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LAUNCH DAY

A story by Ojas Krish

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THIS WEEK'S THE WATCHLIST

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Broadchurch
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A Few Good Men

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DRAWING THE LINE

-Ngukivi Chishi, School Captain (Batch of ISC 2019-20)

Taiwan, Hong Kong, Tibet, parts of Bhutan and Nepal, Arunachal Pradesh, and the latest development- Ladakh. Just to name a few prominent ones. The year is 2020, and apart from the Coronavirus Pandemic, The People's Republic of China still seems unhesitant to claim ownership over a great many things. Which assertions are justified and which are not, is completely dependent on the opinion of the beholder; but well, everyone knows the story of the boy who cried wolf. Quite a pity that by the end of it, nobody bothered to verify his claims at all. For those of us, myself included, who have spent large parts of this quarantine period snoozing, allow me to brief you on the ongoing matter as simply as possible. The first and second week of May 2020 saw two brief encounters between the Indian and Chinese soldiers on parts of what is called the Sino-Indian Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh. Most interestingly, while admitting casualties, military statements of both countries have kept all details inconspicuous. While a few overly optimistic pundits seemed convinced and taken by the idea of Modi-Trump bhai-bhai after what many millennials would term as their cringe-worthy show of affection during the rally that was part of the US President's recent visit, the doltish leader of the free world seemed to have other ideas. By the end of May, President Trump announced that he had conversed with Prime Minister Modi on the issue and in typical

fashion, declared that our Prime Minister was "not in a good mood", most tritely offering to mediate on the "raging border dispute". In what followed to be a tragic anti-climax for President Trump, the Indian Government, within hours, clarified that there had been no conversation between Trump and Modi since The 4th of April 2020. Furthermore, the governments of both China and India nonchalantly dismissed President Trump's offer to jump into the middle of the unfolding drama. For now, the primary concern is that there has been significant mobilisation of Chinese troops in parts of the LAC, particularly the Pangong Tso lake and Galwan river valley areas.

In fact, reports suggest that the Chinese have even moved up the line that they now believe to be the LAC. Which is, to say in layman's terms, they are substantially intruding upon our territory. Conveniently enough, all of this happens to occur at a time when the annual training exercise of the Indian Army in Ladakh has been cancelled due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Delving into the shared history behind repeated skirmishes between our countries will entail another narration altogether, but at this point, these unsettling developments beg the question- with our world already turned upside down, why now? It does not take much pondering to realise that for our noisy neighbours, now is, in fact, the perfect time.

NOTED

-Priyanka Das, ISC Batch of 2018

While a bunch of us are wondering when this dreadful phase of lockdowns will be over, there are several others wishing for its extension. Many of us might even be questioning the worth of these early successive lockdowns in India given the fact that the pandemic has not yet been overcome. On the other hand, less-restrictive lockdowns in the European countries have proven to be more beneficial. It is true that the rate at which the number of new cases was doubling in the country has been reduced and it's been following a flat trend after undertaking the measures of social distancing and other such limitations. However, India is yet to reach its peak only after which will there be a downward trend line.

The pandemic hit the nation at the worst possible time. The outbreak of the novel Coronavirus has only increased the already-existing burden faced by the Indian Economy.

Initially the government put the goal of preventing the spread of this disease ahead of any other measures related to the betterment of the nation's economic condition by shutting down all the economic activities.

However, India can no longer afford such shut downs which is why we have seen the re-opening of many businesses even in the Red Zones. To be precise, quoting Delhi's CM, Mr. Arvind Kejriwal, "We will have to be ready to live with Coronavirus." Now, the real question is: What lies ahead for the government? While the deteriorating economic condition may be overwhelming, the priority still lies in breaking the chain and defeating COVID-19. For this, it is a must for the government to work closely with the medical & healthcare sector and ensure the availability of the required equipments, professionals, technologies, etc. E-training can now be helpful in extending the boundaries faced otherwise. Only after the safety of the citizens is ensured, should the government focus on re-booting the national economy. It is true that there isn't any sector that's not been affected by this pandemic. However, the

agricultural sector (which accounts for almost 14% of the nation's GDP) can recover in a manner faster than the rest and even grow in the upcoming period. This makes it highly crucial for the government to provide the farmers with the required storage facilities, credit options, logistics, etc. This pandemic has caused big disruptions in the consumers' behavior; preferences as well as in the transportations of goods and services. One cannot expect this entire issue to dissolve quickly

which calls for measures to revamp the supply chain management. On the other hand, the MSMEs sector (which accounts for 30% of the nation's GDP) is another key-pillar of the Indian Economy. Being out of action is making these suffer extensively as well. Other sectors like tourism, real estate, automobile, aviation, etc. need urgent attention of the government too; however, the recovery of these sectors will definitely take longer than the rest.

The recent economic package of Rs. 20 lakh crore that is supposed to make the nation self-reliant, as mentioned by the PM in his latest address, happens to be one amongst the largest in the world. It aims at aiding the ones with the need of immediate help- migrant workers, farmers, poor, etc. It includes measures like "One nation, one ration card" which will enable migrant workers to avail to the Public Distribution System from anywhere in the country & they aim at full coverage by March of 2021. On the other hand, they have announced that free food grains will be provided to the migrants for the next two months which raises the question, "What about after these two months?" as 100% coverage can only be made next year. Others include providing funds for the poor, street vendors, farmers, etc. Although this sounds impressive on the outside but the measures included in this package aren't all new. The success of this package will depend on if they will actually cater to

Illustration: Shipriya Kajaria



the immediate needs in an immediate manner as well as in its transparency. These are definitely testing-times for the leaders of this nation and they have a lot on their plates. Every action is being watched closely by all the citizens especially regarding the measures taken for the

well-being of the poor and needy. It is indeed in times like these when we realize the worth and importance our votes have. As responsible citizens of this nation, we should cooperate with the rules as much as we can as well as keep an eye out for the misuse of power.

BLAZING STANDARDS

-Hrishiraj Surekha, Captain, Electronic Media

Illustration: Naavya Thapa

2020 just does not cease to test humanity, does it? Amidst all the terrible news that has been floating around, it's heartbreaking to read about another issue of deep concern, right in our home-state. A massive fire erupted at the Baghjan oil field in Tinsukia district. It started with a blowout on 27 May at the Oil India Limited's oil well due to pressurised natural gas and has now led to a massive widespread fire, which is so dense that it can be seen from a distance of 30 km.

Officials of the Dibru Saikhowa National Park have found a dead endangered Gangetic River Dolphin and dead livestock on the wetland that falls under the Eco Sensitive Zone of the Park.

Two firefighters have also died near this site while 5 other people have been injured.

The part that is worrisome is that the burning area

endangers the rich biodiversity adjacent to it. The National Park inhabitates innumerable animal species along with endangered and migratory birds.

About 1601 families have been evacuated from their homes and are camped at relief camps in nearby areas. A large number of them being farmers.

Their crops and livestock have been destroyed due to raging floods and now they are homeless due to the fire. Post a 5-phase lockdown and unable to sell any crops, they are struggling to make ends meet.

Officials at the OIL have said that it may take up to 4 weeks to put the fire out while the cause of the fire still remains unknown. Let us hope that the officials are able to establish control over this situation soon and the farmers and daily-wage workers do not have to suffer any further in the face of natural adversities.

Illustration: Takhe Tamo Reela

LAUNCH DAY

-Ojas Krish, X

"EXCUSE ME, HOTSHOT!" came a loud voice. James woke up instantly, regretting his choice to fall asleep near the wall. And now he had to deal with another annoying person. "THE PROGRAM BEGAN THIRTY-FIVE MINUTES AGO, AND I HAVE NOT SEEN YOU ANYWHERE!!" Now this exclamation got James thinking. What program did he miss? He put a finger on his chin and wore an expression of utmost dumbfounded-ness. "Oh, you don't know what I am talking about. WORLD'S SMARTEST SCIENTIST, MY HAT!" Ah yes. Now It was all clear. He was looking for a scientist! "No, Mister, You're mistaken. I am not a scientist. I am a janitor." James spoke, gesturing to the mop nearby. The man's red face instantly shrunk down. His mouth opened but no words escaped. "What? SpaceX cannot have janitors?" James asked, retrieving the mop. "Well-yes-I-sorry. Have a good morning." The man was heavily flustered and he stalked off at a fast pace. James shook his head, dully dipping the mop into the disinfectant and wiping the floors. He looked down at his Rolex and saw that the time was due for him to clean the control rooms. Ever since the great pandemic took place all those years ago, the



position of janitors had been greatly elevated. However, it was a boring life, wiping floors and spraying buttons and keypads. In the process however, he had realized something important. All the scientists in the building were required to attend this particular conference. So that meant- "Control room clear." He breathed aloud. All rational thoughts flew out of the window as he sped towards the control room. Upon entering it, he

marveled at the sight of all of the rockets and lasers and whatnot. He had dropped out of school in 3rd grade, and so never really got an opportunity to behold all of these marvelous sights. Suddenly, a brilliant idea popped into his head. He would launch this rocket into space. Oh, what all accolades would be showered upon him! Though he did not have the slightest idea on how to launch it, his eyes fixed on the big red button and the

keyboard beside it. He ran over to it, and pressed the red button.

However, the ground began to shake and red alarms began to go off. He was thrown off balance, and upon standing up again, he saw the CEO, X AE A-12. "JANITOR? WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU ARE DOING?" "Err-Science?"



EDUCATING THE "EDUCATED"

-Mr Siddarth Bathla, Department of Psychology

It is hard to educate the "educated".

I would request every reader to ponder over the above line for a minute. Go ahead, take that one minute. Be honest with that minute.

Now ask yourself, have we learnt?

If yes (and I doubt it), Did it need a virus of this scale, for us to learn?

We are truly privileged to reside on a campus like our own. Surrounded by Dogs, Birds of various species, an assortment of Flora and Fauna that I cannot even begin to name, yet, we still crib about birds chirping at dawn, dogs barking as is their nature. Can any one of us bear to go an hour without speaking? No. So why should they? There are people who wake up to the sound of a horn and sleep to the sound of a siren in concrete jungles. We on the other hand are inconvenienced by birds chirping at dawn and the comforting bark of a loyal dog at dusk. This virus is nature telling us that we are guests who have overstayed our welcome. Life is present when we are absent. I hope we feel ashamed.

Nature is thriving all over the world only because we, for once are captive in the zoo, and aren't the zookeepers. You hate being under quarantine don't you?

It's almost been three months. How unbearable. Now,

imagine a lifetime, your entire life! That's what we have done and continue to do, to other creatures.

Where do we begin to make a change?

Look around you. Begin in your neighbourhood, at a school level (add animal welfare to your social service league, care for the stray dogs, monkeys and other creatures around you) and eventually take up bigger causes at a national and global level.

As a school we should be approaching NGO's that work for animals to help us when it comes to giving the stray dogs or injured birds, the care they deserve, not backward, and by the way illegal, methods of catch and relocation.

The generations before you have failed you in terms of empathy. We are making efforts to learn and you must acknowledge us for that, however, we have a lot more to learn from each one of you.

Please be the generation that restores this planet. Please be the voice to the voiceless and please begin at home and at school.

It is hard to educate the "educated".

It isn't impossible.

It just takes an exceptional generation of people to do so.

Be that exception.

THE DI-LAMA

-Karma Chamling, XII

Tibet, a land of Buddhist mystics, a treasure of rich cultural heritage, a land of mystery in itself, of death and rebirth of great Buddhist scholars. Individuals who hold prominent positions in the political and social structure of the Tibetan population at large. Geographically, the Tibetan plateau is surrounded by the Himalayas, sharing the vicinity of Mt. Everest with Nepal. Thus, It is also

often called the 'Roof of the World.'

Bod's (the Tibetan name for Tibet) simplicity and way of life revolves around rich Buddhist culture. It is the land of the His Holiness The Great Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama, and many more prominent Buddhist scholars.

These scholars have lived, preached and shrouded

themselves in the great mystery of re-birth.

The history of this small Himalayan region however is far more tumultuous. By 1951, the People's Liberation Army of People's Republic of China had annexed Tibet, forcing the Tibetan delegation of the Dalai Lama (sovereign De-Facto ruler) to sign the controversial Seventeen Point Agreement. Since the Chinese takeover, the Tibetans have established a government of exile in Dharamshala, India. But, the Chinese have not stopped trying to gain control over said Tibetan government. One such example is the case of the Panchen Lama.

The Panchen Lama meaning 'Pandita' or 'Chenpo' – is a Tulku (meaning a great scholar), of the Gelug School of Tibetan Buddhism, second only to His Holiness The Dalai Lama in spiritual authority.

Traditionally, the Panchen Lama heads the Tashilhupo Monastery and holds the responsibility of recognition of the next Dalai Lama after the present's soul has departed. Similarly, it is the Dalai Lama who recognises the next Panchen Lama. This has been the tradition for centuries.

However, the case of the present Panchen Lama is a curious case of manipulation, aggression and suppression. The originally recognised Panchen Lama, by the Dalai Lama had been forced underground, and the Chinese backed figure has surfaced, being lobbied by the Communist Government to be recognised in the international platform. Though the claim has not been supported by the larger group, there still exists a section of the people who follow the now Panchen Lama. It is

popularly believed that the original Panchen Lama has been imprisoned with his entire family. He was only 6 years old when taken into custody, making him the youngest political

prisoner in the world. The entire theory and its complexity has given birth to various insecurities, even the fear that the original Panchen Lama has been diabolically eliminated.

The Chinese intension of recognizing their version of Panchen Lama stems deeply from political intrigue and agenda. If the Tibetan society recognizes Gyaltzen Norbu (Chinese recognized), who is 30, as the rightful Panchen Lama, the Chinese will have indirectly gained control over the Tibetan Government in exile; as by right and tradition, he is to choose the next Dalai Lama. In essence, placing the Tibetan Government, the Tibetan society and the entire Buddhist community at the fingertips and mercy of the CCP.

While this still remains an uncertain argument, the fact of the matter remains, Chinese aggression and oppression of the Tibetan capital Lhasa still persists. Racial and socio-economic oppression of the Uighurs in the Xinjiang province still exists. Violent and animalistic suppression of voices in Hong-Kong still continues. This begs us to ask the question: are we to sit back and allow the Chinese government to continue with its persecutions or are we willing to side step trade concerns and raise a united voice in a global platform for more uniformity, racial equality, and egalitarianism for China occupied Tibet, Hongkong and the Panchen Lama at large?

THE OUTPOST

The balance of power has shifted in America from the police to the populace even as they demand change and retribution worth of centuries, in the same breath. Yemen's Aden is predicted to have coronavirus death rates exceeding the wartime fatalities, while the dive in currency fuels nationwide outrage in Lebanon. In sheer desperation over the humongous losses caused by the Oil Field blowout, the affected retaliate with a violent outcry. The company in the meantime shared very little information to control damage. India's coronavirus tally has reached new heights with the richest state, Maharashtra, contributing 1/3rd of the cases.

Illustration: Eloziini Senachena

Ripple #131

-Jeremy Jahau, Editor-in-Chief

They completed
each other like the
Yin and Yang
Sky was the limit
she said
Funny enough that's
where she went
Leaving him on the
ground, broken.

The Quarantine Watchlist

Feeling sick and tired of the same four walls at home? Well grab your popcorn and immerse yourself in the world of media, here is a list of some of our suggestions:

BROADCHURCH: Are you interested in crime but not in real life? Same here, that's why we recommend this detective series as they unravel the mysteries to the murder of a child.

HOTEL DEL LUNA: Does your Korean RomCom not have enough death? Fear not because everyone is already dead here... well mostly. Join Gu Chan-sung as he unravels the mystery behind a hotel for ghosts.

YOUR NAME: We all know that one person who keeps on telling you to watch Kimi No Na Wa, guess what? you should. It is an amazing testament to how good Japanese animation is and deserves the love on this tale of two literal star-crossed lovers.

A FEW GOOD MEN: Never believed that a film based around law and trials would be interesting? Well prepare to be proven wrong as Jack Nicholson and Tom Cruise reel you in to this tale of justice amongst soldiers.

Keep It Reel!

BURN MARKS

-Aakangsha Dutta,
ISC Batch of 2020

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