



The President's Daily Brief

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DAILY BRIEF
21 DECEMBER 1966

1. India

Religious and communal fanaticism is threatening to degenerate into violence again over two separate emotion-laden issues.

A prominent Hindu religious leader is well along in a fast to the death protesting the government's refusal to impose a nationwide ban on the slaughtering of cows--the sacred Hindu symbol of motherhood. Another fanatic, a leader of the nine-million-member Sikh minority, is threatening self-immolation next Tuesday unless the government grants territorial and political concessions to a newly created Sikh state.

There are no signs of compromise. Serious trouble could erupt on the death of either fanatic, presenting Mrs. Gandhi with yet another political challenge.

2. Soviet Union

Brezhnev celebrated his sixtieth birthday on Monday to the accompaniment of a more effusive chorus of adulation than he has yet received.

Even allowing for the Soviet habit of celebrating only the decennial birthdays of its leaders, this was a whopper. The bunkum still includes references to collective leadership, but it does appear that Brezhnev's preeminence has now become an undisputed fact of Soviet politics.

3. Soviet Union

The Soviets launched another moon probe this morning, their sixth this year. It will reach the moon Saturday afternoon, but we do not yet know its mission. It will probably either try for a soft landing or--like the last three--a lunar orbit. Our bet is the latter.