former boss-turned-political adversary Mamata Banerjee by a narrow margin of over 1900 votes.

Mr Adhikari was one of the key associates of Banerjee during the Nandigram land movement in 2007-08 and was instrumental in the formation of anti-land acquisition committee formed in 2007 which launched a fierce struggle foiling the bid of the then Buddhadeb Bhattacharya government to set up a petrochemical hub in the area acquiring thousands of acres of farm land.



Triveni Group sanitizes community hall at Cheuribotey

RANGPO, 10 MAY: Triveni Group of Cheuribotey under West Pandam constituency carried out a cleanliness drive at the community hall area today. From now on, the community hall will be managed by the Triveni Group.



GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM  
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (SOUTH WEST)  
TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION DEPARTMENT  
GANGTOK, SIKKIM

### CORRIGENDUM

For and on behalf of the Governor of Sikkim, Tourism and Civil Aviation Department, Government of Sikkim would like to inform that timing for submission and opening of the bid in respect to the work "Development of sector 17 & festival event ground at Temi in South Sikkim" previously published vide tender ID no 2021-TCAD\_489\_1, has been rescheduled in view of Covid 19 (second wave). For further information please visit the official website [www.sikkimtender.gov.in](http://www.sikkimtender.gov.in)

RO.No 45/IPR/PUB/Classi/20-21  
Date: 10/05/21



## Enough of the Condescension

*Consultations can deliver what enforcement messes up*

A regular march of press releases pass through newspaper offices; a majority of these are about awareness programmes [on a plethora of issues and missions] and some from political groups [claiming to be speaking for the “poor and innocent” Sikkimese]. From NGO cells of hydel project developers claiming to have taught basti children the importance of washing their hands [yes, this has been done], to obviously registered-for-specific-projects ‘service providers’ becoming enlightened saviours teaching farmers forced to go chemical when they were organic for generations, and disconnected officers and leaders blaming people for the second wave when it was they who blundered without a plan, there is no dearth of agents claiming to be delivering virtuous service.

Such claims are made often and rarely contested, but in the condescension with which they are thrown about lies the reason why policy interventions which appear grand on paper, end up delivering only very shallow results. The problem is not with the intent, in most cases, these are very earnest undertakings, but in the ignorance and superficiality with which they are executed because there has never been any accountability and often a disconnectedness that would not be wrong to blame on a lack of empathy.

The problem areas are always accurately identified, but it is in superficiality of the suggestions like the absence of an customised responses to either the pandemic or vaccination that the intent is misdirected because the reactive and restrictive nature of “action” suggests that the people have to be save from themselves. Examples of such bureaucratic arrogance abound. Look at the manner in which cops pounce on people to “enforce” Covid-curfews and lockdowns or officials claiming that all is well when they have clearly not got the time to spare from all the committees and teams they ex-officio sit on and the hazaar protocol commitments they have to kow-tow at.

This, even though it might not appear to be so, is not just about babu-bashing, but a condemnation of the education system that creates disconnected minds which end up with executive power in their hands. What is required is not “greater conservation awareness”, because that is already in place, but more awareness about how the real people live and how excessive power in the hands of poorly trained, ineffectively briefed and universally uninspired force [and one does not speak only of beat cops here, but also the officers from the entire spectrum of “services”] does to their sense of self respect and self esteem.

This pandemic will eventually run its course and we will find our respective new normals, if only there had been more consultations, more transparency, more trust, we would have emerged better prepared to face the next emergency. There is still time though to get our priorities right...

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# 4 Ways to Fill the Need to Socialize During the COVID-19 Pandemic

**TEGWEN GADAIS**  
**THECONVERSATION.COM**

The pandemic has fundamentally reorganized our relationships with family, friends and colleagues. Socializing during lockdown has been discussed at length since the crisis began over one year ago.

We have learned that technologies such as Zoom, Skype and Face-Time will never replace real human contact and that it is essential to maintain social connections despite social distancing.

In light of these findings, another question arises. Why can't humans do without others? The answer is simple: social connection is a fundamental need.

My colleagues and I at Université Laval conducted a review of research on social connections and here is what we learned.

**HUMAN BEINGS ARE FUNDAMENTALLY SOCIAL**

From birth to death, human beings need others to live, survive, develop and die. Our mother gives birth to us and our spouse or relatives accompany us to death.

In between, our lives are punctuated by the social relationships we have with others.

Our youth is influenced by the quality of our relationships with our parents and families and by the education we receive. It is also influenced by the environment in which we live. People we meet influence us positively and negatively.

Our friends provide us with entertainment, enriching experiences, shared emotions and memories. Likewise, our colleagues allow us to evolve, serving as examples or counter-examples. We are the result of a set of positive, negative or neutral influences that we experience throughout our lives which help develop our personality.

**A KNOWN AND RECOGNIZED NEED**

Several theories can explain why our need to socialize is fundamental. One of the best known is Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, developed in 1943 and often represent as a pyramid.

Maslow indicated that the first two levels (physiological and safety) are linked to the assets and the context in which we evolve. The others are necessary to satisfy our needs for food (parents, farmers), shelter (family) or security (police, firefighters, doctors, the state).

On a second level, Maslow talked about being and more psychological needs, such as love or belonging (to friends, to a community, to a family), but also the development of esteem (being part of a group, being useful in society). These needs, again, require others to fulfil them.

In The Ecology of Human Development, psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner tried to explain the social influences to which human beings are exposed during their lives through a socio-ecological model composed of various levels.

Simply put, it is necessary to understand that a person is influenced all their life by their personal characteristics and close or family environment. They are also affected by the institutions they visits, such as day care centres or schools, the culture of their community, embodied by traditions or language or the policies that apply in their context, and finally society as a whole, with its values and ideologies.

**HAPPINESS COMES FROM SOCIAL RELATIONS**

A series of studies conducted by Harvard researchers over the past 75 years has revealed that happy human beings are those who maintain quality social relationships throughout their lives.

This means it's not the quantity of friends we have, but the quality of the relationships we have that is im-

portant - these keep us healthy both physically and mentally. While good relationships keep us healthy, loneliness is what kills us.

The research also provides insight into what leads people to live alone and isolate. While some explanations can be found in personal and individual characteristics, the majority come from negative emotional experiences that tend to accumulate. One is not born alone, one becomes alone.

**THE EXPRESSION OF SOCIAL NEEDS**

The human being evolves in three types of environments that reinforce the expression of their social need: the physical, cultural and human environments.

The physical environment represents the place where we live, the weather in our region or the services available to ensure our basic needs (groceries, health, running water). The cultural environment is the set of spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional elements that condition our existence and give rhythm to our calendars. Human environments include the people who condition our values, our ideologies and our ways of acting.

Our research review also revealed that there are six pillars that have a major influence on our socialization: education, leisure, work, economy, politics and justice.

All of these areas seem to play a privileged role in determining our quality of life and development. Strangely, health did not appear in our analysis but it should probably be taken into consideration as the pandemic has revealed.

Finally, we also need alone time to recharge and disconnect from social life.

**HOW TO FULFIL YOUR SOCIAL NEEDS**

Here are four tips to help fill the need to socialize during the pan-

demic, but also to remain happy in life.

1) Focus on various forms of physical distancing and not social. We are social beings and it is extremely difficult for us to live without the contact of others for a long period of time.

2) Favour a reasonable and temporary use of technologies because they will never replace the need to see each other in person. This is true in all aspects of life.

3) Create opportunities to meet - when allowed - in order to strengthen one's social capital. Do this by connecting with those close to you, one's community or social network (bonding); by connecting with people from different or more distant networks (bridging); or by connecting with the right resources and services of institutions, organizations or authorities (linking).

4) Adapt your know-how and expertise to the new social rules. The Public Health Agency of Canada gives us recommendations and guidelines to continuing our activities. It is for everyone to adapt according to their field of expertise, respecting guidelines as much as possible without forgetting that a human being must also be in a social relationship to be happy.

No response model is perfect but we have the capacity to learn from others and adapt constantly to improve ourselves. It is time to stand together and rely on each other.

Finally, do not forget that some may be suffering fatally from isolation and that whole generations may be affected by this crisis.

An African proverb says “it takes a village to raise a child.” Despite the pandemic, we shouldn't forget this.

*[the writer is Professor, Département des sciences de l'activité physique, Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM)]*

## How School Pets Can Help Children to Learn and Read

**HELEN LEWIS**  
**THECONVERSATION.COM**

Since COVID-19 hit British shores, 3.2 million pets have reportedly been purchased. Animals provide a valuable sense of companionship and a wide variety of species, including dogs, cats, fish, birds and horses have helped many people cope psychologically through the pandemic.

For educators searching for ways to help children cope, and to deal with the potential impact on their language and communication skills, animals may provide some creative solutions.

As an educator and specialist in the involvement of animals in schools, my research shows how children's social and emotional development can benefit from interactions with animals, but also looks at how we can ensure that the wellbeing of learners and animals is considered.

**SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL BENEFITS**

One study we conducted involved trained dogs and their handlers doing weekly sessions in six primary schools in south Wales. Over the course of a term, pupils between the ages of five and ten, whom teachers had identified as needing help with their reading skills, spent 15 minutes at a time reading out loud to their canine companions, and reported improved self-confidence. This correlates with wider research into how reading-to-dogs schemes motivate children to pick up a book.

In another study we mention in our book *Tails from the Classroom*, the regular presence of a golden retriever called Honey helped pre-school children start conversations with one another, with adults and, of course, with Honey herself.

As part of this research, we talked to teachers from around the world to find out how animals – including a rabbit called Peter Pudding and a crew of maggots, snails and butterflies – are supporting learners at every age and stage of development. A highlight was Daisy and Chip, a pair of geese, who hatched in a primary school in south Wales, where four- and five-year-olds delighted in caring for them. The children learned to be kind and considerate when dealing with these baby animals, and developed their communication, observational and thinking skills as they watched them grow.

Our current research suggests a growing number of schools are seeing the benefits of having a resident school pooch or doing sessions with organisations such as the Kennel Club. This reflects not only the long-lasting emotional ties dogs can form with humans but their desire to please, their adaptability and their responsiveness.

**ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

But bringing an animal into school is not a de-



cision to take lightly. For understandable reasons, mainly ethical, organisations including PETA do not support the use of animals in classrooms.

Clearly, ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of all concerned is crucial, which adds responsibility – and a potential cause of stress – for teachers, already juggling complex classroom environments.

Some children may harbour fears or anxieties relating to animals. And there are also potential medical or cultural factors to consider.

So before bringing an animal into school, you need to do your research. Which type of animal is best suited to the setting? What sort of intervention is possible with that species?

And beyond the species, you need to select the individual animal itself. A dog might seem ideal, but each has its own personality. How will you assess whether this particular dog is happy in this particular classroom with these particular children?

Teachers also need to complete a detailed risk assessment, and have a plan for what happens after the lessons. Before Daisy and Chip arrived, the teacher carefully researched how to hatch goose eggs. She prepared her classroom environment and planned what would happen to the birds as they grew. As a result she now has two large adult geese in her garden (and possibly for the next 15 years).

**CHOICES AND VOICES**

Interventions involving sentient creatures should take the form of a partnership. Animals should be seen not as tools or resources, but as individuals. The best

animal-assisted interventions harness the bond between animal and human based on trust, knowledge, understanding and respect.

Beyond simply meeting the dog's basic needs, it is important to take into account how to enrich their experiences and wellbeing too. Risë Van Fleet and Tracie Faa-Thompson, founders of the Animal Assisted Play Therapy organisation, suggest that any intervention should consider what they call the choices and voices animals have.

Approaches such as Van Fleet's prioritise playful, natural interactions. A well-mannered, well-trained dog who is tolerating a session is not necessarily a sign of a successful session. Instead, we need to think about how the dog might also enjoy themselves and, possibly, learn from the experience too, as evidenced through their curiosity, engagement and willing participation.

Animals have sophisticated communication systems and we need to learn about these if we are to “hear” what they're saying. With dogs, for example, a wagging tail is not always the sign of a happy dog. And a bark can indicate excitement, fear, surprise, frustration and more. You have to listen for pitch, speed, spacing and volume to work out what they are saying.

This is an exciting new field of inquiry. There's a lot of research still to be done into how teachers can become advocates for their animal partners, learning to understand what they are saying and allowing them to make choices of their own during sessions. And into the benefits reaped, for both the children and the animals.

*[the writer is Senior Lecturer in Education, School of Education,, Swansea University]*







# Super League rebel Juventus loses 3-0 to Milan, drops to 5th

**MILAN, MAY 10 (AP):** Juventus lost 3-0 at home to AC Milan and dropped to fifth to leave its chances of qualifying for the Champions League in peril, on the same weekend that Juventus insisted on forging ahead with a European Super League competition that would guarantee it a spot among elite clubs.

Juventus, which had its nine-year grip on the Serie A title ended by Inter Milan last weekend, slipped out of the Champions League qualifying positions. It is a point behind fourth-place Napoli, with three rounds remaining in the Italian league.

The Bianconeri, along with Barcelona and Real Madrid, stepped up criticism of UEFA on Saturday, denouncing threats for their refusal to back down on the prospect of a breakaway competition.

The other nine clubs who formed the ill-fated Super League three weeks ago accepted a settlement on Friday to be fined by UEFA and stay within the open Champions League structure.

Milan was one of those clubs and the win boosted its chances of getting back into the



Champions League as the Rossoneri moved level on points with second-place Atalanta, which earlier won 5-2 at Parma.

"I knew we were going to run into difficulties, but now we all have to get out of this together," said Andrea Pirlo, who was appointed Juventus coach in the offseason despite never having coached at senior level before.

"I had a different project in mind, I tried to work according to certain principles, at times we had to adapt, but I am convinced that I have an excellent team at my disposal. If something went wrong, I take responsibility for it."

The match in Turin

was a direct fight for a top four finish, with both Milan and Juve locked on the same number of points.

With Atalanta and Napoli already having won this weekend, the pressure was on the teams in what was being billed as a Champions League playoff.

And it was Milan which broke the deadlock in first-half stoppage time. Juventus goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny failed to properly punch clear a free kick and Brahim Diaz was able to control and cut inside before curling the ball into the top right corner.

Milan could have doubled its lead 13 minutes into the second half

when it was awarded a penalty for a handball by Giorgio Chiellini. But Szczesny made up for his earlier error by saving Franck Kessi's spot kick.

Szczesny was left with no chance in the 78th minute when Ante Rebic unleashed a powerful 25-yard strike into the top right corner.

And Milan sealed the result four minutes later when Fikayo Tomori headed in a free kick for his first goal for Milan since joining on loan from Chelsea in January.

The defender's goal also means Milan has the better head-to-head record over Juventus -- after losing the first match be-

tween the teams 3-1. That is the first tie-breaker if the teams are level on points at the end of the season.

**SUPER SUBS**  
Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini's half-time changes had an immediate impact against already-relegated Parma. Matteo Pessina doubled Atalanta's lead shortly after coming on and fellow substitute Luis Muriel scored twice. Another substitute, Aleksei Miranchuk, scored Atalanta's final goal. Ruslan Malinovskyi had opened the scoring in the 12th minute.

**RELEGATION FIGHT**  
Cagliari took a potentially decisive step towards safety with a 3-1 win at Benevento, pushing its opponent closer to a swift return to Serie B.

Cagliari moved four points above Benevento and the final relegation spot. Torino is level on points with Cagliari, having played a match less, after drawing 1-1 at Hellas Verona.

Genoa is only five points above the drop after losing 2-1 at home to Sassuolo.

Elsewhere, Roma crushed bottom club Crotone 5-0.

Berrettini, who ended with 50 unforced errors, squandered a break point early in the third set, and Zverev broke him in the following game to take the lead. He earned another break at the end, converting on his second match point to clinch the victory.

In the men's doubles final, Marcel Granollers of Spain and Horacio Zeballos of Argentina defeated Nikola Pietrangeli and Mate Pavic of Croatia 1-6, 6-3, 10-8.

The Madrid Open was one of the first sporting events in Spain that allowed the presence of a limited number of fans. The tournament was among those canceled last year because of the coronavirus pandemic. Local health workers were honored by tournament organizers before the final on Sunday.

In the women's edition, Aryna Sabalenka beat top-ranked Ash Barty 6-0, 3-6, 6-4 in Saturday's final.



## Zverev beats Berrettini to win his 2nd Madrid Open title

**MADRID, MAY 10 (AP):** Alexander Zverev continued his impressive form going into the French Open by winning his second Madrid Open title. After beating top-seeded Rafael Nadal in the quarterfinals and fourth-ranked Dominic Thiem in the semifinals, Zverev rallied to defeat Matteo Berrettini 6-7 (8), 6-4, 6-3 for his second title this season.

The sixth-ranked German also won the Mexican Open in Acapulco in March.

Zverev won his first Madrid title in 2018 in a final against Thiem. The win on Sunday gave him his fourth Masters 1000 title, and first in three years. Zverev will be trying to improve from his fourth-round exit last year at the French Open.

"To do well at the French Open, you need to be playing well during the clay court season, the 24-year-old Zverev said.

"That is in a way important for me, as well. At

the end of the day I won a Masters. There's really very little in terms of bigger than this one right here. I'm happy with this achievement. Obviously, yeah, I look forward to the next few weeks. I look forward to what's ahead."

The 10th-ranked Berrettini won the title in Belgrade last week. The Italian has been gradually returning to form after struggling with an abdominal injury that kept him from playing his quarterfinal match against

Stefanos Tsitsipas at the Australian Open. The injury kept Berrettini out until Monte Carlo, where he lost his opening match.

"This was my first (Masters 1000) final. Hopefully it's not going to be my last," Berrettini said. "But like I said before, I'm really happy on my level. Today unfortunately I think I didn't play my best tennis."

After exchanging a break each in the first set, Berrettini opened the tiebreaker with a 5-0 lead but allowed Zverev

to come back.

The Italian closed it out on his fourth set point after Zverev also squandered a set point in the back-and-forth tiebreaker. It was the first set dropped by Zverev this week.

Zverev, who finished with seven double-faults, evened the match after breaking Berrettini at 4-4 and serving out to clinch the second set at the Magic Box center court, which had its roof closed because of rain in Madrid.

## Former Asiad gold medallist footballer Fortunato Franco dead



**NEW DELHI, MAY 10 (PTI):** Fortunato Franco, one of the pillars of India's last Asian Games gold-winning football team in 1962, died on Monday.

He was 84. The AIFF confirmed the news of his death but did not specify the cause of his demise.

Franco is survived by his wife, son and daughter.

One of India's finest mid-fielders (half-back as per 1960s parlance), Franco was a part of Indian football's golden era between 1960-64.

He was a part of the 1960 Rome Olympics squad but didn't get a game but was an integral part of the 1962 Asiad gold winning team in Jakarta.

He made 26 appearances for India, including the 1962 Asian Cup, where India finished runners-up, and silver and bronze-winning medal winning sides of 1964 and 1965 Merdeka Cup.

But his best performance was in the 1962 Asian Games where

India football witnessed its finest hour beating South Korea 2-1 in the final in Jakarta watched by 100,000 people.

While the more illustrious quartet of PK Banerjee, Chuni Goswami, Tulsidas Balaram and Jarnail Singh hogged the limelight, Franco would forever be remembered for providing the assist that enabled Jarnail to nod home the winner.

At the domestic level, Franco, a Goan, played his best years for the powerful Tata Football Club in Mumbai. In fact, he worked in the company's Public Relations department for four decades before retiring in 1999.

He was probably the tallest name in Maharashtra football having captained the state for eight successive years between 1959 and 1966 in the Santosh Trophy and was the architect of their title triumph in 1964.

During his last years in competitive football, he did play for Goan giants Salgaocar but a knee injury ended his career

even before he was 30 years old.

Had Franco not retired from international football in 1965, many old timers believe that he was a contender to become India captain for the 1966 Asian Games in Bangkok.

"It is devastating to hear that Mr. Fortunato Franco is no more. He was a member of the Indian football's golden generation who played a stellar role in India helping India win the Gold Medal in 1962 Asian Games," AIFF president Patel was quoted as saying in a media release.

"His contribution to Indian Football can never be forgotten. I share the grief," he added.

AIFF general secretary Kushal Das said: "Mr. Fortunato Franco will be alive in his achievements. He played a massive role in India winning the Gold Medal in the 1962 Asian Games.

"He was a legendary footballer who has been an inspiration to so many generations. My condolences to his family. We pray for his soul to rest in peace.

## Virat Kohli, Ishant Sharma get first dose of vaccination

**NEW DELHI, MAY 10 (PTI):** India captain Virat Kohli and senior pacer Ishant Sharma on Monday received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccination.

While Kohli, who now lives in Mumbai, posted a photo on Instagram, Ishant and his wife Pratima, a former India hooper, also uploaded their selfie in front of a vaccination centre.

"Thankful for this and grateful for all the essential workers. Happy to

see the smooth running of the facility & management. Let's all get vaccinated at the earliest," Ishant wrote on his Twitter handle.

India vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane, pacer Umesh Yadav and Senior opener Shikhar Dhawan have already got their first dose of vaccination.

The Indian team will be leaving for England on June 2 for a three and a half month

tour, comprising of six Test matches including the World Test Championship final against New Zealand.

In order to ramp up the coronavirus vaccination drive in the country, the Centre had last month announced a 'liberalised and accelerated' Phase 3 strategy of COVID-19 vaccination from May 1.

Now, everyone above the age of 18 are eligible to get COVID-19 vaccine.

## Veteran spinner Piyush Chawla loses father to COVID-19

**MUMBAI, MAY 10 (PTI):** Experienced India leg-spinner Piyush Chawla's father Pramod Kumar Chawla on Monday died after battling COVID-19.

He was around 60 years old.

"With deepest grief, we announce that my beloved father, Mr. Pramod Kumar Chawla, left for the heavenly abode on 10th May 2021. He was suffering from covid and post covid complications," Chawla wrote on his Instagram account.

"We invite your kind thoughts and prayers in this difficult times. May his noble soul rest in peace."

Chawla's latest IPL team Mumbai Indians



too offered their condolences.

"Our thoughts go out to Piyush Chawla who lost his father, Mr. Pramod Kumar Chawla this

morning. We are with you and your family in this difficult time. Stay strong," tweeted Mumbai Indians.

Chawla, 32, has

played three Tests, 25 ODIs and 7 T20s for India. He represents Gujarat in the domestic circuit and has so far played 136 first-class matches,

taking 445 wickets in it.

The Aligarh-born spinner was fetched by Mumbai Indians in the IPL auction this year but he did not play a single game in the 2021 edition of the lucrative league, which was indefinitely suspended due to COVID-19 outbreak in its bio-bubble.

Former India pacer Irfan Pathan also condoled the demise.

"My dear brother Piyush Chawla's father, Pramod uncle is no more. My deepest condolences to you and your family. I pray that you go thru this difficult time with patience. Uncle was a great soul and full of life. COVID has taken one more life!" tweeted Pathan.

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# Palestinians fear loss of family homes as evictions loom

**JERUSALEM (AP):** When Samira Dajani's family moved into their first real home in 1956 after years as refugees, her father planted trees in the garden, naming them for each of his six children.

Today, two towering pines named for Mousa and Daoud stand watch over the entrance to the garden where they all played as children. Pink bougainvillea climbs an iron archway on a path leading past almond, orange and lemon trees to their modest stone house.

"The Samira tree has no leaves," she says, pointing to the cypress that bears her name. "But the roots are strong."

She and her husband, empty nesters with grown children of their own, may have to leave it all behind on Aug. 1. That's when Israel is set to forcibly evict them following a decades-long legal battle waged by ideological Jewish settlers against them and their neighbors.

The Dajanis are one of several Palestinian families facing imminent eviction in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of east Jerusalem. The families' plight has ignited weeks of demonstrations and clashes in recent days between protesters and Israeli police.

It also highlights an array of discriminatory policies that rights groups say are aimed at pushing Palestinians out of Jerusalem to preserve its Jewish majority. The Israeli rights group B'Tselem and the New York-based Human Rights Watch both pointed to such policies as an example of what they say has become an apartheid regime.

Israel rejects those accusations and says the situation in Sheikh Jarrah is a private real-estate dispute that the Palestinians have seized



upon to incite violence. The Foreign Ministry did not respond to questions submitted by The Associated Press. A top municipal official and a settler group marketing "residential plots" in Sheikh Jarrah did not respond to requests for comment.

Settler groups say the land was owned by Jews prior to the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation. Israeli law allows Jews to reclaim such lands but bars Palestinians from recovering property they lost in the same war, even if they still reside in areas controlled by Israel.

Samira Dajani's parents fled in 1948 from their home in Baka — now an upscale neighborhood in mostly Jewish west Jerusalem. After several years spent as refugees in Jordan, Syria and east Jerusalem, which was then controlled by Jordan, Jordanian authorities offered them one of several newly built homes in Sheikh Jarrah in exchange for giving up their refugee status.

"I have beautiful memories from this house," says Dajani, now 70, recalling how she played with the other children in the close-knit neighborhood, where several other Palestinian refugee families had also been resettled. "It was

like heaven after our exodus."

Things changed after Israel captured east Jerusalem, along with the West Bank and Gaza, in the 1967 Mideast war, and annexed it in a move not recognized internationally. The Palestinians want all three territories for their future state and view east Jerusalem as their capital.

In 1972, settler groups told the families that they were trespassing on Jewish-owned land. That was the start of a long legal battle that in recent months has culminated with eviction orders against 36 families in Sheikh Jarrah and two other east Jerusalem neighborhoods. Israeli rights groups say other families are also vulnerable, estimating that more than 1,000 Palestinians are at risk of being evicted.

The Dajanis and other families have been ordered to leave by Aug. 1. A Supreme Court hearing in the case of another four families that was to be held on Monday was postponed for at least a month. If they lose the appeal, they could be forcibly evicted within days or weeks.

A woman from another family in Sheikh Jarrah said it was "an inhumane act" to take away some-

one's home. She invited her parents to move in with her and her husband if they are evicted from the home where she was born and raised, but her father refused.

"He said there is no way I'm leaving this neighborhood unless I'm dead," she said, requesting anonymity for fear of retribution by Israeli authorities. "It's been 65 years that he's lived in this neighborhood."

Israel views all of Jerusalem as its unified capital and says residents are treated equally. But east Jerusalem residents have different rights depending on whether they are Jewish or Palestinian.

Jews born in east Jerusalem are automatically granted Israeli citizenship, and Jews from anywhere else in the world are eligible to become Israeli citizens.

Palestinians born in east Jerusalem are granted a form of permanent residency that can be revoked if they spend too much time living outside the city. They can apply for Israeli citizenship but must go through a difficult and uncertain bureaucratic process that can take months or years. Most refuse, because they do not recognize Israel's annexation.

Palestinians are also treated differently when

it comes to housing, which will make it difficult for the Sheikh Jarrah families to remain in Jerusalem if they are evicted.

After 1967, Israel expanded the city's municipal boundaries to take in large areas of open land where it has since built Jewish settlements that are home to tens of thousands of people. At the same time, it set the boundaries of Palestinian neighborhoods, restricting their growth.

Today, more than 220,000 Jews live in east Jerusalem, mostly in built-up areas that Israel considers to be neighborhoods of its capital. Most of east Jerusalem's 350,000 Palestinian residents are crammed into overcrowded neighborhoods where there is little room to build.

Palestinians say the expense and difficulty of obtaining permits forces them to build illegally or move to the occupied West Bank, where they risk losing their Jerusalem residency. Israeli rights groups estimate that of the 40,000 homes in Palestinian neighborhoods, half have been built without permits and are at risk of demolition.

In part due to the protests, Israel has come under international pressure over Sheikh Jarrah, with both the United States and the European Union expressing concern. Rights groups say the government can halt or postpone the evictions if it wants to.

In the meantime, Samira Dajani has planted her spring flowers in small pots that she'll be able to take with her if she is forced from her home in August. The trees named for her and her siblings will have to stay. She says she tries not to think about it.

## More than 200 Palestinians hurt in Jerusalem holy site clash

**JERUSALEM (AP):** Israeli police firing tear gas, stun grenades and rubber bullets clashed with stone-throwing Palestinians at a flashpoint Jerusalem holy site on Monday, the latest in a series of confrontations that threatened to push the contested city toward wider conflict.

More than a dozen tear gas canisters and stun grenades landed in the Al-Aqsa mosque, situated in a compound sacred to both Jews and Muslims, said an Associated Press photographer at the scene. Smoke rose in front of the mosque and the iconic golden-domed shrine on the site, and rocks littered the surrounding plaza. Inside one area of the compound, shoes and debris lay scattered over ornate carpets.

More than 270 Palestinians were hurt, including 205 who went to hospitals and clinics for treatment, according to the Palestinian Red Crescent. Five of the injured were in serious condition. Police said nine officers were hurt, including one who was hospitalized.

Monday's confrontation was the latest in the sacred compound after weeks of mounting tensions between Palestinians and Israeli troops in the Old City of Jerusalem, the emotional center of their conflict. The clashes have come during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, already a time of heightened religious sensitivities.

Most recently, the tensions have been fueled by an eviction plan in an Arab neighborhood of east Jerusalem where Israeli settlers have waged a lengthy legal battle to take over properties.

Hundreds of Palestinians and about two dozen police officers have been hurt over the past few days in clashes at the the sacred com-

pound, which is known to Jews as the Temple Mount and to Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary. The compound, which, has been the trigger for rounds of Israel-Palestinian violence in the past, is Islam's third-holiest sit and considered Judaism's holiest.

An AP photographer at the scene said that early Monday morning, protesters had barricaded gates to the walled compound with wooden boards and scrap metal. Sometime after 7. a.m., clashes erupted, with those inside throwing stones at police deployed outside. Police entered the compound, firing tear gas, rubber-coated steel pellets and stun grenades.

At some point, about 400 people, both young protesters and older worshippers, were inside the carpeted Al-Aqsa Mosque. Police fired tear gas and stun grenades into the mosque.

Police said protesters hurled stones at officers and onto an adjoining roadway near the Western Wall, where thousands of Israeli Jews had gathered to pray.

After several days of Jerusalem confrontations, Israel has come under growing international criticism for its heavy-handed actions at the site, particularly during Ramadan.

The U.N. Security Council scheduled closed consultations on the Jerusalem situation Monday. Diplomats said the meeting was requested by Tunisia, the Arab representative on the council.

Late Sunday, the U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan spoke to his Israeli counterpart, Meir Ben-Shabbat, and urged calm. A White House statement said that Sullivan called on Israel to to "pursue appropriate measures to ensure calm" and expressed the U.S.'s "serious

concerns" about the ongoing violence and planned evictions.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pushed back against the criticism Monday, describing Israel's actions in Jerusalem as a law-and-order issue. Netanyahu said Israel is determined to ensure the rights of worship for all and that this "requires from time to time stand up and stand strong as Israeli police and our security forces are doing now."

Ofir Gendelman, a spokesman for Netanyahu, claimed in a tweet that "extremist Palestinians planned well in advance to carry out riots" at the holy site.

In other violence, Palestinian protesters hurled rocks at an Israeli vehicle driving just outside the Old City walls. The driver appeared to lose control and slammed into bystander. Police said in a statement that two passengers were injured.

The day began with police announcing that Jews would be barred from visiting the holy site on what Israelis mark as Jerusalem Day, with a flag-waving parade through the Old City and its Muslim Quarter to the Western Wall, the holiest site where Jews can pray. The marchers celebrate Israel's capture of east Jerusalem in the 1967 Mideast war.

In that conflict, Israel also captured the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It later annexed east Jerusalem, home to the city's most sensitive holy sites, and considers the entire city its capital. The Palestinians seek all three areas for a future state, with east Jerusalem as their capital.

The police decision to ban Jewish visitors temporarily from the holy site came hours before the start of the Jerusalem Day march, which is widely perceived by Palestinians as a provocative display of Jewish hegemony over the contested city.

## South's Moon hopes to restart N Korean diplomacy with Biden

**SEOUL, MAY 10 (AP):** South Korea's leader said Monday he'll use his upcoming summit with President Joe Biden to push to restart diplomacy with North Korea, saying that Biden favours a diplomatic, phased approach to resolve the North Korean nuclear crisis.

The White House recently said officials completed a review of North Korea policy and suggested the Biden administration would seek a middle ground between Donald Trump's grand bargain and Barack Obama's strategic patience approaches as a way to curb the North's nuclear ambitions.

In a nationally televised news conference, President Moon Jae-in said he welcomes the direction of the Biden administration's North Korea policy, which he said was finalized after consultations with South Korea. Moon said Biden's North Korea policy aims to achieve the Korean Peninsula's

la's complete denuclearization through diplomacy with a flexible, gradual and practical approach.

The Biden administration hasn't disclosed details of its North Korea policy review. But administration officials have signaled they are trying to set the stage for incremental progress, in which denuclearization steps by the North would be met with corresponding actions, including sanctions relief, rather than a Trump-style push for an immediate, comprehensive deal through a leader-to-leader summit.

Moon said when he meets Biden for their first summit talks in Washington on May 21, he'll try to bolster the bilateral military alliance, boost policy coordination on North Korea and find ways to resume stalled talks between Washington and Pyongyang and between Seoul and Pyongyang.

Moon, whose sin-

gle five-year term is to end next May, said he'll focus on establishing lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula during his final year in office.

I will not be pressed by time or become impatient during the remainder of my term. However, if there is an opportunity to restart the clock of peace and advance the peace process on the Korean Peninsula, I will do everything I can, Moon said. I look forward to North Korea responding positively."

Moon, who champions a greater reconciliation with North Korea, once shuttled between Pyongyang and Washington to facilitate the now-dormant nuclear diplomacy between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Trump. Inter-Korean exchanges and cooperation programs also flourished.

But the Kim-Trump diplomacy eventually fell apart during their second summit in

Vietnam in early 2019 due to wrangling over U.S.-led sanctions on North Korea. Pyongyang later suspended communications with Seoul and halted all major joint cooperation programs.

Kim's government hasn't made an official response to the Biden administration's North Korea policy review. But his Foreign Ministry last week warned Washington of a very grave situation while criticising Biden for calling North Korea's nuclear program a serious security threat in his address to Congress.

In January, Kim said the fate of ties between North Korea and the United States would depend on whether Washington would abandon what it considers a hostile policy on Pyongyang. North Korea has long wanted the United States to lift sanctions on it and provide a security guarantee.

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PIONEER IN THE NEWS



## Amitabh Bachchan donates Rs 2 crore to COVID-19 care facility in Delhi

**NEW DELHI, MAY 10 (PTI):** Megastar Amitabh Bachchan has donated Rs 2 crore to Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur COVID Care Centre at the Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Sahib here to help them combat the coronavirus crisis.

Manjinder Singh Sirsa, president of the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee, shared the news on Twitter.

“Sikhs are Legendary, salute to their service’. These were the words of @Sr-Bachchan Ji when he contributed Rs 2 Cr to Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Covid Care Facility,” Sirsa wrote on Sunday.

He said when Delhi was facing crunch in oxygen supply, Bachchan would every day enquire about the progress at the facility, which started operations from Monday afternoon with 300 beds.

In another tweet, Sirsa informed that the 78-year-old actor has also arranged oxygen cylinders from abroad for the facility.

“He is not just a REEL Hero but a Real life Hero,” he said.

During the “VAX LIVE: The Concert to Reunite the World”, which aired on



Sunday, Bachchan had also urged the global community to help India, which is currently battling a deadly second wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

“My country India is battling with the sudden surge of the second wave of COVID-19. As a global citizen I appeal to all global citizens to rise up, speak to

your governments, your pharmaceutical companies, and ask them to donate, to give, to extend a helping hand to the public that needs it the most. Every effort counts,” he had said.

On Sunday, Delhi recorded 273 coronavirus deaths and 13,336 new infections, the health department said.

## Joss Whedon kind of threatened my career, says Gal Gadot

**LOS ANGELES, MAY 10 (PTI):** “Wonder Woman 194” star Gal Gadot has detailed her experience of working with filmmaker Joss Whedon on the DC movie “Justice League”, saying the director threatened to make her “career miserable”.

The Israeli actor, who essays the role of superhero Wonder Woman in the Warner Bros/DC movies, said Whedon told her to “just be pretty” and say her lines.

He kind of threatened my career and said if I did something, he would make my career miserable, and I just took care of it instead, Gadot told Israeli news outlet N12.

The clash reportedly happened when the 36-year-old actor pushed back on some new dialogue Whedon had written. During the exchange, he also allegedly disparaged “Wonder Woman” director Patty Jenkins.

Whedon took over the reins of “Justice League” after director Zack Snyder left the project in the wake of a family tragedy.

In an interview with The Los Angeles Times last year, Gadot had hinted at her troubling experience with Whedon, saying it was resolved privately.

“I had my own experience with (him), which wasn’t the best one, but I took care of it there and when it happened. I took it to the higher-ups and they took care of it. But I’m happy for Ray to go up and say his truth,” she had said.

Whedon’s alleged toxic behaviour



towards the cast of TV shows “Angel” and “Buffy the Vampire Slayer” and the film “Justice League” first came to light last year.

Actor Ray Fisher, who played the role of Cyborg in the superhero ensemble film, had claimed in a tweet that Whedon was “abusive” and “unprofessional” on the sets of their

2017 DC movie.

WarnerMedia, the parent company behind the DC movie projects, launched an investigation into the claims made by Fisher.

In December, the company issued a statement saying that it had completed the investigation and taken “remedial action” in the matter.

## COVID-19 almost killed me, says J Balvin

**LOS ANGELES, MAY 10 (PTI):**

Singer J Balvin has revealed that he “almost” died from coronavirus last year and doesn’t want others to suffer the way he did.

The Colombian singer, who was diagnosed with the disease in August 2020, shared a leaf from his survival story at the Global Citizen’s

Vax Live: The Concert to Reunite the World.

“I had COVID before. It almost killed me. We don’t want people to feel what I felt,” Balvin said before taking the stage at the fundraising event, which was held to address the immediate need for wider and more equitable distribution of COVID-19

vaccines around the globe.

According to Billboard, the 36-year-old singer said too few people are vaccinated there and across South America.

“I want people to really know they have to vaccinate for themselves, for others, for the world,” he added.

The singer, whose full

name is Jose Alvaro Osorio Balvin, performed his hit songs “Otra Noche Sin Ti” and “Tu Veneno” at the show.

The event was hosted by singer-songwriter Selena Gomez and aired on Saturday on ABC, ABC News Live, CBS, YouTube (streaming here) and iHeartMedia broadcast radio stations.



**LILY IN SAINT-TROPEZ!** Actress Lily Collins filmed season 2 of Emily in Paris alongside costars Ashley Park and Camille Razat in Saint-Tropez, France.

## Taylor Swift to receive global icon honour at 2021 Brit Awards

**LOS ANGELES, MAY 10 (PTI):** Singer-songwriter Taylor Swift is set to be feted at the upcoming Brit Awards, where she will receive the global icon award at this year’s ceremony.

According to Billboard, the American singer will become the first female artiste and the first non-English artiste to receive the honour, which the British characterise as their highest accolade.

The only previous recipients are Elton John (2014), David Bowie (2016) and Robbie Williams (2017).

The global icon award is given “in recognition of her immense impact on music across the world and incredible repertoire and achievements to date”.

Swift, 31, is also nominated in the international female solo artist category, an award she won in 2015. Interestingly, other four nominees are her compatriots -- Ariana Grande, Billie Eilish, Cardi B and Miley Cyrus.

JHUS, Jessie Ware and Lipa are competing for best album, while Biffy Clyro and The 1975 will face off in the best British group



category.

The show will also include performances by The Weeknd, Dua Lipa, Olivia Rodrigo, Griff, Headie One, and Rag’n’Bone Man & Pink with the Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust Choir.

Comedian-actor Jack Whitehall is set to host the ceremony for the fourth year in a row. The show will be held at The O2 arena on Tuesday, with a live audience of about 4,000 people, roughly one-fifth of the venue’s capacity.

The Brit Awards were originally set to take place in February but were postponed in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

step. It’s the inspired action you take after that will help you move one step closer to the desired destination.

**CANCER:** Leadership expert and motivational speaker Robin Sharma says, “Smart leaders understand the power of publicly praising excellence in action. So do it often. Coach your teammates as to areas they need to improve in private. So they can save face.” Just the words of wisdom you need to follow in order to bring about a change on the professional front, Cancer. Remember, we’re all going through hardships at this moment. As a result, it’s easy to lose sight of our career goals and slack every now and then. Instead of judging your coworkers, hold space for them to talk their feelings out. Something tells us a pep talk by you, coupled with a few words of encouragement, can help move mountains around here.

**LEO:** It’s never about the flashy cars or the fancy jewels, is it? (Although a little bling here and there never hurt anybody!) So, what then, is the secret to true happiness, Leo? Something you may find yourself pondering this weekend. A good place to start: make a list of five things that you’re grateful for and are keeping you sane in the midst of this storm. Don’t just note down the points, though. Be as detailed as you can in your description. Make a note of special moments and uplifting conversations.

**VIRGO:** Some people believe it’s easier to communicate your truth to strangers. It gets sticky with those who are close, you know? If this sounds familiar to you, we’ve got a problem at hand that needs to be addressed, Virgo. So, pay attention to how

you are communicating with your inner circle. Are you being completely authentic here, or relying on half-truths in order to keep things together? Remember, a unicorn dies every time you betray yourself a little. You wouldn’t want to rob the world of its magic, would you now?

**LIBRA:** If the Rule of Three is to be believed, then everything we put into the Universe comes back to us threefold. The real question is: what do \*you\* feel inspired to create in your reality, Libra, and what are the seeds you are being called to plant consciously? The Universe is offering you a sacred cauldron, bedazzled with jewels and crystals in every colour, for you to brew a magical potion that will change your physical reality.

**SCORPIO:** Truth tea: You’ll always be ‘too loud’, ‘too bossy’, ‘too ambitious’, ‘too dominating’ and ‘too career-oriented’ for some people. They’re certainly not your people, Scorpio. Those who love and accept you for who you truly are will never ask you to dial down your crazy or dull your sparkle. So, own your brand of magic, baby! Step into your power and go after your dreams with renewed passion. The mysterious forces above and below are applauding your spirit and betting on your big win!

**SAGITTARIUS:** Now is not the time to second guess the magnificent shift you are capable of creating in the collective—and your life is a living, breathing proof of this miracle. So, slow down, Sagittarius. Take a moment to soak it all in. What a long way you have come since you first embarked upon this journey! Here’s something you want to keep in mind, though: this is

merely the first stage of Mission World Domination. You have many mountains to move on this journey. Hard work coupled with focus and discipline will help you achieve the impossible.

**CAPRICORN:** The Ancients believed that every time humanity shifts into a new era, the transition is marked by natural disasters of all kinds, political and religious wars, and economic challenges. Could this be true for where we are standing today? Are the mysterious forces somehow conspiring to help us usher in the light by moving through the darkness? While we may never have all the answers we seek, Capricorn, it is a comforting thought that we, as a collective, are birthing a New Age.

**AQUARIUS:** 2020 felt like being stranded at the airport with no flight in sight. 2021 was supposed to be your year—the year of the big change—but here you are, stranded all over again. While the frustration is real, Aquarius, it is also temporary. So, rise above. Rise above the limitations and remember the limitless being that you are. You are the change you have been waiting for and your circumstances ain’t got nothing on you, beautiful!

**PISCES:** It’s easy to externalise the problem, Pisces. To blame somebody outside of yourself for what’s taking place in the collective. The real question is: what are \*you\* doing to fix things on a micro and macro level? Take matters in your hands and educate those around you to do the same. On the upside, those who have been fighting a legal battle will find that the scales of justice are tipping in their favour soon. Working with a lawyer you trust (or somebody who is an authority on the given matter) will help you take control of the situation.