



**INDIA NEWS – November 12, 2018**

**A publication of the  
India Committee of the Netherlands**

### **Seed companies show progress on tackling child labour, but fail to tackle non-payment of minimum wages in their supply chain**

The report *Remedies for Indian seed workers in sight?* is a follow-up to the two 2015 reports of the India Committee of the Netherlands, analysing what 14 international and Indian seed companies have done since then to tackle child labour and non-payment of minimum wages. A positive development is the increasing transparency of the seed companies. In the report ICN reveals that despite progress in addressing child labour, seed companies have not sufficiently addressed the issue yet. The companies are also largely failing to take adequate measures to address non-payment of minimum wages, especially to women.



Read the press release and download the report: <http://www.indianet.nl/pb181101e.html>

### **Stop Child Labour presents annual report *Getting down to Business***

The Stop Child Labour coalition is currently working on the programme *Getting down to Business – Accelerating joint action towards a child labour free world* for a period of two years, from 1 July 2017 – 30 June 2019. The programme focusses on three countries: India, Mali and Uganda and a number of sectors: gold, natural stone, leather/shoes, textile/garments, vegetable seeds and coffee. The programme promotes the concept of child labour free zones linked to a sector based approach of companies and CSR initiatives. In this project, ICN is mainly active in the field of the sectors natural stone and seeds. By doing so, we expect to get more thousands of children out of work and back into school. The annual report shares experiences and results over the past year. Lessons learnt will be taken into account to motivate and inspire more companies and other stakeholders to take responsibility and to join the fight against child labour.



Download the annual report: [https://www.stopkinderarbeid.nl/assets/SKA-annual-report\\_online\\_partners\\_DEF2.pdf](https://www.stopkinderarbeid.nl/assets/SKA-annual-report_online_partners_DEF2.pdf)

### **Indian Government treating human rights organisations like criminal enterprises**

*Amnesty International India* said the Union government is treating human rights organisations like criminal enterprises in the wake of searches by the Enforcement Directorate at its premises.

The ED on October 25 conducted searches at two locations of the rights watchdog in connection with a foreign exchange contravention case.



"Government authorities are increasingly treating human rights organisations like criminal enterprises," *Amnesty International India* executive director Aakar Patel said in a statement here.

Read the article in *The Times of India* (Oct 26, 2018): <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/govt-treating-human-rights-organisations-like-criminal-enterprises-amnesty/articleshow/66375588.cms>

## Republic of Fear - 'India is hostile to its weakest and poor, there is no justice for them'

India has always been a profoundly violent country. The violence against her marginalized people - Dalits, Muslims, tribals, poor, women - has become self-evident.



The website of *The Polis Project* published a probing conversation with a journalist, Sagar, who has focused on reporting violence against Dalits and other disadvantaged in India. He talks about how media and police look at this violence. Often crimes are described as random violence, violence among peers, while it is often a culmination of prolonged oppression of, for example, casteless people by the higher castes. A confrontation between Dalits and higher castes is often not just a collision between two groups, as media often write, but a well-organized attack of the latter group at first, often intended to sow fear ....

Read the full article on the website of *The Polis Project* (Oct 15, 2018):

<https://thepolisproject.com/republic-of-fear-india-is-hostile-to-its-weakest-and-poor-there-is-no-justice-for-them-interview-with-a-reporter/>

## Sanitation worker deaths spark protests demanding an end to manual scavenging in India

Dalits in India have for centuries been forced into working without proper tools or protective gear to clean dry latrines, sewers and septic tanks, a practice known as 'manual scavenging'. This is not only demeaning but also extremely dangerous work and activists have been campaigning for many years for the proper implementation of laws banning the practice and rehabilitating those who have been engaged in it. This past month it has been uncovered that in the Delhi municipality alone, there has been an alarmingly high number of deaths of sanitation workers lowered into the city's sewers with no equipment to protect them. Activists are sending the message that India must #stopkillingus and that the caste-based practice must end now.



Read more in the *IDSN* article (Sep 26, 2018): <https://idsn.org/11-sanitation-workers-deaths-over-just-7-days-spark-mass-protests-in-india/>

## Rock quarry slavery survivors in Tamil Nadu welcome stiff sentence for captors

Survivors of slavery at a rock quarry in Tamil Nadu welcomed a stiff sentence handed to the owner and managers, and said on Monday that the rare ruling sends a strong warning to other employers.



A court in Tamil Nadu found three men guilty of using violence, intimidation and debt bondage to force people to work in the quarry in Tiruvannamalai district, and sentenced them each last week to 11 years and nine months in prison.

India banned bonded labour in 1976, but it remains widespread, and campaigners say that less than two percent of cases result in convictions.

Read the article published by *Reuters* (Oct 16, 2018): <https://in.reuters.com/article/india-slavery-verdict/rock-quarry-slavery-survivors-in-tamil-nadu-welcome-stiff-sentence-for-captors-idINKCN1MQ10S>

## Hostel life of garment workers in hostels strict and hopeless

In hostels, where hundreds of women working in garment factories stay, there is a sense of an inescapable prison-like atmosphere. Vehicles ferry them to their workplaces, two garment factories nearby, and when they are dropped back there are rules that prohibit them from going out (even on holidays). Cameras record their every step, while the rooms have no doors to allow wardens to keep an eye. The use of mobile phones has been banned and conversations with their families have to be done through a payphone. Only family members are allowed to visit and they have to be pre-approved by the company.



Read more in the article in *The Hindu* (Oct 9, 2018): <https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-karnataka/its-a-strict-hostel-life-for-these-garment-workers/article25162176.ece>

At a public hearing of the *Tamil Nadu State Women's Commission*, 41 cases of violations committed against women working in textile and garment industries across the state were heard. Many of them were of deaths in factories. Often, it also involves suicide in for the women's hopeless situations.

Read the article in *The Times of India* (Oct 24, 2018): <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/panel-hears-horror-tales-of-womens-death-in-textile-factories/articleshow/66338655.cms>

## Statement of the Bangladesh Accord Witness Signatories on the Imminent Expulsion of the Only Credible Factory Inspection Program in Bangladesh

Less than two months remain until the Bangladesh High Court's decision to lift the restraining order against the Accord is set to expire, which would force the premature cessation of the Accord's inspection program in Bangladesh. The purpose of this statement is to outline our expectations for company signatories should this occur and actions we believe can and should be immediately taken by company signatories, even at this late stage, to prevent this from happening. The only way to prevent the premature departure of the Accord's inspection program from Bangladesh – and the dangerous consequences to worker safety as well as brands' own finances and reputation it would bring – is for signatory brands to take immediate action.

Download the details of the above-mentioned scenario, as well as the recommendations for how to avoid it: <https://cleanclothes.org/resources/publications/statement-of-the-bangladesh-accord2019s-witness-signatories-on-the-imminent-expulsion-of-bangladesh2019s-only-credible-factory-inspection-program/view>