

India: Resisting Vaccines and Corporate Capture of Farms

By [Michael Welch](#) and [Chris Cook](#)
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“The introduction of that study to India was made on the basis that it was going to be great investment in the health of India and the health of India’s women. But in fact, later on, during the investigation around these alleged ethical violations... the profits that would have been made had the study passed through the trials would have been enormous! I mean, and this is something that Indian people are very aware of .

“The size of their population means that if you can get a mass vaccination program going there, if you can compel people to accept the vaccine, this involves billions and billions and billions if not trillions of dollars!”

- Jo Nash, from this week’s interview

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India. Considering it is the seventh largest country by land mass, the second largest by population, and controls the fifth largest economy in the world, perhaps it does not get the attention it deserves.

But then, on November 26, 2021, 200-250 million people, a sizable chunk of humanity large enough to form the fifth largest country in the world rose up in an act of protest. It arguably marked the single largest uprising in history anywhere on the planet. The action was a reflection of farmers’ anger over new reforms pushed by Prime Minister Modi and his party the BJP. [1]

The three laws in particular [passed in September of last year](#) were proposed as a “watershed moment” for the farmers that would give them “easier access to futuristic technology that will boost production and yield better results. This is a welcome step.” But tens of millions of farmers who have shown their anger see these new as [“leaving them at the mercy of big corporations.”](#) Even now, [40,000 committed protesters](#) are sitting at Singhu and Tikri at the border of the capital city, Dehli. Nothing other than the rejection of the Modi’s new farm program will convince these souls to deviate from this mission of defiance.

But another big issue in play is the explosion of cases and deaths in the country due to the second wave of the Corona Virus. Thomson Reuters reports that the population of the biggest democracy in the world is reeling with 250,000 deaths due to COVID. Deaths shot up by 4,205 over the course of a 24 hour period, with the number of cases according to conservative estimates surging up to 348,421 in the same time period. [2]

Dead bodies were reportedly burned in funeral pyres and washed up on the shores of the river Ganges. The hospitals had to turn away patients because they were overloaded with the ill. Political leaders were crying out for vaccines in order to curb the man more deaths that are sure to follow.

Delhi's Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia told reporters that without more vaccines:

“People will die in the same way in the third and fourth waves as they have this time.”

According to the World Health Organization's most recent reports, 50 percent of cases in the world and 30 percent of deaths due to COVID take place in India. And yet, the vaccination roll-outs which have been in effect since January have only claimed 2.5 percent of the population as of this date! And unlike in other countries where the pandemic has essentially shut down protests, the farmers in India are sticking to their actions - at least so far. [3][4][5]

Some might think the time has come to contain the explosion before a large component of humanity perishes! Or - perhaps a different perspective is in order.

A recent article in the website for *Left Lockdown Sceptics* reveals that there is more going on here than a virus! She details elements in Indian society like air pollution and an oxygen market, diseases like TB and Diarrhoea claiming even more lives, and the immense number of people living in India (it is 100 times the population of the province of Ontario with 100 times the death and case total.) [6]

On this week's Global Research News Hour we endeavor to unravel the details behind the Indian situation and truly determine where the voices of ordinary people lie in the height of popular turmoil.

In our first half hour we hear from Jo Nash, the author of the article entitled [India's Current 'COVID crisis' in context](#). She explains the media's exaggeration of the facts given the details in her article. In our second half hour we hear from journalist Vandana K on the ground in Delhi. She relates to programmer Chris Cook of Gorilla-Radio in a February interview the details behind the farmer's protests which for the time being is not in danger of discontinuing until Prime Minister Modi has a change of mind about his neoliberal plan.

Jo Nash is an independent researcher, writer and editor living in Scotland, UK. She previously worked as a Senior Lecturer in Psychology and earned a Master's Degree in International relations while in Sri Lanka. Jo was a Lecturer in Mental Health at the University of Sheffield's Faculty of Medicine in the UK for ten years where she earned her PhD in psychotherapy in 1998 before to moving to India to study the health benefits of meditation in 2008. She currently fundraises for a food bank in Bodhgaya, Bihar, north India.

Vandana K is a Delhi-based independent journalist and producer who writes on the intersections of environment, gender, youth and indigenous communities with a focus on climate change. She's also covered India's agriculture beat for nearly two years. Vandana's articles can be found at Deutsche Welle, Resurgence & Ecologist, The Wire, and Canada's Media Co-Op, where her recent piece, ['The fight over agriculture in India, and how Punjabis in Canada are supporting farmers'](#) appears.

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[Cowichan Valley Community Radio CICV 98.7 FM](#) serving the [Cowichan Lake](#) area of Vancouver Island, BC airs the program Thursdays at 9am pacific time.

Notes:

1. [consortiumnews.com/2020/12/04/indias-one-day-general-strike-largest-in-history/](#)
2. [www.cbc.ca/news/world/india-covid19-death-toll-1.6023704](#)
3. World Health Organization: COVID-19 Weekly Epidemiological Update,, May 11, 2021
4. [www.cbc.ca/news/world/india-covid19-death-toll-1.6023704](#)
5. Anju Agnihotri Chaba (May 12, 2021), 'At protest sites, farm unions get Covid battle-ready with team of doctors, oxygen', Indian Express; [indianexpress.com/article/india/farmers-protest-coronavirus-pandemic-7311750/](#)
6. [leftlockdownsceptics.com/2021/04/indias-current-covid-crisis-in-context/?doing_wp_cron=1621007065.9737439155578613281250](#)

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