

# CONTRVERSIAL AGRICULTURE LAWS IN INDIA

## Congress backs farmers' nationwide strike call

### UN chief, UK MPs extend support to protesters

AGENCIES

The Indian Congress Party yesterday expressed its whole-hearted support to the 'Bharat Bandh' (nationwide strike) called tomorrow by farmer unions over new agriculture laws after latest round of talks between the government and farmers failed to ease tensions.

In a statement, the party said that a 10-member team will reach Delhi soon to join the farmers who have been camping at various borders of the national capital seeking repeal of three farm laws enacted in September.

On Saturday, Protest leaders rejected the government's offer to amend some contentious provisions of the new farm laws, which deregulate crop pricing, and stuck to the demand for total repeal.

They said they would intensify their agitation and occupy toll plazas across the country on the strike day if the government didn't abolish the laws.

The two sides will meet for further discussions on Wednesday.

The farmers say the laws will lead the government to stop buying grain at minimum guaranteed prices and result in exploitation by corporations that will push down prices.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government insists the reforms will benefit farmers. It says they will allow farmers to market their produce and boost production

through private investment. But farmers say they were never consulted.

Saturday's talks between Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and 35 farmer leaders were the fifth since the laws were passed in September.

Meanwhile, the spokesperson for UN chief Antonio Guterres and a group of 36 cross-party UK parliamentarians have come out in support of the agitating Indian farmers, saying people have a right to demonstrate peacefully and authorities should let them do so.

These reactions came even as Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau reiterated his support for the protesting farmers despite India's strong reaction to his earlier remarks that Canada will always be there to defend the rights of peaceful protesters.

"As to the question of India, what I would say to you is what I've said to others when raising these issues is that people have a right to demonstrate peacefully, and authorities need to let them do so, Stephane Dujarric, the spokesman for the UN Secretary General, said on Friday while responding to a question on the farmers' protest in India.

Farmers in the northern states of Punjab and Haryana have been protesting against the laws for nearly two months. The situation escalated last week when tens of thousands marched to New Delhi and clashed with the police on the outskirts.



Farmers eat lunch along a highway blocked by police with barricades to stop farmers from marching to New Delhi to protest against the central government's recent agricultural reforms at the Delhi-Uttar Pradesh state border in Ghazipur yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

# 'We will still win it'

## Trump keeps up false claims of widespread voter fraud at Georgia rally for US senators

AGENCIES

President Donald Trump made clear Saturday he had no intention of relinquishing his baseless claims that last month's election was stolen from him, telling a raucous crowd at his first post-poll rally he would somehow still win.

In a speech remarkable for its twisting of reality more than a month after the November 3 election, the outgoing president launched into another litany of allegations that the polls won't be rigged by Democrat Joe Biden were rigged.

The crowd in Valdosta, Georgia for what was nominally a rally in support of two Republican Senate candidates facing a hugely consequential runoff election on January 5 roared in support, at one point chanting "fight for Trump."

Even with Covid-19 cases surging nationwide, there were few masks in the crowd and many ignored social-distancing rules.

In a nearly two-hour speech Trump, 74, declared he would not concede, at times sticking to his script but regularly going off-the-cuff for his more incendiary claims.

"They cheated and they rigged our presidential election but we will still win it," Trump said. "And they're going to try and rig this election



too," Trump told the crowd, who chanted "Four More Years!"

It was yet another example of Trump breaking democratic norms, engaging in conspiracy-mongering and presenting falsehoods in ways unprecedented in US history.

Trump has barely left the White House since Biden was projected winner of the election on November 7, though he has made a number of trips to his nearby golf course.

There had been concerns from some Republicans over whether Trump's continuing claims of fraud would drive down voter turnout among Republicans in the upcoming election, making his appearance in Georgia somewhat of

a gamble.

The runoff election will decide which party controls the US Senate, and Trump in his speech continued his fear-mongering about rival Democrats.

"Very simply, you will decide whether your children will grow up in a socialist country or whether they will grow up in a free country."

If Democratic challengers Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff defeat Republican senators Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue, the Senate will be evenly divided at 50-50, meaning Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris would cast any deciding votes, as the Constitution dictates.

But on Saturday night, there were flashes where it seemed Trump may be beginning to accept what lies ahead.

At one point, he said half-jokingly: "A friend of mine said, 'Oh don't worry about it sir, you're way up in the polls, you'll win in 2024.' I said, 'I don't want to wait until 2024. I want to go back three weeks.'"

Biden won the election with 306 Electoral College votes - more than the 270 required - to Trump's 232. The Electoral College will meet on Dec. 14 to formalize the outcome.

## UK bluffing on breaking Brexit treaty

### Says Irish FM

REUTERS, Dublin

Britain's plan to press ahead today with legislation that would break an earlier Brexit deal is a "negotiating tactic" which should not distract EU negotiators, Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney said yesterday.

Britain's upper house of parliament last month voted to remove the controversial clauses from the Internal Market Bill, but the government intends to reinstate them in the lower chamber today, just as trade talks reach crunch time.

The British government has openly admitted that the clauses are a breach of international law.

London says the offending clauses are a "safety net" to prevent the EU from interpreting complex customs agreements between Ireland, an EU member, and Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom, in a way that would limit internal UK trade.

## PALESTINIAN ISSUE

# Saudi, Israeli officials spar at regional meet

AFP, Manama

An influential Saudi prince launched a bitter attack on Israel at a regional conference Sunday, drawing retorts from the Jewish state's foreign minister who addressed the gathering virtually.

The row erupted months after the UAE and Bahrain broke decades of Arab consensus by normalising ties with Israel, a move condemned as a "stab in the back" by Palestinians.

Prince Turki al-Faisal, a Saudi former intelligence chief who is said to be close to the country's top leadership, reiterated strong support for the Palestinian cause in a fiery presentation to the Manama Dialogue security forum.

In unusually blunt language, he accused Israel of depicting itself as a "small, existentially threatened country, surrounded by bloodthirsty killers who want to eradicate her from existence."

"And yet they profess that they want to be friends with Saudi Arabia," he said.

He described the Jewish state as a "Western colonising power" and outlined a history of forcible eviction of Palestinians and destroyed villages.

Israeli Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi addressed the meeting by videoconference shortly afterwards, expressing his "regret" over the comments, which come after years of covertly warming relations between the two Mideast powers.

"The false accusations of the Saudi representative at the Manama Conference do not reflect the facts or the spirit & changes the region is undergoing," he said in a tweet. "I rejected his remarks & emphasised that the 'blame game' era is over. We are at the dawn of a new era. An era of peace."

Prince Turki, who said his comments reflected his personal view, voiced scepticism over the US-brokered Abraham Accords, to which Washington has been urging the kingdom to sign up.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### US opens up on diplomats' mysterious illness in Cuba

"Directed" radio frequency is the most plausible explanation for mysterious symptoms experienced by diplomats stationed in US embassies in Cuba and China, a US government report said on Saturday. The symptoms appear "to be consistent with the effects of directed, pulsed radio frequency energy," said the report by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering. Diplomats in some postings have been plagued with nausea, headache, dizziness and other unexplained symptoms. Saturday's report marks the first time Washington has officially offered an explanation, although inconclusive, on the events which effected more than 40 diplomats between 2016 and 2018.

### Mass evacuation in Frankfurt as WWII bomb is defused

Nearly 13,000 residents were evacuated in Frankfurt yesterday as experts defused an unexploded World War II bomb, local emergency services said. The 500-kilogramme British bomb had been found on a construction site in Germany's financial capital on Thursday, the emergency services said. A 700-metre evacuation radius was set up in the west of the city centre in an area that included a number of old people's homes, heating and internet infrastructure and facilities of the Deutsche Bahn national rail operator. Some 75 years after the war, Germany remains littered with unexploded ordnance, often uncovered during construction work. In 2017, the discovery of a 1.4-tonne bomb in Frankfurt prompted the evacuation of 65,000 people -- the largest such operation since the end of the war in Europe in 1945.

### Indonesia minister arrested over pandemic aid graft



Indonesia's social affairs minister was arrested yesterday for allegedly taking \$1.2 million in bribes linked to food aid for those hit by the coronavirus pandemic. Juliani Batubara was named as a suspect after Indonesian anti-corruption agents seized suitcases, backpacks and envelopes stuffed with cash equivalent to \$1.2 million in a sting operation on Saturday. He turned himself in on Sunday at the anti-corruption agency's headquarters, becoming the second minister in President Joko Widodo's government to be arrested over alleged graft in recent weeks.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



A woman poses for photographs amidst winter daisies at a botanical garden along the Red River in Hanoi, Vietnam, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

# Japan retrieves asteroid samples in hunt for origins of planets

REUTERS, Tokyo/Melbourne

Japan has retrieved a capsule of asteroid dust from Australia's remote outback after a six-year mission that may help uncover more about the origins of the planets and water, the Asian nation's space agency said yesterday.

The mission of the Japanese spacecraft, Hayabusa2, spotlights Asia's growing role in space exploration, with a Chinese robotic vehicle collecting lunar samples last week for the first time since the 1970s.

A helicopter flew the capsule from the unmanned craft, containing the first extensive samples of asteroid dust, from the landing site in Australia's desert to a domestic research facility of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (Jaxa).

"The probe landed on the asteroid twice, and the second time it created an artificial crater and collected some debris," agency president Hiroshi Yamakawa told a news conference.

"I hope this will shed light on how the solar system was formed and how water was brought to Earth."

The capsule may also contain some gas, which will be extracted in Australia, Yamakawa added.

The spacecraft, launched in 2014 from Japan's Tanegashima space centre, journeyed for four years to the asteroid Ryugu, where it gathered a sample and headed home in November 2019.



Asteroids are believed to have formed at the dawn of the solar system, and scientists say the sample may contain organic matter that could have contributed to life on Earth.

"What we are really doing here is trying to sample this pristine rock that has not been irradiated by the sun," astrophysicist Lisa Harvey-Smith told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

Gases trapped in the rock samples could reveal more about conditions prevailing about 4.6 billion years ago, she added.

After Hayabusa2 dropped off the capsule, it changed course and headed back into space. The capsule lit up on re-entry into the atmosphere early on Sunday and landed in the Woomera restricted area, about 460 km north of Adelaide, Jaxa said.

সাংস্কৃতিক অগ্রযাত্রায় নবতরঙ্গ	
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Realistic And Scientific Style of Acting in Cinema And Television Course (Online Based)	
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কোর্সের শিরোনাম	: "চলচ্চিত্র ও টেলিভিশনে বাস্তবিক, মনস্তাত্ত্বিক ও বিজ্ঞানসম্মত অভিনয় কোর্স (অনলাইন ভিত্তিক)"
কোর্সের মেয়াদ	: ০৬ (ছয়) সত্তাহ।
প্রশিক্ষণ সময়	: বিকাল ৩.০০টা থেকে রাত ১০.০০টা পর্যন্ত, শুক্র ও শনিবার বন্ধ।
প্রশিক্ষণার্থীর যোগ্যতা	: ন্যূনতম এস.এস.সি/সমমান পাস।
বয়স	: অনূর্ধ্ব ৫০ বছর।
প্রশিক্ষণের বিষয়	: সিনেমা ও নাটকে অভিনয় ক্রিয়ার বাস্তবিক ও মনস্তাত্ত্বিক প্রয়োগ, পাত্তালিপি পাঠ প্রক্রিয়া, অভিনয় বিজ্ঞান ও চরিত্র গঠন রীতি, অভিনয় শিল্পবোধ ইত্যাদি।
আবেদনের শেষ তারিখ	: ০৭ জানুয়ারি, ২০২১। আবেদনপত্র সরাসরি, অনলাইনে অথবা ডাকযোগে নির্ধারিত ঠিকানায় যথাসময়ে পৌছাতে হবে। সেক্ষেত্রে, অনলাইন থেকে ভর্তি ফর্ম ডাউনলোড করে নিতে হবে।
আবেদনপত্রে যেসব তথ্য থাকতে হবে	: নাম, পিতা ও মাতার নাম, বয়স, শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, স্থায়ী ও বর্তমান ঠিকানা, জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের নম্বর, প্রশিক্ষণ, অভিজ্ঞতা, মুঠোফোন নম্বর, ই-মেইল প্রভৃতি তথ্যাদিসহ জীবন-বৃত্তান্ত।
সংযুক্ত কাগজপত্রাদি	: ০২ কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের ছবি; শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার সত্যায়িত সনদ; জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র, নাগরিকত্ব ও চারিত্রিক সনদের সত্যায়িত কপি।
বাছাই পরীক্ষা	: ১৩ জানুয়ারি, ২০২১ তারিখ সকাল ১০.০০ ঘটিকার বিসিটিআই ক্যাম্পাসে অনুষ্ঠিত হবে। লিখিত অথবা মৌখিক পরীক্ষার মাধ্যমে প্রার্থীদের তালিকা চূড়ান্ত করা হবে।
প্রশিক্ষণ ফি	: চূড়ান্ত মনোনীত প্রার্থীদের ২,০০০/- টাকা (দুই হাজার টাকা মাত্র) বাংলাদেশ চলচ্চিত্র ও টেলিভিশন ইনস্টিটিউট-এ অনুচ্ছেদ ব্যাংক ড্রাফট অথবা পে-অর্ডার এর মাধ্যমে জমা দিতে হবে।
ক্লাস শুরু	: ২১ জানুয়ারি, ২০২১ (সম্ভাব্য)।
প্রধান নির্বাহী, বাংলাদেশ চলচ্চিত্র ও টেলিভিশন ইনস্টিটিউট, অস্থায়ী কার্যালয়, জাতীয় গণমাধ্যম ইনস্টিটিউট, ১২৫/এ, দারুস সালাম, এ. ডব্লিউ. চৌধুরী রোড, ঢাকা-১২১৬ বারবার নির্ধারিত তারিখের মধ্যে আবেদন করতে হবে। প্রার্থী নির্বাচনের ব্যাপারে কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে বিবেচিত হবে। প্রয়োজনীয় তথ্যাদির জন্য যোগাযোগঃ ০১৬৭৬৬৮৭৩৬, ০১৮৬৬৯৯৮৭৩১।	
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জিডি-১৯৪৪	