

# Britney Spears says fans 'saved' her life during conservatorship

Pop star Britney Spears has addressed her fans directly for the first time since a judge ended the controversial guardianship that has controlled her life for the past 13 years. In a video posted to Instagram late Tuesday, Spears, wearing low-rise black shorts and a flowered crop top, thanked fans and the #FreeBritney movement for raising awareness while her "voice was muted and threatened for so long." "You guys rock," she said. "I honestly think you guys saved my life."

Legions of fans had celebrated with cheers and showers of pink confetti last Friday in front of the downtown Los Angeles court house where a judge terminated the guardianship first imposed in 2008. "That's a really long time to be in a situation you don't want to be in," the 39-year-old said in the two-minute video filmed on a sun-drenched patio. Speculation had abounded over the star's future plans. She has not given an interview in years, rarely makes public appearances and last performed in October 2018 — bound as she was to a lifestyle largely governed by her father, Jamie.

## Family should be 'in jail'

In her video, she said she was now appre-



Supporters of the FreeBritney movement celebrate following a court decision ending her conservatorship outside the Stanley Mosk courthouse in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

ciating for the "little things," like "seeing cash for the first time, being able to buy candles"—adding she wanted to be "an advocate for people with real disabilities and real illnesses." "I'm just grateful honestly for each day and

being able to have the keys to my car and being able to be independent like a woman and owning an ATM card," she said. With the ruling, the "Baby One More Time" singer regained the majority of control over a multi-

million-dollar estate that had been managed by the conservatorship, which she has described as abusive.

In the caption to her post, Spears hit out at family members and "all the bad things they did to me which they should all be in jail for." "It still blows my mind every day I wake up how my family and the conservatorship were able to do what they did to me... it was demoralizing and degrading!!!!" Most of what the public knows about Spears—who soared to global fame as a teenager before a highly publicized mental breakdown saw her become a paparazzi punch bag—comes from her eccentric Instagram account.

For years, the bubbly star has posted regularly, sometimes uploading videos of herself twirling or doing dance routines, other times waxing poetic on hopes and dreams. Another post on Tuesday hinted at new plans the recently engaged Spears may be harboring "I'm thinking about having another baby!!!" the mother-of-two shared with her 36.4 million Instagram followers, over 1.3 million of whom cheered her on with a "like." — AFP

## Adele returns with new ferocity on '30' album

Six years after Adele's last blockbuster exploration of heartache and loss, everyone's favorite ugly-cry balladeer is back, channeling her vocal fireworks to lay bare the emotional torture-and catharsis-of divorce. In line with her three other records the British artist's highly anticipated new studio album "30," out today, digs into romantic pangs with the heart-piercing high notes set to stirring piano arrangements that have made her a household name.

The album's first single "Easy On Me" has reigned over the US and British singles charts since its debut four weeks ago, proving the enduring strength of Adele's prowess as a hit-maker with broad appeal. Her record drops after years without headlines and a stretch of musical silence, defying pop's current standards of stream-friendly quick hits and an urgent social media presence. But Adele's announcement this fall that a new album would soon soundtrack break-ups and wistful contemplation the world round set off a media blitz, including Vogue and Rolling Stone cover

stories along with a primetime Oprah Winfrey interview spliced into a televised concert that drew more than 10 million stateside viewers.

In the years since the 15-time Grammy winner's last album "25"—which included the megahit "Hello"—Adele's relationship of nearly a decade with Simon Konecki, including two years of marriage, dissolved. She sifted through the fallout of that traumatic period for "30," probing its implications for her own life but also for her nine-year-old son with Konecki, Angelo. "There were moments when I was writing the record or I would listen back to something and be like, 'That might be a bit too private, that might be a bit too about myself to put out,'" she told Winfrey. "But nothing is as scary as what I've been through over the last two, three years behind closed doors. So I'm not frightened about what people may or might not know."



Adele and Oprah Winfrey

## 'I want to live'

While the 12-track "30" does include textbook Adele—those slow, mournful tales of feeling jilted and alone—she isn't hitting replay on her previous work. The new album sees the now 33-year-old megastar marry her classic, piano-driven pop with new inflections of Motown and reggae, Afrobeats and dance music. But it's Adele's honed writing delivered in her smoky, volcanic range that does the heavy lifting on "30."

"They say to play hard, you work hard, find balance in the sacrifice," she belts in "I Drink Wine," a track that progresses from a 1970s-esque groove to a gospel choir-backed meditation on self-acceptance. "And yet I don't know anybody who's truly satisfied." In "Love In The Dark" she sings that "I want to live and not just survive." "I've definitely felt like that," she told Winfrey. — AFP



US rapper Young Dolph

## Rapper Young Dolph shot and killed in cookie shop

The American rapper Young Dolph was shot and killed Wednesday while he was in a cookie shop in Memphis, Tennessee, police said. The Chicago-born artist, whose real name was Adolph Robert Thornton, was 36. He was known for hit songs such as "Major," and his 2020 album "Rich Slave" shot to the top of the Billboard 200 list. Thornton was reportedly shopping at Makeda's Homemade Butter Cookies in Memphis when someone drove up and shot him, local press reports said. Police said they have yet to identify a suspect.

The Memphis Police Department released a statement reporting the shooting and said "preliminary information" indicates the victim was Thornton. Thornton was almost killed in a shooting in Los Angeles in 20017. He sustained three gunshot wounds, news reports said. — AFP