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#### Indian Farmers are striking against the BJP’s new farm laws that strip away protections against corporate stockpiling and monopolies.

Debbie Brennan | 2021-04 | India’s farmers strike for their lives | Freedom Socialist Party | https://socialism.com/fs-article/indias-farmers-strike-for-their-lives/

India’s farmers have stood up to water cannons, tear gas and beatings. They’ve withstood malicious smears, provocateurs, cyber shutdowns, raids and arrest. No matter how brutal the repression by Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s governing far-right Bharatiya Janata Party, the farmers are not buckling. They are striking for their very survival.

The farmers’ strike has galvanised millions since it began in November 2020. From Peoples World to Consortium News, it is reported to be the largest in world history. Solidarity rallies and actions have occurred across Australia, the United States, Canada and Europe.

Setting off this avalanche was the passage of three farm laws in late September. The new laws override 50 years of rules that regulated the distribution of food produced in the fertile states of Punjab and Haryana and protected farmers’ incomes from the vagaries of the market.

More than half of India’s workforce is engaged in agriculture, and approximately 70% of rural households depend on farming for their main income. Yet 86% own less than two hectares (five acres).

The three new laws strip away needed protections. They allow corporations to buy crops at market prices, stockpile mass quantities when prices are low, and engage in contract farming, in which farmers will have no legal redress. India’s food supply, from seed cultivation to marketing, will be controlled by monopolies. The new laws also end the government’s purchase from farmers for its subsidised food distribution to the poor.

As Parliament voted through the bills, India was reeling from Covid’s destruction, ranking second to the United States in infections and deaths. Modi’s business-serving measures worsened India’s widespread poverty, hunger and malnutrition. India has one-third of the world’s malnourished children.

Neoliberal feeding frenzy countered. For over 30 years, under the neoliberal whip of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, Indian governments have been deregulating agriculture and industry — throwing farmers into debt and kicking millions off their lands. Since the late 1990s, more than 300,000 farmers have committed suicide, at least 10,000 since 2019.

Three days after the farm bills’ passage, the parliament enacted labour codes that free up employers’ capacity to exploit and sack workers and further restrict workers’ right to strike.

Modi has been promoting India to corporate investors as both a potentially lucrative agrarian market and a replacement of China as the global manufacturer. But he didn’t count on the tenacity of the Indian people.

On Nov. 26, as millions of striking farmers converged on Delhi, India’s capital, workers across all industrial sectors joined them — from banks and transport, steel mills and power plants, postal and health services and more. Throughout the country, 250 million protested, picketed and shut down major industrial centres. They sat across railway tracks and blockaded highways. Transport, banking and business came to a halt.

Trade Unions had been protesting Modi’s labour and privatisation agenda throughout 2020 with multiple, massive one-day strikes. Since October, national strikes have incorporated the call for the farm laws’ repeal under the slogan, “Long live labour-farmer unity.” Workers’ solidarity goes beyond official union statements and stoppages. Their presence is felt, from the farmers’ encampments on Delhi’s outskirts to the ongoing protests in the capital and major cities across the country.

#### The government has used force to repress the strikes, but they rattled the government and its starting to buckle under pressure.

Wasantha Rupasinghe and Keith Jones | 2020-12-01 | Mass farmer protest rattles India’s far-right BJP government | World Socialist Website | https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2020/12/02/farm-d02.html

An agitation by farmers demanding the repeal of recently adopted agrarian “reform” legislation has become a major political crisis for India’s far-right Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government.

Tens of thousands of farmers who police had blocked from entering the Delhi National Capital Territory and bringing their demands to the seat of India’s government late last week have been encamped at Delhi’s borders for the past six days. Their tractors and trucks are blocking several major roads into Delhi from the neighbouring states of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, and the farmers have vowed to remain until their demands are met.

The farmers are protesting three laws that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his BJP rushed through parliament in September, at the same time as they were attacking workers’ right to strike and gutting restrictions on plant closures and mass layoffs. Long demanded by big business, the IMF and World Bank, the BJP’s agrarian “reform” laws are aimed at strengthening the power of agri-business at the expense of farmers and consumers. They promote contract farming, undermine the government-regulated system of agricultural markets (known as mandis), and will open the door, farmers fear, to abolishing the Minimum Support Price for certain basic commodities.

The farmers are also demanding the government abandon its proposed Electricity Bill 2020, which would eliminate or greatly reduce subsidized power rates for farmers.

The Narendra Modi-led national government orchestrated a massive security operation last week to prevent the farmers from bringing their protest to India’s capital and largest city and, if possible, from ever reaching Delhi’s borders.

The BJP state government of Uttar Pradesh and the nearby BJP-ruled state of Madhya Pradesh deployed paramilitary forces to block convoys of protesting farmers from approaching the capital. In Haryana, which borders Delhi to the south, west, and north, the BJP-led government was even more aggressive. Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar ordered the state’s border with Punjab, one of the principal centres of the protest movement, sealed as of Nov. 25, and invoked Section 144 of the Criminal Code under which all gatherings of more than four people are illegal. Several dozen leaders of farm organizations were taken into “preventive custody” and police were mobilized throughout Haryana to block farmers from traversing the state.

Nevertheless, by Friday, the day that the “Delhi Chalo” (Let us go to Delhi) mobilization was to converge on the capital, tens of thousands of farmers from Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand had reached Delhi’s border near Tigri in the south and Singhu in the north. There they were met by barricades of barbed wire and sand-laden trucks, tear gas and water cannon.

The authorities succeeded in preventing the protest from reaching Delhi. However, their actions have only served to anger the farmers and muster sympathy for them among broad sections of working people across India. According to media reports, the numbers camped at Delhi’s borders have grown to well in excess of 100,000 people. At one border point, the line of protesters reportedly stretches for 30 kilometres (19 miles).

The head of a farmers’ union in Uttar Pradesh who intends to join the agitation later this week told CNN, "We are trying to be wary of COVID but we don't have an option. It is a question of life and death. We are the ones who have provided food, milk, vegetables when the whole country was in lockdown. It is the government who has put us at risk by introducing these laws during COVID."

The Modi government has clearly been rattled by the militancy and determination of the farmers. BJP representatives have oscillated between suggesting that the farmers have been duped by the opposition or are led by treasonous elements. Last week, Amit Malviya, the head of the BJP’s IT cell, sought to whip up communal animosity against the protesting farmers, many of whom are Punjabi Sikhs, when he blamed the agitation on Maoists and “Khalistanis.” The latter is a reference to the reactionary movement to create a separate Sikh state, Khalistan, which was ruthlessly suppressed by the Indian state during the 1970s and 1980s.

Initially the government refused to meet with leaders of the Delhi Chalo protest, which is supported by more than 500 kisan sabhas (peasant unions) and other farm organizations, until the agitation was called off. Later it made talks conditional on the farmers agreeing to move to a large field and fair ground in north Delhi, the Nirankari Samagan Ground. Some accepted the government’s offer. But the vast majority of farmers have refused, arguing that relocating their protest to a field far from the heart of Delhi and where they will be surrounded by security forces would be akin to agreeing to their jailing or kettling.

The government’s greatest fear is that the farmers’ protest will serve to fan growing social opposition within the working class.

The launch of the Delhi Chalo was timed to coincide with the Nov. 26 one-day general strike called by the country’s major central labour federation and supported by numerous independent unions. Tens of millions of workers walked off the job across India to demand the scrapping of the BJP’s “labour” and “agrarian” reforms, a halt to privatisation, and emergency financial support for the hundreds of millions whose meagre incomes have been slashed as a result of the government’s ruinous handling of the pandemic.

On Sunday evening, Home Minister Amit Shah met with Agriculture Minster Narendra Singh Tomar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to discuss the crisis. Rajnath Singh’s involvement underscores that the BJP government is preparing to deploy the military and, if need be, use lethal violence to suppress the farmer agitation.

#### India’s economy down now, and strikes threaten Modi’s popularity.

Emily Schmall and Hari Kumar | Published Feb. 1, 2021 Updated 02-02, 2021 | India’s Modest Budget Signals Modi’s Limited Options | NYTimes | https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/01/world/asia/india-budget-modi-economy.html

NEW DELHI — The world’s biggest economies are trying to borrow and spend their way out of the pandemic, from the European Union’s [$900 billion stimulus package](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/20/world/europe/eu-stimulus-coronavirus.html) to President Biden’s proposed [$1.9 trillion rescue plan](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/14/business/economy/biden-stimulus-plan.html).

Then there’s India.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government on Monday proposed a nearly half-a-trillion-dollar budget for the 12 months beginning on April 1 that shows New Delhi is taking a largely conservative tack. Infrastructure and health care spending are set to rise significantly, but Mr. Modi’s budget also calls for reducing debt.

Over all, spending would rise less than 1 percent at a time when India is suffering from [its worst recession in years](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/27/business/economy/india-economy-covid-19.html) while battling the coronavirus. India’s economy, once one of the world’s fastest growing, is estimated to have shrunk nearly 8 percent in the current fiscal year, which will end on March 31.

“I don’t know why the government is so hung up on being fiscally conservative when the whole world is suggesting that this is the time, like no other, to be profligate,” said Mahesh Vyas, an economist and the chief executive of the Mumbai-based Center for Monitoring the Indian Economy.

“I don’t know any economist suggesting this line of policy,” he said.

The amount allocated toward defense, for example, totals only a fraction more than last year, even as Indian and Chinese troops [face off](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/25/world/asia/india-china-border.html) along their [largely undefined high-mountain border](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/17/world/asia/india-china-border-clashes.html).

“This was only to be expected given the state of the Indian economy, but will certainly impact the military’s modernization,” said Lt. Gen. D.S. Hooda, India’s former commander of the area’s northern border with Pakistan and China.

In many ways, the budget reflects Mr. Modi’s difficult position. He remains [hugely popular](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/16/world/asia/coronavirus-modi-india.html), and the country’s opposition parties have not been able to [seriously challenge him](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/09/world/asia/india-bihar-election.html).

But Mr. Modi’s [stringent lockdown](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/25/world/asia/india-lockdown-coronavirus.html) in March [cratered the economy](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/05/world/asia/india-economy-coronavirus.html). His government says the move saved countless lives, but it also cost jobs. Many people are still out of work or earning less.

[photo removed]

A government-run hospital in Kolkata, India. The Indian government is allocating a much larger share of its nearly $500 billion budget to infrastructure and health care.Credit...Rupak De Chowdhuri/Reuters

He faces thorny challenges on other fronts. For months, farmers [have been clamoring](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/27/world/asia/india-farmer-protest.html) on [the capital’s borders](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/25/world/asia/india-farmers-protests-delhi.html) for lawmakers to repeal a trio of farm laws that Mr. Modi has said are key to India’s market reforms.

India’s economy [was facing headwinds](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/21/business/economy/india-economy-trade.html) well before the pandemic. Between April and December 2019, G.D.P. grew only 4.6 percent. While more mature economies might envy that rate, it marks a slowdown from years when the country’s output grew at 7 to 8 percent.

The government could ratchet up spending, taking advantage of low global interest rates to borrow to pay for it. Still, that could spark inflation, [a lingering fear](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/01/world/asia/india-modi-onion-prices.html) in a country where many households struggle to afford basic staples. A surge in prices while much of the 1.3 billion population is already teetering on the edge could erode the popularity of Mr. Modi’s Bharatiya Janata Party.

Arun Kumar, an economics professor at the Institute of Social Sciences in New Delhi, said the government was also worried about a credit downgrade by international ratings agencies, which would make it more expensive for the government to borrow.

Thus, Mr. Modi is anxious to put India’s struggling economy in the best light possible. With coronavirus cases and deaths sharply down from the last peak in September, government economists are pledging a dramatic recovery.

“India focused on saving lives and livelihoods, took short-term pain for long-term gain, recognized that G.D.P. growth would drop but then recover and it has,” said the government’s chief economic adviser, K.V. Subramanian.

That recovery is far from assured. Even if the government’s rosy forecast of 11 percent growth is realized in 2022, India’s net growth would only be 3.5 percent — far short of what is needed to employ the millions of young people entering the job market each year.

Nirmala Sitharaman, India’s finance minister, defended the government’s relative frugality on Thursday, saying that the budget was just the latest in a series of public interventions meant to support India’s most vulnerable, while also boosting consumer demand and [small and medium-size businesses](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/27/business/economy/india-economy-covid-19.html) that make up much of the Indian economy.

“We have spent, we have spent and we have spent,” Ms. Sitharaman told reporters on Thursday. “We have also shown a clear glide path for deficit management and bringing it down.”

India’s deficit target is one of the budget’s more ambitious goals. The fiscal deficit, which was 3.5 percent before the pandemic took hold in India, has jumped to 9.5 percent as the country scrambled to ramp up manufacturing of masks and other protective gear, plus testing for the coronavirus and expanding cash handouts and food rations to about 800 million people. Ms. Sitharaman aims to bring the fiscal deficit down to 6.5 percent.

Despite the lack of overall big spending, investors found a lot to like in the budget. It calls for increased spending for farmers — a priority given the protests on the outskirts of New Delhi in recent weeks — and greater privatization of state-run firms. After the budget was presented, the Bombay Stock Exchange’s main index jumped 5 percent.

Some economists remained skeptical. They pointed to studies like [one from Azim Premji University](https://cse.azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/covid19-analysis-of-impact-and-relief-measures/) that found that, of those who lost employment between April and May, one in five are still out of work.

Mr. Kumar, of the Institute of Social Sciences, said the government should be more concerned about the hit to the informal sector — the people who run shops, drive rickshaws or otherwise don’t appear on corporate payrolls. Because of a lack of data, the hit to their livelihoods could be much greater than realized.

“Major components of the economy are still down,” Mr. Kumar said, adding that the informal parts of the economy “are down substantially.”

Correction: Feb. 2, 2021

A picture with an earlier version of this article was published in error. It was taken in Sri Lanka, not India.

#### Agriculture is a rare bright spot in the Indian economy and is key to building back growth.

By Emily Schmall | Published Dec. 4, 2020 Updated 10-22 Oct. 22, 2021 | Indian Farmers’ Protests Spread, in Challenge to Modi | NYTimes | https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/04/world/asia/india-farmers-protest-pollution-coronavirus.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pgtype=Article

NEW DELHI — Before [India’s farmers](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/22/world/asia/india-farmers-protests-modi.html) rose up in anger, presenting an increasingly difficult challenge to a government already grappling with the coronavirus outbreak and a devastating economic slump, Devinder Singh set his field on fire.

Mr. Singh would have preferred to clear his rice field. A 41-year-old farmer in the parched region of Punjab, he knew that setting piles of field waste on fire after harvest contributes to the pollution that often chokes New Delhi and the rest of northern [India](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/30/world/asia/india-ban-islamic-schools.html).

But he is one of [thousands of farmers](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/25/world/asia/india-farmers-tractors-delhi.html?referringSource=articleShare) in an increasingly nationwide pushback against Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s proposal to overhaul the way many of the country’s 146 million farms do business. Mr. Modi has said that his market-oriented reform would free them from the constraints of a state-run system.

Many Indian farmers believe the overhaul will lead to lower prices and pave the way for corporate takeovers of their small farms, which average [less than three acres](http://agcensus.nic.in/document/agcen1516/T1_ac_2015_16.pdf) in size. [Farmer protests](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/22/world/asia/india-farmers-protests-modi.html) that began choking the roads to New Delhi last week have spread, intensifying pressure on Mr. Modi’s government to strike a deal.

Mr. Singh, who joined the protests outside New Delhi, was also incensed by a new, pollution-focused government ordinance prescribing prison, a fine of up to 10 million rupees (about $135,000) or both for burning crop residue. So last month, when it came time to clear his field for the winter wheat season, he burned the rice straw instead.

“Most of the farmers, we have tried not to burn, but we wanted to show our resentment,” said Mr. Singh, who works a 17-acre farm in the Firozpur district of Punjab. “If you impose on us, we will burn it.”

Their defiance may be worsening problems in New Delhi. Deaths from the coronavirus are rising as the Indian capital grapples with a third wave of infections, exacerbated by worsening air pollution. Some experts say fires from angry farmers are contributing to the pollution. The government disputes the theory.

The two sides are set to resume talks on Saturday. While officials have said they will not give in and repeal the laws, they could compromise on one of the farmers’ demands: enshrining minimum prices for some crops into law.

[photo removed]

Farmers protesting at the Delhi-Haryana border listened to a speaker on Tuesday.Credit...Altaf Qadri/Associated Press

In the meantime, the protests have spread beyond New Delhi. Farmers marched and waved banners in the southern states of Kerala and Karnataka and in the northeastern state of Assam. Sugar cane farmers in Uttar Pradesh, who would be less affected by the farm overhaul, set up a protest camp in solidarity, clogging a central artery on the state’s border with Delhi.

India’s foreign ministry summoned Canadian diplomats on Friday after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau [voiced concern](https://thewire.in/world/canada-expresses-concern-over-indias-handling-farmers-protests-india-hits-back) for the farmers during a Facebook Live session. The ministry said the comments constituted “unacceptable interference” and risked damaging ties between the two nations.

Mr. Modi’s government faced similarly [widespread protests](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/22/world/asia/modi-india-citizenship-law.html) late last year after it enacted an anti-Muslim naturalization law. But these demonstrations present a trickier challenge.

Farmers represent a powerful political constituency for Mr. Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party. Farmers could also be important for bringing India out of [its debilitating, coronavirus-driven recession](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/31/world/asia/india-economy-gdp.html). Agriculture has been [a rare bright spot](https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1657224), with farmers continuing to purchase consumer goods and offering income for people who lost their jobs after Mr. Modi locked down the country to stop the pandemic earlier this year.

Outside New Delhi, protesters were settling in for a long wait.

At the village of Singhu, on the border between the territory of Delhi and the state of Haryana, protesters blocked several miles of highway. On a recent visit, they were cooking and serving food on long mats, spread on the ground in the style of Sikh temple kitchens, and sleeping on hay in tractor-trailers covered with canvas tarps. An armed barricade blocked the road to New Delhi.

Harjinder Singh, a wheat and cotton farmer in Gujarat, Mr. Modi’s home state, traveled more than 600 miles to join the protest. He said that farming had become untenable in Gujarat because farmers had no access to a state-run market that subsidizes their crops.

“I’ve got 100 acres there,” he said, “and now I’ve turned it into barren land because of the government’s rude policies.”

Angry farmers could make their worries felt beyond the protests.

[photo removed]

At a police barricade Thursday in Singhu, a village on the Delhi-Haryana border.Credit...Danish Siddiqui/Reuters

After enjoying some of its cleanest air in memory during the lockdown, New Delhi has recorded day after day of catastrophically bad air. Pollution in the capital surges near the end of every year, as cold winds sweep down from the Himalayas and people try to keep warm, but the elevated levels amid the outbreak have prompted questions.

Farmers traditionally play a role in the annual pollution. Many set fire to large swaths of land to clear fields ahead of the winter wheat sowing season, a practice known as stubble burning. Farm fires have been estimated to contribute between 2 and 40 percent of Delhi’s air pollution during the period.

Experts say this year’s pollution levels could be blamed in part on displaced laborers returning to farms, resulting in more cultivating. Satellite data has registered the worst farm fires in four years. “Farm production is at a record level,” said Panwar Sudhir, a life sciences professor of zoology at the University of Lucknow who follows farming issues.

But Mr. Sudhir [and other experts](https://scroll.in/latest/978619/punjab-records-73883-incidents-of-stubble-burning-highest-in-4-years-amid-farm-laws-protests) said farmers may be ignoring official threats and inducements to curb stubble burning as a way to protest. State authorities have long worked to discourage the practice, including offering the use of stubble-clearing tractors and paying farmers not to burn.

“What farmers were saying was if we are protesting, and you don’t listen to us, then we will burn the stubble,” said Ramandeep Singh Mann, an engineer turned farmers’ activist in Punjab.

Government officials dispute the idea of a direct connection.

“The farming laws have nothing to do with this pollution impact,” said Prakash Javadekar, India’s minister for the environment, adding that farmers will stop burning when they have a less costly alternative — a goal that the government wants to help them find.

“There will be more solutions in the offing,” he said.

Whatever the cause, the rise in pollution has been deadly as the coronavirus has made its way through New Delhi. Delhi has witnessed [record daily infection numbers](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/world/asia/india-coronavirus-cases.html) and its highest death toll since the pandemic began, registering 2,612 deaths in November.

[photo removed]

Burning stubble in the state of Punjab in October.Credit...Archana Thiyagarajan/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

“Pollution and cold waves worked like splashing petrol on the burning building,” said Dr. Nikhil Modi, a pulmonologist at Apollo hospital in New Delhi.

The pollution makes it harder for coronavirus victims, like Ritesh Agrawal’s diabetic mother, to breathe. Last month, after she said she was struggling to breathe, Mr. Agrawal immediately took her to be tested for Covid-19.

She tested positive, and doctors advised home isolation. But within hours of returning home, her oxygen levels plummeted.

Mr. Agrawal, a 41-year-old businessman in Delhi, said his mother died after being turned away from one hospital after another.

“I have money and connections,” Mr. Agrawal said. “But even that did not help.”

The Indian government has made fixing New Delhi’s pollution a priority. Mr. Javadekar said that the government has purchased a fleet of electric buses, expanded metro rail service and imposed steeper emission standards on personal cars. It has also pushed sooty refinery work outside the city limits. It monitors pollution levels from more than 3,000 industrial plants and notifies plant managers by text message when emissions exceed federal limits.

At the camp in Singhu, many of the farmers said they had no choice but to burn their waste. Many of the farmers from Punjab are Sikhs. For hundreds of years, males in that community have used the surname Singh to show their common bond.

That community is under threat, said Navdeep Singh, 30, a seventh-generation farmer from Amritsar in Punjab. Times are hard, he said, and government efforts like making tractors available are ultimately still too expensive.

“We are forced to burn,” Mr. Singh said, as he shelled peas for one of the demonstration camp’s free kitchens. “The government hasn’t really helped us with any other way to dispose of it.”

#### Previous attempts to de-regulate agriculture only increased agrarian distress. In 2005, prices crashed.

By Ravinder Kaur | 2021-02-19 | How a farmers’ protest in India evolved into a mass movement that refuses to fade | New Statesman | https://www.newstatesman.com/ideas/2021/02/how-farmers-protest-india-evolved-mass-movement-refuses-fade

The Indian stock markets [“sky-rocketed”](https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/markets/stock-markets/market-updates-sensex-nifty-open-in-green-ahead-of-budget-2021/article33713775.ece) in early February. The surge was a [“standing ovation”](https://www.financialexpress.com/market/will-sensex-nifty-continue-their-standing-ovation-for-budget-or-was-it-just-a-one-day-show/2185458/), according to media reports, to the market-friendly budget the government had tabled in parliament on 1 February. The “[deep reform](https://www.livemint.com/budget/news/the-30-years-that-changed-the-country-11611274312908.html)” proposals that investors were cheering included [the proposed sale of](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/budget-key-announcements-on-psu-divestment-lic-ipo/articleshow/80626302.cms?from=mdr) key public-sector enterprises, raising limits on foreign capital investments, and spending big on infrastructure.

Delivered during [India’s worst recession in decades](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/27/business/economy/india-economy-covid-19.html), the budget was proof that Narendra Modi’s government had not wasted the opportunity the pandemic had provided to accelerate its deregulation of the economy. Framed by the government as [“One Nation, One Market”](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7VWk95GemLg&feature=youtu.be), the budget sought to position India – a federal system of states – as a single economic unit governed by a strong centralised government, ready to dislodge China from its position as the world’s factory.

The official optimism and elated stock markets came amid a sharp escalation of what has been described as [“India’s largest farmers’ protest”](https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-asia-india-55584924), the months-long struggle that has brought tens of thousands of farmers to the borders of Delhi. The contrast between the euphoria of the financial markets and the anxieties of the striking farmers was as jarring as it was revealing of the battle lines fast reshaping Indian politics. Just as the government was proposing more market liberalisation to boost the neoliberal reforms introduced in the 1990s, it was also erecting a [border fence](https://twitter.com/rkadelhi/status/1355627450747772931) to cordon off protest sites – barriers made of concertina wires and heavy concrete blocks, with thick nails in the ground – designed to halt the protesters’ progress into the city.

The state was not just impeding the protesters’ physical movement but also disrupting digital connectivity. There have been regular [Internet shutdowns](https://edition.cnn.com/2021/02/01/asia/india-internet-cut-farmers-intl-hnk/index.html) in the protest sites and demands that social media platforms [suspend social media](https://edition.cnn.com/2021/02/09/tech/twitter-india-government-farmer-protests/index.html) accounts that are critical of the government. In some camps, water and electricity were [cut off](https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/farmers-protests-ghaziabad-administration-asks-farmers-to-vacate-up-gate/article33686350.ece) and basic amenities removed to force the protesters to leave. The [heavy presence](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-55899754) of armed [police](https://twitter.com/rkadelhi/status/1356280240939663360) in riot gear at this internal border reinforced the menacing atmosphere. A strange scenario was unfolding: the state was gearing up to battle its own citizens to enforce the rule of the market.

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The [protests began](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-55630394) last summer in the northern state of Punjab, in response to the [rushing through](https://thewire.in/politics/farm-bills-rajya-sabha-legislative-scrutiny) of three [new farm laws](https://www.business-standard.com/about/what-is-farm-bills#collapse) to open India’s agricultural sector to the market. Subsidised and once partly shielded by the state, the sector, according to the World Bank, employs more than 40 per cent of India’s workforce. The protests only became visible in national media in late November – international coverage of the mobilisation, still remarkably thin, has been even more belated – when the farmers’ unions gave the call to march to the national capital: [“Chalo Delhi”](https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/dilli-chalo-why-angry-farmers-want-to-storm-new-delhi/story-jXPjzqOmTgxralskj1e7HI.html) (“let’s go to Delhi”).

What made the images of seemingly endless caravans of people travelling to Delhi in tractors, trolleys, cars or sometimes on foot so spectacular was not just the march itself but the government’s attempt to stop it from reaching the city. Tens of thousands of protesters faced barricades, water cannon and even tear gas shells. Soon, tent cities began appearing along Delhi’s outer perimeter as the government refused to allow the farmers entry. The tent cities of Singhu, Tikri, Shahjahanpur Kheda, Ghazipur – once just the names of villages at the doorstep of the capital, have become part of a popular vocabulary of democratic dissent and solidarity.

The [three laws](http://egazette.nic.in/WriteReadData/2020/222040.pdf) at the heart of this dispute – on pricing, sale of produce and storage – remove safeguards that had partly insulated farming from the vagaries of [the market](https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/opinion-farm-bills-a-false-experiment-in-the-name-of-agricultural-freedom/362281). While the government claims deregulating agriculture will [double](https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1657657) farmers’ incomes and improve productivity, the small and marginal farmers who make up [85 per cent of the sector](http://farmer.gov.in/imagedefault/DFI/DFI%20Volume%201.pdf) fear they will [lose](https://www.indiaspend.com/fear-distrust-behind-punjab-farmers-protests/) out to private investors. The new laws strip away the protective cover of a [minimum price guarantee](https://farmer.gov.in/mspstatements.aspx) and the [mandi system](https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/economy/why-punjab-stands-to-lose-from-farmers-produce-trade-and-commerce-ordinance-72040) (regulated wholesale markets), leaving farmers exposed to a [barrier-free](https://www.indiaspend.com/why-farmers-are-worried-about-new-laws-its-the-history/) market in which they have little bargaining power against the major corporate players.

The farmers’ anxiety also stems from previous measures to deregulate agriculture, which increased agrarian distress. The often-cited cautionary tale is of Bihar state, in eastern India, where the liberalising reforms of the farm sector in 2005 eventually crashed prices, forcing small-scale farmers to sell their produce for paltry sums. Faced with debt and dispossession, many farmers became farm labourers in other states where regulated agricultural markets were still intact. Fear of dispossession is fuelling the protests, though their expansion to other sections of society, including journalists, activists and other workers, reflects a wider, growing disenchantment with Modi’s “New India”: an illiberal state locked in an embrace with “liberal”, free-market capitalism.

**Indian economic strength deters China along the India-China border---military buildup and signal of resolve diffuses conflict.**

Husain **Haqqani** **and** Aparna **Pande** **7-10**-21. Haqqani is the director for South and Central Asia at the Hudson Institute in Washington D.C. and was Pakistan’s ambassador to the United States. Pande (Ph.D) is director of the Initiative on the Future of India and South Asia at the Hudson Institute. "India has a long way to go in confronting China". The Hill. https://thehill.com/opinion/international/562397-india-has-a-long-way-to-go-in-confronting-china

India’s decision to move [50,000](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-06-27/india-shifts-50-000-troops-to-china-border-in-historic-defense-shift) additional troops to its border with China bolsters its ability to protect itself against Chinese aggression. It is a belated response to China’s actions [last year](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-57234024), when the Chinese army [surprised](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-china-military-families-insight-idUSKBN2460YB) ill-prepared Indian soldiers and occupied several square miles of Indian territory in the Ladakh region to build roads and fortify military encampments. The hope of some Indian policymakers to resolve the matter diplomatically has not so far been fulfilled. Several rounds of military and diplomatic negotiations since April 2020, when the Chinese incursions started, have yielded little result. Any willingness on India’s part to deal forcefully with China would be welcomed in the U.S., where successive administrations have sought to integrate India into America’s Indo-Pacific strategy. Several years of an India-U.S. entente cordiale has been premised on India standing up to China. After all, with a population of more than one billion, India is the only country with enough manpower to match that of China. China sees India as a potential rival and covets parts of Indian territory. China [occupied](https://www.reuters.com/article/idINIndia-43780820091108) 15,000 miles of Indian territory in the Aksai Chin section of Ladakh after war in 1962. China’s desire for influence in South Asia and the Indian Ocean Region challenges India in its backyard, setting off [competition](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09700160801886314) for the same sphere of influence. But China’s phenomenal economic growth, coupled with India’s inability to keep pace, has hampered India’s ability to respond to China strategically. Even now the moving of troops to Ladakh is a tactical maneuver not backed by a clear strategic plan. On [four](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/why-chinese-and-indian-troops-are-clashing-again/2020/09/11/c5939466-f402-11ea-8025-5d3489768ac8_story.html) occasions since 2012, China has indulged in salami-slicing along the largely un-demarcated India-China border. India’s response each time has been limited to diplomatic negotiations with limited military pushback. There is a co-relation between relative economic strength and China’s willingness to flex its muscle. Between 1988, when India and China signed a series of agreements to restore relations, and 2012, the border between India and China remained by and large quiet. During that period, the size of the two countries’ economies was not huge. In 1990, India’s GDP stood at $320 billion and China’s GDP at $413 billion. By 2012, China’s GDP had grown to $8.5 trillion, seven times larger than India’s $1.2 trillion economy. The [change](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/sunday-times/all-that-matters/chinas-rising-support-for-pakistan-and-their-collusion-may-affect-our-interests-says-former-nsa-shiv-shankar-menon/articleshow/82234601.cms) in China’s policy after 2012, encouraging its troops to use force against India along the border, coincided with the rise in China’s military and economic power and its impact on the relative balance of power with India. Like many in the West, India during the 1990s had bought into the view that deeper economic and diplomatic engagement with communist China would help maintain peace between the two Asian giants. But the India-China border dispute could not remain on the back burner as China became more aggressive in the wake of growing economic and military power. India can no longer rely solely on diplomacy to deal with China. It will soon have to build and deploy hard power to deter the Chinese. The recent deployment along the Ladakh border could mark the beginning of that process. With the latest addition, 200,000 of India’s more than a million strong army now face China along the 2,167-mile border. By way of comparison, 600,000 Indian troops are positioned along the 2,065-mile, fully fenced and fully demarcated border with Pakistan. It is inconceivable that any attempt by Pakistan to take territory would go unretaliated by India. While India’s attempts over the last year have been to convince China, primarily through diplomatic engagements, to return the border to status quo ante, most [military](https://www.orfonline.org/research/eastern-ladakh-the-longer-perspective/) and [strategic](https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/crisis-after-crisis-how-ladakh-will-shape-india-s-competition-china) experts argue that China has no interest in resolving the border dispute with India. India has for far too long acquiesced to Chinese aggression without sufficient retaliatory military action. India may not seek to provoke China into an all-out war, but it needs to find a sweet spot between ignoring and provoking. The United States and its allies, too, would like India to act like a major power in not taking Chinese provocations lightly. Western democracies and Japan have viewed India as an ideal partner and future ally in Asia and the Indo-Pacific. India has consistently been a democracy, shares pluralist values with the United States, and its embrace of free market reforms since 1992 have created an opening for expanded economic ties. India also shares America’s concerns about China’s rising power. In developing a pivot to Asia or an Indo-Pacific policy, successive U.S. administrations have assumed that a shared concern about China makes India a natural American ally. India-U.S. relations were referred to as the “[defining](https://www.google.com/search?q=obama+india+defining+partnership+of+21st+century&rlz=1C1GGRV_enUS751US751&oq=obama+india+defining+partnership+of+21st+century&aqs=chrome..69i57j33i160j33i299.7702j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8) partnership of the 21st century” under President Obama. The Trump administration’s [2017](https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf) National Security Strategy spoke of India as a “leading global power” and a strong “strategic and defense partner.” The Biden administration’s [March](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/03/interim-national-security-strategic-guidance/) 2021 “Interim National Security guidance” has described the “deepening partnership” with India as being critical to America’s “vital national interests.” But the Indo-Pacific policies of both the Trump and Biden administrations have focused on maritime security, ignoring India’s challenge from China on the continental landmass. China views India as an inward-looking democracy that has yet to focus on economic growth or military prowess. Only an expansion in India’s economy and military capability would convince China’s leaders to view it differently. Moreover, the two decades of celebrating convergence of democratic values and voicing of strategic concerns by Washington and Delhi now needs to be followed up with specific steps to counter Chinese hard power with Indian muscle.

**That escalates.**

Jeffrey **Gettleman et al 20**. Jeffrey Gettleman is The Times’s South Asia bureau chief. Hari Kumar is a reporter in the New Delhi bureau of The New York Times. Sameer Yasir is a reporter for The New York Times. “Worst Clash in Decades on Disputed India-China Border Kills 20 Indian Troops”. The New York Times. 6-16-20. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/16/world/asia/indian-china-border-clash.html

NEW DELHI — The worst [border clash between India and China](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/17/world/asia/india-china-border-clashes.html) in more than 40 years left 20 Indian soldiers dead and dozens believed captured, Indian officials said on Tuesday, raising tensions between nuclear-armed rivals who have increasingly been flexing their diplomatic and military muscle. For the past several weeks, after [a series of brawls](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/30/world/asia/india-china-border.html) along their disputed border, China and India have been building up their forces in the remote Galwan Valley, high up in the Himalayas. As they dug into opposing positions, adding tinder to a long-smoldering conflict, China took an especially muscular posture, sending in artillery, armored personnel carriers, dump trucks and excavators. On Monday night, a huge fight broke out between Chinese and Indian troops in roughly the same barren area where these two nations, the world’s most populous, had fought a war in 1962. Military and political analysts say the two countries do not want a further escalation — particularly India, where military forces are nowhere near as powerful as China’s — but they may struggle to find a way out of the conflict that does not hint at backing down. Both countries and their nationalist leaders, President Xi Jinping of China and Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/17/world/asia/india-china-border-clashes.html) of India, have taken increasingly assertive postures that pose real risks of the conflict spinning out of control. “Neither PM Modi or President Xi want a war, but neither can relinquish their land rights either,” said [Ashley J. Tellis,](https://carnegieendowment.org/experts/198) a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington. What’s happening along the Himalayan border is an unusual kind of warfare. As in the brawls last month, Chinese and Indian soldiers fought fiercely without firing a shot — at least that’s what officials on both sides contend. They say the soldiers followed their de facto border code not to use firearms and went at each other with fists, rocks and wooden clubs, some possibly studded with nails or wrapped in barbed wire. At first, India’s military said only three Indian troops had been killed in the clash, where the Ladakh region of India abuts Aksai Chin, an area controlled by China but claimed by both countries. But late Tuesday night, a military spokesman said that 17 other Indian soldiers had succumbed to injuries sustained in the clash, bringing the total dead to 20. An Indian commander said dozens of soldiers were missing, apparently captured by the Chinese. Indian television channels reported that several Chinese soldiers had been killed, as well, citing high-level Indian government sources. Chinese officials did not comment on that. It’s not clear what India can do now. Mr. Modi and his Hindu nationalist party have pursued a forceful foreign policy that emphasizes India’s growing role in the world and last year, after a devastating suicide attack that India blamed on a Pakistani terror group, Mr. Modi ordered airstrikes on [Pakistan](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/29/world/asia/pakistan-stock-exchange-shooting.html), bringing the two countries to the brink of war. But India is in no shape to risk a war against China — especially now, as it slips deeper into the economic and health crisis caused by the coronavirus, which has cost the country more than 100 million jobs. “Whatever India might want to do it’s not in a position to do,” said Bharat Karnad, a professor of security studies at the Center for Policy Research at New Delhi. “The Modi government is in a difficult position,” he said. “This is bound to escalate.” And, he added, “we are not prepared for this kind of escalation.” Mr. Xi has been doubling [down on China’s territorial claims across Asia](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/24/world/asia/china-hong-kong-taiwan.html), backing up arguments with the threat of force or sometimes even the use of force. In recent weeks, the Chinese have tightened their grip on the semiautonomous region of Hong Kong; menaced Taiwan; and sunk a Vietnamese fishing boat in the South China Sea.

## Adv 2

#### India is in a democracy crisis now – caused the second wave.

Singh 7/5 [Prerna Singh, July 5, 2021 at 5:00 a.m., “India has become an ‘electoral autocracy.’ Its covid-19 catastrophe is no surprise”, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/07/05/india-has-become-an-electoral-autocracy-its-covid-19-catastrophe-is-no-surprise //](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/07/05/india-has-become-an-electoral-autocracy-its-covid-19-catastrophe-is-no-surprise%20//)

On Thursday, the White House announced that it is deploying [response teams](https://www.cnbc.com/2021/07/01/delta-white-house-to-deploy-response-teams-across-us-to-combat-covid-variant.html), composed of officials from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other federal agencies, to combat the “hypertransmissible” delta variant of the [coronavirus](https://www.washingtonpost.com/coronavirus/?itid=lk_inline_manual_2) spreading across the United States and the world. This variant first emerged in India, where a devastating second wave of virus infections have been accompanied by a parallel epidemic of [mucormycosis, or “black fungus,”](https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/why-deadly-black-fungus-is-ravaging-covid-patients-in-india/) that is maiming and killing patients. **India’s humanitarian tragedy is linked to** a **deeper political crisis** — that of **democratic erosion**. At independence from colonial rule, **India** had relatively **low** economic **development and industrialization**, widespread poverty and illiteracy, and immense ethnic diversity across linguistic, religious and caste lines. [Leading political science theories](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1951731) argued these conditions made India [infertile terrain](https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Success_of_India_s_Democracy/Io0NsnlRT6sC?hl=en) for democracy. Yet in 1947, India instituted a democratic government and, with the exception of [a short time from 1975-77](https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691186726/emergency-chronicles), has remained one. Up until a few weeks ago, that is. In its influential annual rankings of countries across the world, the U.S.-based democracy watchdog Freedom House downgraded **India from a free democracy to a “**[**partially free democracy**](https://freedomhouse.org/country/india/freedom-world/2021)**.”** Similarly, the **Swedish-based V-Dem Institute demoted** **the country to an “**[**electoral autocracy**](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-56393944)**.”** Both organizations cited the regime’s **crackdowns on freedom of speech** — and in particular, expressions of dissent — as a key factor driving India’s slide down these indexes. How are **India’s coronavirus crisis and democratic backsliding linked**? Here’s what you need to know. **The decline of free speech in the world’s largest democracy** Since assuming power in 2014, **the** ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (**BJP**) regime has **consistently and brutally undermined civil liberties**, especially freedom of speech. This crackdown has [affected](https://thewire.in/rights/india-modi-anti-national-protest-arrest-sedition-authoritarianism) journalists, editors, organizers, climate activists, Bollywood actors, cricketers, celebrities, and even ordinary citizens posting on social media. The BJP has forced editors of prominent newspapers to step down**. Police** have [**raided**](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/05/world/asia/india-ndtv-raids-narendra-modi-prannoy-roy.html)**or shut down the offices of media outlets** that featured articles **challenging the regime’s actions**. Physical attacks on journalists have become commonplace. Some have been gunned down in broad daylight outside their homes, earning India a [reputation](https://www.cjr.org/special_report/gauri-lankesh-killing.php) as what the Columbia Journalism Review called “one of the world’s most dangerous countries to be a reporter.” Meanwhile, reporters and media organizations sympathetic to the regime have been [protected](https://theprint.in/opinion/arnab-goswami-swift-bail-should-be-rule-for-undertrials-not-exception/545301/) and supported. [Thousands](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/5128-uapa-cases-229-sedition-cases-lodged-in-five-years-government/articleshow/81433613.cms) of individuals and organizations critical of the regime have had wide-ranging charges filed against them. Many awaiting trial still [languish](https://thewire.in/rights/jail-bail-hearings-court-delhi-riots-elgar-parishad) in jails across the country. **These attacks on freedom** of speech **harm democracies’ effective functioning. An uncensored public realm enables** the **open exchange of information**; an unencumbered press enables popular accountability. **That leaves governments** insulated from evidence and accountability, **making decisions in isolation**. [What's behind India's dramatic pandemic surge? Here's one factor: Too little competition in parliament.](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/06/02/whats-behind-indias-dramatic-pandemic-surge-heres-one-factor-too-little-competition-parliament/?itid=lk_interstitial_manual_16) Silencing critics can be lethal during natural disasters. In their influential 1991 book “[Hunger and Public Action](https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/0198283652.001.0001/acprof-9780198283652),” development economists Jean Drèze and Nobel laureate Amartya Sen explored why India had not endured famine since independence, despite chronic undernourishment and food production difficulties. Under colonial rule, devastating famines were numerous. Sen and Drèze concluded that the key difference since independence has been watchdog journalists whose reporting on early signs of a famine in an uncensored news media aroused public concern and pushed the government to act. But in March 2020, Prime Minister Narenda **Modi’s government**[**petitioned**](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/sc-asks-media-to-publish-official-version-of-corona-developments/articleshow/74919142.cms?from=mdr)**India’s top court** to **prevent journalists from reporting covid-19 information that the regime had not sanctioned**. The Supreme Court denied the petition — but nevertheless directed the media to broadcast “the official version” of covid-19 developments. Meanwhile, **the government** has [**filed charges**](https://rsf.org/en/news/surge-harassment-indian-reporters-over-coronavirus-coverage)**against** and arrested dozens of **journalists reporting** on the **government’s mismanagement of the coronavirus crisis, whether that was about** the urban [migrant crisis](https://thewire.in/media/himachal-pradesh-firs-journalists) caused by the regime’s abrupt lockdown at the start of the pandemic; dire conditions at quarantine centers; or the shortage of oxygen and other key medical supplies. Following Drèze and Sen’s logic about famines, this quashing of a free press has both prevented the government from accessing accurate information about how the pandemic was unfolding on the ground and reduced its sense of public accountability. [Millions of people in India's crowded slums can't keep each other at a distance during a pandemic lockdown](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/04/13/millions-people-indias-crowded-slums-cant-keep-each-other-distance-during-pandemic-lockdown/?itid=lk_interstitial_manual_23) The In February, the government announced controversial[new rules covering digital publishing](https://time.com/5946092/india-internet-rules-impact/) that give officials the power to block stories from being published or to shut down entire websites. In the past few weeks, the government has [pressured social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter to remove posts critical of the government](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/25/business/india-covid19-twitter-facebook.html). Many posts — including those with the trending hashtag #ResignModi — have disappeared and mysteriously reappeared. In India’s largest state, Uttar Pradesh, one man took to Twitter to locate oxygen for an ailing family member, who subsequently died. The [police charged him with circulating misinformation](https://scroll.in/latest/993484/up-fir-filed-against-man-who-sought-twitter-help-for-oxygen-for-grandfather) “with the intent to cause fear or alarm.” **These attacks** on free speech **are** all the **more dangerous because other key democratic watchdog institutions** — for example, an active [political opposition](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/06/02/whats-behind-indias-dramatic-pandemic-surge-heres-one-factor-too-little-competition-parliament/?itid=lk_inline_manual_29) — **are weak**. India has protected the freedom of speech, until now BJP government extended its power to censor The freedom of speech, including the right to critique, has been at the core of Indian nationalism, forged during resistance to British colonialism. The Modi regime’s [exclusionary Hindu nationalism](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/01/20/india-protesters-are-singing-national-anthem-waving-flag-heres-why-that-matters/?itid=lk_inline_manual_34) deviates from that history. Muzzling free speech has been [deadly](https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2021-05-08/india-covid-pandemic-deaths-narendra-modi) during the pandemic. Today **the scale of the covid-19 crisis** that **continues to burn across India remains unknown.** Experts [warn](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/05/25/world/asia/india-covid-death-estimates.html) that death tolls are likely many times the official reports. Scientists remain unclear about how well each of the vaccines work against the delta strain. In the United States, [concerns](https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-dangerous-is-the-delta-variant-and-will-it-cause-a-covid-surge-in-the-u-s/) about a new surge are growing. A free press could not have prevented the pandemic. But it could have both provided critical early information about the unfolding second wave of virus infections and put pressure on the government to take action. This would have likely reduced the public health tragedy.

#### The central government instructed the Supreme Court to intervene.

By Samanwaya Rautray | Last Updated: 10-05-2021, 08:21 AM IST | Farmers' protests must end: Centre in Supreme Court | The Economic Times | https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/farmers-protests-must-end-centre-in-supreme-court/articleshow/86771228.cms

The central government has told the Supreme Court on Monday that the farmers' protest must come to an end to ensure that no untoward incidents happen again like in Lakhimpur Kheri on Sunday, prompting the top court to wonder whether the farmers can still continue their protests while a challenge to the constitutionality of the farm laws was pending before the court.

The top court had, on January 2, 2021, stayed the three farm laws, but the protesting farmers had refused to accept anything short of a repeal of the laws and had continued to protest. The top court had, in its order, allowed them to protest if they so wanted and asked the executive authorities not to interfere with their protests.

The protests have been continuing since then. But after Sunday's incident in which a Union Minister's son allegedly ran over the farmers killing two of them, the Union government, through AG KK Venugopal, said in court that the protests cannot continue. "The protests must end," AG said, dubbing the incident as "unfortunate".

"Such unfortunate incidents should not happen. The protests must stop," the AG said.

In this context, a bench, led by Justice AM Khanwilkar, made several adverse comments on the protests. "Nobody takes responsibility when such events happen," Justice Khanwailkar observed. He also demanded to know why the farmers were protesting. "There is nothing to be implemented. What are the farmers protesting about? No one other than the court can decide the validity of the farm laws. When farmers are in court challenging the law, why protest on the streets? How can the executive allow these protests? What is the validity of the protests?"

#### Remediation talks have failed which means continued strikes are the only chance to repeal the farm laws.

The Associated Press | 09-27 September 27, 20215:36 AM ET | India's Farmers Renew Protests, Challenging Modi Government | https://www.npr.org/2021/09/27/1040834711/indias-farmers-renew-protests-challenging-modi-government

NEW DELHI — Thousands of Indian farmers blocked traffic on major roads and railway tracks outside of the nation's capital on Monday, marking one year of demonstrations against government-backed laws that they say will shatter their livelihoods.

The farmers have renewed their protests with calls for a nationwide strike on the anniversary of the legislation's passage. The drawn-out demonstrations have posed one of the biggest political challenges to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who swept the polls for the second time in 2019.

Waving colorful flags and distributing free food, hundreds of farmers gathered Monday at one of the protest sites on the edges of the capital, New Delhi.

"The enthusiasm we had on the first day, it is much stronger and bigger now," said Manjit Singh, a 45-year-old farmer and protester.

Mohini Kaur, a 61-year-old New Delhi resident traveled to the protest site to show her support for the farmers.

"These lion-hearted farmers are here today under the hot sun. They have been exposed to rain, heat and the cold," she said.

Protesters expressed their determination to keep the movement going — some even brought mattresses with them, camping out as the day went on.

Along New Delhi's southwest and eastern fringes, protesting farmers crowded highways, choking traffic and cutting off access from the capital to neighboring states. Police were deployed to three main protest sites on the outskirts of the city to maintain law and order.

A coalition of farmers' unions — known as the Samyukta Kisan Morcha, or United Farmers' Front — has called on shops, offices, factories and other institutions to shut their doors in solidarity for the 10-hour strike. The calls for a strike, however, seemed to go largely unanswered, with most businesses continuing work as usual across the capital.

The government has defended the legislation, saying it is necessary to modernize agriculture and that the laws will boost production through private investment. But the farmers say the new legislation will devastate their earnings by ending guaranteed pricing and force them to sell their crops to corporations at cheaper prices.

In neighboring Punjab and Haryana states — which are the country's the two biggest agricultural producers — thousands of demonstrators also blocked highways, bringing traffic to a halt in some areas.

In the eastern state of Bihar, trains were halted as farmers squatted on railway tracks. Protesters also took to the streets, raising slogans against the Modi government, burning tires and blocking roads across the region. Police said some 500 protesters had been taken into custody, but added that the shutdown remained peaceful.

In the southern city of Bengaluru on Monday, hundreds of people marched in support of the protest against the government. In the southern state of Kerala, the ruling Left Democratic Front called for a total shutdown, reported local media.

Opposition parties in India, including the Congress Party, have supported the farmers. Senior leader Rahul Gandhi called the government "exploitative" and said he stood with farmers on Monday.

A number of talks between the government and farmers have failed to resolve the issue.

In November, the farmers escalated their movement by hunkering down on the outskirts of New Delhi, where they have camped out for nearly a year, pushing through a harsh winter as well as a coronavirus surge that devastated India earlier this year.

While the farmers' protest movement has been largely peaceful, demonstrators in January broke through police barricades to storm the historic Red Fort in the capital's center. Clashes with police left one protester dead and hundreds injured.

#### The passing of the farm bills were horribly undemocratic. Reversing course is key to preserving democracy

IU [Industrial Union] | 9-23 September, 2020 | Modi government’s anti-worker laws met with union protests | Industriall Union | https://www.industriall-union.org/modi-governments-anti-worker-laws-met-with-union-protests

23 September, 2020Central trade unions in India came together in nationwide protests on 23 September to protest against a series of anti-workers policies passed by the Modi government.

As workers torn up copies of the draconian labour legislation in the streets, the Modi government passed three key labour laws in an undemocratic way, fundamentally rewriting Indian labour laws. The laws include the Code on Industrial Relations, the Code on Social Security and the Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions.

The legislation was passed in Parliament without debate, as opposition parties were boycotting the house over legislation affecting agriculture workers and farmers. The labour laws ignore the government’s own pre-legislative consultative guidelines, as there has not been adequate consultation with unions and workers in the informal sector, who are primarily affected by the changes.

The changes increase workers’ vulnerability and facilitate corporate-friendly hire and fire policies without adequately protecting workers’ rights, promoting fixed-term and contract work without adequate social protection. Exercising the right to strike legally is virtually impossible. The new laws on social security is in many ways discriminatory, as it has removed welfare provisions for many informal sector workers.

Dr G Sanjeeva Reddy, INTUC president and IndustriALL affiliate, says:

“We strongly condemn the undemocratic way the anti-workers labour laws have been passed. With the steep fall in economic growth and increasing unemployment, workers across the country are facing a dire situation. The Indian central trade unions, moving beyond political affiliations, have formed a joint platform to defend workers’ interests. Indian unions also extended solidarity to agricultural workers and farmers’ organizations and their protests against anti-farmer policies on 25 September. We are working together to save the people from Modi’s dictatorial government.”

Union demands include:

The withdrawal of labour codes and anti-farmer laws

An end to the privatization of public sector undertakings

Social protection to all informal worker

No job cuts and full wages during the Covid-19 lockdown

Social security coverage for all workers

Universal access to public distribution system to ensure food security for everyone

Kemal Özkan, IndustriALL assistant general secretary, says:

“We are dismayed over the lack of respect for the democratic process. India’s government need to engage in genuine dialogue with union representatives and ensure that labour laws incorporate internationally recognised human rights and fundamental principles, and rights at work. IndustriALL and the global union federations are looking to intensify global solidarity actions to support the Indian union movement in its struggle to save democracy and defend their members’ rights.”

The central trade unions INTUC, AITUC, HMS, CITU, AIUTUC, TUCC, SEWA, AICCTU, LPF, UTUC and several independent federations participated in the protest.

#### Internet lockdowns erode democratic principles. The Supreme Court has been wary of checking executive overreach. That has global repercussions.

Jonah Blank | 6-9 June 9, 2021 | India’s Democracy Is the World’s Problem | Jonah Blank is the author of [Arrow of the Blue-Skinned God](http://www.amazon.com/Arrow-Blue-Skinned-God-Retracing-Ramayana/dp/0802137334) and [Mullahs on the Mainframe.](http://www.amazon.com/Mullahs-Mainframe-Islam-Modernity-Bohras/dp/0226056775) | https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2021/06/g7-india-narendra-modi-democracy/619144/

When the G7 group of rich democracies assembles this weekend in southwest England, it will discuss issues including COVID-19, taxes, and climate change. One item overhanging the formal agenda, however, will be the global deterioration of democracy itself, and the nation on which this question may hinge won’t be any of the hosts, but a guest invited to this year’s confab: India. Democracy’s fate there may determine its fate throughout the world. At the moment, the signs aren’t looking good—and that should be a flashing-red warning beacon for the rest of us.

Why is India the hinge point? The most obvious answer is the optics: When propagandists in Beijing [describe democracy as a Western ideal](https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202104/1221285.shtml) unsuited to non-Western peoples, having a standard-bearer from the formerly colonized rather than the former colonizers is vital. But India’s importance goes far beyond narrative.

The world’s most successful democracies are mostly small, wealthy, and homogenous. Any list you might consult will highlight nations such as Denmark, the Netherlands, and Norway. The Economist Intelligence Unit gives [all of the top 10 spots](https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2020/) in its annual Democracy Index to rich Western nations—most of which have populations smaller than that of Maryland. But these nations look nothing like the places where the mass of humanity lives.

Of the world’s 10 most populous nations, only the United States and India are long-established democracies. Two (China and Russia) are undisguised autocracies, and the other six can be charitably described as “democracies in progress.” That a political system works for Iceland—which has 341,000 residents, almost all of them [practically relatives](https://www.bbc.com/news/av/technology-24304415)—means little to Brazil, Indonesia, or Nigeria. A real proof of concept can be found only in a nation that is big, low-income, and abundantly diverse—in ethnicity, language, religion, and every other way a society can be divided.

That’s India. If democracy can make it there, it can make it anywhere.

[Read: India just put democracy at risk across South Asia](https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2019/08/indias-kashmir-democracy/595711/)

Until recently, democracy clearly could make it there. Upon gaining independence in 1947, India established a parliamentary system and enacted [a liberal, far-reaching constitution](https://journalofdemocracy.org/articles/indias-democracy-at-70-the-impact-of-instant-universal-suffrage/). Its sole deviation from the democratic path was a period of [“Emergency”](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-33269607) (1975 to 1977), which stemmed more from then–Prime Minister Indira Gandhi’s paranoia than any challenge to her party’s rule. With this and several other notable exceptions (periods of insurgency in Kashmir and Punjab, too-frequent local injustices against marginalized communities), rule of law has done better in India than in most other nations.

But India’s democracy has seen worrisome erosion. On [The Economist’s list](https://www.economist.com/media/pdf/DEMOCRACY_TABLE_2007_v3.pdf), the country has slid from No. 35 in 2006 to No. 53 today. And the ways in which democracy is being undermined there provide a wake-up call to those watching from afar—including in the United States.

At the root of the backsliding, in India as elsewhere, is a rejection of the core democratic principle that all citizens are equal. India’s governing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) champions Hindutva, an ideology that privileges the Hindu majority over religious minorities. First articulated [a century ago](https://aeon.co/ideas/how-hindutva-recast-multi-faith-india-as-the-hindu-homeland), Hindutva has grown from a fringe movement into the focus of national politics. Its immediate target has been the country’s Muslims, who represent [14 percent](https://www.census2011.co.in/religion.php) of the population. If India transforms itself from a secular democracy (as is mandated by its constitution) into an avowedly Hindu nation, 276 million non-Hindus will become second-class citizens.

Sectarian tensions flared throughout the BJP’s rise to power, and the flames were often fanned by the party itself. In 2014, Narendra Modi supplanted a generation of soft-edged figures and led the party to electoral victory. Although the only previous BJP prime minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, had downplayed Hindutva in favor of less divisive center-right policies, Modi has made it the centerpiece of his governing strategy.

The first illiberal thrust was launched not against the hardware of democracy (the electoral system) but the software that enables it to operate—that is, an apolitical judiciary, a free press, and other elements of civil society.

India’s judicial system has bent to the wishes of politicians since 2014. In the early years of Modi’s premiership, Uttar Pradesh, India’s biggest state, whose population is larger than all but four of the world’s nations, saw [dozens of murderous attacks](https://www.hrw.org/report/2019/02/18/violent-cow-protection-india/vigilante-groups-attack-minorities) on Muslims by Hindu mobs, who accused their victims (in almost all cases falsely) of cow slaughter. The BJP sided with the killers: When the party won state elections in 2017, it appointed as chief minister a firebrand Hindu cleric who had [promoted](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/yogi-adityanath-orders-closure-of-slaughter-houses-bans-cow-smuggling-in-up/articleshow/57769113.cms) this vigilante action. Since then, the state’s judicial system has declined to punish most of the offenders—and the nation’s Supreme Court has [contented itself with issuing only tsk-tsks](https://indianexpress.com/article/india/lynchings-by-cow-vigilantes-supreme-court-states-5243938/).

Likewise, attacks on India’s press have grown brazen. Of the past decade’s 405 cases filed against journalists under a colonial-era sedition law, [all but a few have been registered since Modi took office](https://www.newindianexpress.com/opinions/2021/feb/26/indiscriminateapplication-ofsedition-law-2269140.html). The Caravan, an outlet known for its dogged investigation of the BJP, has been [singled out for special harassment](https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2021/02/narendra-modi-assault-indian-idea/617904/). Less than a month ago, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram acceded to [government demands](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/25/business/india-covid19-twitter-facebook.html) to block some journalists’ posts. The bans are under review by the platforms, but they have achieved their purpose. Many feisty Indian journalists now choose their words carefully.

[Read: How Hinduism became a political weapon in India](https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2019/05/hindu-nationalism-narendra-modi-india-election/590053/)

Weakening these civil-society foundations enabled the next stage of Modi’s program: the use of democracy’s mechanisms to undermine democracy’s core.

In 2019, Modi returned to office with an absolute parliamentary [majority](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-48347081). Shortly after, he abrogated the [special status](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/05/world/asia/india-pakistan-kashmir-jammu.html) written into the constitution for Jammu and Kashmir (India’s sole Muslim-majority state). Protests in Kashmir were met with a months-long clampdown. Modi followed up with actions that [officially](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-50670393) and [unofficially](https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-citizenship-amendment-act-nrc-caa-means-6180033/) advantaged Hindus over Muslims nationwide. Demonstrations against these moves peaked in December 2019, and were extinguished only by a COVID-19 lockdown three months later.

All of these moves would have been anathema to the drafters of India’s constitution. Yet all were within the technical limits of the law, and none has been seriously challenged in the nation’s now-quiescent courts. The fecklessness of opposition parties made the BJP’s task easier, but the tools were provided by the governing system itself: The BJP has never earned anything close to a majority of the popular vote, but because of India’s first-past-the-post electoral system, its lock on power is firm. In [2019](https://www.thehindu.com/elections/lok-sabha-2019/analysis-highest-ever-national-vote-share-for-the-bjp/article27218550.ece), 37.4 percent of the vote (the BJP’s highest total ever) translated into 55.8 percent of the seats in Parliament.

Gyan Prakash, a scholar of the Emergency, sees the greatest threat to democracy in this “shadow legality”: the use of lawfare to subvert the foundation of constitutional government. And he sees India’s example as having global implications. “Modi is part of a much larger phenomenon,” he told me. “This is a project to mobilize all state institutions, and change India’s democratic and plural politics and culture.”

Do constitutional questions matter to a farmer scraping by on [$4 a day](https://m.rbi.org.in/Scripts/PublicationsView.aspx?id=20083) (the national average)? They should. As the Nobel laureate Amartya Sen once noted, “[No famine has ever taken place in the history of the world in a functioning democracy](https://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/01/arts/does-democracy-avert-famine.html).” India is now facing its most serious natural disaster since independence, in the coronavirus pandemic. Even by [official figures](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/world/india-covid-cases.html) (which significantly undercount the victims), India is the world’s coronavirus epicenter: 29 million sickened, more than 350,000 dead, and no end in sight. A great many of these cases were preventable. Modi’s response to the pandemic has swung from [oppressive lockdown](https://www.isas.nus.edu.sg/papers/covid-19-lockdown-in-india-impact-on-the-poor-and-the-governments-response/) to [maskless political rallies](https://www.reuters.com/world/india/indias-modi-scorned-over-reckless-rallies-religious-gathering-amid-virus-mayhem-2021-04-19/) and the encouragement of a [super-spreader Hindu pilgrimage](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-57005563) with 9 million attendees. A political system in which the government could be held accountable might have yielded a different outcome.

All of this may sound familiar to American ears. President Donald Trump labeled the press the [“enemy of the people”](https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/437610-trump-calls-press-the-enemy-of-the-people) and attempted to intimidate sitting judges. A critical mass of the Republican Party is at least as motivated by [white grievance](https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2021/04/22/republicans-and-democrats-move-further-apart-in-views-of-voting-access/) as the BJP base is by Hindutva. And laws recently [passed in Georgia](https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/04/georgia-voting-rights-fiasco/618537/) and [proposed elsewhere](https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2021/03/voting-rights-act-democracy/617792/) would let partisan state officials rather than voters determine elections. This might be technically in accord with the Constitution, but would be at odds with—well, democracy.

[Read: A look inside the school professionalizing India’s nationalists](https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2019/05/india-school-hindu-nationalists/588127/)

Perhaps the most dangerous threat of all is complacency. Whether doomscrolling Twitter or ignoring politics completely, most Americans share a baseline confidence that democracy will endure. But will it? American democracy isn’t nearly as deeply rooted as we like to believe. Half of the population (that is: the female half) weren’t generally [permitted to vote](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2019/06/most-dangerous-women-american-politics/590959/) until 1920. Black Americans in Jim Crow states (that is, most of them) had to wait nearly another half century. If measured by universal suffrage, how long has America [been a true democracy](https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2021/03/voting-rights-act-democracy/617792/)? For less time than the Rolling Stones have been touring.

This is why Americans should be paying close attention to the politics of India. The U.S. is not Iceland; it’s huge, diverse, and tough to govern. Only one other country with comparable size and complexity has given democracy a sustained, multigenerational shot. If the system fails in India, it can certainly fail closer to home.

#### Judicial activism collapses democracy.

James Muffett 14. Founder & President of Student Statesmanship Institute and President of Citizens for Traditional Values. “The Danger Of Judicial Activism”. Michigan All Rise. 9-8-14. <https://michiganallrise.org/resources/the-danger-of-judicial-activism/>

There is a battle in our nation between those who believe that judges should follow the law as intended by the legislature, and those who think judges have latitude to interpret the law according to their view of what the law ought to be. The latter are referred to as, “activist judges.” When judges insert their own personal bias, they usurp the role of the legislators whom the citizens elect to represent them in deciding disputed, difficult policy issues. Thus, judicial activism **undermines the very basis of our representative democracy.** It can be argued that activist judges have done more damage to traditional, Judeo-Christian values than the other branches of government combined. The areas of greatest damage include free enterprise, human life, marriage, personal freedoms, property rights and religious liberty. Judges who usurp the authority of the people are **not merely incorrect; they are themselves unconstitutiona**l. And they are unjust. In fact, Justice White in his Roe v. Wade dissent opinion, wrote that the court had acted “**not in constitutional interpretation**, but in the unrestrained imposition of its own, **extra-constitutional value preferences**.” In addition to short-circuiting the democratic process, this judicial approach creates an environment of unpredictability which ultimately leads to **destabilization and more litigation.** When judges exercising the power of judicial review are guided by the text, logic, structure, and original understanding of the Constitution and the law, they deserve our respect and gratitude. By operating with this type of judicial oversight, they are playing their part to make constitutional republican government a reality. But where judges usurp democratic legislative authority by imposing on the people their moral and political preferences, under the guise of fairness or empathy, they should be severely criticized and resolutely opposed. It is time for all citizens to wake up to this **crisis** and work to elect “Rule of Law” judges who exercise constitutional authority only to enforce the law as written and ensure that laws apply to everyone equally.

#### Democracy solves great power war.

Larry Diamond 19. PhD in Sociology, professor of Sociology and Political Science at Stanford University. “Ill Winds: Saving Democracy from Russian Rage, Chinese Ambition and American Complacency,” Kindle Edition

In such a near future, my fellow experts would no longer talk of “democratic erosion.” We would be spiraling downward into a time of democratic despair, recalling Daniel Patrick Moynihan’s grim observation from the 1970s that liberal democracy “is where the world was, not where it is going.” 5 The world pulled out of that downward spiral—but it took new, more purposeful American leadership. The planet was not so lucky in the 1930s, when the global implosion of democracy led to a catastrophic world war, between a rising axis of emboldened dictatorships and a shaken and economically depressed collection of selfdoubting democracies. These are the stakes. Expanding democracy—with its liberal norms and constitutional commitments—is a crucial foundation for world peace and security. Knock that away, and our most basic hopes and assumptions will be imperiled. The problem is not just that the ground is slipping. It is that we are perched on a global precipice. That ledge has been gradually giving way for a decade. If the erosion continues, we may well reach a tipping point where democracy goes bankrupt suddenly—plunging the world into depths of oppression and aggression that we have not seen since the end of World War II. As a political scientist, I know that our theories and tools are not nearly good enough to tell us just how close we are getting to that point—until it happens.

#### Indian leadership in global governance is the only way to ensure a peaceful U.S.-China power transition and is key to solve every existential global risk---inequality, warming, food, water, terrorism, cyber-security

GPC 17 – Greater Pacific Capital, investing institution designed to identify and develop investing opportunities in and between India and other international economies, 7/17/17, “Path to Power: India’s Great Opportunity in the Changing World Order,” https://greaterpacificcapital.com/path-to-power-indias-great-opportunity-in-the-changing-world-order/

Last month’s Sign of the Times highlighted what appear to be a series of US retreats from global leadership positions. With the geopolitical cards apparently being reshuffled across a wide range of defence, political and economic areas, America’s apparent withdrawal is creating opportunities for countries seeking to fill the resulting void, with China currently taking the most proactive steps among the potential contenders. Beijing has already made clear its intent to play a more active role in matters of globalisation, international trade and climate change, global issues that also align well with China’s domestic agenda and where it can leverage significant political and financial assets. Despite China’s head start over others and its apparent desire to lead, its efforts will likely face not only resistance from the West but also competition from a number of countries, both within Asia and abroad. Further, China’s inability to lead on a broader set of issues related to matters such as human rights or regional security acts as a counter-weight to its leadership efforts and provides opportunities for other countries to fill the gaps being left by the United States. Among potential contenders for regional and international leadership, India, as the world’s fastest growing economy, the largest democracy and (potentially[1]) the most populous country, clearly has critical assets to leverage across a number of spheres. Bringing these to bear though will require India to be far more bold and strategic in handling both international affairs and in making strong domestic progress, both are matters that have proved elusive to date. However, if India can achieve this, it has the potential to create a virtuous circle of domestic development and international leadership similar to the one that has underwritten US prosperity for over two generations.

The Need for Renewed Leadership

One of the most dangerous geo-political circumstances is a power vacuum and America’s actions in the last six months in particular, suggest that the execution of the Trump Administration’s ‘America First’ vision is creating vacuums across an increasingly broad range of fields. These are further being exacerbated by the accompanying weakening of (formerly US-led) international and multi-lateral institutions that have until recently underwritten the global order. This order consisted of, among other things, a shared commitment to liberal capitalism, clear rules of engagement in trade, policy and war, a high-level security architecture focused on nuclear non-proliferation, a recognition of states’ fundamental sovereignty and shared access to the earth’s global commons. A number of the key elements of this order were already under attack before America’s current retreat. In fact, the recent withdrawal by the US from what has historically been a muscular international leadership is in many ways a reaction to its own domestic challenges and the global economic, political and security issues that have built up over the past few decades. As pointed out in a previous Sign of the Times[2], many of these challenges are the direct consequences of the current world order, including, the lack of international and national policies to compensate for the uneven nature of growth based on globalisation which while being the key driver of the unprecedented rise in prosperity has also created increasing income divides and continued to cause massive environmental impacts from mass industrialisation. Among the challenges facing the world today are a number of issues of global scope and scale that will require coordinated international action, and that is unlikely to be achieved in the absence of clear leadership by either one country or a small group of tightly aligned countries. The issues, which require this vision and leadership, include:

1. Trade Protectionism and Fairness. The continued growth of global industrial trade is being threatened by increasing protectionism (e.g. a 51% increase in G20 country trade protectionist measures from 2010-15) and major withdrawals by countries from trade frameworks (e.g. the US withdrawal from the TPP and the UK’s Brexit). While this is based on a perception of the unfairness of trade or an infringed sovereignty, it is clear that the countries that have voted for more isolationist leaders and policies have been among free trade’s biggest historic beneficiaries with their economies still reliant on its continued growth.[3]

2. Income Inequality. The gaps between the have and the have nots globally is sharpening across a number of key dimensions, with the traditional north-south divide between countries being exacerbated by growing inequality within nations, too, with the GINI coefficient, a traditional measure of inequality rising by 10% across OECD countries and the ratio of top income decile to bottom income decile reached its highest level in 30 years. [4]

3. Climate Change and Rising Pollution. The global fight against climate change and greenhouse gas emissions, which have increased by 80% since 1970, and has been damaged by the US withdrawal from the Paris Climate Change Accord.

4. Food and Water Security.5bn people today lack adequate access to sanitation, and of the 3bn people projected to be added to the world’s population by 2050, most will be born in countries facing severe food and water shortages.

5. Cross-Border Terrorism. Cross-border terrorism is at an all-time high today, causing nearly 40,000 deaths per year, and creating an urgent need for global co-operation on intelligence and security.

6. Cyber-Crime. Cyber-crime, with over 45m+ incidents annually, is an increasingly critical threat to the global economic and political order.

7. Displacements and Increasing Refugee Flows. Collective action is required to effectively process and integrate refugees and economic migrants around the world, which today total 65m – the highest number in human history.

As pointed out in previous Sign of the Times papers, these issues are interrelated, with the feedback loop between them accelerating the demise of the current US led world order and its governance framework underwritten by multilateral institutions. As the single most powerful nation on earth, America’s current unwillingness or inability to reinvent the rules and institutions that have failed to solve the world’s issues satisfactorily to date creates an opening for other countries to either reform and save or to reinvent these institutions based on a set of new values. China has clearly recognised the importance of the major issues facing the world and shown an interest in leading across a number of them, in particular in the areas of climate change and free trade. However, China’s willingness to lead is neither comprehensive in nature nor universally welcomed, particularly by the established participants of the current global order who fear that increases in China’s influence would come at a cost to their own positions. While unipolar world orders (such as the Pax Britannica in the 19th century or the shorter Pax Americana post the collapse of the Soviet Union) can underpin periods of peace and prosperity, most countries today lean towards preferring one led by a pre-Trump America or a multi-polar order to one dominated by China. However, where ambitious nations form the leadership of a multipolar order, their competitiveness can drive conflict and instability, whereas in a unipolar world, the rivalry is kept in check. Despite the US having built a broader armoury of hard and soft power than China, the two countries seem set up for conflict across a number of issues. So, unless a third country seeks to also enter this fray and create a three-way tug of war, new entrants to the power game will need to think differently about how to participate. It would seem though that given the diversity of global issues today there is space for multiple leaders employing multiple approaches.

In terms of who the new power players might be, while some of the world’s major western countries in theory might partially fill America’s shoes, most will likely be held back by a combination of domestic and geopolitical issues, even if they were able to overcome their fundamental and long-standing lack of willingness to lead. The EU needs more time to recover from its separation from the UK, the UK has been in increasing political and economic turmoil since the Brexit referendum, France is beginning its own domestic political revival and Germany and Japan remain mostly unwilling to be overt leaders for a combination of historic reasons. Having said that, Germany is positioning and being welcomed as a voice of reason by many in favour of salvaging the best of the current liberal world order. However, none of these countries are yet able to provide a credible alternative to China’s bids for leadership or stem its increasing influence and, in the face of American withdrawal, they may have no choice but to welcome another power player.

In the absence of credible alternatives from established economies, there are few with the positioning to play a more central role in world affairs. Among these, India stands out clearly due to its size, growth and most importantly its potential. The country has been an important part of the United States’ ‘Asia Pivot’ strategy, is growing rapidly with an increasingly outward foreign and trade policy, has embarked on an aggressive security and defence programme, has established strong relationships with major Asian countries and is committed to the principles of democracy. In the absence of a renewed American interest in world leadership, which one should certainly not rule out, India alone has the scope and scale to offer credible alternatives to China’s leadership bids across a number of fronts. Moreover, given the imbalance in power that a US withdrawal would leave in the Asia-Pacific region, India will have little choice but to play a more active role in the region and the world if it is to achieve its ambitions. However, while India’s potential to become a more important voice on the international stage is unlikely to be questioned, its actions to date are not yet in line with a country that has global leadership aspirations.

#### Extinction

Shivshankar Menon 18, distinguished fellow at Brookings India, 12/26/18, “China-US contention has opened up space for other powers, including India,” https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/china-us-contention-has-opened-up-space-for-other-powers-including-india-118122500454\_1.html

We live in an amazing, paradoxical age – an age of contrasts, an age of extremes, and an age of rapid change. Never before in history has such a large proportion of humanity lived longer, healthier, more prosperous or more comfortable lives.

And yet, we have probably never had a stronger sense of standing on the brink of a precipice, of possible extinction and of the fragility of human life — by climate change or nuclear war or other violence. Global battle deaths are back up to the highest levels since the Cold War and the 68.5 million displaced persons around the globe in 2017 are at the levels of 1945-46 (after World War II and during the Chinese civil war).

The global prospect

The world today is between orders. The so-called “rule-based liberal international order” – which was neither liberal, nor particularly orderly for most of us – is no longer attractive to those who created and managed the order from WWII until the 2008 global economic crisis. At its height, that order brought unprecedented prosperity to a large segment of humanity while simultaneously exacerbating inequality, bringing identity, emotion and demagoguery to the fore in politics, and making possible technological revolutions (in energy, information technology, digital manufacturing, genetic engineering, artificial intelligence and other fields) which promise to upend our lives, economies and societies in fundamental ways in the near future.

Indeed, if the world seems out of joint there is an objective reality to support that conclusion. Today the world is effectively multipolar economically — relative shares of global GDP, the location of economic activity in the world, and the contribution of large emerging economies to global growth all show this to be so. At the same time, it remains unipolar militarily. The Royal Navy, at the height of Empire, had a two-power standard, that the Royal Navy should be at least as large as the next two biggest navies put together. The US Navy today is equivalent to the next 13 navies put together, and the US defence budget is equal to the next seven largest national defence budgets in the world.

Politically, the world is confused rather than being orderly or structured. It is the imbalance between the distribution of economic, military and political power in the world that is the source of our sense of insecurity, of events being out of control, and that creates spaces that groups and local powers like the Islamic State and Pakistan exploit. In the past, such imbalances were settled by conflict and war. Today nuclear deterrence prevents conflict at the highest level and pushes it down to lower levels of the spectrum of violence – into civil wars, small wars, asymmetric violence and conflict and the non-state domain.

Since the 2008 crisis, we have seen a slow, weak and hesitant economic recovery in most of the world. We should probably get used to the post-miracle world since the global boom from WWII to 2008 was a blip in historical terms. The world (but not India) now faces depopulation, deleveraging and de-globalisation.

Despite grim prospects for the world economy as a whole, the UN forecasts that if China grows at 3%, India at 4% and the US by 1.5%, by 2050, China’s per capita income would be 40% of US levels, and India’s at 26% – where China is today. China would be the world’s largest economy (in PPP terms), India the second, and the US the third.

By that time, both India and China will be overwhelmingly urban.

This would be an unprecedented situation where the largest economies will be among the most powerful states, but will not also be the richest.

China’s rise and the shifting balance of power

Asia is no exception to the great transition at the global level, indeed it is where the transition is most marked as Asia returns to global centre stage, economically and politically speaking.

What we see in Asia today as a result of decades of globalisation and the rise of China, India and other powers is an unprecedented situation: the continental order in Asia is being consolidated under new auspices and the maritime order in the seas near China is contested.

The balance of power in Asia and the world has shifted. For the first time in history, China is comfortable enough on land – with no real enemies now that the West has pushed Russia into her arms – to turn to the oceans on which she depends for her prosperity. China seeks primacy in the seas around her. This is a historic transition that she has never successfully managed before. Her only previous attempt in the early Ming dynasty failed. What is new for Asia is the attempt to centre both continental and maritime orders on one single power.

The response of existing power holders to this shift in the balance, like Japan and the US, has been to tighten the first island chain security and other ties that China sees as containing her, and to seek partners for a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific”, an ill-defined concept that implicitly concedes the continental order to China, and does not fully meet India’s security needs since we are both a continental and a maritime power. Several voices in the present US administration also seek to limit China’s rise by using the US’s technological and other superiorities.

The reaction of other countries in the region such as India, Indonesia and Vietnam has been to balance and hedge against rising Chinese hard power by building military strength and by working together in defence, security and intelligence. This is a natural balancing phenomenon, that has resulted in the world and history’s greatest arms race in Asia in the last three decades, fuelled and made possible by the wealth that globalisation brought to the hard Westphalian states east of India.

To our west, new technologies empowered non-state actors, rogue regimes and radical movements.

East and West, we see a continuous belt of weapons of mass destruction – nuclear and chemical, don’t even mention biological – from the Mediterranean (Israel) to the Pacific (North Korea).

Uncertainty and insecurity

If the rapid shift in the balance of power and uncertainty have led states to behave in ways that exhibit grave insecurity, this has been heightened by worry or disquiet about China’s behaviour as a power. That China seeks primacy has been clear since 2008, but whether she is able or willing to provide the global public goods that the world has got used to remains in doubt.

Will China provide for the security of the commons – the high seas, cyber and outer space – or provide access to her own markets, or build coalitions and work with others to sustain a predictable international order? On present behaviour the answer must be no to all three questions. China’s preference remains to deal with each country bilaterally.

## 1AC – Solvency

#### Plan: The Supreme Court of India should recognize a worker’s unconditional right to strike against the government.

#### India’s farmer strike is the biggest threat to Modi’s power. It is imperative that they are allowed to continue.

By Ravinder Kaur | 2021-02-19 | How a farmers’ protest in India evolved into a mass movement that refuses to fade | New Statesman | https://www.newstatesman.com/ideas/2021/02/how-farmers-protest-india-evolved-mass-movement-refuses-fade

This authoritarian streak has shaped the pandemic policies of the Indian government, which not only rushed through the farm laws but also promptly acceded to industrialists’ demand for [labour reforms](https://www.indiaspend.com/why-trade-unions-are-opposing-labour-law-reforms/) that weaken the rights of workers in both the [formal](https://indianexpress.com/article/india/firms-with-up-to-300-workers-can-hire-and-fire-without-govt-nod-bill-in-lok-sabha-6602928/) and [informal](https://scroll.in/article/973877/why-the-new-labour-codes-leave-workers-even-more-precariously-poised-than-before) sectors. The changes include looser hire and fire policies, [longer working hours,](https://www.thehindu.com/business/enable-longer-work-hours-cii-to-centre/article31546269.ece) reduced social protection and restrictions on the right to strike.

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This powerful alliance between the state and capital explains why the Modi government neither brooks dissent nor hesitates to take harsh measures against critics, including cracking down on activists and journalists. The severity of the government’s response despite its political strength – it has full control of the state apparatus and faces almost no meaningful political competition – is evidence that the anti-farm law mobilisation poses the most sustained and direct challenge to this alliance yet. That the movement emerged and continues to expand during a relentless pandemic indicates the desperation of the protesters.

To the drumbeats of hyper-nationalism, the ruling party and its supporters have tried to delegitimise the protests in various ways, including smearing Sikh protesters as Khalistani separatists, posing as [“locals”](https://scroll.in/article/985485/bjp-workers-posing-as-locals-identified-in-mob-protesting-against-farmers-at-delhis-singhu-border) to demand the [removal](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-55854406) of the protest camps, and consistently casting the protesters as [“rich farmers”](https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/farmers-protest-agri-laws-apmc-mandis-msp-surjit-bhalla-7101406/), even though this is unsupported by [facts](https://thewire.in/rights/farmers-protest-modi-government-gulag).

Yet these attacks have failed to dent the movement. Far from petering out, it continues to grow, building new solidarities across caste, class, religion and region. One probable reason for the continued popular support is widespread disillusionment with the free-market formula; instead of spreading prosperity, liberalising reforms have produced high [unemployment](https://www.indiatoday.in/business/story/explained-why-india-s-unemployment-rate-is-rising-sharply-despite-economic-recovery-1756074-2021-01-05) and increased [income inequality](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3619370). Equally alarming for many is the majoritarian impulse of Hindu nationalism and the aggressive marginalisation of minority groups.

Thus, it is hardly a surprise that the language of [love and solidarity](https://www.trolleytimes.online/) has been key to the vocabulary of the protesters, the very opposite of the hyper-nationalist rhetoric that thrives on social division and exclusion. Everyday life in the tent cities at Delhi’s periphery offers a vision of a shared community built on voluntary labour that strives to be inclusive. These protest cities did not emerge from a pre-existing solidarity but have, through the protest itself, created the opportunity to forge new solidarities.

Half a year on, the original farmers’ protest has evolved into perhaps the largest mass mobilisation in post-colonial India’s history, one that spans rural and urban populations, and conjoins the revolt against deregulated capitalism to the struggle for civil liberties. The widespread sense of vulnerability, the fear of exploitation at the hands of an overweening state and large corporations are the common experiences continuing to drive the protest. As one [farmer said](https://www.ft.com/content/4cd6f1b2-712b-4c07-bd03-e2cc2b833468) of the new reforms, “It won’t be a market for farmers, it will be a stock market.”

#### Pressure tactics are key to overturn the farm laws. Absent a continued push now, the resistance effort will fissile out.

Pawanjot Kaur | 12-25 25/Dec/2020 | A Month on, Farmers Remain Resolute Over Repeal of Farm Laws | The Wire | https://thewire.in/agriculture/farmers-protests-repeal-farm-laws-govt-india

Mohali: The farmers’ ‘Dilli Chalo’ movement will complete a month on December 26, 2020. What started at the village block level, mainly in Punjab, has panned out across the country and Indian embassies, and foreign parliaments.

At the completion of 30 days, the gridlock over the farmers’ demands remains. The Centre sent a fresh invitation to the agitating farmers on December  23. In a press conference held on the same day, protesting farmers responded and said that they are ready to meet the government but only if it does not propose the same amendments which the farmers have already argued against point-by-point.

One may say that the farmers’ demands – a complete repeal of the laws, may be far-fetched. But the farmers’ unions have sharply argued their case in the many meetings that have taken place so far.

Kiran Vissa, who is a working group member of the All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC), and an active farmers’ leader from Telangana, believes that the  government has no more proposals to offer to the agitating farmers because the nature of the demands is such that they can be met only if the farm laws are repealed.

“The government has the sharpest of brains working for it. The fact that they’ve not been able to come up with a proposal which meets our demands means that our case is strong,” he told The Wire over the phone.

“See, we demand the removal of a dual market structure and this simply collapses the first – APMC Bypass Act. So the only way the demands can be met is by a complete repeal of the laws. The government has refused to look into the nature of our demands in a substantive manner,” he added.

Pressure tactics and new challenges

To get the government to look into the demands with seriousness, the only option left with those agitating is to resort to “pressure tactics”. The farmers’ union, especially from Punjab, have proved to be quite good at it.

The latest “pressure tactic” involves requesting the Punjab-origin British members of parliament to write to  UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson to not attend the Indian Republic Day ceremony on January 26 – the invitation to which he has accepted already.

In addition to this, at least five borders around New Delhi – Singhu, Tikri, Ghazipur, Delhi-Jaipur Shahjahanpur and the Delhi-Agra Palwal, are swelling up each day as farmers make their way from Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana and Punjab.

[photo removed]

Farmers protesting for the repeal of Central farm laws have their meal on a highway in Delhi. Photo: Rohit Kumar.

Pratibha Shinde, activist and general secretary of the Lok Sangharsh Morcha, who is at the Shahjahanpur border, with thousands of protestors told The Wire over the phone that over 3,000 farmers and labourers from Maharashtra are on their way too. “A vehicular march with 1,000 vehicles with almost 3,000 kisans is on its way,” she said. Meanwhile, a large crowd of farmers from, mainly, Madhya Pradesh has occupied the Delhi-Agra Palwal border.

Those at borders other than Singhu and Tikri are slowly gaining momentum in terms of numbers, resources like food, water and sanitation, and even media attention. Although Punjab’s farmers have shown the way to the others, Shinde said that for many coming from Maharashtra in the biting north-Indian winter is a rare experience. “It will be a challenge for us,” she added.

Even as lakhs of agitating farmers, under the banners of at least a hundred farmers, labourers and student unions have gheraoed Delhi from five sides, the government, earlier this month, said that at least 10 farmers’ unions under the banner of All India Kisan Coordination Committee (AIKCC) submitted a signed acceptance to the amendments proposed by them.

But the farmers’ unions at the forefront of this agitation said that AIKCC was never a part of the agitation – which means they were satisfied with the laws in the first place and have accepted the amendments made to it too.

Those agitating against the farm laws said that the ball is in the government’s court and it can choose to play the game with seriousness or keep sitting on it. Either way, the stamina on the side of the farmers is enough to keep them going, they said.

The last one month, and for Punjabi farmers, the last four months, were full of hurdles – the lack of media attention on the subject of agriculture, the coronavirus pandemic, state surveillance on farmers’ leaders, fake news propaganda and a general apathy of the current government towards those resisting its dictum.

Yet, they have overcome each hurdle with organisational capacity and grit. The government still has the option to emerge smartly, and in good faith to end the gridlock.

## Util

#### 1. Value is only accessible through experience.

Sam **Harris 10**, CEO Project Reason; PHD UCLA Neuroscience; BA Stanford  Philosophy, “ The Moral Landscape: How Science Can Determine Human  Values”) OS

Here is my (consequentialist) starting point: all questions of value(right and wrong, good and evil, etc.) depend upon the  possibility of experiencing such value.Without potential consequences at the  level of experience—happiness, suffering, joy, despair, etc.—all talk of value is  empty. Therefore, to say that an act is morally necessary, or evil, or blameless, is  to make (tacit) claims about its consequences in the lives of conscious creatures (whether actual or potential). I am unaware of any interesting exception to this rule. Needless to say, if one is worried about pleasing God or  His angels, this assumes that such invisible entities are conscious (in some  sense) and cognizant of human behavior. It also generally assumes and that it is possible to suffer their wrath or enjoy their approval,  either in this world or the world to come. Even within religion, therefore, consequences and conscious states remain the foundation of all values.

#### 2. Only consequences can explain degrees of wrongness, i.e. why it’s worse to break a promise to a dying friend than to skip meeting someone for lunch – either ethical theories cannot explain comparative badness, or it collapses

### Thus, the standard is maximizing expected wellbeing.

#### Prefer additionally – 1] Death must be the primary concern of an ethical theory since it destroys the subject itself.

Craig Paterson 03– Department of Philosophy, Providence College, Rhode  Island, “A Life Not Worth Living?”, Studies in Christian Ethics, 2003. Contrary to those accounts, I would argue that it is **death per se that is really the objective evil for us,  not because it deprives us of a prospective future of overall good**judged better than  the alter- native of non-being. **It cannot be about harm to a former person who has ceased  to exist, for no person actually suffers from the sub-sequent non participation. Rather, death in itself is an evil to us because it ontologically  destroys the current existent subject** — it is the ultimate in metaphysical lightening strikes.80 The evil of death is truly  an ontological evil borne by the person who already exists, **independently of calculations about better or  worse** possible lives. **Such an evil need not be consciously experienced**in order to be an evil for  the kind of being a human person is. Death is an evil because of the change in kind it brings about, a change that is destructive of the type of entity that we  essentially are. **Anything**, whether caused naturally or caused by human intervention (intentional or unintentional) **that drastically  interferes in the process of maintaining the person in existence is an  objective evil** for the person.

#### 2] Calc indicts fail: A] Ethics- it would indict everything since they use events to understand how their ethics have worked B] Reciprocity- they are NIBs that create a 2:1 skew where I have to answer them to access offense while they only have to win one C] Internalism- asking why we value pain and pleasure is nonsensical cuz the answer is intrinsic since we just do, which means we still prefer hedonism despite shortcomings.

## UV

**1] 1AR Theory – a] the aff gets it because otherwise the 1NC could be infinitely abusive which o/w, b] it’s drop the debater because the 2AR is too short to win a shell AND substance so theory can only check abuse for the aff  c] no neg RVI because otherwise they could dump on the shell for 6 minutes and get away with anything by sheer brute force, d] fairness is a voter and outweighs because it’s constitutive of competitive activities like debate and every argument either debater makes relies on the judge evaluating them fairly, it comes before substance because it determines whether it’s an accurate measure of who debate better.**

**2] Conditionality bad – incentivies reading multiple offs and dropping the ones that are actually responded to, means we don’t get real clash**

**3] We get rvis on t 1. Reciprocity - need equal routes to the ballot 2. Time skew – they get 13 mins to collpae on t while we only get 7 – forces a 1ar restartx**