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Murder By Other Means

Former Union Health Minister, Keshav Desiraj confesses that the answer to the question that "is Indian state responsible for providing health care for its citizens" is ambiguous at best. With 80% of health care transitions in Indian being in private sector, the answer seems be obvious: State does not believe it is its duty or function to provide health care to its citizens.

The recent Lancet Commission on Pollution report linked 25 Lakh deaths a year to pollution in the country, and 90 Lakh deaths world wide - India is in lead. Most deadly being air pollution and water pollution being the second. As is predictable poor and minority communities fare worst, for examples deaths of most construction workers is linked with air pollution.

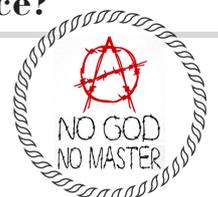
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Children also have disproportionately worse affect as coming in contact with toxins in early stages of development causes worse and long lasting affects on lung, heart and stomach related diseases. The Global Hunger Index placed India at 100 out of 119 nations. The report tells us that every one in five children under the age of five in India weigh too little for their height and one in three is too short for their age.

These appalling results should evoke many questions. Questions like how the economy which is doing relatively well, with great GDP year after year why is large part of India living in conditions like Ghana? Do these concepts have any bearing on reality for most Indians?

Let me point out that both of the reports clearly states that these are not necessary out comes of "development" or "industrialization" but are direct outcome of policies and decisions of Indian elites. For example the Lancet report states that states like India and Pakistan could have saved a lot of lives by applying similar legislation and regulation as "developed" countries.

But this cannot even be argued by Indian elites and media as these regulations which might save thousands of life erode the "business climate".

A new study by Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology and National Centre for Atmospheric Research, says that one could lose as much as 6.5 years of their lives because of breathing polluted air

Now let's ask a different question: "is Indian state responsible for the financial health of big corporations"?

And again, look at some data: Under the Automobile Mission Plan 2016-26 and related urbanization projects Indian state is providing more than One Lakh Crore Rupees to Automobile industry. It promises to provide market. It's is ensuring R&D and even manufacturing lithium ion for Electronic Vehicles, via ISRO and BHEL. This is just one industry. Glance at other industries shows a similar story.

This is free-market capitalism - socialism for corporations, capitalism for the poor.

One aspect of these policies that extremely almost never make into mainstream media is the affect of these deadly policies on places like Andaman and Nikobar islands and Assam and north east generally. SIAM,

"NORMALCY" IN MYANMAR

"It is clear that normalcy will only be restored with the return of the displaced persons to Rakhine state," stated India's External Affairs Minister in Bangladesh on October 22nd. Hence, India's official stance on Rohingya ethnic cleansing is that they should disappear from the face of the Earth. Because India insists that return could take place after "verification". And as Rohingya have no "verification" they cannot return and there can be no Normalcy for them. India denies "normalcy" to the victims.

She added that, "only long term solution is rapid socio-economic and infrastructure development" and India is "committed to provide financial and technical assistance for identified projects to be undertaken in Rakhine state." As reported in last issue of Azadi India's economic interest in the region is one of the reasons it supports the genocide.

Meanwhile, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and The Guardian have documented that Myanmar forces - namely, Army's Western Command, the 33rd Light Infantry Division and Border Guard Police - and the State itself have committed Crimes Against Humanity under The Rome Statute of International Criminal Court. Murder, torture, rape and burning villages are the modus operandi of the State.

apex lobbying body for automobile industry, proudly reported few months back that it forced the courts to remove ban on motor vehicles in some regions of Assam. It also helped remove the ban on 20,000 cc diesel vehicles in 2014.

The indigenous Onge, Jarawa and Sentinelese of Andamans have been reduced to a population of 500 from 5000 in last 150 years. More rapidly after India took control over it from the British. Under the boots of development and tourism the ecosystem have been severely harmed.

Increased Militarization and non-ecological friendly energy are also major development of the ast few

decades. A brilliant study of Indian policy towards "it's" islands is Pankaj Sekhsaria's recent book.

The outcome of Indian domestic policies is killing its population in numerous way, most significant of which is through pollution. These are not accidents. These policies for decades have been undertaken with full knowledge of their outcome. But the benefits outweigh the costs to the sovereign State and its servants.

Death of farmers, death of workers, death of women, and death of great majority of population of this country is premature and is a form murder by its own State.

New Arms Race?

On October 22nd Pakistani media reported Farukh Amil's concern over the growing transfer of conventional armaments to volatile regions. The Pakistan's permanent representative to UN in Geneva said "Pakistan neither wants, nor is it engaged in an arms race in the region." Without examining the truth value of the statement lets look at accusations made on India

India accounts for 13% if the total global arms import between 2012-16 - Highest among all the countries. India is expanding its naval capacities; it is acquiring new drones (Predator), and many missile deals - a \$2.5 billion deal with Israel. India is steadily increasing its military spending, amounting to Rs. 3.9 Lakh crore in 2016 – more than 2.5% of GDP. Given this reality and when compared with other neighboring nations

the claim that India is engaged in an Arms Race that will destabilize the region rings true.

In Japan, Shinzo Abe's re-election and his breaking the "principle" of defense budget to never be larger than 1 percent of GDP is also a distressing sign. China's militarization is also rampant. Asia, especially the South - with its ever growing nuclear arsenal is waiting to go critical.

Since September 29th, Indian troops have killed 5 Pakistani civilians by shelling. Indian military has noticeably escalated violence after it launched in July last year the barbaric attack on Kashmiri population – implementing the Doval doctrine. Anyone concerned about peace and justice should organize to dismantle the military complex in India that feeds on profit and mass murder.

TN Government and Transport Corporations' criminal negligence and "cost-cutting" leads to death of 8 workers

8 workers were killed at the Poraiyar bus depot, 40kms from Nagapattinam, when the rest house that they were sleeping in collapsed early on 20th October. The deceased include eight drivers and one conductor. They had finished the second shift duty late into the previous night and were getting ready for the first shift on Friday morning. The G+1 building which was used as the rest house was constructed in 1943 when transport was still run by private agencies. Unions say that the transport corporation paid no heed to repeated demands to demolish old buildings and reconstruct better structures. The blame has squarely been laid on the government, transport corporation and labour department for their negligence. On 21st October, workers throughout Tamil Nadu held condolence meetings at the depots and began work half hour later.

LABOR NOTES



Sanitation Workers, Sexual Harassment and Organizing

One kilometer away from the center of new Bhopal lays one of the solid waste collection site and a pocket of slum which inhabits around 20 sanitation workers' families. Shanti Nagar (phase II), like almost all other slums in the city is build over gutter, which overflow during the monsoon and fill houses with filth. Nagar Nigam (Municipal Corporation) does not provide these families electricity meters, as that would indirect give evidence of their living on the land for over 20 years. Which the corporation does not want to do - as it wants to have the freedom to evict these workers whenever it feels like.

Monthly wages, "officially" for most of the workers is Rs 5700; Rs 700 are deducted for PF (to get the PF no. amount of Rs 300 has to be given as bribe.) Rs. 300 are deducted for "collection" - for leaves that might, or might not have been taken - there are no off days for these workers. And deduction for actual leaves is done separately. According to the workers jobs are bought for Rs 5000 - Rs 10,000, which are regularly deducted from the wages as well. These deductions are made by the private contractor - who also runs fake workers accounts that amounts to Rs 50,000 a month.

A female worker, who used to gather house waste on trolley, after being harassed by the Nagar Nigam officer, was asked to give an Apology Letter to the officer. She was immediately fired when she rejected. Twenty-Five workers from Gautam Nagar slums were also fired in a single day for demanding better wages and basic equipments - all these workers work with bare hands and no masks.

Male workers in Shanti Nagar are naturally afraid to organize - especially after Gautam Nagar incident.

Some female workers are eager to organize and start demanding basic things like workers ID. If successful, these small victories could help energize rest of the workers.

Sanitation workers in East Delhi were on strike earlier this month demanding unpaid wages (some unpaid since 2003) and cashless health insurance cards. Female sanitation worker in Bengluru was told by her employer that her "wages are in [his] pants, come and take it". A private contractor, responsible for collecting and disposing waste in the same city, engaged in class-war by using its enemies tactics and also went on strike to stop Bangalore municipality from ending contract labor in some sectors.



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