

# NEWSREEL WORLD

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Programmanus av Artemis Irvine

### **ALANNA LESLIE:**

Hi, I'm Alanna Leslie and welcome to Newsreel World.  
Today we're talking about Kenya, Hong Kong and India.

But first...

The Canadian province of British Columbia has started a three-year trial decriminalising small amounts of hard drugs.

Under the new law, adults can possess up to 2.5 g of drugs such as heroin, cocaine and MDMA.

While those substances will remain technically illegal, people found in possession of small quantities of drugs won't be arrested or charged. Instead, they will be offered information on available health and social services.

To tell us more, here's Katy Davis in Vancouver.

### **KATY DAVIS:**

I'm walking along East Hastings Street in Vancouver, in an area of the city called the Downtown East Side. I'm heading to a space that's a key part of this community, the home of VANDU.

VANDU is an organisation made up of drug users and former users who are working to improve the lives of users, their families and communities.

The VANDU building is a hub of activity. In their office, I meet Vince, a community organiser at VANDU.

### **VINCE:**

*I think talking to the VANDU membership, it was a feeling of a little bit, you know, too little, too late and it's taken the government a very long time to actually respond and, you know, understand the issue, the severity of the crisis.*

**KATY DAVIS:**

Dr. Lindsey Richardson is an Associate Professor at the University of British Columbia and she teaches on the university's drugs and society course.

**DR LINDSEY RICHARDSON:**

*It's long been recognised that there are harms from drug use, but then there are another set of harms that exist around the enforcement of drug laws. And so decriminalisation is trying to address that second set of harms. And that's because criminalising people who use drugs has really significant negative impacts.*

**KATY DAVIS:**

I spoke to some of Dr. Lindsey's students to hear how they think the exemption will affect young people in British Columbia. This is Armaan.

**ARMAAN:**

*I think that overall we've gone from kind of demonising drug usage, and one kind of shift I'm seeing lately is that we're moving towards treating it in a much more humane kind of manner. It's not that we're saying, "Oh, everyone, you can use drugs, it's fine now." It's more so saying there are people that are really suffering right now and these are people that need our help, our support.*

**KATY DAVIS:**

But some believe the new exemption falls short. Certain experts, as well as the VANDU community, have questioned the 2.5 g limit, saying this isn't enough to account for the habits of many drug users. And there's one key issue Dr. Lindsey and others feel the exemption doesn't tackle.

**DR LINDSEY:**

*This doesn't do anything to address the drug supply. And in Vancouver and in much of Canada and North America, we know that the drug supply is adulterated with other substances. We really need to create a safe and regulated and accessible drug supply.*

**KATY DAVIS:**

*So what would you – here at VANDU – what would you like to happen next? What more needs to be done?*

**VINCE:**

*So I think, you know, whenever there's a win, you don't rest on your laurels, right? The next step for us is actually seeing if decriminalisation will actually be practised, right? To continue to monitor police behaviour will be, I think, a huge task for the community.*

**KATY DAVIS:** This is Katy Davis reporting for Newsreel World in Vancouver, Canada.

**ALANNA:** Thanks Katy.

**ALANNA:**

A British horror film based on the children's books Winnie the Pooh has had its screening cancelled in Hong Kong.

Websites selling tickets to 'Winnie the Pooh: Blood and Honey' say technical problems prevented it from going ahead, but many think that the Chinese government is involved.

Critics suspect that it's not the film's gory violence that has caught the censors' eye. Memes of Winnie the Pooh have become a popular way of mocking President Xi Jinping, whose appearance has been compared to that of the chubby Pooh bear.

**ALANNA:**

Millions of fish have died in a river in New South Wales, Australia, as a result of dangerously low levels of oxygen in the water.

Scientists say the mass deaths were caused in part by flooding, which brought an excess of biological material, like leaves and branches, into the river and increased the amount of bacteria there competing for oxygen.

This problem was made worse by the subsequent heat wave in the region, because the hotter water is the less oxygen it can hold.

Now the authorities face the huge task of clearing the fish which have begun to rot. One resident said, “You can just imagine leaving a fish in your kitchen to rot with all the doors shut and no air conditioner, and we've got millions of them.”

**ALANNA:**

That was a short clip of Napambana by Tanzanian artist Zuchu.

Napambana is Swahili for “I fight”. In the music video, Zuchu plays a woman living in a rural part of Tanzania who is struggling to make money so travels to a city where she is forced into sex work.

Zuchu was the first East African female artist to reach 1 million subscribers on YouTube, and has already been nominated for five awards this year.

**ALANNA:**

Blind and visually impaired children across the globe are learning to teach themselves braille for the first time, thanks to an invention called “Annie”, designed by four Indian engineers.

The device is named after Anne Sullivan, who was the teacher and carer of Helen Keller, the famous deaf-blind author and disability rights activist.

**Ayushi Shah** spoke to the inventors of Annie to find out more.

***ANNIE:** Hi there, I'm Annie.*

**AYUSHI SHAH:**

What do you think of when you hear the name, “Annie”? For blind children in India, this friendly name is a glimmer of hope.

For these kids, braille education offers literacy, employability and a path to a life of independence. Broadly speaking, braille is a special way of writing that uses bumps and raised dots on paper. People who are visually impaired move their fingers across the page to feel these especially arranged dots and read.

Visually impaired students rely on their teachers to hold their hand to teach braille. This means that in a class of five, each student only gets an average of eight minutes of the teacher's time during a 40 minute session.

In 2014, four young bright minds from a college in India came up with an innovative solution to address this problem. While still pursuing their studies, they co-founded Thinkerbell Labs and built Annie, the world's first self-learning braille literacy device.

***ANNIE:** Welcome to the main menu, what would you like to do today? English braille grade one.*

**AYUSHI SHAH:**

Made in India, it allows children between the age of four and 15 to learn braille on their own and it can also be used in schools.

Aman Srivastava, the co-founder, tells me more about Annie.

**AMAN SRIVASTAVA:**

*What Annie does is it helps automate the aspects which are repetitive, which can be done again and again and takes care of those while helping the teacher focus on the areas which need more improvement and which need more focus.*

**AYUSHI SHAH:**

I speak to Prathamesh Sinha, a 12-year-old student who has been using Annie for the last 3 years, to better understand how it works.

**PRATHAMESH SINHA:**

*Annie taught me braille and it kept me engaged by educational games. Nowadays as well, I practise braille after my studies on Annie. That's why Annie is my best companion, and learning braille on Annie is very easy and fun.*



**AYUSHI SHAH:**

While inventions like Annie are helping the visually impaired community, there is a lot more that needs to be done. I ask Upasana Makati, who runs “White Print” India’s first braille lifestyle magazine. What are the challenges that need to be addressed to empower the community?

**UPASANA MAKATI:**

*I believe education and the availability of accessible educational resources is what we really, really need to focus on.*

**AYUSHI SHAH:**

Inventions like Annie are empowering a new generation of visually impaired individuals to become more confident, independent and self-assured.

This is Ayushi Shah reporting from Newsreel World from Mumbai in India.

**ALANNA LESLIE:** Thanks Ayushi. That’s all from me today. Speak to you soon, bye!