Twitter Thread by Raghu Karnad

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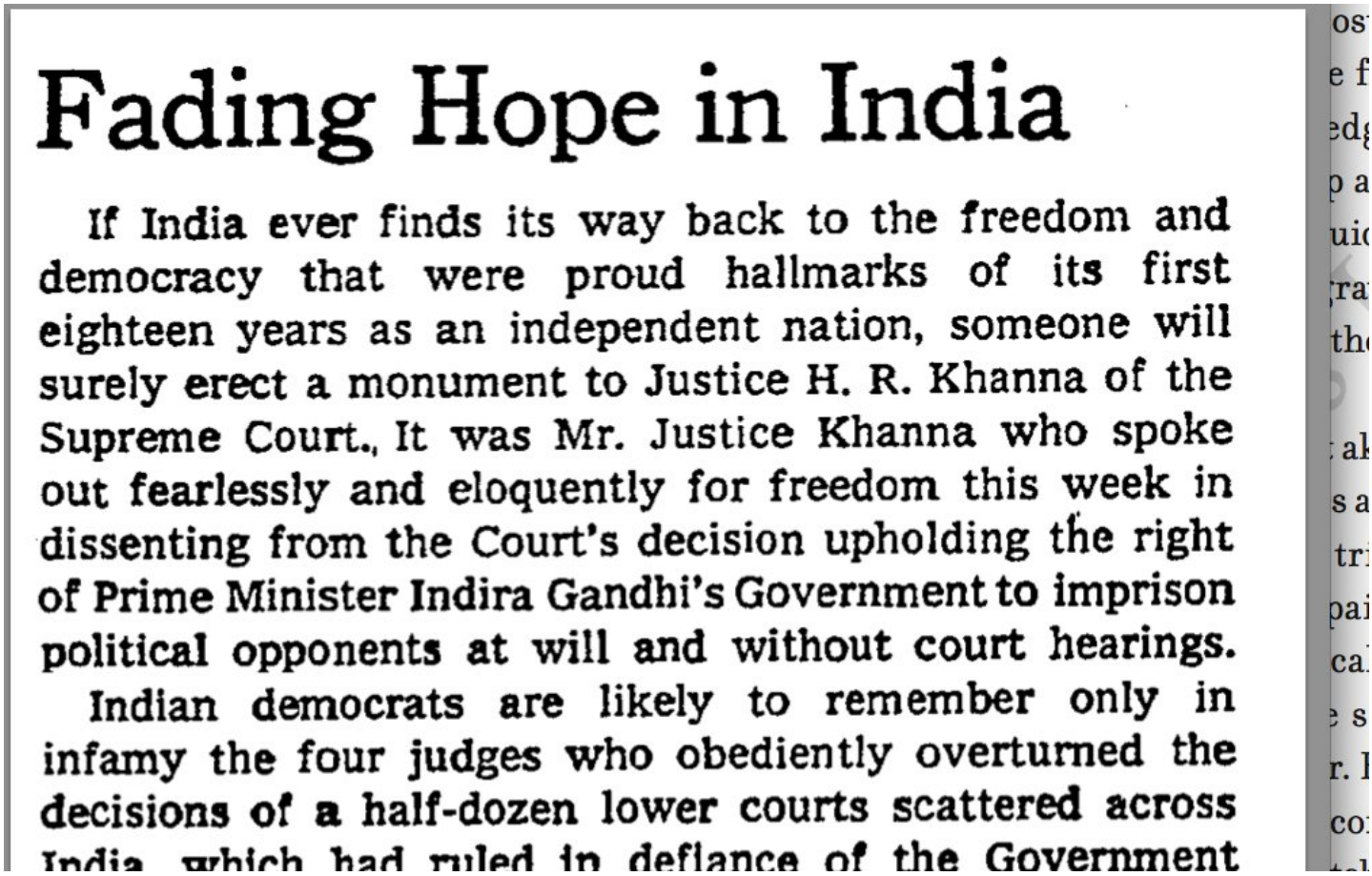
@rkarnad

Since tweets by @rihanna and @miakhalifa are now considered 'external forces' and 'foreign interference', a small reminder... During the first Emergency, the Sangh's main line of dissent was through foreign press, governments, activists, and funding.
A short thread.

(2) The RSS has a fanciful mythology of its resistance within India, but there's not much evidence of it. @Swamy39 wrote in the year 2000 that ‘most of the leaders of the BJP/RSS had betrayed the struggle against the Emergency,’ offering ‘to work for the nation’s tormentors’...

(3) Instead it was overseas intelligentsia (from the Left) who gave the anti-Emergency movement early moral support. But Sangh leaders like Makarand Desai also lobbied @nytimes & other Western papers to editorialise on the silencing of dissent & capture of the judiciary in India.

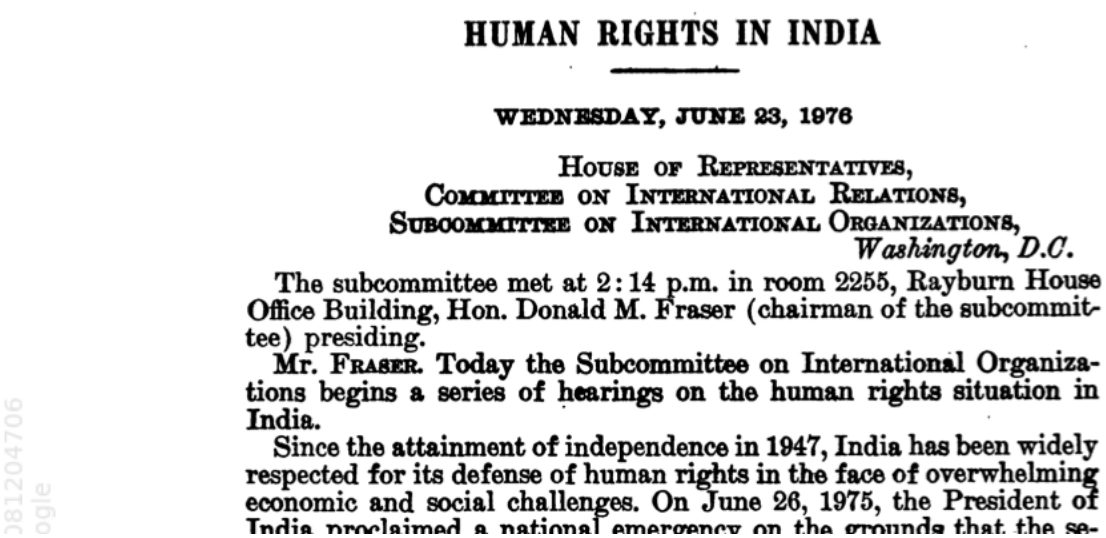


Fading Hope in India

If India ever finds its way back to the freedom and democracy that were proud hallmarks of its first eighteen years as an independent nation, someone will surely erect a monument to Justice H. R. Khanna of the Supreme Court., It was Mr. Justice Khanna who spoke out fearlessly and eloquently for freedom this week in dissenting from the Court's decision upholding the right of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's Government to imprison political opponents at will and without court hearings.

Indian democrats are likely to remember only in infamy the four judges who obediently overturned the decisions of a half-dozen lower courts scattered across India, which had ruled in defiance of the Government

(4) Following this, the US Congressional Committee on International Relations held hearings about human rights in India. Witnesses included Ram Jethmalani; Jagjit Singh Chohan, of the Int'l Council of Sikhs; and Leila Kabir Fernandes, married to union leader George Fernandes.



HUMAN RIGHTS IN INDIA

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 1976

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met at 2:14 p.m. in room 2255, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Donald M. Fraser (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. FRASER. Today the Subcommittee on International Organizations begins a series of hearings on the human rights situation in India.

Since the attainment of independence in 1947, India has been widely respected for its defense of human rights in the face of overwhelming economic and social challenges. On June 26, 1975, the President of India proclaimed a national emergency on the grounds that the se-

(5) Questions were also asked in the UK House of Commons – just as they were last year, in the US Congress, in the House of Commons, and in the European Parliament, in support of the anti-CAA Citizenship movement.
https://t.co/SeH55OrVll

(6) It was this international pressure on Indira Gandhi that helped to bring the Emergency to an end in 1977. MG Chitkara, an RSS ideologue, said that overseas activism ‘proved to be one of the decisive factors in upsetting the calculations of the dictatorial regime here’.

(7) Predictably, the Indira government's response was to accuse Western media of ‘foreign interference’ and to call their coverage ‘slanderous and malicious’.
Its language – of ‘anti-India propaganda’, ‘external enemies’ – was exactly the same we're hearing today.

(8) Even when the Emergency ended, the linkages with overseas Indians did not. The BJP's popularity in the older generation of Indian expats, the 'Howdy Modi' crowd, is an artifact of foreign states providing safe harbour for dissent & protest when it was not safe in India.

(9) Today, younger generations of Indian expats and diaspora uphold a strong, non-sectarian, progressive South Asian identity – led by role models who represent all that too.
The anti-CAA movement, and now #FarmersProtests, are naturally finding support and safety there.

(10) Don't expect this to end just because @MEAIndia is upset about it. As a young Indian in the US wrote to me, after the Citizenship protests: 'New regimes of control in India will require new forms of resistance in spaces where it remains possible'.