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# Class struggles and economic inequality: Modi's BJP faces major setback in Indian elections

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June 8, 2024



People attended a Maha Panchayat, or grand village council meeting, on September 5, 2021, in Muzaffarnagar, in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, India, as part of a farmers' protest against agricultural laws.

In capitalist countries, free elections are said to be an expression of democracy, meaning that the people select their own government. In fact, these elections are anything but democratic.

The unexpectedly weak performance of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in the Indian elections on June 5 reflects significant class struggles in the world's most populous economy. With 1.4 billion people and nearly 970 million eligible voters, the election outcome highlights the deep class divisions within the country.

On June 4, the New York Times [reported](#): “On Friday, on the eve of the election’s last day, India’s central bank delivered a happy surprise. Growth in the most recent quarter was even higher than economists expected, giving the past fiscal year an official rate of 8.2%.”

The Times print edition’s headline calls Mumbai “the new darling of Wall Street.” Modi’s decades-long rule has been revered by the wealthiest 1% in the U.S.

In India, the wealthiest 1% of Indians currently claim almost a quarter of the total income in the country. Inequality has surged during Modi’s rule, bringing about a poverty ratio that is worse than that before India became independent.

### **Income below the poverty line**

Currently, more than [600 million Indians try to survive](#) on an income below the World Bank poverty line.

The unemployment rate for those under 29 years of age stands at 17%. Food inflation has averaged 7.88%, with essential foods — roti (bread), dal (beans), and sabzi (vegetables) — registering double-digit inflation in the last 12 months.

In 2021 and again this January, farmers and agricultural workers from the northern

states of [Punjab](#) and [Haryana](#) set road blockades to protest the revocation of agriculture laws passed by Parliament in 2020 that offered some financial protection to farmers.

During the past year, nearly 3,000 farmers have died by suicide in the state of Maharashtra, where the financial center of Mumbai is located. The [Wall Street Journal](#) reported on June 4 that in the rural district of Jalna, Digambre Jitangre, a farmer who earns less than \$150 a month, said, "There is no drinking water here and there is little to earn with farming."

Mohammad Ahmed, a 42-year-old farm laborer from Uttar Pradesh, stands at the main traffic intersection in his village, along with hundreds of others, hoping to pick up daily work. He said the number of people waiting at that traffic signal has increased tenfold over the last six years.

The Indian government's structure is modeled after that of Britain, with a prime minister and 543 elected representatives in a parliament. The BJP lost 63 seats in the parliament in the election, bringing its total down to 240, well below the majority required to form a government. Now, it can only hold power with the support of its alliance partners.

The position of the prime minister rests on a majority in parliament. Modi, hoping to overcome the failure of unpopular right-wing politicians, focused the election campaign on building a Hindu-chauvinist personality cult around himself, even claiming that he was a Hindu god.

## **Brutal repression**

The Modi campaign was based on the brutal repression of the rights of 20% of Indians who are not Hindu. His goal is to make India a Hindu state with an apartheid system akin to the Zionist entity in Palestine and white supremacist Jim Crow in the

U.S. Violence against Muslims, the country's largest religious minority, has escalated. Mouthing Nazi and racist rhetoric in an April speech, [Modi called Muslims "infiltrators"](#) and "those who have too many children."

Modi's regime is also attacking the predominantly Muslim territories of [Jammu and Kashmir](#) and [Ladakh](#), in the north of the subcontinent, revoking their [limited autonomy](#) and placing them under martial law.

Modi rose to power by inciting pogroms in which tens of thousands of Muslims were murdered. In 1992, he initiated a mob attack to demolish a 16th-century Muslim mosque in Ayodhya. This January, Modi attempted to fire up Hindu nationalism by inaugurating a new Hindu temple on the grounds of the former mosque, thereby fulfilling one of his key election promises.

Nevertheless, the BJP lost badly in Uttar Pradesh, the home of Ayodhya, where there is a large population of Dalits, an oppressed caste group. The Wall Street Journal quotes Gurmeet Singh, an 18-year-old Dalit voter, who said, "This election is about saving our constitution and the rights it gives us. Modi and BJP are actually anti-Hindu for using Hinduism for their political gains. They are also anti-India for dividing people on the basis of religion."

The unparalleled support for Modi by U.S. politicians and the wealthiest class is not only based on investment in the enormous riches his regime has been able to extract. It is India's strategic role as a world player in league with the U.S., Israel, and Europe as a bulwark in the New Cold War on China. Today, India's rulers envision themselves as leaders of the Global South.

On June 5 at the People's Forum in New York, a panel discussion hosted by Jewish Currents was held on the "India-Israel Alliance," an alliance that nearly goes back to the foundation of the new Republic of India in 1947. There, it was explained that even during the 1950s, when India was a leader among non-aligned nations that

condemned colonial domination, such as that occurring in Palestine, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had begun secret negotiations with the Zionists for a role in controlling the region's oil.

## **Ties to Israel**

India's economic growth is not only supported by U.S. investment, it is closely tied to Israel and the Zionist military. It funds the Zionist regime with \$3.7 billion a year. [An Indian company owns](#) the Haifa Port. Workers from India are recruited to replace the Palestinian workers from the West Bank. Indian police train in Israel and purchase Israeli security systems. Israel is supporting India's development of high-tech weapon industries such as the manufacture of drones.

With the support of U.S. imperialism, India is striving to compete with and undermine the development of China's Belt and Road Initiative.

In September 2023, the [White House](#) released a "Memorandum of Understanding on the Principles of an India - Middle East - Europe Economic Corridor."

The International Multi-Modal Economic Corridor (IMEC) is an infrastructure project aimed at controlling trade and connectivity between Asia and Europe. It will consist of two distinct corridors: the eastern corridor, which will link India to the Arabian Gulf, and the northern corridor, which will connect the Arabian Gulf to Europe.

The IMEC is to have an extensive railway network and a cross-border ship-to-rail transit system to move goods and services across multiple countries, including India, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, and various European nations.

The U.S. has also created a military alliance similar to NATO called the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or simply The Quad. It is a military alliance between Australia,

India, Japan, and the U.S. designed to encircle and strangle China.

The International Monetary Fund published the most telling statistics about the New Cold War on China. From 2008 to 2020, China's per capita income quadrupled while India's grew 2.5 times. That places India at No. 138 in the national income ranking, while China is in 65th place.

