Twitter Thread by Somya Lakhani



Somya Lakhani
@somyalakhani

Thread:

A year ago, at this hour exactly I was in Maujpur in northeast Delhi. For days, weeks & months, I -- like several other reporters -- filed multiple stories on the #DelhiRiots. On the violence, the perpetrators, the victims, the burnt homes & shops, the fear.

I remember every minute of Feb 23, 2020 -- from the speeches to smoke billowing from afar. What I can't ever forget is the face of a man who sat alone in front of a shop, his kurta dusty and torn, blood on his forehead, unable to answer who he was & where he wanted to go.

I've his photo, I never posted it anywhere, and I won't either. He was in such shock, and there was no help around. I tried talking to him but he didn't say a word. He was numb.

It'll take me years before I can fully write down what happened that afternoon -- a stampede, stones flying all around me, a colleague who held nu hand & ran, another who lost her slipper for a minute, tear gas, my inhaler, salt.

I sent my mother messages, my hands trembling. At 1 am, I was home -- my head buried inside a pillow between my parents.

For days and weeks after this, I, like many other reporters, visited northeast Delhi and witnessed fear, heartbreak, grief, helplessness. I met women who delivered babies that week, kids who missed school & friends, adults who sat atop rubble that was once home.

My own trauma of day 1 didn't mean anything anymore. It was entirely mine to work on & forget. Grateful to my parents & sister who understood my silence & nightmares + my colleague who put his hand above my head to protect me.

Many reporters are still doing their job, thankfully, of writing on what happened in Feb 2020 in the Capital of the country. Please read their work, share their work.

What reporters & photojournalists underwent in Feb 2020 -- harrowing & scary things -- are just a line in a story. 53 people died, 100s were injured, families torn apart, parents who lost kids, kids who lost siblings & parents & partners.

Let's never forget what happened, why it happened, who let it happen, who stood & watched.

Of all things, I'm also grateful to my boss who ASKED me where I wanted to be the next day -- the choice was mine. He told me it was okay if I didn't want to head back the next day to northeast Delhi, and it was okay if I wanted to go back.

I'm not here to pitch my pieces, they're online for you to find and read. I'm here to remind you that a riot happened in the capital of the country a year ago.