

MESSAGE FROM

**DIRECTOR'S DESK**



Also accounting the changing rules of International relations, dividing policies, perspectives on alliances, institutionalization, transboundary politics of South Asia, lashes of climate change and economy deeply.

Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS), India through its corridors of engagement with researchers, academicians, Ministry forums have tried to establish a study of connection between regional, national and global histories over centuries to provide a way to think creatively about social lives and future unfolding of the world around us.

Institute syndicate of activities, publications and multiple webinars on coinciding issues stirring up globally and altering lifestyles, defining epistemologies and preparing multiple sectors to function disparately post pandemic, has gained extensive focus among interdisciplinary participants over last few months.

Therefore this specific segment of institute's Bi-Monthly Bulletin "News Reel" is also a paper pack of essays and narratives serving a clear picture of devastating effect of COVID-19 on public health, human development and sustainability. Also accounting the changing rules of International relations, dividing policies, perspectives on alliances, institutionalization, transboundary politics of South Asia, lashes of climate change and economy deeply.

The edition and institutions forthcoming activities along with disquisitions in itself is and will be broadband of views and remedies, concentrating on attaining solidarity while being at distance in order to develop a viaduct of plans and strategies to fight against the present while aspiring for tomorrows "New Normal."

To find out more on ISCS's upcoming research and academic activities stay connected and keep logging in to: <https://www.facebook.com/ISCSKolkata>

Stay Safe till then.

-Arindam Mukherjee  
Director, ISCS India





# INDIA IN BETWIXT OF LOCK AND UNLOCK

India after spending almost months of Lockdown is now looking forward to a normal life albeit with some significant safeguard measures. Everyone was eagerly waiting to retrospect and find out how the country would function during her unlock phases. Although the momentum gained by Corona Virus in last few months has been immense, the experts proclaim that country's decision, policy making has helped the graph of fatality rates of the country remaining squat and improving her recovery rates of COVID patients with the passing days.

The given write up is the summary of how the country had been living in past two months with a dawn of unlock and dusk of lockdown. In keeping with the increasing abatement of the lockdown in prior months, Government has mapped out three phases of unlock plans by restricting the containment zones and from initial calendar days of June has permitted the reopening of mall, hotels, restaurants, religious places and inter-place travels in consonance with the guidelines issued by Health Ministry while the night curfew has been remaining in force till Aug 5, to bridle movement for non-essential reasons.

The shrinking footprints of Lockdown have been mended to attain country's economic recovery, even though it is believed that country's robust foundation, built on structural reform, domestic nature of market, prudent monetary and fiscal policy will help the nation to navigate through the current challenging environment quite efficiently. It is true that policy makers have acknowledged vast uncertainties associated with pandemic, however, in case of India there are some positive signs emerging – lower incidences of positive test results, steady fallouts in new infection rates, quick identifications of hotspots as also the fighting fit measures to stop the spread of virus.

Therefore it will not be inappropriate to regard the fact that the government's timely initiated measures, RBI's sustainability based policy and planning have laid an impetus towards the economic recovery of the country. The pace is obviously gradual, as because a certain amount of social distancing has been continued over the medium term to avoid another wave of infection. This, in turn, has caused an uneven recovery across different sectors, especially businesses that depend on the gathering of people, such as retail, hospitality, tourism, cinemas, exhibitions, and construction sites while remaining even under the surveillance the sectors catering from distance like packaged food, telecom, home improvement, automation, white goods, and consumer electronics have attained a faster economic recovery.

The unlock phase of India has encountered unending slew of challenges including the flurry of cyclones like Amphan, Nisarg, swarming locust, intermittent hits of earthquakes, and neighbouring actions in the borders. The country's response to each of these adversities is strong enough to transform all of these scourge into a stepping stone of success. Given the changes in mindset and behaviour that are currently underway, we can see a new world forming.

One thing that we are witnessing is a tremendous widening of digital platform. The digital world is actually more critical than ever before. Still the situation is such that if pressed, most consumers will opt paying for Internet services rather than paying for a car. E-Learning routes have built in to complete the syllabus, Board rooms are brought down within the computer frames, webinars are hosted by different Academies and Research Institutes in order to



transpire on the contemporary happenings along with its act and impact on sustainability. People for work or study now have adopted travelling not by roads but by digital highways. Unfortunately, the firms that are not digitalised, remain almost paralyzed, which evokes the factor of Digital Divide and concern.

An internet based teaching has become an appropriate stop gap arrangement now. However, as majority of student population from rural and semi-urban regions are being left out from educational pursuits Central Government's portal named DIKSHA is developing and designing programs in vernacular languages, preparing practical videos almost on all the subjects right from geometry to photosynthesis, but the paucity in the reach of congruous digitalization in hooks and corners of country bridles the country from attaining her prime most priority of Make in India that is educational empowerment of the youth on a seminal basis.

India already has set her foot into unlock phases with a lifestyle that mandates-thermal screening, hand sanitizing fixations, compulsory face mask and social distancing. Hence the lockdown to partial opening with multitude of restrictions has truly been difficult to cope for many. The situation on the other hand has the scope of involved innovation of ideas , start-ups and bringing one close to the nature. The use of natural products and adoption of practices like replacing paper napkins with one time use environmental friendly banana leaf along with the ride and reliance for home remedies as immunity booster- from turmeric milk to other supplements on day to day basis are recommended by Ayush Mantralaya (Ministry of Health ,Gol) as the panacea for “Swasth India”.

Simultaneously, the sprawling news of ICMR claiming the imminent launch of Covaxin, an indigenous COVID vaccine being developed in collaboration with Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech with the ICMR and the National Institute of Virology (NIV), have created a hope among Indians to lead world to the doors of COVID

vaccine and diminish the virus. Aiming to launch the indigenous Covid-19 vaccine the Indian Council of Medical Research has written to selected medical institutions and hospitals to fast-track clinical trial approvals for the vaccine candidate. Twelve clinical trial sites have been identified at present and the apex health research body has asked the medical institutions and principal investigators to ensure that the subject enrolment is initiated before July 7. The Covid-19 vaccine candidate Covaxin, has recently got the nod for human clinical trials from the DCGI also. Noting that this is the first indigenous vaccine, developed by India, ICMR Director General Dr Balram Bhargava in his letter to principal investigators of the 12 sites has mentioned, it is one of the "top priority projects which is being monitored at the top-most level of the government".

Thus the country in her different stages of outbreak with surging numbers of COVID victims each day keeps on hoping for a remedy and at the same time is drowned with pressure to start the activities to stall the eruption of economic downfall. Steady lifts in lockdown and country's step up towards unlock 3 have somehow managed to fill the sky with patches of grey smoke, roads with bustling of vehicles and mind to get set in fast track lifestyle once again.

The concept that should be taken into account is not to allow the pandemic converting to a Pandemonium.

Let us not panic, but let us use the advantage of having experience and implement the necessary steps now rather than wait for the tragedy to overwhelm us. If things don't go south, that's fine, the exercise will not cost a lot. But if the epidemic does hit and we are not prepared, we will be in a long dark tunnel for quite sometime- capsizing unlock to lockdown the country once again, the trend of which has already been picked up by few states now planning redesigning normalcy with cutbacks.







# MANAGING LIFE IN THE NEW NORMAL

— Anju Chirimar\*

The recent situation is a time nobody was prepared for. The pandemic came at a stage where life changing events like new academic session, competitive examinations, internships, jobs and promotions were expected.

As it happens, initially it seemed like a “much needed “ break and most youngsters felt that they would still comfortably complete assignments and tasks at home. After all, staying at home for a short while can be a stress buster. With the situation lengthening, however, a lot of the adolescents are finding it increasingly difficult to remain positive and productive. They are now quite aware of the current job situation and often, quite inattentive at all tasks. The older generation is much better off as they have been resilient through ups and downs in life. The very young ones are often oblivious of what exactly is happening. Some of them have faced technology issues.

## NEW NORMAL AND ONE’S TAKE

One needs to connect through laptop and mobile for any and every work. Wifi costs and usage have therefore, increased. Now, while stepping into the Digital world one has to have necessary preparations.

### 1) For efficiency

- a) You need to choose a fast speed connection.
- b) In case you are ill- equipped for an online job, take necessary steps as also training to update yourself and do it without embarrassment.
- c) Discuss with other friends, mates, colleagues and learn fast, without excuses.

### 2) To Avoid Distraction

When one has to study or work from home, at times some are unable to manage distractions and obviously, their productivity dips.

- a) You need to separate mobile/laptop usage time for work and for fun in a clear cut crisp manner.
- b) Time management can be improved with routine reformulation by bringing a disciplined approach. Keep staying off-screen from time to time else this causes havoc with your attention span. As a result, time gets wasted.
- c) Restlessness that comes with gadget use and screen time, can be managed by using breaks for personal work. This way, you remain in control of both work and household chores. Additionally, this works as a destressor.

### 3) Communication

Communication and collaboration with classmates/team mates/ colleagues/ boss must be specific and effective. This is quite difficult for a lot of you.

- a) Use tools like Microsoft team for meetings, Google drive for documents sharing, quickly. Or else, you will be wasting a lot of your time.
- b) Daily or weekly reports are far better now than monthly or quarterly. Piling up of reports can add to your stress as well as your senior's.
- c) Leave aside your ego and communicate with others on the same day itself when they are supposed to do it .
- d) Use a combination of tools- call, whats app, group calls, online meeting, email, depending on the effectiveness relevant to different kinds of communications.

### 4) To avoid criticism

At such times, the fear of being criticized or asked to leave is very common. If you want to manage high productivity levels to avoid being criticized or laid off-



- a) You must develop skills to multi task. There are many things to be managed together.
- b) There is a definite need to focus on the priorities. When prioritising, calculate the consequences of each task that is not done and minimize your own risk

### 5) Balance

When the work style is new, challenging and stressful, one must improve work-life balance.

- a) Switch off from work after a point, If you don't do it, it will affect the mind, memory, sleep and make you less productive.
- b) Learn to say NO to an attempt by seniors/family members which may be overburden to you. Sometimes, you need to say No even to a friend, family member or colleague, but obviously in an acceptable manner. Otherwise you will get landed with work of others and feel burdened.
- c) Get mentally organised and prepare“ To-do lists” which should be checked at the end of the day always so that you can complete tasks and sleep peacefully. This brings down anxiety to a great extent in youngsters.

### 6) Health Issue

- a) While working, shift positions & postures for controlling your body's revolt. Sitting in one place with your laptop for long can be very tough indeed.
- b) It's very important that you eat right and on time. Light non starchy food should be preferred while working. Eat right so that you have the necessary energy as well as the immunity.
- c) Even while working, take short breaks. You can think of some movements like walking while talking, or carrying your laptop while reading an email or a report, etc
- d) The fear of putting on weight can deter you from eating right, so keep doing exercises in short spells.

### 7) Mental Health

The pandemic has affected mental health, caused insomnia, anxiety which causes dipped working efficiency.

- a) A good positive attitude to adjust to the current situation is required.
- b) Adjustment, openness to change, acceptance and resilience will be required rather than rigidity, negativity, resistance and getting overwhelmed.
- c) Use positive self affirmations when you get anxious and feel negative.
- d) Remember, you had managed tough times every time you went to give an examination. . . . .you will do it now too.

Once this time is over, you will really be proud of yourself and feel gratitude for whatever you have, your family, job and your qualities. It's much better to prepare and prevent, rather than having regrets.

On a conclusive note, we all need to accept that the current situation is not within our control. However, we are in control of what we think, learn, remember, develop and achieve. When we stay positive mentally, we win half of the battle. Stay strong, stay busy, talk to positive people, keep yourself engaged with activities, do the things for which you always wanted time, reconnect with old friends, introspect and understand yourself better and above all, follow a structured routine with exercises. A big take-away would be to inculcate the habit of a gratitude prayer, everyday for all the things and the relationships that we have, so that we can focus more on what we have.

Remember, you have managed a lot of tough times before and you will manage even now!!!!



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# DISASTERS AND LIVELIHOOD

## A POST-AMPHAN REVIEW OF SUNDARBANS

— Dr. Sudhir Chandra Das, IFS

### Introduction:

“Amphan” Cyclonic Storm hit Sundarbans on 20.05.2020 at a speed of 165 - 175 km/hr. gusting to 185 km/hr. causing a devastation in Sundarbans in South 24 Parganas and North 24 Parganas Districts. Sundarban Tiger Reserve is located in South 24 Parganas district comprising of Sundarban National park, Sajnekhali Wildlife Sanctuary and Reserve Forests ,an area of 2585 Sq. km. and Tiger bearing areas of 24 Parganas (South) Division having an area of 1660 Sq. km. The cyclone hit the area at about 3 p.m and continued upto 9.00 p.m with a lower intensity from 7.30 p.m onwards.

Low tide embarked on 20.05.2020 from 9.30 a.m till 3.00 p.m but there was no reduction of water level during low tide due to water surge. High tide started from 3.00 p.m and water level of rivers started to increase further till 9.00 p.m when there was full tide. High water level coupled with strong cyclonic wind made the rivers furious. As a result there was possibility of breaking the river – bunds at Vidya, Pakhiralaya, Kumirmari, Satjelia, Mollakhali and Amthali. The river bank (bund) at Amthali in Basirhat Range was broken due to water surge in Raimangal River and salt water lashed into the villages and inundated hundreds of hectares of agricultural land. As salt water entered into agricultural field, it will take 3 years

to leach down salts and in these 3 years there will not be any crop in those fields. So there will be some rehabilitation programme for the JFMC members of those villages.

The strong cyclonic wind has damaged our staff compounds by blowing away CGI sheets of the roof & solar system. Solar street lights in the camps are also damaged. Water entered in Basirhat Range compound at Jhilla and Jhingekhali Beat Office compound. In Sundarban Tiger Reserve, we have 110 km, nylon net fencing along the Northern and North-Western boundary of the Tiger Reserve to prevent Tiger straying. Almost entire nylon net fencing is damaged, bamboo posts are uprooted. The entire stretch of nylon net has to be repaired immediately to stop tiger straying. Staff compound fencings are also damaged.

### Location & Area of Sundarban:

Sundarban region is the World's largest delta in inter-tidal zone having 26000 km<sup>2</sup> area of which 16370km<sup>2</sup> in Bangladesh and 9630km<sup>2</sup> in India. Indian side comprises of 19 blocks of W.B (13 blocks in 24Pgs South and 6 blocks in 24Pgs North district) criss-crossed by riverine streams, canals & creeks that lies 21032' & 22040'N and 88010' & 89051'E. It is formed by meeting 2 mighty Himalayan river system (Ganges & Brahmaputra) with Bay of Bengal along India & Bangladesh. Indian side 9630 km<sup>2</sup> covers Reserve Forest - 4264 km<sup>2</sup> (40% in India) comprising of Sundarban NP 3



Sanctuaries (Sajnekhali, Lothian & Haliday Island).

### Demography & Livelihood:

Total Islands in Indian Sundarban is 102nos having human habitation in 54 islands. Total Population is 4.4 million of which 60% depends on agriculture & 40% on non-agricultural activities like fishing, crab collection, honey & wax collection, tourism, etc. 45% population belongs to SC & ST against the State average of 25%. 62% area is low-lying & agriculture is the principal economic activity. Animal Husbandry has not developed due to shortage of animal, poultry feed & transport difficulty. Inhabitants are under constant threats of cyclonic storms & poor communication.

Major Cyclones in Sundarban:

- 1688 - Surge size in Bay of Bengal took toll 6000 people in Sagar island.
- 1737 – A severe cyclonic storm with wind speed of 250 km/hr. along with tidal thrust 13 m from MSL.
- 13.11.1970 – Cyclonic storm caused approx. 1000 death.
- 29.11.1988 – 250 km/hr wind speed caused huge damage.
- 25.05.2009 – ‘AILA’ hit the area which caused heavy damage.
- 28.04.2019 – Tail of Cyclone ‘Fani’ (125 miles/hour) hit ‘Sundarban’ – 89 persons died in Bangladesh side.
- 5.11.19 - 6.11.19 – Cyclone ‘Bulbul’ hit with its highest gale at the Sundarban and entire Sundarban faced the storm throughout the night @130-140 Km/hr.
- 20.05.2020 – Cyclone “Amphan” hit Sundarbans @165 175 Km/hr at 4.30pm

### IMPACT OF CYCLONES:

- IMPACTS on PEOPLE
- IMPACTS on ECO-SYSTEM

#### IMPACTS on PEOPLE

- Kaccha houses damaged, People became homeless, took shelter in flood centres
- Domestic animals suffered
- No drinking water
- Electricity & telecommunications disrupted
- River bunds broken & salt water entered
- Agriculture severely affected

- Sweet water ponds converted to salt water
- Road & Jetty damaged
- Possibility of Tiger straying from forests to villages

#### IMPACTS on ECO-SYSTEM

- Uprooting of trees, damage to “Carbon Sink” & “Bio-Shield”
- Damage to Biodiversity (particularly pollinators Butter flies & Honey bees)
- High Water level (water surge)
- Landslips & Landslides along the rivers due to tidal effect.
- River bund got damaged & broken
- Agricultural lands filled with salt water

#### RESTORATION & COPPING UP Strategies include:

##### (1) Short Term Measures:

- Supply of dry food & relief materials
- Supply of drinking water
- Supply of Tarpaulins, Mosquito nets, Clothes
- Supply of Lime & Bleaching Powder





- Organizing Health Camps & Veterinary Camps

## (2) Long – term Measures:

- Reclamation of agricultural land by leaching & growing salt resistant rice varieties (e.g Chinsura Nona-1,2, Gosaba-5,6, Morichsal, Lunishree, Lunaswana, Hogla, etc)
- Reconstruction & repairing of river bunds
- Planting of Mangroves within the forests as well as outside the forests
- Road improvement
- Tourism development
- Support Activities through SHGs & JFMCs
- House construction for the poor

## How Livelihood is affected?

- Cyclones have its most negative effects on livelihood.
- Crops & Agricultural fields are damaged.
- In Sundarban 60% people depend on Agriculture & 40% on non-agricultural activities (like Fisheries, Crab collection, Honey & Wax collection etc)
- Tourism gets affected (Eco-resorts closes & its employees become jobless)

## Alternate Livelihood

- Apiculture in Bee Boxes to reduce tiger attacks on honey collectors
- Honey processing, bottling & selling through SHGs (value addition)
- Integrated farming & multiple cropping training through KVK
- JFMC share money utilization for community work (sinking tube wells, road repairs, community hall construction, solar street lights, etc).

## Relief Materials distribution after Amphan by STR & NGOs:

Sundarban Tiger Reserve has 26 Joint Forest management Committees (JFMCs) in its northern fringe involving about 10,000 families. Immediately after Amphan cyclonic storm, that left the area in darkness and abate of existential resources and STR staff members took up the responsibility of supplying drinking water and cooked food to the needy people where either river bund broken or surge water entered into the village e.g Sonagaon, Dulki, Bijaynagar, Rangabelia, Kalidaspur & Hentalbari. Community Kitchen was started by STR to feed hungry and homeless people. Relief materials were distributed to almost all the JFMCs. The affected people got relief of dry food materials 4 to 5 times within 15 to 20 days of Amphan, details of which are provided in Table-1.

**Table-1: Dry & Cooked Relief Materials Distribution by Sundarban Tiger Reserve & NGOs.**

SI No	Agency	Date	Location of arrangements	Materials / Activity	No of Family
1	Sundarban Tiger Reserve	20/5/2020 night, 21/5/2020	Bali, Bijaynagar JFMC area under NP West Range.	Community Kitchen	120 persons.
2	Sundarban Tiger Reserve	23/5/2020 onwards	Rajatjubilee, dulki etc JFMC under Sajnekhali Range; Kalidaspur, Hentalbari and various areas under Basirhat Range.	Drinking water Supply.	400 families daily.
3	Sundarban Tiger Reserve	25/05/2020 onwards	Kalidaspur, Hentalbari, Kumirmari area, various JFMC areas under Basirhat Range.	Community Kitchen.	Around 1000 people are eating daily.
4	Sundarban Tiger Reserve (Through Pakhirala JFMC)	24/5/2020 25/5/2020 26/5/2020	Rangabelia village.	Dry ration items (Rice, Dal, Soyabeen, Potatoes) approx 3kg/unit.	500 families.



5	Hentalbari JFMC (Under Sundarban Tiger Reserve)	25/5/2020	Hentalbari under Basirhat Range.	Dry ration materials (Rice, Dal, Soyabeen, Potatoes) approx 3 kg/unit from their share money. Last year they got 4, 85,856 INR as their annual share money.	Around 1000 families.
6	SHER Kolkata	24/5/2020 25/5/2020 28/5/2020 And continue	Pakhirala, Dayapur JFMC area under Sajnekhali, and various JFMC areas of Basirhat Range	650 tarpaulins, 1600 water containers, potatoes 300kg, onion 300 kg and medicines, 500 sarees, 300 face shields for staffs,	Around 1000 families benefited till now.
7	SAGE Stripes and Green Earth Organizations	28/5/2020 30/5/2020 31/5/2020 And continue	Dulki, Sonagaon, Jyotirampur JFMC area under Sajnekhali Range.	Dry food materials (Rice, dal, potatoes, soyabeen) Approax 2kg/unit, tarpaulins, Saree.	630 families benefited.
8	Saving Tiger Society	28/5/2020 09/6/2020 10/6/2020	Dulki and Sonagaon JFMC area under Sajnekhali Range on 28/05/2020. Kalidaspur JFMC area on 9th June. Hentalbari JFMC area on 10th June, both under Basirhat Range.	Dry foods materials Apprx 2kg/unit, tarpaulins and medicines on 28th may. 100 tarpaulins, 100 kg bleaching, 200kg lime on 9th June. 100 tarpaulins, 100 kg bleaching, 200kg lime on 10th June.	350 families
9	Rotary Club Kolkata	29/5/2020	Kalidaspur and Bagnapara JMFC area under Basirhat Range.	Dry food materials (Rice, dal, gur, sattu, cakes, breads etc) Approax 15kg/unit. soap, medicine, water bottle, tarpaulin.	200 families.
10	Railway Hospital, Dr. Subnhankar Home	29/5/2020	Rangabelia area.	Dry food materials, Apprx 2kg/unit.	300 families.
		11/6/2020	Sonagaon, Pakhiralaya, Jyotirampur JFMC area under Sajnekhali Range.	Rice, potatoes, oil, soyabeen, dal, washing powder. 6kg/unit.	600 persons.
11	Mr. Dhritiman Mukherjee, Eminent Wildlife Photographer	30/5/2020 onwards	Mainly Kalidaspur, Kumirmari and Mollakhali area in Basirhat Range.	Dry food materials Apprx 2kg/unit., matchbox, candles.	630 families



12	Mr. PritamDey and group	30/5/2020	Mainly Kalidaspur, Kumirmari and Mollakhali area in Basirhat Range.	Dry food materials Approax 2kg/unit, soap, detergent, milk.  He also donated raw materials for Basirhat community kitchen.	250 families
13	Mr. Subhrendu Biswas	30/5/2020	Mainly Kalidaspur, Kumirmari and Mollakhali area in Basirhat Range.	Mainly he also donated raw materials for Basirhat community kitchen.	200 families.
14	Green Army	02/6/2020	Bali and Bijaynagar JFMC area of NPW	Dry food materials, soap, sanitary napkin,etc	300 people.
15	Hon'ble SriRajib Banerjee, Forest Minister, GoWB.	3/06/2020	Rangabelia village and Dulki JFMC area under Sajnekhali Range.	Around 15kg/unit dry food materials	500 families.
16	Calcutta Foodies Club	4/6/2020	Lahiripur, Chorghery, Luxbagan, Parashmoni JFMCs ofSajnekhali Range.	Dry food materials ( chide, sattu, biscuit, muri, batasha), bleacing powder &lime.	450 families.
17	WPSI	5/6/2020	Amtali,Phuijali, Sardarpara, Kumirmari, Samsernagar, Hemnagar JFMCs of Basirhat Range.	Dry food materials (chide, sattu, biscuit, muri, dal, sugar etc), soap, detergent – around 5kg/unit.	1600 families.
18	SHER	5/6/2020	Kumirmari under Basirhat Range.	500 nos mosquito nets, 160 nos tarpaulin sheets, 990 nos water containers, 2000 face shield for staffs.	Around 500 families.
19	Journalist Avigyan Naskar and group	5/6/2020	Pakhirala JFMC area under Sajnekhali Range.	Dry food materials and a torch.	70 tour guides.
20	We Wild	5/6/2020	Bali and Bijaynagar JFMC area under National Park West Range.	Dry food materials, soap, detergents, sanitary napkins etc.	100 persons.
21	Travel Agent Association of Bengal	6/6/2020	Dulki JFMC area under Sajnekhali Range.	Food materials ( dal, sattu, chide, biscuit, potato, onion etc), torch, soap, detergent, etc. Around 10kg/unit.	130 persons.



22	Dr Debanjali Roy and Kaushik Roy and party	6/6/2020	Rajatjubilee JFMC area under Sajnekhali Range.	Dry food materials.	200 persons.
23	ADFOs Mr. K. Chakrobarty, &S.ChaterjeWBFS		For affected villages.	Pulses (130kg), bleaching (125kg), lime (125kg), zeoline.	
24	Kolkata Police Club	7/6/2020	Kalitola JFMC area under BasirhatRange.	Dry food materials, 10kg/unit.	200 families.
25	PatherSathi	7/6/2020	Dulki JFMC area under Sajnekhali Range.	Dry food materials, soaps, tarpaulins.	200 families.
26	Naktala Udayan Sangha	7/6/2020	Dulki JFMC area under Sajnekhali Range.	Food materials (Rice, lentils, mustards oil, chipped rice, puffed rice, soyabin, sattuetc), soaps, candles, dresses, towel etc. Around 10kg/unit.	150 families.
27	Way 2 Wild	9/6/2020	Gadkhali area, Bali JFMC area under National Park West Range, Pakhirala, Jamespur, Sonagaon, Dayapur, Anpur JFMC area under Sajnekhali Range.	Food materials (Rice, lentils, mustards oil, soyabin, sugar, potato, onion etc), soap, detergent, sanitary napkins etc. Around 11kg/unit.	600 persons.
28	WPSI	12/6/2020	Tripligheri, Patharpara and AnpurRajatjubilee area under Sajnekhali Range.	Dry Food materials (rice, dal, soybean, mustard oil, chira, muri, biscuit, soap etc), 6kg/unit	375 families.
29	WPSI	13/6/2020	KankmariChargheri Adibasipara, Luxbagan Glasskhali JFMC under Sajnekhali Range.	Dry Food materials (rice, dal, soybean, mustard oil, chira, muri, biscuit, soap etc), 6kg/unit	300 families.
30	Kolkata Society for Cultural Heritage	13/6/2020	Imlibari and Mitrabari JFMC areas under Basirhat Range.	Rice 3kg, potatoes 2kg, daal 700gm, and soybean 200gm, weighing around 6.4kg/ packet.	800 families.
31	Mr. Debiprasad	14/6/2020	Sonagaon JFMC area under Sajnekhali Range.	Dry food (2.5 kg), water bottle (500ml), milk (250ml), saree, churidar and kids dress.	300 families.
32	NEWS	20/6/2020	70 Nature Guides of STR	Food &Sanitory items	70 families.





**Medical Camps in villages by Sundarban Tiger Reserve:**

In the post Amphan period, the spread of some diseases (cough & cold, stomach problems, fevers etc) need to be addressed. Sundarban Tiger Reserve has arranged medical camps for the affected villagers immediately with the help of NGOs. A series of medical camps started with the doctors and medicine facilities from NGOs. Sundarban Tiger reserve has provided logistic supports to the NGOs as shown in the list of medical camps(Table-2).Not only medical camps but also veterinary camps were arranged with the help of our doctors to treat the cattle of fringe villages.

**Table-2: List of Medical Camps Organised by Sundarban Tiger Reserve in Villages.**

Sl.	Agency	Date	Area	Persons treated
1	SHER	6/6/2020, 7/6/2020	Kumirmari area under Basirhat Range	300 persons each day.
2	We Wild	5/6/2020	Bali and Bijaynagar JFMC area under National Park West Range	100 patients treated.
3	DrDebanjaliand Kaushik Roy and party	6/6/2020	Rajatjubilee JFMC area under Sajnekhali Range	231 patients treated.
4	PatherSathi	7/6/2020	Dulki JFMC area under Sajnekhali Range	200 patients treated.
5	Kolkata Police Club	7/6/2020	Kalitala JFMC area under Basirhat Range.	200 patients treated.
6	SAGE	9/6/2020	Tripligheri Bazar of Anpur Rajatjubilee JFMC area under Sajnekhali Range	131 patients treated.
7	SAGE	10/6/2020	Manasha More of Lahiripur Santigachi JFMC area under Sajnekhali Range	120 patients treated.



8	Saving Tiger Society	9/6/2020 10/6/2020	Kalidaspur JFMC area on 9th June. Hentalbari JFMC area on 10th June Both under Basirhat Range	200 persons at Kalidaspur. 180 persons at Hentalbari.
9	Saibal Ganguly & group	11/6/2020	Amlamethi JFMC area under National Park West Range	173 patients treated
10	SHER	13/6/2020	Pakhirala JFMC area under Sajnekhali Range	273 patients treated and 49 nos tarpaulins were given.
11	SanjibGhosh	13/6/2020	Sonagaon JFMC area under Sajnekhali Range	175 patients treated.
12	SHER	14/6/2020	Kumirmari area under Basirhat Range	323 patients treated.
13	Saibal Ganguly & group	20/6/2020	Dayapur JFMC of Sajnekhali Range	200 patients treated
14	SAGE	20/6/2020,	Kalitola JFMC of Basirhat Range	214 patients treated.
15	SAGE	21/6/2020	Hemnagar JFMC of Basirhat Range	196 patients treated

### Some photographs of the Amphan damage in village and JFMC areas



Serving cooked food to hungry, homeless people by STR



Distribution of Tarpaulins to homeless people

### Conclusion

It is true that the Tiger Reserve forest has been a victim of Amphan flurry, that not only have tossed the livelihood of thousands depending on mangroves for sustainability but has ripped off the tiger fences massively, causing an erroneous conditions for Bengal Tigers and salt water crocodiles. Proactive steps have been woven by the government and the forest officials to restore the roofs of mangroves for its denizens .

Still a question- How many more hits of speedy wind burst has to be faced by fellow human beings and multiple species bringing their lives to halt and crumbling the decades of development work to ground level over and over again?

*\* Chief Conservator of Forests, Soil Conservation*





— Major General (Dr) P K Chakravorty, VSM \*

### Demography

Nepal is a land locked country surrounded on the West, South and East by India and on the North by China. It has the flat Tarai forest to the South and the highest peak in the World Mount Everest at a height of 8848 metres. The country contains eight of the World's ten Highest peaks. Topographically, the country can be divided into three regions, the Himalayas to the North, the hills in the middle and the Tarai forest to the South. It has three major River systems; the Koshi River System, the Gandaki (Narayani) River System and the Karnali (Goghra/Mahakali) River System. The Chinese border to the North is mountainous but technology has played a role with roads leading from Lhasa, Shigatse to Kathmandu. Further with the railway line practically operational to Shigatse, in the short term Kathmandu would be linked to all parts of China by Air, Road and Rail.

The population of Nepal is 2.91 crores. There are 125 ethnic groups in Nepal. The Madhesis are about 50 % of the population and are located in the Tarai region. They are located in 20 districts of Nepal. There is a school of thought that considers the Madhesis ethnic group which comprises of the Dalit and Tarai ethnic group is about 19.3 percent of the population. The Madhesis have been fighting against the new constitution for greater number of seats for the lower house in the Federal Assembly. It is pertinent to note that India shares an open border of 1751 Km with Nepal.

### Policy Approach and Strategies

India and Nepal are close friends from time immemorial. The close cultural relationship goes back to 900 BCE during the Kirat Dynasty of Nepal. They formalised their relationship with the Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship and accompanying secret letters that defined security relations between the two countries. The Treaty granted the Nepalese citizens the same educational and economic opportunities as Indian citizens in India. The 1751 Km Indo Nepal border is open and citizens of both countries may move freely across the border as also live and work in either country. Nepalese citizens can own landed properties in India however the same is not applicable to Indian citizens. Nepalese citizens form a part of the Indian Army and are allowed to work in Indian Government institutions with a few exceptions though India had waived its reciprocal rights under a sign of good will. It is pertinent to note that Nepal wanted this Treaty, in order to maintain the special ties with independent India that it had with the British. Nepal's security concerns had been heightened by the Communist revolution in China and its occupation of Tibet. Further, the provisions of secret letters pertaining to consult India on its defence requirements, is no longer secret and are not observed. Today the open border is sporadically used by Pakistan to infiltrate terrorists. Although India has agreed to review and update the Treaty, every time the matter is taken up, Nepal sidesteps the issue. It is pertinent to note what the Nepalese Prime Minister spoke of India on our Republic Day in 2020, "India is not only a development partner of Nepal; she is also the largest friend in terms of trade, transit,



investment, infrastructure, technology, energy, education, healthcare and so on.” The strategy has been to have excellent relations while diplomatically deal with the bilateral issues.

#### **The Bilateral Issues are as under:-**

- *Peace Treaty of 1950*

This must be revisited and done the needful as discussed earlier.

- *Newly Drafted Constitution*

India perceives the document of 2015 to be discriminatory against the Madhesi who are Nepalese citizens of Indian origin.

- *Blockades*

Transportation blockades have accumulated hatred and anger towards India. The first blockade of 1970 was after Nepal built the Kodari highway linking Kathmandu with Tatopani, as a trade route to China. India considered this as a breach of the 1950 Treaty. The blockade of 1989 was due to Nepalese buying Chinese weapons and the 2015 blockade was by the Madhesi for four months when Nepal promulgated its new Constitution. This really made Nepal look for viable alternatives and had a backlash as Nepal had just come out of the Earthquake in 2015.

- *Water Issue*

The British signed the Sarada Treaty in 1920 on the basis of which the Sarada Barrage was constructed on Mahakali River after exchanging 4000 acres of territory. India agreed to build the Koshi Barrage in 1954 and the Gandaki Barrage in 1959. These projects need to be discussed further to fulfill Nepalese aspirations.

- *Report of Eminent Persons Group*

The report was completed in 2018 but could not be presented due to Nepalese Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli's anti India policies. This pertains to the 1950 Peace Treaty.

- *Cartographic Aggression by Nepal*

Nepal has approved a new map that shows Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura as part of Nepal. This has been opposed by India. The issue started on 08 May 2020 when Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated a road to Lipulekh. A Constitution amendment has been done to ratify the map. The issue would make diplomatic negotiations difficult hence political discussions are needed.

Nepal has been playing the China card since the Sino Indian War of 1962. President Xi Jinping visited Nepal in October 2019 and made Nepal a strategic partner. During his visit 18 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and two letters of intent were signed. Nepal signed the Belt and Road Initiative resulting in major investments by Chinese in infrastructure. The 72 Km Kerung-Kathmandu railway corridor will get a detailed project report by mid-2021. This railway line will be extended to Lumbini. Roads from the Chinese border

to Hilsa, Korala, Rasuwa, Kodari and many more are being added. China has also permitted the use of Tianjin, Shenzhen, Linayungang and Zhanjiang as sea ports and Lanzhou, Lhasa and Xigatse as dry ports. Further \$500 million has been allotted for upliftment of living standards in Nepal. A fraternal relationship between the Communist Parties of the two countries is being strengthened by six MOUs. Further Confucius Study Centres are bound to spread Mandarin to the Nepalese people.<sup>12</sup> It is pertinent to note that Chinese and Pakistani intelligence agencies are operating in Nepal which is a security risk to India.

#### **Sedate Geo Political Issues**

Nepal currently is entangled between anti India sentiment and lure of Chinese finances for balancing its national interests. Nepal has understood Geopolitics appropriately to use the tension between China and India in order to have the benefit in an optimised manner. This policy has been cherished in the Nepalese mind for long. King Prithvi Narayan Shah had described Nepal's location like a yam between two stones. China's emergence as a global power has emboldened Nepal to openly challenge India. Possibly Nepal is not understanding China correctly. Mao Dzong described Tibet as the right palm and Ladakh, Sikkim, Bhutan, Nepal, and Arunachal Five fingers. Well, China is now thinking of accomplishing its five fingers plan. China has cultivated the Communist Party and ensured that they will move in consonance with Chinese plans. It is reported that China has an eye on uranium deposits in Northern Nepal and blocking Tibetan refugees as also nibbling Nepalese territory which has become a Chinese speciality. Further, Mandarin has been accepted as a language to be taught in schools. Unconfirmed reports are stating that the Chinese People's Liberation Army in conjunction are planning to move on selected areas of the Indo Nepal Border in Kalapani Area and in future in other areas to cause consternation in India's North East region.

India has to look at all these issues pragmatically. The Chinese rivalry has to be dealt imaginatively. We have been able to resolve a large number of issues with Bangladesh by constant engagement and in a pragmatic manner by involving institutions and people. We have to sit and listen to Nepal and sort out issues with patience and facts. It is prudent to take the advice of Ambassador Shyam Saran who in his book "How India Sees the World" writes to offer Nepal, the use of our roads and ports on the same terms as for Indian citizens and companies. We must exhibit speed and do our utmost to give the Chinese a tight competition. Further as 81% of Nepalese are Hindus, they must be encouraged to visit our shrines and temples. Last of all, the recent map issue in the Kalapani Area must be dealt at the political level looking at appropriate historical evidence.

The efforts should be to comfort Nepal that they are India open not India locked.

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# INDIA'S CHINA PROBLEM & THE WAY FORWARD

— Manash Ghosh \*

There is a great degree of similarity between 1962 and 2020 Communist China's perfidious armed aggression against India. In 1962, an expansionist China, under Mao Zedong, was seriously troubled by his sagging image problem at home because of the starvation deaths of 65 million Chinese during the Great China famine (called by the Chinese themselves as the greatest man-made disaster in human history) of 1958-1961. This was because of the suicidal policy that Mao had doggedly pursued under his so-called epochal great leap forward programme. Under this, he sought to convert China's overly agrarian economy into a modern industrial one which would make China a Communist paradise on earth.

As part of this programme, he and his party comrades, armed with repressive measures and revolutionary zeal, forcibly collectivized farm land and herded millions of farm hands into vast communes at an astonishing speed. This caused such widespread administrative, social, distributive and economic inequities and disruptions, that famine conditions prevailed throughout China wiping out millions of lives of commune members in just three years. What had badly marred Mao's image and made the ordinary Chinese latently hostile towards him was his infamous comment, "When there is not enough to eat, people starve to death. It is better to let half the people die so that others can have their fill."

It was during the famine years that the Sino-Indian border dispute had surfaced and it came in handy for Mao to shore up his image by stoking the Chinese nationalist fervour and take it to a feverish pitch by launching a massive military operation against India, a country, according to him, called "the running dog of Western imperialists."

Mao, thus, distracted the attention of the Chinese people from the unfolding monumental tragedy of his man-made famine and diverted their focus to the "Indian intransigence." The Chinese Communist Party leadership and their mouthpiece spewed venom against India and its "useless" political and military leadership for daring to take on China.

Fifty eight years later history is repeating itself. The present Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, Xi Jin Ping, is following Mao's strategy of "teaching India a lesson" at a time when his leadership stock, both domestically and internationally, has hit nadir largely because of his futile cover-up bid to disown the Wuhan virus (developed in a Chinese laboratory), which he deliberately allowed to spread not only in China but also in those countries perceived to be hostile towards Beijing. Those countries, like India and the USA, were specially targeted for the spread of the deadly virus as they came in the way of its expansionist game plan of redrawing its international borders. Like Mao, his reckless and irresponsible acts resulted not only in the loss of hundreds of thousands of Chinese lives but also sought to hide the astronomical death figures of his countrymen which has now confronted him with a serious image problem at home. He wanted the Wuhan virus to rip through China's sworn rivals, the USA and India, so as to cause massive social, economic and psychological disruptions which would seriously demoralize and divide their people and governments. The chaos, confusion and disorder that the pandemic would unleash on these two enemy countries would so thoroughly overwhelm them that this would provide him with an excellent opportunity and cover to aggressively



pursue his imperialistic and expansionist agenda of scoring significant territorial gains for China. Also, the Wuhan pandemic has provided Xi Jin Ping with an excellent opportunity to distract the attention of his countrymen from his regime's failings at home on various fronts and cover them up with calls for jingoistic nationalism which, he thinks will bolster his image among his countrymen. He wants to silence his critics in the party by presenting newly annexed territories of India, Taiwan, the South China Sea, Senkaku and other small islands in the Pacific Ocean as a gift for next year's centenary celebrations of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

Many have wondered why Xi suddenly decided on reneging various over-a-decade old agreements reached between India and China, which envisaged maintaining peace and tranquillity on the Line of Actual Control (LAC), and withdrawing his troops to his side of the LAC so as to facilitate disengagement by both sides. The horrendous un soldierly-like attack on June 15-16 night by his troops on an Indian detachment in Ladakh's Galwan valley with nail studded steel rods and wooden clubs was absolutely unprovoked. The Indian soldiers had gone there to verify whether the Chinese, who had built a watch tower and a temporary shelter at the bend of the Galwan river, an area clearly marked by both sides as disputed, had begun to dismantle their structures as they had promised. But the Chinese suddenly pounced on the Indian detachment and viciously targeted the Commanding officer of the Bihar Regiment, Col. Santosh Babu, with the intent to kill him. Indian troops, taken aback by the sudden viciousness of the attack, regrouped and fought back valiantly with bare hands and killed at least 35 Chinese soldiers, including a commanding officer and a captain. While India lost 20 of its brave hearts, many of whom, while fighting, fell into the freezing Galwan River and died of hypothermia. The Chinese casualty was considerable as Chinese helicopters flew nearly 40 sorties next morning to retrieve the bodies of their dead and injured soldiers strewn all over the mountainous ridge. Because of the unexpectedly high casualty figures, the Chinese not only desisted from publishing the names of dead and injured soldiers, but also deleted the incident news from all official and unofficial media sites.

The Galwan attack by the Chinese was not an accidental episode but a part of their well-thought out and pre-determined strategy to intimidate India. This is borne out by the statement of Gen. Zhao Zongji, head of China's western theatre command who, on instructions from the top Communist Party leadership, ordered a "lightning ambush so as to teach the Indians a lesson of their life." It was on his instructions, that the Chinese troops last May had entered the clearly well-defined Indian Territory at three different points to erect structures. On each occasion, Indians foiled their attempt by engaging them in unarmed combat. The Indian soldiers belonged mostly to "ghatoks" Special Forces. The Chinese responded by deploying soldiers specialist in mixed martial art but they could not cope with the onslaught of the "Ghatok" squad on 15-16 June night.

Political pundits and military analysts the world over are shocked by Xi's recklessness in brushing aside international protocols and conventions to achieve his objectives. He has already done this with India and adopted the same tactics elsewhere. The National Security Law, that Xi recently piloted through the National People's Congress, was in clear violation of the Sino-British joint declaration of 1997 which guaranteed 50 years of unhindered freedom, democracy and autonomy to the residents of the former crown colony when it reverted back to Beijing's control under "one country two systems" formula. Xi is already enforcing the harsh security law in Hong Kong by resorting to large scale arrests and severe persecution of those who have been demanding protection and continuation of this economic hub's autonomy and democratic rights as provided under the 1997 Sino-British agreement. Xi also brought Hong Kong under the purview of China's extremely harsh extradition law which provoked widespread protests among its residents. Moreover, the utter contempt and disdain with which Xi has rejected the International Maritime Court's verdict on the South China Sea is alarming. He has claimed this vital and extremely busy international sea lane as its own territorial waters and is forcibly enforcing its writ by keeping foreign vessels out of this area by deploying its naval fleet. This has made many analysts say that Xi is fast developing megalomaniacal tendencies in his bid to establish China as a maritime super power of the Pacific and Indian Oceans. His next objective is to annex the island nation of Taiwan for which he is indulging in a lot of sabre-rattling. Enforcing Chinese sovereignty over the Japanese islets of Senkaku is also aimed at impressing his party and the Chinese people that he, by these annexations, is reawakening his country's nationalist pride and spirit.

What has emboldened Xi to embark on his ambitious Mussolini and Hitler like expansionist plans so that he can push and redraw China's international border, is that the response of the free and democratic world and international bodies, like the UN, to his military adventurism has been pitiful to say the least. Except mouthing meaningless homilies and oral expression of support, the bulk of the free world has chosen to remain silent on Chinese incursions and the killing of Indian soldiers. Take Britain's role, for instance. On Chinese transgressions in Hong Kong, Whitehall, except for announcing that it might offer citizenship to three million Hong Kongers, who are unwilling to live under a repressive Communist regime, has said or done little to shame China by raising the issue of Chinese violation of the 1997 agreement and gross violation of human rights in its former colony at the UN bodies, though, it is morally bound to do so as it is a signatory to the bilateral agreement. The UN and its human rights body has also remained a mute spectator. Instead of castigating China for violating established international laws, agreements and practices, it recently chose to induct China into its human rights panel.

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# INDIA CHINA STAND-OFF: THE ROAD AHEAD

— Debalina Ghoshal \*

The recent Indo-China stand-off has led to a strategic instability in the Eastern Ladakh region. However, this is not surprising owing to India's stringent policies on Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh region last year and the ongoing pandemic for which China is facing global criticisms. However, in the present day scenario, the Indo-China stand-offs will not be one sided victory for China. Especially, in the present circumstance of the Sino-India stand-off in the Eastern Ladakh region, both the countries having strong and determined leaders are not willing to step down from their stand on this issue. Neither does India want to accept China's territorial claims, nor does China wishes to retreat from its position now.

In this context one should analyse the reasons behind that led to the recent stand-off and the strategies and policies that can be adopted as an effective and credible deterrent strategy.

## The Reasons

Though India-China stand-offs have been common in the recent past, the reasons that led China to adopt such an offensive approach in the summer 2020 clashes when China moved two brigades of People's Liberation Army (PLA) near the eastern Ladakh region are to be analysed. One reason for this is India's own change in policies and approaches to its own territories- especially the Jammu and Kashmir region in the recent past. In 2019, India made a historic move by abrogating Article 370 of the Indian Constitution and Home Minister Amit Shah has claimed to shed blood for Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) and Aksai Chin territory. Aksai Chin is a crucial to China as it links Xinjiang to Tibet and China claims the region to be a

part of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. Moreover, Ladakh's status was changed into Union Territory rather than a state making the region under the direct control of India. The other union, the Union of Jammu and Kashmir is again under the direct control of Indian rather than state government.

In addition, the pandemic led to severe international criticism of China for manhandling and mis-information of the Covid-19 situation resulting to the global spread of the disease. China has adopted an aggressive stance not just with its neighbour- India, but also taken up the South China Sea as a way to deviate Chinese frustration on how the pandemic could have been handled by China better. China is also entangled with Japan over the Senkaku Islands. Thus China has tried to unite its people on common Chinese goals and threat perceptions amid the pandemic. In the next few months, as China further entangles itself into this pandemic, it will continue its assertive and aggressive posture militarily with its adversaries.

## Policies and Strategies

While the ideal policy that should be adopted at the moment is to disengage and de-escalate, such policies need to be backed by effective strategies to ensure that de-escalation is a win-win situation for both India and China. Military might of India is displayed near the Eastern Ladakh region. Air defence systems, artillery systems with the sophisticated M-777 howitzers are being deployed in the border by India and occasional patrolling by fighter jets of the Indian Air Force in the region are the ways of force projection. The Indian Air Force also got clearance from the Government of India to



use BrahMos missile during combat missions. The BrahMos cruise missile will be equipped with Sukhoi-30 squadrons.

Force projection is one of the key components of coercive diplomacy. Logistics agreement with Australia under Mutual Logistic Support Agreement allows both India and Australia to access each other's military bases for logistic support. This would enable greater foothold for India into the Indo Pacific region. Amid the Sino-Indian clashes, Indian Navy also conducted joint maritime drills with Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force signalling to China that India is not alone in the tussle with China.

This force projection will remain key to disengage at the moment. While de-escalation will also be the need of the hour, de-escalation will likely to happen least until the next summer. There is also a need to review the existing ground procedures and holistic review of the confidence building measures (CBMs) in the military field along the India-China border. Military maneuvers undertaken by China at the four friction points have for sure projected a need to modify the age old drills of showing banners and disengaging when both countries engage in patrolling. Again, new means and methods should be adopted to ensure Indian troops visit mandated patrolling points on regular basis. In view of the recent military maneuvers undertaken by the Peoples Liberation Army at the four friction points on the Line of Actual Control, the present border management posture of Indian Army and Indo Tibetan Border Police Force (ITBP) wherein the forces station themselves in a non-tactical fashion in camps along the LAC to carry out patrolling to the 65 patrolling points may require reassessment.

Changing over to a more tactically sound defensive posture even after De-escalation even at the cost of increased application of forces within the Leh Corps Zone would certainly pose a deterrent to any further misadventures by the Chinese forces. Also greater focus must be given by India in strengthening intelligence and surveillance mechanisms to avoid such catastrophes in the near future. Moreover, de-escalation should be two-sided approach with Chinese side also agreeing to reduce troop strength, artillery, air defence radars, jammers, rocket forces and other weapon systems in the region. If that does not happen, de-escalation cannot take place.

This stand-off not just had challenges for Indian military in dealing with an external threat militarily, but also dealing with the internal threat of Covid-19. Protection of forces from such pandemics remains utmost priority at the moment to avoid deterrent value. Command in Northern Army Command faced the challenges of being constantly vulnerable to this virus. Protection of command from such virus remains utmost priority for the motivation of the troops. Timely testing of officers and other ranks is crucial for force survivability as major operational and planning functioning take place in Northern Army Command, Udampur. Not just this, even in border region where clashes are taking place, Indian soldiers must

be careful as infected Chinese soldiers can be deliberately retained there for the spread of the disease.

India has also adopted economic related punishments like banning Chinese apps, and n Chinese products, but this also needs holistic approach. China must realise that engaging with India is more conducive than to involve itself in territorial skirmishes .

As the global order grapples with Covid and shows resentment against China, and as more and more Chinese people question Chinese government on various issues, China would continue to be assertive in its military posture to divert people's attention towards its enemies. Hence, stealth and deceit will continue to remain crucial in its war fighting capabilities that it imbibes from Sun Tzu's 'Art of War.' This is seen during the Galwan episode where they took on the Indian Army by means of stealth and deceit. Hence, India needs to be watchful in the near future.

Deception and stealth are crucial to China's war fighting capability that India cannot eschew. This deception has been seen at both military-military level now and previously at diplomatic level also when China blocked India's permanent membership in the Nuclear Suppliers' Group (NSG) and backed instead Pakistan for equal opportunity in the NSG despite President Xi Jinping showing keen interest to improve ties with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

#### Conclusion

India needs to continue with its stern policies adopted at the moment unless it is able to coerce China to make this disengagement a win-win situation for both and not just for China. India should be mentally prepared that complete disengagement with China will not be an easy task but need to continue with patience and diligence.



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# THE DRAGON IS DOWN: TOO MANY HOLES IN CHINA'S ECONOMIC RECOVERY NARRATIVE

— Pratim Ranjan Bose \*

The greatest power of China lies in its ability to create a myth about its invincibility to economic challenges. Over the last four decades, during its journey from a poor nation to aspiring super power China successfully and meticulously created an impression that they can do what the world cannot. Despite enhancing their stake in world goods trade to the abnormally high levels of 70 per cent of the value chain, they remain unaffected by successive storms beginning with the collapse of Berlin Wall in 1989, financial crisis in the 1990s to meltdown in 2008 and so on. The post-Cold War world purchased their stories, and helped fanning it, for the vested interest of growth. COVID struck a major blow to this paradigm.

On July 6 this year, news agency Bloomberg reported[j]: “China imposes checks on large transactions after bank runs.” According to the report, the People’s Bank of China kicked off a pilot plan in Hebei province that retail and business clients would require to pre-report any large withdrawals or deposits. The two-year program will be expanded to Zhejiang and Shenzhen in October. “Chinese lenders are facing a surge in bad debt with the economy set to expand at the slowest pace in four decades. Authorities stepped in last month to halt bank runs at two local lenders in Hebei and Shanxi. That comes on top of an already shaky situation last year, which saw China bail out and seize several struggling banks,” Bloomberg said.

The report was of significance for two reasons. First, as in the past the Chinese news sources were busy singing ‘China is great’ even in the face of the coronavirus pandemic. China was projected as a role model for the world for fighting the disease (which incidentally originated there) as well as limiting the economic impact. The myth now stands seriously dented or broken.

Second, for all these years we read about weaknesses in the banking sector in the USA, Greece or Ireland and of course India. Such concerns have gone up in recent months as all the countries are resorting to extra-fat stimulus, apparently ignoring fiscal prudence. India, for example, announced a package that is worth 10 percent of its GDP without sufficient clarity on the source of funds. But we haven’t heard a single case of bank run and restriction on cash withdrawal in any major economy as yet, except in China.

A bank run is essentially a result of mistrust. When people lose trust over the regulatory authority, they rush for withdrawals forcing even the healthy banks to suffer. The last time India came close to any such incident was during the 2008 meltdown when rumours started flying about the health of a private bank. The Indian authorities doused the fire too quickly. However, China seems to have been planning long-term restrictions. Why?



It is extremely difficult to come to any conclusion about China, due to lack of clarity of information. Consider this: According to official sources Chinese economy grew by 3.2 percent[ii] in the April-June 2020 quarter, riding on the manufacturing sector that contributes 45 per cent of GDP. The performance was on the back of 6.8 percent contraction in January-March quarter and 20 percent reduction in industrial profits in the first five months. The economic growth has not only beaten best estimates by the market, but is unparalleled in contemporary world economy. Japan, which managed the pandemic reasonably well, reported 11-year low manufacturing activity in June[iii].

However, that's not the end of the story. One of the major attributes of China's dramatic recovery in the April-June quarter was a "boom" in the steel sector. An Al Jazeera report[iv] dated June 22 pointed out the growth narrative "masks" economic troubles in China. According to the report the steel demand is generated by the State sponsored construction activities without much traction from the manufacturing sector. "The recent sector-wide bustle has been a lopsided reliance on metal demand from construction sites that has partially masked weakness from manufacturers and calls into question the robustness of the steel boom as well as how quickly China can restore growth," Al Jazeera wrote.

As if that's not all. A July 20, Reuters report[v] pointed out that iron-ore futures both in China (Dalian) as well as Singapore suffered decline due to rising stock of ore at Chinese ports. According to the report, the port-level stock in China is at two months high and has been increasing for four consecutive weeks. To put it in simpler terms, while China keeps importing ore, they are lying at ports indicating lack of demand appetite from steel makers; and the commodity market is worried that the "economic recovery" in China may not be as strong as Beijing claims.

There are some confusing sets of information too. Over the last couple of years, China was following a strict schedule of closing down smaller and unsafe coal mines. Recent news suggests Beijing has gone slow[vi] on that front. News reports suggested this was to meet surging demand. However, there is scope to assume that this was to provide traction to the job market, which is the ultimate concern of all country managers in the face of COVID-19 pandemic. In a parallel development Bloomberg reported[vii] that a major Chinese data provider halted publication of daily coal consumption index that was widely used as a real-time indicator of the nation's economic health. The development is not new. China stopped publishing another key index earlier this year.

"Accurate and timely data is key to understanding the world's second-biggest economy, but releases can often change with little warning, even when the figures are from official sources. Earlier this year, the coal market lost an important signpost when a major Chinese data provider halted its daily price index after the commodity slumped to a sensitive level that might have triggered state intervention. Now the China Coal Transportation & Distribution Association has stopped publishing its daily coal burn index after a port company cut off access to the data, according to a person familiar with the discussions, who asked not to be identified because the information isn't public," the report said.

China built its economic might riding on export demand. The recent global moves to reduce dependence on China, relocating contract facilities and high degree of suspicion on the role of Chinese technology companies from security perspectives, are all set to hit Beijing hard. The rising tariff walls and worldwide focus on domestic value addition may have a far reaching impact on global trade architectures.

It's time to take Chinese Narratives with a Pinch of Salt.



\* Columnist and Researcher





# INDIA'S ISSUES WITH HER HIMALAYAN NEIGHBOURS: THE CASE OF CHINA

— Dr. Dipankar Sengupta \*

## Introduction

While India has or at least had contentious issues with all its neighbours which either have been sorted out or need sorting, the cases of China is unique. India's problems with China were initially border issues, compounded by developments in Tibet which led to the presence of the Dalai Lama in India. We now know from Bertil Lintner that given the disastrous failure of Mao's "Great Leap Forward", the Great Helmsman wanted a distraction and the 1962 War with India was just that. Contrary to earlier narratives especially those pushed by Neville Maxwell that laid the responsibility for that War on India's Forward Policy, Lintner has showed that well in advance of the War, China had made adequate and detailed preparations with the aim of "teaching India a lesson." Certain global developments made this problem more intractable.

The Sino-Soviet Split had the USA looking to ally with China and yet given strong anti-communism feelings at home this had to be done in stealth. The role played by Pakistan in this regard as a go-between gave it immense leverage with China reducing China's ability and/or inclination to solve its problems with India. China's critical help in enabling Pakistan to acquire nuclear weapons technology is arguably the single act that most characterises its hostility towards India.

## Relations on the Mend

It is only in the late 1980s, particularly during the visit of the then Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to China in 1988 that Chinese

leader Deng Xiao Ping signalled that India and China should put its contentious issues aside into "cold storage" and let later generations deal with them. Sino-Indian ties thereafter saw a continuous uplift (with occasional hiccups caused largely by China eg the issue of stapled visas for residents of Arunachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir) till the ascent of Xi Jinping.

India's bilateral trade with China which was roughly \$250 million in 1990 rose to \$ 2.96 billion in 2000, \$ 57 billion in 2010 to \$ 82 billion in 2019. This trade of course has been heavily in favour of China. China's surplus with India which was \$ 670 million in 2000, ballooned to over \$ 27 billion in 2010 and \$ 48 billion in 2019 (falling from \$ 53 billion and \$ 63 billion in the previous two years)! The most obvious reason is of course that the Chinese economy is a more efficient economy which translates into lower costs. But another very important reason also has been the roadblocks placed on items where India has an advantage like pharmaceuticals as well as IT services. Indeed, the human cost of these policies paid by Chinese patients was depicted by the immensely popular Chinese Movie, Dying to Survive which was based on the plot of illegal smuggling of affordable Indian anti-cancer medicine giving hope to Chinese leukemia patients.

Yet this state of affairs was allowed to be at least in part because like rest of world, India expected the rise of China to be a peaceful affair where engagement with the rest of the world would lead to the transformation of China into a more open and democratic polity



engaging with global institutions responsibly and settling contentious issues with negotiation and dialogue.

### **Developments in China and China Inspired Developments**

The assumption of Paramount Leadership of Xi Jinping in China in 2013 and a series of developments and global initiatives by China during that period began to disturb the order that the world had become used to from the early '90s where at least China was concerned. Its unilateralism on issues like the South China Sea Dispute by building and Island in the Spratlys in 2013 signalled a new aggressiveness in world affairs. As China settled its border disputes with most of its neighbours, their neighbours found that these settlements had left them territorially smaller. Closer home, it was discovered that China taking advantage of India's poor communications and roads near the LAC had gradually taken over about 640 sq km of territory that lay on India's side of the LAC. As India's road networks started to expand in the vicinity of the LAC clashes with the Chinese troops started to become more frequent.

But a more significant development was China's Belt and Road Initiative. It was in 2013 that an array of infrastructural projects undertaken by China across the world were sought to be shown as a "parts" of a well thought out "whole", the One Belt One Road initiative rechristened the Belt and Road Initiative (to avoid "misinterpretation").

Although invited to join the BRI, India had reservations at two levels. India holds that initiatives such as these that involve so many nations have issues with respect to national sovereignty, national laws etc and therefore such initiatives are most appropriately supervised by a multilateral agency that are sensitive to these issues and preserve equality between participating countries. The BRI on the other hand is undoubtedly a Chinese initiative and therefore structurally bound to reflect Chinese interests.

The specific project that India voiced its opposition to is of course the China Pakistan Economic Corridor. This Corridor comprises the Xinjiang-to-Gwadar port project which passes through Gilgit Baltistan, which according to India is its integral part and even going by the UN resolutions the part that should have been vacated by Pakistan. The nomenclature adopted clearly weighs in favour of Pakistan as it is wittingly or unwittingly endorses Pakistan's position on Jammu and Kashmir. Thus in its present form, participation in the CPEC in particular and the BRI in general therefore becomes politically impossible for India. While India was alone in voicing its reservations initially, these opinions have gained traction and this was reflected in the current opinions of all major economies. This too cannot have endeared India to China given that the first symphony of what was to be the Chinese Century was spoilt.

### **Developments in India**

The constitutional developments in India regarding Jammu and Kashmir on August 5-6, 2019 and the reorganisation of the State

seems to have rattled China as much as it did Pakistan. The reasons that have been advanced was that by bifurcating the State, India "provoked" China into its current belligerence. It is argued that this was an act of aggression because it made claims on territory in Chinese possession. This argument does not hold water. India's maps depicting its international borders before and after the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act of 2019 remain the same as it was before. However, with Ladakh as a separate political entity ie a UT within the Republic has some serious politico-cultural implications. It signifies to the Tibetans that Ladakh whose people have ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious ties have a territorial entity to themselves where democratically elected Autonomous Hill Councils have jurisdictions on great many issues and have been given significant financial support. This is completely absent in the Tibetan Autonomous Region. Secondly, no longer under the thumb of Srinagar's polity, Leh as a cultural and religious centre for Buddhism can shift the centre of gravity of Buddhism from Lhasa towards itself. The implications for China are profound.

All these developments came to a head in the tragic incidents of Galwan Valley. Here the loss of lives caused by Chinese attacks on unarmed Indian soldiers and the response of the Indian soldiers to these attacks provoked anger in India and shock in China. For China, the lack of support for its position as compared to support for India has made it realise that it may have globally exposed its hand too early and its goal of global dominance is not longer hidden.

### **The Indian Response**

The Government of India's Response to China has been calibrated as contrasted with what a viewer of the mainstream media would be led to believe. Government statements have been measured while holding firm to India's long held positions. Economically, the squeezing of China with respect to access to Indian markets have begun especially in those areas where Indian firms have capacity especially in software (a slew of Chinese applications have been banned) as well as in construction projects. Initial indications suggest that this squeeze will be in a manner to cause hurt to China without hurting Indian firms which rely on Chinese imports for intermediate goods for its production lines. The Indian market may be a small one for China as compared to the rest of the world but given its large surplus vis a vis India and its economy slowing down, the prospects of being squeezed out of the Indian market with its impact via the export multiplier is not a pleasant one. Militarily, India has been rearming itself and buttressing its defences near the LAC. India's response will not be knee jerk.

### **Summing Up**

China, by seeking to gain a transient gain by breaching trust is now gridlocked with India and presently to its chagrin finds itself hyphenated with India, its larger GDP and military notwithstanding. In a polity where "face" is everything, what it bodes for Xi Jinping has to be watched.

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## BANNING OF CHINESE APPS

— Subimal Bhattacharjee \*

Towards the end of June this year, the Government of India took a tough decision to ban 59 mobile apps that are of Chinese origin and ownership and then followed it up with banning another 47 towards the end of July. Around the same time, the government also took a decision to withdraw Chinese participation in a few infrastructure projects including those of highways and railways. Much of these drastic steps were taken by the union government after the border incursions in the Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh which led to violent crude fights and deaths of soldiers from both sides. The Chinese deceit and a constant attempt to destabilize the border situation have forced rethinking in the highest levels of government. This situation perpetrated by the Chinese PLA has brought many a situation where soldiers of both countries are left facing each other at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) on a regular basis beginning from the Doklam incident of 2017. Alongwith such posturing and chest thumping, Chinese networks and non-state actors funded by them constantly try to snoop and hack Indian networks including those of defence institutions.

Banning of the Chinese apps and then withdrawing the Chinese organizations from the various ongoing projects in India was a strong signal from India. The ban on the mobile apps was notified by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) of the union government, invoking its power under section 69A of the Information Technology Act (IT Act) read with the relevant provisions of the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking of Access of Information by Public) Rules 2009. The premise for such blocking under the above Act and Rule was 'sovereignty and

integrity of India, defence of India, security of state and public order'. The banning of the apps was also undertaken on the exhaustive recommendation by the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre of the Ministry of Home Affairs besides other related bodies and public concerns.

Post the ban, these Chinese app companies were sent 79 questions on various aspects of the company to respond by 22 July failing which will result in permanent banning of the apps. The questions asked the details about the corporate structures, parent company details, funding procedures, data storage pattern, company practices and many more internal details which will help the government to judge the companies and will equally provide the companies to prove their stand on the matter. One concern that arose was if the content from users in India were stored in servers in India or sent somewhere else most notably China. Post the ban, the India head of Tiktok on 30 June had clarified that "TikTok continues to comply with all data privacy and security requirements under Indian law and have not shared any information of our users in India with any foreign government, including the Chinese Government. Further if we are requested to in the future we would not do so". While data sharing with China is clarified the issue of where they are stored has to be clarified and also made known to the general public and by now surely, they have been answered.

This ban on the mobile apps might not make any major impact on the India-China bilateral trade as Indian exports account for a mere 1.5% of the total Chinese exports including tech. However India's



large digital market is something that the Chinese tech companies have been chasing because of its huge size and growth potential. So right from the mobile devices manufacturers, to the mobile apps and games developers, to the venture capitalists and Chinese investors, everyone is targeting the Indian tech sector. In the course of the last decade many Chinese firms and venture capital funds have invested steadily in Indian ventures and so the sudden disruption is definitely going to impact them. There is also a larger fear that with bilateral relations becoming sour, more hurdles will be on the way. So the reaction from the Chinese establishment was to warn that it will take India to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) for these sudden banning of apps or stopping Chinese companies' participation in India's projects.

Among the banned apps is the very popular short music video TikTok which is one of the most downloaded app in India. With approximately around 323 million users in India as per the statistics of 2020 before the banning of the app, TikTok's largest market was in India followed by the US in far distance. Indians clocked more than 5 billion hours on TikTok in 2019. As per Forbes magazine, "TikTok owner ByteDance has invested more than \$1 billion to build its vast Indian user base, and now faces losses of as much as \$6 billion, as hundreds of millions of users are cut off." Tiktok has been very popular among Indian youths with its presence in 14 languages and has also resulted in the discovery of many Indian talents who are proficient in forms of arts and humour. Besides TikTok other banned apps like Cam Scanner, WeChat, Share it, UC Browser and Clean Master are also some of the popular apps that had a large number of users in India, Share It Indian users accounts for 20% of its global users count whereas Cam Scanner crossed 100 million user counts in India on January 2020.

Interestingly an app named "Remove China Apps" capable of helping to identify apps made by the Chinese developers was launched in May 2020 by an Indian company, which had more than 4 million installations in just a span of two weeks. However, it was later taken down by Google Play Store as it violated its policies. The app was installed by more than one million people in India on their phone with the aim to delete all the Chinese apps on their phone. In fact, in the first week of June the application was listed as the top-free app on Play Store. Even after the ban a few apps were developed in India with almost the same features as Tiktok but are yet to gain that level of sustained popularity.

Not just in India but the Chinese apps had attracted negative drawbacks in almost all parts of the world where the prime accusation is the misuse of the available data. Countries like the United States of America, Australia and Japan have also been rumbling for sometime regarding the security credentials of these apps and their backdoor traps to Chinese government desks. The US, Japan and France have supported India's ban move but haven't undertaken the move themselves except some veiled threats. The US interestingly after

two rounds of media threats is now providing a cover for Microsoft to negotiate and buy out Tiktok from ByteDance by 15 September this year. This also raises the concern if India is becoming the only major country to ban Chinese apps while they flourish in more than 150 countries and more than 50 languages.

However the opportunity in these bans also exist for India. With Prime Minister Narendra Modi's push for indigenization in almost all sectors for the nation, the self-dependent (Atmanirbhar) call is gaining pace and offers the right motivation to excel in this area also. Indian technology strength with software is globally recognized and so if they are motivated and channelized to build more apps that have usage potentials in almost every area, there is a huge scope to fill the gaps around. Very recently Reliance Jio has created an alternative of the Zoom video chat app and named it as Jio Meet which offers almost similar functions like the Zoom. Airtel on the other hand launched BlueJeans which is developed to offer virtual communication also. There are many entertainment apps that have come up closer to Tiktok like the already established Mitron, Chingari and Roposo and also the emerging TakaTak, Moj and Josh. However Atmanirbhar in this area should not just rely on the issue around the Chinese apps but also be a strong product to compete with the many American apps that still dominate the Indian market.

The fact remains that banning apps is not the solution and many more apps will come up even after some apps are banned. So a workable solution has to be found so that geopolitical differences don't always find their impact on digital creativity platforms like the apps. However from a sovereignty and national security interest, the government also cannot shy away from not taking action against digital platforms that create security issues and also seem as back door information collectors or for that matter even become propaganda tools. What is crucial is also to seize the opportunity and develop applications with the help of the wide talent available in the country. India has a long way to go when more people go online and today about half the 130 crore population is digitally connected. With the pace of expansion of the Digital India programme and many applications envisaged therein, the scope and market for local functionally based apps is tremendous. That's what should be strived on a proactive basis alongwith the peace efforts on the border.



*\*Director Jookto, New Delhi*

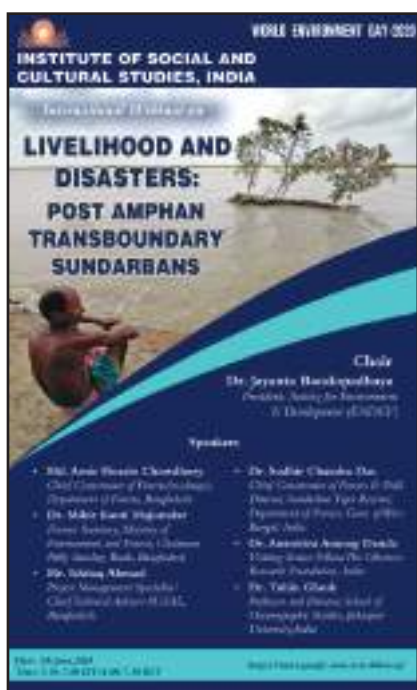


# AMALGAMATED REPORT OF THE WEBINAR (JUNE-JULY 2020)

## Webinar 1

**Topic :“Livelihood and Disasters: Post Amphan Trans-boundary Sundarbans”**

Institute of Social and Cultural Studies that beholds an imperative to address the contemporary issues through activities and publications continues to unfurl its trend in the amid of Lockdowns through numerous Webinars hosted with eminent speakers, researchers, activists, policy makers and illustrious historians.



The first of the ISCS's Webinar was hosted on 5th of June, 2020 to acknowledge the World Environment Day and mark the aftermath of the Amphan that hit the Eastern Part of the country . The Webinar was Co-ordinated by: Dr. Jayanta Bandyopadhyay, President – Society for Environment and Development.



**Speakers:**

- Dr.Farid Uddin Ahmed (Executive Director Arannayk Foundation)
- Dr.Sudhir Chandra Das(Chief Conservator of Forests and field Director, Sundarbans Tiger Reserve, Department of Forests, Government of West Bengal India.



- Dr.Mihir Kanti Majumdar-(Former Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Chairman Pally Sanchay Bank, Bangladesh)
- Dr.Tuhin Ghosh(Professor and Director, School of Oceanographic Studies, Jadavpur University)
- Mr.Ishtiaq Ahmad(Project Management Specialist/Chief Technical Adviser-SUFAL, Bangladesh)
- Dr.Anamitra Anurag Danda (Visiting Senior Fellow, The Observer Research Foundation)

The speakers and the co-ordinators through their deliberations and an interactive session highlighted the historical narratives of the Sundarban region and adjoining Bangladesh . Highlighted the relationship between livelihoods and natural disasters in an area Sundarban which needs to be assessed through a multi-level analysis. The Webinar counted the causes like global warming and threats that these cyclones adds to the adjoining India –Bangladesh risking the livelihood practices of the residents who are dependent largely on agriculture. The speakers rested on synthesizing pragmatics and efficient management skills to resist the effect of these cyclones on the people of the region while accumulating on statistics figures to skim the economic gridlock that Sundarban and Bangladesh faces due to frequent lashes of cyclone in the region. While summing up the Webinar did throw the light upon the fact that , Since there is no hope of situation to arrest of global warming, and environmental hazards the cyclones are expected to become more intense. This also opens the option of informed and voluntary relocation of people in the very vulnerable areas, needs for sensitization among people regarding climate change and an alarming global warming. With deliberate opening up of opportunity for proactively activating the MoA of 2011, for sustainable collaboration between India –Bangladesh on Sundarbans.To battle against the onslaughts of climatic change and fostering the ecology and habitability of the mangrove.

## Webinar 2

### Topic : “India –Nepal in Present Times”

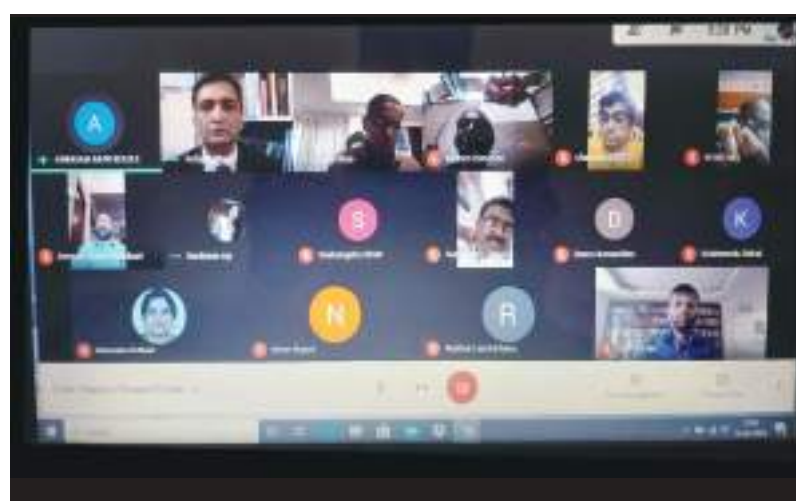
In the View of given situation and nations’ differences with its neighbouring over trans boundary issues and geo-political gridlocks , Institute hosted an International Webinar on “India-Nepal in Present Times” with eminent speakers of neighbouring India-Nepal on 10th of June 2020. The Webinar was co-ordinated by Ranjit Rae(Former Ambassador of India to Nepal)

#### Speakers:

- First Speaker- Dr. Achyut Wagle, Economist, Kathmandu University



- Second Speaker- Prof Rajesh Kharat, Dean Humanities, University of Mumbai and Professor of South Asian Studies , SIS JNU
- Third Speaker- Shri Bishnu Rijal, Central Committee Member and Deputy Chief, Department of Foreign Affairs, Nepal Communist Party(NCP)
- Fourth Speaker- Dr. Nihar R Nayak, Research Fellow, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses.



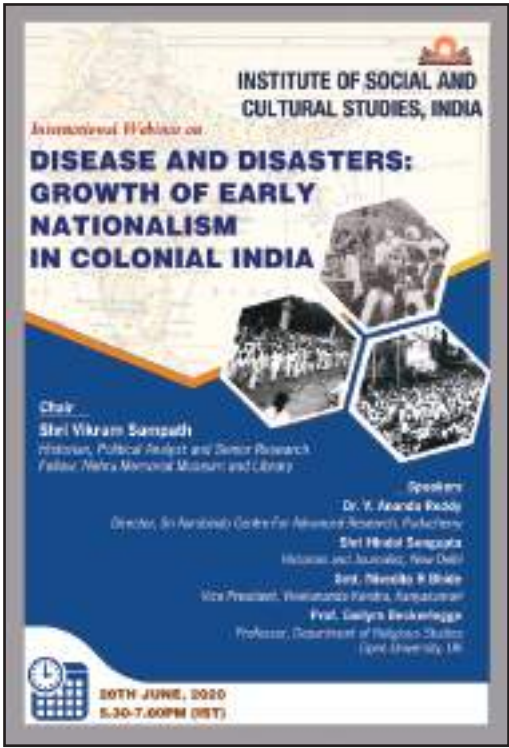


The webinar highlighted some of the most intractable issues between India and Nepal and its impact on Future. The speakers over their discourse deliberated the need to initiate a need of a political dialogue to sedate the conflict between the countries over land and territorial issues and others challenging the peace between the two neighbouring nations. The Webinar divulged the some of the potent factors in terms of bilateral issues, empowerment, eco-tourism and of course territorial issues that have been an impinging issues for quiet long, but if focused now and addressed will enable country's to resolve difference between two neighbouring countries. The speakers themselves over their deliberation and later over an interaction with the participants of the webinar. The initiative did agog on the need to build a synergic relation between countries over education, tourism, empowerment opportunities and development pragmatics. As the webinar engaged eminent speakers from both the countries who in the parallel tune concluded with a positive note and beholding a hope that soon the political pillars of both the nation will design a transparent, resilient and supportive policy outline that will strengthen the relation of both the countries that have been a partner of each other's development for last 350 yrs.

**Webinar 3**

**Topic : “Disease and Disaster: Growth of Early Nationalism in Colonial India”**

As Institute have always nurtured the historic intricacies to identify how its prologue in the given concurrent situations , thus as a part of its endeavour it hosted its third Webinar with eminent research scholars, journalists and Welfare activists on the given subject on 20th June 2020. The Webinar was Coordinated by : Dr. Sri. Vikram Sampath, Historian, Political Analyst and Senior Research Fellow at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.



**Speakers:**

- First Speaker- Dr.V.Ananda Reddy, Director, Sri Aurobindo Centre For Advanced Research, Puducherry
- Second Speaker- Hindol Sengupta, Historian and Journalist, New Delhi
- Third Speaker- Nivedita R Bhide Vice President, Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari,



The Webinar initiated with a the views of Moderator himself who emphasised that disease and disaster have played a significant role in transforming the destiny of the human civilization. During the colonial era epidemic and natural disasters ignited the nationalistic spirit of the people, subjugated under the colonial regime. Dr. Ananda Reddy in his presentation discussed about the intrinsic relationship between nationalism and epidemics. While analysing various forms of nationalism in India he laid special emphasis of the role played by Sri Aurobindo in propagating Spiritual nationalism. While Sri Hindol Sengupta in his deliberation explained the nationalistic endeavours like Sanyasi Rebellion, assassination of the British officials by the Chapeker brothers and the role of Ram Krishna Mission and Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel during epidemic and disaster. He tried to prove the necessity of looking inward during the time of epidemic and other disasters. Such inward looking trend according to him, would help the nation to regain its self-esteem, self-dignity, collective self-worth. Whereas Ms. Nivedita R Bhide, in her discourse analysed and the role of Swami Vivekananda and Sister Nivedita during the outbreak of plague epidemic in Calcutta, beautifully narrated how epidemic played an important role in the growth of national awakening in India. The Webinar while visiting history in different times underlined the need to attain congregation among communities , resisting their difference to fight against the existing crisis of COVID-19 and also retain the framework of solidarity in future to come...



## Webinar -4

### “Topic of Webinar – India Australia Alliance over Indo-Pacific”

In order to address the review the various angles of bilateral relations and comprehensive strategic partnership that both India-Australia have stepped over MoU's and range of agreements in the month of June, 2020 over a virtual summit, the Institute did host the webinar on the proposed topic on 3rd July 2020. The Webinar was Coordinated by Prof. Raja Gopal Dhar Chakraborti, Prof and HoD, Department of South and South –East Asian Studies, University of Calcutta



#### Speakers:

- First Speaker- (Amb) Anil Wadhwa, Distinguished Fellow, Vivekananda International Foundation
- Second Speaker- Dr. Ashutosh Misra- Chief Executive and Executive Director

Institute for Australia India Engagement (IAIE), Editor in chief- India News

The coordinator of the Webinar initiated the event by highlighting highlighted India and Australia are in different stages of economic development played a very important role in fostering world peace. He further added that the Australian Bureau of Statistics' 2016



census, 619,164 people in Australia declared that they were of ethnic Indian ancestry. This comprises 2.8% of the Australian population. Among those, 592,000 were born in India. For obvious reasons, Australia cannot ignore recognizes the immense potential and growing economic profile of India. India remains Australia's largest source of skilled migrants and the second largest source of international students. The speakers in support of the statement elucidated the numerous initiatives and policy approach that the Indian-Australian Cooperation should undertake in terms of tourism, economic synergies, economy, trade, education, defence, free trade agreements and development strategies to boost each other's growth columns. The speakers did highlight some of the political rationales and resistance regarding the activities of China by both the nation and hence emphasised that the countries over development should also reciprocate about some measures and initiatives to global challenges and adversities jointly faced by global community. The coordinator on the concluding edge stated that While Australia has been comparatively successful in flattening the COVID-19 curve and containing the spread of virus, India has a long way to go and here lies the need for cooperation particularly with regard to health research and development between the two countries.

## Webinar -5

### Topic: “Saga of Galwan”

Among the range of Webinars by ISCS in the month of July, did include a virtual discussion on one of the most talked about Indo-China relation of present times over “Saga of Galwan” on 11th July 2020. The initiative visited the history geographical alliances of the Galwan valley over a review of narratives of “Servant of Sahib” By Ghulam Rassul Galwan, Published by W. Heffer and Sons Ltd, 1924. Followed by an riveting discussions on the existing border standoff and geo-political incursions at the valley itself. The Webinar was been moderate by Rana Banerji (Former IAS), Distinguished Fellow and Member, Governing Council of the Institute for Peace & Conflict Studies (IPCS), New Delhi,





#### Speakers:

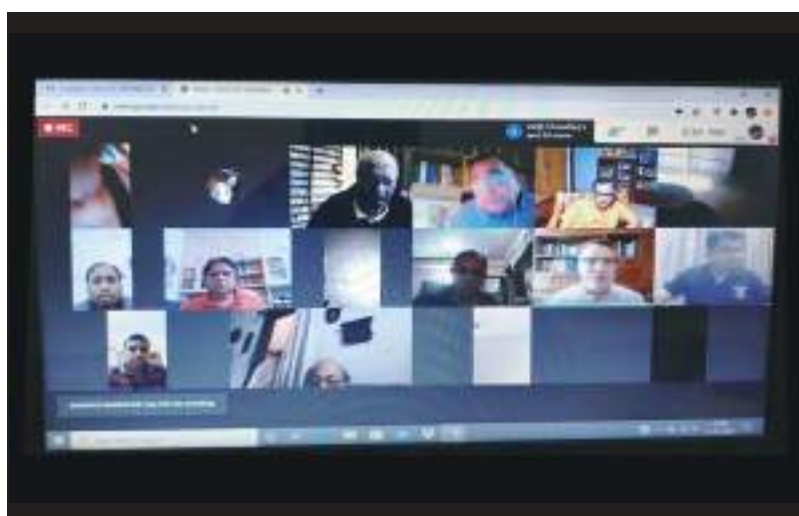
- First Speaker- Pratim Ranjan Bose – Journalist and Eminent Author
- Second Speaker- Lt.Gen.(Retd).R.Mukherjee,PVSM,AVSM, VSM
- Third Speaker- Dr.Anders Corr, Principal at Corr Analytics: Political Risk Analysis
- Fourth Speaker- Sri. Subir Bhaumik, Editorial Director eastern Link and Former BBC-Reuters correspondent and author

The border skirmishes between Indian and the Chinese army in the Galwan Valley of Eastern Ladakh created a huge diplomatic and military tussle between the two emerging Asian powers. The Webinar reciprocated a meaningful understanding and exchange of views about the crisis which earned the attention not only of every Indian citizens but the world community at large. The deliberation of Pratim Ranjan Bose was focused on the life and journey of Ghulam Rasool Galwan (after whom the Galwan valley is named) who travelled extensively along the Silk routes connecting Leh, Gilgit-Baltistan, Xingjiang and Tibet autonomous regions. Lt. Gen. John R Mukherjee shared a detail and valuable information regarding the historiography of the Sino-Indian border conflict and its geo-political and geo- strategic implication. Dr. Anders Corr's discussion centred round on how India could contain the systematic Chinese aggression in Ladakh though multinational diplomatic and military cooperation. Sri Shubir Bhaumik critically estimated the policy of the Government of India regarding the Galwan border skirmish and made invaluable suggestion to strengthen Indian army both morally and militarily. The coordinator of the programme Sri Rana Mukherjee while summing up the webinar briefly pointed out the Pakistan- China cooperation and its impact over India specially after the Galwan skirmishes.

#### Webinar-6

#### Topic: "COVID crisis and Revival of Tourism in West Bengal"

The Covid- 19 pandemic had engulfed the entire world and brought the economy to an almost standstill position. Indian economy like any other economies of the world, not being immune to such danger, is passing through a rough time . It is important to note here that the Indian tourism industry is one of the worst affected sectors in our country. Thus in order to address the COVID's landslide on the tourism sector of West Bengal and people associated with the sector ISCS hosted yet another webinar on "COVID crisis and Revival of Tourism in West Bengal" on 18th July 2020. The Webinar was







moderated by a Tourism advisor and eminent conservationist Sri Raj Basu himself.

### Speakers

- First Speaker- Biswajit Saha, Secretary, ACT Central Doars Committee
- Second Speaker- Norbu G Lama, Takdah Heritage Society and Rongli Rangliot Tourism Association
- Third Speaker- Mr.Sayak Nandi , Tourist Information Officer, Indiatourism, Kolkata, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India
- Fourth Speaker- Prof. Malay Mukhopadhyay, Department of Geography Visa Bharati University
- Fifth Speaker- Akanksha Garg, Sunderban Tiger Camp, Member of the Protocol Committee of Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI)

Sri Raj Basu over an introductory address pointed out the importance of the tourism industry and the impact of the pandemic in this sector. Sri Shayak Nandi in his deliberation spoke about the various initiatives taken by the government of India to promote tourism in Eastern India and the endeavours of the government to revive the tourism industry during the ongoing pandemic situation. The concept of Home stay and how such innovative idea had changed the fate of the people of Takdah was revealed by Sri Norbu.G. Lama. The presentation of Norbu.G.Lama described how the standing Heritage Infrastructure is a live witness to the fact that Takdah due to its scenic Himalayan beauty remained most preferred destination of British. In parallel to that he defined the existing battle the region is been facing due to outbreak of pandemic since 2019 .He also traced multiple ways through which region planning to resist and bounce back remaining the most favourite holiday destination of sightseers across world till date. Sri Biswajit Saha narrated the gradual

transformation of Doors into a tourist destination and suggested the necessary steps to be taken to revive the tourism industry in the region during post COVID scenario. Professor Maly Mukhopdhay in his presentation pointed out the importance of Edu-Tourism and Geo-Tourism and stated his own endeavour in popularising such new concept of tourism. He was on the high hope that such type of tourism could draw huge attraction in the post COVID era. Ms. Garg in her informative deliberation discussed about the guidelines and regulatory mechanisms and sanitization measures have adopted and trying to propagate widely to revert back to the adversities and provide a safe stay to travellers now and post COVID world. This educative endeavour came to an end with the summation of Sri Raj Basu who not only emphasized the importance of effective new policies to revive the tourism industry but also stressed about the importance of making tourism interesting through new initiatives for backpackers in New Normal.

## UPCOMING WEBINAR

