Pingali Venkayya

August 3, 2022

<u>**In news**</u>— The Ministry of Culture recently organized "TirangaUtsav" to celebrate the contributions of Pingali Venkayya to the nation on the occasion of his 146th Birth Anniversary.

A brief note on Pingali Venkayya-

- Pingali Venkayya was was an **Indian freedom fighter, staunch follower of Mahatma Gandhi and the designer of the flag** on which the **Indian national flag** was based
- **He was born** on August 2, 1876 at Bhatlapenumarru, **near present-day Machilipatnam town in Andhra Pradesh.**
- He completed his high school in Madras and went to Cambridge University and acquired knowledge in geology, agriculture, education and languages.
- He **went to South Africa** as a young British Indian soldier where he was **inspired by nationhood among British soldiers.**
- It was when he **saluted the Union Jack (the flag of Britain), and got inspired to design a national flag for India.**
- He was 19 years old during this stint, and **met Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa**, and became his staunch follower for around 50 years.

- **He designed the National Flag and presented it to Mahatma Gandhi during the latter's visit to Vijayawada city in April 1921.**

- This flag, **called the Swaraj flag**, consisted of two **red and green bands**; the two bands represented the two major religious communities – the Hindus and the Muslims. The flag **also had a charkha,** which represented Swaraj.
- **On the advice of Mahatma Gandhi, Venkayya added a white band. The white represented peace**.
- Though the first tricolour was not officially accepted

by the All India Congress Committee (AICC), it began to be hoisted on all Congress occasions

- **The flag kept being used, but it was in 1931** that concerns were raised about the religious aspect of the flag.
- Keeping that in mind, a **Flag Committee was set up** and they came up with a new idea**, called Purna Swaraj.**
- **They replaced the red with saffron and changed the order of the colours**, with saffron on top followed by white and then green. The charkha was placed on the white band in the middle.
- **The colours stood for qualities and not communities;** the **saffron for courage and sacrifice, white for truth and peace, and green for faith and strength.** The charkha stood for the welfare of the masses.

- **Post-Independence, a national flag committee under President Rajendra Prasad replaced the charkha with the Ashok Chakra.**

- His speech in Japanese at a school in Bapatla town in Andhra Pradesh made him famous and was called **'Japan Venkayya'.**
- He was **agriculturist and also an educationist** who set up an educational institution in Machilipatnam.
- His massive **research on Cambodian cotton**, which was important to Machilipatnam, famous for Kalamkari handloom weaves, brought him the title **'Patti Venkayya'.**
- **He died in penury and oblivion on July 4, 1963.** In 2009, a postage stamp was released in his honour.