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Clash between India and China Decoding China's Planned Aggression



(Story on
Page 12-13, 36-37)

Also

Don't Cave In. China Has To Be Defeated In Its Own Game

Page No. 8

Read

After Galwan, what next for India-China ties?

Page No. 11

China's Reason For Clash With India Despite Saying Otherwise

Page No. 12

Are You Immune from Covid-19 ?

Page No. 34

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(See Full Page Advt. on Page 20)

Being a police officer can be a dangerous job

Working as an undercover officer in the units that deal with gangs, guns or drug dealers takes the “can be” out of the equation. It’s just dangerous.

(News Agencies) As Chief of Detectives of the NYPD I have the honor, but also the great responsibility for deploying the undercover officers who, on a daily basis, walk into some of law enforcement’s most dangerous scenarios. We try as best we can to protect them with covert communications and back-up teams but we know undercover work is also unpredictable. I know that as a commander but I also know it as an undercover. On September 21st, 1995 I was working as narcotics undercover. I was working with another officer. It was one of those perfect Fall nights. Warm, in the low 70s but with a nice breeze. The weather was the only thing right that night. After attempting a buy from five suspected dealers on the street I couldn’t score. Something was off. After attempting another buy from a couple of other dealers nearby, same. The vibe was off. Walking back to the car that night I was being shadowed by my partner, detective Mike Stoney. I was going over it my head. We

other way but Mike Stoney my partner walked ahead to distract them from me. The group challenged Mike and one of them, unprovoked, pulled a gun and opened fire. Stoney, was struck by gunfire and seriously hurt but even wounded, he fired back. I moved in and returned fire as well. I believe to this day, Stoney saved my life and I may have saved his. I spent much of that night at the hospital until I knew Mike was going to be OK. The five men involved including the shooter were arrested later that night. Last December when I was promoted to Chief of Detectives, I looked out to my right, and several rows back amid hundreds of people, there was Detective Mike Stoney, retired by then, but still watching my back as I assumed this new responsibility. You never forget someone like that. It’s a bond that undercover officers share. We try to take care of them and they take care of each other.

This week, the City Council is set to vote on a bill called the POST Act. They are expected to pass it. It is a law that in its current

systems that my detectives use in investigations Every day. That’s why we support 99% of what the Post Act requires. When it comes to security cameras we recover video from to solve crimes or the license plate readers we use to retrace the direction of a getaway car, or facial recognition software that has been instrumental in identifying robbers, hate-crime perpetrators and sexual predators, the NYPD believes people have a right to know about these systems, how they work and how privacy is protected. The problem

with the POST Act is it also requires the NYPD to give a description of any and all devices that are “used or designed for, collecting, retaining, processing, or sharing audio, video, location, thermal, biometric, or similar information, that is operated by or at the direction of the department.” The Post Act says the department must place on its public website a list of this equipment with a description of it and how it is used. There is no carve out for the covert electronics used to protect

our undercover officers. Granted since the days I was undercover and buying drugs with a tape recorder and a transmitter, the electronics have gotten smaller and easier to conceal. But undercover officers face increased dangers. The drug deals moved away from the street corners and into the buildings, hallways and apartments where an undercover is at greater risk of being searched more thoroughly than the street.

The City Council can fix the Post Act with one simple sentence. Give the Police Commissioner the authority to report all the technology we use, how we use it and what the rules are which is what the law was intended for but also give the commissioner the ability to exclude descriptions of the technology used by our undercover officers in the field whose jobs are already very dangerous. Why would we ever legislate a way to make their work more dangerous?

Rodney Harrison is the Chief of Detectives of the NYPD

Zone 126 Appoints Anju J. Ruchandani as New Executive Director

By our staff reporter (Queens, New York) NY – Zone 126 (a sponsored project of the Fund for the City of New York), a non-profit Cradle-to-Career Collective Impact organization driving school and community transformation for children and families living in Astoria and Long Island City’s concentrated

pockets of poverty, has promoted Anju J. Rupchandani to the role of Executive Director. Anju has played a vital role at Zone 126 since its inception in 2011 and has been involved in all aspects of the organization’s evolution. She will assume this role beginning on June 15, 2020.



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7 fresh charge sheets filed in Delhi riots case

A total of 39 persons had been arrested and charge sheeted in the seven cases, six of which were related to rioting and murders at Shiv Vihar near Karawal Nagar while the seventh rioting and murder incident took place at Khajoori Chowk.

the seventh rioting and murder incident took place at Khajoori Chowk. All the seven deaths were reported on February 25, the officers said. The trial of all cases related to north-east Delhi riots will be held in a special court regarding which the Delhi high court had passed an order on Monday. On February 25, a police officer associated with the cases said, a clash broke out between two communities at Shiv Vihar and violent mobs from both the sides indulged in rioting, stone pelting, firing of bullets, arson and looting and damaging of private and public property. The violence

began in the morning and continued throughout the day, the officer said, requesting anonymity. Three men, identified by their first names Anwar, Aftab and Salman, were killed in the clash during the morning hours. Between 5 and 10 pm, three men from the other community were also killed in the rioting. They were identified as Veer Bhan, Alok Tiwari, and Dinesh.

A total of 11 people have been charged for rioting, murder, criminal conspiracy and other offences in connection with the separate murder cases of Anwar, Aftab and Salman. Twelve

persons have been charged for similar offences in the murder cases of Bhan, Tiwari and Dinesh, the officer cited above said. In the Khajoori Chowk rioting incident in which a man, identified by his first name Babbu, was killed, the police have charged 16 people, for rioting, murder, promoting enmity between different groups, and criminal conspiracy, the police are learnt to have said in the charge sheet. As many as 100 charge sheets have been filed in as many cases by the Delhi Police, which registered more than 750 cases pertaining to the north-east Delhi riots.



(News Agencies) The Delhi Police in the last two days have filed seven charge sheets in seven different cases related to the north-east Delhi communal riots that claimed 53 lives and left over 400 others injured in February. While five charge sheets were filed in a Delhi court on Tuesday, the other two were submitted on Monday and Sunday, senior police officers privy to the cases said. A total of 39 persons had been arrested and charge sheeted in the seven cases, six of which were related to rioting and murders at Shiv Vihar near Karawal Nagar while

Maharashtra records sudden spike in Covid-19 fatalities. Top official explains why

Bhushan Gagrani, principal secretary blamed lack of information in private hospitals and poor record-keeping in government facilities.



(News Agencies) Over 2,000 Covid-19 fatalities were added to the national death toll, taking the final figure to 11,903. This comes after Maharashtra and Delhi, two of the worst-hit states in the country, added unreported fatalities to their respective death tolls after review.

The national capital's death toll went

up by 437 of which 93 occurred over the past 24 hours while the rest were added after a review of pending fatalities. Maharashtra added 1,409 more fatalities to its Covid-19 death toll of which 1,328 deaths were added to the tally after the reconciliation exercise. Together, Delhi and Maharashtra added a total of 1,672

deaths after reconciliation. The addition led to a spike in Maharashtra's case-fatality rate – defined as the ratio of deaths to the total number of cases – and now stands at 4.9, against the national rate of 3.4.

Sudden spike

Mumbai alone added 862 fatalities to its death toll on Tuesday with officials citing discrepancies in records filed from various counting centres, according to a Bloomberg report. All of these cases correctly recorded Covid-19 as the cause of death but weren't integrated into the master database, it said.

Why the mismatch?

Bhushan Gagrani, principal secretary, the Chief Minister's Office, blamed lack of information in private hospitals and poor record-keeping in government facilities. "The figures of the deaths have risen suddenly owing to the reconciliation of the figures. It is true that there was negligence to a certain extent at some level and it led to the mismatch in the figures," he said. He admitted that the data was not being fed as per the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) guidelines, leading to the mismatch. "Some private hospitals did not provide us the information in time while in some government hospitals, the records about the deaths were not kept properly. In some cases, the death certificates had the mention of Covid infection as the cause of the fatality, but in hospital records, the entry was missing. When we realised the lapses we, last week, asked all the municipal corporations and district collectors to reconcile the data on an urgent basis," he added.

Ancient temple submerged in river Mahanadi, resurfaces in Odisha's Nayagarh

(News Agencies) An ancient temple in Odisha's Nayagarh, that was submerged in Mahanadi river has resurfaced. The temple is believed to be around 450 to 500 years old had submerged during a flood in 1933. The archaeological survey team of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) recently claimed that they discovered an ancient submerged temple in the Mahanadi upstream from Cuttack. "The temple had submerged a long time back but around 11 years ago, the temple started emerging again. Now the temple is visible a little bit above the water level. A research team is also working on it," said a villager.

The temple was successfully located after repeated attempts by Anil Kumar Dhir and his Project Assistant Deepak Kumar Nayak of Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH). The top of the submerged temple was discovered mid-river near Baideswar in the Padmavati village near Nayagarh. The 55 to 60 feet submerged temple dates back to the late 15th or early 16th century, considering the construction style of the Mastaka and material used for the construction.

According to INTACH Chief Anil Kumar Dhir, the 55 to 60 feet long temple which belongs to Lord Gopinath, a form of Lord Vishnu dates back to the late 15th or early 16th century. "This temple has a very old history. This temple is around 450 to 500 years old. Lord's idol from this temple was taken to another temple. We are working on a project--documenting the Mahanadi valley so we were in search of this temple. Around a week ago we were informed that the upper surface of the temple is visible," said Dhir.

"It is in a good state of preservation. The temple should be re-established the temple as we have technology with us. This is not the first submerged temple that has been recovered by us," he added.

Commuters urge government to provide relief as fuel prices continue to rise

(News Agencies) The rates of fuel have been increased again in the national capital on Wednesday causing more troubles for the commuters. With the hike in fuel prices, the petrol prices stand at Rs 77.28/litre (increase by Rs 0.55), and the diesel prices stand at Rs 75.79/litre (increase by Rs 0.69) in Delhi, according to a price notification of state oil marketing companies. "Even a one rupee increase has an effect

on us. The government should not increase prices like this, they should try to stop this hike as and when they can," a commuter told ANI here. Another customer, Naresh, at the same pump said that the hike in prices, especially during the phase when the city is trying to recover from the effects of Covid-19 induced lockdown is making it worse for the people and urged them to take immediate steps in this direction.



20 Indian soldiers dead in clash with China

Casualties on Chinese side as well, says Army; Beijing adds twist, says Galwan valley theirs

(News Agencies) Fragile peace along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) between India and China was shattered last night. As many as 20 Indian Army soldiers, including, an officer, have been killed in action while battling the Chinese at Galwan valley in Ladakh.

However, the count of those injured or missing in action is still not known.

Till 10 pm on Tuesday the Indian Army had confirmed three dead, Col Subhash Babu, the Commanding officer of the 16th battalion of the Bihar regiment, Havildar K Palani and Sepoy Ojha. Authoritative sources told the Tribune the count is 20 dead.

More than 900 troops on each side were involved in a physical clash, which started

Monday night, lasted several hours---in three phases---and ended on early hours of Tuesday. Most of the deaths have occurred as soldiers fell-off cliffs during a physical fight in the narrow Galwan valley into the river at an altitude of 15,000 feet. Some died due to hypothermia and other due to injuries.

Stones, Steel poles, bamboo poles with nails embed on them, were used by the Chinese, to attack the Indian troops. The Peoples' Liberation Army (PLA) of China, have also suffered fatal casualties. There is no number to their casualties. Indian Army categorically said "no bullets were fired in clash". The casualty would have been manifold had bullets been fired. Detailing the incident, sources said it occurred as an altitude of almost 15,000 feet. The Peoples'

Liberation Army (PLA) of China, which was in talks with Indian Army for both sides to withdraw from the forty---day long stand-off, had build a fresh post and set up arctic tents at vantage position on the south bank of the Galwan river. The post gave a clear view to Chinese of the vital 255 kms Daulat Baig Oldie (DSDBO), India's only link to Depsang, Murgo ad Karokaram pass. This was unacceptable to India. The post was some 5 km from the DSDBO road, the Galwan river flows in an east-to-west direction and joins the river Shyok.

Troops of the 16th battalion of the Bihar Regiment noticed this fresh military post near patrol point 14 and asked the Chinese to vacate. The number of Indian Troops was greater than the Chinese on the spot, a

clash ensued. The PLA sent in reinforcements another clash ensued.

The disengagement plan decided on June 6 at the meeting of Corps Commander-level was to ask both sides to withdraw from Galwan valley. However, on Tuesday PLA's Western Theatre Command spokesperson Colonel Zhang Shuili made a fresh claim on Tuesday saying "China always owns sovereignty over the Galwan Valley region, and the Indian border defence troops are inconsistent with their words and seriously violated the agreements both countries have reached". Until now the Indian side had maintained that there was no dispute at Galwan and the LAC, which is not demarcated on ground, matched the Chinese claim line (CCL) proposed in 1956.

4 Punjabi soldiers martyred in face-off with China

(News Agencies) Four young Punjabi soldiers were martyred in a violent face-off between Indian and Chinese forces at the Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh on Tuesday. As per the details of soldiers killed during "physical clashes" with People's Liberation Army (PLA) in Galwan Valley released by the Northern Command, 41-year-old Naib Subedar Satnam Singh from Gurdaspur, 22-year-old Sepoy Gurbinder Singh from Sunam, 23-year-old Sepoy Gurtej Singh from Budhhada (Mansa), and 39-year-old Naib Subedar/AIG Mandeep Singh from Rajpura (Patiala) succumbed to the injuries they received during the clash.

Extending his heartfelt condolences to the families of the four Punjab martyrs of the Galwan Valley clash, Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh on Wednesday announced ex-gratia compensation, along with a Government job to a next of kin of the deceased. The Chief Minister expressed grief and shock at the violent clash in Galwan Valley of Ladakh, which had wiped out the lives of these four brave men, whose sacrifice for the nation would not be forgotten.

"The loss suffered by the families was immeasurable and could not be compensated with material things, but the compensation and the jobs would help alleviate some of their sufferings," said Capt Amarinder, paying his tributes to the four men who lost their lives in the violent clash near the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China.

The Chief Minister said that the Cabinet Ministers would represent the State Government at the martyrs' funerals, which will be held with full Army honours in their native villages.

Patiala village mourns after Naib Subedar Mandeep Singh killed on LAC in Ladakh

(News Agencies) Mortal remains of Naib Subedar Mandeep Singh killed in a clash with the Chinese army in Ladakh's Galwan Valley were consigned to flames with full military honours in Punjab's Patiala on Thursday. Mandeep's mother, his wife, daughter and son saluted him



Sepoy Ganesh Hansda, 22, killed in Ladakh face-off was on his 1st posting

(News Agencies) A 22-year-old was one among the 20 soldiers killed in the line of duty in Galwan Valley in the border clash between troops of the Indian and Chinese army in eastern Ladakh on Monday evening. A pall of gloom descended on the nondescript house of Hansda family in Kosaphaliya village under Chingra panchayat in Jharkhand on Wednesday morning as the news of sepoy Ganesh Hansda's death trickled in. The young sepoy was on his first posting at Leh. Despite the setback, the family, given a chance again, says they will fight for the country.

"I am ready to join the army and fight for my country if given a chance. My brother sacrificed his life to protect the nation and we are all proud of him. He had joined Bihar Regiment in September 2018 and

was deployed at Leh in his first posting after completing 9-month training at Danapur on July 27 last year," said Dinesh Hansda, the sepoy's brother. Ganesh, says his brother, was to be transferred but it was delayed due to the coronavirus crisis.

"He [Ganesh] was to be transferred to Hyderabad but could not due to the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic," Dinesh Hansda, Ganesh's elder brother said this morning, adding that the sepoy had last visited them in February. The entire Kosaphaliya village near Basda chowk under Baheragora police station (PS), about 93 km from Jamshedpur, was in a state of shock as Dinesh said they were informed by a Colonel of Indian Army about the tragedy at around 10.30 pm Tuesday night.

as scores of people bade a tearful adieu to the soldier at his native Seel village in the district. Slogans like 'shaheed amar rahe' and 'Bharat Mata ki jai' rent the air as the body of 39-year-old Mandeep Singh, wrapped in the Tricolour, reached his native place. Villagers, especially the youth, were seen holding the Tricolour and showered petals on the military vehicle in which the mortal remains of the soldier were brought.

The soldier's family members were inconsolable when the body arrived. Mandeep's minor son lit the funeral pyre. Punjab minister Sadhu Singh Dharamsot and Akali MLA Harinderpal Singh Chandumajra were present to pay tributes to Mandeep along with officials of the Army, police and civil administration. Mandeep was one of the 20 soldiers killed in the clash with the Chinese army on Monday. He had joined duty about two weeks ago after a month-long leave. Earlier, the mortal remains of Mandeep arrived at the Chandigarh airport and from where the body was brought to his native place in Patiala by road. Mandeep joined the Army in 1997. He is survived by his mother Shakuntala, wife Gurdeep Kaur, 15-year-old daughter Mehakpreet Kaur and 10-year-old son Jobanpreet Singh.

Don't shoot the messengers'

Supreme Court tells Delhi govt over action against doctors, healthcare workers

The Delhi government has been asked to file a better affidavit by Friday on this aspect on whether they have reinstated those doctors who were dismissed.

(News Agencies) The Supreme Court on Wednesday made strong observations against the Delhi government for taking action against doctors and health workers, who it said acted as messengers in bringing out the real picture in government-run hospitals in the Capital. "Don't shoot the messengers. You stop registering FIRs against doctors fighting this war against Covid," a bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan said. The Delhi government has been asked to file a better affidavit by Friday on this aspect on whether

they have reinstated those doctors who were dismissed, withdrawn first information reports (FIRs) against doctors and payment of salaries to medical workers. The order came in a suo moto proceeding with regard to disposal of dead bodies and poor facilities in government hospitals in the national capital taken up last week. The top court had invited status reports particularly from Delhi, Maharashtra, Gujarat, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu. The report of other states will also be taken up on Friday.



Assam Human Rights Panel Issues Notice Against Complaint of 'Pitiable' Condition of Relief Camps



(News Agencies) The Assam Human Rights Commission (AHRC) on Wednesday issued a notice to the Upper Assam

Division Commissioner to inquire into the condition of relief camps where about 7,000 people have been put up following the gas blowout and fire at the Baghjan oil well. The Commission had received a complaint from one Hurojit Moran about the "pitiable" condition of the 12 relief camps which lacked food and drinking water facilities. The inquiry report should be submitted within two months from the date of receipt of the notice highlighting the steps taken by the Tinsukia district administration, a release issued by the AHRC said. The report should include the steps taken by the district

administration with the help of Oil India Limited to provide essential commodities, including drinking water, health care facilities to people sheltered in the camps. Persons of nearby villages had to hurriedly leave their houses following a blowout incident at the oil well on May 27, culminating in a devastating inferno on June 9 in which two firefighters lost their lives. The AHRC issued another notice to the Upper Assam Division Commissioner

to inquire into the circumstances leading to the death of 30-year old Jayanta Bora in Jorhat district on June 15. The Commission took suo motu cognisance of newspaper reports of June 16 alleging custodial death of Bora who was picked up by a joint team of the Army and police from his house on charges of being an ULFA cadre and brought to Borholia police station. The report must be submitted within 30 days from the receipt of the notice, the release said.

No Space at Home And Denied Extension at Quarantine Centre, Odisha Man Spends 7 Days in Toilet

(News Agencies) A 28-year-old returnee from Tamil Nadu spent seven days inside a toilet as his request for extension of stay in institutional quarantine in Odisha's Jagatsinghpur district was turned down and he did not have enough space for self-isolation in his house, an official said. Manas Patra was discharged from the government-run temporary medical

his house where his family members including his elderly parents stay. "I had pleaded with the local authorities for extending my quarantine period. However, they did not keep my request. Therefore, to ensure the safety of family members, I was forced to stay in the toilet," Patra said. He spent seven days from June 9 to 15 in that 6x8 feet newly-built toilet which Patra's family members are yet to start using.

Block Development Officer of Naugaon, Rashmi Rekha Mallick, said the matter is being looked into. "We have asked sarpanchs (village heads) to allow people to stay longer at quarantine centres if inmates give undertakings that they do not have adequate facility at home for self-isolation," Mallick said. Earlier, returnees were placed under quarantine for 14 days.



'Bow to the families of great heroes' Amit Shah pays tribute, says India is in their debt

(News Agencies) Home minister Amit Shah has paid tribute to Indian soldiers who died in a violent clash with Chinese soldiers in eastern Ladakh's Galwan Valley on Monday night and said their sacrifice can't be put in words. He added that their bravery reflects India's commitment towards safeguarding her land. Shah's homage followed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's clear message that while New Delhi wants peace, it was capable of giving a befitting reply if provoked. "Pain of losing our brave soldiers while protecting our motherland at Galwan Valley can't be put in words. Nation

salutes our immortal heroes who sacrificed their lives to keep the Indian territory safe. Their bravery reflects India's commitment towards her land," said Shah in a tweet on Wednesday afternoon. Indian Army has reported loss of 20 lives on its side, including that of a commanding officer of the Bihar Regiment, in clashes with China during the de-escalation process in Eastern Ladakh on Monday night. The Indian government has blamed China for not honouring a consensus reached between the two sides to withdraw and said the clashes were a result of China's attempts to change the status quo of the

line of actual control (LAC) in the Galwan Valley. Shah went on to say that the country will always be in debt of the soldiers' supreme sacrifice. "I bow to the families, who have blessed Indian Army with such great heroes. India will always remain indebted for their supreme sacrifice. Entire nation and the Modi government stands firmly with their families in this hour of grief. Praying for the speedy recovery of those injured," Shah added. Earlier, during his meeting with the chief ministers of states, the prime minister had said that the sacrifice of the jawans will not go in vain. "I would like to assure the nation that the sacrifice of our jawans will not be in vain. For us, the unity and sovereignty of the country is the most important," PM Modi said.



12 killed on way back from pilgrim centre in Andhra after truck rams vehicle



According to police, the tractor-trolley was carrying a group of 25 people belonging to Gopavaram village of Errupalem block in Telangana's Khammam district.

(News Agencies) Twelve people, including four children, were killed and 14 others injured when a truck rammed the tractor-trolley Wednesday afternoon, the police

said. While seven of them died on the spot, five others succumbed to their injuries at the government hospital in Jaggayyapet. The injured were also admitted to the same hospital and the condition of three of them is said to be critical.

According to police, the tractor-trolley was carrying a group of 25 people belonging to

Gopavaram village of Errupalem block in Telangana's Khammam district. They were returning from Vedadri, a famous pilgrim centre, after having darshan of Lord Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy.

"As they were approaching Jaggayyapet, a speeding truck loaded with cement bags rammed into the tractor-trolley, which overturned on the road side," Jaggayyapet sub-

inspector of police R Dharma Raju said.

On receiving the information, the police rushed to the spot and took up the rescue operations with the help of locals. The injured were moved to the hospital. "We are yet to ascertain how the accident took place. We have registered a case and taken up the investigation," the SI said.

2 priests in Kerala suspended after alleged sleazy audio clips go viral



(News Agencies) The Thalassery Arch Diocese of Syro-Malabar church in north Kerala on Wednesday suspended two priests after an alleged audiotape of the two engaged in a sleazy talk surfaced on social media and online sites. The diocese has also tendered an apology to believers. The two were supposed to "hold a high moral ground but they failed", said a statement issued by the public relations officer of the diocese signed on June 14.

Both Father Joseph Poothattil and Father Mathew Mullappallil were debarred and restrained from carrying out priestly duties indefinitely, said the diocese. Both are parish priests in north Kerala.

Last year a woman believer had complained to the diocese about their alleged sexual advances. Some believers also complained about their behaviour. But the church brushed aside these charges and defended them. Last week, two audio clips surfaced on social media in which one of the priests was heard allegedly saying he had an illicit relationship with the woman in question and wanted to come out of it. One of them was also heard detailing his sexual dalliance with the woman. Later some video clips also surfaced.

Soon these clips went viral, forcing church authorities to take action against them. "Whatever we want to say is there in the statement. We don't want to make more comments on this," said the spokesman of the archdiocese. Police said they are yet to get a complaint in this regard.

Akhilesh calls for economic reply to China, has his hands on popular pulse

The 'boycott Chinese goods' sentiment has emerged from time to time in India when the relations between the two countries take a hit.

(News Agencies) Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav has called for cancellation of contracts awarded to Chinese companies as part of an economic reply to China in addition to the strategic response for the killing 20 Indian soldiers at the line of actual control in Ladakh's Galwan Valley on Monday. Akhilesh's call on Wednesday follows similar demands by some other groups including RSS linked Swadeshi

Jagran Manch (SJM), whose members protested outside the Chinese Embassy earlier today. "Govt should not only give strategic but also an economic reply. Contracts awarded to Chinese companies should be suspended with immediate effect; restrain imports from China. Samajwadi Party will support the government in any such endeavour for the country's sake," Akhilesh Yadav tweeted in Hindi on Wednesday. Akhilesh's suggestion comes close on the heels of demand by the SJM to oust



Shanghai Tunnel Engineering Co Ltd

+Tata, (ii) STEC (China), (iii) L&T (India), (iv) Afcons (India) and (v) GulermakAgir (Turkey). On 12th June 2020 - Financial bids were opened - M/s STEC emerged as lowest bidder. The tender is under process and yet to be finalised. PI note that the ADB/World Bank/Multi-lateral procurement guidelines do not allow discrimination among firms/countries," a government press release clarified. A news agency reported that protestors in Varanasi burned Chinese flag and effigy of Chinese President Xi Jinping and said that similar protests were also seen in Patna and Gujarat. The 'boycott Chinese goods' sentiment has surfaced in India from time to time and it witnessed a surge recently when innovator and education reformist Sonam Wangchuk posted a video last month asking Indians to shun all Chinese products including the popular mobile application TikTok in response to the Ladakh stand-off.

(STEC)- a Chinese company—from the project to build the underground stretch of the Delhi-Meerut RRTS (Regional Rapid Transit System) corridor. STEC has emerged as the lowest bidder for the project and the government clarified on Wednesday that the part of the project was funded by the Asian development bank and it was obligated to not discriminate between companies or countries. "Five bidders submitted bids and qualified for financial bid opening including (i) SKEC (Korea)

Employees at 41 ordnance factories to go on indefinite strike against corporatisation

(News Agencies) Eighty two thousand civilian employees of India's 41 ordnance factories will go on indefinite strike after the second week of July in protest against the Centre's decision to corporatise weapon and defence equipment manufacturing units run by the Ordnance Factory Board of the ministry of defence.

The announcement was made on Wednesday afternoon by all three national trade unions, including the Bharatiya Pratiraksha Mazdoor Sangh (BPMS) affiliated to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the ideological parent of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

The unions, however, said that the strike will be deferred if the killings in

Galwan, in which the Indian Army lost 20 soldiers, leads to a crisis. "The nation comes first. If there is a crisis we have to work round the clock and supply equipment to the army," Mukesh Singh, general secretary, BPMS, told HT. The date of the strike will be decided in mid-July. The unions decided to go on indefinite strike after their members gave their opinion through ballot between June 8 and 17.

"Ordnance factory workers toiled day and night whenever India was at war with its neighbours. There was no need to corporatize the factories. We are ready to stand up to any crisis," said C Srikumar, general secretary, All India Defence

Employees' Federation (AIDEF). In a statement, the trade unions described the decision to corporatise the plants "arbitrary, illegal and unjustified" and "in violation of assurances" given by former defence ministers.

"In spite of the Covid-19 lockdown more than 99 per cent employees participated in the ballot and voted in favour of the indefinite strike," said Srikumar. The unions started a movement against corporatization in July last year. The agitation started to build up soon after the Centre enforced Arms Rules 2016, which introduced new laws to facilitate production of weapons by private players in collaboration with foreign partners.

Don't Cave In. China Has To Be Defeated In Its Own Game

It's only when there is fear of retaliation that neighbours will stop taking us for granted. Till then, we will keep buying casualties and moving tanks on slides on TV shows

By Maj Manik M Jolly, SM (Retd)

On June 16, in a sad and shocking incident, Indian Army lost 20 soldiers during the de-escalation process of Chinese soldiers at Galwan valley in Ladakh. The first reports came of three casualties, including Col Santosh Babu, who was Commanding Officer of 16 Bihar Regiment and Hav K Palani and Sep Ojha who belonged to the same unit. Our heartfelt condolences to the families and units on the loss of brave soldiers who in the highest traditions of Indian Army, laid down their lives defending the country and us all.

As per reports, the Chinese Army was supposed to be packing and moving. However, during the night, at PP 14, Galwan Valley, a scuffle broke out between the troops of Indian Army and PLA which led to injuries on both sides. The Commanding Officer and his escorts were supposedly attacked by iron rods and stones and by morning, it was confirmed that they had succumbed to the injuries. Later, additional 17 casualties were reported by government sources. The Chinese media reported five PLA soldiers were dead and 11 injured during the clash, which later was said to be 43 in number. But then, the report is 'Made in China'; its authenticity is anyone's guess.

India stands at a crucial juncture. Mind you, not crossroads! We do not have many options, but one. The bully has to be defeated in his own game. Stay aggressive. China and its Army did this as a message to put India on backfoot, to maintain the psychological dominance in the region and to break away on a comparatively higher note. China is a master of propaganda and this single act will light social media on fire. Remember, not a single bullet was fired, and China's Foreign Ministry denied even having any information of this incident. What does that mean? We will not do anything that can be construed as an act of war and work under plausible deniability at the highest levels. Ladies and gentlemen, China!

The region is becoming increasingly difficult for India. Our diplomacy with neighbours has taken a major hit recently. And this incident has further worsened the situation. Yes, the authorities will talk, and de-escalation will happen, and the world will move on. But as I have been saying earlier, what do we do if they act again like this? Why don't we have diplomatic, economic and military deterrents in place to counter such moves? Why



does Pakistan think it can keep sending terrorists for decades and nothing will happen? Why does Nepal think it can change the map on its own? Why does China think it can come and go whenever it wants? It is time to shed the Nehruvian-Gandhi image of non-violence, submission and fake brotherhoods, and respond appropriately. Have we still not learned our lessons? Why do we have one of the largest armed forces if we cannot even answer to an open threat? This is not war mongering; this is balancing the scales. This is creating appropriate defence and this is telling everyone, 'Enough'. It's only when there is fear of retaliation that neighbours will stop taking us for granted. Till then, we will keep buying casualties and

moving tanks on slides on TV shows. Better be safe and hated than vulnerable and still hated!

As normal citizens, we have to safeguard ourselves against propaganda. Nothing eats away the sanity and unity of a nation like psychological ops. And propaganda remains its strongest tool. China has dedicated teams focused only on this. Soon, you will see social media flooded with anti-government posts. As these posts and tweets start to pick up, there will be posts to create a rift between the Army and government. Propaganda shapes opinions and opinions dictate actions. As responsible citizens, we should not forward messages that are not substantiated. In this information-sharing age, we all play a role in

these battles. By giving a boost to negative and anti-India propaganda, we not only weaken the resolve to act, but create gaps for the enemy to exploit. The best we can do is believe news from authentic sources and ask right questions, and wait for answers patiently. Also, the armchair Generals and keyboard warriors should know that it takes years of training and decades of service to become Commanding Officer of an Infantry Battalion. To criticise actions of a CO, to dissect his operation and to undermine his decisions because you know names of five types of guns and have watched some YouTube videos is not only disrespectful towards the martyr but also shows your ignorance. Rather, focus on

the commitment and bravery of these Commanding Officers who always lead from the front, and that would be an appropriate homage. And if you still think you are right, go and join the Army and prove everyone wrong.

The country needs to put up a united front and we all have to show our soldiers that not only do we care, we support them unconditionally. We have a government that is known now for taking tough decisions. I am sure they will not let this go. But let's not push for knee jerk reactions and comments from the government and military. The country is fighting a major war internally with Covid-19 crisis and we cannot afford to take focus away from that either. Do not buy into loose talk and 'source in Army' reporting. We have one of the largest and best Armies in the world, and given chance and permission, they have the capability to deliver. So, have faith, stay calm and trust your army.

(The author is a decorated veteran, who now works in Energy Innovation and Rural Development. Views expressed are personal.)

Bolton's book makes it clear *Trump is the amoral charlatan we knew he was*

By Michael H Fuchs

John Bolton's book is a reminder that, contrary to all of Trump's claims to be "tough" on China, in reality Trump fawns over China's president Xi Jinping, his China policies are counterproductive, and Trump has repeatedly sold out the American people to China to advance his own personal interests.

From encouraging Xi to continue ethnic cleansing against Uighurs to asking for China's help in his 2020 re-election campaign, Trump's actions make it clear why Chinese officials believe that Trump is good for the Chinese Communist party (CCP).

The revelations regarding China are just a handful of the many episodes in Bolton's book illustrating Trump's corruption and ineptitude that, in year four of Trump's term, may not be surprising, but should still shock everyone.

Daily events highlight how dangerous Trump is to America and the world, from ignoring a

pandemic that is killing tens of thousands of Americans to encouraging state violence against protestors and police brutality against African Americans.

There are no more surprises with Trump, just more death and destruction he leaves in his wake. But Bolton's book helps illustrate two facts about the Trump administration: Trump is exactly who we know he is – an amoral charlatan using the most powerful office in the world to help himself at the expense of the American people; and those around Trump help him carry out his corrupt ends, despite what they may tell themselves to justify their complicity.

Trump's approach to China, in particular, is illustrative. Bolton claims that Trump told Xi that he supported the ethnic cleansing against Uighurs and other ethnic minority groups on at least two occasions, telling Xi that building concentration camps was "exactly the right

thing to do". Trump's lack of interest in human rights in China, his racist views towards Muslims and emulation of strongmen like Xi make this revelation abhorrent and yet completely unsurprising.

The book also recounts how Trump specifically asked Xi to buy American agricultural products – which was part of the eventual "phase one" trade deal signed in January 2020 – to help Trump win votes from certain constituencies in the 2020 election. We already knew that Trump had asked Xi to investigate Joe Biden, and so combined with Trump's solicitation of campaign help from Russia and Ukraine this is yet another reaffirmation that Trump's conversations with world leaders regularly include invitations to interfere in America's elections.

At the end of the day, Bolton's book tells us more of what we already know about Trump: the president is corrupt, incompetent, and partners with whomever he needs – including

the world's worst dictators – to advance his own personal interests.

But Bolton's book also reinforces how the people around Trump enable the president's destructive behavior. Despite claiming at the time to have information relevant to the inquiry, Bolton refused to testify before the Trump impeachment process, choosing instead to make money off of his knowledge of Trump's impeachable conduct by waiting to sell a book. Bolton says that Matt Pottinger - now deputy national security advisor and someone who reportedly takes a hardline against the authoritarian CCP - heard Trump in 2017 encourage China's ethnic cleansing campaign against Uighurs and yet (despite that and every other publicly known corrupt and impeachable act Trump has committed in office) Pottinger still works for Trump.

(Contd on page 31)

Don't be fooled

The US supreme court hasn't suddenly become leftwing

A few decisions that help progressives do not mean the justices have become enlightened 'We can celebrate the outcome, but we certainly shouldn't treat Roberts and Gorsuch as champions of the rights of the oppressed.' Photograph: Michael Reynolds/EPA Everyone knows that there are liberal US supreme court justices and there are conservative supreme court justices, and usually in a politically charged case you can pretty well predict the way the justices will vote by where they stand on the left-right spectrum. But not always: the decision upholding Obamacare's individual mandate was written by Bush-appointed Chief Justice John Roberts, and the decision legalizing same-sex marriage throughout the United States was written by Reagan appointee Anthony Kennedy.

In the last week, progressives have notched two more supreme court victories with unexpected votes by the conservative justices. In *Bostock v Clayton county*, the Trump-appointed justice Neil Gorsuch wrote in a majority opinion that discriminating against LGBTQ+ employees violates the 1964 Civil Rights Act. And in *Department of Homeland Security v Regents of the University of California*, in a 5-4 decision, the court decided that the Trump administration could not proceed with its plan to eliminate *Daca*, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program that protects certain immigrants from deportation. Donald Trump has been apoplectic over the decisions, calling them "shotgun blasts to the face" of conservatives.

If your theory of judicial behavior is a purely political one, these results might seem mystifying. Why is Gorsuch siding with the liberals? Donald Trump's "shotgun to the face" is one he himself loaded and fired, by appointing Gorsuch to the court. Was Gorsuch a Trojan horse, a person of secret left-ish sympathies? No, of course not. Because while the court is extremely political, it's not completely political, and sometimes judges do in fact make rulings for reasons other than where they stand on the left-right spectrum. And that's important, because it means we shouldn't really think of the court as having made "progressive decisions" at all. They were rulings that had progressive outcomes. But the justices' politics haven't changed, and we can't assume there is any kind of pattern here. The court is still fundamentally conservative, and these rulings are more the product of luck than any kind of shift in the "hearts and minds" of Neil Gorsuch and John Roberts. Do not be surprised if next year, they rule in ways that hurt LGBTQ+ people and immigrants just as much as this week's rulings have helped them. We can celebrate the outcome,

but we certainly shouldn't treat Roberts and Gorsuch as champions of the rights of the oppressed.

To think about what the decisions imply about the court itself, it's helpful to understand the justices' actual reasoning in each case. In *Bostock*, Gorsuch's reasoning was very simple: the 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, and while it does not specifically prohibit discriminating against people for being LGBTQ+, in practice there is no way to discriminate against a person for being LGBTQ+ without discriminating against their sex. After all, if I fire a man for being attracted to men, but I would not fire a woman for being attracted to men, what is making the difference in my conduct? The sex of the employee. Gorsuch said that it doesn't matter whether Congress intended to prohibit discrimination against LGBTQ+ people, because the thing they did prohibit covers acts of anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination. It's very straightforward reasoning. It's also quite "conservative", in the sense that Gorsuch is applying a form of judicial interpretation usually associated with conservatives, most notably Antonin Scalia. Scalia was an advocate of textualism, meaning that the words of a statute matter far more than what the lawmakers writing it intended for it to do. If applying the law in its most literal form has a negative unintended consequence, tough luck. Gorsuch felt that a consistent application of textualism required ruling in favor of LGBTQ+ rights. But if Gorsuch's vote resulted from his highly literal interpretive theory, there's no reason to expect he will be progressive in cases involving LGBTQ+ people more generally. The Human Rights Campaign opposed Gorsuch's confirmation originally citing worrying past decisions, and while there is evidence that he is not personally homophobic, if the "textualist" reading of a statute goes against LGBTQ+ people next time, they are unlikely to find Gorsuch so friendly to the cause.

In the *Daca* case, too, there is more going on than simply "John Roberts being favorably disposed toward immigrants." Roberts himself wrote in his opinion that the decision had nothing to do with the merits or justice of *Daca*, but was purely about a procedural issue: "We do not decide whether *Daca* or its rescission are sound policies... We address only whether the agency complied with the procedural requirement that it provide a reasoned explanation for its action." Of course, judges always say that what they're doing isn't political, even when it is, but there are justices with fetishes for procedural regularity, whose loyalty to the process far exceeds their loyalty to any kind of "justice" or political value. **(Contd on page 15)**

On China, the error of judgement

No other Indian prime minister (PM) has travelled to Beijing as often (nine visits, five as PM and four as Gujarat chief minister) or invested as much personal equity in nurturing ties with the Chinese leadership as Narendra Modi.

Which is why if the 1962 war is seen by Nehruvians as China's "Great Betrayal", Ladakh 2020 may face similar damnation in the future from Modiites. If Jawaharlal Nehru's outreach to China was founded on a romantic illusion of a great ancient civilisational compact, Modi's engagement has been less ideological and far more personalised.

The Modi rendezvous with the Chinese can be explained at three levels. First, it is rooted in a sense of personal gratitude. When Modi was ostracised by the West after the 2002 Gujarat riots, the two countries which embraced him were China and Japan. Which is why, soon after becoming PM in 2014, the first major country he travelled to was Japan and the first big power leader he welcomed to India was the Chinese President Xi Jinping. The photo-op of the two leaders on a swing in Ahmedabad was hyped as evidence of their special bonding, two supreme leaders promising to end decades of Sino-Indian mistrust over *dalkadhi* and *dhokla*.

Second, there is a sharp business angle that underpins the connection. The PM has never hidden his admiration for China's State-driven private enterprise. Chinese business leaders have been a striking presence at Vibrant Gujarat summits and Chinese companies have reportedly invested thousands of crore in the state.

Third, the Modi brand of muscular Hindutva nationalism finds an echo in the Xi vision of aggressive Chinese nationalism. Two strongmen, dominant over their party apparatus and exercising a larger-than-life presence over their citizenry, are perhaps

attracted to each other by the remarkable similarities in their political rise.

And yet, diplomatic relations, especially those with as fraught a history as India and China, cannot be built on personal chemistry alone. The bloody encounter in eastern Ladakh only highlights the limits of this "personalised" brand of diplomacy where institutional mechanisms are forsaken at the cost of promoting a personality cult. The Modi years have seen the PM as a frenetic globetrotter, reducing the ministry of external affairs to little more than an appendage to the PM's myth-making machine.

Then, whether it was the late Sushma Swaraj who was relegated to the role of a lighthouse for Indians in distress or now S Jaishankar, whose formidable intellect and diplomatic experience appear to count for little, the focus in the last six years has almost been on refurbishing Modi's self-image as a game-changing, charismatic leader for whom style and optics often matter more than substance.

This might explain the dramatic decision in 2015 to crash-land for an unscheduled visit to greet the then Pakistani PM Nawaz Sharif in Lahore. Or rushing to the airport to receive the Obamas and bear-hug "my friend Barack". Or driving the Donald Trump family in a cavalcade through Ahmedabad or clasping hands with the US president at a rock concert-like event in Houston. The blaring headlines and artful event management might ensure 24x7 news coverage, but they can never be a substitute for the exactitude of rigorous diplomacy and quiet ground work that is required to foster ties beyond personal equations.

Let us not forget that within weeks of the Modi-Sharif bonhomie in Lahore, there was a terror attack at an air force station in Pathankot, followed by a series of suicide strikes in 2016.

(Contd on page 31)



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It is time to tap potential of handicrafts and textiles



India has an estimated 16 million craftspeople, living mainly in rural India, who are actively involved in some of the most complex textile processes that the world has ever seen. This is not an insignificant number. These craftspeople constitute a highly-skilled workforce, with huge knowledge of specialised processes, learnt from master craftsmen, who ran guilds over centuries, of complex designs. It was in the 1960s that I discovered the art of gold embroidery in a rural setting, in small villages in West Bengal, where the craft was being practised. It is said that the origin of the craft was Iran, and it came to India during the Sultanate. The embroideries from these villages were once patronised by the Nawabs of Bengal. India is replete with village workshops like these, which cannot survive without financing and infrastructure. After the coronavirus pandemic, the reality is that the handloom and handcraft sector in India needs a way to survive. There is no relevance today in government-run emporiums. Our philosophy is completely wrong. A superior handloom product, aesthetically appealing as well as ecologically-friendly, cannot be sold out of compassion but needs the modern technology of marketing and retailing, and needs to be projected as the best in the world. This is the only way to survive in a competitive market. A fact not commonly known is that the textile sector is the second largest employer in rural India, after agriculture. India was the world's largest supplier of textiles 200 years ago. By 1947, this was converted into a nation using copies of its own textiles, in bulk from England's industrial areas. This bankrupted India's rich craft economies is causing destitution in India's rural markets.

It is a miracle that post-Independence, due to the

government's efforts to revive heritage crafts, India has been able to recreate many of its forgotten textile crafts. This was forward-thinking at its best and was not easily achieved. It took a sustained and progressive, revival movement to save India's handmade legacy. This was successfully launched with a series of the "Viswakarma" exhibitions, which displayed the sophisticated creations of this revival in prestigious museums. The programme generated a great degree of excitement, and the affluent middle-class became the biggest patron of these textiles.

It can be produced in rural areas; it creates jobs; it needs low investment; it can be a Made in India by Hand brand

This was unlike in many other countries where priceless textiles were relegated to dusty museums. In India, these creations, and not fashion from the international ramps, became aspirational garments for urban consumers, especially women. In an effort to create interest in Indian crafts internationally, the "Vishwakarma" exhibitions were exhibited through the Festivals of India in the most-prestigious museums around the world capitals. This highlighted the richest traditions of handicrafts left in the world. This again caught the attention of the fashion fraternity abroad. India was once again on the world fashion map. Over the last two decades, the Indian fashion industry has made strides. And unlike the rest of the world, it boasts of an indigenous team of designers. These do not necessarily mean only those who show on the ramps, but also those present in the rural fields. They are weavers, embroiderers and creators of embellishments, which no one in the world can create. Most

of Indian couture and its glamorisation can be attributed to the handmade crafts. In India, the garments from maharajahs and royal pageants serve as a theme to Big and Small Indian Weddings. Their imitations have flooded malls, boutiques, village haats and bazaars across smaller markets. Each has its own version, creating a theatrical, Indian ethnic fashion. With the recessionary trend that the pandemic is causing, it is time for the government to step in, as they did in the 1950s, to save India's handicrafts. The drop in the retail of high-end merchandise will temper the scale of celebrations. Most high-end production will move from hand-made to mechanised alternatives. The world today produces textiles using sophisticated machinery. India's vast repertoire of designs may end up being used only as an inspiration, as is the case with China, which produces copies of the woven Benares saris, among a host of other textile merchandise, and sells these at

a fraction of the price to India. This has destroyed the handloom market in Varanasi. After the pandemic, we have a real problem of livelihood on our hands here, as well as one of the intellectual property of textiles which is facing a real threat. The government has to think outside the box, step in and support start-ups. This is a lucrative market. It can be run and marketed by a professionally-run organisation, with cutting-edge pricing, which also offers retail spaces on the internet. The only way to do this is to become a conduit to the customer to buy directly from the craftsman which would involve minimal overheads. It can easily be achieved. Let us look at the USP of this sector. Handicrafts can be best generated in agrarian set-ups. They do not necessitate a move from the rural to the urban scenario, hence avoiding the ghettoisation of its inheritors. It requires little investment in production infrastructure or skill development. It will be the only Made in India by Hand brand in the world.

Ritu Kumar
is a fashion designer

Social media is killing democracy

Print is in crisis. TV news has declined. Social media, with its fake news and lies, dominates

Last week, Uddhav Thackeray was forced to deny reports that Mumbai would be re-imposing a lockdown on June 15. The reports had made such an impact that all over the city, people were stocking up on goods and wondering whether they had made a mistake by resuming work too soon.

In Delhi, where reports of a similar June 15 lockdown had also surfaced — though they had not been as widely circulated as they were in Mumbai — the health minister, and subsequently the chief minister, had to issue a similar denial. Here's the thing about these reports. They had not come from a single credible source. Nor had they been attributed to anyone in a position to either make that decision or to know the truth. They had not been carried in newspapers or on TV channels. Instead, they had come from Facebook and WhatsApp forwards. And on Facebook and WhatsApp, you don't need to quote anyone or provide any sources. People just tend to believe what they



read on their phones. And even if they don't fully believe, it still nags away at them inside their heads.

The WhatsApp news phenomenon is not new. WhatsApp has regularly been used by political parties and partisan groups to circulate photo-shopped pictures and false news. Riots have broken out as a consequence of WhatsApp forwards and people have been killed on the basis of fake news. But over the last few months, there has been an important escalation in the ability of social media — not just WhatsApp but

Facebook too — to set the agenda. In the United States (US), Facebook posts have been used to stoke emotions and circulate bogus information in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer. Fortunately, this has led to a national outcry against Facebook in the US and a systematic debunking of the lies by TV channels and newspapers. In India, alas, we don't have the checks and balances that they have in the US. There was a time when TV news was interested in what was happening in India. It tried to tell the truth. Its stock in

trade was facts, not emotions. Over the last few years, however, TV has lost interest in news. This is particularly true of many regional news channels, though most commentators only focus on the national Hindi and English channels. TV is a commercial medium so it makes sense to cut costs and increase revenues. Covering news costs money; so, many channels have settled for a low-cost formula of studio debates. The only major costs are the anchor's remuneration and the studio expenses. In the old days, channels paid for camerapersons who went and shot debates with guests outside the studio. But now, with Zoom and Skype, the cost of getting the guests on air is virtually zero.

In the 1970s, the media pundit, Marshall McLuhan, wrote that while radio was a "hot" medium which could inflame sentiment (as Adolf Hitler and Winston Churchill did when their speeches were broadcast on radio), TV was a "cold"

After Galwan, what next for India-China ties?

New Delhi has a range of options. What matters is the objective it sets for itself in the immediate and long-term

In a brief statement condoling the death of 20 Indian Army personnel, including a colonel in clashes with China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi emphasised that this loss of precious lives will not go in vain and that India's traditional posture of restraint should not be mistaken for a lack of national resolve apropos territorial integrity and sovereignty. He further added that "differences should not be allowed to become disputes", but that is where the India-China relationship is now poised and it could go further south given the prevailing mood of anger and anguish in the country.

While there are unconfirmed reports about the number of PLA troops killed, it merits recall that China does not release any official numbers about casualties sustained in battles and wars, much less in skirmishes of this nature. For instance, the Chinese casualties in the October 1962 border war with India were discretely shared in the internal military history documents of PLA only in the mid 1990s. It is

important to note that there will be a marked difference between the transparent approach of a robust democracy such as India and the cloistered approach of an authoritarian regime such as China. Various reasons are being advanced as to why PLA acted in the barbaric manner that it did (attacking Indian troops with lethal batons embedded with nails and spikes – if some reports are true). The reasons for the eastern Ladakh incursion and consolidation by PLA will have to be addressed at a later date, perhaps in the manner that the Kargil Review Committee was convened and necessary policy inadequacies will have to be redressed.

But the focus at the moment should not be on the "why", but on "what next", for the Wuhan-Mamallapuram bonhomie will now tempered with a dose of reality.

India will have to carefully think through its options and remain resolute. The loss of a colonel is a big setback for any army and the Indian Army will respond in a manner that it deems appropriate. The 1967 battles of Nathu La and Cho La when India lost 100 lives but erased

the humiliation of October 1962 will be part of the collective memory of PLA.

But the options will go beyond the military domain, and it will actually be determined by the objectives that Delhi sets for itself — both for the immediate and the long-term. On the face of it, getting China to pull its troops back to the status quo position that prevailed in eastern Ladakh will be the immediate priority and objective but, desirable as it is, realising that normative goal will throw up its challenges.

China is currently in a more advantageous position tactically both in the Galwan Valley and other areas it has occupied and fortified. This places India in a less-than-favourable position as far as the current negotiations are concerned. China has honed the art of moving forward assertively in territorial disputes and then ostensibly stepping backward in "good faith", but finally ensuring that its own territorial creep becomes a de facto reality. This was noted in the Doklam experience. And there should be no illusions about China's inherent orientation towards territory and



strategic geography. India, alas, has not shown such resolve or acumen about strategic geography or learning from military history.

While democracies thrive on objective dissent and debate, they must also exude national unity and consensus during times of crisis. The current challenge with China calls for closing of ranks among the political parties. It is encouraging to note that an all-party meeting will be convened on Friday where PM Modi is expected to brief party leaders about the Galwan setback and the options that lie ahead for India in relation to China.

The history of the last 60 years indicates that China has been able to exploit the political and ideological divisions within India to its benefit in shaping the narrative of

the troubled bilateral relationship. This is part of the "Three Warfares" framework that Beijing has invested in as part of its comprehensive military modernisation.

China will remain part of the economic and technological eco-system of the 21st century and India's choices cannot be binary. Whether the post pandemic word morphs into sullen bi-polarity or a more flexible cluster of democracies remains moot. This will determine India's posture. For PM Modi, the Galwan challenge has the potential to transmute to either the trauma of Jawaharlal Nehru and 1962 or the triumph of Margaret Thatcher and Falklands of 1982. The next few months will be critical for India and Asia.

C Uday Bhaskar

Many countries saw a dip in cases. There are lessons

Achieve a recovery rate of over 70%, follow social distancing, and understand host susceptibility to virus

A close look at the Covid-19 trajectory in Europe reveals that the number of fatalities in the four hotspot countries (Spain, Italy, Germany, France) has suddenly decreased and is down to double digits daily.

Even the United Kingdom and the United States (US), with their initial sudden and steep rise in infection rates and deaths, appear to be on the path to recovery. Are there specific lessons in this? Have these nations already reached a peak and is the infection now on the decline? Is the upsurge in recovery rates related to this and, more important, does this signify a downward trend in virulence? The current pandemic is unique not just because it is caused by a new virus that puts everyone at risk, but also because of the dichotomy of the host immunity. It is a unique case of innate immunity (pre-existing, passed on by the mother since birth) in overdrive mode leading to a cytokine storm in more severe cases. The adaptive immunity, which is more potent, long-lasting and much-desired, is suppressed. The challenge is to develop therapeutic strategies for maintaining an optimal balance between the two, so as to halt viral replication and promote the destruction of virus-infected cells.

The infection rates and clinical severity of Covid-19 patients are highly variable across populations. As of June 16, more than 8.15 million cases and over 439,000 deaths have been reported from

216 countries/areas or territories. India reported a test positivity rate of 5.8% of a total of nearly 59 lakh tests and only 7.0 deaths per million population. For such a densely-populated country and despite the recent spike due to opening up, these figures are remarkably low as compared to hotspots in Europe and the US where up to 15% cases and significantly higher fatalities have been reported. What is even more remarkable is that there are relatively few severe/critical cases in India and the mortality rate out of the total positive cases is very limited (less than 3%).

The observed population-specific heterogeneity in infection rates and clinically different patterns (morbidity and mortality) are due to two factors namely, virus virulence and host-susceptibility, both of which are interdependent and together result in the manifestation of the infection. A virus that is virulent in one setting could be innocuous in another. On the other hand, host-susceptibility is dependent on the genetic diversity of genes that control immune responsiveness in a population. The latter is shaped by diverse microbial and geographical pressures, which are a hallmark of evolutionary selection and immunity to novel pathogens.

Once the peak is reached, the virus may continue to replicate though at lower levels in the face of immune recovery, as reflected in the percentage of recoveries. It is noteworthy that nations with

a recovery rate of 70% and above (China 94.3%, South Korea 90%, Germany 91.3%, Scandinavian countries 82-95%, Italy 71%) have all been able to reverse the trend with significantly reduced number of new cases and daily deaths. The so-called smouldering infections may lead to more asymptomatic cases which can improve immunity. Government responses should continue to focus on detecting and isolating infected people with symptoms.

More good news comes from New Zealand, which became the first country with zero active cases, while neighbouring Australia, with a recovery of over 92%, has also resumed normal activities. The recovery rate in India is almost static at 48% since June 1 due to greater public activity, leading to a daily spike in the number of new cases. This is shifting the recovery further ahead by weeks, maybe months. The focus has to be on slowing spread of the virus. To achieve this, novel strategies will have to be developed that may vary from state to state. The target should be to achieve recoveries upwards of 70% as early as possible.

India's situation is not very different from that of Russia and Brazil, both having reached high numbers and still reporting significantly high infection rates daily. The big question that everyone is asking is whether we are expecting the peak in India along with subsequent decline in infection rates

anytime soon. It is conceivable that in such a vast country, no one single peak can be expected and the much-anticipated decline in numbers will differ in different regions. Currently, it is apparent that many more people will get infected and self-help groups must step forwards to make Covid-19 a people's movement. The three golden principles of wearing masks, social distancing and hand hygiene are the only ways to contain the pandemic.

A recent study published in the UK (BMC Medicine 2020) concludes that physical distancing measures substantially reduce the contact levels to about 74% and this can help mitigate considerably the spread of the virus which could lead to a decline in cases in the coming weeks. The real challenge for us would be to focus on keeping the mortality rates low. Understanding host-susceptibility to the SARS-CoV-2 virus is a key step towards identifying a vaccine. It will also help determine why the disease is mild for some people but life-threatening for others. Science must also examine whether patients who recover are able to develop long-lasting immunity against reinfection and whether those reinfected will develop a milder form of the disease compared to those who were previously not infected.

Dr Narinder Kumar Mehra

Decoding China's planned aggression

Its arc of military pressure is designed to test India's preparedness, political will and resolve

The deaths and injuries to Indian and Chinese military personnel in violent clashes on the night of June 15 has escalated the intensity of the border confrontation, with the statements of China's foreign minister and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Western Theatre Command (WTC) upping the ante. It is curious how these violent, large-scale clashes occurred when Indian military personnel went to the site with prior agreement.

The statement issued by PLA WTC on June 16 expands China's territorial claims and asserts that China has for a "long time had sovereignty" over the Galwan Valley. This is the second time since the current confrontation began that China has extended its claims over the "entire Galwan Valley". The statement asserts also that Indian forces repeatedly crossed the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and warned India to "strictly restrain its front-line troops, immediately stop all provocative actions and return to the correct track of dialogue and resolve differences". China's foreign minister separately accused India of "crossing the LAC" and "provocatively attacking" Chinese personnel.

Beijing quickly sought to gain the propaganda high ground and portray itself as a "reasonable power" by claiming it has not disclosed the number of PLA casualties "as it doesn't want people of the two countries to compare the casualty number so as to avoid stoking public mood". Hu Jixin, editor-in-chief of the official Global Times, warned the Indian side, "Don't be arrogant and misread Chinese restraint as being weak. China doesn't want to have a clash with India, but we don't fear it." Later, unconfirmed reports put the numbers as close to 45 Chinese killed and injured. China's social media is abuzz with netizens asking for the number of Chinese casualties. This will put



pressure on China's leadership. These violent clashes and loss of lives have raised the stakes for the leadership of both countries and will make negotiations for disengagement more difficult.

It is important to remember that since the beginning of May, China has created an arc of sustained military pressure along India's northern borders stretching over 1,000 kilometres from Daulet Beg Oldi in Ladakh to Naku La in north Sikkim. China's action blends military, civil and diplomatic instruments. Confrontations between Indian and Chinese troops, or Chinese military activity, have been reported from a

number of places including Daulet Beg Oldi, Gogra, Hot Springs, Galwan Valley, Chushul, Pangong, Demchok, Shiquanhe, Rudok and Naku La in north Sikkim. Such a military build-up takes planning and preparation. At least three military sub-districts (MSDs), namely Hetien, Ngari and Shigatse, subordinate to the Xinjiang and Tibet Military Regions, are involved in this. Both Military Regions come under PLA WTC, which exercises operational jurisdiction over the Chinese side of the entire 4,057 km border with India. Related civilian activity by the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and Rudok County administrations

pointing to long-term interest in the Pangong Lake has been noticed. On April 21, Dorjee Tsedup, deputy chairman of the TAR People's Government and head of Pangong Lake Governance travelled to Ngari (Ali)'s Rutok County to inspect the lake and its environment. Hinting at long-term plans for Pangong Lake, Dorjee Tsedup emphasised that law enforcement and protection of the lake "is important for long-term work". Days later, Rutok County's judicial bureau and the Ngari regional customs and commerce bureau officials conducted propaganda campaigns to explain the alignment of China's border in the border villages of Deru and Jaggang also known as Chagkang village, not far from

Demchok in Ladakh. In late May, the Ngari municipal public security bureau revealed that all public security personnel in Ngari received "intensive real combat training". It is worth noting here that General Li Zuoqiang, chief of the joint staff department of the Central Military Commission and the military commanders of the South Xinjiang Military District and the Tibet Military Region have long years of experience in the area. They would have been involved in planning this force build-up and formulating its objectives. After the 73-day face-off at Doklam in 2017, the number of ground and air exercises held by PLA in the high altitude Tibetan Plateau has increased with

regular references to India. The commander of the Western Theatre Command and former commander of the Shigatse MSD would also have memories of the disengagement at Doklam. China is, meanwhile, creating additional points of potential pressure. It seems to have instigated Nepal's Prime Minister KP Oli to raise a contentious, emotional claim on a border dispute with India. A report indicates that since May 8, PLA is constructing, or upgrading, a military training base on the Tibet-Bhutan border opposite Drowa village in Lhodrak County, Shannan, TAR. The recent tweet by the spokesman of the Chinese Embassy in Islamabad suggesting that the standoff in Ladakh may be linked to the revocation of Article 370 is another indicator. He deleted the tweet later.

Viewed in this backdrop, the activity at multiple points along India's borders is different from earlier intrusions. It suggests a larger objective with the Chinese testing India's military preparedness, political will and resolve. In view of the domestic and international pressures on Xi Jinping, he will be reluctant to withdraw forces without showing substantive gains, which points to protracted negotiations.

By Jayadeva Ranade

China's Reason For Clash With India Despite Saying Otherwise

No foreign diplomat understands China better than the legendary Henry Kissinger. In his book on China, Kissinger narrates an interesting tale in the context of the India-China war in 1962. He recalls that in October 1962, the then supreme leader of China, Mao Zedong, called a meeting of his top military commanders and political leaders in Beijing. This was when China was engaged in a military conflict with India and Mao had decided to break the stalemate. He told his audience, "China and India are not doomed to perpetual enmity. They could enjoy a long period of peace again, but to do



so, China had to use force to 'knock' India back 'to the negotiating table.' Kissinger writes that "China executed a sudden, devastating blow to the Indian positions and then retreated to the previous line of control even going so far as to return the captured Indian heavy weaponry".

Today, when India is engaged with China in its worst crisis since 1962, I am reminded of those words. 20 brave Indian soldiers have been

martyred in a bloody skirmish with Chinese troops in the Galwan Valley. The number of casualties is likely to go up. In eastern Ladakh, some reports say China has forcibly occupied more than 60 square miles of Indian territory. This can be construed as the most serious crisis for this government since Narendra Modi assumed office in 2014. The crisis erupted suddenly in the month of April and the Indian side failed to understand the real Chinese motive.

(Contd on page 13)

Reset ties with China

Beijing crossed a threshold. India must be strong



With its aggression in the Galwan Valley, Ladakh, China has crossed a threshold and pushed the relationship with India to a dangerous low, with long-lasting consequences. Chinese soldiers used the opportunity of a negotiated withdrawal operation to viciously attack a supervisory Indian contingent. The first Indian military casualties along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in 45 years, and the seeming manner of their deaths, are a tragedy. While the present crisis in Ladakh was unusual in terms of the number and size of Chinese intrusions, it appeared to have similarities with past patterns of intimidation. Beijing would intrude; there would be some pushing and shoving; then it would withdraw, feeling a message had been sent. Not this time. Galwan Valley indicates there has been a dramatic shift in Chinese tactics, one that will require an equally drastic re-evaluation of India's position.

First, it is important to diagnose the roots of Beijing's behaviour. At the macro-level, it is clear that China — under President Xi Jinping — believes the time has come to assert its power on the international stage. This has translated into China violating international norms and law (South China Sea); engaging in predatory, almost colonial, economic practices (Belt and Road Initiative); being brazen, rather than introspective and transparent, about its role in causing crises with global impact (the coronavirus pandemic); encroaching upon the sovereignty and territorial integrity of neighbours (Japan and India); intervening in the politics of democracies (from European nations to

Australia); exporting its own ideological worldview to other countries (especially in South Asia); and becoming even more repressive at home (Xinjiang, Tibet and Hong Kong).

In this backdrop, China wants to limit New Delhi's power and ambition; it wants India to accept Beijing's primacy in Asia and beyond; it wants to impose costs on India for deepening ties with the United States (US); and it wants to continue using Pakistan, which has now become almost its client State with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, to inflict terror on India. Concerned about India's upgradation of border infrastructure and motivated by a desire to change facts on the ground, with its recent actions, China has violated every border pact signed in the last three decades to maintain peace and tranquillity and engaged in unacceptable aggression. India will have to respond. But it must do so strategically, not emotionally. There have to be two layers of response. The first priority has to be to restore status quo ante at the border as it existed in April. This will require both a display of military strength at the border by standing up to Chinese aggression, and diplomatic work by making it clear to Beijing that its intervention will lead to heavy costs across all spheres of the relationship. The political leadership, while providing strategic guidance, must give all the support the armed forces need at this moment and carefully examine the possibility of inflicting costs on China in other theatres (including business and trade) while keeping the conflict within limits. It must also

mobilise international opinion to expose Chinese aggression at a time when a humanitarian, economic and health crisis (originating in China) has engulfed the world. But more fundamentally, India will have to reconsider its entire geopolitical posture. Engagement with China is essential and should continue. But there can be no appeasement. Policymakers need to go back to the drawing board and examine ways to build leverage against Beijing. India should consider taking a

stronger position on some years back but Tibet. It must double down on its partnership with the US, make Quad (which also includes Japan and Australia) a permanent arrangement, and be a part of any club that seeks to contain Chinese power. India needs to re-examine its trade, technology and investment ties with China, for all these appear to have benefited Beijing more than Delhi. It needs to ramp up its military modernisation, identify vulnerabilities across sectors, and prepare for a two-front situation — which may have seemed unthinkable

India will also have to invest more in South Asia, ensure there are friendly governments in neighbouring capitals, and push back on Chinese efforts to encircle Delhi. The government will also, domestically, need to take the Opposition into confidence (an all-party meeting scheduled for Friday is a positive development) and prepare public opinion. As India battles the coronavirus pandemic and a recession, the security threat from China has added to the challenge. But India has to display strength and wisdom and defend itself.

China's Reason For Clash With India Despite Saying Otherwise

(Contd from page 12)

Neither the government nor the experts can pinpoint to one particular reason for the Chinese belligerence.

China till now has not spelt out the reason for its aggression. And what is most baffling is the audacity of the Chinese troops - they decided on a deadly blow to India when the military leaders of both the countries are involved in trying to find a solution. It was reported that after talks between the commanders of both armies, troops from both sides have pulled back by a few kilometres. It is beyond my comprehension why Indian troops retreated when they are not the ones to have crossed the line; it was Chinese troops which entered the Indian territory. In the absence of a clear motive, can it be said that this deadly attack on Indian soldiers is an attempt to force India to the negotiation table? But the issue then is - negotiation for what and why?

In the last few weeks, Chinese newspaper The Global Times which is the mouthpiece of the Chinese government has hinted at several reasons for the Chinese anger vis-a-vis India. There appear to be two potent reasons. The first is India's growing proximity to the USA. China believes that there is a convergence of interest of India and USA to create an anti-China axis in the India-Pacific region. Events like India becoming a part of the "Quad" of USA, Australia and Japan, and the US's advocacy that India should be a member of expanded G7 have fuelled its doubt about India playing a proxy game for the USA. Then, Modi going out of his way to welcome Donald Trump in events like 'Howdy Modi' in USA and 'Namaste Trump' in Ahmedabad irritated it no end. Global Times writes on 23 February 2020, "China should not blithely ignore US overture to India". This was written when Trump was in India.

On June 5, 2020, The Global Times again published an article which said, "Since Modi began his second term, India's attitude towards China has changed...it is fair to say that India has been active in many US plans to target China." These are strong words. And obviously China has been sending feelers to India and it was up to the leadership of the country to take the hint. Undoubtedly, a sovereign and proud country like India cannot be pressured to conduct its foreign policy according to the diktats of another nation, but it is also a fact that India can't ignore the feelings of a big power like China in its neighbourhood. It should be deliberated if it was necessary to have a virtual conference with the Australian Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, at a time when the Chinese had occupied India's territory.

Secondly, the Modi government's effort to change the geographical landscape of Jammu and Kashmir has also not been appreciated by the China leadership. The statement by Home Minister Amit Shah in parliament during the discussion on Article 370 that Aksai Chin in Ladakh is a part of India seems to have provoked the Chinese leadership. An article was penned by a senior Chinese official, Wang Shida, very recently. He wrote that "Abrogation of Art 370 posed a serious challenge to the sovereignty of Pakistan and China". After the abrogation of 370, China went out of its way to support Pakistan.

It was because of China that for the first time in the last 50 years, Kashmir was discussed in the Security Council of the United Nations, though informally. Therefore, Chinese troops entering Indian territory in areas like the Galwan Valley is a clear indication that it has bigger plans and it is for India to conduct its diplomacy accordingly. It appears that Prime Minister Modi has been wrongly

advised. No effort was made by his government to pacify Chinese leaders prior to this deadly clash. Now, the killing of Indian soldiers in the line of duty has created a situation which will make his job more difficult. There are many in his ideological family and outside, who, on account of hyper-nationalism and jingoism, will be asking him for 'an eye for an eye' solution; they will attack his leadership if he dithers. But the moot question is, can or should India be more aggressive? The pragmatic answer is a big "No" for two reasons. Firstly, China has very carefully chosen the timing of its operation. It has entered Indian territory when India is under lockdown due to the Coronavirus and is dealing with a battered economy. While China has also suffered, there are forecasts that it could be the only major economy that does not face negative growth. Secondly, if China's defense spending is 261 billion dollars, then India's is only 71 billion dollars. Since 2000, China has been working on the plan to make its army the most powerful in the world by 2049. Chinese president Xi Jinping in May asked the military to "scale up the battle preparedness, visualising the worst-case scenario." Among BJP leaders and supporters, it is very proudly said that India under Modi is no longer India of Nehru in 1962. This sounds very attractive when it is voiced by our so-called nationalist TV anchors, but the reality is that China today is a superpower with a clear ambition to displace America as the most influential force in world politics. India is a responsible nation which relies on diplomatic and back-channel talks to defuse tensions. The Chinese have not entered our territory to launch a full-scale war with India. At the outside, they want to force India to negotiate, as Mao told his commanders in 1962. This is not the time for India to react in anger.

By Ashutosh

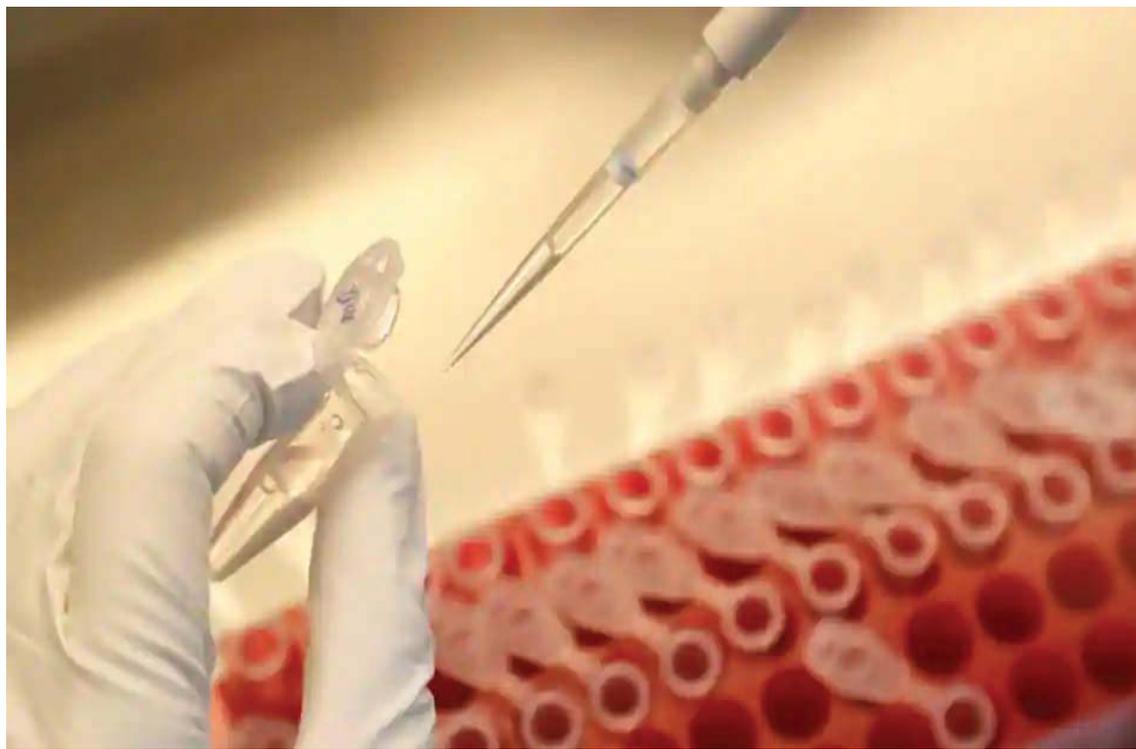
India is key to the global battle against Covid-19

Beating the disease will require innovation, equity and global collaboration. India scores on all three counts

By Mark Suzman

I was last in India in November. Back then, my meetings were about subjects such as financial services, rural poverty, and philanthropy. No one even mentioned the word “pandemic”. Just six months on, there is now talk of little else, with the world rocked by a disease, causing human, economic, and social misery on a scale most of us have not experienced in our lifetimes.

As Bill Gates shared with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India’s response to Covid-19 to date is encouraging. The actions taken so far have kept the loss of life and livelihoods well below those experienced in countries in Europe and the United States (US). Our foundation is supporting this national response with technical assistance, digital tools, training for health care workers, and other programmes in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. But like every other country in the world, India’s weapons against the virus are mainly limited to



measures such as physical distancing, closing shops, stay-at-home orders, and suspending travel. That’s because there are no drugs to treat the disease, and no vaccine to stop people catching it in the first place.

The good news is that India is also responding to this global challenge. And the genius of its scientists, inventors and

engineers, the capacity of its drug-manufacturers, its ability to meet the highest safety standards for medicines, and culture of collaboration put it at the forefront of the race to rescue the world from this pandemic.

Ultimately, beating Covid-19 will take innovation to get the solutions we need; equity to ensure they are affordable,

available and accessible to everyone who needs them; and global cooperation because this is a challenge too immense for one country or one company to go it alone. Just consider what India has already accomplished on these fronts, and it’s clear that this is its moment to lead.

When it comes to innovation, India is already a significant

player in global health research and development. Thanks to vaccines developed by Indian companies, including Serum Institute, BioE, and Bharat Biotech, who our foundation has partnered with, fewer children around the world than ever before are dying from diseases such as measles, pneumonia and rotavirus. This expertise gives India’s vaccines industry a significant advantage in developing cost-effective, quality-assured vaccines as it turns its attention to Covid-19.

Today, Indian companies have 30 potential vaccines in their pipelines, with several of the most promising backed by government funding. Our foundation is partnering with the department of biotechnology, the Indian Council of Medical Research, and the office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to provide insights from our global research and development work that might inform India’s vaccine development efforts.

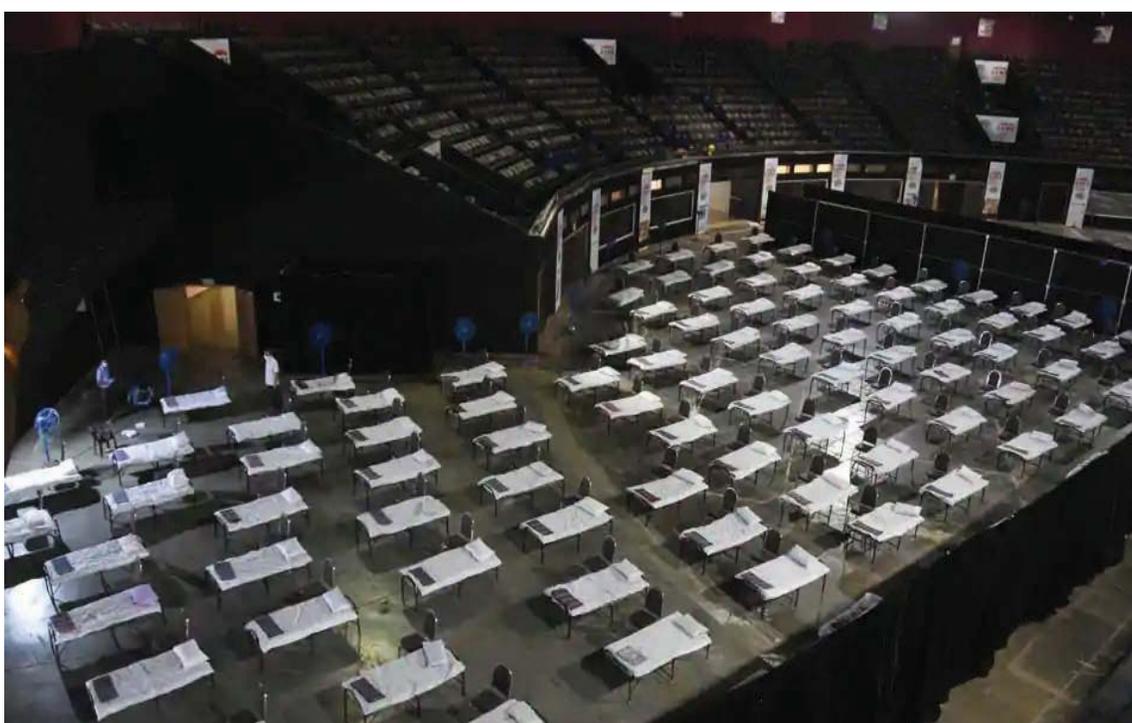
(Contd on page 31)

The worst is yet to come in Delhi and Mumbai

Requisition health care workers; create temporary facilities; have a clear chain of command; help patients

By Barkha Dutt

The financial backbone and the political nerve-centre of our country are both reeling. And the worst is still yet to come. With the biggest single-day jump in cases this week, it’s critical to understand what is going on in Mumbai and Delhi — that along with Ahmedabad and Chennai — have become the cities to worry about. As part of my now-16,000 kilometre journey across India reporting the pandemic, I have spent considerable time studying the medical infrastructure in both places, apart from tracking deaths at graveyards and crematoriums. In the pouring rain of a Mumbai storm, I met Narmada, a domestic worker, who has been living outside Mumbai’s Nair Hospital, looking after her coronavirus disease (Covid-19)-positive mother for 11



days, including cleaning up toilets, in what is meant to be a strictly isolation illness. Inside KEM Hospital, I have seen bodies unclaimed by families, and relatives huddled together with patients infected

by Covid-19 on the floor, sometimes asleep on makeshift “beds” assembled from cardboard strips. In Delhi, I met the son of Seema, a nurse orderly who was denied both a test and

treatment, including by Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Hospital where she worked. In the capital’s main crematorium, Nigambodh Ghat, I met a man unable to cremate his younger brother as there was

“no space”. For 10 days, he had run from hospital to hospital, desperately seeking help. Now he was stranded between shamshan ghats. At a graveyard in the capital, Mohammad Sabir, whose 40-year-old wife died this week, said in words that haunt me, “We are poor, we will die like insects.” I am no votary of the lockdown but some of the learnings in these cities are obvious; it is befuddling that the lockdown time was not used to implement them. In both Mumbai and Delhi, the narrative of “beds running short” is a misnomer. In fact, there are enough beds. Take Mumbai for example. In its private hospitals alone, there are 20,000 registered beds; there are another 5,000 in the public hospital system.

(Contd on page 32)

Orwellian Dystopia Is Here, So Is The New India

The way government and police work now bears part resemblance to the dystopian setting of Oceania in George Orwell's book 1984

By Pushkar Raj.

At a time when the whole world is fighting a life and death battle against a pandemic, the way people are being rounded up and sent to jail bears part resemblance to the country of Oceania in George Orwell's book 1984. We are hopeful of finding a vaccine for Covid-19, which is acting like a death warrant, soon, but liberty may not come back in public life, as we have so long known it. The new normal in democracy is frightening. Recently, two prominent human rights activists—Gautam Navlakha

and Anand Teltumbde—were arrested for their alleged involvement in Bhima Koregaon case. Police knock at the door of activists and journalists alike because they are perceived to be opposing the ideology of Hindutva or speaking up against detention of those who protest against controversial laws. Compared to Oceania, though, India has a Constitution with a chapter on fundamental rights enforceable by the judiciary. However, when Navlakha and Teltumbde sought additional time from the Supreme Court

to surrender before the trial court in the Bhima Koregaon case, the court rejected it, rescinding its own observation earlier, i.e., bail, not jail to the accused, thereby concurring with the government, effacing its own purpose under the Constitution. The court overlooked that the government of the day is representative of a tiny minority (considering statistical absolutes), but the judiciary represented constitution and citizens of all ideological persuasions.

In Oceania, the ruling party's

ideology is socialism that "rejects and vilifies every principle for which the socialist movement originally stood, and it does so in the name of socialism." Similarly, Hindutva rejects foundational principle of Hinduism, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family), in the name of Hinduism.

Doublespeak

The government claimed that the CAA is neither anti-Muslim nor anti-human, though, it has no logical answers on reports of building detention camps across the country. Oceania is

a state where doublethink is the norm, which Orwell defined as "the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously and accepting both of them, such as, 'India is home to diverse cultures, India is a Hindu Rashtra; Gandhian principles are foundation of constitution, constitution does not reflect Indian ethos.' While at play, this doublethink becomes doublespeak that Orwell describes as, "to tell deliberate lies while genuinely believing in them, to forget any fact that has become inconvenient, and

then, when it becomes necessary again, to draw it back from oblivion for just as long as it is needed. In Oceania, the ruling party members distort reality and doublethink is method to achieve it. Presently, the followers of Hindutva are demanding doublethink from its citizens, and those who do not agree with or resist this state of 'cognitive dissonance' are being questioned.

Mass Surveillance

In Oceania, propaganda captures mind of people by constant bombardment of manufactured statistics, stigmatising opposition, and arousing hate. Recent media coverage of Shaheen Bagh protests comes close to, how Emmanuel Goldstein, the opposition leader in the book, is portrayed—as a traitor. In Oceania Thinkpol (thought police) is entrusted to detect, arrest, and kill thought criminals, citizens whose intellectual, mental, and moral independence challenges the political orthodoxy of Ingsoc. They spy upon the people through ubiquitous two-way telescreens. Indian government's National Intelligence Grid and facial recognition system will perform similar tasks. So, when the police raid people's house, seizing cell phones and computers, they already establish guilt by thought and association as they know, with whom the seditious citizen has spoken.

Modi Government's J-K Gambit Has Had Pakistan, China And Nepal Riled

China's Asia policy rests on its desire to keep alliances from building amongst its regional rivals

By KC Singh

The standoff over Chinese intrusions across the Line of Actual Control (LAC) had simmered since early May. Some analysts using private satellite pictures revealed that Chinese ingress was seen in areas like Galwan valley—Indian control over which was never disputed—or even deeper on the north shore of Pangong Tso, the world's highest saltwater lake. Troops, larger than normal in number, were also observed all summer patrolling the LAC in contested areas.

The Indian government kept the imbroglio quiet, to avoid triggering jingoism in both nations.

Existing methodology and mechanisms under LAC management agreements of 1993, 1996 and 2013 were used. On June 6, the Indian corps commander met his counterpart and the initial public comments were optimistic. But things went horribly wrong on June 15 when troops of 16 Bihar Regiment, led by their commanding officer (CO), proceeded to occupy an area vacated by PLA. They were attacked by the Chinese with improvised weapons. Col B. Santosh Babu, the CO, and 19 colleagues were brutally killed. The external affairs ministry (MEA) revealed in a statement that foreign minister S. Jaishankar on June 17 phoned his counterpart Wang Yi and protested "in the strongest terms" over PLA's violent reaction to India destroying a

Chinese structure on the Indian side of the LAC. Jaishankar warned of its "serious impact" on relations between the two countries. The statement said both sides "would implement the disengagement understanding of June 6 sincerely".

This sounds optimistic but must be viewed cautiously against past experience, current Chinese motives and the geo-political context. Firstly, Chinese desire to contain India in a South Asian construct began in 1963, immediately after 1962 Sino-Indian war. Pakistan settled their border with China, ceding Sakhshgam valley. While China could not help Pakistan during the 1971 Indo-Pak war, as China was embroiled in its own Cultural Revolution, they vented ire on Bangladesh by delaying its recognition. After the 1972 Simla Summit, China began clandestine transfer of nuclear weapons technology and material to Pakistan, entrenching its position in Islamabad.

Secondly, post-Mao Zedong, China adopted pragmatic dualism. Following Rajiv Gandhi's 1988 China visit while relations normalised and trade boomed, mostly in China's favour, China continued to woo anti-India forces in South Asia. Since then it opposes India's permanent membership in the UN Security Council, blocks Indian entry into the Nuclear Suppliers Group, counters

listing of Pakistani terrorism masterminds by the UNSC and so on. But whenever economic interests beckoned, China chose conciliation. To maintain peace and tranquility at the LAC, agreements were signed in 1993, 1996 and 2013. After the 1989 Tiananmen massacre, under western sanctions Chinese growth stumbled. Its GDP fell from 11.2 per cent in 1988 to 4.2 per cent in 1989 and 3.9 per cent in 1990. It recovered in 1991-94 but again began sliding, worsened by the Asian financial crisis in 1997. Similarly, the most promising border resolution agreement was signed on April 11, 2005 on "Parameters and Guiding Principles of the Settlement of the India-China Boundary Question".

Don't be fooled : The US supreme court hasn't suddenly become leftwing

The ostensible issue in the DACA case was whether, under the Administrative Procedure Act, the Trump administration's had undergone the proper process for presenting its justifications for ending the program, and whether the administration's judgments about DACA's legality had undergone the correct amount of deliberation. Justice is sometimes served at the supreme court, but when it is it's often by chance

This is a rather dull question of administrative law, and the issues being argued about have very little to do with whether or not DACA is a good thing. Of course, it could be that John Roberts's subconscious sympathies for immigrants are influencing his judgment on the

Alongside, India was finalising and eventually clinched its civil nuclear deal with US. Thus, China's Asia policy rests on its desire to keep alliances from building amongst its regional rivals, with offshore US support, using the carrot and the stick.

There may be multiple drivers for the current crisis, which catches India amidst the pandemic-related health and economic stress. Last year's abrogation of Article 370 and division of Jammu and Kashmir definitely are factors. China had protested both to show support for Pakistan, but also create grounds for intervention. It also puts India on notice to avoid closer convergence with US and China's regional rivals Australia, Japan and

Vietnam. India is also chairing executive board of the World Health Organization, where a probe into the Covid pandemic is underway. India has also tightened the rules for Chinese foreign direct investment in vital sectors.

Additionally, embarrassing a politically ascendant Narendra Modi, diminishes one Xi rival. It also signals to countries in SAARC and ASEAN that China is the dominant power and shall brook no challenge. China has to take a call. It can gradually restore status quo ante, obtaining from India assurances on its concerns regarding Indian infrastructure upgrade near LAC. It can do so partially, hoping India will settle for a face-saver. Or it can dig in and force India to react and then respond.

administrative law question. But it could also be that they aren't, and that he's genuinely committed to ensuring that executive branch agencies undergo a particular series of steps in order to make or rescind new rules. If that's the case, under a Democratic administration, progressives might find that Roberts proves just as much an obstacle to the accomplishment of progressive goals as he is currently proving to the accomplishment of Trump's goals. The law that is applied in our favor one day will be applied against us the next.

Judges make decisions for all kinds of reasons, ranging from their ideals of justice to whether or not they have had lunch. Sometimes partisan political values guide a

judge, but sometimes the desire to avoid looking like a political partisan guides them. The point is: we can't rely on the justices' conscience to improve the world. Even "progressive" justices like Ruth Bader Ginsburg often turn out to have unexpectedly conservative streaks, and while a conservative may look like a lefty from time to time, it's frequently because of an obscure procedural issue that nobody except lawyers understands or cares about. Justice is sometimes served at the supreme court, but when it is it's often by chance. The court won't save us, and conservative justices are still not our friends.

By Nathan Robinson, Courtesy
The Guardian

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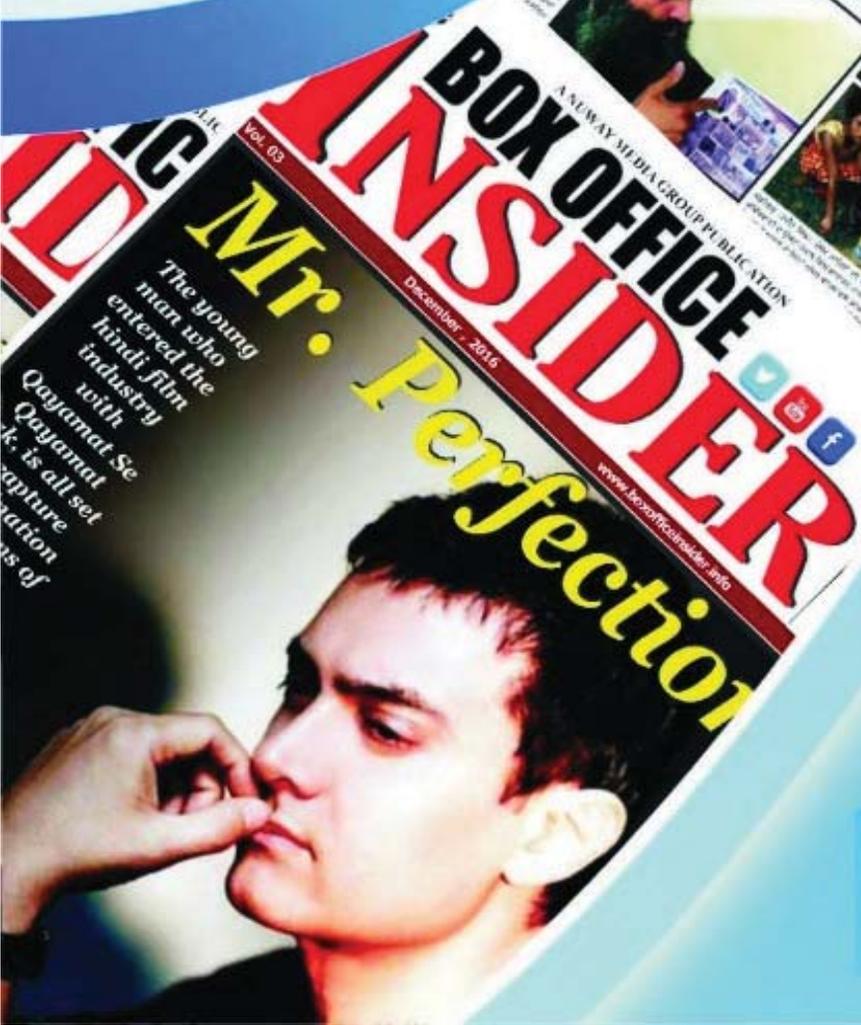
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India-China's deadliest border clash since 1975 explained

The weeks-long stand-off snowballed into the deadliest clash between India and China in 45 years.

(News Agencies) India and China, on Monday evening engaged in their first deadly conflict in at least 45 years, resulting in 20 deaths on the Indian side, including that of a commanding officer, and possibly 43 casualties including injuries on the Chinese side, pushing the bilateral relationship between the two nuclear powers to an all-time low.

May 5-6: Violent clash between Indian and Chinese patrols on the northern bank of Ladakh's Pangong Tso lake. Soldiers exchange blows, throw stones at each other and Chinese troops attack Indian soldiers with nail-studded clubs. Scores of soldiers (from both sides) injured in the skirmish involving 250 men.

May 9: Tensions spread to eastern sector. Heated confrontation between Indian and Chinese soldiers in north Sikkim's Naku La area. Four Indian and seven Chinese soldiers injured during the face-off involving 150 soldiers.

May 10: Army issues statement confirming Naku La face-off, says aggressive behaviour by soldiers led to injuries on both sides. Army officers also confirm the Pangong Tso clash.

May 12: Reports of tensions building up in Galwan Valley emerge. In a statement, army reiterates "face-offs and aggressive behaviour occur" along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China as the boundary

is not resolved.

May 19: As tensions simmer in Pangong Tso, Galwan Valley and Hot Springs, China's foreign ministry accuses Indian troops of trespassing across LAC, saying Beijing had to take "necessary countermeasures" after the Indian side allegedly obstructed normal patrols by Chinese troops.

May 21: India strongly refutes China's contention that tensions in the Ladakh and Sikkim sectors were triggered by Indian troops. External affairs ministry says Indian activities entirely on the Indian side of LAC and China hindering India's normal patrols.

May 22: Army chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane makes a low-key visit to Leh-based 14 Corps headquarters for a security review of the sensitive sector. Troop build-up and military reinforcement from both sides.

May 25: China marshals close to 5,000 soldiers on its side of the disputed border in the Ladakh sector where India has also sent military reinforcements.

May 27: The army's top brass discusses security issues including the ongoing border row with China in eastern Ladakh where Indian and Chinese soldiers are locked in a standoff at multiple points.

May 30: Defence minister Rajnath Singh says India and China talking to each other at military and diplomatic levels to resolve the standoff, assures the country that government will not

SETBACK FOR INDIA-CHINA RELATIONS

The weeks-long stand-off snowballed into the deadliest clash between the two in 45 yrs

May 5-6: Scores of troopers injured after scuffle involving 250 soldiers of Indian and Chinese armies at Ladakh's Pangong Tso

May 9: Another skirmish in Sikkim's Naku La area leaves 4 Indian and 7 Chinese soldiers injured; tensions build up in Galwan Valley of Ladakh days later

May 21: India refutes Beijing's contention that it obstructed Chinese patrols

May 25: China marshals 5,000 soldiers on its side of disputed border in Ladakh; India too sends military

reinforcements

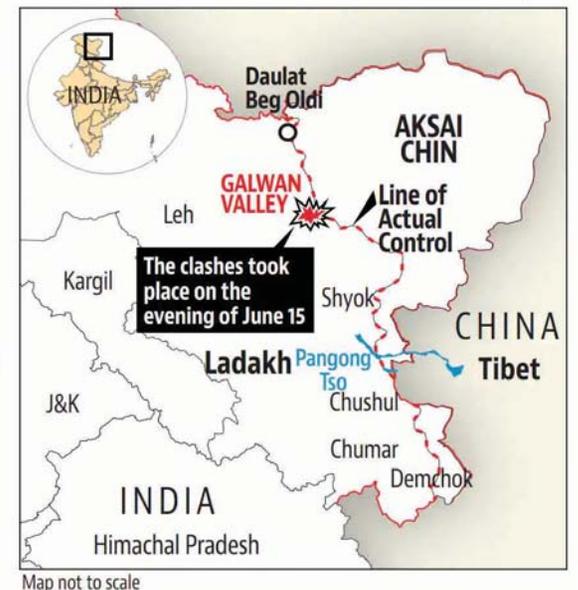
May 30: Defence minister says India and China have begun diplomatic and military-level talks

June 6: Top military officers of Indian and Chinese armies discuss de-escalation plan

June 9: Army officers say 'limited military disengagement' has begun at 3 hot spots along LAC including Galwan Valley

June 13: Army chief says situation is 'under control'

June 15: 20 Indian Army personnel killed in 'violent face-off' in Galwan Valley



allow India's dignity to be hurt.

June 2: In the first official acknowledgement of a troop build-up along the border with China, Singh says a significant number of Chinese troops are present along LAC and that the Indian Army is matching the neighbour's military moves.

June 6: In a rare meeting between top military officers, Lieutenant General Harinder Singh, commander of Leh-based 14 Corps, and Major General Liu Lin, commander of the People's Liberation Army in South Xinjiang region, discuss de-escalation plan.

June 9: Army officers say China has begun withdrawing its soldiers from three hotspots along LAC, with India reciprocating by

pulling back its forces deployed in those pockets. They say "limited military disengagement" has started in the Galwan valley, Patrolling Point 15 and Hot Springs.

June 10: Indian and Chinese delegations, led by Major General-rank officers, meet at Patrolling Point 14 at the Galwan Valley area as part continuing efforts to resolve the confrontation that has eased slightly with limited disengagement of forces at some LAC hotspots. This is the fourth round of talks between the two-star generals to break the stalemate.

June 12: Major General-rank officers meet for the fifth time to discuss de-escalation plan and ease border tensions. Chinese

deployment in their 'depth areas' across LAC includes more than 8,000 troops, tanks, artillery guns, fighter bombers, rocket forces and air defence radars.

June 13: Army chief says disengagement of Indian and Chinese forces taking place in a "phased manner" along LAC with China where the situation is "under control".

June 15: Army delegations from India and China hold discussions again. Talks take place at two locations along the LAC --- brigadier-ranked officers meet in the Galwan Valley and Colonel-ranked officers in Hot Springs. The engagement between the two sides happens the same evening.

Beijing's Tibet plan, Delhi's infra push possible triggers for China's troop build-up

Experts say China is irked by India's speedy development of infrastructure, especially in recent years, in strategic sections of the LAC, including in Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh. This includes bridges and other structures along Darbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldie road.

(News Agencies) Analysts say there could be a host of reasons behind China's massive troop build-up along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) that flared up into the first conflict between the sides in almost 45 years: from Beijing's desire to tighten its grip on Tibet to anger over New Delhi's rapid development of infrastructure in border areas. Tensions between the two sides first flared up in early May following clashes between Indian and Chinese troops in the Sikkim and Ladakh sectors of the LAC.

The deployment of reinforcements by both sides led up to the "violent face-off" in Galwan Valley on Monday night that left at least 20 Indian soldiers, including a colonel, dead. "The obvious priority for the Chinese side in Galwan Valley appears to be to move the perception of the LAC to their advantage," said one of several people familiar with developments who spoke to HT on condition of anonymity. This sentiment in New Delhi appears to have been vindicated as a statement in Mandarin

issued by the western command of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) on Tuesday said: "The sovereignty of the Galwan River Valley has always been ours."

This is what China does, the people cited above pointed out: forcibly establish a military presence in a disputed region and then stake claim to it. The people said China was also irked by India's speedy development of infrastructure, especially in recent years, in strategic sections of the LAC, including in Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh. This includes bridges and other structures along the key Darbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldie (DSDBO) road. But there could have been other irritants as well.

"Then there's Tibet and the Dalai Lama factor. Chinese officials have been saying for some time that India shouldn't come in the way of their efforts to choose the next Dalai Lama. The current Dalai Lama is based in India along with the Tibetan administration in-exile and that's always been a problem for China," said a second

person. Or it could be plain old-fashioned distraction. The people said China's actions along the LAC could also have been aimed at countering growing criticism within the country and abroad of Beijing's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the calls from several countries, including India, for an examination of the response from global bodies such as the World Health Organization (WHO) as well as a probe to identify the "zoonotic source" of the virus and the route that led to human infections.

"Linking the border stand-off to the pandemic may sound far-fetched to some but President Xi Jinping has been strongly criticised within the country for his handling of the Covid-19 crisis. This stand-off could help burnish his image and also help distract attention from the blame from around the world," said the second person. "China has also watched the role India has sought to play in shaping the post-Covid world order and they could be thinking this is

the perfect way to cut India down to size," the second person added. The people attributed the timing of the troop build-up and intrusions into the Indian side of the LAC to the preparations apparently done by the Chinese side over the winter months.

"This was a coldly calculated move and there doesn't seem to be anything spontaneous about their actions. They prepared through the winter and acted as summer set in," said a third person. Amitabh Mathur, a former special secretary in the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), said the time has come for the Indian government to take the opposition parties into confidence so that the political leadership could present a united stand on the border stand-off. He too said the Tibet factor could have influenced China's actions along the LAC. "The government has to take the opposition into confidence and brief them and plan a coordinated response before things spiral further out of control."



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What is China trying to achieve: 5 experts weigh in

China's actions along the LAC, which have gradually escalated in tone and tempo over the last few weeks, are a reflection of its growing military capabilities and its attempts to dictate the terms of engagement to India, experts say.



(News Agencies) With the Indian Army now sustaining fatalities in the tense border confrontation with China, the key question is what China's objective is. Regardless of the tactical details and the legal and linguistic gymnastics over whether China has entered Indian "territory", there is no question that the scope, scale and swath of Chinese pressure is unprecedented and strategic. There are many hypotheses but few definitive answers: Is this about Indian

infrastructure development along the DSDBO [Darbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldie] road? Article 370? To settle the border unilaterally on their terms through fait accompli? General assertiveness East and West? Something else? Without any definitive statements from the Chinese, we are left with much speculation. And it is when the Chinese say nothing that one should worry. The objective may become clear in due time, but one thing is clear now: The PLA came to play and they came to stay,

and they are intent on making India pay. China's recent intrusions aim to serve three purposes: First, to stop or slow down India's border infrastructure development, second, to restrict New Delhi to South Asia, thus reducing its ambitions for a global role, and three, to weaken the traction the Quad partnership has been gaining of late. Kathmandu and Islamabad are happy to lend a helping hand to Beijing on the second objective mentioned above. Our response has to be firm and resolute. For Beijing, border transgressions are a cheap instrument to apply pressure on India's political leadership. The Chinese side doesn't tell you "why", "why now", and indeed what their claim actually is. By keeping New Delhi guessing as to its intentions, Beijing puts the Indian government on the back foot on lots of issues. For instance, we are now asking whether it is to pressure India to stay neutral in the WHO investigation on the origins of Covid-19, whether it is to retaliate against FDI restrictions, to coerce India on the 5G issue, to counter the Modi government's move to change the status of Jammu and Kashmir, or indeed in response to purely military developments.

Corona Conundrum

Techies Forced to Take Up MGNREGA Jobs, Theatre Artistes Run Food Carts in Karnataka

(News Agencies) Desperate times call for desperate measures. The breakout of a global pandemic, Covid-19, has pushed millions out of their comfortable lives or jobs of their choice. And the jobless in Karnataka are now taking up any available employment just to survive, even if it is manual labour. Also, some jobless professional such as theatre artistes are being forced to sell food on the roadside to survive the pandemic in Bengaluru.

Several dozen graduates, postgraduates, diploma holders and even some techies who have lost their jobs in Bengaluru have gone back to their native places to earn a livelihood under MGNREGA.

According to confirmed reports, over 50 such youths are working under the rural employment guarantee scheme earning Rs 275 per day in Bidar district alone. They are engaged in building canals, desilting check dams, tanks, wells and even repairing roads. According to Sharath Kumar Abhiman, assistant director of MGNREGA in Bidar district, these are people from poor families who used to earn a decent living in cities like Bengaluru before the lockdown.

Intel agencies red-flag use of 52 mobile apps with links to China: Complete list

The National Security Council Secretariat has backed the recommendation to block or discourage use of 52 mobile apps



(News Agencies) Indian intelligence agencies have asked the government to block or advise people to stop use of 52 mobile applications linked to China over concerns that these weren't safe and ended up extracting a large amount of data outside India, people familiar with the development told Hindustan Times. The list of applications sent by the security establishment to the government include video conferencing app Zoom, short-video app TikTok, and other utility and content apps such as UC browser, Xender, SHAREit and Clean-master. A senior government official said the recommendation of the intelligence agencies had recently been supported by the National Security Council Secretariat, which felt these could be detrimental to India's security. In April this year, the

home ministry had issued an advisory on use of Zoom on the recommendation of the national cybersecurity agency – Computer Emergency Response

Team of India (CERT-in). India wasn't the first country to restrict use of Zoom within the government. Taiwan has banned government agencies from using Zoom, the German Foreign Ministry restricts its use of Zoom to emergency situations on personal computers while the United States Senate advises members to use other platforms. The company had responded to the home ministry advisory, insisting that it was serious about user

security. There have been calls for action against mobile apps that are perceived to be compromising security from time to time. And companies such as the hugely-popular video popular video-sharing app TikTok - owned and operated by Chinese internet company ByteDance - have issued denials. But officials said there were inputs that many Android and IOS apps, either developed by Chinese developers or launched by companies with Chinese links, had the potential to be used as

spyware or other malicious ware. There have been reports that security agencies had advised security personnel from using them in view of the "detrimental impact that this could have on data security. Such concerns about backdoors in China-linked hardware or software have been frequently articulated by western security agencies too. One argument has been that China could use its access to degrade communications services in case of conflict.

Chinese Violence Completely Unprecedented, Govt Should be Firm in Statements: Lt Gen DS Hooda

(News Agencies) Calling the violence at the Line of Actual Control by the Chinese side as completely unprecedented, former head of Indian Army's Northern Command Lieutenant General (Retd) DS Hooda said clear rules of engagement are required going forward. The retired General, under whose leadership India carried out the surgical strikes against terror camps in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, told CNN-News18 this is not the first time that China has resorted to violence along the border, but the situation never escalated to this extent. His

reaction came a day after the Army confirmed that at least 20 Indian armed forces personnel were killed in a clash with Chinese troops at the Galwan Valley in Ladakh.

Government sources say at least another two dozen soldiers are battling life-threatening injuries, and over 110 have needed treatment. "The toll will likely go up," a military officer with knowledge of the issue said. "I am sure that there are casualties on both sides...we are in a situation where Chinese are resorting to violence and this is not for the first time," he said.

Lt General Hooda also called upon the Indian authorities to be more firm in responding to the Chinese aggression while making statements, as the government had till now maintained that military and diplomatic dialogue was being used to defuse the border row that has lasted for more than a month. In his first reaction since the deaths of the soldiers were first confirmed on Tuesday afternoon, defence minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday gave his condolences to the families of 20 soldiers who laid down their lives in the violence face-off, but did not mention China.

India and China: How Nepal's new map is stirring old rivalries



(News Agencies) Nepal's parliament is expected this week to formally approve a revised map of the country, including three areas it disputes with its giant neighbour India. The redrawing of the map covers a relatively small region high in the Himalayas but it has stirred simmering tensions between two of the world's biggest powers, India and China. In Nepal, which is sandwiched between the two, people have reacted angrily, protesting and accusing India of disregarding the country's sovereignty. In recent months a new Indian road on a strategic mountain pass fanned tensions, as did a revised map put out by Delhi showing disputed areas as belonging to India. To top it off India and

China are already locked in a military standoff in the northern Ladakh region of disputed Kashmir, where their troops have been facing off for weeks. Media and some officials in India have accused China of instigating the changes to Nepal's map, a charge to which China has not responded.

What triggered the row? Nepal and India share an open border of about 1,880 km (1,168 miles). The two countries have finalised maps covering 98% of the boundary, but the Lipulekh pass, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura in western Nepal are among the areas that remain contested. Together, the three areas cover about 370 sq km (140 square miles), Nepalese officials say. The strategic Lipulekh pass connects the Indian

state of Uttarakhand with the Tibet region of China. Nepal and China have been angered by India's recent moves. Delhi's published its new map of the border region in November, after it divided Indian-administered Kashmir into Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. The map incorporated some of the

territories disputed with Nepal inside India's borders. "We all agree that international boundary between two countries is defined by bilateral treaties. Any unilateral type of action cannot establish any legitimate claim of their presence," Pradeep Gyawali, Nepal's foreign minister, told the BBC. Mr

Gyawali said there was no other agreement beside the 1816 Sugauli treaty that defined the western border of Nepal with India, and that treaty clearly states that the three areas belong to Nepal. In retaliation, Nepal published its revised map last month showing the disputed areas within Nepal, infuriating India in return.

"We urge the government of Nepal to refrain from unjustified cartographic assertion and respect India's sovereignty and territorial integrity," the Indian foreign ministry said in a statement. The amendment to replace the map is expected to be passed in Nepal's parliament this week.

Maldives' Touted July Reopening Shows Complexities Behind the Hoopla

(News Agencies) The Maldives' "See You in July" social media marketing campaign may be a little premature. Just two weeks to go before reopening international borders, tour operators are still in the dark about key matters such as flight schedules and reciprocal travel corridors, while government regulations on safety protocols have not yet been finalized.

On the other hand, the reopening rah-rah has built up great excitement and interest from tourists to visit the Maldives, which has flaunted a dream welcome back: no mandatory quarantine, no Covid-19 immunity certificate needed, no Covid tests before or on arrival, no new visa rules, and no additional fees imposed. A previous draft was for a special visa costing \$100 for tourists staying a minimum of 14 nights, a

compulsory Covid-19 test upon arrival costing \$100 per test, and an immunity health certificate. If it seems too good to be true, it probably is. Industry players contacted by Skift said recovery is driven not just by a destination's travel policies but those imposed by tourists' governments. So even if the Maldives does not quarantine tourists, their own countries will upon their returns.

"The key for the destination to boom again for us will be reliant on the airlines ensuring flight routes are announced across all major hubs and that source market return quarantine regulations are eased," said Cameron Holland, CEO of Luxury Escapes, an Australian-based online company that curates travel deals for 3.2 million well-heeled members. As well, many

source markets including the UK, Maldives' fourth largest, still allow only essential travel, said David Kevan, director, Chic Locations, a UK-based luxury tour operator that specializes in Asia. Bilateral corridors or bubbles may be a solution but again, there are no details of who Maldives is discussing them with, if at all. All 10 of Maldives top source markets in 2019, namely China, India, Germany, UK, Italy, Russia, France, US, Japan and Australia in that order, currently have a 14-day quarantine for all travelers, according to a chart shown by Ghaly Marthala, founder and managing director Morteza Capital, during a webinar organized by Delivering Asia. At press time, the tourism ministry did not reply to queries from Skift regarding airlinks, airports or tourism bridges with source countries.

NYC: STOP THE SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS!

New Yorkers working together can slow the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in New York City.



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- Do not touch your face with unwashed hands.
- Do not shake hands. Instead wave or elbow bump.
- Monitor your health more closely than usual for cold or flu symptoms.



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China's 'naval base grab' in Sri Lanka exposed amid WW3 India row



(News Agencies) CHINA and India have clashed in a violent skirmish this week leading to deaths on both sides - and while the border dispute rages on, Beijing's ambitions in Asia span across the

continent. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi vowed his soldier's deaths "will not be in vain" today after yesterday's violent clash on the contested Himalayan border. Soldiers reportedly brawled with sticks, bats and bamboo sticks studded with nails in the Ladakh region. Both sides insist no shots were fired, as part of a longstanding pact. India's army said

China also suffered casualties but Beijing has given no details. While military action has long been a fear on the India-China border - Beijing has also used its economic power in Sri Lanka, countries such as the US fear.

The Mattala Rajapaksa airport is located in Sri Lanka, and was opened in March 2013

after China's government helped fund the project as it looked to expand its trading power throughout the world. Of the £166million spent on the airport, around £150million came from Beijing via the Exim Bank of China. However, this deal has become one of the most cited examples of "debt-trap diplomacy" - defined as diplomacy carried out in the bilateral relations

between countries with an often alleged negative intent. Specifically, it involves one creditor country intentionally extending credit to another debtor country with the alleged intention of extracting economic or political concessions from the debtor country when it becomes unable to honour its financial obligations. Due to Sri Lanka's inability to service the debt on the Mattala Rajapaksa airport, it was leased to the Chinese state-owned China Merchants Port Holdings Company Limited on a 99-year lease in 2017. This caused concern in the US, Japan and India that the port might be used as a Chinese naval base to contain China's geopolitical rivals. The row is reminiscent of ongoing disputes in the South China Sea as countries try to thwart Beijing's growing military presence in the contested region.

'Million at risk' as attacks on Afghan healthcare facilities rise

Red Cross raises concern over spike in attacks on health facilities and large number of coronavirus cases among medics.

(News Agencies) Rising violence and attacks on healthcare facilities amid the coronavirus pandemic have put millions of people at risk in Afghanistan, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has warned. In a statement on Wednesday, the humanitarian group said civilian casualties were on the rise even as the war-torn country battles the coronavirus pandemic. "The recent trajectory in Afghanistan is of great concern,"

said Juan Pedro Schaerer, the head of the ICRC delegation in Afghanistan. "After the hope brought by a relative reduction in hostilities in February and March, we again see more violence." The ICRC said Afghanistan's health system was stretched even before the arrival of the novel coronavirus, with limited coverage in conflict-affected areas and poor specialised healthcare. Attacks on medical staff and health facilities, such as the assault last

month on a hospital in the capital, Kabul that killed 24 people, including 16 women and two newborn babies, only made the situation worse, it said. "COVID-19 has challenged the world's most advanced nations. A country where gunmen attack a hospital stands no chance at providing quality care. We see it in health facilities in conflict-affected areas and in prisons, where people have already limited access to healthcare," Schaerer said. With a

population of more than 37 million, Afghanistan has roughly 172 hospitals and four doctors per 10,000 people, according to a 2019 government report. More than 26,000 people have so far tested positive for the coronavirus, and nearly 500 have died, according to data collected by Johns Hopkins University. Authorities imposed a nationwide lockdown after the first cases were reported in February, but people have largely ignored the regulations.

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Bangladesh archbishop critically ill with Covid-19

Catholics are praying for Archbishop Costa of Chittagong after he was hospitalized in Dhaka on June 13 with Covid-19.

By Robin Gomes

Archbishop Moses Costa of Chittagong is the first known case among Bangladesh's senior Catholic clergy to be infected with the novel coronavirus. The archbishop has been admitted to Square Hospital, Father Leonard Rebeiro, vicar general of the archdiocese said in a statement on Sunday. He was flown by helicopter from the south-eastern port city of Chittagong to Dhaka on Saturday.

Prayers urged

"Dear clergy, religious and lay faithful, Archbishop Moses M. Costa of Chittagong was admitted to Square Hospital with serious ailments on June 13," Saturday, he said. "During admission, his sample was collected for a Covid-19 test and the report came positive today," Father Rebeiro said. The vicar general also made an announcement regarding the archbishop's condition at the start of a Mass live-streamed on Sunday, the solemn feast of Corpus Christi, or the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. He offered the Mass for the archbishop's recovery and

requested all to pray for him. The news about Archbishop Costa's critical condition spread quickly across Bangladesh's tiny Catholic community, both at home and abroad. Many expressed their closeness with the archbishop, assuring and inviting prayers for his recovery. Bangladesh Catholic Students' Movement (BCSM) said its members are praying "for his speedy recovery". 69-year-old Archbishop Costa, a member of the Congregation of Holy Cross, is secretary-general of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh (CBCB) and he is also chairman of its Commission for Health Care. Saint Pope John Paul II appointed him Bishop of Dinajpur in 1996 and in 2011 Pope Benedict XVI transferred him to Chittagong. Pope Francis elevated Chittagong Diocese to the rank of archdiocese in 2017, making Bishop Costa its Archbishop.

Covid-19 in Bangladesh

Bangladesh on Tuesday confirmed 53 more fatalities from COVID-19, bringing the country's death toll to 1,262. The number of confirmed

infections in the country has totalled more than 94,000. More than 30 people from the minority Christian community of Bangladesh have been infected and 5 have died in recent weeks. Chittagong, officially known as Chattogram, is the country's second-largest city and a major financial hub. It has seen a rapid increase in coronavirus cases in recent weeks. Its Kotwali area has been marked as a hot spot.

Lockdown

Chittagong Archdiocese was among the first of the eight

Catholic dioceses in Bangladesh to issue Covid-19 health guidelines and closed all churches for public services even before the government declared a nationwide shutdown from March 26. An official from Chittagong Archdiocese told UCA News he was shocked to hear that Archbishop Costa who has been maintaining strict lockdown measures since March, was hit by the virus. All Chittagong Archdiocesan staff have been advised to stay in isolation at home and to continue working from home,

the official added. Bangladesh began easing Covid-19 restrictions on May 31 and since then all dioceses except Chittagong have opened churches for public worship including Masses. Aiming to kick-start a crumbling economy, Bangladesh has allowed the reopening of public transport, businesses, public and private offices on a limited scale maintaining strict health protocols, most importantly physical distancing. Only education institutes remain closed. (Source: UCA news)

New Delhi could opt out of Russia-India-China virtual meeting

(News Agencies) India is unlikely to join a virtual meeting of foreign ministers of the Russia-India-China (RIC) grouping scheduled for June 23 in the aftermath of the violent clash along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) that left 20 Indian soldiers dead, people familiar with developments said on Wednesday. After a weeks-long military build-up along the LAC, Indian and Chinese troops were involved in what Indian officials described as a "violent face-off"

on Monday night. One officer was among the 20 soldiers killed in the confrontation and several more were injured.

Though the border stand-off was not on the agenda of the RIC meeting via video conference, the people cited above said on condition of anonymity it appeared unlikely the Indian side would join the meet in view of the prevailing tensions with China and the domestic situation. The meeting, which hasn't been officially

announced as yet, was originally scheduled to be held in March but was postponed because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Russia recently took the initiative to organise the virtual meeting on June 22, as first reported by HT on June 13. It was subsequently deferred by a day to June 23. The meeting was expected to largely focus on enhancing cooperation to tackle the fallout of the global pandemic and the agenda was to have been finalised by early this week.

Bangladesh suspends visa-on-arrival indefinitely amid Covid-19 crisis

The decision has been taken considering the Covid-19 situation in Bangladesh



Bangladesh has extended the suspension of visa-on-arrival services for nationals of all countries until further notice, as the Covid-19 pandemic in the country is worsening. An order in this regard was issued by the Home Ministry's Security Services Division on Tuesday. It read that only foreign investors and businessmen might be able to get the services upon showing proper credentials. However, they have to submit a medical clearance certificate, by taking a PCR test which was obtained within 72 hours of arrival in Bangladesh. The government had suspended visas-on-arrival from March 15 to March 31 to curb the spread of novel

coronavirus. The suspension was later extended till June 15. It also suspended incoming flights from all European countries, except the United Kingdom, on March 16, while a nationwide shutdown was enforced to limit the spread of the deadly virus. This ban was also extended several times. However, the authorities resumed flights on several domestic routes from June 1 and all international flights from Jun 16. On Tuesday, Bangladesh recorded the highest number of deaths -- 53 -- and cases -- 3,862 -- in a 24-hour span, till date. With those, the Covid-19 death toll in the country climbed to 1,262 and the total number of cases went up to 94,481.

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Is America falling apart?

It can seem that way in this totalitarian moment

By Ben Shapiro

America feels like it's falling apart. That's because it is. There are two ways to achieve unity in any group. The first is to set up a few serious standards of conduct, policed with the absolute minimum of compulsion, and then allow freedom in all other matters. This was the founding vision for our federal government. In this vision, we agree not to infringe upon one another's life, liberty and property, and we create a government capable of preventing or prosecuting such infringements. Then, so long as we abide by those simple standards, we are free to pursue our own paths. Diverse ways of life can coexist within this broader group membership. Governance becomes largely a matter of localism – places with homogenous values setting further standards for their group membership. But our broadest-group membership is

easy to obtain and easy to maintain.

The founding vision for unity presupposed a flawed human nature: People were capable of sin individually but capable of the greatest sin when backed with the power of federal force. The founding vision for unity also presupposed an agreement on the nature of rights and liberty: No man had a right to demand anything from his neighbor. Furthermore, the founding vision for unity presupposed that our strongest bonds would exist outside of government – in our families, our communities, our churches. The founding vision has now been abandoned in pursuit of something more fulfilling: a communitarian vision of reality in which the will of the mob is perceived as virtuous; in which every man has the right to protect himself from the vicissitudes of life and the cruelties of history by demanding redress from his

neighbors; in which our strongest bonds are forged at the most centralized level.

This second path toward unity requires purification. This path seeks homogeneity in place of diversity, top-down standards in place of localism. Standards for membership are not weak or broad – membership cannot be obtained simply by avoiding encroaching on others' life, liberty or property. Membership can only be obtained and maintained through strict compliance with an increasingly arcane set of rules and standards. Politically, this means a demanding legal regime with heavy coercion. Culturally, this means braying mobs of ideological enforcers, casting out unbelievers into the cornfields. This second model of governance is promoted by the political left today. In this view, diversity of viewpoint cannot be allowed; unity of



viewpoint in all things is the predicate for all serious change. Once the group has been purified, change will require only the snap of a finger. No more gridlock; no more conversation. The collective can be activated quickly and powerfully. This second model of governance is totalitarian in nature, and it is toward that model we are now moving as a society. Politically, those who deny that the collective ought to have the power to override individual rights must be punished; culturally, they must be exiled. They must be deemed unworthy. To stand up for

individual rights in this climate means to be labeled a defender of privilege. To deny the systemic evil of the United States means to betray your moral unworthiness. The great irony is that the second model of unity – the totalitarian purification rituals we watch before us – will never achieve unity. It will achieve further division, as more and more people fall short of ideological purity, or refuse to bow before the ideological demands of the perpetual revolutionaries. We could agree to live with one another, as individuals under the broader rubric of rights. If we don't, we won't be living with one another at all.

Google and Big Tech are the chief threat to our liberties-and no one is protecting us

By Tucker Carlson

On Monday night, we did something we don't do very often. We spent the entire first block of the show on a single topic. We told you about Black Lives Matter. We told you what Black Lives Matter believes. We told you what the group plans to do to our country as they amass unprecedented amounts of power. The segment went on for nearly 20 minutes, and by the standards of this business, it was probably way too long. There was a lot to say. But in the end, a lot of people saw it. The show turned out to be the most-watched hour of primetime television in the country on Monday. It out-rated everything else -- cable and broadcast news, entertainment and sports.

We never talk about ratings, and we're definitely not telling you this to brag about it. There's already more than enough bragging in television, that's for sure. In any case, nothing in television lasts forever. Next week, we'll probably get beaten by a 3:00 a.m. re-air of "Gilligan's Island" or a four-hour "Love Boat" retrospective. That'll probably happen. The point of telling you this is to remind you that you are not alone. You may feel like you are. Suddenly your opinions qualify as crimes. Dare to say what you think at work, and you will be

fired in the middle of a recession. Write what you think online, and you will be silenced by the Big Tech companies.

So, you keep your views to yourself. You have no choice. A lot of Americans are doing that right now. They're staying quiet. And of course, that's the point of censorship -- to keep people isolated and alone to prevent a consensus from forming that challenges those in charge. If you're forced to shut up, they can do what they want to you and your country. That's why they do it. But Monday night's show suggested they have not yet succeeded, though they're trying. Millions and millions of Americans agree with you. You are not crazy. Your views are not evil. What is happening to this country right now is completely and totally wrong. And that will be obvious to everyone someday when our French Revolution has ended.

For now, most are too afraid to say that. One of the reasons we get to say that and often do is that Fox News is an independent company. We are not dependent on the progressive tech monopoly, Google, to make a living here. Thank heaven. Most media companies are dependent on Google. Google controls 70 percent of all online advertising. So, if you're in the news business, you obey Google. When

Google tells you to do something, you do it. You have no choice. They can bankrupt you in a minute, and they will. In all of human history, no single entity has ever had more control over information than Google does right now. So, if you're worried about the concentration of power in the hands of a few unaccountable actors -- and you very much should be -- nobody has more unchecked power than Google does.

On Tuesday afternoon, NBC News decided to use some of Google's power to shut down a couple of its competitors. Power is useful for that. An NBC employee called Adele-Momoko Fraser forwarded Google executives a screenshot from a leftwing activist group in England denouncing two sites, ZeroHedge and The Federalist as "racist."

Google immediately took the bait, of course. The company threatened to ban both news organizations from Google's ad platform. In other words, to cut off their revenue. Adele-Momoko Fraser was thrilled by this. She immediately fired off a victory tweet boasting about the censorship she had inspired. She called the two sites "far-right." That's a term that has no meaning but does suggest some kind of immoral behavior that Adele-Momoko Fraser

disapproves of. At the end of her tweet, she thanked the activists who helped her to silence competing views "For their hard work and collaboration!" -- #BlackLivesMatter with three raised fists at the end. Adele-Momoko Fraser seemed very satisfied with herself. She had done her part for the revolution today.

So what did ZeroHedge and "The Federalist" do to deserve this, to be demonetized? Well, we asked Google, and they told us that the two sites maintained unmoderated comments sections. In other words, readers get to say what they want. Google finds this intolerable. Faced with destruction, The Federalist had no choice but to submit to Google. The site deleted its comments section entirely. No more saying what you think about articles on "The Federalist." Google has banned that now. ZeroHedge still does have comments. So, it has been demonetized. We'll see if they can continue operating. All of this raises an interesting question, though. Google says it now holds conservative websites responsible for the comments of their readers. And yet, irony of ironies, thanks to a special carve-out Google has received from the United States Congress

(Contd on page 31)

Follow Bhutan's lessons for post-coronavirus life

Its policies on conservation could help prevent the loss of habitat and biodiversity that create conditions for deadly viruses and diseases, such as COVID-19, to cross over into human communities.

Bhutan's Gross National Happiness philosophy that prizes the environment, culture and social well-being over GDP has made it the only carbon-negative country in the world. Its 2008 constitution states that every Bhutanese is a trustee of the Kingdom's natural resources and environment, and mandates that the country maintain 60% of its land under forest cover; so far, the country has surpassed this target, with more than 70% coverage.

Today, over half of the country's area is protected by five national parks, four wildlife sanctuaries, one strict nature reserve and eight biological or ecological corridors. These areas host more than 11,000 species of flora and fauna, which include 103 tigers and 96 snow leopards. Of the more than 200 species of mammals that have been identified here, 27 are on the endangered species list.

To sustain this incredible ecosystem, all government policies and projects are subject to the Gross National Happiness screening tool. It sets goals and indicators that are tracked and evaluated to gauge which conditions are conducive to the happiness and well-being of the people, the country and the planet. The screening tool has 33 indicators that analyze the nation's well-being by measuring an individual's achievements in each indicator.

While governments across the world pump in massive resources to kick-start flailing economies, the question is how to resist the temptation to go back to unsustainable consumption and big carbon emissions, which affect countries like Bhutan that are doing their part to stay green and clean.

The pandemic is revealing new ways of working, giving us insights into sustainable economic activity, divulging opportunities that countless summits and rounds of negotiations have failed to deliver. So it is imperative that fiscal stimulus packages offer

investments in low-carbon technologies; promote sustainable tourism and agriculture; and provide incentives for transportation and small and medium-scale enterprises to embrace renewable energy.

So far, the global debate has focused on finding a balance between saving lives and saving the economy and jobs. But instead of making trade-offs, can we seek answers in alternative pathways, like Bhutan? Recovery from COVID-19 is being measured by "old normal" parameters — the bounceback of GDP and stock markets.

Meanwhile, as Bhutan aspires for a dynamic future, it strives to balance economic development with its GNH philosophy — inclusiveness, sustainability and well-being. Even as it illustrates how interconnected we are, COVID-19 is validating these values during these times of societal distress and demonstrating that we can get through crises together, with a new enlightened development model.



Kanni Wignaraja is U.N. Assistant Secretary General and Director of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific. Azusa Kubota is Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme in Bhutan. The tiny Kingdom of Bhutan may be managing to fend off COVID-19, but it cannot escape its crushing economic blow.

To try and blunt the impact of the pandemic, Bhutan's government moved fast, putting decisive measures in place during the early stages of the crisis. It closed its borders to tourists, including the southern border with India; shut down schools; instituted work from home measures for most government offices; issued directives on social distancing; and asked businesses to shut down by 7 p.m. Last month it extended a two-week quarantine to three weeks.

The measures have largely worked: there have been only 47 cases recorded so far — mostly migrants or students returning from abroad — and no deaths. There has been no community transmission either.

This has, of course, delivered brutal consequences to Bhutan's economy, where tourism makes up 9% of gross domestic product and provides the largest employment opportunity to Bhutanese youth. Similar measures have ensured tourism's collapse around the world.

But the silver lining of coronavirus, if there can be said to be one, is that this global slowdown has led to clear skies, lower pollution and the rejuvenation of biodiversity — things which Bhutan has always had with its forward-thinking approach to the environment. Now the rest of the world should learn from Bhutan.

Steps to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 if you are sick

FOLLOW THE STEPS BELOW: If you are sick with COVID-19 or think you might have it, follow the steps below to help protect other people in your home and community.

Stay home except to get medical care

- **Stay home:** People who are mildly ill with COVID-19 are able to recover at home. Do not leave, except to get medical care. Do not visit public areas.
- **Stay in touch with your doctor.** Call before you get medical care. Be sure to get care if you feel worse or you think it is an emergency.
- **Avoid public transportation:** Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.



Wear a facemask if you are sick

- **If you are sick:** You should wear a facemask when you are around other people and before you enter a healthcare provider's office.
- **If you are caring for others:** If the person who is sick is not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live in the home should stay in a different room. When caregivers enter the room of the sick person, they should wear a facemask. Visitors, other than caregivers, are not recommended.



Separate yourself from other people in your home, this is known as home isolation

- **Stay away from others:** As much as possible, you should stay in a specific "sick room" and away from other people in your home. Use a separate bathroom, if available.
- **Limit contact with pets & animals:** You should restrict contact with pets and other animals, just like you would around other people.
 - Although there have not been reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19, it is still recommended that people with the virus limit contact with animals until more information is known.
 - When possible, have another member of your household care for your animals while you are sick with COVID-19. If you must care for your pet or be around animals while you are sick, wash your hands before and after you interact with them. See COVID-19 and Animals for more information.



Cover your coughs and sneezes

- **Cover:** Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- **Dispose:** Throw used tissues in a lined trash can.
- **Wash hands:** Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



Clean your hands often

- **Wash hands:** Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. This is especially important after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- **Hand sanitizer:** If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry.



Call ahead before visiting your doctor

- **Call ahead:** If you have a medical appointment, call your doctor's office or emergency department, and tell them you have or may have COVID-19. This will help the office protect themselves and other patients.



Avoid sharing personal household items

- **Do not share:** Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people in your home.



[cdc.gov/COVID19](https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19)

STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



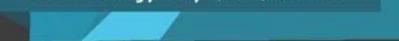
Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



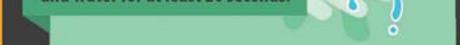
Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.



Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



[cdc.gov/COVID19](https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19)



Can the American-led Black Lives Matter movement trigger an African awakening?

A good friend of mine shared this story with me. When her daughter was seven, she told her mother in no uncertain terms that she didn't want any black kids at her own birthday party. My friend was shocked not just because her daughter was black -- so was she -- but because her daughter felt that black people were not the kind of people she wanted at her party.

My friend, like any black mother, was alarmed. She couldn't figure out how her child got to that point in her thinking. After taking a moment, she responded, "Well, if you are going to insist on not having any black people at your party then technically that means you can't come to your own party, and neither can your other friends, your brother and your dad." Her daughter paused, weighed up the pros and cons and responded a little reluctantly with; "OK, I guess we can invite everyone then." I tell that story not to illustrate the challenges of parenting or that racism comes from unexpected places, but to share some good news; today that same confused child, is now a teenager living in South Africa and has become a huge activist and influential ambassador in her social media circles for the American-led #BlackLivesMatter campaign. And it's not just her, many young, digitally savvy armchair activists from across Africa are emerging to champion this compelling movement that's playing out on social media platforms in their bedrooms.

African teenagers and others should absolutely show solidarity for their black brothers in the US by supporting #BlackLivesMatter. At a deeper level you could

argue that because the African American condition is rooted in slavery and ours in colonialism, and the architects for both are white, there is a common understanding that links Africans to this movement. Either way, this movement clearly has global appeal and not just to teenagers. This is partially inspired by the simplicity of the #BlackLivesMatter message and the dichotomy of its protagonists, the black victim versus the white perpetrator. But what happens when black people are both victim and perpetrator? Do black lives matter as much then?

Despite progress on the continent -- our growing economies, legitimate democracies, cultural contributions and increasing significance on the global stage -- there are still too many examples of massive injustices perpetrated by black people towards other black people

every day, with little attention and almost no outrage. No headlines, few hashtags and no movement to call out the injustice.

Black people in Africa may not be dying as a result of racism, but far too many are dying because of their ethnicity, their political beliefs, their poverty and their gender.

As Africans we have our own George Floyd, Eric Garner and Manuel Ellis. South Africa's post-apartheid examples include Andries Tatane killed in 2011 during a "service delivery protest"; then there was the Marikana Massacre in 2012 where 34 striking mineworkers were shot dead by police; and more recently Collins Khoza who was allegedly killed during the country's Covid-19 lockdown. And it's not just in South Africa. In Nigeria, there's the recent alleged police shooting of 16-year-old Tina Ezekwe, and in Kenya the case of 13-year-old Yassin Hussein Moyo who was killed

on his balcony at home.

The continent that gave us icons like Kwame Nkrumah, Nelson Mandela, Fela Kuti, has also given us thousands of anonymous heroes who have sacrificed their lives with no recognition, no campaigns. The Rwandan Genocide, South Africa's xenophobic uprisings, Boko Haram's ongoing reign of terror in Nigeria are stark reminders of these nameless heroes; black Africans who suffered at the hands of black Africans. They remind us that the doling out of injustice is not the preserve of white people nor is it always about race. Africans are equally complicit in ensuring that black lives don't always matter.

In an ironic move on May 29, the African Union issued a statement condemning Floyd's killing, asking America to "ensure the total elimination of all forms of discrimination based on race or ethnic origin." It's ironic because there isn't the same level of indignation

when examples of the inhuman treatment of black people by black people is exposed in our countries. Why is that? Remember the saying? "When you point a finger at another, there are three fingers pointing back at you?" Making a case for African lives, that they matter too is not demeaning #BlackLivesMatter, on the contrary it pays homage to the movement. We can learn lessons from it about how to start campaigns that capture the world, create social change for us and elevate the plight of the downtrodden in Africa. Thank you, George Floyd, and the many who sadly came before you. The impact of your death is already being felt beyond America. Africa's growing youth population has been described as a potential "ticking time bomb." Let's hope the bomb explodes a generation of youth activists like my friend's daughter who use this opportunity to fight injustice in their own country.



Labor of Love The baby-making reality show you won't believe

Watching Labor of Love is like pulling your brain out of your ear with a corkscrew and booting it into a lake. Let me try to explain. In textbook dating show fashion, Kristy is a 41-year-old divorcee who must choose between 15 different hunks. Together they will, in the words of host Kristin Davis, "skip the dating and go straight to baby-making". Because, that's right, Labor of Love is a dating show where the prize is a real life flesh-and-blood baby. The entire show exists to help one woman choose a candidate to impregnate her. It's a mating show, not a dating show. Love, as we're told, is optional.

Clearly, we were already headed this way. Dating shows cannot simply be dating shows any more. We've had Love is Blind, where couples propose to people they haven't even seen. We've had Married at First Sight, where people get married the instant they meet. Of course there was eventually going to be a show about women being impregnated by men they barely know. Labor of Love isn't necessarily the logical endpoint of the genre – because that's Sperm Lottery, a reality show of my own invention where a woman repeatedly inseminates herself with random sperm samples sent by anonymous donors, and then marries the father of the child she likes best – but it's close. It's another moment of human purity bulldozed by television. To be clear, I hate it.

It doesn't help that the potential fathers all feel like dopey offcuts from other reality shows. They all uniformly, regardless of age or background or race, look like slabs of battered ham. They're all a bit too dumb, their emotional problems a bit too overt. They say things like "I appreciate the interactions we had" instead of actual human words. They look, obviously, like the sort of people who'd sign up for a reality show about getting a woman pregnant. The format is awful, especially the part where the woman eliminates potential fathers on an iPad app. The house they all live in is awful, not least because one of the rooms is an infantilised man cave called "The Father Hood". The tasks are all awful, ranging from the annoying ("look after some children at a party") to the insulting ("get your sperm analysed") to the apparently randomly generated ("spraypaint negative adjectives on to a car and then beat the car to death with a hammer"). Labor of Love is so terrible that it doesn't even feel like a television series. It feels like a document designed



to be presented to God as an argument for the total eradication of the human race. It feels like an open invitation for the coronavirus. Now, it's important to point out that I have only seen half of the series. In episodes

five, six, seven and eight, there's a fighting chance that everyone involved in this legitimate horror show comes to their senses and starts to rebel against the system a little. The show does already have something of a

backdoor; in the first episode we see that Kristy has had her eggs frozen, allowing her the option to back out of the deal and go it alone in the event of her realising that going on a dating show just to get pregnant is arguably the

least dignified thing any person could ever do. Hopefully that's how this ends. But honestly, on the basis of the first four episodes, that isn't going to happen. She's going to have a baby with one of these gibbering corned beef statues. Their relationship will falter. The child will grow up and discover how they came into being and embark on an unbreakable cycle of destructive behaviour that leaves a permanent trail of regret behind them. On the basis of the first four episodes, this whole show is nothing but a recipe for suffering. Everyone involved in it should be truly ashamed. To reiterate, I hate it. However, if any Fox executives are interested in paying me for the rights to Sperm Lottery, please get in touch through the usual channels. I have kids to feed.

Bolton's book makes it clear

Pompeo - one of Trump's worst sycophants - thinks the president is "full of shit," according to Bolton. Bolton and those around Trump deserve nothing except an infamous place in the dustbin of history alongside their boss. Bolton's book is merely the latest reminder that there are few guardrails mitigating the damage that Trump can inflict on the nation and the world. For more than three years Trump has eroded norms, broken laws, and installed cronies who facilitate his corrupt reign. Even impeachment by the House with a slam-dunk case could not convince Trump's allies in the Senate to do their

constitutional duties and remove Trump from office. And so officials like Bolton – who don't have the courage to stand up to Trump when they are in positions of power – just get rich by selling their experiences to corporate boards and in memoirs.

Bolton has some serious gall to try to get rich by playing the role of Trump opponent at the same time America is grappling with the damage that Trump's malignance inflicts on Americans by ignoring a deadly pandemic and fomenting violence and bigotry against those protesting structural racism.

Trump, Bolton's book, the pandemic and the protests all illustrate that while stopping Trump's actions is necessary

to solve America's problems, it will hardly be sufficient. To rid America of structural racism, to prevent the incompetent leadership at so many levels that could botch the response to a pandemic, to ensure that our elected leaders don't corrupt our democratic norms, and to guarantee that the Boltons of the world cannot inflict damage on the American people and then profit off of their experiences, every American will need to pitch in.

Trump's behavior and policies are America's most acute obstacle to progress, but improving the lives of all Americans will require structural change from the bottom up and the top down.

Providing work to migrants

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch the Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan (GKRA), a mission-mode scheme designed to help migrant labourers, on Saturday. The massive public work scheme — details of which were first reported in this newspaper — is worth Rs 50,000 crore and aims to provide job opportunities to

returnee migrant workers, in 116 districts of key migrant-originating states (Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Odisha) for 125 days; merge 25 existing State-run programmes; and create durable infrastructure. The decision to go for construction-focused employment was taken after a

skill mapping of migrants showed that more than two-thirds worked in this sector.



The lockdown led to an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, with millions of workers and their families frantically trying to return from their host states, predominantly in west and south India and key urban centres such as Delhi and Mumbai, to their villages in states in the north and east. In May, the Centre hiked the allocation of the Mahatma

Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) by Rs 40,000 crore, taking the total allocation under the scheme to Rs 1,01,500 crore. But it was clear that MGNREGS was not enough, and the Centre would have to come out with another comprehensive scheme to tackle the crisis. GKRA, if

implemented properly, can provide relief to the migrants, many of them landless, without savings and dependent on informal rural financial ecosystems, to sustain themselves and their families for the next few months. The movement of workers will also have a major impact on labour markets. Industry is feeling the

pinch of labour shortage. But getting back migrant workers will not be easy because the experience of the coronavirus pandemic, the lack of a social security net in the host states, and the absence of support at a critical time has broken the trust between workers and their employers, and between workers and the State. It is critical to build back that trust, and to do so the State must build a register of migrants; fast track the one nation, one ration card scheme; ensure proper housing, sanitation and medical facilities; invest in their skilling; and ensure that labour laws spur industrial growth but also provide basic protection to workers. Without these steps, the migrant workers crisis will continue to fester, and have a debilitating effect on the economy, State resources, and the lives of people.

India is key to the global battle against Covid-19

And it's not just vaccines. India already manufactures many anti-viral drugs that could be re-purposed and scaled-up for use in mild cases of Covid-19. Our foundation is also working with Indian pharma companies to look at the potential of transferring production techniques for drugs created by US pharmaceutical giants to Indian plants for manufacturing and global supply.

Then there is the issue of equity. With an ability to not only develop vaccines and medicines but a proven track record to manufacture them to a high standard, in high volumes and at low cost, India is critical to saving millions of lives in the poorest countries.

Beyond vaccines and treatment, India can offer unique

solutions for the world. For example, the rapid development and deployment of affordable diagnostics and medical devices from basic test kits to ventilators and high-end medical equipment that are particularly suited for use in rural and remote villages with no electricity or regular power supply.

There is also a clear role for advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence to enhance diagnosis and contact tracing. Indian start-ups have been successfully piloting such efforts for a while, and these technologies could be crucial for frontline workers, especially where there is an acute shortage of doctors, radiologists, and other specialists.

Finally, on global collaboration, India has seen excellent results

through cooperation with several international organisations, private companies, public sector research institutes, and academia. The rotavirus vaccine, ROTAVAC, for example, is a joint venture involving the Indian government, Bharat Biotech, the international non-profit PATH, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health, and others. If there is a breakthrough in the global efforts on Covid-19 research and development, Indian manufacturers have demonstrated the collaboration necessary to manufacture large quantities of cost-effective vaccines to deliver to a waiting world. India — along with our foundation — is also a founding-member of the Coalition

for Epidemic Preparedness (CEPI), which is overseeing a global effort towards a Covid-19 vaccine. And the country also has a role to play with multilateral endeavours which are critical to consign this virus to the history books.

The time is right for India to play a leading role in the fight against Covid-19. It has all the capability and capacity needed to do it. And as someone who has seen its remarkable transformation over more than a decade, I am more convinced than anyone of India's strengths and potential. Now we need to make full use of them. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation stands ready as a partner to help India find a global solution to this global crisis.

Google and Big Tech are the chief threat to our liberties-and no one is protecting us

-- something called Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, remember that -- Google itself is not responsible for content on its platform because the Congress says it doesn't have to be. So, if you're slandered by someone, for example, and that slander passes through Google servers, you cannot sue Google over it. Google is immune from the consequences. Immunity is a very nice thing to have if you're a big company. Fox News doesn't have it.

But again, thanks to Congress, Google does have immunity, and that's one of the main reasons that Google's founders are some of the richest and most powerful people in the world. Because Congress allowed them to be.

Sen. Josh Hawley has pointed this out. Let's hope he and his colleagues act soon to revoke this privilege. If Google will not extend 230 protections to others, Google should not enjoy those protections itself, obviously. Google should have faced these consequences a long time ago. Congress should have done this years ago. It's been clear for a very long time that the Big Tech monopolies have now surpassed the federal government as the chief threat to our liberties.

Tucker Carlson, 2017: Google is the most powerful company in the history of the world. It's the portal through which the bulk of our information flows. That means that if Google isn't on the level, neither is our understanding of the world. To an unprecedented extent, Google controls reality. Now, Google has already shown a

disturbing willingness to distort reality for ideological ends.

And now it is happening. Google is acting directly to shape what people can say and what they're allowed to speak. It's a direct effort to stifle free speech. All of that is even truer today. So why hasn't the Congress done anything about this? Well, we'd love to ask Sen. Mike Lee of Utah. We invited him on the show. He would not come. We've invited him before, he would not come then. Why do we ask him? Because Lee chairs the Senate Antitrust Subcommittee. He is the man who could do something to protect you from Google, but Lee has not bothered to do that. Instead, Mike Lee repeatedly has taken the side of the Big Tech companies over your constitutional rights -- the constitutional rights Mike Lee is sworn to uphold and protect but refuses to.

So, the question is, why is Mike Lee still sitting in the United States Senate? He should not be in the Senate, that is for sure. We are hoping Mike Lee is soundly defeated in his next primary by someone who cares about the Constitution and more to the point, about protecting Americans from the actual threats they face. We are fervently rooting for that day. We will celebrate it when it happens. We trust it will. So, how about House Republicans? Well, this spring, Congressman Doug Collins, the ranking member of the House Judiciary Committee, and Jim Sensenbrenner, the ranking member of the Antitrust Subcommittee, released a letter defending Google and the other tech monopolies from

scrutiny. They attacked any investigation of the tech companies that might have "preconceived conclusions that large tech companies are inherently bad or must be broken up." They actually wrote that. Who is paying these guys? And more to the point, whose side are they on? Again, let us hope for a vigorous primary challenge to these

two and any who share this view. Year in and year out, we vote for these people in the fervent hope they will stand up for us when it matters. Now it matters. And now, like every time before, they sell us out. Time is up. Seriously, it is too much. The stakes are too high. We need better leadership. We need someone to protect us. Nobody is.

On China, the error of judgement

Now, within less than eight months of hosting Xi in a luxurious Mamallapuram resort along the Bay of Bengal, India has lost several of its brave soldiers in a gory conflict in the hardy, unforgiving terrain of Ladakh. With the Pakistanis, it could be argued that a rogue Inter-Services Intelligence terror network can never be trusted to hold the peace.

With the Chinese, on the other hand, it is far more disconcerting that four decades of relative peace and tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) has evaporated in a matter of weeks. To say we were ambushed by Chinese troops would be to admit to military failure. To say we misread Chinese strategic intentions in reworking the status quo on a disputed border would be to admit to a monumental political and diplomatic fiasco. Unfortunately, political

leaderships that thrive on the supremo cult rarely admit to failures. The wounds of what happened on the night of June 15 in the high altitudes of the Galwan Valley are perhaps still too raw to allow for such open admissions. But sooner or later, any government must face itself in the mirror, admit to failings and course correct. That is now the challenge before the Modi regime. Accept the shortcomings in its personality-centric Chinese policy, recognise that Chinese ambitions in the neighbourhood pose a genuine threat; and diligently work to restore the status quo ante along LAC in a manner that national sovereignty and territorial integrity are not compromised. Before unleashing the high-pitched rhetoric of promising to recapture Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir, let's start with securing our land in eastern Ladakh. And yes, let's not blame this on Nehru.

100 days of Covid-19: Pandemic presents a new political paradigm

Tablighi Jamaat; eastern Ladakh; Centre-state relations; digital rallies; economic recession; and the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) and its case count. It is now a truism to suggest that the pandemic has changed India, and Indian politics. But the past does not go away, and there is never — in history — a clean, new slate. But disruptive events have an ability to force transformation and throw out variables with long-lasting consequences.

FIRST, RUPTURES

One, never in the history of Indian politics has public health been this significant. From testing capacity to providing personal protective equipment for health care workers, from increasing the number of beds across public and private hospitals to health services for patients with other medical conditions, public health and infrastructure has become central for the first time.

What has changed is that all citizens across regions, castes, communities and classes today experience, simultaneously, the urgency of health care. Such a large collective experience cannot but have an impact on politics. Governments and parties will be judged on whether they were able to cope with the crisis; there will be louder demands for better health care; and India will need not just more doctors, but nurses, paramedical staff, and Accredited Social Health Activists (Asha workers). Whether this translates into a longer term shift, where public services and quality of governance is the central issue in electoral debates and political discourse, is to be seen.

Two, never in Indian history and politics have migrant workers been as central to public consciousness as they are today. When workers first began walking back to their villages and towns, soon after the lockdown was imposed on March 25, it was as if an invisible India appeared. In the absence of income and food, and given the deep yearning for emotional security of families and communities, tens of thousands of workers kept walking, as all public transportation had been stopped during the lockdown. The government, after 36 days of the lockdown, finally allowed their movement by buses, and then trains. This, however, was

accompanied with a different set of controversies — from payment for their fares to lack of coordination between the Centre and states. The Supreme Court eventually stepped in, but its intervention was seen as coming rather late.

The image of the migrant family walking back home will be the defining moment of this crisis and is a stark reflection of how the Indian State sometimes treats its poorest citizens. The scattered nature of migrant workers and their own heterogeneity made them politically weaker than usual. The weakening of trade union movements and the limited bargaining power of labour, especially in the unorganised sector, left them vulnerable.

For the government, the challenge now is in providing opportunities to migrants who now want to stay home. For the opposition, the crisis presents an opportunity to channel the discontent of migrant workers. For the Indian political economy in general, the reverse migration could lead to a shift in the way labour markets operate. How migrant workers will act — will their economic identity become more important than other identity markers; will they stay home or return to the cities; will they be angry at the government or see it as a function of the pandemic — will determine political trends.

Three, never in recent history has the country seen the kind of economic contraction that now seems inevitable. With the lockdown imposed to curb the spread of the pandemic, factories and businesses shut down, supply chains got disrupted, company revenues went down and unemployment soared.

There is a real possibility that millions of people may be pushed back to poverty. The government first announced a relief package of ₹ 1.7 lakh crore for the marginalised, and followed it up a month and a half later, with a cumulative ₹ 20 lakh crore stimulus. But the package has come under criticism for lacking a strong enough fiscal component. Economists believe that while the structural reforms announced are important, they may not solve the crisis at hand. There is a clear link between the state of the economy and politics. If distress grows,

businesses continue to close down and millions find themselves deprived of basic incomes, there is a real possibility of social unrest. But if governments use this as an opportunity to rethink the nature of growth, provide immediate relief through a possible universal basic income, ramp up the welfare architecture, provide a buffer through a larger fiscal stimulus, and succeed in attracting investment, the future could be different. India's political economy is at a crossroads.

Four, never have political parties had to innovate on such a scale to continue their internal functioning as well retain their connect with people. To adhere to the norms of social distancing, large gatherings have been prohibited; even face-to-face meetings have declined. Political parties have turned to technology. The most visible symbols of this include the digital rallies that the Bharatiya Janata Party is organising across the country and the digital conversations Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is having with Indian and global thought leaders.

This trend will accelerate, especially for elections. Parties will rely even more on the mobile phone to reach out to voters. Data will become even more powerful in the micro targeting of voters. Large rallies will have to give way to either virtual gatherings or very limited, localised small meetings.

Normal political activity and the value of direct human interface can never be substituted. But the form of both political outreach and political communication will change. And five, never has Indian federalism been put to test as now. To be sure, India has always had a division of powers but rarely have states and the Centre had to work on a single issue, for weeks at end, together. This was most clearly reflected in the five meetings held between the PM and chief ministers (a sixth is scheduled this week). While this coordination began on a promising note, there have also been increasing differences between the Centre and Opposition-ruled states — especially on the duration of the lockdown, financial support, health protocols, and movement of migrant workers. What is clear is that the power balance that forms the basis of Indian federal arrangements will change. Some states which have performed credibly will manage to enhance their political capital; other states which have struggled will see an erosion of their power and greater central intervention. But fundamentally, this can open up a conversation on the division of powers (in terms of Union, state and concurrent lists) especially in a crisis.

NOW, CONTINUITIES

One, leadership will continue to be a critical component in parties

and a key basis on which voters judge parties. And on this metric, Narendra Modi still ranks above others. The structure of power between the BJP and the non-BJP parties remains tilted towards the former in substantial ways. Two, inter-community relations will remain fragile — as witnessed during the Tablighi Jamaat controversy, which was used by a section to introduce a communal element to the Covid-19 crisis. There is a clear possibility that the pandemic may reinforce existing cleavages in society and push people back to narrow, parochial identity grouping. Three, India's security challenges will persist. As we can see with the Chinese aggression in eastern Ladakh, Pakistan's continued efforts to create terror in Jammu and Kashmir, and now, Nepal's decision to pass a map which incorporates territory claimed and controlled by India, the neighbourhood will remain difficult. And four, Indian institutions will remain under scrutiny. It took months for the judiciary to address the migrant crisis; the nature of investigation and arrests over the Delhi riots in February points to politics colouring independent probes; the fact that major legislations have been pushed through the ordinance route without parliamentary scrutiny speaks of the weakness of the legislature. The dialectic between the ruptures and continuities will determine India's future.

(Hindustan Times)

All you need to know about Galwan Valley, the site of clash between India and China

News agency ANI quoting sources said four Indian soldiers are in critical condition after the face-off. The US media quoted reported from its intelligence officials to say that 35 Chinese troops have been killed in the clashes. The troops fought each other with fists and rocks, people aware of the development said. Neither side fired any shots in the clash, they added. After the clash, the two sides "disengaged" from the area where the fighting happened, the army said in a statement. A protest was held outside the Chinese embassy in New Delhi on Wednesday. The stand-off at Ladakh's Galwan Valley has escalated in recent weeks due to the infrastructure projects that India has undertaken in the

recent years. India is building a strategic road through the Galwan Valley - close to China - connecting the region to an airstrip.

China is opposed to any Indian construction in the area. In 1962, a stand-off in the Galwan area was one of the biggest flashpoints of the 1962 war, according to news agency Reuters. India last year abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution, thereby ending the special status of Jammu and Kashmir. It further bifurcated the erstwhile state into two union territories - Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. China was among the handful of countries to strongly condemn the move, raising it at international forums including the UN Security

Council. Beijing said the move violated Chinese sovereignty but will also not change the situation on the ground as part of the area in the former state remains under Chinese control. The Indian and Chinese armies are engaged in the standoff in Pangong Tso, Galwan Valley, Demchok and Daulat Beg Oldie in eastern Ladakh. A sizeable number of Chinese Army personnel even transgressed into the Indian side of the de-facto border in several areas including Pangong Tso. The Indian Army has been fiercely objecting to the transgressions, and demanded their immediate withdrawal for restoration of peace and tranquillity in the area. Both sides held a series of talks in the last few days to resolve the border row.

Trump signs executive order incentivizing police reforms

President Donald Trump on Tuesday signed an executive order aimed at guiding police reforms after weeks of nationwide unrest over police killings of unarmed black Americans — though the reforms he outlined fall far short of changes demanded by protesters.

The president revealed in his Rose Garden remarks that he'd just met with the families of nine victims of police or racially motivated killings — though none were in the audience as he laid out three planks of reforms, according to a pool report.

The order would create federal incentives through the Justice Department for local police departments that seek “independent credentialing” to certify that law enforcement is meeting higher standards for the use of force and de-escalation training. Trump specifically noted that those standards would include banning the use of chokeholds — an especially controversial tactic that has led to the high-profile deaths of multiple African-American men — “except if an officer’s life is at risk.”

Trump’s order would also incentivize local departments to bring on experts in mental health, addiction and homelessness as “co-responders” to “help officers manage these complex encounters.” And it would encourage better information sharing to track officers with “credible abuses” to prevent them from moving from one department to the next. The text of the order directs the Justice Department to create and maintain a database to track when officers have been terminated or decertified, have been criminally convicted for on-duty conduct or faced

civil judgments for improper use of force. It notes that information-sharing related to use-of-force complaints would not apply in “instances where a law enforcement officer resigns or retires while under active investigation related to the use of force,” and emphasizes that the database would track only episodes in which an officer was “afforded fair process.”

But it does not address the issue of qualified immunity, a legal doctrine that reform advocates say shields police from liability and that the White House has called a nonstarter for any reform measures. The president’s action on Tuesday swiftly drew criticism from activists for systemic reform for not going far enough and for

“The word he was afraid

“The word he was afraid

a lack of teeth. The vast majority of law enforcement decisions are made at the state and local levels, and Trump’s order aims only to incentivize local departments by stipulating that only departments that adopt his reforms might be eligible for discretionary grants from the Justice Department.

The ACLU seized on the optics of Tuesday’s event, as well as Trump’s failure to mention racism in his remarks or in the executive order. It noted that on the point of whether racism exists in policing, he even broke with some in his party. The group also called for communities to divest from police departments and shrink police presence in Americans’ lives.

“The word he was afraid

to use is more memorable than anything he did say,” the ACLU’s executive director, Anthony D. Romero, said in a statement. “The president’s use of victims’ families as a backdrop as he offered empty words of sympathy, anemic reforms, and hollow rhetoric was sad — to borrow a word from the president’s vocabulary. What’s wrong with this picture: The president had a veritable beauty pageant of law enforcement officers behind him as he signed an executive order that was supposedly meant as a response to the public outcry of recent weeks.”

The Brennan Center, a think tank and advocacy group that has pushed for

criminal justice reform, on

additional measures” for police reform. The executive order makes “only cosmetic changes when the nation is ready for law enforcement’s racism to be pulled out by its roots,” noting that it “says nothing” about racial disparities in policing. While the group called the order’s reforms a slate of “welcome changes,” it said that legislation in the House would be more comprehensive and effective.

The president himself appeared to acknowledge the unilateral action, announcing that “beyond the steps we’re taking today, I am committed to working with Congress

additional measures” for police reform.

The executive order comes as Senate Republicans led by Tim Scott of South Carolina, the lone black member of their conference, are planning to introduce their own police reform proposal on Wednesday. Democrats in the House and Senate have introduced their own sweeping police reform proposal, which would ban chokeholds, limit qualified immunity for police officers, create a National Police Misconduct Registry and stop the use of no-knock arrest warrants in drug

cases. Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas) said the executive order “was pretty good as far as it went,” but noted that “there are limitations.”

The worst is yet to come in Delhi and Mumbai

Back of the envelope calculations suggest that the city needs roughly 5,000 beds, including 1,250 critical care intensive care unit (ICU) beds. Theoretically, there is no shortage. Practically here is what’s happening.

It’s not beds but health care staff which has run short. Whether it’s because many young residents have tested positive or because ward staff is unable to travel in the absence of local trains or because many health care professionals, especially in private hospitals, are not showing up to work. One of the models Mumbai has got right is its National Sports Club of India Covid “Dome”, an erstwhile rock concert venue, that is now a 600-bed modular hospital. Led by Dr Muffazal Lakdawala, what has kept it relevant is its constant adaptability. It has experimented with mobile X-rays as one way of preliminary mass screening; it has built ICU containers on wheels and created contactless booths for doctors to talk to patients.



With sections that separate cancer patients, pregnant women, the elderly and those who need regular oxygen, it has married science with zeal. But even in this exemplar venue, doctors, nurses and intensivists are woefully short and the facility is welcoming volunteers. Delhi, by contrast, has not used the lockdown period to create makeshift jumbo facilities in stadiums and colleges; it urgently needs this. And unlike Mumbai, which also did so too late, it has not yet capped the fees of private hospitals, permitting a class divide in health care response that is morally egregious. Governments should be focusing on fixing a broken

system; instead promoters of private hospitals and laboratories have begun to whisper about pressures to under-test. The problem is rooted in the paranoia and hysteria around testing positive and the suggestion that being Covid-19-positive is a calamitous event. Our focus must be on deaths, not cases.

Fundamental things need to be addressed in both cities. Health care workers need to be requisitioned from states that are doing relatively better on an urgent basis. There needs to be a clear chain of command, not multiple officials with giant egos fighting petty battles that pull doctors in different directions. People need to be

encouraged to stay at home and not rush to the hospital if they have mild symptoms. In the absence of enough polymerase chain reaction (PCR) kits and dodgy serological tests, X-rays may be the only cost-effective way along with oximeters and temperature screening to sift who needs a swab. Oxygen cylinders need to travel into containment zones so that you can buy time for gasping patients till they get an ambulance. Above all, governments need to have representation (along with ambulances on standby) outside hospitals to talk to patients, families — to comfort them, advise them, or redirect them to the facilities where beds do exist. I first saw the abdication of the Indian State when migrants were walking on the road. Now it is happening outside hospitals — and at funeral grounds. Covid-19-affected patients cannot be orphaned. And no dashboard on a mobile app can be a substitute for a real person.

Are You Immune?

Why Immunity Is The Central Plot In Your Inner Covid Drama...

The coronavirus has shown an extremely varying potential to infect and a puzzling unpredictability about who recovers and who does not



Short stories can afford to come with a twist in the end. But epics are fated to contain twists at every turn, at every level of the labyrinth of nested stories. COVID-19 is proving to be one such gigantic and perplexing hall of mirrors: the logic unfolding in a subplot at Level 5 can alter the main narrative frame...and then twist again. Immunity is a word that's been lurking around like a minor character with a walk-on part in the story from the beginning. There was at first that partly naïve optimism in the idea that Indians, on account of exposure to a rich bouquet of pathogens, have a kind of all-purpose 'native immunity'—a Teflon coating against Covid. As the new coronavirus plugged into India as a collective host, that was soon quietly replaced with a more modest, and perhaps illusorily durable, hypothesis. That if the virus strains were the same as were lacerating Italy, the UK and US, Indians looked at least more immune than the West. Could it have something to do with blood

groups and variable vulnerability thereof? Was it the wall-to-wall coverage of BCG vaccination? The questions seemed valid enough. After all, through Season 1, the India graph had moved at a gentle canter, with a low (official) fatality rate to boot. But as those ominous hoofbeats picked up in May, even that was discarded for a more fragmented picture. Some regions within India looked less (or more) at risk. Over 30 districts witnessed a wide spread, others experienced slower transmission. And seemingly inexplicable variations within that defied a universalising story. It still looks deadliest in Maharashtra, as the state exacts the highest toll. In Delhi, it looks more infectious but not as fatal as in Maharashtra and Gujarat. Kerala has a tremendous recovery rate; no other state has that. But soon it became clear that one key playfield of variations existed at a still more micro level: not country, not region or ethnicity, but individual.

Young Keralites in their 30s were dying in the Gulf, but back home in hilly Ranni, 93-year-old Thomas and his 88-year-old wife Mariyamma tested positive, even got critical and stayed so for days, then happily recovered—defying everything in the COVID 101 handbook about the elderly being at higher risk. By now, this randomness is a leitmotif of the COVID story: you as a patient may have merely experienced an unpleasant fortnight (with your "pizza tasting like cardboard," as writer Karan Mahajan told *The Atlantic*), but your neighbour goes to the ICU, perhaps thence to the mortuary. Why? Two axioms stay with us: the new coronavirus has shown an extremely varying propensity and potential to infect, and an equally puzzling unpredictability about who recovers and who does not. And perhaps neither has to do with the virus per se. Some variation in recovery rates could owe to

differing healthcare practices and treatment protocols (at state/hospital/country level). But the lens surely needed to be adjusted to another level of magnification—because one key act in this grim drama unfolds inside the individual. This is where immunity comes in. All other things being equal—age, health, exposure to virus—why does Person A get infected and Person B go unaffected? That's simply hard-wired innate immunity: a healthy body's first line of defence against pathogens, an in-built fortification. This inv-isible armoury of the body is by nature capable of warding off new enemies—so the fact of this being a novel virus wouldn't matter. The innate system has non-specific barriers that work regardless of who the enemy is—the body-castle's moat, drawbridge and mortar-fire repel Viking and Mongol alike. By contrast, adaptive (or acquired) immunity is like an active database of prior infections: it invests the body with a pathogen-specific immunological memory. An 85-year-old person's body thus carries the memory of a childhood measles infection, but is too slow to produce antibodies against a new enemy—hence, more at risk. "This is why children are more protected: their immune systems are simply stronger. That wanes as you age," says Calcutta paediatrician Dr Aniruddha Maitra. A point of mystery: COVID-19 initially seemed to spare children altogether. Thus the famous 'double peak' seen in other infections—

older people and children being most vulnerable, healthy adults of median age being the hardiest—was markedly absent here. But as the pandemic spread, even children are seen to be not entirely out of its sway. But regardless of age variation, think of a first layer of armour. Now, say the enemy penetrates that arm-our, via a Trojan horse, and you do get infected. Why only a mild flu for X, and ICU for Y? Well, post-infection, innate immunity continues to work, now in collaboration with its brother-in-arms, adaptive immunity: it smells out the foreign invasion, and enlists its ally to produce the amm-union...the antibodies. Inflammation happens, like sirens going off, signalling for reinforcements to rush to the infected site. Usually, this is when you get fever with any flu, before the body recovers. This is where the critical twist in the plot comes. It's a cataclysmic breakdown of these normal immunity processes—this complex wartime communication machinery—that's now looming forth frighteningly as a final act. A sudden, little understood crumbling of the fortress. A gasping, shuddering death. The key episode, called a cytokine storm, is now linked to many a Covid fatality. "It's a centerpiece of COVID-19 pathology," writes Tufts University immunologist Alexander Poltorak. "The killer is not the virus but the immune response." Essentially, an excessive reaction or dysregulation of the host's immune system, akin to what happens with autoimmune disorders. The system goes into hyperactive mode, then goes berserk and launches a stunning

mutiny against the body itself—till the whole zeppelin comes flaming down. This happens when immunological agents fail in one key function—recognising self-substances, and exempting them from attack, while it goes for those nasty "non-self" macromolecules (the foreign pathogens). The realisation that there's a consistent pattern of Covid fatalities being linked to this inner suicidal drama has led to a reorientation of efforts across the world. That's why proposed/ongoing studies posted on the US National Library of Health's ClinicalTrials.gov bear titles that refer to therapeutic strategies targeted at critically ill patients who've suffered or are close to an immunological burnout—by modulating or suppressing their immunity processes. A *Lancet* study called immunosuppression "a double-edged sword" because the body may be still vulnerable to any infection, and leaving it bereft of its armour is risky too. As a focus area, though, it has dawned. But first the macro-level, before we descend the steps. 'Native immunity' is actually just a synonym for innate immunity, but let's twist it to fit us 'natives'. Have Indians been conferred with an ability to take on all comers of the microscopic variety? Have we acquired a greater immunity by way of familiarity with viruses in general? Would that suffice to thwart a novel and tenacious one like Covid? The idea that prior exposure to other infections can create an all-purpose shield isn't

Are You Immune?

entirely erroneous. There is such a thing as 'cross-resistance', which can work by altering the way receptor sites behave. But India's climbing numbers do not seem to offer any blanket comfort there. Why?

One reason could be that low nutrition levels enfeeble the delicate web acquired weaves in conjunction with innate. It's the latter's signalling apparatus—a complex, multi-function communication grid involving constantly patrolling sentinel called neutrophils, our most abundant White Blood Cells, and proteins called cytokines—that recruit the good guys with the Bofors gun, the B-cells and T-cells. (Roughly, the first produces antibodies that lock onto antigens on the surface of pathogens, and calls upon phagocytes that eat them up; the latter kills infected cells). Micronutrient deficiency leaves this double-barrelled defence fortification starving at all levels. The internet is awash with preprints of studies linking, for instance, Covid morbidity with low Vitamin D levels (severe among the old in Italy, Spain et al). Elina Hypponen, an Australian nutritional and genetic epidemiology professor, offers preliminary support "in theory" for the link, writing: "Nearly all immune cells have Vitamin D receptors (showing the interaction). The active Vitamin D hormone, calcitriol, helps regulate both innate and adaptive immunity. And deficiency is associated with immunity dysregulation." So, on that front, India fundamentally represents a vulnerable mass of humanity—and it goes beyond vitamin deficiency.

What about BCG? Can vaccination against bacterial infections even conceivably work against a virus? Well, there's a new line of theory on 'trained immunity'—the idea that, say, a vaccine can modify our innate system's pattern recognition receptors in such a way that they pick up similar antigens on even new enemies (antigens are surface structures on microbial bodies). But it begs further study.... "As of now, there is only correlation," admits Dr Maitra. And as Lancet warned in another context, "correlation does not equal causation". Despite India's recent surge in cases, some researchers are willing to give a chance to BCG, a mandatory booster for children in India to protect them against meningitis and disseminated TB. "While COVID-19 caused a lot of deaths in Spain, its neighbour, Portugal, witnessed a very low fatality. And Portugal is the only European country where BCG vaccination is still prevalent," says Dr Sudhir Bhandari, senior professor of medicine at Sawai Man Singh Medical College, Jaipur. "The BCG association, like that of hydroxychloroquine, arose because the early spread of Covid was a reverse image of these two, but there are multiple possible explanations for it without ascribing a causal link," says Ranchi-based radiologist Dr Manish Kumar.

Many medical professionals anyway dismiss the notion of India (or any other country) collectively having a higher immunity, citing the interplay of several factors that influence transmission and fatality. Dr Yadu Singh, Sydney-based cardiologist, for

instance, attributes Australia's "spectacular" flattening of the curve (a mere 7,227 cases as of June 4, some 6,640 recovered, 102 deaths) to simply "good policies...and civic sense", adding it has nothing to do with high immunity among Australians. But even if country-wise variations are possible, we're still in the grip of a story that evokes fear and awe: the perennially unravelling mysteries of Covid, and how your body can itself unravel, a deadly denouement where immunity is the tragic protagonist.

An evolving death

The Covid infection was initially thought to be a merely respiratory phenomenon, affecting only the alveoli in the lungs—and bringing on pneumonia. That's still the primary effect: the lung's ACE2 receptors are the most abundant, most strategically placed, most amenable to hosting the virus. But it's becoming clear that it often causes a "multi-system disorder", says Dr Maitra—an all-pervasive attack on several fronts. Heart, guts, liver, kidney, brain...all cells can get infected because most organs have ACE2 receptors. A captured heart can go into myocarditis, an inflamed liver produces an enzyme glut. Most benignly, the gut lining; an altered gut flora

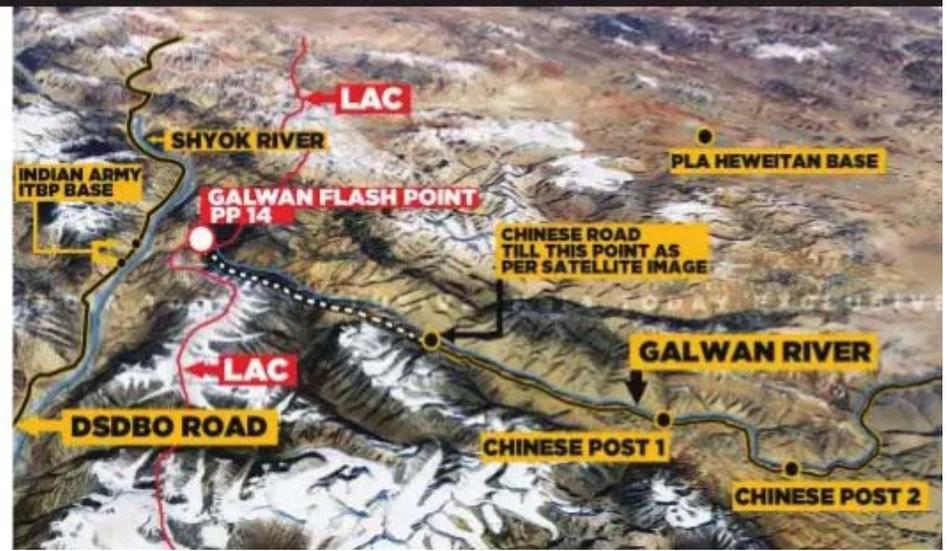
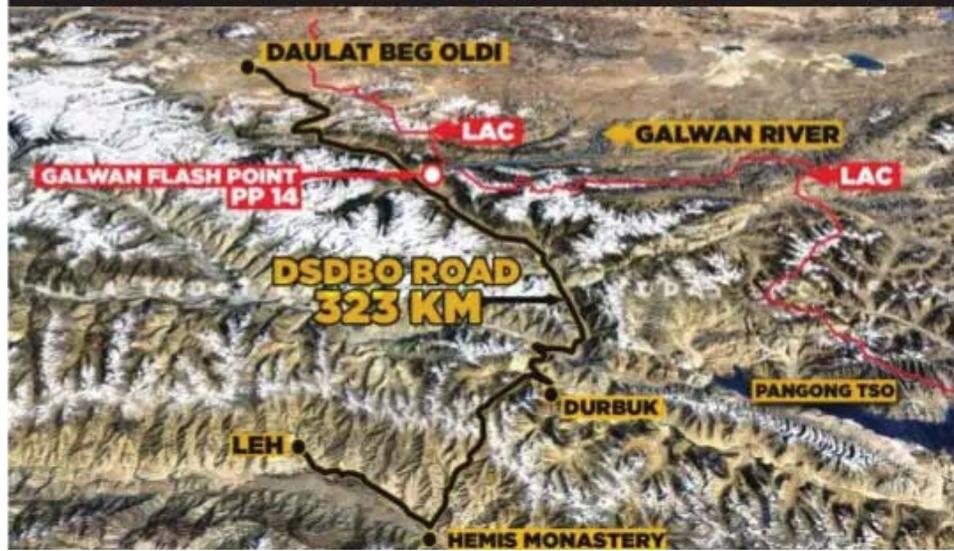
equilibrium leads to the loss of appetite and/or diarrhoea common to many diseases. The UK officially added the loss of taste and smell as part of Covid symptoms on May 18—either as a presenting symptom, signalling an early onset stage, or independently, without other symptoms. Indeed, isolated anosmia and ageusia are now seen as a tool to screen potential spreaders, for these are often associated with a milder form of the virus—patients "10 times less likely" to go on to be critical. The reasons for anosmia/ageusia are not understood yet. One view is that ACE2 is also present in cortical neurons, making them potential targets. Another is that it's likely to be a secondary effect—the nervous system, for instance, is dependent on blood oxygen to function properly—rather than a direct infection of the nerves, as in, say, forms of meningitis or encephalitis. This brings us to another potentially crucial site: blood. It was controversially proposed in a ChemRxiv preprint by two Chinese scholars and then reiterated by Italian pharmacologist Annalisa Chiusolo that the Covid virus manages to plug on to red blood cells, crack open the haemoglobin and release the enclosed iron. This was then linked to all the

observed chain of is to "trigger catastrophic effects: inflammation" and anaemia, excess iron "recruit" other choking the kidney; immunological silent hypoxia (from a elements to fight hindered exchange of infection. Why they oxygen and carbon dysfunction is because Covid manages to "silence" this brain; thrombosis, with inflammatory response, and grows in the body in what an attack, stroke) et al. Atlantic article called Blood was also a putative candidate to "stealth mode". When the explain Covid's rainbow body realises belatedly effect: the all-pervasive that it has been totally nature of its attack on besieged, the immune system goes into the body. The theory is hotly disputed, even if overdrive: cytokine storm. Ebola too famously A mass attack ensues on wrought havoc on blood infected cells. The lungs systems in fill with a sea of dead unexplained ways. The cells, a kind of biological idea that the virus sludge that leads to organ cracks open failure. The blood clots all haemoglobin molecules over, blood vessels leak, (haemolysis) may or BP plummets because of may not endure. Then vasodilation, anaemia occurs. Somewhere along this disastrous slope, they that stunning variety of start turning on even symptoms? Well, recent understanding healthy body cells. Just inserts a vital first step: like any other autoimmune immunity-gone-awry. disorder, it's an aberrant Once that happens, overreaction that some your body-castle turns into a house of cards and caves in. That's now known, a subset of the cause; haemolysis, children who get infected. Why only they have it is one of the mysteries of thrombosis et al are of science. Thus, from a struggling country down to effect So the real twist in the plot is when your a self-immolating cell, the body starts eating itself. An uncontrolled view is different at each immunological self-step down the baoli. And step down the baoli. And the last step promises a pool of water with no clear reflections.

Dr Ramanan Laxminarayan
Director, Center for Disease Dynamics, Economics and Policy, Washington



FLASHPOINTS OF THE LADAKH FACE-OFF



Will India Side With the West Against China?

The United States and its allies have long wanted India's help in confronting China. Now, a deadly border clash seems likely to push India in that direction.

For years, the United States and its allies have tried to persuade India to become a closer military and economic partner in confronting China's ambitions, painting it as a chance for the world's largest democracy to counterbalance the largest autocracy.

This week, the idea of such a confrontation became more real as Indian and Chinese soldiers clashed in the worst violence on the countries' border in 45 years, leaving 20 Indian troops dead and causing an unknown number of Chinese casualties.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has publicly revealed in the prospect of a more muscular role for India in the region and the world. But analysts say the new tensions with China will be the starkest test yet of whether India is ready — or truly willing — to jostle with a rising power bent on expanding its interests and territory.

With China facing new scrutiny and criticism over the coronavirus pandemic, Indian officials have recently seemed emboldened, taking steps that made Western diplomats feel that their goal of an India closer to the West was starting to be realized. And some believe the friction with China will push India even further in that direction.

This month, India signed a major defense agreement with Australia that allows both countries to use each other's military bases. And it is expected to invite Australia to join naval exercises it conducts with Japan and the United States, to strengthen efforts by the so-called Quad — Australia, Japan, the United States and India — to counter China's projection of sea

power in the region.

India's campaign for a larger profile in multinational organizations has also moved quickly. On Wednesday, it was elected unopposed to a nonpermanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. And in May, it won the chair of the World Health Organization's executive board, where it promptly supported calls to investigate the origins of the coronavirus — an inquiry China had fought to block.

But India is still well behind China when it comes to military and economic power. That may give India's leaders pause over the prospect of an armed escalation on their disputed Himalayan border, where the bloody clashes broke out this week.

"India will have to deploy all three — military, economic and political options," said Samir Saran, the president of the Observer Research Foundation, an influential think tank in Delhi. "China is a large and powerful country, and a sustained response to their aggression will have to include all of these."

"The defense of liberalism and democracy and an international open system will play out between India and China," he said.

Chinese and Indian generals

continue to meet along the border to discuss de-escalation efforts. And Indian officials acknowledged on Friday that the night before, China released 10 Indian soldiers seized during the fighting. (Later, China's foreign ministry spokesman said he did not know of any prisoners being taken, but did not explicitly deny India's announcement.)

But the troop buildup is continuing, with villagers in the area and satellite imagery indicating that both sides are still sending in reinforcements. On Friday, Mr. Modi scheduled a closed-door meeting with top opposition leaders to discuss what India will do next.

While India's military is one of the world's largest, it has failed to modernize and stay competitive. This year, India announced a military budget of nearly \$74 billion, compared with Beijing's \$178 billion. In India's case, much of that spending is going to pay pensions.

Economically, India has become more willing to use its vast market as a lever to pressure China. In April, it passed legislation requiring government approval for any investments from Chinese entities, a setback for China as its companies look abroad for growth. And Reuters reported on Thursday that India

planned to raise tariffs on Chinese goods.

Diplomats expect India to prevent the Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei from entering its market to build a 5G wireless network. The United States accuses Huawei of aiding the Chinese government in cyberespionage, and it has urged its allies to block the company's 5G development.

Although India's potential buying power gives it one way to slap at China, it has nowhere near the spending and lending capacity that China has used to increase its global influence.

Still, Indian officials have embraced the idea of being a democratic counterbalance to China, and the coronavirus has offered a chance to push that narrative as countries fume over Beijing's handling of the pandemic.

Indian political figures went on the offensive after the pandemic began, criticizing China's authoritarian system and its lack of transparency as the

coronavirus spread beyond the city of Wuhan, where it is widely thought to have begun.

Vijay Gokhale, who recently retired as India's foreign secretary and is still close to the government, wrote a lengthy opinion piece this month in which he blasted China's handling of the pandemic. "The shortcomings of the regime," he wrote, "will further fuel a debate on the superiority of the Chinese model as an alternative to democracy. Will this form the ideological underpinning for the birth of a new Cold War?"

The pandemic also gave Mr. Modi a chance to tap his country's giant pharmaceutical industry to strengthen diplomatic ties. Diplomats stationed in India say that in the early days of the crisis, he and his foreign minister were "constantly working the phones" to offer countries help with medicines.

One Western diplomat felt that the coronavirus crisis had made India more eager to build stronger relationships to help it deal with China, and that diplomacy with

"...We have always worked closely with our neighbours in a cooperative and friendly manner. Always wished for their development and welfare. We never provoke anyone, but we also do not compromise with the integrity and sovereignty of our country."

— PM NARENDRA MODI



Why is the PM silent? Why is he hiding? Enough is enough. We need to know what has happened. How dare China kill our soldiers? How dare they take our land?

— RAHUL GANDHI, CONGRESS LEADER

Last time this happened in span of 1 week?

- 20 deaths along LAC during a "de-escalation" mission**
 - Friendliest neighbour unilaterally amends political map w/o talks**
 - Indian deaths on 3 borders -China, Pak, Nepal**
- Anti-national to ask why. Sedition to ask how**



— MAHUA MOITRA, TRINAMOOL CONGRESS MP

Will India Side With the West Against China?

India was going more smoothly than ever before.

"Everyone is more willing, privately, to talk about what to do with China in a post-Covid world," the diplomat said, speaking on condition of anonymity. "The ways that China has influenced that world order can now more easily be discussed as we are all trying to figure out what the new world order is."

"India represents one path," the diplomat added, "and China represents another."

More immediately, India faces the prospect of an escalation at the border, where China had been building up its forces before the violence this week. On Wednesday, Mr. Modi broke his silence to promise a tough response.

"India wants peace," he added, "but if provoked, India is capable of giving a befitting reply."

China's push at the border is not an isolated show of strength. Since the pandemic's start, China has flexed harder on many different fronts: It sank a Vietnamese shipping boat, harassed

Malaysian oil rig operations and tightened its control over Hong Kong in hopes of stamping out the pro-democracy movement there.

But India has several reasons to feel particularly hemmed in by China. Over the past decade, China has heavily courted India's neighbors, unraveling New Delhi's influence on its own doorstep.

As Indian and Chinese troops clashed in the Himalayas, Nepal's government simultaneously claimed a sliver of territory on its border that India considers its own. India's defense minister recently suggested that Nepal's border actions were taken at the behest of China.

In Pakistan, India's archrival, China is building huge infrastructure projects, some in territory that the Indian government disputes. With every project built, China is making it harder for India to hold on to its territorial claims.

And right off India's southern coast, China took possession of a port in Sri Lanka after that country could not pay its debt to Beijing. Some Indian officials fear that China could militarize the port, which

Sri Lanka denies.

"India went from having a monopoly of political and military power in the region to dealing with a marketplace of competition where China is increasingly predominant," said Constantino Xavier, a fellow at the Brookings Institution. He predicted that the new wave of border violence would prompt India to push back harder.

Some see China's buildup on the border as a calculated effort to keep India's aspirations in check.

"China doesn't particularly want India to succeed," said Tanvi Madan, the director of the India Project at the Brookings Institution. "A weaker India will do less strategically in its own neighborhood, allowing China to step in more; and it will engage less in places like East Africa or in regional institutions, posing little challenge to China."

China has also been sensitive about the prospects of closer ties between India and the West.

On Wednesday, Global Times, a mouthpiece for the Chinese Communist

Party, published an editorial claiming that the United States had given Mr. Modi's government false confidence, and that it would ultimately abandon India.

"The resources that the U.S. would invest in China-India relations are limited," the editorial read. "What the U.S. would do is just extend a lever to India, which Washington can exploit to worsen India's ties with China."

Despite warm meetings between Mr. Modi and President Trump, their countries' relationship has at times been rocky. But given China's increasingly hard line in territorial disputes, some Indian officials fear there may be little choice but to look West.

In an opinion piece on Tuesday, Mr. Gokhale, the former Indian foreign secretary, said that countries could no longer ignore Beijing's transgressions and must choose between the United States and China.

"In the post-Covid age," he wrote, "enjoying the best of both worlds may no longer be an option."

By Maria Abi-Habib, Courtesy NY Times

Chinese side makes fresh claim on Galwan Valley

The claim was made in what was described as a "step by step account of the Galwan clash" by Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian that was posted on the Chinese embassy's website shortly before midnight on Friday.

A day after India rubbished China's claim of sovereignty over Galwan Valley, at the heart of a tense border standoff between the two sides, Beijing on Friday claimed the region on the Chinese side of the Line of Actual Control and had been patrolled by its troops for "many years".

The claim was made in what was described as a "step by step account of the Galwan clash" by Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian that was posted on the Chinese embassy's website shortly before midnight on Friday.

China's People's Liberation Army's (PLA) western command had in a statement issued on Tuesday initially raised the issue, saying: "The sovereignty of the Galwan River Valley has always been ours."

On Thursday, external affairs ministry spokesperson Anurag Srivastava had dismissed the PLA's claim as "exaggerated and untenable".

On Monday night, Indian and Chinese troops were involved in a seven-hour violent face-off in Galwan Valley that left 20 Indian soldiers dead and at least 76 injured. Another 10 Indian soldiers held by the Chinese side were released on Thursday.

The so-called "step by step account" by Zhao said: "The Galwan Valley is located on the Chinese side of the Line of Actual Control in the west section of the China-India boundary. For many years, the Chinese border troops have been patrolling and on duty in this region."

It further claimed that since April, Indian troops had "unilaterally and continuously built roads, bridges and other facilities at the LAC in the Galwan Valley". China made representations and protests on multiple occasions but "India has gone even further

to cross the LAC and make provocations", Zhao said. Zhao contended Indian troops crossed the LAC by night and trespassed into China's territory on May 6 and then "built fortification and barricades, which impeded the patrol of Chinese border troops". They deliberately made provocations in an attempt to unilaterally change the status quo of control and management. The Chinese border troops have been forced to take necessary measures to respond to the situation on the ground and strengthen management and control in the border areas.

Is China eyeing new world order?

Is China using the world's preoccupation with the Covid-19 crisis to enlarge its position on several border disputes and target rivals that could have a say in shaping the post-pandemic global order? That's a question now being debated by experts and analysts following a string of actions by China over the past few weeks and months.

India-China border standoff:

The most urgent of the crises is the tense weeks-old face-off between Indian and Chinese border troops in the Ladakh sector of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) that has sparked at least three clashes since early May, the latest being the violent brawl of June 15 that left 20 Indian soldiers dead.

India has accused China of taking "premeditated and planned action" that reflected an intent to change the status quo on the LAC.

Reasons advanced for China's actions have ranged from anger over India's beefing up of infrastructure along the strategic Darbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldie (DSDBO) road and

Referring to a meeting of senior Indian and Chinese military commanders held on June 6, Zhao said the two sides "reached consensus on easing the situation". He claimed the Indian side "promised that they would not cross the estuary of the Galwan river to patrol and build facilities" and the two sides would discuss and decide the phased withdrawal of troops". Zhao claimed that on June 15, Indian troops violated the agreement reached on June 6 and "once again crossed the Line of Actual Control for deliberate provocation...and even violently attacked the Chinese officers

and soldiers who went there for negotiation, thus triggering fierce physical conflicts and causing casualties". He reiterated various accusations levelled by the Chinese side in recent days about the violation of agreements. There was no immediate reaction from Indian officials to Zhao's account. A readout issued by the external affairs ministry after a phone conversation between external affairs minister S Jaishankar and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi on June 17 had clearly accused Chinese troops of provoking the clash on June 15 by entering the Indian side of the LAC.

India's decision last August to scrap Jammu and Kashmir's special status and create the union territory of Ladakh, which Beijing has indicated had an impact on its territorial claims in the region. Experts have also pointed to China's desire to protect its considerable investments in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a key part of which is located in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

Australia cyber attack:

The Australian government said on Friday it was dealing with a massive cyberattack targeting all levels of the administration, industry, education, essential services, critical infrastructure, and political organisations. Prime Minister Scott Morrison said a malicious and sophisticated "state-based cyber actor" was behind the attack, adding that "there are not a large number of state-based actors that can engage in this type of activity".

Though Morrison didn't name any country, Australian experts and observers pointed the finger at China. Peter Jennings, executive

director of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, told CNN there was a "95% chance that it is China who is responsible for this attack". Australia has been vocal in recent months about an international investigation into the origins of the Covid-19 pandemic and backed India's calls for reforms of the World Health Organization for its initial handling of the crisis. China retaliated with tariffs on Australian exports, including barley and beef. India and Australia have also spoken about working together to shape the post-Covid world order.

South China Sea:

There has been no let-up in China's activities to bolster its presence in the South China Sea, where it is embroiled in maritime boundary disputes with several countries, despite the Covid-19 pandemic. China has never been happy with the "one country, two systems" principle put in place for governing the special administrative region of Hong Kong when it was returned by the UK in 1997.

A dangerous leak of diesel fuel in the Arctic



An approximately 5-million-gallon diesel fuel spill from a power station storage tank near the Arctic town of Norilsk, Russia, poses a deadly threat to the region's people, plants, and animals. Even Russian President Vladimir Putin, who doesn't have a strong environmental track record, has declared a state of emergency. Norinickel, the parent company of Norilsk-Taimyr Energy Company, which operates the station, said the accident could have been the result of the foundation of the storage tank sinking due to thawing permafrost, the Russian state news agency TASS reported. As an oil spill scientist, I see unique dangers in the Arctic. This spill is a warning of a precarious future that we are unprepared for. Whenever I learn about an oil spill, I immediately ask two questions: What type of oil spilled and where did it spill? Crude oil, the kind spilled in the Exxon Valdez (1989) and Deepwater Horizon (2010) disasters, is thicker and stickier, but that also makes it visually obvious and easier to track and clean up. Crude oil spills can be corralled with the help of booms -- large, floating barriers -- and skimmed with equipment that physically removes the oil from the water. Crude oil-covered objects along shorelines can be cleared away. Diesel oil, which spilled in the Arctic disaster, is less viscous and harder to contain and recover. Once the oil is in the water, plants and animals will find themselves enveloped in a coat of potent hy-

drocarbons. Pound-for-pound in the short term, diesel fuel is significantly more lethal than crude oil and can cause longer-lasting damage.

Then there's the "where" part of my first question. With oil spills, it's all about location. Among the worst places for a diesel spill to occur is an enclosed body of water, like a slow-flowing river or inlet. I have studied three such spills.

In September 1969, a barge ran aground in Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts, spilling diesel and causing massive deaths of marine life and marsh grass in bays that are similar to those found along the Arctic coastline.

Residents still refer to the "Silent Autumn" that followed for the lack of bird life in the area that season. It took up to five years for marsh grasses to grow back, and

50 years later, grasses, crabs, and mussels in the area still show detrimental impacts from the spill. While a total volume of about 5 million gallons pales in comparison to the 11 and 168 million gallons released from the Exxon Valdez and Deepwater Horizon disasters, respectively, the "what" and "where" of the spill will lead to a much greater relative amount of damage.

Despite its similarities to Cape Cod, the Arctic is unknown territory for oil spill responders. Unlike coastlines here or in the Gulf of Mexico, we haven't mapped the Arctic Ocean's seafloor or traced currents in detail. Its weather is harsher, particularly in winter. We also don't know nearly as much about its fragile and intricate ecosystem.

On top of all that, the vast, remote Arctic has singular logistics

problems. It has limited ports, roads and airports, available to for bringing in equipment, supplies, responders, and scientists -- and few places to house and feed people who show up to help. On Friday, TASS reported, the first stage of the cleanup operation was completed.

The Deepwater Horizon spill was a major challenge, but the established infrastructure and ready access in the Gulf of Mexico was instrumental to the cleanup effort. Little such infrastructure exists in the Arctic.

All of these things mean that we have a vast learning curve ahead of us and a short time to navigate it. The Ambarnaya River region in Siberia will have to make do with what the responders can manage in a hurry and with the clock ticking. But this will almost certainly not be the last spill we

hear about in the Arctic.

Warming temperatures mean that more ship traffic will soon be plying the northern passage between Europe and Asia -- ships powered by diesel and other refined fuels. Warming temperatures also mean more thawing permafrost, which makes the soils move and collapse and puts infrastructure, like the Russian fuel tank, increasingly at risk.

The world is fraught with dangers for which we could have and should have been more prepared. To that list, we need to add the Arctic's vulnerability to oil spills. We need the foresight, will, and investment to develop strategies and policies to minimize the costs and impacts of future spills -- to prepare effective responses now for inevitable oil spills in the Arctic, and not react futilely to them after they happen.



Policing: What Trump and Congress can do now

An endless stream of sickening videos from civilian cell phones and police camcorders has shown the world an undeniable truth: Our policing system in the United States is badly broken -- and it needs to be completely reinvented and overhauled.

Police accountability systems are so pathetically inadequate that no single federal law or action -- such as President Donald Trump's forthcoming executive order on police reform -- could hope to fix them all in one fell swoop. But even in an election year, even with the US government as polarized as it is, meaningful progress to lock



in a set of basic improvements that address the worst symptoms and lay the groundwork for more fundamental changes is possible and necessary.

Below I will spell out where I think the common ground is. But first, here's a thought experiment. What if you gave 800,000 decent, law-abiding citizens handguns, batons, Tasers, pepper spray, fast cars and badges -- and told them it was their job to maintain order in a big, diverse country?

What if you told them, "Please follow the rules. But because you are good people doing a tough job, nobody is going to fire you ... or sue you ... or jail you ... no matter what you do! Just please follow the rules!"? What if you ran this experiment in a nation with a long, documented history of severe discrimination against one or more disfavored ethnic minorities?

How soon do you think you would have a huge mess on your hands? Which groups do you think would suffer the most from excesses or brutality?

Well, unfortunately, the above scenario is not a thought experiment. It is a pretty decent description of America's law enforcement system.

This approach is turning out exactly as you would imagine -- with the vast majority of people trying to do a good job, but way too many of them breaking the rules (even killing people) and getting away with it. The endless videos showing cops behaving lawlessly are entirely predictable because the mechanisms to enforce the law against law enforcement are almost completely nonexistent.

ent. It is hard to FIRE bad cops. Police unions have made it their mission, over the years, to bubble wrap even the worst police officers in layers of protective red tape. As a result, even the best police chiefs have a hard time hacking through the bureaucracy to impose order -- even when they are trying to get rid of notoriously brutal cops.

It is almost impossible to SUE bad cops. The US Supreme Court has granted qualified immunity to police officers; on Monday it declined to reexamine the doctrine. So, even if a cop rapes, unjustly beats or kills someone, it is extremely difficult for a citizen to sue a police officer individually in a court of law.

It is very difficult to JAIL bad cops. Meanwhile, prosecutors are reluctant to press charges against officers who break the law because prosecutors have to work with police officers on other cases. And juries are reluctant to pronounce a cop guilty of a serious crime.

The dangers of impunity for police

The result is a de facto "policy of impunity" for police officers -- meaning that cops generally can violate their training, police policy, criminal law and the Constitution, without fearing serious consequence. It's a recipe for disaster, on its face. But when you add well-documented racial bias against African Americans to the mix, you have an inevitable catastrophe for the black community.

Any human system without adequate oversight, checks and balances will tend toward cor-

ruption and abuse. That's why we have meat inspectors; not because we hate the butchers. That's why we have building inspectors; not because we despise all construction workers. The reason we maintain strict oversight over both professions is because otherwise we would have a national epidemic of food poisoning and collapsing buildings. By the same logic, lack of meaningful oversight is a major reason we have an epidemic of unlawful police violence.

Until we address the core issue of "police impunity," we will continue to see outrageous misconduct -- especially targeted at people of color.

That said, penetrating the hardened bunkers of unaccountable police power will take years, not weeks. Before the presidential election sucks up all the oxygen this fall, leaders in DC should move quickly to solve as many problems as they can now. And their actions should set the table for more significant changes after the election.

Congress: Essential elements of police reform

Democrats and Republicans in the House and Senate are developing legislative proposals on police reform.

Misguided funding programs that channel federal dollars to local law enforcement have contributed to the massive expansion of local police forces over the past 40 years. So, even though the federal government can't directly regulate state and local police, it can use the power of the massive federal purse to effect change in the way conditioning federal highway funding helped to

change state drunken driving laws.

Any bill worth passing Congress must include several bare minimum items.

1. Ban choke holds: Congress should prohibit federal funding from going to any state and local police departments and law enforcement agencies that don't adopt tougher policies on when the use of deadly force is permitted. Police must especially ban the hideous choke hold restraints that killed George Floyd, Eric Garner and many others. Some cities and states have already done so; the rest of the nation must follow suit. Federal tax dollars should not go to support any police department that permits choke holds -- or any other maneuvers that restrict breathing -- as a policing tool.

2. Eliminate no-knock entries: Congress also needs to address the use of no-knock entries, like the one that led to the death of Breonna Taylor in Louisville, Kentucky. Analysis of these entries show that they have evolved from an unusual tactic used in high-risk situations to an everyday policing tool, used to serve low-level drug warrants and the like.

These dangerous entries present terrible risks to officers and citizens, as the Taylor case demonstrates, and their use needs to be severely curtailed and subject to stringent oversight to ensure public safety and respect for citizens' rights.

3. Mandate review boards: Police departments that receive federal funding should also be required to create review boards with civilian membership that can review the use of deadly force, compel the disclosure of

documents and testimony, and issue public findings. Transparency is the cornerstone of any good government agency, and police can no longer be permitted to abuse citizens and then cover up that abuse. Review boards with teeth might have prevented a number of police killings, including the 2014 murder of Laquan McDonald by a Chicago police officer who had been subject to 20 complaints for excessive force.

4. Decertify bad cops: State and local police departments that get federal money must have decertification programs with teeth that revoke the certification of cops who use deadly force illegally.

5. Register bad cops: And we need a "bad cop" registry that identifies officers who have been fired for misconduct, especially the use of excessive force, so that they can't simply move from department to department to commit more wrongdoing.

The first two steps would help save lives. And the last three steps would give good police chiefs and communities better tools to find and weed out the worst elements. Fortunately, many of these ideas are already under consideration in the US House.

But Congress should try to go further -- if not in this summer's bill, then in the next ones.

1. Fix immunity: Congress needs to roll back the woefully misguided doctrine of "qualified immunity," which protects officers who commit constitutional violations from the kind of civil liability that any other citizen would face.

2. Involve the feds: Congress should create an enhanced federal role in investigating officer misconduct committed during the use of deadly force.

3. Support de-escalation: Congress should mandate tougher training requirements on de-escalation for local police departments.

4. Support mental health: Congress needs to repurpose some federal police dollars into hiring mental and behavioral health specialists. It is unfair to expect police officers to also function as therapists, marriage counselors and psychologists. Those steps would also create more checks and balances, less violence and more peaceful streets.

OUR MS DHONI ACTOR SUSHANT SINGH RAJPUT COMMITS SUICIDE AT 34.

By Sukhmani

Avery young bright and talented actor Sushant Singh Rajput left us shocked and speechless, as he commits suicide by lynching in his Bandra apartment on Sunday morning, was battling depression. According to a Mumbai Police official, the team that visits his home found some medication which meant to treat depression. But No suicide note was found from the spot. The Patna-born Rajput became an immediate strike with his good looks and boyish charm when he was notice in the famous daily soap on Zee TV's 'Pavitra Rishta' in 2009. He made his Bollywood entrance in the chum drama 'Kai Po Che!' in 2013, for which he also received a Filmfare nomination for Best Male Debut. The same year, he was also seen in the romantic comedy 'Shuddh Desi Romance' 2013, which was followed by the ostensible

officer in the action thriller 'Detective Byomkesh Bakshy!' in 2015. Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput was filled with dreams, and was inexorably working to fulfill them. As his premature demise shaken the whole nation. The last burials of actor Sushant Singh Rajput were conduct on Monday in the attendance of family members and close friends from the film and TV sorority. The actor was cremated at Mumbai's Pawan Hans crematorium around 4:30 pm in the afternoon. Earlier on Monday, Rajput's father and a few other family members flew from Patna to reach Mumbai. The family had earlier wanted to conduct the last rites in Patna where Rajput had spent a considerable part of his childhood. Due to novel coronavirus pandemic and restrictions on large gatherings, only a few people

were allowed inside the crematorium. His body was brought to the crematorium in Vile Parle from Cooper Hospital where the autopsy had been conduct earlier on Monday Mukesh Chhabra who has worked with Rajput in the yet-to-be-released remake of 'The Fault In Our Stars' was one of the first to reach the crematorium. The 'Kai Po Che!' star's colleagues from the industry including Shradha Kapoor, Kriti Sanon attended the cremation. They were joined by a few others including his friend Rhea Chakraborty and Abhishek Kapoor who directed him in both 'Kai Po Che!' and 'Kedarnath' who offer farewell to the 34-year-old as it rained. Actors Vivek Oberoi, Randeep Hooda, Prateik Babbar and singer Udit Narayan were a few others who attended the cremation. Suicide is not the solution for our problems. But still we pray for his beautiful soul who will be missed.



Sushant Singh Rajput's US-based sister Shweta deletes social media profiles after sharing empowering messages for fans



A day after posting an emotional message in remembrance of her brother, actor Sushant Singh Rajput's sister, Shweta Singh Kirti has deleted her social media profiles on Facebook and Instagram. Shweta had been sharing posts about her brother on Facebook, as recently as Wednesday. In her last post, Shweta had shared a handwritten note from Sushant, and had written, "Mera baby, mera Babu mera Bachcha is not physically present with us anymore and it is ok... I know u were in a lot of pain and I know u were a fighter and u were bravely fighting it. Sorry mera Sona... sorry for all the pain u had to go through...if I could I would hav taken all ur pain and given all my happiness to u."

The had added, "Your twinkling eyes taught the world how to dream, ur innocent

smile revealed the true purity of ur heart. you will always be loved mera Baby and so much more....Wherever ur mera baby stay happy....stay fulfilled and know that everyone loved, loves u and will always love you unconditionally." In an earlier post, she had written about telling her son that his uncle is no more. Sushant died by suicide on Sunday, at the age of 34. He was reportedly suffering from depression. She'd written, "When I told Nirvanh the news that Mamu is no more, he said 'But he is alive in your heart' 3 times. When a 5 yr old can say something like that... think how strong we should all be.... Stay Strong everyone.... especially the fans of Sushant... please understand he lives in our hearts and he will always keep doing so....Please don't do anything that can hurt his soul....Stay Strong!"

'STAY AT HOME' BRINGS ANOTHER RIFE TO FIGHT'

By Sukhmani

COVID19 lockdown has took the another turn, due to lockdown DOMESTIC ABUSE has become an additional subject to think about. Since the lockdown has started; there is increase in domestic abuse complaints. The lockdown has turned into a fence in with the abusers for women and children. "Staying at home is a main part of the tactic to put a stop to corona virus from scattering and accumulate lives, but for some people lockdown isn't safe. Things have become quite hard for children and women. With limitations in society, it is difficult for the victims to ask for help to run away from their abusers. The victims are mostly women and children, who are now caged with their abusers. Insistent act is needed to save victims from harm and avoid

crimes to be committed by culprits. It's really difficult to abandon victims in the middle of lockdown because this kind of demeanor of people privately, it was unexpected so there is no arrangement of places to live. "All women who need to escape during lockdown and beyond must be assured of a safe place to stay. Basic reason or Domestic reason could be the fear of the epidemic, which has led many people to drop their jobs and short of alcohol is all toting up to the aggravation of these offensive men. Reports say that from March 24 till April 1, 257 complaints related to various offenses against women were received out of the 69 complaints are related to domestic violence. As we know the pandemic of covid19 has produced a unease among the people all over the

world, on the other hand, it has also shaken the markets around the world. Corona virus has affected our economical, social life but also personal life. Because of this Corona virus, divorce cases have also increased among the people, couple says that they spent the last two months together during isolation. During these two months, their relationship has reached to divorce. Even just because of curfew marriages are put to test like never before as 30percent of couples have filed a divorce case as they are fed up and unable to cope up with each other. To resolve the domestic matters governments of different nations are trying to handle this situation differently. For instance: India has provided helpline numbers where private fuss related to women and chil-



dren will be listen and resolve. On the other hand, France, French gender equality minister will be helping sufferers of domestic brutality during lockdown. Moreover in some countries NGOs are tackling this problem by giving counseling sessions through video calls and phone calls. But in nation like Spain domestic level

has gone to next level because three women are murdered due to domestic abuse in lockdown. Well this pandemic has changed the lives of people completely. This pandemic is not so easy so everyone has to be strong head to fight it and cope with it by co operating with governments of their nations.

CII Study: 155 Indian Companies Account for Over \$22 Billion in Investments, Nearly 125,000 Jobs in U.S.

Texas, New Jersey, New York, Florida, and Massachusetts are top investment destinations for Indian firms

By our staff reporter (WASHINGTON, D.C.) - One hundred and fifty-five companies with origins in India are responsible for generating over \$22 billion in investments and nearly 125,000 jobs across the United States, according to a new survey report released today by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

The report, "Indian Roots, American Soil 2020," is a state-by-state breakdown of tangible investments made and jobs created by 155 surveyed Indian companies doing business in all 50 states, as well as Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. Texas, California, New Jersey, New York, and Florida are home to the greatest number of workers in the U.S. directly employed by the reporting Indian companies. The surveyed companies disclosed the highest amounts of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Texas, New Jersey, New York, Florida, and Massachusetts. The states with the top concentrations of Indian companies reporting were New Jersey, Texas, California, New York, Illinois

and Georgia.

The surveyed companies also provided data regarding their corporate social responsibility (CSR) and research and development expenditures, which totaled \$175 million and \$900 million, respectively.

Key findings in the report (attributed to the 155 survey-respondents):

Together, 155 Indian companies employ nearly 125,000 people across 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The total value of tangible investments made by these 155 companies exceeds \$22 billion.

The top five states in which Indian companies have generated maximum employment are: Texas (17,578 jobs), California (8,271 jobs), New Jersey (8,057 jobs), New York (6,175 jobs) and Florida (5,454 jobs).

The top five states in which Indian companies have contributed the highest foreign direct investment are: Texas (\$9.5 billion), New Jersey (\$2.4 billion), New

York (\$1.8 billion), Florida (\$915 million), and Massachusetts (\$873 million).

Indian investments in 20 U.S. states stand at over \$100 million each.

77% of the companies plan to make more investments in the United States.

83% of the companies plan to hire more employees locally in the next five years.

The CII survey respondents represent diverse sectors including pharmaceuticals and life sciences, telecommunications, aerospace and defense, financial services, manufacturing, tourism and hospitality, design and engineering, automotive, food and agriculture, energy and mining and materials.

The CII report was launched via a webinar by Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, CII and Taranjit Sandhu, Ambassador of India to the United States, along with support from senior US Government officials, including Diane Farrell, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for International Administration, US Department of Commerce and Peter Haas, Principal Deputy Assis-

tant Secretary, US Department of State.

Several members of Congress also joined the report launch over video, including Senators John Cornyn (R-TX) and Mark Warner (D-VA), co-chairs of the Senate India Caucus, as well as Representatives Brad Sherman (CA-30), co-chair of the House Caucus on India and Indian Americans, and Ami Bera (CA-07) who joined live. A business panel moderated by Atul Deshmukh, Global Head of Assurance, KNAV, followed the report launch, in which business leaders – Inderpreet Sawhney, Group General Counsel and Chief Compliance Officer, Infosys Ltd, Dr Sofia Mumtaz, President, Lupin North America, and Laksh Vaaman Sehgal, Vice Chairman, Motherson Group highlighted the contributions of Indian companies to the U.S. economy in the form of FDI, jobs created and saved, research and development, skills training and local corporate social responsibility initiatives – including Indian companies' support to the US in its fight against COVID-19.

Mumbai BJP leader booked by CBI for 'cheating' Bank of India of Rs 57.26 crore

The BJP leader said his firm had entered into a compromise with the bank and made a one time payment to settle dues.

(News Agencies) The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has registered a case against local Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Mohit Kamboj and directors of his company for allegedly cheating Bank of India to the tune of Rs. 57.26 crore. The CBI has also booked unknown public servants and bank officials, while its inquiry in the case continues. The cases have been registered against two Mumbai-based firms known as Avyaan Overseas private limited-- now known as M/s. Bagla Overseas private limited, Mumbai--- and KBJ Hotels Goa private limited. Mohit Kamboj, managing director of the former has also been booked along with firm directors Jitendra Gulshan Kapoor, Siddhant Bagla and Irtesh Mishra.

According to a CBI official, between 2013 and 2018, the Mumbai based firm 'Avyaan Overseas private limited and its managing director Mohit Kamboj, along with unknown public servant, entered into an agreement with the bank's Mid Corporate Branch in Fort, with an intention to cheat through FB purchase/ Foreign Bills Negotiation Limit and Export Packaging Credit Limit facilities worth Rs.60 crore (approx.) extended to the firm.

It was further alleged in the complaint that the accused company diverted the funds obtained from the bank followed by forging and fabrication of documents in support of their claim, which resulted in a loss of Rs.57.26 crore to the bank, as per the CBI press re-

lease. The CBI has been conducting searches at five places in Mumbai including at the residential and official premises linked to the accused individuals and companies. The search has led to recovery of certain incriminating documents pertaining to property, loan,

various bank accounts and locker keys, said the CBI official. Mohit Kamboj, who changed his name to Mohit Bhartiya said, "Compromise in the above loan account has been done in 2018 by paying Rs 30 crore as one-time settlement of dues. I have also

received no dues certificate from the Bank of India in March 2019. I don't know why the bank has gone ahead with this complaint, after two and a half years of clearing all the dues. Nevertheless, I will cooperate with the CBI probe as I have full trust in them".

Uncle Ben's and Mrs. Butterworth's follow Aunt Jemima phasing out racial stereotypes in logos

(News Agencies) Uncle Ben's owner Mars is planning to change the rice maker's "brand identity" — one of several food companies planning to overhaul logos and packaging that have long been criticized for perpetuating harmful racial stereotypes.

In a statement on its website Wednesday, Mars wrote that "now is the right time to evolve the Uncle Ben's brand, including its visual brand identity, which we will do."

"We don't yet know what the exact changes and timing will be, but we are evaluating all possibilities," Mars added. Earlier on Wednesday, Quaker Oats announced it's retiring the 130-year-old Aunt Jemima brand and logo. "As we work to make progress toward racial equality through several initiatives, we also must take a hard look at our portfolio of

brands and ensure they reflect our values and meet our consumers' expectations," the Pepsi (PEP)-owned company said in a

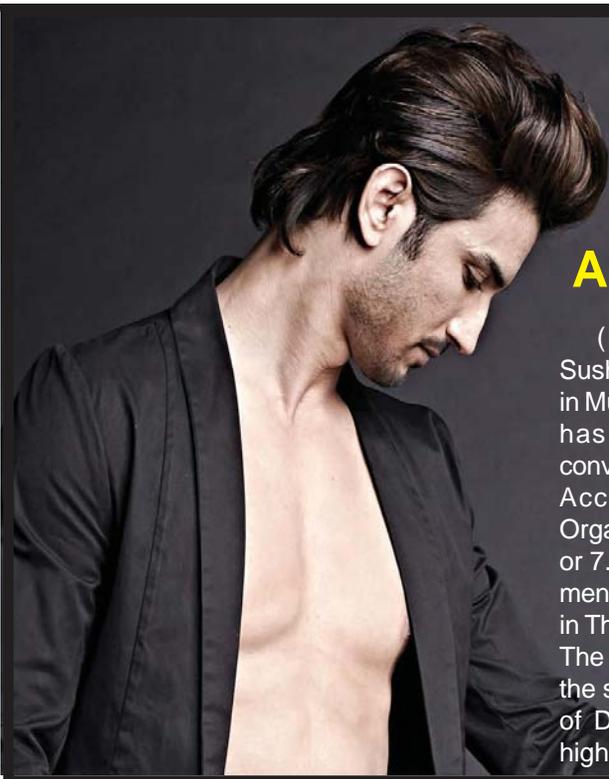
wholly inconsistent with our values."

The moves are an acknowledgment of the brands' origins in racist stereotypes, a consideration brought to the forefront during the nationwide reckoning on race following the death of George Floyd in police custody.

According to the Uncle Ben's website, the name was first used in 1946 in reference to a black farmer known as Uncle Ben who excelled in rice-growing. The man depicted in the logo is a "a beloved Chicago chef and waiter named Frank Brown."

However, the imagery evokes a servant and uses a title that reflects how white Southerners "once used 'uncle' and 'aunt' as honorifics for older blacks because they refused to say 'Mr.' and 'Mrs.," according to a 2007 New York Times article.





India needs better mental health care systems

Address structural and financial gaps, change mindsets

(News Agencies) Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput died by suicide in Mumbai on Sunday. His tragic death has triggered a much-needed conversation on mental health in India. According to the World Health Organization, over 90 million Indians, or 7.5% of the population, suffer from mental health issues. A study published in *The Lancet* in December 2019, titled *The burden of mental disorders across the states of India: the Global Burden of Disease Study 1990–2017*, also highlights the scale of the challenge.

Mental health issues are among the leading causes of non-fatal disease burden in India; one of every seven Indian was affected by mental health issues in 2017; the proportional contribution of mental health to the total disease burden has almost doubled since 1990; and suicide was the leading cause of deaths among young people — aged 15 to 39 — in 2016. India spends little on mental health care. In financial year (FY) 2019, the budget allocated to the National Mental Health Programme (NMHP) was

brought down to ₹ 40 crore from ₹ 50 crore in FY18. Budget 2020 has not increased the allocation for NMHP. When it comes to mental health care personnel, India has 9,000 psychiatrists, or one doctor for every 100,000 people, when WHO norms say there should be three for every 100,000 people. While these structural and financial lacunae need to be addressed, it is important for society to not stigmatise the victims, and provide a community support structure so that they don't battle such problems alone.

People with co-morbidities 12 times more likely to die of Covid: US study

In the US, cardiovascular disease (32%), diabetes (30%) and lung disease (18%) are the most common chronic diseases among Covid-19 patients.



(News Agencies) People with underlying health conditions like heart disease and diabetes are 12 times more likely to die and six times more likely to be hospitalised with severe coronavirus disease (Covid-19) than healthy patients, according to what is the largest yet analysis of patient records to understand how to save lives from the virus that has infected 823,289 and claimed 431,541 globally (WHO report as on June 15). One in five (19.5%) people with underlying diseases died compared to 1.6% of those who were healthy, found an analysis of 1.3 million cases and 103,700 deaths in the United States from January 22 through May 30 done by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the country's federal agency. Hospitalisations were also significantly higher in those with chronic diseases, with 45.4% of such people needing to be hospitalised compared to 7.6% with no pre-existing disease. Of the 1.3 million cases, 14%

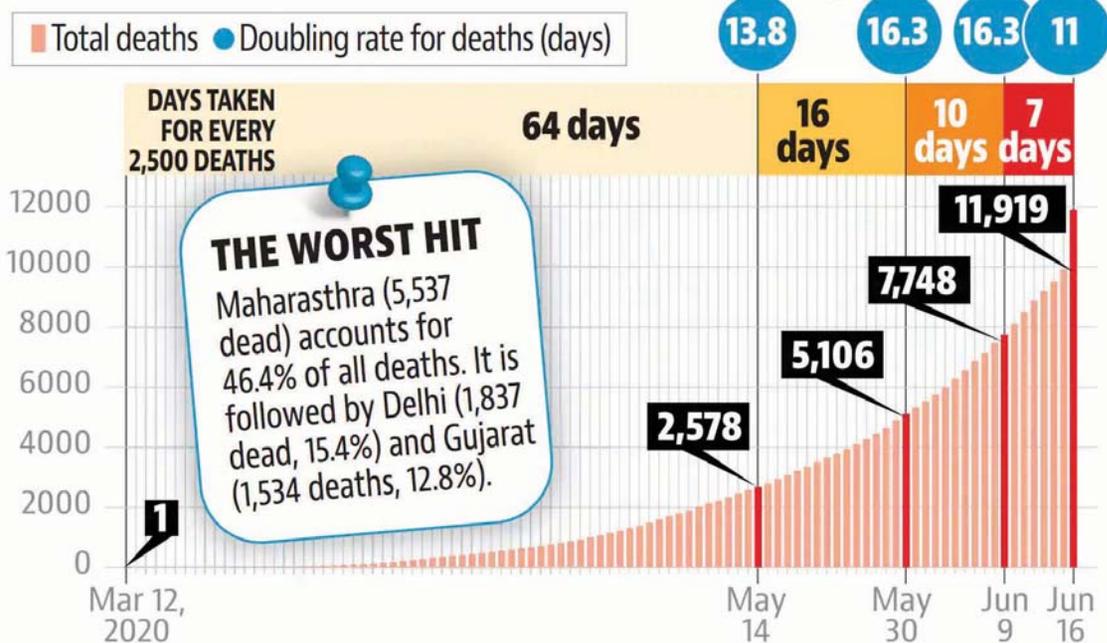
needed hospitalisation, 2% needed intensive care, and 5% died, but the real death rate is likely to be lower because people with mild or no symptoms often remain undiagnosed, said the CDC. The chances of severe illness and death increase with age, particularly in men and people with underlying health conditions, according to the analysis. The CDC report is consistent with reports from around the world, including India, where people with other diseases had a higher risk of hospitalisation and death. In the US, cardiovascular disease (32%), diabetes (30%) and lung disease (18%) are the most common chronic diseases among Covid-19 patients. Even among young adults below 39 years, the hospitalisation rate in the US is at least four times higher for those with underlying illnesses. Deaths are highest among people 80 years or older, irrespective of whether they had chronic illnesses, but about 50% of all deaths were in that age group with a chronic health

illness. The prevalence of underlying diseases is similar between the sexes, but men with Covid-19 were twice as likely to need hospitalisation, the CDC study found. In a separate but linked study published in the journal *Lancet* on Tuesday, an estimated 1.7 billion people — more than 20% of the world's population — have at least one underlying health problem such as obesity or heart disease that put them in greater danger of Covid-19 infection. In India, close to four in five people (78%) diagnosed with Covid-19 have underlying conditions, according to an analysis of data from first 33,050 cases in India reported till

April 30. Men accounted for two-thirds of cases, and half (51.2%) of all patients were over 60 years old, said the Union ministry of health analysis. The risk factors for severe Covid-19 include old age, cardiovascular disease, chronic kidney disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease and obesity. "Our clinical experience in India is that those at the highest risk of severe disease and death are Covid-19 patients with any two or more underlying conditions, such as hypertension and kidney disease, or diabetes and chronic lung diseases," said Dr Randeep Guleria, director, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi. In India, an estimated 54.6 million

people have heart disease and 70 million people have diabetes, according to estimates based on the Global Burden of Disease Study 2017. "With testing remaining low and many sick people avoiding hospitals, there is a danger of the death certificates not recording the correct cause of death and Covid-19 being missed, which is why we must study all-cause mortality to see if overall deaths have increased during the pandemic. Also, the advantage of a young demographic is negated if chronic diseases are high in young people and the health systems are weak," said Dr Dileep Mavalankar, director, Public Health Foundation of India, Gandhinagar.

INDIA'S COVID TOLL NOW AT 11,919



Pioneering Grant For South Asian Filmmakers in the U.S.



(News Agencies) SEATTLE Festival (TSAFF), the largest South Asian film festival in the United States, is currently ac-

Tasveer Film Fund is the first of its kind grant dedicated to South Asian storytellers in the U.S. creating short films - submissions accepted through



cepting submissions from South Asian filmmakers in the US to make their scripts come to life. Submissions are accepted now through July 31, 2020 and the grantee will be announced at the Tasveer Arts Festival in October 2020, which is the new iteration of the festival this year. "Tasveer was founded to combine a passion for social justice and awareness, with powerful, inclusive storytelling by and about South Asians," said Rita Meher, Executive Director of Tasveer. "With this new fund, we can make this possible all around."

In its inaugural year, the Tasveer Film Fund (TFF) will

award one grant of \$5,000 to a South Asian filmmaker residing in the U.S. to make a short film. Filmmakers should submit scripts between five to 20 pages in length and incorporate a social justice issue or theme. Scripts can be submitted through FilmFreeway and the submission deadline is July 31, 2020. The final grantee will be announced during Tasveer Arts Festival in October 2020, and must complete their film in time for a premiere at the festival in fall 2021. "Funding is one of the greatest barriers to entry for South Asian filmmakers, and at this critical moment for artists and representation, we're

proud to be able to offer this support towards getting films made and out into the world," added Pulkit Datta, Artistic Director of the film festival. Tasveer Film Fund is funded by Tasveer, Archana Soy Fund, and donations by local community members. Tasveer produces three festivals yearly including Tasveer South Asian Literature Festival (TSAL), Yoni ki Baat (YKB), and its signature Tasveer South Asian Film Festival (TSAFF), now in its 15th year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization will combine its festivals into one, now titled Tasveer Arts Festival (TAF). TAF will feature South Asian films, literature, and performance arts to empower, transform, heal, and entertain audiences. In a healthy and safe way, the diverse programs will encourage people to start and hold space for dialogues focused on South Asian stories that represent equity, climate change, LGBTQ+ issues, women's rights, and much more. TAF is scheduled for early October. The format of the festival and dates will be announced soon.

"Frankly, My Dear, He Didn't Give A D**n"

Sushant Singh Rajput's Friend Rohini Iyer In Viral Post



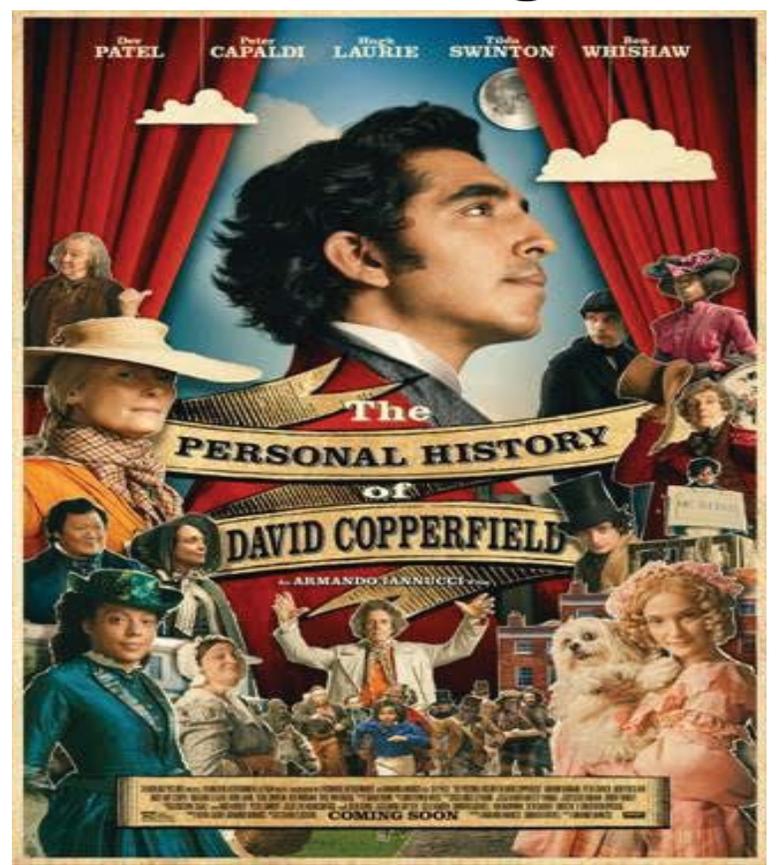
(News Agencies) Actor Sushant Singh Rajput's close friend Rohini Iyer, an influential Bollywood publicist, has shared an immensely long, detailed and honest - almost aggressively so - note about Mr Rajput. Ms Iyer writes that she was prompted to share her thoughts on Mr Rajput by the "fiction" she reads online instead of news. Sushant Singh Rajput was found dead at home in Mumbai on Sunday and police say it was suicide - since then social media has discussed little else, from why he died to why some celebs shared tributes to him to why others didn't. In her now-viral post, shared by many including by some celebrities, Rohini Iyer attempts to set the record straight about the man she called her best friend. Some of the social media chatter about Sushant Singh Rajput has focused itself on public outpourings of grief from celebrities, one of whom - filmmaker Karan Johar, who produced Sushant Singh Rajput's last film Drive - wrote that he blamed himself for not having been in touch with the actor for a year. Rohini Iyer names no names but writes, "Firstly, he didn't give a f**k about fame or your opinions. He didn't care about these people who are busy posting about not being in touch with him. For the record, he didn't care about being in touch. He hated fake friends, phone calls and small talk." There has also been speculation about a supposed boycott Sushant Singh Rajput allegedly faced from powerful production houses and that he felt shut out and isolated by the camps that Bollywood is notoriously run by.

THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF DAVID COPPERFIELD Opens in Theaters on August 14

(News Agencies) As movie theaters in North America begin plans to reopen with social distancing guidelines this summer, Searchlight Pictures has announced that the acclaimed Dev Patel film THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF DAVID COPPERFIELD will release in cinemas on the new date of August 14, 2020. The film re-imagines Charles Dickens' classic ode to grit and perseverance through the comedic lens of its award-winning filmmakers — giving the Dickensian tale new life for a cosmopolitan age with a diverse ensemble cast of stage and screen actors from across the world.

Release Date: August 14 Director: Armando Iannucci Cast: Dev Patel, Peter Capaldi, Hugh Laurie, Tilda Swinton, and Ben Whishaw

THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF DAVID COPPERFIELD re-imagines Charles Dickens' classic ode to grit and perseverance through the comedic lens of its award-winning filmmakers — giving the Dickensian tale new life



for a cosmopolitan age with a diverse ensemble cast of stage and screen actors from across the world. Emmy® winners and Oscar® nominees Armando Iannucci (IN THE LOOP, THE DEATH OF STALIN, HBO'S Veep) and Simon Blackwell

(IN THE LOOP, HBO'S Succession) lend their wry, yet heart-filled storytelling style to revisiting Dickens' iconic hero on his quirky journey from impoverished orphan to burgeoning writer in Victorian England.



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Trump signs executive order incentivizing police reforms

But Trump's order offered little in the way of enforcement and appears unlikely to quiet calls for broader change in policing.



(Story on Page 33)

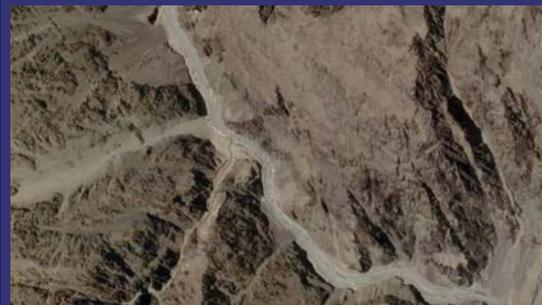
Labor of Love

The baby-making reality show you won't believe



(News Agencies) If the coronavirus has taught us anything, it's that people will watch any old dating show under quarantine, no matter how staggeringly dumb it is. So with that in mind, Fox's Labor of Love will probably end up as the biggest hit of the summer. Because, and I really can't stress this enough, Labor of Love is stupid. It is arguably the most knuckleheaded show I have seen in half a decade. You could take this show and bury it in the desert, and people would still be able to locate it from the stench of its utter, logic-defying stupidity. (Contd on page 30)

All you need to know about Galwan Valley, the site of clash between India and China



(News Agencies) A violent face-off took place between Indian and Chinese soldiers in Ladakh's Galwan Valley on Monday night in which 20 Indian soldiers were killed. Defence minister Rajnath Singh issued a statement on Wednesday in which he mourned the loss of lives of 20 soldiers. In his first comments since the clashes on Monday, Singh said that the loss of soldiers in Galwan is "deeply disturbing and painful". He also said that India will never forget the bravery and sacrifice of soldiers who displayed exemplary courage and valour in the line of duty and sacrificed their lives. Singh had briefed Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday evening and held two other meetings with the Chief of Defence Staff and the three service chief. (Contd on page 32)

100 days of Covid-19 Pandemic presents a new political paradigm

Covid has claimed about 12,000 lives in India, with cases and fatalities rising in recent weeks. HOW THE PANDEMIC has shaped national issues since march 2, seen as the beginning of the infection's first wave in India, and changed personal lives and habits. The outbreak pushed to the fore the urgency of health care, plight of migrant workers, and economic hardships. It also put to test federalism and made political parties innovate.



(News Agencies) Think back to February this year. The political lexicon of India revolved around the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, National Register of Citizens and the National Population Register; Shaheen Bagh and protests; Namaste Trump; Anurag Thakur, Kapil Mishra and violence; and an economy in decline. A little over 100 days later, examine what has animated the Indian political discourse: Lockdown; migrant workers; testing; hospital beds; inter-state movement; the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS); (Contd on page 32)

ਪੰਜਾਬ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਅਤ ਦਾ ਤਰਜਮਾਨ