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DHIRUBHAI AMBANI INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, MUMBAI

The Dhirubhai Ambani International School is a K-12 Co Educational International Day School established in 2003, with a view to offering world-class educational opportunities in the city of Mumbai. It is affiliated to the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations and CIE (Cambridge International Examination). In years 11 and 12 the school is authorized by the IB (International Baccalaureate) to offer the IB diploma Programme. The school recognizes the imperative of imparting an educational experience that is world class in every respect and prepares children for global citizenship. The school directs all its efforts to inspire and enable each child to believe in and practice the school's motto of 'Dare to Dream- Learn to Excel.'



SOCIAL MEDIA HAS EMPOWERED THE GENERATION

TITLE FOR TOPIC: #AidForIndians

"Turkish Prime Minister is unavailable, however, the honourable President Mr. RecepTayyip Erdogan now conducts what is the first national address via Facetime, broadcast with the help of CNN Turk, urging the citizens to ignore the unlawful military curfew and actively thwart the military coup. The Twitter hashtag #MilitaryMania' is tending world-wide as the citizens of Ankara, Turkey take matters into their own hands. Meanwhile, expatriates in Turkey are in a state of panic and are under threat by the out-of-control military"

The words of the news reporter faded away as I sat motionless on the kitchen chair, my eyes unfocussed, unseeing, as the harsh breaths of my father and the frustrated arguments and pleas of my mother came into focus.

"No, I will not wait any longer! My child is missing and I have no idea, if she is alive. She is more than a thousand miles away from in a city that just became a warzone!" My mother paused to catch a breath as the man on the other end

replied.

"I understand you have a lot to do, you are in the International Affairs department - I understand. But I am sincerely requesting you to contact the shelters and see to it that my daughter has made it there. That is the least you can do for me." My mother frowned, tears streaming down her cheeks. "Thank you."

My father ran a hand down his face tiredly, looking as if he had gained ten years in the past three hours alone. "She is still not answering the phone."

My parents sat on the couch, tired and fearful, the worry starkly evident in their eyes.

It had been almost eight hours since the military had forced a curfew onto the people in Ankara, leaving 180 people - those who resisted them - dead eight hours since the city my sister lived in was reduced to state of utter chaos. Eight hours since we had last had any contact with her. The last sound during that phone call was a shrill scream that was unmistakably hers.

My movements were heavy as I silently rose and walked into my room. My throat was dry and my eyes were dry. The Indian government was waiting to locate and bring Indians in Turkey back to safety, while the Western governments were already sending out flights to Ankara to evacuate Americans.

A wave of anger and helplessness tore me apart. I could not do anything for my sister or any other Indian living there. My wandering eye landed on my laptop, as a tiny ray of hope festered deep inside my heart.

Firing up the laptop, I quickly logged into my 'change.org' account.

It was time to write a petition.

Drawing in a deep breath I typed: "EVACUATION OF INDIAN EXPATRIATES IN TURKEY. Turkey has just seen a major upheaval in its political machinery in the form of a coup. Mass hysteria grips the nation with a cloud of uncertainty looming above the heads of the citizens.

Expatriates in Turkey have been threatened and no longer have a safe place or shelter to turn to - and so today! Write to urge the government to send #AidForIndians immediately and fulfil our role as their mother nation and fellow brothers and sisters.

We must aim to at least locate and gather, if not evacuate these Indians immediately! Please sign my petition so we can save the lives of the 36,000 Indian citizens in Ankara, Turkey."

The words, written from the bottom of my heart, were posted reaching millions of people with one click and the power of social media.

I posted my petition on my Facebook wall, on my WhatsApp groups and my Instagram feed with a picture of my dear sister, hoping and praying that I got the needed signatures. For once, in that moment, I was not helpless. In that second, as I posted and reposted the hashtags #AidForIndians

#TurkishTakeout #MilitaryMania' I was, in my own way, raising awareness and spreading word of the condition of the expatriates' and so, in my time of need, it was the empowerment provided by social media that activated my fear and gave me a medium to amplify my voice.

A week passed full of fervent phone calls and myriad conversations with the government departments and tears.

It was also during this week that my social media campaign took flight. Friends supported it, and a startling 100,000 signatures were on my petition. My post on Twitter and Facebook were reposted time and time again around 12,000 times. The people were stirring, and I could feel myself getting closer to obtaining my goal.

It was a Thursday, three weeks after my first post, that my petition was displayed on national news.

It was written in the passing, but written. Nonetheless, it was acknowledged, my words heard.

My tiny ember of hope became a small fire, and the joy on my parents' face reflected their hope too.

It was then, at 8-o'clock on that Thursday evening, after weeks of struggling, that the phone rang.

"Hello?" My mother said softly.

"Madam, the government has acknowledged your petition and has taken action to find and gather the expatriates. You would also be glad to know that we have located your daughter Ms. Ishita Mehra and she is safe here with us."

"Can I talk to her?" My mother cried, ecstatic.

"Yes, here she is."

"Hello?" My sister's voice broke my heart, the joy and relief clear within me.

That's when I shed my first tear.