

Identities and descriptors

How the news media described the Assam clashes

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The Internet was the primary source of information pertaining to the Assam clashes. One of the reasons for this was a that of feasibility —physically track 30-odd publications over a period of eight days. The study, therefore, cannot come to any conclusion about the physical mileage that the clashes were accorded in newspapers. Some empirical observations, nevertheless, can be made.

- Asian Age: October 4 (Pg 2), October 5 (Pg 1), October 6 (Pg 1), October 7 (Pg 1),
- Hindustan Times: October 5 (Pg 8), October 6 (Pg 1

& 10), October 7 (Pg 10), October 8 (Pg 15), October 9 (Pg 13), October 10 (Pg 11)

- Indian Express: October 6 (Pg 1), October 7 (Inside), October 8 (Pg 7), October 10 (Inside)
- New Indian Express: October 5 (Inside), October 6 (Pg 1), October 7 (inside)
- Pioneer: October 6 (Pg 1), October 7 (Pg 1), October 8 (inside)
- Sakaal Times: October 7 (Pg 3), October 8 (Pg 7)
- Times of India: October 7 (Pg 1)
- Telegraph: October 7 (Pg 7)

■ News media outlets and the Northeast

Cases of the Northeast being under-represented or wrongly-represented in the metropolitan Indian media abound.

Of all the stories scanned for the study, there was one where the error was glaring to say the least. *Hindustan*

Times in its October 5, 2008 edition carried a story headlined 'Communal violence in Guwahati, toll hits 15'. The fact is that the violence took place in Assam's Udalgori and Darrang districts, and not in Guwahati city. Even the intro of the copy said that the Army had staged flag marches in "Guwahati's Udalgori and Darrang districts."

It is almost inconceivable that the reporter concerned —

Digambar Patowary, one who lives in and reports from the state — would have committed such an unpardonable mistake. In all likelihood, this study would like to believe, the error was perpetrated on the copy by someone on the desk who did not know



PAK FLAG HOISTED AT ASSAM SCHOOL

In violence-affected Udalgori district of Guwahati, miscreants on Saturday hoisted a Pakistan flag in Sonaripara village. Bangladeshi immigrant settlers are in majority in the village.

Villagers said they saw the Pakistani flag atop a pole in the Bhoiraguri LP School

Communal violence in Guwahati, toll hits 15

Digambar Patowary
Guwahati, October 4

THE ARMY staged flag marches in Guwahati's Udalgori and Darrang districts on Saturday as the death toll in the communal violence between the immigrant settlers of Bangladeshi origin, mainly Muslims, and Bodo tribal members went up to 15.

Eight bodies were recovered from Bhakatgaon and Sonaripara villages of Udalgori district on Saturday.

The two districts continued to remain tense with fresh reports of violence and rioting.

Miscreants set ablaze

Muslim settlers allegedly targeted vehicles carrying Durga Puja idols.

The settlers also allegedly torched houses of a linguistic minority in Darrang district's Dhula and Kharupetia areas.

"Situation in Darrang district is very tense. Besides police and CRPF, the Army was also deployed in several sensitive areas," said Darrang deputy commissioner Dhruva Hazarika.

A red alert has been sounded in both the violence-affected districts.

The All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) demanded that the Udalgori district be handed over to the Army.

The Assam government has already transferred

Eight bodies were recovered from Bhakatgaon and Sonaripara villages of Udalgori district. Miscreants set ablaze 60 houses in Jhongapara and 40 others in Dingdong Para villages in the district

the difference between Assam and Guwahati.

This case also highlights the need for those on the editorial side of the mainstream Indian publications to brush up their elementary general knowledge about the Northeast.