

Pingali Venkayya

August 3, 2022

In news– 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 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.