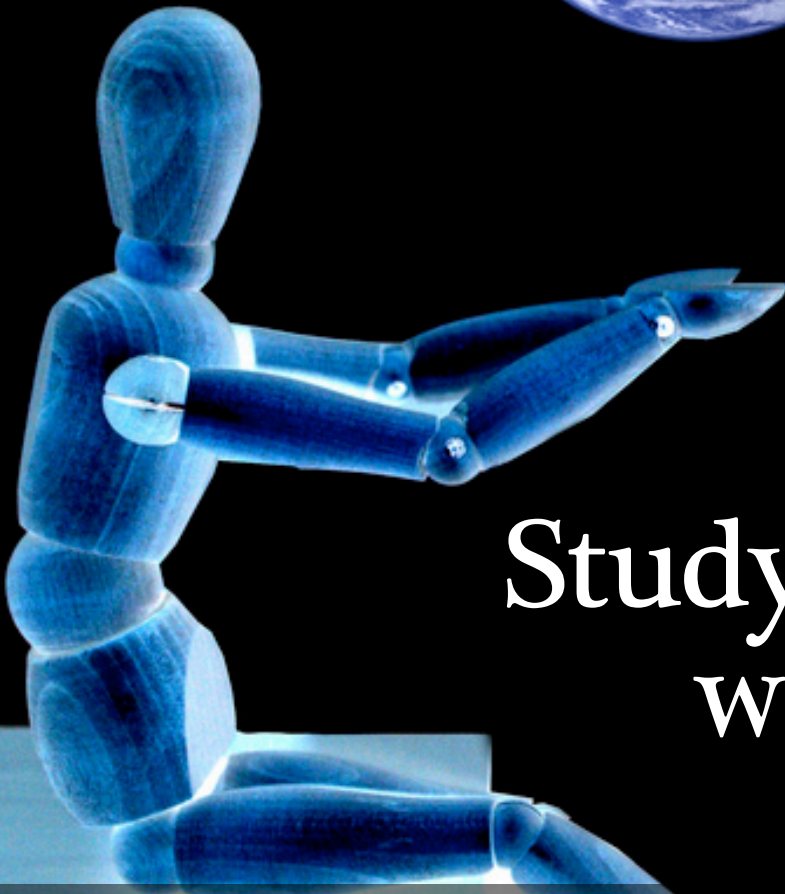


Pragati

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Studying the world

WITHER POLICE REFORMS?
AFTER SHARM-EL-SHEIKH
CLIMATE CHANGE COMES SECOND
MAKE IT EASIER TO VISIT INDIA
BRACING FOR DROUGHT

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pressive propaganda, fundraising and procurement infrastructure overseas. KP's arrest might look like the end of the Tigers. But it could possibly be looked at by Tiger hardliners as an end to what they considered as an unlikely moderate path for the LTTE. Mr Rajapakse has violently eliminated the Tigers and now has to guard against unbridled optimism. He has to ensure that he does not get caught up in petty political gains and sees the larger picture of Sinhala-Tamil reconciliation. Whether the president indeed fulfils the

promise of integrating Tamils into the political process and granting them political autonomy is crucial to achieving a lasting solution. Unless the root causes for Tamil discontent are addressed holistically, the Tigers will be lurking in the background.

Ankur Kumar is a research analyst with World-Check Terrorism and Insurgency Research Unit.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Addressing the real problem: climate of poverty

Global warming is low priority

WILLIE SOON & DAVID LEGATES

WHAT DOES the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation think about carbon dioxide (CO₂)-induced global warming?

"We don't think about it," Bill Gates said during last year's Engineers Without Borders International Conference. On another occasion, he told *Newsweek* magazine: "The angle I'll look at most is ...What about the 4 billion poorest people? What about energy and environmental issues for them?"

The question, however, is not simply a matter of re-prioritising limited resources. More fundamentally, the scientific case for catastrophic global climate change from increased atmospheric CO₂ is substantially flawed.

The Indian government also recognises the need to put real, immediate, life-and-death problems ahead of speculative risks 50-100 years from now---and base the country's health and prosperity on energy, economic and infrastructure development, full employment, and diseases and poverty eradication.

"It is obvious that India needs to substantially increase its per-capita energy consumption to provide a minimally acceptable level of well-being to its people," the Indian government's National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAP) declared. Moreover, a stronger economy and increased living standards will reduce the vulnerability of poor families to extreme weather events and climate change, natural or man-made.

Over 400 million Indians remain energy-deprived, impoverished, and reliant on wood,

grass and animal dung for heating and cooking. When the sun goes down, their lives shut down. India's per-capita CO₂ emissions are roughly one-twentieth of the United States, one-tenth of the EU, Japan and Russia, and a quarter of the world average. Even under rosy economic growth scenarios, India's future per-capita CO₂ emissions will remain far below those in most developed countries.

Without electricity, people must live at subsistence levels. What little they can manufacture must be done by day, by kerosene lamp and by hand. Women and children spend hours every day collecting firewood, squatting in filth to make dung patties, and carrying infected water from distant rivers and lakes. The lack of refrigeration and safe drinking water means millions suffer from severe diarrhoea, and countless thousands die annually. Open heating and cooking fires cause lung infections that kill thousands of infants, children and mothers, year after year. Poverty is rampant, education minimal.

Given these realities, can you explain why certain rich and famous people and media outlets are fixated on "preventing" CO₂-induced global warming? Why they obsess over computer-generated scenarios of climate disasters a century from now? Why they blame every weather incident and disease outbreak today on global warming, when the Earth has been cooling for at least five years?

Can you understand why, in the next breath, they oppose the construction of natural gas and

coal-fired power plants that could generate enough electricity to reduce the poverty and disease? And then oppose nuclear and hydroelectric facilities, as well?

As to climate science, there are no clear indications that rising CO₂ levels are changing the weather in ways or degrees that haven't been observed in past centuries and cycles. There has been no change in trends for large-scale droughts, floods, or rain, the NAP concluded.

The report also noted that average Indian temperatures have increased only 0.4 °C over the past century, while cooling trends can be found in northwestern India and parts of south India. Himalayan glaciers grew to their maximum ice accumulation about 260 years ago, according to the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, and their

foods will be determined by their value as feedstock for bio-fuel, rather than their importance as human food or livestock feed," he points out. "India is currently providing a strong momentum for bio-fuel production, [which means that] food production may be in jeopardy."

Ironically, many of the same environmentalists who worry about global warming, and oppose large-scale electricity generation, are also against biotechnology---which could create more nutritious crops that grow better under hotter, cooler, wetter or drier conditions. That would enable India's farmers to improve productivity and feed more people, no matter what the climate does.

That's why Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Norman Borlaug, father of India's first "green revolution" in agriculture, is such a strong supporter of biotechnology.

So here is our answer to Bill Gates' question, "What about India's poorest people?" India should focus on feeding the poor, improving their health, and enhancing their economic conditions---rather than worrying about hypothetical anthropogenic global warming. Only then will India's economic and population growth be sustainable. Only then will its people be comfortable, and able to adapt to and weather or climate changes that Mother Nature might send them---just as they do in the West. That would only be fair.

Many of the same environmentalists who worry about global warming, and oppose large-scale electricity generation, are also against biotechnology---which could create more nutritious crops that grow better under hotter, cooler, wetter or drier conditions.

well-known retreats began as Earth warmed following the 500-year-long Little Ice Age---not because of human CO₂ emissions.

Even the computer-generated "threat" of sea level rise does not match reality. Researchers from the National Institute of Oceanography at Goa observed that sea levels in the north Indian Ocean rose an average 1.1 to 1.8 millimetres per year (4.3-7.1 inches per century). That is slightly lower than the 7 inches per century global average---and way below Al Gore's scary "prediction" of 20 feet by 2100.

On forests and food supplies, India's carbon dioxide news is equally bullish. The Subcontinent's "net primary productivity" (plant and crop growth) could soar by nearly 70 percent if temperatures warm a little and atmospheric CO₂ concentrations go from today's 380 ppm (0.0380 percent of the atmosphere) to 575 ppm by 2085, N H Ravindranath and colleagues from the Centre for Ecological Sciences of the Indian Institute of Science at Bangalore have calculated.

R T Gahukar is far less concerned about global warming, than about policies implemented in the name of preventing planetary climate changes. "If food crops are used for bio-energy, the price of

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