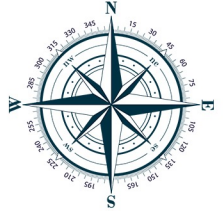


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If the World was a High School, Bioterrorism would be like a 'Bad Rumour'

Ishani Singhal delves into the agenda of the UN General Assembly to explore its relevance.

Gunshots, violence and vivid bloodshed are the first things that come to mind when one thinks of terrorist attacks. However, attacks that are not so brazen are just as critical. While the world has evolved, the anti-social elements have evolved alongside. Today, bio-terrorism is a real threat. It is not only restricted to the silver screen and literary fiction.

Bioterrorism is like a bad middle school rumour - hard to trace but very harmful. Unlike rumours though, this form of terrorism causes widespread damage to life in such a short time period, that a state infrastructure can be brought to its knees within days. After all, if your population is dying by the hundreds without any apparent source, or they are incapacitated, what is left of a country?

The Montevideo Convention of 1933 describes the four characteristics for a State – a permanent population, clearly defined boundaries, the ability to enter into relations with other states and a government. Bio-terrorism is a powerful tool in the hands of anti-state elements to threaten these basic characteristics of Statehood. In 1975, the world realised the need to put a halt to all such sources that could pull apart a State in a matter of days, and The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction, came into force.

The UN General Assembly plans to discuss Threat posed by Bioterrorism to Life, with special emphasis on Volatile Nations. Clearly, the focus is on the 'threats' rather than the consequences of a contemporary incident related to the same. 'Prevention is better than a Cure' stands particularly true in this instance, because a cure might not be found as rapidly as the toxin spreads. It is therefore, imperative to ensure vigilance to tackle any possible threats of bioterrorism that may exist so as to avoid any mass casualties that might be caused as a result of it.

Imagine hundreds of people becoming violently ill overnight, or worse, dying by the hundreds in a matter of hours or days. That would swiftly question the capability of a State to protect its own people, and cause widespread panic. With panic as its companion,



the toxin would take more lives than it could on its own.

For the sake of security of their own, people would want to relocate to another city, state or even country. But the State is also responsible for the entirety of its population, not only a select few. What would the State do if such a situation occurred? Would it quarantine the area and accept (no matter how difficult the decision) that to lose a few is better than letting the infection spread. Or would it uphold rights such as Freedom of Movement and allow probable sources of infection spread to other parts of the country? What would you do as a leader in such circumstances?

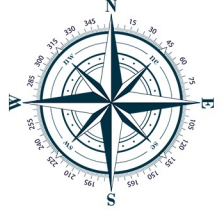
Now imagine a country that lacks resources to mount an effective defence, such as countries marred by conflict, or those with weak economies and fragile infrastructure. As easy as it is to penetrate their borders, it is much easier to break down the public infrastructure using such means. Basic necessities like water or food, if used as a carrier can cause entire cities to suffer by using the State's infrastructure against itself.

One could easily go on building scenarios such as those above, with each one worse than the previous. But we do hope that the Member States of the UN push themselves out of their comfort zones, and focus on combating the threats through plans of action. Discussion can only take us so far, but inaction would be the worst strategy that the UN could implement.

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Woefully short of WHO's Standards, Security Council meets to discuss Global Health

Despite the International Health Regulations in place, the world lacks a unified strategy against Pandemic outbreaks, writes Imran Batra.



Ebola Spreading 'Exponentially' as Patients Seek Beds in Liberia | NBC News

In today's globalised world, travelling all over the world has become a common phenomenon. Relatives and friends have shifted to different parts of the world and the commute has become inexpensive. Travel is no longer a privilege reserved for the wealthy, but has become a necessity for majority of the people.

When people travel from one place to another, they carry money, clothes, gifts and many other items. Amongst these, there is also disease. Simple regional viruses that were once simple to isolate and prevent from spreading are taken to different parts of the world where the people are more prone to them. The diseases soon adapt to the new surroundings, and as a result become very easy to transmit.

Sometimes, these sicknesses can be minor *rhinoviruses* like the common cold. At other times, they can be far more dangerous, like Ebola.

In times like these, only one protocol can be followed - all sick people are kept in isolation where they are being treated. All others are kept far away from them in order to prevent the disease from spreading any further.

This is called quarantine.

Ever since the creation of this law in the 14th century, there have been many arguments over the humanity of this law. Often, the quarantine zones are not very well maintained or hygienic. Not only does this not help in the treatment of those who are sick, but also increases the probability of the disease spreading, especially in Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) like Sierra Leone, Syria, and Afghanistan.

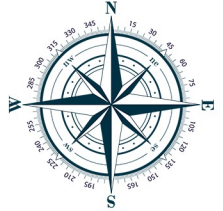
Additionally, quarantine massively affects international travel and trade. If large, important and industrial regions of a country were to be quarantined, it would cripple its trading potential. This, in turn, would have an adverse effect on its trading partners, and would then start a domino effect that could potentially lead to a worldwide economic repercussion.

However, there is currently no other way to deal with the outbreak of a deadly disease. Despite leaders accepting this as a fact, there are few collective strategies in place to deal with such outbreaks.

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UN(ified) Member States of the Security Council for Global Health?

A step by step approach is the need of the hour, beginning in the most vulnerable countries to avoid escalation of diseases, writes Sakshi Singhal.

The UN Security Council is going to meet this Friday to discuss 'Developing an Emergency Response Mechanism for International Health Regulation, with special emphasis on International Peace and Security'. The International Health Regulations (IHR) is an international legal instrument that is binding on 196 countries across the globe, including all the Member States of WHO. In the last decade, the outbreak of several diseases such as Ebola, Zika and SARS have proved that these regulations are not enough.

It seems as if world health is a stepladder, and to achieve Global Health and Well-Being, the leaders must start from the steps at the bottom of our economic charts. The most vulnerable areas must be addressed first. Countries in Africa and Asia that reel from the effects of such outbreaks usually are the same countries that do not have resources to fortify their defences against such outbreak, or to prepare an effective response. To make matters worse, security issues also plague these countries. Diversion of the State's funds towards solving security issues is unavoidable due to their political atmosphere.

Viruses and diseases like Ebola can easily thrive in such countries due to poor health infrastructure, and other reasons stated above. But viruses do not respect State Boundaries or International Agreements. These diseases, if permitted to thrive, will spread to other countries and then become a Pandemic. It is undeniably expensive for the world to combat a pandemic, but a preventive approach can be adopted by supporting the source countries in development. Routing the financial support through relevant UN Agencies and Organisations can lead towards a transparent mechanism, which is one of the most important ingredients of a long term action plan.

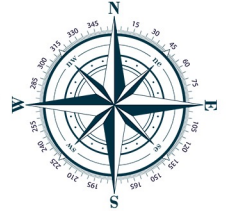
The Security Council should be able to take multiple angles into account due to its expansive mandate, as well as links to possible situations of threat to international peace and security that arise out of poor global health.



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Old Flames Rekindled in the Ad Hoc Indian Parliament

Summarising the current debate around the Freedom of Expression and Sedition, Sashrika Pathak informs us of the youth's confusion today.



Bal Gangadhar Tilak's second trial for sedition in 1908

The Right to Freedom of Expression is a constitutional freedom promised to each Citizen of India, and this freedom is to be upheld and ensured by the Government of India. It gives one the indispensable freedom to voice their thoughts, irrespective of differences from public opinion or the opinion of the Government.

A home to billions of people from a variety of cultures, socio-political ideologies, religious groups and categorisations ranging far and wide, some voices are bound to be ignored, unheard, or worse, suppressed in India. The Indian Constitution acknowledges this Right to be vital to the existence of a free India. But in the current political climate, the line between sedition and Freedom of Expression is very thin. Where one might see righteous democratic dissent, others might see anti-nationalist outcries.

Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code labels any attempt 'to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards the Government established by law in [India],' as a punishable offence. This law was introduced in 1870 in response to the ongoing radical Wahhabi movement led by Syed Ahmed Bareli in Uttar Pradesh. It was like many other

laws, a consolidation of English imports like the Treason Felony Act, the Common Law of Seditious Libel, as well as the English law relating to seditious words.

The Government has used this law to convict some of India's greatest leaders. One of the infamous arrests made under this law was Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Tilak's first arrest was a result of a Government claim that his speech had instigated the Murder of Rand and Ayeherst, both British officials posted in India during that time. After this came the trial of Mahatma Gandhi in 1922, for three articles published in the magazine Young India. When Gandhi stood trial in the court, he said that as a nationalist leader, it was his moral duty to disobey the law.

The Kedarnath vs State of Bihar case post-independence revolutionised the meaning of sedition. In January 1962, Kedarnath Singh was convicted by the High Court for criticising the Congress, and threatening to subvert the corrupt government. Towards the conclusion the Court judged such words to be outside the scope of Section 124A.

Today, the issue of sedition has been reduced to a heated debate between the leftist and the rightist parties. Whereas the Right values the law for protecting Indian Democracy from subversion and threatening, anti-nationalist elements, the Left sees the sedition law as an instrument to curb political criticism by the citizens.

The youth today has been reintroduced to this term 'sedition' due to the recent uproar in JNU. JNU Student Union President Kanhaiya Kumar has been booked under this law for allegedly raising anti-nationalist slogans. The youth wonders often, at what point does expression become sedition? Do regional aspirations would be classified as anti-national if voices rose in its favour? This question will hopefully see some deliberation in the Ad-Hoc Indian Parliament's attempt to 're-examine the Sedition Law in light of evolving ideas of nationalism.

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Black Money Flows While The World Sleeps

Ruminating about the release of the Panama Papers, Ananya Kaushik talks about the rise of corruption and INTERPOL's increasing significance.

We have all watched movies where a wealthy businessman hides his black money in 'offshore bank accounts in the Cayman Islands', where the Government cannot trace the money, and where transactions are highly secretive and discreet. The wealthy use these accounts to avoid paying taxes on their truckloads of money.

The fact that this practice exists is an abstract reality for most because of which the release of such transactions from the Mossack Fonseca & Co. law firm located in Panama City was an eye-opener for people world over. No secret can be hidden forever.

These accounts are glorified to be shown as hidden from the authorities. Moreover, the hypocrisy of leadership is proven by the numerous accounts held in offshore banks by politicians and global leaders who decry this practice in their statements and speeches.

The INTERPOL integrates resources from different law enforcement agencies around the world to hinder, prevent and apprehend the corrupt.

As we already know that the world over, corruption has taken a rise as if on a mission to reach the stars. Though there is skepticism on the actions of INTERPOL as it consists of humans like all other organisations, but there are few that stand firm behind the values of justice and law, and INTERPOL has not compromised on these values yet.

Tackling of such issues is a necessity, though how successful we are depends on our morality and the cooperation by various governments across the world.

The Biggest Data Leak in History

Expressing hope about participants of the INTERPOL at SBSMUN, Tanvi Jhunjhunwala asks some poignant questions and hopes they are answered in this meeting.

On 3rd April, 2016 the biggest data leak in history occurred which changed the face of data journalism as we knew it. Over 11.5 million documents were released that detailed financial and attorney-client information for more than 214,488 offshore entities. The leaked documents were created by Panamanian law firm and corporate service provider Mossack Fonseca. These documents, dubbed the Panama papers, highlighted the use of shell companies for tax evasion by some of the wealthiest people on Earth including 12 current or former world leaders, as well as 128 other politicians and public officials. At INTERPOL this year, the topic of discussion will be how to tackle widespread corruption and tax evasion with attention on these papers.

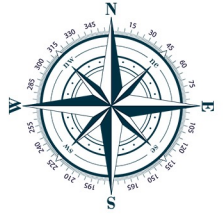
The International Criminal Police Organisation ICPO or INTERPOL is an intergovernmental organisation facilitating international police cooperation. It aims to maintain security and the rule of law in all nations. Since corruption can undermine political, economic and social stability, and eventually threaten peace and security of countries, the Panama Papers greatly concern the INTERPOL.

This year, at SBS MUN, delegates at INTERPOL will raise some crucial questions. Is there a fundamental problem with allowing individuals to have offshore accounts or registered companies? Can their activities be monitored? Should all offshore activities be stopped or can transparency be brought in? With the power to change the world for those three days, they may reach to some conclusions the 'real world' was unable to.

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‘Monumental Failures’ of the Twenty First Century

The Middle East must stand together, and the world in solidarity behind them, to put a stop to the extremist acts that threaten entire civilisations and rich cultural heritage, writes Gopika Kohli.



With the very recent destruction of Palmyra - the heritage city that once was one of the most important cultural centres of the ancient world, suicide bombing in the holy city of Medina and destruction of innumerable museums and libraries in Iraq - Well all I can say is that if things keep going the way they are, then very soon, little would be left of a region which was one of the wealthiest in the entire world not too long back in history.

It's time that the world should come together to curb this menace, which is termed both as a civil war as well as religious extremism. It's not just monuments and historical sites that are being destroyed. The gravest victim of all this is also the rich culture and traditions propagated in these regions from ages. Generations being massacred together, a mass exodus of natives to different countries as well as pure indifference are all consequences of the present situation.

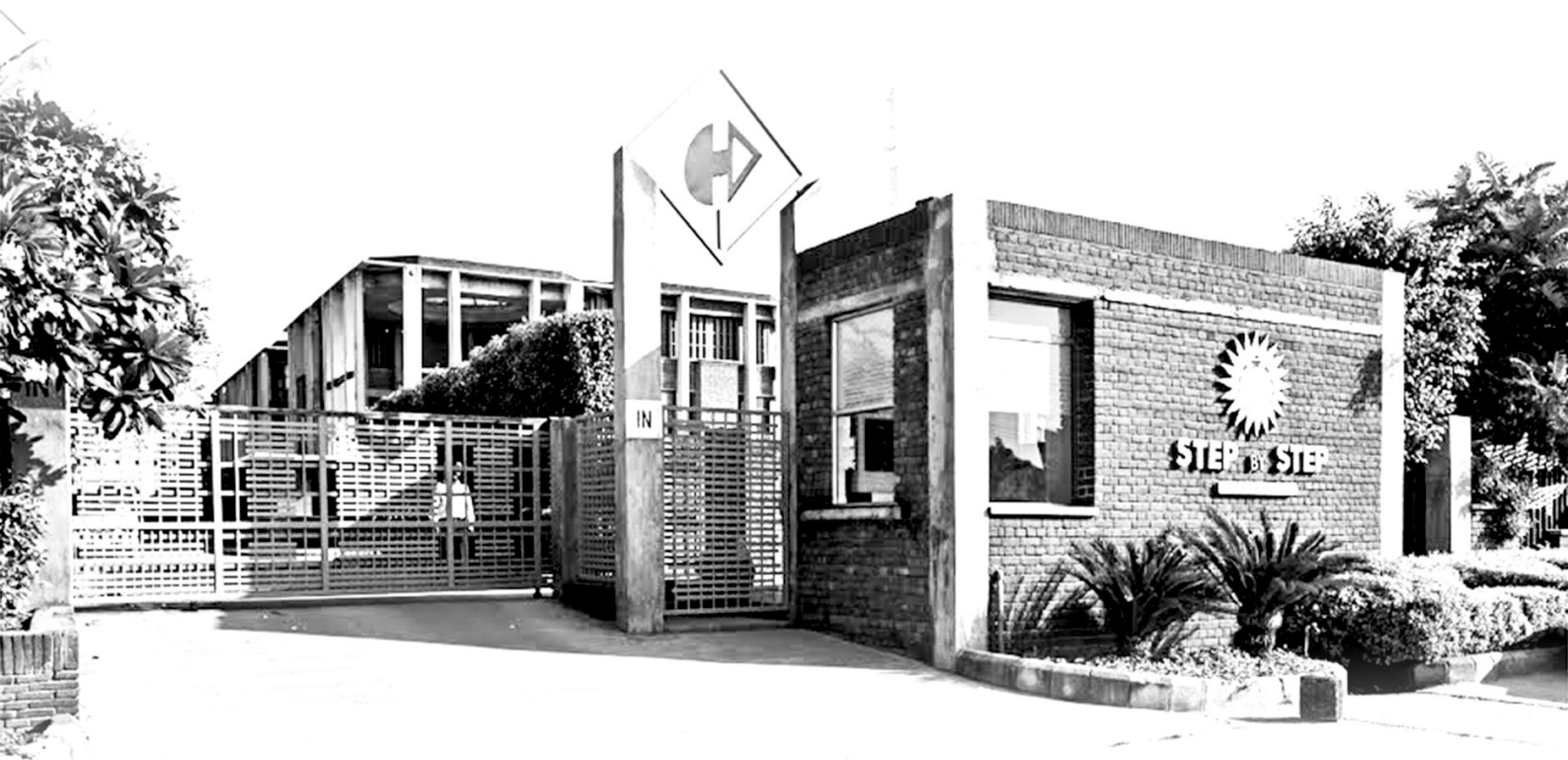
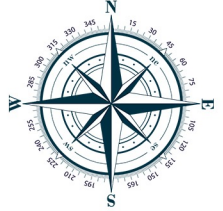
It is also the time that the nations of the Middle East should stand together, united against the forces that are localised to certain parts but if not stopped will eventually impact the entire Middle East. UNESCO must encourage the practice of cosmopolitanism over ethnocentrism. One should celebrate and accommodate different cultural propensities within its fold and promote cultural exchange and borrowings to enrich one's own culture.

And lastly, it's time to make sure that deploying the best of minds to restore what can be in the best possible way minimises the damage done to the cultural heritage, and hopefully prevent it in the future.

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THE TEAM

Arushi Gupta | Sakshi Singhal | Ishani Singhal | Imran Batra | Ananya Kaushik | Sashrika Pathak
Sameera Sethi | Vedika Himatsingka | Gopika Kohli | Naina Atri | Tanvi Jhunjhunwala

Ekisha Poddar | Keshavi Bhardwaj | Anushree Dhingra | Reeha Das | Udisha Madan | Shree Narain

Shivesh Chatrath | Sarvika Sharma | Vidur Bahl | Rachit Gupta | Arjun Jawa | Siddhartha Mittal
Aaryan Sinha | Ranveer Ahujla | Mansi Vikram | Lael

Sidharth Das