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Border conflict and normalising ties with China

Should India overlook boundary issues?

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TIME TO EXPERIMENT

India faces Oman in its final group game

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Rahul says CEC is ‘protecting’ those ‘destroying’ democracy

Congress leader cites attempted voter deletions in Karnataka and sets 7-day deadline for EC to share details for probe into ‘vote theft’; he says non-cooperation will imply EC is ‘complicit in murder of the Constitution’; EC says charges are ‘baseless’

Sandeep Phukan
NEW DELHI

Mounting a scathing attack on Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Thursday accused him of “protecting” those “destroying” Indian democracy by refusing to share technical details of persons behind an attempt to delete names of voters from the electoral rolls of an Assembly seat in Karnataka. The Election Commission of India (EC) rejected his allegations as “incorrect and baseless”.

Mr. Gandhi said that 6,018 names were sought to be deleted in the Aland constituency using centralised software and mobile



Serious charges: Rahul Gandhi addressing the media at Indira Bhavan in New Delhi on Thursday. R.V. MOORTHY

phones registered outside Karnataka. In the past 18 months, the State’s Criminal Investigation Department has written 18 letters to the EC for details of the IP addresses used to fill online applications for the deletions, but the EC has not responded, he said.

The EC must stop protecting “vote chors (thieves)” and provide information sought by the Karnataka CID within a week, he said, adding that if the EC does not oblige, it will be known for being “complicit in the murder of the Constitution”.

All data handed over to police: Karnataka CEO

BENGALURU
Responding to Rahul Gandhi’s allegation that the EC was not sharing key technical data for probe into the alleged vote fraud in Aland constituency, Karnataka Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) has claimed that his office handed over all available data to the police on September 6, 2023. » **PAGE 15**

Cong. leader lacks faith in Indian democracy: BJP

NEW DELHI
The BJP has termed Rahul Gandhi’s charges against the Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar as baseless. BJP leader Anurag Thakur on Thursday said the repeated accusations of the Congress leader against the EC showed his lack of faith in Indian democracy. » **PAGE 15**

IN BRIEF



I believe in true secularism, in all religions, says CJI

NEW DELHI
Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai on Thursday said he believes in all religions and firmly trusts in “true secularism”. He made the comment after a social media outrage over his oral remarks in a hearing on a damaged Lord Vishnu idol. » **Page 14**

DUSU polls see 39.45% turnout; counting today

NEW DELHI
Delhi University Students’ Union (DUSU) elections were held on Thursday with a voter turnout of 39.45%. Votes will be counted on Friday. » **Page 2**

Attack on one of us is an attack on both, says Saudi Arabia-Pakistan pact

Associated Press
ISLAMABAD

Saudi Arabia and nuclear-armed Pakistan have signed a mutual defence pact that defines any attack on either nation as an attack on both – a key accord in the wake of Israel’s strike on Qatar last week. The kingdom has long had close economic, religious and security ties to Pakistan, including reportedly providing funding for Islamabad’s nuclear weapons programme as it developed. Analysts – and Pakistani diplomats in at least one case – have suggested over the years that Saudi Arabia could be included under Is-

Will study pact to protect India’s interests: MEA

NEW DELHI
Hours after Pakistan signed a defence agreement with Saudi Arabia, India said it was aware that the pact had been under consideration. The External Affairs Ministry said India would study its implications for “our national security” and “regional stability”. » **PAGE 14**

lamabad’s nuclear umbrella, particularly as tensions have risen over Iran’s atomic programme. But the timing of the pact appeared to be a signal to Israel, West Asia’s

only nuclear-armed state, which has conducted a sprawling military offensive since Palestinian nationalist Hamas’s October 7, 2023, attack on Israel stretching across Iran, Lebanon, the Palestinian territories, Qatar, Syria and Yemen. The pact marks the first major defence decision by a Gulf Arab country since the Qatar attack. Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman signed the pact on Wednesday with Pakistan’s Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. While not specifically discussing the bomb, the agreement states “any aggression against either

country shall be considered an aggression against both,” according to statements issued by both Pakistan’s Foreign Affairs Ministry and the state-run Saudi Press Agency. “This agreement... aims to develop aspects of defence cooperation between the two countries and strengthen joint deterrence against any aggression,” the statement said. A senior Saudi official, speaking on condition of anonymity to The Financial Times, seemed to suggest that Pakistan’s nuclear protection was a part of the deal.

CONTINUED ON
» **PAGE 14**

Trail of destruction



Rain fury: Rescue operation under way at Nandanagar in Uttarakhand’s Chamoli district, which was battered by torrential rain on Thursday. Gushing water, accompanied by debris, turned houses into rubble, leaving at least two people dead and seven missing. PTI (REPORT ON PAGE 16)

U.S. visas of Indian executives revoked over ‘drug trafficking’

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

Months after charging two Indian companies of “criminal conspiracies” to smuggle fentanyl precursors into the United States, the U.S. Embassy on Thursday said that it has revoked and denied visas for “certain” Indian “business executives and corporate leadership”, accusing them of smuggling ingredients that are used in the illegal production of the drug. In a statement, the Embassy said the “family members” of these business executives would also “face consequences” for the illegal production and trafficking of drugs. “In furtherance to the Trump Administration’s efforts to keep Americans

Drug precursors

The following are two precursors highly suitable for illicit manufacture of fentanyl and fentanyl analogues

- 4-piperidone
- 1-boc-4-piperidone

Fentanyl and fentanyl analogues are very potent narcotic drugs that continue to result in overdose deaths, according to the International Narcotics Control Board



safe from dangerous synthetic narcotics, the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi has revoked and subsequently denied visas for certain business executives and corporate leadership based on involvement in trafficking fentanyl precursors,” it said, acknowledging the support received from “counterparts in the Go-

vernment of India” toward stopping the flow of fentanyl and its precursors. The Embassy continues to be “steadfast in its commitment to combating illicit drug trafficking”, said U.S. chargé d’affaires Jorgan Andrews.

CONTINUED ON
» **PAGE 14**

Delhi court sets aside gag order in Adani defamation case

Aaratrika Bhaumik
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Thursday set aside the *ex parte* injunction that had restrained journalists Ravi Nair, Abir Dasgupta, Ayas-kant Das, and Ayush Joshi from publishing allegedly defamatory material about Gautam Adani’s Adani Enterprises Limited (AEL). District judge Ashish Aggarwal of the Rohini courts said that the September 6 order was “unsustainable” as it had been passed without affording the journalists an opportunity of hearing. “While articles and posts spanning a substantial period were questioned by the plaintiff through the suit, the court did not deem it fit to grant an opportunity of hearing to the defendants before passing the impugned order... In my opinion, the



District judge Ashish Aggarwal of the Rohini courts said that the September 6 order was ‘unsustainable’. FILE PHOTO

senior civil judge ought to have granted that opportunity before passing an order which had the impact of *prima facie* declaring the articles as defamatory and even directing their removal,” he said. Special civil judge Anuj Kumar Singh had restrained nine journalists, activists, and entities from publishing or circulating “unverified, unsubstantiated and *ex facie* defamatory” reports about AEL, and directed the removal of such content within five days. The order had also allowed the company to identify additional online material it considered defamatory, which intermediaries and platforms were required to take down within 36 hours.

Judge said that the journalists should have been afforded ‘an opportunity of hearing’

The injunction was sought in a defamation suit where AEL alleged that “coordinated defamatory” content had been published to tarnish its reputation and disrupt its global business operations. Appearing for the journalists, advocate Vrinda

Grover submitted that the September 6 order contained no finding on whether the publications were defamatory. “[The order] was not the court expressing its mind. It is the reproduction of the plaintiff’s averments and pleadings,” she said. She said that most of the publications cited in the suit had been available in the public domain since June 2024 and argued that there was no urgency to justify the “extraordinary and exceptional relief” of an *ex parte* injunction months after their release. “Why the rush? Why was no notice given to us? How have they explained the delay in approaching the court?” she said.

‘Malicious campaign’
On behalf of the conglomerate, advocate Vijay Aggarwal contended that the

journalists were engaged in a malicious campaign. “All of them like writing against me... it is a completely malicious targeting,” he said. Senior advocate Jagdeep Sharma, also appearing for AEL, submitted that the company’s reputation was being unfairly maligned. The court, however, noted that the veracity of the contested publications could not be determined at this stage. Judge Aggarwal orally observed that whether the defendants are able to prove the truth of their articles “would be a subject matter of trial”. The judge further clarified that his ruling applied only to the four appellants before him and did not extend to the separate appeal filed by senior journalist Paranjay Guha Thakurta, on which another judge of the same court has reserved judgment.

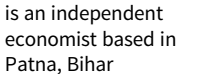


The interim government must bring the criminals to justice as any inaction will lead to a normalisation of violence threatening all institutions that were set up to fulfil the promises of deeper democratisation and Nepal's transformation into a republic. Even if Gen Z protesters claim that impostors carried out the violence, their continued reliance on online forums, such as Discord, for decision-making reveals immaturity and an unrepresentative nature. The reliance on online forums, which feature anonymity, frivolity and impersonation, and the fact that there is no guarantee that these views are representative of the many marginalised groups suggest that giving into the demands from these unaccountable groups uncritically could be hazardous. The failures of mainstream leaders – the K.P. Sharma Oli-Sher Bahadur Deuba-Pushpa Kamal Dahal troika and their coteries – cannot justify discrediting democracy or the polity itself, as some protesters have made it out to be, echoing anti-social and destructive pro-monarchic elements. One outcome is that the entrenched leadership of mainstream parties could be compelled by party members to give way to fresh blood. Meanwhile, the interim government must protect Nepal's institutions and constitutional achievements while building the stage for free and fair elections – this is the surest path to safeguarding the promise of a democratic, plural and republican “Naya Nepal”.

India needs a multi-pronged strategy to deal with stubble burning

In the absence of a transparent mechanism to evaluate and address an issue and being cowed down by imagined political repercussions, it is not surprising that suggestions such as to 'jail farmers' to act as a deterrent to others are being bandied about. While no section of citizens – farmer or industrialist – can be considered to be above the law, creating better incentives, enforcing existing laws and being transparent about what is realistically achievable are more advisable steps than 'carrot and stick' approaches.

A crucial reason why our findings differ is that



Expanding the Public Distribution System to ensure desirable levels of consumption of pulses by eliminating subsidies for those whose food consumption exceeds a reasonable norm will be an ideal step

It tends to be assumed that the Public Distribution System (PDS) deals effectively with food deprivation. To assess this, we have computed the value of food consumption including the imputed value of supplies received via the PDS – both purchased and free of cost. With the value of consumption thus adjusted, the proportion of the population that cannot afford two *thalis* declines to 40% in rural areas and 10% in urban areas. Notably, food deprivation remains very high in the former even with subsidised food.

This suggests that the desired level of consumption of cereals, both rice and wheat, has been reached, for the richest can afford to purchase all the cereals that they desire. While it points to the success of the PDS, in that it has

India needs more focus to reach SDG 3, a crucial goal

There are multiple reasons for these gaps. They include, first, lack of access to quality health care partially due to poor infrastructure and economic factors; second, non-economic factors such as poor nutrition, hygiene and sanitation and other lifestyle choices and, third, cultural



Compulsory health education in schools is one measure that can help close the gap

The World Health Statistics 2022 by the World Health Organization highlights that strong primary systems help in detecting diseases earlier, reducing hospitalisation costs, and achieving better long-term outcomes. This will also require harnessing the transformative potential of digital health tools. Telemedicine and integrated digital health records can bridge access gaps, especially in rural and underserved regions. Evidence from the Lancet Digital Health Commission shows how digital platforms have improved maternal health care and vaccination tracking in several low and middle-income countries, offering lessons that India can adapt.

At this young age, they need to improve their health behaviour and not just their knowledge. The health habits they develop at this age will be maintained as they grow to be adults. When girls

It is unreasonable, from considerations of both logistics and expense, to expect that a government can distribute the entire food basket to any section. There is a middle path though, and that is to expand the distribution of pulses through the PDS. In a further comparison of the consumption patterns at the two ends of the distribution, we find that unlike in the case of the cereals, the per capita consumption of pulses in the 0%-5% fractile is exactly half of that in the 95%-100% fractile.

We have proposed an expansion of the PDS in the direction of the food most needed by the least well-off, namely pulses, accompanied by the elimination of subsidies for those whose food consumption exceeds a reasonable norm, such as two *thalis* a day. Right now, the PDS is both unwieldy and ineffective, as it spreads resources thin. Our proposal will render it compact, enabling the equalisation of primary food consumption in India by raising that of the poorest household to the highest level observed in the economy, a globally significant outcome.

Finland's school-based health reforms in the 1970s, which wove lessons on nutrition, hygiene and lifestyle into the curricula, played a central role in reducing cardiovascular disease rates in the decades that followed. In Japan, compulsory health education has been linked to improved hygiene practices and longer life expectancy. A structured and progressive curriculum in India can achieve similar results.

India's improved SDG ranking is encouraging. But it should not obscure the reality that only 17% of global SDG targets are currently on track to be achieved by 2030. Educating its youth about healthy behaviour, supported by stronger health-care systems, can act as the foundation for sustainable progress. And while 2030 is an important milestone to reach, the true vision lies further ahead – building a healthier and stronger India. A government that devotes its attention to embedding health education in school curricula can help achieve the goal of a *Viksit Bharat* 2047.

The Jews and Israel today
The Jews have been the most persecuted race — the Holocaust is the darkest chapter in human history. Therefore, one would expect that the Jews would inherently imbibe qualities of empathy and tolerance, given their sufferings in the past. However, it seems that the oppressed have turned oppressor with renewed force. How else can one explain the atrocities that Israel is perpetrating in Gaza? Even today, German children are taught about

the shameful role that the Germans played in the annihilation of Jews during the World War, lest they forget. Similarly, let the people of Israel pause for a moment and rethink on how history will judge them for the genocide in Gaza. They may soon have to contend with the possibility that their victimisation during the Second World War will be relegated to the last pages of history in the aftermath of their actions.

Sharada Sivaram,
Kochi, Kerala

India's inexplicable and continued silence on the genocide in Gaza reflects its narrow-mindedness, and its strange unwillingness to challenge executive decisions on foreign policy. As the world grapples with the mounting toll of the Gaza conflict, India's role as a silent bystander is growing increasingly untenable. The Prime Minister of India and the External Affairs Minister may frame their diplomacy as pragmatic, but history will judge them as moral

failures. The cost of complicity — both for Palestine and for India's global standing — is far too high to ignore. The question now is whether India will continue down this path of strategic expediency or rediscover the courage to condemn the genocide in Gaza — which it ought to do so.

The answer will shape not only the fate of Palestine but also India's legacy in the global order.

R. Sivakumar,
Chennai

A loyal BSNL customer
I have been a long-standing BSNL customer, for nearly 20 years. The only reason my family and I (nearly 75 members) have continued with BSNL is out of our conviction to support a Government of India enterprise and promote its services. We have encouraged others in our circle to use BSNL despite its known limitations. Although BSNL has officially launched eSIM, it is still not available in Kerala. Even more concerning is the

explanation by customer-care representatives — that eSIM facilities are not available for long-standing policy customers. This policy shows a disregard for loyal customers. In the absence of BSNL's rollout of eSIM services, I am left with no choice but to consider porting my number to another operator.

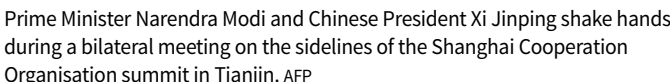
Akhil S. Karun,
 Kochi, Kerala

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the postal address.



Earlier this month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi concluded his much-anticipated visit to China. Mr. Modi attended the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit and also held talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the summit. The two leaders decided to restart bilateral trade and air connectivity, and underlined the importance of peace and tranquility along the border. These decisions were significant as they were made five years after the deadly border clashes between the two neighbours in the Galwan Valley in Ladakh; and months after India launched Operation Sindoor against Pakistan (at the time, China supported the Pakistani military forces). Both leaders reaffirmed that the two countries were “development partners and not rivals, and their differences should not turn to disputes,” the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement after the meeting. Should India overlook boundary issues while normalising ties with China? Vivek Katju and Antara Ghosal Singh discuss the question in a conversation moderated by **Kalol Bhattacharjee**. Excerpts:

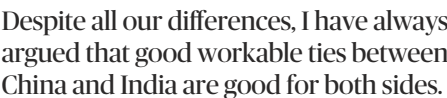
Vivek Katsu: In 1988, during Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China, India and China decided to normalise ties in other sectors even as they attempted to resolve the border issue. In a way, this constituted a departure from the past. The crucial point was that peace and tranquility had to be maintained along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). While India wanted the border issue to be resolved (as part of normalising ties), China was more reluctant to do so (and wanted to set the issue aside for the time being). In the 1990s too, both countries agreed to maintain peace and tranquility (along the LAC). In 2020, the Galwan incident, which demonstrated China's aggressive approach, upset this arrangement. That didn't mean that there weren't previous incidents which constituted serious setbacks to the normalisation process, but those paled in comparison to what happened in 2020. In the last five years, both sides, through diplomatic and military arrangements, have tried to restore the system that prevailed in the 1990s. So, when you ask whether the border issue is holding us back, I think we had moved past that in 1988 and in the 1990s. And one last point: if you see the Indian and Chinese readouts of the Modi-Xi Jinping meeting at the SCO margins, you will find a distinct difference in how the two sides describe the salience of the border issue.



Antara Ghosal Singh: My understanding is that it is not an either-or situation. The overall positive turn in China-India ties is not really a sudden development or a knee-jerk reaction to the current turmoil in international politics or the recent downturn in India-U.S. ties. India-China relations have been showing signs of improvement since early last year. Both sides have been sending some positive signals towards each other. As I gather from Chinese sources, the 2024 Border Patrol Agreement was a key icebreaker. Since the Galwan clash of 2020, India has been consistently demanding that the Chinese Army withdraw to the pre-April 2020 positions and restore India's patrol rights in the disputed areas. From that perspective, India sees the restoration of patrolling points, even in Demchok and Depsang, as a diplomatic victory. Many Indian strategists have acknowledged this fact. Importantly, the Chinese side feels that they have not really suffered any loss in this agreement because it is a border patrol agreement and has nothing to do with the demarcation of sovereignty. The agreement means that two years after achieving disengagement at four places through the creation of non-patrolled buffer zones, now two more places, as demanded by the Indian side, are being disengaged through cross-patrolled buffer zones. That is the Chinese understanding from what I read.

Do you see a situation where the normalisation of relations could be disrupted by, say, a Galwan-2 in the distant future?

VK: Of course, that will disrupt relations – and disrupt them badly. In the Indian strategic community, China now looms large. China has always loomed large, but I think for historical



ANTARA GHOSAL SINGH

reasons, Pakistan occupied a principal place. But today, I do believe, despite Pakistani terror and despite China's consistent support for Pakistan, there is a realisation that China is India's main threat and will continue to be so. Now, there are new formulations that suggest that India and China can be partners and not rivals. What I understand is that China is aspiring for primacy in the world. It no longer considers India to be on par with it. It believes that India is just another South Asian country it has to deal with. If you see (Chinese Foreign Minister) Wang Yi's remarks, after his meeting with (Deputy Prime Minister of Pakistan) Ishaq Dar, that part is made clear. A journalist noted that Pakistan was the Minister's final stop after visiting three countries. Mr. Wang said it was the final stop – and the most important one. That speaks volumes.

There has been a shift in India's appreciation of China. But we cannot overlook the enormous infrastructure development, especially in the military area of the Tibetan Plateau. Why is this being done? And what will that lead to? It will lead to India having to spend a fair amount of its own financial resources in ensuring that the LAC infrastructure is fortified and that the LAC is well garrisoned throughout the year. I think that is also a Chinese objective.

I don't think it will be wrong for me to say that China shows no interest in really resolving the border issue. Yes, the special representatives are going to meet, but are they going to make any headway? What does the history of the last 30 years show? And why did Galwan happen? No one has been able to come up with an authoritative reason for why it happened.

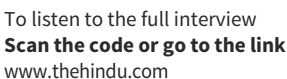
AGS: If you look at Chinese sources, you will find many theories (behind what prompted China's action in Galwan). The most popular one is the dilution of Article 370 (of Jammu and Kashmir; China protested against the move). Another argument is the competition between China and India in terms of manufacturing. It was during COVID-19 that the first round of the China-U.S. trade war took place and there was this feeling on the Chinese side that India was collaborating with the U.S. to take away China's position in the global supply chains. That caused a lot of panic within Chinese strategic circles. Ambassador Katju also mentioned that India is

often looked down upon by China; that is true. For a long time, China has chosen to believe that India is a retreating image in its rear view mirror. But it was during that time in 2020 when they started to realise that things can change and that India, a country with 1.4 billion people, can be a competitor. There is this weird 'India is a threat' theory. If you look at Chinese discussions on various platforms, you can see how they are concerned about India's economic growth and India's demographic dividend, particularly at a time when China is facing a population crisis. There is also a prevailing mood in China that it should not let Chinese industries invest in India; that it should impose various export controls; and that it should not let India develop and be a competitor to China. So, there is a change in perception within China as well, on the India issue. All these insecurities played a role in what happened in 2020.

Can the two tracks of the normalisation of India-China relations, and China's plans for South Asia, as seen in the recent Kunming trilateral featuring Pakistan, China and Bangladesh, be in harmony with each other?

VK: Of course not. I have reached the conclusion that China believes that India, if not now, then in later years, can be a rival and that it must be tackled. The way China is moving in South Asia establishes that too. Earlier, they were entering into bilateral ties. Now there are trilateral mechanisms. There is an Afghanistan, Pakistan, China mechanism. They are trying for a Bangladesh, Pakistan, China mechanism. Soon, I think they would want a mechanism involving all South Asian countries, including us. They will know that we might not take part in it.

AGS: They have their cards against us and we have our cards against them. But despite all our differences, I have always argued that good workable ties between China and India are good for both sides. We are aware of China's manufacturing prowess and how dependent India and the world is on Chinese manufacturing. The Economic Survey 2024-25 highlighted China's overwhelming manufacturing dominance in various sectors, including electric vehicles and critical minerals. It also stated how China's overall manufacturing output, which is nearly 45% of the global total, is at a level never seen before since the U.S.'s or the U.K.'s at their industrial peak.



Landing in the midst of a 'revolution'

Journalists tend to go to the midst of rage-filled streets to report and record events, even if they are not there on work

Ramya Kannan

What are the chances of landing in the lap of a "revolution", completely unintentionally? In the Indian subcontinent, there is a pretty high chance, given what we have seen in recent years. After the uprising in Sri Lanka against the fall in the island nation's economic fortunes, and the protests in Bangladesh against the job quota system, the guarantee of peace in the region is shaky. The possibility of flights getting disrupted, arson and looting on the streets, curfews shutting down cities for days on end, and a palpable fear everywhere is not that remote.

For a journalist, there is also a measure of headiness. As vulgar as it may sound, even an unintended encounter with chaos counts as ecstasy for a reporter – to be amidst such a crisis and report on it. Something in our DNA takes us to the midst of rage-filled streets to report and record events, even if the purpose of visiting the place is different.

Who could have imagined that in the five-odd hours that it took to hop on to a flight in Chennai and hop off – first to New Delhi and then in Kathmandu – that things would fall apart so rapidly in Nepal? Protesters had initially turned up with flowers and books. They sang songs, demanding that the ban on social media be lifted. However, the situation deteriorated after reports of deaths began trickling in. The first few reports from the Himalayan kingdom stated that the number of dead stood at 19, and included a child.

Despite this, there is no panic among those who were already on the ground in Kathmandu and not part of the protests. Conference mates in the city lend assurance, recording how other people had arrived by air without any issues and how there are no disruptions on their side of the city.

On the first evening (September 8), everything seems fine. The airport is milling with people walking about normally. That the quotidian routine went on un-

disrupted is falsely calming. There are never-ending traffic jams on the way from the airport. This changes drastically overnight.

The next morning dawns with the smell of smoke. Thick, grey columns rise to blur the blue of the distant Himalayas. Protesters have set government buildings, institutions, and homes of politicians on fire. They have occupied a couple of media houses. The youth burn property in the middle of the road, unnerved by shoot-at-sight orders. On the sidelines of the “revolution”, and roads, people stand fearlessly, watching the burning piles. As can be expected during such a mass upheaval, bystanders mutter: “This government needs to go.” There is no fear on the main roads, but no cheering either. Pictures shot then tell the ambivalent side story of this South Asian equivalent of the Arab Spring.

That changes that evening: the youth cheer and give each other high fives and take out a victory march, a show of mostly testosterone. They sit on bikes, waving flags, sticks, even a rifle, yelling “victory”. It seems to some that the protests have quickly ended.

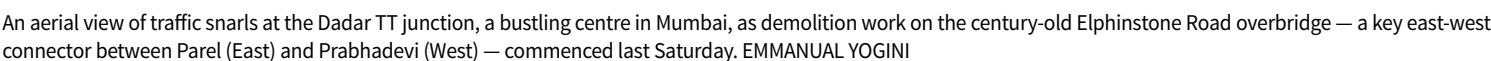
The next day dawns in sharp contrast. There is a calm and a curfew in place. The annoying hoots of pigeons holed in the eaves of buildings replace the sounds of the previous day's raucous victory cries. Every shop is shut, and army pickets are within viewing distance on both sides of the winding roads. Army trucks whizz past, their sirens blaring. Hotels lock their gates and gently warn visitors against venturing out.

But that is for everyone else to follow. The journalist DNA drags one by the nose to the empty streets, the army pickets, into the centre of action. A video shot on an empty street seems disquieting. But for a journalist responding to the news, there are adrenaline hits with every photo and video recording history being rewritten, mostly in swirls of smoke.

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PICTURE OF THE WEEK

Moving slowly in a fast-paced city



FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO SEPTEMBER 19, 1975

Proposal for flood relief stamp to raise Rs. 100 crores

New Delhi, Sept. 18: The Government is examining a proposal to raise Rs. 100 crores for flood relief in Bihar, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh from the issue of a special stamp, the use of which will be obligatory while posting letters. Such special stamps were issued at the time of the Bangladesh crisis to augment resources.

The  Hindu.

Since the issue of special stamps alone may not net in the projected Rs. 100 crores, it is proposed to ask the State Governments to introduce certain additional levies on stamp papers for registration of documents, motor vehicles taxation, etc.

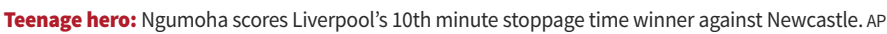
The Centre, deeply perturbed over the extensive damage caused by the floods, particularly in Bihar, is examining various proposals for effectively coming to the rescue of the flood-affected States. The special stamp and additional levies proposal is, however, likely to face some resistance from the other State Governments, though they did not object to the issue of the Bangladesh stamp.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO SEPT. 19, 1925

Wire-nail industry

Calcutta, Sept. 18: Giving evidence before the Tariff Board to-day, Mr. Khusrum, proprietor of the Punjab Wire-nail Factory, Amritsar, said that they could not run their factory at a profit nor compete with the foreign-made articles unless protection was granted. He pointed out that many of the articles made by them, such as panel pins, tacks, etc., were already subject to a duty of 10 per cent whilst they paid about 35 per cent customs duty on the wires imported for manufacturing such articles in India.

Ruthless but not clinical would be a fair assessment of the Reds' campaign so far; for all the flair and potency in its attack, the Premier League title-holder is also susceptible to conceding goals



ND-NDE