

Kolkata official briefs Her Majesty The Queen on UK-India COVID collaboration

Sanjibita Tariang, who works at the British Deputy High Commission in Kolkata, narrated her experience of helping stranded British travellers get home during India's lockdown.

She described how the 'UK in India' team rose to the unprecedented challenges posed by COVID-19, through collaborative working between India and London, and with exceptional cooperation from the Indian authorities.

The UK repatriated nearly 18,000 travellers from India on 66 charter flights, from 11 Indian cities, between April and June.

Sanjibita Tariang, Regional Consular Development Officer at British Deputy High Commission in Kolkata said:

Organising the repatriation flights was a huge and complex operation involving thorough planning and coordination. We also had to obtain movement permissions during a nationwide lockdown – the main challenge was to organise transport from remote places like Meghalaya and Manipur for a journey spanning 32 hours.

I used my local networks and Hindi, Assamese, Bengali, Nepali language skills to organise a safe journey for some of the most vulnerable and elderly British nationals. For example: arranging a bus all the way from Shillong to Kolkata; requesting assistance from police officers to help passengers cross borders; and getting hotels to open their restaurants for dinner and packing breakfast for long journeys – all so passengers could catch their flight in the nick of time.

It was with the support of the Indian authorities and great teamwork across the UKinIndia network that we could successfully organise this operation.

During the engagement, Her Majesty spoke to staff who worked on the repatriation effort and also heard about the work the UK government is doing internationally to develop a vaccine.

Sir Philip Barton, High Commissioner to India said:

The India repatriation effort was the biggest globally for the UK. I am delighted that Her Majesty had the opportunity to hear from Sanjibita, one of our excellent consular officers, about the huge

amount of work and excellent UK-India collaboration that went into making it happen.

Beyond the repatriation effort, the UK and India are working together to combat the effects of COVID-19. A vaccine – developed in the UK and manufactured in India, benefitting the whole world – is the ultimate goal.

The engagement took place during a virtual unveiling of a new portrait of Her Majesty the Queen. The artwork, painted by artist Miriam Escofet, will be proudly on display in the refurbished reception of the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

During the virtual engagement Her Majesty praised Foreign and Commonwealth Office staff members for their work in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Further information

During the pandemic, the UK worked with airlines and other governments to get over 1.3 million British travellers back to the UK on commercial routes.

The UK government brought home more than 38,000 British travellers on special charter flights to the UK.

This was the first time for a portrait of a member of the royal family has been unveiled virtually.

The portrait will hang in the new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) department in King Charles Street, London for visitors to see.

The FCDO is the name of the new department to be formed in September following the merger of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development.

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Law change to better protect consumers in event of insolvencies

- Proposed changes will provide clarity for consumers about when they will own goods they have pre-paid for, particularly if a retailer becomes insolvent
- guidelines will set out ways of identifying the consumer as legal owner, including if goods have been labelled or altered for the buyer – such as an engraved ring
- the current rules on “transfer of ownership” date back to 1893 and are not fit for modern-day shopping practices

Consumers who have pre-paid for goods would be better protected if a retailer goes insolvent, under Law Commission proposals announced today (27 July 2020).

Under the existing rules, if a company becomes insolvent, goods paid for in advance that are still in its possession may be considered as assets belonging to the business.

These goods can then be held by the company’s administrators and used to pay off the firm’s debts, potentially leaving consumers out of pocket.

Consumer Affairs Minister Paul Scully has asked the Law Commission to consult on draft legislation to update the law that establishes when consumers legally own goods for which they have pre-paid.

This is known as the transfer of ownership, and the law in this area has remained largely unchanged since 1893.

Consumer Affairs Minister, Paul Scully, said:

With more and more people prepaying for goods online, it is so important our laws are up to date to reduce the risk of customers losing out if a business unfortunately becomes insolvent.

This consultation will look at how the law can be brought into the 21st century, providing clarity for those managing insolvencies and better protection for consumers.

The law change would apply to scenarios where, for example, a person may have pre-paid for a pair of blinds tailored to fit their windows. If the company they have ordered from goes out of business before they have received the blinds, insolvency practitioners may label them as assets of the business, and use the proceeds to pay back creditors in the insolvency.

The proposals would also support those shopping online where goods are not immediately handed over at the point of sale, unlike when shopping in store.

In 2020, around 20% of all retail sales take place online and require prepayment. The last few months have seen internet sales jump from 19.9% of all retail sales in January 2020 to 32.8% in May 2020.

The Law Commission recommends that, in that situation, legislation should include a list of events and circumstances which would be sufficient to transfer ownership to the consumer. For example, goods having been manufactured to the consumer's own specifications, such as a sofa, or goods having been labelled with the consumer's name.

Law Commissioner, Professor Sarah Green, said:

The current transfer of ownership rules are shrouded in complex language which consumers can find difficult to understand.

We believe it is time for the rules to be modernised so that consumers have clarity on their rights of ownership, especially in an insolvency situation.

The changes would build on the recent Corporate Insolvency and Governance Bill, which made permanent additions to the UK insolvency regime, as well as containing a series of measures to amend insolvency and company law to support business to address the challenges resulting from the impact of coronavirus. The Bill received Royal Assent on 25 June 2020.

Notes to Editors:

- The rules governing transfer of ownership were developed for commercial contracts and codified in statute in 1893. Since then, they have been restated in the Sale of Goods Act 1979 but not changed in their substance. Additional provisions were introduced in 1995 for goods forming part of a bulk. Although these apply to all sales contracts, including with consumers, they were developed with commodity trading in mind.
- The Law Commission has agreed to produce and consult on draft legislation to amend the Consumer Rights Act 2015, in order to create a non-exhaustive list of events that will be sufficient to identify goods as being linked to a contract and result in a transfer of ownership from the business to the consumer.
- This work will implement recommendations from the Law Commission's July 2016 report, Consumer Prepayments on Retailer Insolvency, which was commissioned by the government.
- The Law Commission recommends that legislation should include the following non-exhaustive list of events and circumstances which would be sufficient to identify ownership by the consumer:
 1. the goods have been labelled with the consumer's name in a way that is intended to be permanent;

2. the goods have been set aside for the consumer in a way that is intended to be permanent;
 3. the goods have been altered to a specification agreed between the consumer and the retailer;
 4. the consumer is told that goods bearing a unique identifier will be used to fulfil the contract;
 5. manufacture of the goods is completed, if the goods are to be manufactured to a specification agreed between the consumer and the trader;
 6. the consumer examines the goods and agrees they are to be used to fulfil the contract;
 7. the goods are delivered to a courier for delivery to the consumer;
 8. the goods are delivered to the consumer; or
 9. the goods are identified in some other way by the retailer, and the retailer intends the identification to be permanent.
- The changes will not benefit a consumer if the item they have purchased has not yet been made.

Case studies:

Citizens Advice has provided the Law Commission with evidence that consumers sometimes think their goods are ready for collection, only to be turned away when they go to collect them. In this example, the consumer bought furniture for around £2,400:

Because our flat was in a state [the trader] told us that they would store our furniture until we were ready for delivery... Our flat is now nearly there, so I tried to call [the trader] last week, to arrange a date to have our furniture delivered, only to discover that they had gone into receivership. I am horrified. I paid my money in good faith trusting that I would get what I had paid for.

Alternatively, goods may be left for alteration:

We ordered some curtains, paid for them and had them shortened by

the shop... We called in today to collect them and were told that the shop had gone into receivership as of 12 noon yesterday and that we couldn't have the curtains as they were assets of the company and the assets were frozen. Surely if we have paid for them, they are no longer the company's assets but they are our assets and we should have been able to pick them up?

[New Obesity Strategy unveiled as country urged to lose weight to beat coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and protect the NHS](#)

- Ban on TV and online adverts for food high in fat, sugar and salt before 9pm
- End of deals like 'buy one get one free' on unhealthy food high in salt, sugar and fat
- Calories to be displayed on menus to help people make healthier choices when eating out – while alcoholic drinks could soon have to list hidden 'liquid calories'
- New campaign to help people lose weight, get active and eat better after COVID-19 "wake-up call"

A raft of measures have been revealed as part of the Government's new Obesity Strategy to get the nation fit and healthy, protect themselves against COVID-19 and protect the NHS.

Obesity is one of the biggest health crises the country faces. Almost two thirds (63%) of adults in England are overweight or living with obesity – and 1 in 3 children leave primary school overweight or obese, with obesity-related illnesses costing the NHS £6 billion a year.

The urgency of tackling the obesity time bomb has been brought to the fore by evidence of the link to an increased risk from COVID-19.

Living with excess weight puts people at greater risk of serious illness or death from COVID-19, with risk growing substantially as BMI increases. Nearly 8% of critically ill patients with COVID-19 in intensive care units have been morbidly obese, compared with 2.9% of the general population.

As the government continues to respond to this unprecedented global pandemic, Ministers will today set out a comprehensive package of measures to help people take control of their own future by losing weight, getting active and adopting a healthier lifestyle.

Rather than focusing primarily on childhood obesity, the strategy represents a new focus on empowering adults to lose weight as well.

This plan is being launched alongside an exciting new “Better Health” campaign, led by Public Health England, which will call on people to embrace a healthier lifestyle and to lose weight if they need to, supported by a range of evidence-based tools and apps providing advice on how to reduce the waistline.

The measures in this world-leading plan include:

Banning unhealthy food adverts – new laws will ban the advertising of food high in fat, sugar or salt (HFSS) on television and online before 9pm when children are most likely to see them. Ahead of this, the government will also hold a new short consultation on whether the ban on online adverts for HFSS, should apply at all times of day. Analysis published by Cancer Research UK from September 2019 shows that almost half (47.6%) of all food adverts shown over the month on ITV1, Channel 4, Channel 5 and Sky1 were for products high in fat, sugar and salt. This rises to almost 60% during the 6.00 to 9.00pm slot – the time slot where children’s viewing peaks. Evidence shows that exposure to HFSS advertising can affect what and when children eat, both in the short term and the longer term by shaping children’s preferences at a young age. This is supported by the World Health Organization.

Ending BOGOF promotions – new legislation will restrict the promotion of foods high in fat, sugar, such as ‘buy one get one free’ offers. There will also be a ban on these items being placed in prominent locations in stores, such as at checkouts and entrances, and online. In the UK we spend more buying food products on promotion than any other European country and a survey from 2018 shows that around 43% of all food and drink products located in prominent areas were for sugary foods and drinks, compared to just 1% for healthy items. Shops will be encouraged to promote healthier choices and offer more discounts on food like fruit and vegetables.

Calorie labelling – new laws will require large restaurants, cafes and takeaways with more than 250 employees to add calorie labels to the food they sell. Research shows eating out is becoming more common, particularly among families, with 75% of people visiting a restaurant, fast food eatery or getting a takeaway in the past week, compared to 69% in 2010. However, there is often a lack of information about the calorie content of these items and research suggests people consume around 200 more calories a day if they eat out compared to food prepared at home. This new measure will help people make healthier, informed choices as part of a balanced diet.

Alcohol calorie labelling – a new consultation will be launched before the end of the year on plans to provide calorie labelling on alcohol. Alcohol consumption has been estimated to account for nearly 10% of the calorie intake of those who drink, with around 3.4 million adults consuming an additional days’ worth of calories each week – totalling an additional two months of food each year. But research shows the majority of the public (80%) is unaware of the calorie content of common drinks and many typically underestimate the true content. It is hoped alcohol labelling could lead to a

reduction in consumption, improving people's health and reducing their waistline.

Expanding NHS services – weight management services will be expanded so more people get the support they need to lose weight. This will include more self-care apps and online tools for people with obesity-related conditions and accelerating the NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme. From next year doctors will be offered incentives to ensure people living with obesity is given support for weight loss and primary care staff will also have the opportunity to become 'healthy weight coaches' though training delivered by Public Health England. Separately, GPs will also be encouraged to prescribe exercise and more social activities to help people keep fit.

Front of pack nutritional labelling – we will launch a consultation to gather views and evidence on our current 'traffic light' labelling system to learn more about how this is being used by consumers and industry, compared to international examples. Our 'traffic light' scheme is popular, with 90% of consumers agreeing it helps them make informed decisions when purchasing food. Research shows that people who look at front of pack nutritional labelling are shown to have healthier shopping baskets, fewer calories, less sugar, fat and salt content and higher fibre content

Prime Minister, Boris Johnson said:

Losing weight is hard but with some small changes we can all feel fitter and healthier.

If we all do our bit, we can reduce our health risks and protect ourselves against coronavirus – as well as taking pressure off the NHS.

Health Secretary, Matt Hancock said:

Everyone knows how hard losing weight can be so we are taking bold action to help everyone who needs it. When you're shopping for your family or out with friends, it's only fair that you are given the right information about the food you're eating to help people to make good decisions.

To help support people we need to reduce unhelpful influences like promotions and adverts that affect what you buy and what you eat. Taken together, supported by an inspiring campaign and new smart tools, will get the country eating healthily and losing the pounds.

We know obesity increases the risk of serious illness and death from coronavirus – so it's vital we take action on obesity to protect the NHS and improve our nation's health.

Dr Alison Tedstone, Chief Nutritionist at PHE:

“These plans are ambitious and rightly so. Tackling obesity will help prevent serious illness and save lives.

“The main reason we put on weight is because of what we eat and drink, but being more active is important too. Making healthier choices easier and fairer for everyone, and ensuring the right support is there for those who need it, is critical in tackling obesity.

These bold measures will help us tip the scales on obesity. The argument for action is the clearest it’s ever been.

Overconsumption of calories is one of the most significant contributing factors in becoming overweight. Figures show many adults are consuming 200-300 extra calories a day above recommended daily guidelines with children who are already overweight are consuming up to 500 calories more than they need every day.

The environment we live in plays a significant role in tackling obesity: the information they are given to make those choices; the choices we are offered; and the influences that shape those choices. This will support individual choice and give families a fairer chance to maintain a healthy diet and lifestyle.

The measures set out today signal a clear commitment from the government to support individual efforts and kickstart a national effort to tackle obesity.

- WHO evidence showing the impact of advertising food high in fat, sugar and salt on children is available [here](#).
- This measure is widely supported by the public, with polling from 2019 shows that 72% of public support a 9pm watershed on junk food adverts during popular family TV shows and that 70% support a 9pm watershed online as well as academics, health and medical organisations.
- Data showing the impact of promotions and store positioning on food high in sugar, fat and salt is available [here](#).
- Volume promotions like BOGOFs appear to be mechanisms to help shoppers save money, however [data shows](#) that they actually increase the amount we spend by encouraging people to buy more than they need or intended to buy in the first place. We buy almost 20% more than we otherwise would.
- Data on how many extra calories people consume when eating out compared to at home is available [here](#).
- Data on ‘hidden calories’ in alcohol is available [here](#).

[Attorney General launches recruitment](#)

campaign for new Chief Inspector

News story

The Attorney General is seeking to appoint the next Chief Inspector of the Crown Prosecution Service.



The Attorney General, Rt Hon Suella Braverman QC MP, is seeking to appoint the next Chief Inspector of the Crown Prosecution Service.

The Chief Inspector plays a central role in improving the criminal justice system through inspections of the Crown Prosecution Service and the Serious Fraud Office. The work of Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSI) includes identifying best practice and areas for improvement, and offering an independent level of assurance is crucial in challenging poor performance and enhancing the quality of justice.

The Chief Inspector is responsible for leading an independent inspectorate, holding responsibility for the development and delivery of independent inspection programmes, the production of high-quality, evidence-based inspection reports including findings and recommendations, and providing independent assurance to the public and the Government on the effectiveness of public prosecutions. The Chief Inspector is the organisation's voice and spokesperson and is responsible for providing clear and visible leadership to staff.

For more information about the role please visit the [Cabinet Office Public Appointments website](#).

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Eleven arrested linked with illegally facilitating Channel crossings

Eleven people have been arrested in relation to illegally facilitating migrant crossings of the Channel.

The joint operation took place in a number of locations this week (Tuesday 21 July) and was led by Immigration Enforcement Criminal and Financial Investigations. The operation, which was conducted in conjunction with the Metropolitan Police, the National Crime Agency (NCA), Border Force and French law enforcement counterparts, was into organised immigration crime.

During the searches £150,000 cash was discovered and 2 vehicles were seized from the premises.

Those arrested are suspected of being members of an organised crime group that are enabling the facilitation of illegal migrants using small boats between France and the UK.

They were allegedly engaged in the movement of funds to support the illegal crossings and promoting the illegal entry of migrants into the UK, these arrests will significantly disrupt this activity.

Ten individuals arrested on Tuesday 21 July were taken to Wembley Police Station and released under investigation pending further enquiries. Another individual was arrested on Thursday 23 July. 12 properties were raided, 11 of which were in London and one in Sheffield.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

I will not tolerate ruthless criminals looking to break the law by smuggling people into the UK illegally. I will put whatever resource is necessary to dismantle these gangs and stop these dangerous crossings, including going after the groups financing these criminal operations.

This is a clear message to those behind these reckless crossings. We will find you and we will stop at nothing to put you behind bars and strip you of your ill-gotten gains.

Minister for Immigration Compliance and the Courts Chris Philp, who attended the raid, said:

This action shows that we have the intelligence and capability to track down anyone involved in people trafficking. Through this operation we have hit them where it hurts – their pockets.

We will stop at nothing to stop these dangerous and illegal Channel crossings and to make sure the criminals behind them are locked up and their assets are stripped.

The arrests mark the culmination of months of intelligence sharing and collaborative working between UK and French law enforcement agencies into the organised criminal gangs facilitating immigration crime.

Matthew Long, NCA Deputy Director, said:

People smuggling gangs treat migrants as a commodity to be profited from, with no thought for their safety and security. This can have tragic consequences as we've sadly seen.

Tackling this crime type and protecting life are priorities for us. We are working as one team with partners such as Immigration Enforcement, Border Force and policing. NCA officers in the UK deployed on this operation and our teams based in France also contributed. This is how we need to tackle this threat, using our international network, day in, day out.

We have a shared determination to disrupt and dismantle organised immigration crime networks, and this operation is an example of that co-operation in action. Those who profit from misery should be ready to be brought to justice.

Priti Patel met the new French Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin on Sunday 12 July to discuss how the French and UK governments can do more to tackle illegally-facilitated Channel crossings by small boats. Through a Declaration of Intent, it was agreed that a Franco-British Operational Research Unit to combat migrant smuggling will be established.

The new unit will collate, centralise and analyse operational intelligence to prevent crossings from taking place and to dismantle the gangs behind them.