

Indian and Sri Lankan workers and students support WSWS webinar on COVID-19 pandemic

Our correspondents
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Indian and Sri Lankan workers and students spoke to the *World Socialist Web Site* this week about the importance of the October 24 online global webinar. Hosted by the WSWS and the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees, the webinar will be chaired by WSWS Chairman David North and include distinguished scientists and epidemiologists who will explain the case for the elimination of COVID-19.

According to official statistics, almost five million people have paid with their lives, because of the criminal response to the pandemic by capitalist governments around the world, for nearly two years. Shocking numbers of infections and deaths are being reported in many countries as new, more virulent variants, of the virus appear.

Governments everywhere are removing health care restrictions and claiming vaccination is the only solution to the pandemic. Implementation of the murderous so-called “herd immunity” policy has opened the door for this catastrophic situation. Alarming rates of infections and deaths are now being reported among children as a result of the premature reopening of schools.

On October 31, Sri Lanka will become a fully-opened country, following the lifting of limited travel restrictions between provinces by President Gotabaya Rajapakse’s government.

In a dangerous manoeuvre to hide the real situation, the Rajapakse government is only conducting 5,000 PCR tests per day, while the Modi government in India, which is blamed for almost half a million COVID-19 deaths, is celebrating the administration of a billion vaccine doses, claiming this as a great achievement.

In this context, workers and students in Sri Lanka and India have voiced their support for the WSWS campaign for the elimination of the virus.

Senthi, an IT worker in Chennai, said: “I was infected with COVID-19 in May and underwent a terrible experience. There were no beds available in [the public] hospitals but I managed to get treatment from a private hospital. It saved my life but cost me 180,000 rupees (\$US2,400).

“It’s only a matter of time before there’s a new surge in India. The government has created a situation where everything is supposedly back to normal, but nearly 200 deaths and 20,000 cases are being reported every day. The government is promoting the myth that vaccinations are the ‘one and only’ solution, and all the so-called opposition parties have aligned with this false claim.

“As everyone should understand, the vaccination just helps to fight the virus, but it does not wipe it out. I’ve never seen or heard anyone in the Indian media—professionals or scientists—calling for eradication.

“We, as workers, are now experiencing how dangerous it is to ‘live with the pandemic.’ Almost all workplaces are now open in India, and all the schools, apart, from the primaries, are also open.

“Workers are forced to use public transport and the streets are full, with hardly any social distancing. Companies are pretending that they follow the health guidelines for physical distancing, but in practice it’s not happening because of limited available space. I believe that eradication is the only solution and look forward to participating in the webinar.”

Kubenusha, a nurse from Kytes Island in northern Sri Lanka, commented: “A big lie is being spread all

around the world to try and hide the real dangers of the pandemic. The capitalist ruling class wants to cover up the real situation in order to break up public opposition. That's why this online webinar is very important for the working class and the masses, now threatened by the pandemic.

"The government in Sri Lanka has massively reduced the number of daily PCR tests, and is claiming that the pandemic is under control, but there are many unreported patients in their homes. We will therefore face a very bad situation with the government reopening the country. The vaccine alone cannot protect us from this plague. Although both doses have been administered, my whole family became infected with the virus.

"No one should live in fear of falling victim to the pandemic. Therefore, eradication of the pandemic must be the demand of the working class and all the oppressed."

An ATG worker from the Nittambuwa trade zone in Gampaha district, near Colombo, said: "We, as workers in the manufacturing industries, are very well aware of the danger of the 'new normal.' We have to work now knowing that there are infected people among us. We only know when a person is infected, and after they show severe symptoms, but by then many more have been infected.

"Only through reading the WSWS have we learnt that this pandemic can be stopped. All the other media tell us that we have to live with the virus. Workers need to be made aware that there is a way to eliminate the pandemic, then they'll have an urge to fight. I fully support this webinar."

Mohotti, a small business owner in Colombo, said: "From the beginning of the pandemic we saw that the ruling class had no interest in stopping the virus. This pandemic didn't suddenly come about; all the capitalist governments simply ignored the warnings made by scientists.

"When the capitalists say that COVID-19 cannot be eradicated, they mean that their profits cannot be stopped in order to eliminate it, and they say we should die for their profits. The only obstacle to ending this disaster is the capitalist system. Workers need to attend this crucial meeting, in order to have a proper understanding of this.

"I've learned from attending previous meetings that

the pandemic can be wiped out in a very short time, if we do exactly what needs to be done. These meetings have given me hope for the future of the entire human race, so I'll be attending the next meeting with the same enthusiasm."



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