

# SummitTIMES

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# 8 new cases and no new **Covid deaths in Sikkim**

**SUMMIT REPORT** GANGTOK, 21 Nov:

ovid continues remain an er-Cratic infection in the State. Even though new cases are coming in low of late [in absolute numbers], Sikkim's daily test positivity rate swings from highs of nearly 5% to half of it within 24 hours. Today for instance, eight new cases were picked up from the screening of 390 samples, giving the State a DTPR of 2.05%. In the 24 hours before this, the State had posted a daily test positivity rate of 4.90% when 14 new cases were picked up from the testing of 280 samples. Given Sikkim's low population, averages can lead to misleading interpretations. The high DTPR of 4.90%, it will be noticed, were affected by the slightly higher positive cases and nearly a 100 fewer tests [as compared to today's stats].

This erratic nature of statistics notwithstanding, what cannot be ignored is that wider vaccination has ensured that even though

Covid infections have not ended, hospitalizations have dropped substantially in Sikkim.

There are currently 123 people who are still Covid-positive in the State, 109 of whom are on their way to recovery under home isolation. While infections have risen among the under 18 year olds, for whom vaccination has not been opened yet, only two of those in hospital fall in this bracket. Meanwhile, of the 123 active cases, only 14 are admitted in hospital. While this is a low number compared to the hundreds in hospital when Covid's second wave was at its peak, the fact that four of them are in ICU, comprising nearly 30% of the Covid patients in hospital, should be seen with some concern Given the lower burden on the health-workers, the medical history of those who develop severe symptoms should be studied and analysed more, as should the effect of Covishield on the severity of infections. As per the Daily Report of COVID-19 in Sikkim issued by the Programme of the Health Department on Sunday morning, with the eight new cases, the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 detected in Sikkim since testing began on 28 Fen, 2020, has now reached 32,169. While six people tested positive in RT-PCR testing of 258 samples yesterday, two more cases were detected in rapid antigen testing of 130 samples. Of the eight new cases, six were registered in East District and two in South District. Reassuringly, no new COVID deaths were reported in the past 24 hours and the State's Covid toll continues to hold at 403. In a meantime, 10 more COVID patients were discharged from home isolation on Saturday to further improve the figure of recovered cases to 31,309. The state's current recovery rate stands at 98.3%. Similarly, the State administered 834 doses of Covishield vaccine on Saturday, of whom 802 completed their vaccination schedule with the second dose and 32 received their first jab of the vaccine.

Integrated Disease Surveillance

### Janak Sharma wins Mr Ultimate Sikkim 2021

**SUMMIT REPORT GANGTOK, 21 NOV:** 

Cikkim's Janak Sharma lifted the title of Mr Ultimate Sikkim 2021 in the 6th edition of Mr and Miss Ultimate Championship held at Nar Bahadur Bhandari Degree College auditorium on Saturday. Chamba Bhutia from Kalimpong became the champion of Mr Ultimate Open Body Building Championship 2021, while Rahul Chettri from Jharkhand bagged the title of Men's Physique Championship and Lily Hasnu from Nagaland was adjudged as the champion of Women's physique championship.

The championship was organised by Gangtok-based Ultimate Fitness Gym.

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha's youth wing president, Lakpa Moktan was present as the chief guest. The chief guest and other guests gave away cash prizes, trophies and citations to its winners.



# SKM will soon turn Sikkim into Venezuela, says Chamling

**SUMMIT REPORT** GANGTOK, 21 Nov:

 $\mathbf{F}^{ ext{ormer}}$  Chief Minister and president of Sikkim Democratic Front party, Pawan Chamling has alleged that mismanagement of the state's economy could soon turn Sikkim into the Venezuela of India.

Answering his weekly Facebook Q&A, the former CM has also said that there are three ma-

"There cannot be a

Sikkim under the SKM government - Janata Asmita Lilam Mela, Sikkim Kin-bech Mela (SKM) and Robin Hood Mela. "The government is

making desperate attempts to buy Sikkimese people with money gained by selling Sikkim," he alleges. He was answering a

question on distribution of vehicles to SKM supporters.

greater example of misgovernance than this. Instead of the Government of Sikkim rolling out pro-poor, pro-youth and pro-people schemes to help them start up a new venture, here in Sikkim it is the SKM party that is openly distributing vehicles and money to its Hood tactic adopted by the party. The only difference is the original Robin Hood robbed the rich and

But this Sikkim Robin Hood is robbing Sikkim and distributing the loot with its famous "TEAM". The government has tried to justify it by saying that it is being done under the Youth Development Fund but in the last three budgets passed by the SKM government, the YDF is nowhere reflected either in its Plan or Non-Plan Budgets. This simply proves that it is the distribution of loot earned through corruption and the whole-

sale

Chamling. Mr Chamling has said that SKM is intimidating people to join the party and there are "Joining

mechanization

of Sikkim. If it is not,

let the SKM party tell

the people where this

huge sum of money is

coming from," says Mr

distributed with the poor. Agents". These "agents" fix a joining agreement and are pocketing huge sums of money from their chief, he alleged.

"This is the SKM's version of Janata Mela but it is actually a Janata Asmita Auction Mela. People's asmita are being auctioned for the benefit of the joining agents," he added.

On Sikkim Kin-Bech Mela (SKM), Mr Chamling alleges that the SKM government has joined hands with non-Sikkimese businessmen to merchandize Sikkim. Many new private companies are being registered overnight to buy assets of Sikkim, he added.

He further alleged Elaborating on what that "PS Goley's Team" party supporters. This he means by Janata are receiving cash and is nothing but a Robin Asmita Auction Mela, they are buying lands and houses for themselves overnight. He calls this alleged dole outs the "Robin Hood Mela".

# Sustainable Mountain Development Summit X concludes in Darjeeling

**SUMMIT REPORT** GANGTOK, 21 Nov:

Custainable Mountain **D**evelopment Summit's 10th edition, orga nized by the Integrated Mountain Initiative and Darjeeling Himalaya Initiative, came to an end on 20 Nov in Darjeeling.

The three-day summit organized with the theme of 'One Health - Making our mountains resilient' had kick started on 18 Nov in Darjeeling with some prominent speakers addressing the participants in the inaugural session.

A press release informs that Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, Chief Scientist of WHO delivered the key note address joining in from Geneva, while the chief guest was Director General of ICIMOD, Dr. Pema Gyamtso.



On the second day of the summit, the thematic sessions on Zoonoses. Biodiversity and Ecosystems, and Sustainable Food Systems were discussed. Speakers from various organizations deliberated on the importance of the One Health lens bringing in various aspects of animal health, environmental health and human health and the interconnectedness of it all.

The summit's third day brought the elected representatives of the various IHR states together for the Mountain Legislators' Meet to discuss on the important issue of plastic crisis in the mountains. The meeting had as chief guest, the Deputy CM of Arunachal Pradesh, Chowna Mein who joined online. MP Lok Sabha, Vincent Pala, presided over the interactive session along with presi-

dent IMI, PD Rai. More than 20 legislators attended the meet in person and virtually, sharing their experiences of working on plastic waste management and the challenges thereof. Minister for Forest and Environment, Government of Meghalaya, James Sangma, gave the closing

address.

The Darjeeling declaration was signed by the Legislators to work towards a vision of zero waste Himalaya and single use plastic eradication in the mountains. The declaration also resolved to work for making the extended producer responsibility feasible for the mountains.

...turn Pg2



# Two from Sikkim to participate in Jugaad Skateboarding Competition

**SAGAR CHETTRI** 

**GANGTOK, 21 Nov:** two-member team of All Sikkim Skatehoarding Association [ASSA] is all set to represent Sikkim in Jugaad Skateboarding Competition 2021 to be held from 01 to 03 December in Bangalore.

Two skateboarders from Sikkim, Md Tarik and Thupden Sherpa accompanied by ASSA president, Tenzing Chungdu Bhutia will be leaving on 23 November for the competition. Sikkimese skateboarders are participating for the second time in India's biggest annual skateboarding competi-

Addressing a press conference here this afternoon, the ASSA president mentioned that Jugaad is a recognised and the most popular skateboarding competition of the country which also gets skateboarders from other countries as well.

"The competition is very tough among



the best skateboarders of the country but our skateboarders are all set to give their best in the competition. The competition

would be a big exposure for our skateboarders and helpful for their further growth," he said.

team from Sikkim had participated in the last edition of Jugaad Skateboarding Competition in 2019.

Mr Bhutia mentioned that there are around 50 skateboarders in the State, most of whom are in Gangtok and a few in Namchi. He mentioned that local skateboarders have been practicing on the terrace of Kanchenjunga Shopping Complex at Lal Bazaar in the absence of proper infrastructure and facilities.

Skateboarding started here around five years back and the registration of the association is currently under process, informed Mr Bhutia. He added that after registration the association would approach the Roller-Skating Federation of India for affiliation and then call on the state gov-

He also mentioned that skateboarding is now in the Olympics so there is a great

He mentioned that a four-member opportunity for skateboarders to reach the Olympics if they get proper infrastructures and facilities.

> A team member, Md Tarik, who has been skateboarding for the last three years and had participated in the last edition of Jugaad Skateboarding Competition, said that he would give his best in the competition. He also thanked the association for providing this exposure on such a big and popular skateboard event.

He has been training at Kanchenjunga shopping complex terrace for this competition for the last six months.

"We are reaching Bangalore in advance to prepare on a proper skate path to give our best in the competition," he said.

ASSA vice president, Ong Tshering Lepcha appealed to organisations and individuals to come forward to support local skateboarders and promote skateboarding in the State.

## KN Lepcha attends NE Education Ministers' Meet

GUWAHATI, 21 Nov [IPR]: Minister for Education, Kunga Nima Lepcha attended the North-East Education Ministers' meeting in Guwahati, Assam, on 20 Nov which was chaired by Union Minister for Education, Dharmendra Pradhan.

The meeting was attended by the Education Ministers of all the North-Eastern States in the presence of the Chief Minister of Assam, Himanta Biswa

During the conference of the North-Eastern Education Ministers later in the afternoon, the Minster KN Lepcha mentioned about the achievements of the Government of Sikkim in the education sector. He also raised certain is-



While speaking during the conference, the Minister highlighted upon the initiatives of Sikkim like launch-

cation sectors.

ing of NIPUN Sikkim, the Sikkim Chapter of NIPUN Bharat to achieve Foundational Literacy and Numeracy at primary level from Nursery to Class 3 in the age group of 3 to 9 years. He also mentioned about the progress made by Sikkim towards implementing the National Education Policy, 2020.

During the meeting, the Union Minister,

Dharmendra Pradhan congratulated Sikkim for having performed much better in different verticals of the department which are much higher in the North-East and also some of them are much better than the national average.

In the North-Eastern Educational Conclave, the Additional Chief Secretary, GP Upadhyaya participated in the session for Higher Education and the State Project Director Samagra Shiksha and Director Elementary Education, Bhim Thatal participated in the discussion for School Education and implementation of the NEP, 2020.

Later in the evening, the Minister, Additional Chief Secretary and SPD attended a function hosted by the Chief Minister of Assam.

### Financial assistance provided to Yuksam tourism stakeholders

guri Municipal Corporation at Bright Academy, Punjabipara, today.

 ${f A}$  round 500 people were vaccinated in a free COVID-19 vaccination camp organised by Rotary Club of Siliguri Metropolitan in association with Sili-

Free Covid vaccination camp in Siliguri



**PRITAM LAMA** YUKSAM, 21 Nov:

**SUMMIT REPORT** 

GANGTOK, 21 Nov:

 $T^{\text{ourism department,}}_{\text{Khangchendzonga}}$ National Park (KNP) and Travel Agents Association of Sikkim (TAAS) provided financial assistance to Yuksam tourism stakeholders and Ecotourism Service Providers Association of Yuksam (ESPAY) through SKM Constituency-level tourism secretary, Phumpi Bhutia, today.

Tourism Department provided Rs 1 lakh while TAAS provided Rs 25,000 as financial assistance.

The popular trekking route inside the world heritage site, Khangchendzonga National Park (KNP) in West Sikkim opened for tourism after a long gap due to the pandemic. The Dzongri-Goechala trekking for tourism in September this year. The route was closed at multiple places due to landslides and local tourism stakeholders had approached the Tourism Department, KNP division and TAAS for support and assis-

route that falls inside

National Park opened

Khangchendzonga

On the day, a brief meeting with the local tourism stakeholders was also conducted by KNP. KNP-Range Officer,

Tenzing W. Bhutia appealed to pack animal operators and stakeholders for cooperation and support to keep the National park clean and safe.

He also asked stakeholders including trekking guides and porters to be responsible while

**Terence Crawford stops Shawn Porter in** 

rendering tourism services inside the Khangchendzonga National

The meeting also discussed improvement of services in the area.

SKM CLC tourism wing secretary, Phumpi Bhutia, Eco Development Committee president Bhima Gurung, SKM BLC president, Aita Hang Limboo, KNP officials and local tourism stakeholders were present in

the meeting. The Yuksam tourism stakeholders has thanked the Tourism department and TAAS for the assistance.

Phumpi Bhutia has thanked the Tourism department Principal Chief Engineer, Prakash Chettri and TAAS president, Norgay Lachungpa for this initiative.

### Sustainable Mountain Development..... In the valedictory session, the Dr. R S Tolia Memorial Lecture was given by Dr. Eklabya Sharma who provided insights into the impor-

tance of the Indian Himalayan Region and its challenges.

The Dr. RS Tolia award was also declared with North East Network from Nagaland taking the prize for the first time to the North East

Secretary, IMI, Priyadarshinee Shrestha, provided the outcomes and recommendations of the 3 days of summit, mentioning that collaboration beyond Departmental silos was key for the One Health approach. There was much more to be understood about how animal and human health interfaces played out and the need for increasing disease surveillance in the IHR, also from a transboundary perspective. Promotion of traditional food systems that are nurturing for human health as well as the planet was also a key takeaway. A mountain policy for a One Health approach that fosters cooperation and collaboration was one of the important recommendations.

Representing the Youth group of DHI, Shreya Gurung presented their reflections on the summit and the way forward they had charted from the summit. This included having an active youth network within IMI, and working on the key recommendations emerging from the 3 thematic sessions that involved the youth.

In his presidential address, PD Rai congratulated the Darjeeling Himalaya Initiative on successfully organizing SMDSX in Darjeeling. He also complimented the youth group of DHI on their active participation and engagement in the summit. He mentioned that the theme of One Health was an emerging but important topic to discuss and IMI in the future would pick up on the recommendations that had emerged from the summit. IMI Councillor, Roshan Rai, in his vote of thanks address acknowledged all the partners and supporters

The baton for the next summit - SMDSXI to be held in 2022 was passed on to the UT of Ladakh by president DHI, Praful Rao to Chairperson of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council.

# UK calls out racial bias in oximeter device used to assess Covid patients

LONDON. 21 NOV [REU-TERS]: Britain called on Sunday for international action on the issue of medical devices such as oximeters that work better on people with lighter skin, saying the disparities may have cost lives of across the world. This ethnic minority patients is about a racial bias in during the COVID-19 some medical instru-

Health Secretary Sajid Javid said he had commissioned a review of the example of that," Javid issue after learning that said during an inter-

oximeters, which measure blood oxygen levels and are key to assessing COVID patients, give less accurate readings for patients with darker

"This is systemic al but it exists and oximeters are a really good view with the BBC.

Asked whether people may have died of COVID-19 as a result of the flaw, Javid said: "I think possibly yes. I don't have the full facts."

He said the reason for the discrepancies was that a lot of medical devices, drugs, prowere put together in white majority coun-

"I want to make sure lem after looking into

that we do something why, in Britain, people about it but not just in the UK. This is an international issue so I'm going to work with my counterparts across the world to change this,"

said Javid. He said he had already spoken about the issue to his US counter-

Javid said he had become aware of the probfrom black and other minority ethnic backgrounds had been disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

He said that at the height of the early stages of the pandemic, a third of admissions for COVID into intensive care units were for ethnic minority patients, which was double their representation in the general popula-

# Active COVID-19 cases in country lowest in 532 days

NEW DELHI, NOV 21 (PTI): India logged 10,488 new coronavirus infections taking the country's total tally of COVID-19 cases to 3,45,10,413, while the active cases declined to 1,22,714, the lowest in 532 days, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Sunday.

The death toll climbed to 4,65,662 with 313 fresh fatalities, according to the data updated at 8 am.

The daily rise in new coronavirus infections has been below 20,000 for 44 straight days and less than 50,000 daily new cases have been reported for 147 consecutive days now.

The active cases comprise 0.36 per cent of the total infections, the lowest since March 2020, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate was recorded at 98.30 per cent, the highest since March 2020, the ministry said. A decrease of 2,154 cases has been respan of 24 hours.

The daily positivity rate was recorded at 0.98 per cent. It has been less than two per cent for the last 48 days. The weekly positivity rate was recorded at 0.94 per cent. It has been below two per cent for the last 58 days, according to the ministry.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 3,39,22,037, while the case fatality rate was recorded at 1.35 per cent.

The cumulative doses administered in the country so far under the nationwide COVID-19 vaccination drive has exceeded 116.50 crore.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 2020, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11,

corded in the active COVID-19 caseload in a crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19.

> India crossed the grim milestone of two crore on May 4 and three crore on June 23. The 313 new fatalities include 248 from

> A total of 4,65,662 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 1,40,722 from Maharashtra, 38,174 from Karnataka, 37,299 from Kerala, 36,361 from

Kerala and 15 from Maharashtra.

Tamil Nadu, 25,095 from Delhi, 22,909 from Uttar Pradesh and 19,376 from West Bengal. The ministry stressed that more than 70

per cent of the deaths occurred due to co-

"Our figures are being reconciled with the Indian Council of Medical Research," the ministry said on its website, adding that state-wise distribution of figures is subject to further verification and reconciliation.

### Iktara in hand, 75-year-old's victory songs at Singhu to motivate farmers

New Delhi, 21 Nov [PTI]: He plays iktara at the Singhu border, where he has been camping at regular intervals since the start of the protest against the three agri laws. With his songs, Jagar Singh, 75, is back at the site, motivating the protesters to continue their struggle.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday announced a rollback of the three farm laws at the centre of protests by farmers for the past year.

On his fourth visit to

the Singhu border, the epicentre of farmers' protest, Mr Singh, a resident of Patiala district in Punjab, seems happy and in a celebratory mood.

"We have won half the battle but there is still some time for us to return home triumphant. We want the government to bring in a legislation to guarantee the minimum support price (MSP)," he

He said he has stayed at the Singhu border for a week each on his three earlier visits. A day after the Centre's announcement of the three contentious laws, Mr Singh reached the site on Saturday to sing songs of victory and to motivate the protesters to continue their struggle.

"Playing iktara is my hobby and from the past few years, I have gradually started singing as well. This is the fourth time I have come to the Singhu border since

the protest started. I

have family responsi-

bilities back home," he

Mr Singh said he has also performed at the main stage at the Singhu border protest site.

Malkit Singh (58), a resident of Ropar, said "nagar kirtan" was organised at the border on Sunday morning.

"Today, nagar kirtan was organised two days after the Gurupurab. It started from the main stage, we did 'sewa' in the kirtan and sweets were distributed during the procession. We want Prime Minister Narendra Modi to fulfil our other demands also so that we can go back to our homes," he said.

The protesters are refusing to move from the site till their demands are met Chad Singh (70), a

resident of Patiala, said protesters have the achieved one demand, however, "there are others which have to be accepted by the government".

10th round to retain welterweight title LAS VEGAS, 21 NOV dad did the right thing [AFP]: Terrence Crawford stopped Shawn Porter in the 10th round by technical knockout Sat-

most anticipated bouts of the year. Crawford (38-0) retained his WBO welterweight title and extended his streak of stoppages to nine in front of a sold-out crowd of 11,568 at the

urday night in one of the

Mandalay Bay. Crawford knocked down Porter early in the 10th round with a left uppercut and then delivered an exclamation point with a devastating right hook to the temple, followed by a left hook to the face.

Porter's trainer and father, Kenny, threw in the towel and called for referee Celestino Ruiz to stop the fight. Porter stunned reporters by announcing his retirement from boxing at his postfight press conference.

"I know I caught him with a good uppercut and then when I caught him with another left hook clean in his face that he was real hurt and his

by stopping it because I was coming with a vengeance," Crawford said. "I didn't really want to fight him. We always said we would fight each other when the time was right and I guess the time was right for this fight to hap-

Crawford was ahead on all three of the judges' scorecards at the time of the stoppage. Dave Moretti and Steve Weisfeld had Crawford leading 86-85, while Max De Luca had him ahead 87-84. (The Guardian had it 86-85 to Crawford.)

Porter (31-4-1), who has risen to become a legitimate top-five welterweight, and was easily the best opponent of Crawford's career, displayed relentless aggression in the early rounds.

Crawford's switch-hitting flex didn't necessarily work when he turned to southpaw early in the fight, as Porter adjusted accordingly and connected often.

"Shawn Porter is a slick fighter. He was doing some things in there and made me think." Crawford said. "I can't say nothing bad about

him." After playing defense and smiling more than punching, Crawford finally showed signs of offense in the sixth round and came alive in the ninth and 10th rounds the final two rounds, as it turned out, of Porter's career.

"I'm prepared to retire," Porter said. "I was prepared to announce my retirement tonight win, lose or draw. Even if it was a draw, we had a date. They were telling us we were going to have to do it again. I was not going to do it again. I am announcing my retirement right now."

On the undercard, Esquiva Falcao (29-0) beat Patrice Volny (16-1) by way of a technical decision at 2:18 of the sixth round, after the fight was stopped because of an inadvertent head butt. Janibek Alimkhanuly (11-0) remained undefeated with an eighth-round TKO over Hassan N'Dam (38-6).

# SFA needs financial aid from AIFF and State, says Bhaichung

SUMMIT REPORT **GANGTOK, 21 Nov:** 

 $F_{ ext{team}}^{ ext{ormer Indian football}}$ chung Bhutia, who is also the advisor of Sikkim Football Association [SFA], today said that SFA is in need of financial grants from the All India Football Federation and the State Government for the betterment of Sikkim football.

Addressing a press conference here on Sun-

tioned that SFA is facing lots of challenges in conducting the state league, regular coaching camps and other activities due to financial constraints. He added that the association does not get any financial assistance from the State government or AIFF and does not have any source for revenue generation.

mentioning

that the state league is most important for a state to bring out the best footballers and to build a strong state team, Mr Bhaichung said that a proper camp is essential to preparing the state team and ensure that they get picked up by profes-

He mentioned that many footballers were spotted in the Santosh Trophy, who have made

sional clubs.

fessional football.

If the AIFF and State Government start giving financial grants according to the annual calendar of the association then it would help to conduct the league and provide the best facilities to footballers. He suggested that SFA management give written memorandum to the AIFF and the State government on the same.

### AP deluge: The dam that became the sorrow

KADAPA (AP), Nov 21 hundreds of acres stood (PTI): The Annamayya project on Cheyyeru river has turned out to be the sorrow of many a village in Rajampet Assembly constituency in Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh.

Togurupeta, Mandapalli, Pulapathur and Gundlur presented a picture of haunted villages in the wake of the devastation.

flash flood The caused due to a breach of the project's earthen bund caught at least 18 people in a watery grave and left many others missing in these villages.

A sudden gush of about two lakh cusecs of floodwater on Friday, with the level reaching up to 10 feet height, caught the villagers unawares and scampering for their lives.

Tens of houses in these villages downstream the project were reduced to rubble. The villagers literally lost everything, except the clothes on their person. Agricultural crops in

destroyed. Tens of cattle heads were washed

Nothing of the household items was left as the deluge gulped them.

It all happened in a flash. There was no whatsoever warning about the impending disaster and we were left to face the fury. Now, our lives are in total ruin, the sobbing villagers of Togurupeta and Mandapalli said.

In Pulapathur village, 12 people were swept away in the swirling flood in Cheyyeru, nine in Mandapalli and five in Gundlur.

So far, only 18 bodies have been recovered, with no trace of the rest.

Annamayya is a medium irrigation project with a gross capacity of only 2.24 tmc ft on Cheyyeru, a tributary of Penna river, in Rajampet constituency. It caters to an ayacut of 22,500 acres, besides fulfilling the drinking water needs of 140 habita-

The Pincha project upstream breached, letting out all floodwater into Annamayya while water from Seshachalam too came gushing in because of very heavy rainfall, resulting in an overall discharge of over two

lakh cusecs. That pushed Cheyyeru river into spate, inundating at least 10 villages downstream in Rajampet and Nandaluru mandals. and leaving widespread destruction in its wake.

It was nothing but gross mismanagement on the part of the administration. Didn't they know about the flood when there was such heavy rain? Why were we not even alerted about the coming danger before it destroyed us? angry villagers of Mandapalli and Togurupeta questioned.

Except some kind-hearted volunteers, the administration did not come to their help in

any way, they lamented. Ours is the first village right under Annamayya project.

lost our houses, cattle, belongings everything. Some of our villagers were killed. There is no place for us to go, the surviving residents of Togurupeta, a hamlet of about 500 people, said.

The temple of the local goddess, which somehow remained intact, has now turned into the only shelter zone for the hapless villagers.

Mandapalli presented a heartrending sight. Two families were completely wiped out as seven people in all were killed in the flood fury. Another family lost two persons.

Kadapa district Collector Vijava Rama Raju told PTI that the dam breach was the major factor that caused such a major calamity.

The river course changed but the dam breach was what caused the real destruction. We moved some 600 people to safety, he said.

Yes, it was a major calamity, the scale of which could not be imagined,

# SFA team ready for Sr Women's National Football C'ship

SAGAR CHETTRI **GANGTOK, 21 Nov:** 

↑ 20-member him Football Association [SFA] team will represent Sikkim in the upcoming Senior Women's National Football Championship 2021 to be held from 25 Nov to 09 Dec in Kerala. The state team accompanied by Puspa Gurung as head coach, Anuradha Chettri as manager and Sonam Choden Bhutia as physio is scheduled to leave on 24 Nov for the championship.

Addressing a press conference here this afternoon, SFA chief coordinator, Phurba Sherpa mentioned that the state women's team had undergone a 45-day long coaching camp to prepare for this prestigious senior national championship. He mentioned that SFA is sending the team in advance to help

acclimatize to the Kerala weather and play some friendly matches with local clubs.

Mr Sherpa informed that more than 200 girls had participated in selection camps conducted by SFA for North and East Districts at Gangtok, for West District at Soreng and for South District at Jorethang. From these camps, 26 players were initially shortlisted and then a 20-member squad was finally announced for the championship.

The association had organised the coaching camp at Guards Ground for 19 days and then the team moved to Jorethang for further training.

"We have provided the best coaching to the team under the best coaches and we are hopeful that this would definitely reflect on the performance of the team members," he said.

Sikkim will play its first match against Jammu & Kashmir on 29 Nov and will take on Arunachal Pradesh on 01 Dec and then against Maharashtra on 03 Dec

in the qualifying round.

The chief coordinator mentioned that the Sikkim team has also reached Kalyani, West Bengal to participate in the National Football Championship for Santosh Trophy 2021-22 East Zone Qualifying Round after playing few friendlies in Odisha. He said that the Sikkim team has performed exceptionally well in all three friendlies against the Santosh Trophy team of Odisha. Indian Arrows

SFA has also conducted a 45-day long coaching camp for the state team at Jorethang under the AFC 'A' license coach

and Odisha team.

Suren Chettri, assistant coach-cum-manager, Allen Bhutia and physio Prem Bahadur Chettri, he added.

In the preliminary round, Sikkim has been placed in Group 'B' with Chhattisgarh and West Bengal. Sikkim will take on Chhattisgarh in its first match on 23 Nov and will play against West Bengal on 25 Nov.

On behalf of SFA, vice-president, Shyam Pradhan expressed his gratitude to the Chief Minister for extending financial support and encouragement to Sikkim Women's Team and Men's Team for Santosh Trophy. He also thanked former Indian football team skipper Bhaichung Bhutia, who is also the advisor of SFA, and Siliguri-based SILCO for sponsoring the team jersey for women's team for the senior nationals.

## Prolonged school closures due to Covid pose threat to gender equality: UNSECO study

NEW DELHI, 21 Nov [PTI]: Educational disruption due to prolonged closure of schools across the globe will not only have alarming effects on learning loss but also poses threat to gender equality, a new study by UNESCO has pointed out.

The global study titled "When schools shut: Gendered impacts of COVID-19 school closures" brings to the fore that girls and boys, young women and men were affected differently by school closures, depending on the context.

"At the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, 1.6 billion students in 190 countries were affected by school closures. Not only did they lose access to education, but also to the myriad benefits of attending school, at an unparalleled scale," said Stefania Giannini, UNESCO, Assistant Director-General for Education.

"Educational ruption of this extent has alarming effects on learning loss and school already a concern before dropout. Beyond this, it poses threats to gender equality, including effects on health, well being and protection that are gender specific," Giannini said. Drawing on evidence from about 90 countries and in-depth data collected in local communities, the report shows that gender norms and expectations can affect the ability to participate in and benefit from remote learning.

"In poorer contexts, girls' time to learn was constrained by increased household chores. Boys' participation in learning was limited by income-generating activities. Girls faced difficulties in engaging in digital remote learning modalities in many contexts because of limited access to internet-enabled devices, a lack of digital skills and cultural norms restricting their use of technological devices," the report said. The study pointed out that

digital gender-divide was

the COVID-19 crisis. "The in-depth studies

on Bangladesh and Paki-

stan in the global report

revealed its gendered ef-

fects on remote learning during school closures. In the study on Pakistan, only 44 per cent of girls in participating districts reported owning mobile phones for their personal use, whereas 93 per cent of boys did so. Girls who did not own mobile phones reported that they relied on their relatives' devices, typically those belonging to their fathers," it said. "While some of the girls were able to use family members' phones, they were not always able to do so. Their access was restricted since some parents were concerned that providing girls with access to smartphones would lead to misuse and could result into romantic relationships."

"The longer girls were out of school, the higher was the risk of learning loss. From April to September 2020, the share of girls reporting that they did not study at all increased from 1 to 10 per cent," it added. Noting that the pandemic is a timely reminder that schools are sites not only for learning, but also lifelines for girls and boys - an essential space for their health, well-being and protection, the report has several recommendations on how to challenge gender-based barriers for participation in remote learning.

"To advance equal

access to gender-responsive and inclusive remote learning, it is recommended to provide a range of remote learning options including low-tech and no-tech solutions spearhead and support efforts to reach the most at-risk learners design, develop gender-responsive educational resources and tools besides providing appropriate teacher support and training use formative assessments to track learning outcomes,"

# Farmers head to Lucknow for Monday's Kisan Mahapanchayat

LUCKNOW/ MUZAFFAR- Hindi, he claimed, "The KHERI, Nov 21 (PTI): ed about by the govern-Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), an umbrella body of farmers unions, will hold a mahapanchayat in Lucknow on Monday to press for law guaranteeing MSP and the sacking of Union Minister Ajay Mishra, whose son is an accused in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence.

The gathering, scheduled to be held at Eco Garden in Uttar Pradesh capital, was planned months before Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday announced repealing the three contentious agri laws. The SKM, at a meet in Delhi on Sunday, decided to stick to the date.

Despite the prime minister's surprise announcement, farmer leaders have maintained the protesters won't budge until the three contentious laws are formally repealed in Parliament. They have also indicated the sir for a statutory guarantee of Minimum Support Price (MSP) and withdrawal of the Electricity Amendment Bill will continue.

In a tweet on Sunday, Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) national spokesperson Rakesh Tikait gave a call to farmers to gather in Lucknow for the 'Kisan Mahapanchayat' demanding statutory MSP guarantee.

In another tweet in

**LAKHIMPUR** farm reforms being talkmetic. These will not end the plight of the farmers. The biggest reform for the farmers and agriculture will be to make a law guaranteeing minimum support price."

Vice-president of the

BKU's Uttar Pradesh unit Harnam Singh Verma told PTI, "The prime minister has announced the repeal of the three farm laws, but he did not say when the MSP law will be made. Until a law is made guaranteeing MSP and Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Mishra is removed from his post, the agitation will contin-

Four farmers were allegedly mowed down by an SUV in the Lakhimpur Kheri district, the native place of the Union minister on October 3. In the ensuing violence, four people, including a journalist and two BJP workers, were also killed.

Over a dozen people, including the minister's son Ashish Mishra, have been arrested so far in the case.

Verma said that apart from MSP and the Lakhimpur Kheri violence, many other issues will also be discussed at the farmers' mahapanchayat on Monday.

With Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh scheduled to be held ear-



ly next year, the 'Kisan mahapanchayat' in the state capital has assumed much significance. Farmers are electorally important, particularly in western Uttar Pradesh from where Rakesh Tiki-

"The BJP had promised during the last Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections that once it government, sugarcane farmers will receive payment within 14 days. But it has not been done. In the last four-and-a-half years, sugarcane price has increased by a bare Rs 25," Verma said.

Reports from various districts indicate that farmers will be attending the mahapanchayat in large numbers. BKU's district president of Baghpat Pratap Singh Gurjar and of Muzaffarnagar Yogesh Sharma said that farmers have already left for Lucknow in large numbers.

"Until all the demands of the protesting farmers are met, the agitation will continue. The prime minister made the announcement with an eye on the upcoming Assembly election in which the BIP is seeing the reins of power slipping away," president of Rashtriya Kisan Manch Shekhar Dixit said.

Amandeep Sandhi, the in-charge of BKU-Tikait's Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand unit, said that he expects 10,000 to 15,000 farmers from Lakhimpur Kheri to participate in the mahapanchayat.

Apart from the villages of the farmers killed in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence, several others would attend the mahapanchayat, Bhartiya Kisan Union state secretary Om Prakash Verma told PTI.

Sukhvinder Singh,

said that elaborate security arrangements have been made for the 'Kisan Mahapanchayat'.

the father of Gurvinder Singh, one of the four farmers killed in the Lakhimpur Kheri incident, said he would attend the mahapanchayat. Lucknow Police Commissioner of D K Thakur [NDTV]: Trinamool Congress alleged "mayhem" in BJP-ruled Tripura today as its leader, actor Sayoni Ghosh, was arrested by the police and accused of attempt to murder. Alleging repeated instances of violence, the party decided to take the matter to Delhi. More than 15 Trina-

KOLKATA,

mool Congress MPs are flying from Kolkata to Delhi tonight. They have sought an appointment with Union Home Minister Amit Shah to discuss the issue of violence in Tripura. The Trinamool Congress said it will sit on dharna in the national capital tomorrow morn-

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and her nephew, the party national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee, are rushing to Tripura on Monday.

Trinamool's Bengal youth wing chief Sayoni



Trinamool leader arrested in Tripura,

Ghosh was detained by the Tripura police earlier today. The party said she was attacked by BJP goons when she was taken to a police station in Agartala for questioning.

Ms Ghosh was accompanied by other party leaders including MP Sushmita Deb, Kunal Ghosh and Subal Bhowmik. The party said all of them were attacked inside the East Agartala women police station. Six supporters were injured in the violence, the party said.

Denying the allegations, the BJP claimed that Sayoni Ghosh disturbed a public meeting of Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb on Saturday. She had hurled stones

and abuses at the meeting, the party said.

The police said some unidentified miscreants attacked a group of people who had gathered near the police station during the questioning of Ms Ghosh, but no one was injured. The police station, they said, was brickbatted.

Ms Ghosh was later formally arrested, accused of attempt to murder and creating enmity between people. The Trinamool Congress said she was charged with non-bailable sections and could not be produced in court.

"@BjpBiplab has become so UNABASHEDLY BRAZEN that now even SUPREME COURT OR-

DERS DOESN'T SEEM TO BOTHER HIM. He has repeatedly sent goons to attack our supporters & our female candidates instead of ensuring their safety! DEMOCRACY BE-ING MOCKED under @ BJP4Tripura. #NotMyIN-DIA," Abhishek Banerjee tweeted.

Late in the evening, Sushmita Dev tweeted, alleging fresh violence. "They have attacked the Thana again where @ sayani06 is under arrest and also attacked our Convenor Shubol Bhowmick's house in Agartala. @Tripura\_Police I have been trying to call the IG & DGP but to no avail. This is mayhem".

There have been reports of a series of violent incidents in Tripura as the Trinamool Congress is trying to gain foothold in the state ahead of the 2023 assembly elections. The party is contesting the Tripura civic polls, due on November 25.

**Edits** 

# **Summit TIMES**

### **Death Due to Disengagement**

When a society refuses to engage, the shocking becomes the new normal

Cuicides have become so frequent, and the general re-**I** sponse to them so uninvolved that this newspaper has stopped reporting on suicides on a day to day basis, fearful that the commonplace nature of such deaths will convince those contemplating such ends that this is a "normal" means to opt out. But there is nothing normal about a suicide. It is a traumatic experience for everyone touched by it – the victim, the families, the friends and even the police personnel who have to recover the bodies and draft reports about the incident. Why, even journalists who have to report on these incidents are left disturbed. Why then is it that suicides do not figure in public and political discussions? Is it not worrying that something which can be addressed and is yet allowed to take away so many lives from Sikkim's midst is not attracting the attention of leaders beyond the occasional lip-service?

Speak to any cop, especially the ones posted at the more remote out-posts where they respond more to recover bodies of suicide victims than law & order situations, bringing down limp bodies of lives that could have been saved and one does not sense disinterest from the routineness of the matter but a frustration over why lives end in this manner so often in Sikkim. They return to this thankless task every day, reporting to their beats knowing that their policing of yesterday has made no dent in the nexus of disinterest and insensitiveness that spawns suicides in Sikkim. What is worse, the society at large is not only disinterested, but also complacently dismissive, reading of social challenges like suicides and drug busts with shallow comments of this being caused by corruption and materialism.

This is a dangerously uninvolved attitude. These are social challenges, situations that need to be met with social engagement and supported by a political will which creates the enabling laws and environment to redress the situation. Those who pass superficial judgements, blaming these societal trends on law & order failures and not the society, are causing perhaps even more damage than the indifference with which the community at large is responding to the challenges. Among all the factors that sustain substance abuse, societal indifference contributes the most. Suicides in Sikkim manifest in the failure of adequate awareness, or even interest, about mental health. Economic destitution has not claimed lives here yet. Lives are being lost and put in harm's way because a civil society refuses to come together in Sikkim.

Community engagement, when genuinely crafted, automatically leads to spontaneous involvement. And one is referring here not only to substance abuse and suicides. Look at how consistently mute the people and their organisations have remained in Sikkim in the face of every situation that has confronted the State. There is neither any spontaneity in jubilant celebrations nor any instinctive revulsion when misfortune comes visiting. The only voices that find comment indulge in rounds of condemnations and counters and are exclusively politically inspired. The lay citizens remain aloof because they have not cobbled together organisations which are not only not politically compromised, but also neither forceful nor forthright. In this vacuum, issues are manufactured and forced on the people and genuine problems remain unaddressed. Also manifesting because of this involvement deficit are social challenges which grow ever more staggering and confounding. Superficiality and token gestures do not solve any problem, and the situation with suicides is much too pervasive to even be called a "problem" any more – they have become the new normal for Sikkim. Unless the society invests some real involvement, this "normalcy" will keep getting worse and the State the poorer.

And no, don't look at the government to solve this problem. It cannot do so on its own because those who are harm's way are around families and their immediate circle of friends and only they can catch the warning signs in time. The government could help by arranging proper awareness and access to experts, but it will have to be the lay people who walk the way to help and encourage others to do the same. Given how things have been, even the first step has not been taken. As a result, by the time you finish reading this, chances are, that a panic call has gone through to another police outpost reporting an unidentified body found hanging in a neighbourhood somewhere in Sikkim...

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# Refugees in the media: how the most commonly used images make viewers dehumanise them

THECONVERSATION.COM

When the Syrian refugee crisis began in 2011, the journeys of thousands of people fleeing their home country to cross the Mediterranean were widely documented in the media. But the public response was tepid until 2015, when a photograph of drowned Syrian toddler Alan Kurdi on a Turkish beach was printed in media around the world. The photo prompted international responses, a change of EU policy on refugees, and a surge in donations

Images shape our perceptions of the world and have the capacity to become political forces themselves. While more refugees risk their lives to cross the English Channel and the Mediterranean, not to mention the Belarus-Poland border, our research has found that the photos of these populations in the media affect how people view and respond to migration issues.

to charities working with refugees.

This phenomenon is described in social psychology as the "identifiable victim effect". People engage differently with words and images concerning the suffering of a single individual rather than that of large groups. We are willing to offer greater aid to a single victim under hardship than to a group of people with the same need. Increased charity donations are an example of this.

Yet in the mainstream media, images of identifiable victims are the exception rather than the norm. In the context of the Syrian refugee crisis, the majority of news images in western media depict refugees as anonymous, faceless masses. These may either render audiences numb to the subjects' hardship or simply fail to shift their attitudes or behaviours, as past research suggests. **DEHUMANISATION** 

In set of recent studies, we showed media images of refugees to nearly 4,000 European citizens. We exposed them to images of either large groups, in which individuals are not identifiable, or small groups of identifiable refugees. We found that viewers dehumanised



refugees more strongly when they were exposed to images of them in large groups.

We reached this conclusion by asking participants to tell us the extent to which they think that refugees are capable of experiencing certain emotions. We did this because an important dimension of dehumanisation is considering others as being less capable of experiencing secondary emotions that typically distinguish humans from animals, such as tenderness, guilt and compassion (as opposed to primary emotions that are shared with animals such as fear, anger and joy).

We found that the participants who saw images of refugees in large groups attributed fewer secondary emotions to them. Interestingly, we did not observe this difference when participants saw images of large groups of survivors of natural disasters.

We also looked at another distinguishing feature of these images: whether the subjects were depicted crossing a body of water or travelling by land. One of the most striking aspects of the imagery of refugee journeys has been their crossing of the Mediterranean Sea

- being rescued or having drowned.

Social scientists have speculated that the visual and linguistic portrayal of refugees using metaphors of water (waves, tides and floods) reinforces the stereotype of refugees as potentially threatening, uncontrollable agents.

In our study, the visual narrative of depicting large groups of refugees in the sea resulted in even greater dehumanisation. This suggests that current visual representations of refugees emphasise a security issue rather than a humanitarian debate - refugees are depicted as "being a crisis" for host nations, rather than finding themselves "in a crisis".

TURNING EMOTION TO ACTION

We found that not only do these differences in images affect our attitudes toward refugees, they also influence our behaviour and action. We found that participants who had been exposed to images of large groups of refugees were also more likely to endorse anti-refugee petitions and less likely to endorse pro-refugee petitions.

We also tested whether exposure to these images affected people's support for political leaders. We found that viewing images of large groups was associated with increased support for more dominant and less trustworthy-looking political leaders.

Interestingly, in our research, it was not the emotions that viewers attributed to the people in the photographs that drove political effects. Instead, the driving factor seemed to be the specific emotions that the viewers themselves experienced (such as reduced pity) when looking at the images of large groups.

There are no neutral ways to visually depict human beings. Neither the medium of photography itself can afford such neutrality, nor the photographers, the publishers or the viewers themselves.

The decision of what photos to publish is often made by editors who are exposed daily to many images of human suffering. Our research shows that these decisions should consider both the likely emotions audiences will "see" in the images, but also the emotions they

> [the writer is Professor of Psychology, Director of the Centre for the Politics of Feelings, Royal Holloway University of London]

# Worn down by bad news? You're not alone...

**NEILL FITZPATRICK** 

In 1983, Canada's Anne Murray released anther hit song. This one, though, was different than what her fans were accustomed to. A Little Good News is a sombre ballad summarizing the mood of the day: "One more sad story's one more than I can stand; Just once how I'd like to see the headline say; 'Not much to print today, can't find nothin' bad to say' [...] We sure could use a little good news today."

Nearly 40 years later, the lyrics strike a chord. Except, these days, the news coverage of those sad stories are non-stop. There's a "fire hose" of information in the palm of our hands, day and night.

As we grapple with grim headlines about the pandemic, political upheaval, racial injustice and climate change, we could all use a little good

In the meantime, many people — of all ages and backgrounds — are giving up on news, joining the ranks of the so-called "news avoiders." Some are limiting how much they consume. Others are shunning it altogether. They don't watch, listen or read.

News avoidance is the subject of my research paper "No News is Not Good News," soon to be published in the Athens Journal of Mass Media and Communications. As a journalist for more than 30 years, I experienced massive changes to the news industry first hand. Now, as a journalism professor, I have the opportunity to explore what's behind the avoidance trend.

WORN OUT & NEEDING BREAKS

The weight of the world's news can be too much. Even before the arrival of COVID-19, a 2019 survey of 12,000 American adults found 66 per cent admitted they were "worn out" by the sheer amount of news available.

In 2020, 71 per cent of American adults said they need to "take breaks from COVID-19 news" while 43 per cent said the news "leaves them feeling worse emotionally."

In 2021, a survey in Canada found more than two-thirds (69 per cent) of 1,002 Canadians surveyed admitted to being "burned out when it comes to consuming news about the pandemic."

The World Health Organization even addressed this in their mental health tips saying: "Try to reduce how much you watch, read or listen to news that makes you feel anxious or distressed." And growing numbers of people are taking this to heart.

In 2020, the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at Oxford University examined the "infodemically vulnerable" in Britain — people who chose to cut back on pandemic news. More than one-fifth said "they often or always actively try to avoid the news" with the majority citing the impact on their moods.

DISTRUST IN MEDIA

While mental health preservation appears to be the primary reason behind the increase in avoidance, trust is also cited. Distrust in mainstream media isn't new, but the skepticism surrounding journalism intensified during the pandemic as anti-vaccination advocates and conspiracy theorists questioned the validity and accuracy of COVID-19 facts shared by news organizations and governments.

In its 2021 annual world-wide Trust Barometer, Edelman (a communications firm) found trust in media, both traditional and social, at alltime lows. One factor is a strong perception of bias among journalists. Of the 33,000 people surveyed 59 per cent agreed with this: "Journalists and reporters are purposely trying to mislead people by saying things they know are false or gross exaggerations."

Given these findings and opinions, it's not surprising that fewer people are consuming news, at least in the traditional sense. The question for journalism is whether news avoidance is a shortterm, pandemic-related phenomenon or a steady trend attributed to distrust and a decline in the Communications, MacEwan University]

overall quality of journalism?

It's time for news organizations to do more to convince the public of their relevance and reliability. Based on my experience as a journalist, I believe that many news organizations have fallen short by refusing to invest time and money to conduct audience research to confirm what consumers want, as opposed to assuming to know what they want based solely on what has worked

in the past. Greater transparency is another potential solution. Educating consumers on how journalists do their jobs and why certain stories and issues are covered over others is more important than ever. One method — publishing or posting entire interviews or transcripts — would enable consumers to determine for themselves if the interviewee's quotes are accurate or taken out of

Improved trust and increased relevance can also be attained when news organizations address the lack of diversity and alternative perspectives in newsrooms and strive for improved understanding of marginalized communities. The world has changed dramatically in the past 20 years but, apart from technology, little has changed in how newsrooms are structured and how journalists inform the public.

So, if bad or irrelevant news has you considering avoidance, a suggestion: just as we've been taught that moderation is the key to so many habits, it's the same for news.

You don't need to stay glued to the TV or Twitter or Facebook hour after hour and you don't need your phone to be the last thing you see each night. Rather than shutting off the fire hose of news completely, reduce the flow to a steady, manageable trickle. Stay informed without being overwhelmed. I'm confident you'll find at least a little good news.

[the writer is Assistant Professor, Journalism &

# Half of my heart belongs in India: Ban Ki-moon in book

NEW DELHI, NOV 21 (PTI): Former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's first diplomatic posting was in India and he developed such a special connection that even 50 years later, he tells the Indian people that half of his "heart belongs in their country".

Ban also mentions in his autobiography that his three years in India was "such an exciting time in my life".

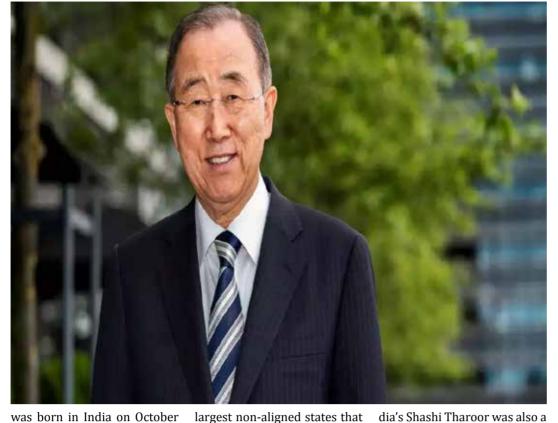
In "Resolved: Uniting Nations in a Divided World", published by HarperCollins India, Ban goes on to describe how he became a "man of peace" from a "child of war".

Born in 1944, just one year before the United Nations itself, Ban's earliest memories are haunted by the sound of bombs dropping on his Korean village and the sight of fires consuming what remained.

As a six-year-old boy, he fled with his family, trudging for miles in mud-soaked shoes, suffering from incessant hunger, and wondering how they would survive - until the United Nations rescued them. Young Ban grew up determined to repay this lifesaving generosity.

On his days in India, he writes: "India was my first diplomatic posting, and Soontaek (wife) and I arrived in Delhi in October 1972. I served there for almost three years, first as vice consul of the Korean Consulate General, and once a full diplomatic relationship was established between Korea and India in December 1973, I served as second secretary of the Korean Embassy."

His daughter Seon-yong was then just eight months old and his only son, Woo-hyun,



was born in India on October 30, 1974.

"I used to joke with Indian people that my balance sheet with India is perfect because my son was born in India and my youngest daughter, Hyunhee, is married to an Indian man. Even now, nearly fifty years later, I tell the Indian people that half of my heart belongs in their country," he

He says his work in India was challenging but fascinating to a young diplomat.

"Our primary goal was to win full diplomatic recognition by India, a leader of the nonaligned group, which we did in December 1973. Koreans and many other diplomats felt that elevating consular relations to the ambassadorial level was a turning point in diplomatic relations. India was among the

largest non-aligned states that recognised both Koreas," he

contender.

ing second.

"Thailand's

Surakiart Sathirathi, was the

only one that felt like a real ri-

val to me at that time. Tharo-

or and (Sri Lankan diplomat

Jayantha) Dhanapala did not

have the strong support of

their governments," he claims.

an informal voting held at the

15-member UN Security Coun-

cil to gauge support enjoyed by

the candidates, Ban emerged

victorious with Tharoor com-

straw polls) exceeded my

expectations. I was the late-

comer, but I was now the

frontrunner. The path to the

UN secretary-general's thir-

ty-eighth floor office began

to glimmer into focus. But I

could not get rid of the wor-

"The results (of the first

In the first two straw polls,

candidate,

Ban performed what has been called the "most impossible job on this earth" with a genuine belief in collective action and global transformation. Meeting challenges and resistance with a belief in the UN's mission of peace, development and human rights, Ban steered the United Nations through a volatile period that included the Arab Spring, nuclear pursuits in Iran and North Korea, the Ebola epidemic, and brutal new conflicts in Central Africa.

As Secretary General, he also forged global agreements to fight extreme poverty and address the climate crisis.

In the book, Ban also talks about his election to the top UN post in 2006, in which Inanxious," Ban recalls.

appointing surprise.

"I received only 13 'enfor 'discourage' and 'no opinonly five votes," he writes.

Finally, he was elected to "what was widely known as the most impossible job on earth" and then re-elected to a second five-year term in June

In the book, Ban also hails India for "raising the bar" and providing the United Nation's first all-female Formed Police Unit (FPU) for service in 2007 in Liberia, which was then beginning to recover from a violent

The sight of 125 women tion," he writes.

ry that the negative vote had come from a permanent member of the Security Council. It was rumoured that Shashi Tharoor did not eniov the Indian government's support, but the fact that he received 10 votes made me

But he says the results of the third straw poll, conducted on September 28, were a dis-

courage' votes and one each ion expressed'. I could not understand what had happened. However, I was the only candidate who received more than the nine-vote minimum to win. The other candidates had lost votes: Shashi Tharoor had eight votes, losing two positive votes, and Surakiart, stung by his support of Thailand's recent military coup, received

two-decade power struggle.

drilling in formation in peacekeeper blue was an electrifying role model in a country where women had paid heavily during back-to-back civil wars. During night patrols, the unit has deterred sexual violence and helped rebuild safety and confidence among the popula3 new cases push Arunachal's COVID-19 tally to 55,246



ITANAGAR, NOV 21 (PTI): Arunachal Pradesh's COVID-19 tally rose to 55,246 on Sunday as three more people tested positive for the infection, a senior health official said.

coronavirus death toll remained unchanged at 280 as no fresh fatality was registered, State Surveillance Officer Dr Lobsang Jampa said.

The northeastern state now has 43 active cases, while 54,923 people have recovered from the disease so far, including eight on Thursday, the official said.

The recovery rate among the COVID-19 patients in the state stood at 99.41 per cent.

The Capital Complex region comprising Itanagar, Naharlagun, Nirjuli and Banderdewa areas, and Tawang district have the highest number of active cases at 10 each, followed by East Siang (six) and West Kameng (four).

The state has thus far tested 11,95,854 samples for COVID-19, including 342 on Saturday, the SSO said, adding that the positivity rate stood at 0.87 per cent.

State Immunisation Officer Dr Dimong Padung said that a total of 13,81,208 people have been inoculated thus far, including 5,007 on Saturday.

### Police seize eight live bombs in Vaishali

VAISHALI, NOV 21 who reached the spot **(PTI):** Police seized eight live bombs from a village in Bihar's Vaishali district on Sunday, four days before panchayat polls in the area, an officer said.

The bombs were seized from Javaj village under the jurisdiction of Mahnar police station and defused, he said.

"These bombs were immediately defused by a team of local policemen soon on receipt of information. The police have started a thorough probe into the matter. The police are already on high alert in view of the coming panchayat polls in the area. All live bombs were kept in a plastic bag", said Sub-Inspector Manoj Ku-

Further investigation is on, he said, adding that some people are being questioned.

# Learning Hindi to give an edge to students: Meghalaya CM

SHILLONG, NOV 21 (PTI): Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma on Sunday urged the youth to give due importance to Hindi and said those learning the language geous position.

The CM said this while inaugurating a Centre of the Kendriya Hindi Sansthan at Mawdiangdiang near here in presence of Union Education minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

He said many youth have taken to learning foreign languages such as Japanese, Italian or Spanish in the hope of getting attractive jobs in those countries.

If similar importance is given to learning Hindi one will be at an advantageous position, he said.

The chief minister said that unless we break the language barrier it will be very difficult to provide employment to the youth and added that for anyone from the North East region who wishes to work in the other economically developed states of the country knowing Hindi language will be helpful.

I have studied in Del-

could converse in the language when I go to Delhi and interact with ministers and officials. I find a different comfort level in communication, he said.

hi and learnt Hindi and

expressed Sangma happiness in having the institution in the state and urged the youth to give due importance to

The chief minister also said that as per the New Education Policy the local language should be encouraged in schools and colleges.

The North East is rich in languages, culture and heritage and we need to preserve this rich cultural heritage which is the identity of the people and many languages have become extinct, he

Sangma said that there is a need to use modern technology to preserve this cultural heritage besides preserving them in documents and books.

He also said that Meghalaya will be celebrat-

ing its 50 years on January 21, 2022 and it would be befitting if the Garo and the Khasi language are included in the 8th Schedule.

The people of the state have been working very hard for the inclusion of these two languages in the 8th Schedule and the Meghalaya assembly has also passed a resolution in this respect and if these languages are included in the 8th Schedule it would be a great gift for the

people of the state, he said.

Education Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said that the Kendriya Hindi Sansthan, Shillong Centre will cater to the needs of students wishing to learn Hindi from the states of Tripura, Mizoram and Megha-

He said that language cannot be imposed on anyone but learning any language other than one's mother tongue is not harmful.

India is a country rich

in biodiversity and every language spoken in this country is my mother tongue, he said.

Pradhan also added that in modern era technology can be leveraged upon to preserve and promote this rich cultural biodiversity not only in the world but within the country itself.

He also said that the northeast is a storehouse of culture, good practices and knowledge and this should be shared with other regions of the country.

Meghalaya Education minister Lakhmen Rymbui said that language is very important and India is blessed with many languages and dialects especially in the northeast region.

He added that the institute will help the people of the region in learning and understanding Hindi in a better way.

He also said that Hindi can be used as the medium of communication alongside English and informed that the state government has trained teachers to help students have a basic knowledge of the Hindi language.

# **Nagaland CM meets** Himanta in Jorhat

held a meeting on Sunday and discussed several issues affecting the two Northeastern states.

Though officials were tightlipped about the issues discussed in the closed-door meeting, sources said the duo spoke only on some "personal and political issues". Sarma, who tweet-

ed to inform about the meeting at Circuit House where the press was not allowed, also did not share details of the discussion that lasted for about 15 minutes only. It was followed by breakfast.

"Glad to have met HCM Nagaland Sri @ Neiphiu\_Rio at Jorhat today, along with MP Sri @KamakhyaTasa. Discussed several issues of mutual interest in order to strengthen the age-old ties & bonhomie b/w (between) two states.

"We strive towards building an ever united & stronger #North-East," Sarma tweeted.

An official statement from the Assam Chief Minister's Public Relations Cell gave details of his other programmes in Jorhat district, but was silent about the particulars of the meeting between Sarma and Rio.

"Earlier in the morning, the Chief Minister (Sarma) held

JORHAT (ASSAM), NOV a meeting with his 21 (PTI): Assam Chief Nagaland counterpart Minister Himanta Biswa Neiphiu Rio at Jorhat Sarma and his Nagaland Circuit House. Both counterpart Neiphiu Rio the Chief Ministers discussed several issues of mutual interest," it

> A senior official said that the meeting was closed-door and nobody from the government was present

"They discussed something personal, and some political issues. The inter-state border dispute between Assam and Nagaland was not discussed in it. No official issue was deliberated upon in the brief meeting," he added.

The meeting assignificance sumed after Sarma and Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma on November 16 for the first time ever jointly visited a disputed area between the two states and interacted with the local people.

Addressing a joint press conference in Guwahati, Sarma and Sangma had said that Assam and Meghalaya are targeting to settle their longstanding inter-state border disputes at six locations out of 12 by the end of this year.

Assam shares a 512.1-km border with Nagaland, with whom it has the longest border dispute that began since the creation of the state in 1963.

### Odisha logs 205 new COVID-19 cases, 2 more fatalities among the new patients, the official said. remaining 86 detected during contact said. Odisha now has 2,327 active cases,

BHUBANESWAR, Nov 21 (PTI): Odisha on Sunday registered 205 new COVID-19 cases, 34 less than the previous day, with the tally rising to 10,47,003, a health department official said. Two fresh fatalities pushed the coronavirus death toll to 8,393, he said. The daily count of COVID-19 cases in

the coastal state remained above 200 for six consecutive days.

Forty-five children and adolescents are

The single-day positivity rate among people below 18 years of age was at 21.95 per cent, up from the previous day's 15.48 per cent.

The new cases were reported from 19 districts, while 11 others did not register any fresh infection in the last 24 hours, the official said. Of the new cases, 119 were re-

corded in quarantine centres and the

tracing, he said. Khurda district, which comprises

the state capital Bhubaneswar, reported the highest number of fresh cases at 107, followed by Sundargarh (22) and Cuttack (10). The two new COVID fatalities were

registered in Khurda, the official said. Fifty-three other COVID-19 patients have so far died due to comorbidities, he over 2.32 crore sample tests, including

number of recoveries to 10,36,230.

while 263 more people were cured of

the disease on Saturday, taking the total

The state has thus far conducted

50,233 on Saturday, for the infection and the positivity rate stands at 4.5 per cent. Over 1.43 crore people have received both doses of COVID vaccines, the official added.

# Mark Cavendish: 'I knew I could be top again'

**IONATHAN LIEW** 

LONDON, 21 NOV [THEGUARDIAN]: Mark Cavendish has just been out on his bike. He went out on his bike this morning, he'll be back out on his bike tomorrow morning, he went out on his bike this afternoon, and when training was over and he needed to get back to his hotel in order to do this interview, there was really only one method of transport that fitted the bill. The point - and admittedly, it's not a particularly earth-shattering one - is that he loves riding his bike. Anytime, anywhere, anyhow. It's his sanctuary, his freedom, his reason for being.

And so, while most of us conceive of professional cycling in terms of suffering - lung-busting sprints, brutal training rides, the tortuous mountain ascents of the Tour de France – Cavendish sees things differently. For all the sweat and pain he endures in the saddle, he knows from bitter experience that the real agony is not being able to ride at all.

Cavendish burst into our collective consciousness more than a decade ago, as the poster boy of British cycling's golden era. Whereas the likes of Sir Chris Hoy and Victoria Pendleton sought glory on the track, embracing a world of marginal gains, body-fat callipers and ultra-sensitive stopwatches, Cavendish opted for the romance of the road, winning classic races, such as Milan-San Remo in 2009 and the world championships in 2011. But his most cherished triumphs came in the Tour de France, the world's most prestigious cycling race, where he won an astonishing 30 stages between 2008 and 2016. "In the past, I felt like I could choose to win," he says now from his hotel room in Belgium, with just a hint of wistful yearning. "We were that dominant."

All of this on its own was enough to anoint him as one of the greatest sprinters of all time, and certainly one of Britain's greatest cyclists ever. And as his career went into sharp decline from 2017 onwards, it felt as though the story of Mark Cavendish had already been written, the journey com-

But Cavendish had other ideas. This summer, at the age of 36, he returned to the Tour in the unlikeliest of circumstances, winning four more stages to draw him level with the record of 34 set by the legendary Belgian cyclist Eddy it came, it was beautiful. It feels so mindset of thinking it's an excuse Merckx. The bare facts of this are much more personable. My whole is massively damaging. It doesn't

the context of a debilitating illness, a crippling bout of clinical depression, a public that had written him off and a sport that had largely forsaken him, it should probably go down as one of the most remarkable sporting comebacks of

The first time I met Cavendish was in Copenhagen in 2011, on the eve of the men's world championship road race. Back then, the boy racer had the world at his feet. Sponsors were forming an orderly line at his door. He was destined to be one of the stars of the impending London Olympics. And yet the man at the centre of this maelstrom was still essentially a boy from the Isle of Man: honed and hot-housed in British Cycling's centre of excellence in Manchester, unaccustomed to fame, bewildered by all the attention he seemed to be attracting. Around that time it was common to hear the sentiment - from people who barely knew him - that Cavendish was a supreme bike rider, but not necessarily the sort of guy you wanted to spend too much time

"Imagine me as a 20-year-old," he points out. "No media training, institutionalised, just thrust into the spotlight. But as a person, I've definitely grown up. I've got kids, I've got a wife, that just changes you. And I've seen the opposite side of the life spectrum. It makes you appreciate what you have."

Some things haven't changed: the devilish smile, the deeply analytical mind, the sincere attempt to give an honest question an honest answer, an extremely low tolerance for bullshit. But in the way that time and tide soften us all, so it has been with Cavendish's occasionally spiky public persona. He's a family man now, married to the model and author Peta Todd, with four children and a strong sense of responsibility not just to his loved ones but to the sport to which he has dedicated his life. His success this year was greeted not with a grudging respect, but with an outpouring of genuine affection from cycling aficionados and casual fans alike: the crowning triumph of an athlete who has walked through hell and come out the other side.

You get the sense that even at his advanced years, Cavendish still feels vaguely bemused by all this. "It's hard, because I wasn't expecting anything," he said of the reaction to his Tour success. "So when impressive enough. But set against career, people have said 'well just not help people get better. It

done'. But now people say 'thank makes people worse." you'. Thank you for what? Fucking hell. I'm proper touched by that."

Part of the reason Cavendish's tale strikes a chord with so many people is that he has had to battle through the same demons many of us face: ill health, self-doubt, the nagging sensation that on some level, the good times have gone. "The process of coming back, from not being able to walk to the bathroom, not being able to climb stairs, to going back to the Tour de France: everything leading up to this year makes a mountain stage piss easy, I tell you," he says with a chuckle. "You learn what actual suffering is."

But we should probably start at the beginning. And for Cavendish the beginning of this particular story comes in early 2017, when he started feeling an uncharacteristic fatigue while training. He was diagnosed with Epstein-Barr virus, one of the causes of glandular fever, which left him bedridden for weeks on end.

"Some people never get better," he says matter of factly. "I'd say it was two or three years before I didn't think about it any more. It's a coward illness. It comes when vou're stressed or run down."

And Cavendish was both. The pressure of staying at the top after years of frictionless dominance was beginning to take its toll. To make matters worse, his condition was misdiagnosed for months. "I was told I was medically all right to train again," he says. "And I wasn't. I still had Epstein-Barr in my system and the only thing that's proven to help is rest, pure rest. And I was doing the opposite, because I was told by medical professionals that I was fine. And then I stopped eating because then you have to get lighter, and it starts to mess with you. I developed clinical depression."

And so began the next challenge. As a young cyclist, Cavendish had always scoffed at sportspeople who cited mental health concerns as an excuse for underperformance. Now, barricaded in his Essex home, the walls began closing in. "Before I had depression, I was one of those people who didn't take mental health seriously," he says. "I really thought it was an excuse. Snap out of it, what's wrong with you? That's why I feel passionately about talking about it now. It was karma that I got it. That

Every sufferer of mental health issues experiences them in a different way. For some it's an intense, overpowering sadness, or a sort of chronic lethargy. For others it's a form of paralysis, of constant external judgment. For Cavendish, depression expressed itself as a kind of photographic negative. "It's nuts how fragile you get, how illogical," he remembers. "You don't think logically. You're not in control. It's not like you don't care. You don't care enough to think you don't care. There's nothing. It's empty. I cannot put it into a visual image, because it's the opposite of any visual image you can get. My family life suffered, my career suffered. I was struggling to get a contract. The kids were too young to understand, but it was hard for Peta, to be sure."

While Cavendish's life off the bike was falling apart, his career on it was taking a similar turn. In the 2019 season, for the first time in 16 years, he didn't win a single race. He didn't even make it to the start line for that year's Tour de France, left out from his Dimension Data team after a bitter disagreement with manager Doug Ryder. For a rider widely considered one of the legends of the sport, it was a cruel lesson in the brutality of professional cycling, an unsentimental game in which you are only as valuable as your next prize cheque.

"Yeah, it's horrible," he says. "It broke my heart how many despicable people are in this sport. And just the world in general."

By the end of 2020, it looked like Cavendish had finally run out of road. His new team Bahrain-McLaren decided not to renew his contract. Once again, he ended the year without a win. Even his most ardent supporters had given up hope and were now quietly urging him to walk away and leave his legacy intact. The phone stopped ringing. "People still wished me well, but they became fewer and fewer," he says. "That was the hardest thing."

With time running out to secure a contract for the 2021 season, his old team Deceunick Quick-Step threw him a lifeline, although it came with a few catches. He would be on a minimum-wage salary of about €40,000. He had to find his own sponsor. And, most crucially of all, the team already had a core few years seemed to lift off me." of accomplished sprinters, led by Three more wins follow, drawing the talented Irishman Sam Ben- him level with Merckx's record,

nett. Cavendish would have to although he misses the chance make do on a diet of smaller races in far-flung places, travelling on low-cost airlines and staying in budget hotels: no red carpet, no star billing, certainly no Tour de

Cavendish didn't mind. After all, he was just happy to be back on his bike. "No matter what position I've been in, I was always the rider who they could call up and I would race," he says. Gradually, he began to show some flickers of his old form. He won a few stages at the Tour of Turkey, his first wins in three years, and rode well at the Tour of Belgium. Still, it was only Turkey and Belgium. He still hadn't beaten anyone of note. And even when a knee injury to Bennett allowed Cavendish an unexpected shot at the Tour de France, nobody seriously expected him to do very much. Well, almost nobody. "I knew I was back," he says. "I felt like the old me. I knew I could be top again."

When you're a sprinter, there are maybe six or seven days of the Tour when the course is flat enough for you to realistically win the stage. The rest of the time you're simply surviving, hauling vourself up seemingly endless mountain climbs in the Alps and Pyrenees, trying to stay within the strict time limit. (Finish too far behind the race winner and you're out of the race, as Cavendish himself discovered in 2018.) "It's just suffering," he says. "It's horrible. There's no reward except the chance to do it again the next day."

Those passages are perhaps the most harrowing parts of Cavendish's new book, Tour de Force, which chronicles his comeback Tour in unstinting, granular detail. The most interesting are when he takes us into the middle of the professional peloton, its rivalries and tactics, the stress and the shoves and the ever-present threat of a disastrous crash. Cavendish has a freakish memory for detail bordering on the photographic. He still remembers every kink in the road, every bottleneck, the ideal line to take around every French

Most of all, he remembers the wins. That first win, a bunch sprint into the Breton town of Fougères on day four, reduces him to tears. "It was like a weight had gone and I couldn't stop crying," he writes. "Everything that had happened in the last

Ronaldo is the biggest problem for

Manchester United's next manager

to break it on the last day in Paris when he is narrowly beaten on the Champs-Elysées.

If there was a breathtaking efficiency to Cavendish's early career, the ruthless raw speed of a man simply too good for the field, then there was a certain fairytale quality to his comeback: one of the feelgood stories in an otherwise grim year for humanity. Luck played its part; it always does. But equally, he points out: "I knew how sick I'd been. I knew where I had to come back from. I signed for minimum wage, found a sponsor for the team. That's not the stars aligning. That's me moving the stars into the right position."

For the first time in a while Cavendish found himself not simply admired but loved, not that it really mattered to him either way. "To be liked or disliked is irrelevant," he says. "In sport you have a character, a style, but it doesn't translate to what you do as a person. You can fake it, and a lot of riders do. They play super-nice but they're actually assholes. I'd rather be the other way round. I'd rather be proud of the guy I see in the mirror than the guy I see on

Cavendish thought about retiring at the end of the season, but he's decided to push on for now, while the body still feels good, while there are still races out there to be won. Does beating Merckx's record mean anything to him? "Nah," he scoffs, and you believe him. Records, the cold accumulation of numbers and statistics, have never really moved him. Grievance - whether real or imagined - no longer acts as a source of fuel. "I've lost the desire to prove people wrong," he says. His historical legacy, which always used to motivate him, has pretty much been secured: "in terms of what I can physically do on a bike, there's nothing more I can do."

So why does he keep doing it? Well, it all comes back to the bike. The thrill of pure speed. The promise of the open road and the wind against his face. "It's the freedom," he explains. "You're not confined by an arena. You don't have to go to a training venue. There's no tee-time. You can leave your front door at what time you want and go for as long as you want, the speed you want, the distance you want. You can go out with someone or go oyster. That feeling is why I started it. And I still get that feeling."

# Manchester United confirm Solskjær exit and target interim for rest of season

[THEGUARDIAN]: chester United have confirmed the departure of Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and said they are looking to appoint an interim manager to the end of the season.

Solskjær's fate was sealed at an emergency board meeting on Saturday night after the team's 4-1 defeat at Watford.

United said: "Ole will always be a legend at Manchester United and it is with regret that we have reached this difficult decision. While the past few weeks have been disappointing, they should not obscure all the work he has done over the past three years to rebuild the foundations for long-term suc-

"Ole leaves with our sincerest thanks for his tireless efforts as manager and our very best wishes for the future. His place in the club's history will always be secure, not just for his story as a player, but as a great man and a manager who gave us many great moments. He will forever be wel-

Nov come back at Old Trafford as part of the Manchester United family.

"Michael Carrick will now take charge of the team for forthcoming games, while the club looks to appoint an interim manager to the end of the season."

Mauricio Pochettino,

the Paris Saint-Germain manager, could be a candidate to take over in the summer. He was coveted by United during his tenure at Tottenham but the timing was never right for him. He has, though, never played down the prospect of being interested in United and it is understood he would not do so now.

PSG, who have no desire to change manager mid-season, activated a one-year option on Pochettino's contract over the summer after he was linked with an emotional return to Spurs. His deal runs to June 2023 but an agreement allowing him to leave could be possible at the end of this campaign.

Despite PSG being 13 points clear at the top of Ligue 1, having played a game more than their closest challengers, Pochettino has been heavily criticised for his team's performances. He said last Wednesday in an interview given to newspapers including the Observer that he was still living in a hotel in Paris. with his wife, Karina, remaining in the family home in London.

Solskjær had been allowed to continue despite a 5-0 hammering by Liverpool and a meek 2-0 reverse against Manchester City, but the loss at Vicarage Road was a step too far for the club's

They felt Solskjær had earned the right to be given a final chance to turn things around after the most recent international break but concluded change was needed after the desired reaction was not seen at Watford. Solskjær's assistants Mike Phelan and Kieran McKenna are staying at the club.

United's minimum target is to qualify for the Champions League. The team are well off the title pace despite the summer

signings of Jadon Sancho, Cristiano Ronaldo and Raphaël Varane, who has barely played since early October because of injury, and are six points from fourth place.

Five goals let in against Liverpool followed two conceded in the comeback Champions League win over Atalanta and four at Leicester, raising serious questions about Solskjær's coaching. Although a rare clean sheet was then achieved in the win at Spurs, the failure to beat Atalanta or Manchester City in the following two games put him in a precarious position.

Solskiær took over in December 2018, initially on a caretaker basis, and last season the team finished second in the league and as runners-up in the Europa League. United's board spent

time discussing Solskjær's future after the defeat by Liverpool and stood by him after shows of support from Sir Alex Ferguson and the directors Ed Woodward and Richard Arnold.

### **JONATHAN WILSON** 21 LONDON,

[THEGUARDIAN]: So, what next? Ole Gunnar Solskjær has gone, and with him perhaps Manchester United's most visible problem, but a sentimental appointment wasn't the only issue holding the club back. United are institutionally dysfunctional and it will take more than a change of personnel in the dugout to change that.

Solskjær was a fine appointment as caretaker, perhaps the last good decision Ed Woodward made as United CEO. The return of a popular club legend, the sunshine man whose rays of decency could dispel the acrimony of the latter days of José Mourinho's reign, made sense. The problem was that rather than waiting until his shortterm contract expired, Woodward gave him the job on a permanent basis.

Even by the end of that season, as United won only two of their final 12 games, it was apparent a mistake had been made. Solskjær's teams lacked the sophis-

ticated organisation that differentiates the very best from the rest. The board could have made an assessment with the benefit of as much evidence as possible; instead they allowed themselves to be carried by emotion.

That lack of organ-

isation was never resolved. Solskjær could set up a team to defend deep and strike on the break, which brought a series of notable results in big games, but they struggled to break down well-organised defences. Of course, when you have a squad as loaded with talent as United's, you will score goals most of the time, but the draw at West Brom, the home defeat by Sheffield United, and perhaps most especially the draw against Villarreal in the Europa League final were indictments.

season, flaw was compounded by the signing of Cristiano Ronaldo, another nostalgia-driven investment, another reminder that United as a club see themselves as being less about the production of effective football than saleable content. This is a squad put together less for utility than celebrity.

Suddenly it was no

longer possible to sit deep and counter because there was a chugging goal-machine who had to be selected up front. With a great midfield, as Real Madrid showed with Casemiro, Luka Modric and Toni Kroos, it is (just about) possible to compensate for Ronaldo and his unwillingness or inability to press. Scott McTominay, Fred and Nemanja Matic do not constitute a great midfield.

The inertia of the United directors, their hope that everything would somehow come good, that a functioning team could somehow be constructed out of some famous people and some 1990s memes, means they have missed out on the best available candidate, Antonio Conte going the way of Thomas Tuchel and Mauricio Pochettino (when he joined Saint-Germain). United's statement said

they will appoint an interim manager until the end of the season. But then who? Zinedine Zidane, Pochettino, Brendan Rodgers, Julen Lopetegui? Would Laurent Blanc be up for it? Could Ralf Rangnick be persuaded to leave Lokomotiv Moscow and take over as sporting director?

And that is probably

the biggest issue. The United board might not be so susceptible to each passing tide if there were somebody there who grasped modern football. The most damaging aspect of the Solskjær appointment was probably that it meant plans for a high-profile sporting director were shelved. John Murtough was appointed as football director in March but his visible impact has been minimal. With a figure who could guide the overall outlook there might be a coherence to signings, rather than a series of half-baked half-theories vaguely pursued before the allure of nostalgia and glamour takes over again.

# Canada's 'crying shame': The fields full of children's bones

**BRANDI MORIN** 

SASKATCHEWAN, 21 Nov [ALJA-**ZEERA**]: On a windy, mid-September morning in the middle of Saskatchewan's picturesque Qu'Appelle Valley, Barry Kennedy, 62, stares tearfully at a field full of bones.

It contains the unmarked graves of First Nations children who died at the former Marieval Indian Residential School that once stood just metres east of the burial ground.

Barry, a member of Carry the Kettle First Nation, attended the Canadian government-funded and Catholic Church-administered school from the age of five to 11.

In June, the Cowessess First Nation announced that 751 unmarked graves - believed to be of both children and adults - had been found at the site

Barry calls it "a crying shame". "We were never believed ... Now, I think Canadian society is heartbroken that all these atrocities happened on their behalf."

Marieval was one of 139 Indian Residential Schools attended by an estimated 150,000 First Nations, Inuit and Metis (mixed race) children in Canada. The first school opened in 1831 and the last one closed in 1996. The institutions – intended to erode Indigenous culture, language and family and community ties - were notorious for the neglect and abuse of the children who were forced to attend them. Thousands of Indigenous children died at the schools, with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada conservatively estimating between 4,000 to 6,000 deaths.

In 2009, the Canadian government turned down requests from the TRC for \$1.5 million in funding to help identify the locations of burial sites of children at the former residential schools.

So some First Nations communities began using their own resources to hire specialists operating ground-penetrating radar to find the graves. At the end of May, Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation was the first to announce it had uncovered the remains of 215 children buried at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia.

Soon, more reports emerged of children's remains being found near former residential schools across the country, while other First Nations continue to search for their lost

THE DAY THEY CAME

Barry remembers the day they came for him and his sisters. He was

It was an autumn morning and he was at home in the cabin where he lived with his parents and seven siblings when all hell suddenly broke loose

The first thing he heard was his father shouting. Then, he saw them in the doorway – the Indian agent (a representative of the Canadian government on the reservation), a police officer, a priest and some others from the residential school.

His mother gathered the children and took them to a bedroom, telling them not to come out.

"She left and then all of this screaming took place. I don't even

remember the words, I just heard the screaming and crying from my mother," he says.

His parents were fighting to protect their children. But it was no use.

"My parents went to residential school. There was a reason for those screams because my mother knew what we were in for. There was no choice in the matter whatsoever. They had to, or they were going to

Barry shakes his head as his face turns red with anger. He doesn't even remember saying goodbye to his parents.

'PREDATORS, PLAIN AND SIM-

Along with three of his sisters, he was dragged to a waiting vehicle and thrown onto the backseat. He says it felt like the longest drive of his life. He had no idea then where he was going or why.

"We were all crying and huddled up together trying to console one another, trying to hide behind one another," he says.

When they finally pulled up near a large brick building that resembled a cathedral, Barry's sisters were removed from the vehicle. They would be staying in the school's girls' residence. He was driven on to the boys' quarters, where a priest pulled him out of the car.

He was overcome with fear, he says, and tried to run away. But he was caught by the scruff of his neck and sent to line up with other boys for processing. He was stripped and deloused, his head was shaven and he was forced into a cold shower by pale-faced women dressed in black from head to toe. "Someone was grabbing you, kicking you during this process," he says.

Then he was given some bedding and clothes and sent to a large room lined with cots.

That night, as he slept alongside 100 or so other boys, he heard strange sounds. He understood then that monsters lurked in the dark. He soon discovered who those mon-

Staff known as "night-keepers" were assigned to watch over the children as they slept. "When that door would open and the light would cast upon the dorm, you could hear the whimpering begin," he says. The night-keepers would prowl the rows of beds and molest the children.

"I'll never forget the smell," he says, choking up. Boys would soil their underwear out of fear, he explains. Others would do it on purpose to try to deter their molesters from abusing them that night.

For the six years that he was there, Barry was regularly molested. There are tears in his eyes and anger in his voice as he says, "They were

predators, plain and simple." 'INTRODUCED TO DEATH'

As he walks through the field of graves now dotted with rows of solar lamps and the teddy bears and colourful plastic flowers brought by mourners over the past few months, another traumatic memory resurfac-

He was eight years old when he was woken early one morning and told to put on the robes he wore when working as an altar boy, help-

ing the clergy during church services. A priest took him and some other altar boys to a spot behind the church. There, they saw a small figure wrapped in white cloth beside a freshly dug grave.

"We were forced to assist in performing the last rights to an individual." He pauses to point at a spot in the distance. "It was over there somewhere ... I don't know whether it was a boy or a girl because they were just wrapped in cloth. That was the first time I was introduced ... to death," he says.

When the first announcement came about the unmarked graves at Kamloops Indian Residential School, it hit Kennedy hard. Then, just a few weeks later, the bodies were discovered at Marieval.

As a survivor, Barry is used to processing difficult emotions. But that doesn't make it any easier, and sometimes, he says, he just shuts down.

"I know after today, I'll probably just like get real tired. My body gets real sore. I just prefer to be alone. And I stay at home for a few days. My wife is good, she notices, and she helps me," he says.

'HOW DO YOU FORGIVE?'

There was a time when the trauma would overwhelm him and he'd turn to alcohol to disassociate from the hauntings of his past. His mother and stepfather would pray for him patiently from afar, he says. He credits them with guiding him back to his Anishinaabe way of life and credits his culture with saving him from a life of hardship.

Barry went on to become a father of nine and to serve two terms as the Chief of Carry the Kettle First Nation.

"A lot of people don't make it out alive with their trauma," he reflects. "Me, I walk a fine line."

These days, that fine line is between healing the past and living in the present. Part of that involves working towards forgiveness, but it

"How do you forgive?" he asks. "If someone can tell me how then please do! How can you reconcile this? It was done to us, to children!

"This truth needs to get out. There are some Canadians that say, 'Oh, why don't you guys quit crying?' That's the biggest insult of it," he

He hopes survivors are given the opportunity to continue to educate others about residential schools and their repercussions. "To give guidance to ensure that it doesn't happen again. Things just need to be made right. Who better to right the wrongs, to tell them than the people that actually survived?"

'NO INDIANS ALLOWED'

To the west across the prairie landscape, at the threshold of the Rocky Mountains in Calgary, Alberta, 79-year-old Ursuline Redwood, another survivor of Merieval, shares her story for the first time.

For her, forgiveness was an escape from a prison of pain and the captors who stole her from her parents when she was a child.

She remembers her spirit breaking as her braids were cut off on her first day at the school.

softly as her hands shake.

"I was traumatised because I was just like a zombie and doing whatever they were telling me to do."

Although she didn't understand why she was being mistreated, it wasn't her first experience of racism.

She recalls how, when she was five years old, she had joined her parents on a shopping trip to a town near Cowessness. She had needed the toilet, so her mother took her to a public outhouse behind a store. But then she stopped suddenly to read a wooden board with black writing on

"And my mother just said, 'We can't go in there."

She remembers feeling confused. "I couldn't forget that. I can see the writing to this day even though I didn't know what it meant at the time. It said, 'No Indians Allowed'."

In the end, her mother took her to use the toilet in a Chinese restaurant that was "always good to the Native people".

'FEAR AND MISTRUST'

When, during the summer, she heard about the remains of children being discovered across Canada, she spent time alone to grieve. She felt heavy, she says, and had to stop herself from falling apart.

"You know, I pushed a lot of stuff out of my mind," she reflects, before falling quiet for a moment. She takes a deep breath and cries.

Eventually, she describes how she woke one morning in the dorm at Marieval she shared with dozens of other girls, including her cousin, Joanie, who slept in the bed next to hers. Their beds were so close that if they reached out in the night they could touch each other.

"She was around nine or 10," she says of Joanie. "The nun would come around with this really loud clapper in her hand. If you didn't wake up with that clapper then she'd get a bell and she'd ring it really hard ... I remember my cousin wouldn't get up. I was pushing her and telling her, 'Get up. Get up."

Ursuline assumed Joanie wasn't feeling well. She went to the bathroom to wash. When she came back, Joanie was still in her bed.

"There was a nun there. And she got another nun and they were both standing there and they told me, 'Take your clothes and go dress in the bathroom," she says.

She knew that if she didn't obey their orders she would be beaten with a strap or endure some other form of punishment.

"It was always fear and mistrust and I never expected love or understanding from them. I just thought, you know, they were all cold-hearted people because they never showed emotion," Ursuline reflects.

That day, as she attended her lessons, went to church and completed her chores, she thought that her cousin must have been very ill.

"I found out, later on, she was dead," she says, her voice breaking. Ursuline was never told what

had happened to her, but she remembers that she had a cough in the days before she died and suspects it might have been tuberculo-

The Dutch government is

now planning to ban unvac-

cinated people from entering

some venues, the so-called 2G

pizza shop owner told the AFP

In The Hague on Saturday, a

"I was very scared," she says, sis. The nuns never offered her any medical care, she says.

> That night, and the nights that followed, she was terrified to sleep next to her cousin's empty bed.

"Can you imagine how I felt going to sleep that night? I remember I used to cover my head with the blankets because I was afraid and I wasn't old enough to understand," she says.

She never learned what happened to Joanie's body. "She could be buried somewhere there," she says, her shoulders dropping.

'THE HURT WILL ALWAYS BE THERE'

Ursuline pledged to stay away from her home reserve, Cowessness First Nation, for as long as she could. In fact, she left there 36 years ago with her children, fleeing an abusive relationship.

She enrolled in college, earned a social work diploma and started working with troubled Indigenous youth. Helping others helped her to heal, she says.

"I think I was healing along with those kids," she says with a smile.

Her son, Kirby Redwood, 56, admires his mothers' courage and devotion to working to stop the cycle of trauma. But he felt her uneasiness growing up, he says. She toiled through a lot of ugliness that affected his generation, as well.

Kirby followed in his mother's footsteps, becoming a social worker himself. He is now the CEO of Miskanawah Community Services Association, an Indigenous-led social services agency in Calgary.

"It was years. Years even for me to heal from intergenerational trauma. But you know, everyone always attributes the trauma to residential schools, but it's the whole colonial violence, too," he explains, his long braided hair a symbol of his culture that was banned in the residential schools.

Kirby has multiple degrees and is a well-respected leader in his field. But it wasn't always this way. Learning to navigate the white man's education system was daunting at first,

'There'd be times where I was sitting in class learning and I was having a complete panic attack, wondering what am I doing here? I don't belong here. I'm stupid. I must be the dumbest person here in this class."

He returned to his culture for help, which he says empowered him

"Another one of the ways that I healed was formal education because I knew that it would be the kind of change that needed to happen. We needed to be able to walk in both worlds in a strong way."

Ursuline points out that the road to healing isn't easy but turning back to Indigenous culture helps.

'You know the hurt will always be there and the memories, but I'm a forgiving person," she says. "There is hope. Stay connected to your culture and elders and learn as much you can about your heritage. Mostly your language because that's something a lot of us lost."

France to send special forces to Guadeloupe after looting, arson

PARIS, 21 Nov [AFP]: France is sending dozens of special forces to restore order in the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe following rioting. looting, and gunfire directed at police officers during protests against COVID-19 measures.

Speaking to reporters on Saturday, French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said France will send about 50 members of the GIGN and RAID elite tactical forces of the gendarmerie and police to the overseas territory, where stores have been looted, shots fired at police, and 31 people were arrested overnight.

The extra forces will increase the number of police and gendarmes available in Guadeloupe to 2,250, Darmanin said.

"The first message is that the state will stand firm." he said.

Darmanin said following an emergency meeting Saturday in Paris that "some shots have been fired against police officers" in Guadeloupe and there has been looting. Videos posted on social media showed that street equipment, cars and some buildings have been set on fire. French media said several buildings in the city center of Pointe-a-Pitre, the island's largest city, have been destroyed.

The deployment comes after days of unrest with protesters gathering in several towns in defiance of an overnight curfew imposed to quell the violence. "The night was very turbulent," a police source told the AFP news agency. The security forces recorded "some 20 incidents of looting or attempted robbery" in the seaside towns of Pointea-Pitre and Le Gosier, including at a jewellery shop, a bank, a betting shop and a shopping centre, the source said.

In the town of Saint-Francois to the east, "gendarmes coming out of the station were threatened by blazing projectiles". "Firearms were used against police forces in four different areas" across the island, the source added, with one officer slightly wounded after a stone hit him in the face.

# COVID protests in Netherlands turn violent for a second night

AMSTERDAM, 21 NOV [ALJA-**ZEERA**]: Five police officers were injured in the Netherlands and at least 40 people were arrested across three provinces as violent protests against COVID restrictions continued for a second night.

Officers in riot gear charged groups of demonstrators in The Hague late on Saturday night, with protesters pelting police with stones and fireworks, while a water cannon was used to put out a pile of blazing bicycles at a busy intersection.

Five officers were hurt in The Hague, one of them seriously, a police statement said. Police carried out charges on horseback and arrested 19 people, one of them for throwing a rock through the windshield of a passing ambulance.

Another 13 arrests were reported by police in two towns in the southern province of Limburg, while disturbances were also reported in the northern province of Flevoland. Eight people were arrested in the town of Urk, where a COVID-19 testing station was torched earlier this year.

Meanwhile, angry fans disrupted two football matches being played behind closed doors because of coronavirus rules, according to Dutch media.

The first division matches in the western city of Alkmaar and the eastern city of Almelo, between AZ-NEC and Heracles-Fortuna Sittard had to be stopped for several minutes, Dutch media said.

The unrest came a day after police opened fire on protesters in Rotterdam amid what the port city's mayor called "an orgy of violence" that broke out at a protest against COVID-19 restrictions.

At least three people were wounded and 51 arrested in

It was one of the worst outbreaks of violence in the Netherlands since coronavirus measures were first imposed last year. In January, rioters also attacked police and set fires on the streets of Rotterdam after a curfew came into force.

Justice Minister Ferd Grapperhaus condemned the events. "The riots and extreme vi-

olence against police officers, riot police and firefighters last night in Rotterdam are disgusting to see," he said in a state-

in our society, but what we saw last night is simply criminal behaviour. It has nothing to do with demonstrating," he added.

An independent investigation into the shootings by police was opened, as is the case whenever Dutch police use their weapons. The Netherlands reimposed

some lockdown measures last

news agency that police had dragged several people out of "Protesting is a great right his shop, smashed the glass in its front door and hit him on the head for "no reason". "These people out here are

> "They are angry about it." AFP correspondents reported seeing police arrest sever-

protesting about 2G and the

lockdown," Ferdi Yilmaz said.

weekend for an initial three al people in the working-class weeks in an effort to slow a re-Schilderswijk neighbourhood surgence of coronavirus contaof The Hague, with plainclothes gion, but daily infections have officers at one point dragging a remained at their highest levels woman out of a car. since the start of the pandemic.

In a statement, The Hague police said the five injured officers included one who was taken to hospital suffering concussion and two others who suffered hearing damage from loud fireworks.

A rock thrown by rioters smashed the window of a passing ambulance carrying a patient,

Earlier on Saturday, peaceful protests involving thousands of people opposed to the coronavirus curbs took place in several cities.

In Amsterdam, several thousand protesters showed up for a march around the city's central Dam square, despite one group having cancelled their rally because of the previous night's violence.

The march remained peaceful, monitored by a heavy police pres-

Another thousand marched

through the southern city of Breda near the Belgian border, carrying banners with slogans such as "No Lockdown". Organisers said they opposed

to exclude the unvaccinated from bars and restaurants. "People want to live, that's why

Prime Minister Mark Rutte's plans

we're here," said organiser Joost But "we're not rioters. We come

in peace," he said. Around him, the mood was fes-

tive, with some protesters dancing behind floats carrying DJs, dubbed "party buses".

# 'Jai Bhim' director conveys regret

CHENNAI, NOV 21 (PTI): Actor Suriya starrer flick 'Jai Bhim' director Tha Se Gnanavel on Sunday said there was absolutely no intention of hurting any particular community and expressed regret to those who were offended.

'Jai Bhim' that was released on November 1 in languages including Tamil and Telugu kicked up a row in Tamil Nadu with the Vannivar Sangam and members of the community alleging that it had portrayed them in bad light. The movie was released in OTT platform Amazon-Prime Video.

Emphasising that there was not even a "wee little bit of thought to cause affront to any individual or a community," in the making of the film, Gnanavel said, "I convey my heartfelt regret to those offended and anguished."

The film director also expressed regret for the difficulty caused to Suriya in the wake of the controversy, who is the lead actor and Jai Bhim producer.

The crux of the row is the alleged vilification of the Vanniyar community by naming a wicked police sub inspector as 'Guru' (Gurumurthy) and showcasing the raging fire pot symbol of the community in a calendar, in the background, in one of the scenes and the foreground had the police SI who tortured the innocent tribal man to

"I did not know that a calendar hung in the background will be understood as a reference to a community. It is not our intention to make it a symbol of reference to a particular community and it was only to reflect the period, the year 1995," Gnanavel claimed in a statement.

During filming or post-production, the calendar footage, that appears for a few seconds did not catch their attention, he

Also, even before the film premiered on Amazon Prime, it was exhibited for several people.

"Had it come to our notice during that time, we would have changed it before its release." After they "got to know about the calendar in the background through social media," after its release, all efforts were made to change it on the following day morning itself, he said.

"As the calendar in the background was changed even before anyone demanded it, I believed that everyone will understand that we had no ulterior motive," the director said. "It is unfortunate to ask Suriya to own up responsibility. As the director, this is a matter I alone has to take responsibil-

The film, though based on a true in-



cident of custodial torture and death of a 'Koravar' tribal man in 1995 in Tamil Nadu it had elements of fiction. The flick portrayed the tribal man as belonging to the Irula tribes. The names of people connected to the real life incident, like that of Justice Chandru who had argued the case in the Madras High Court as an advocate were retained.

Some names like that of Rajakannu's wife (original name Parvathi, changed to Sengenni) and the police sub inspector who tortured, leading community's revered symbol of raging fire to the death of the tribal man was changed from Anthonysamy to Guru (Gurumurthy). The calendar that was replaced had an image of Goddess Lakshmi. The Vanniyar Sangam had on November 15 sent a legal notice to makers 'Jai Bhim' alleging that the flick tarnished the reputation of Vanniyar community and sought an unconditional apology from them.

pot, an apology for "damning, tarnishing and damaging the reputation" of the community, desisting from similar "malicious" moves and payment of Rs 5 crore in damages were the demands made in that legal

Vanniyars, or Vanniya Kula Kshatriyas, a Most Backward Community in Tamil Nadu are predominant in the northern districts of the state. The Vanniyar San-Removal of references to Vanniyar gam's symbol is also the raging fire pot.

# Big Pic

LIVE FROM NEW YORK! Rapper Saweetie arrives at NBC Studios ahead of her musical performance on Saturday Night Live.

# **Britney Spears slams Christina Aguilera for** avoiding questions on conservatorship

Pop star Britney Spears, who doesn't shy away from speaking her mind, called out fellow singer Christina Aguilera after she dodged a question concerning the end of Spears' 13-year-long conservatorship that gave her father legal control of her life. Britney Spears took to her Instagram Stories and posted a video of Aguilera, who refused to answer a question about Spears during a recent interview. The video is from the red carpet at Thursday's Latin Grammy Awards when Aguilera was asked by a reporter if she has been in touch with Spears following the termination of her conservatorship.

Aguilera can be seen frowning in the video, telling the reporters that she can't answer the question before walking away and adding, "But I'm happy for her."

Britney Spears criticised Christina Aguilera writing, "I love and adore everyone who supported me... but refusing to speak when you know the truth, is equivalent to a lie! 13 years being in a corrupt abusive system yet why is it such a hard topic for people to talk about ??? I"m the one who went through it!. All the supporters who spoke up and supported me, thank you... yes I do mat-

Britney Spears and Aguilera rose to fame together as child stars on Disney's The Mickey Mouse Club, on which they co-starred from 1993-1994. As teenagers, they both catapulted to international superstardom at the same time, when female pop singers were rising in the age of "90s boy bands, alongside Mandy Moore and Jessica Simpson.

Following Britney Spears' bombshell testimony in June about what she endured during her 13-year-old conservatorship, Aguilera lent her support to Britney Spears by posting a statement, which said, in part, "These past few days I've been thinking about Britney and everything she is going through...It is unacceptable that any woman, or human, wanting

to be in control of their own destiny might not be allowed to live as they

While Aguilera was avoiding questions about Britney Spears during the event, singer-actor Lady Gaga, who was at another red carpet event on Thursday, the Los Angeles premiere of her film House Of Gucci, spoke at length about Britney Spears when asked about her freedom.

Britney Spears posted about Lady Gaga to thank her for her words. She wrote on her IG Story, "Thank you Lady Gaga for genuinely taking your time to say something so kind. You made me cry! I love you."

In the video posted by Spears, the Star Is Born actor said that the way Britney Spears was treated in the business was wrong. She also took a moment to comment on the negative treatment of women in the music business overall. "I think that she will forever be an inspiration to women," Gaga said in the video that was shared by Spears.

After Britney Spears posted about Gaga, the star responded by posting a photo on her Instagram Story, writing, "Love you @britneyspears. Live your best life. I prayed for the legal system to treat you like a person. You"ve now changed the course for women in this industry forever. You stood up for yourself and were so brave. Thank you."

Lady Gaga also spoke to Variety at the premiere of her Oscar-buzzy film. When asked about Spears, she said she would want to collaborate with her. "Of course I would!" Gaga exclaimed on the

"Britney is, she's a woman in this business that showed a lot of power in her sexuality, even in her youth, in a way that, I think for me as a young woman, was just so inspiring and empowering," Lady Gaga told Variety.

"And I'd like to say this, truly - we can all root for her, but the person who changed her life was her. So this change that's happening for her, it happened because of her, I believe. I'm excited for her future and I wish her all the best," she added.

Britney Spears' conservatorship came to an end recently when Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Brenda Penny terminated the court-ordered arrangement after a contentious, drawn-out legal battle.

Britney Spears was first placed under conservatorship in 2008 with her father, Jamie Spears, overseeing his daughter by the terms of the court-ordered arrangement

The next hearing is set for January 19 to address pending accounting and

other lingering issues.

The full moon in Taurus is all kinds of positive for you. We're talking hope and infinite possibilities, as well as new beginnings on both the personal and professional front. Through your passion and perseverance you have reached a certain stage in your life, and it's now time to move to the next level. So, what do you envision for the rest of your life? Think of the next six months as an important period of laying down a solid foundation.

### **TAURUS:**

The full moon and eclipse are in your sign, Taurus, which means you need to be a little more cautious than the others. Everything is likely to be heightened at this time, and ecstasy could make way for melancholy within seconds. It's important that you stay centred at this time; that you become an observer of the ebb and flow that's arising from deep within you. Spending time in solitude is the best way to cope with all the melodrama that is synonymous with la luna's stages.

Today you're being asked to meditate on the Hermetic principle "As above, so below", which signifies that the mind and the world are merely reflections of another. With the

power vested in you by the Universe, send out an intention about the life you want to create and use your resources to begin taking a step in the right direction. Nothing too drastic, though.

### CANCER:

Don't you love how everything just comes together in the end? This holds true for where you are, Cancer. The full moon is bringing with it hope, optimism and positivity. Not to mention, revealing your true path. Yes, this is the opening you have been praying for all along! So, receive what the Universe has in store with openness and surrender.

Today, you're being asked to contemplate on Buddhist teacher and nun Pema Chödrön's words, "Letting there be room for not knowing is the most important thing of all. When there's a big disappointment, we don't know if that's the end of the story. It may just be the beginning of a great adventure." That eclipses are synonymous with mayhem is not news to you, Leo. It's just that you didn't expect Satan to play mischief today. The good thing is, you are prepared. You are prepared to become the eye of the storm and receive major downloads on where it is that you need to go next. VIRGO:

Yesterday is a thing of the past. Tomorrow is yet to come. Today is all you have. So make it count, Virgo. The full moon is bringing with it new beginnings in the realm of you career and finances. But it is not something that will be handed to you on a silver platter. You will have to hustle hard for what you want and hustle even harder once you've made the opportunity yours. LIBRA:

There are all kinds of love, Libra. From holiday romances to summer flings, and while you see the allure in all of them you are looking for something long-lasting. So, set your intentions with clarity, wild one, and let the Universe meet you where you are. Something tells you are going to be pleasantly surprised in the weeks to come. There's just one catch, though: you will have to leave your judgments at the door.

An aggressive show of strength may make your ego feel good, but it won't help you achieve anything in the real world. Coupled with the full moon energy, it is 100 percent likely to lead to chaos. So, take a step. Watch both your words and your actions. Most importantly, watch your triggers, Scorpio. **SAGITTARIUS:** 

This weekend is all about you and your good vibe tribe. For some of you, a birthday, an anniversary, baby shower or a celebration may be on the cards. Others may be planning something more intimate, like a dinner and movie night with your closest crew. On the professional front, it's a time of completion. A grand finale, if you must! The work that you have dedicated to has now reached its final stage and is ready to be shared with the world.

Is the gift of creativity limited to the canvas or is the canvas of our life the true test of our creativity? Something to think about as you sip and swirl your favourite vintage wine. Today, you're being asked to harness your artistic juices to visualise in HD the life your see for yourself and begin to act like you have already achieved the desired intention. Walk like you've made it! Take like you've made it! Begin to embody the changes you're on your way to manifesting. Something tells us, your physical existence

### will soon begin to reflect this reality. **AQUARIUS:**

Psychologist Carl Jung once said "Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves." Uhoh! The tea has been spilled, Aquarius. Instead of shying from those feeling of anger and distrust, sit down with them. See what they have to say. When you let go of your resistance, newer layers of your being begin to reveal themselves to. What the full moon is urging you to focus on: book an appointment with your therapist and get down and dirty with the shadow work.

### Pisces:

This is the last leg of a very tiring yet fulfilling journey. The hardest part is over, Pisces, and you have successfully overcome all obstacles. While this is a time to reap the rewards of your efforts, it is also a sign of a lot more responsibilities coming your way because you have proved yourself. What the Universe wants you to master at this moment: the art and craft of prioritising. Knowing what can and cannot be outsourcing \*and\* allowing yourself to ask for the help that is required will help you reach greater heights.

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