

Farmers' protest

Supply chain disrupted, vegetable prices in Delhi could see spike

NEW DELHI, Feb 17 (ANI)

VEGETABLE prices in Delhi could be headed for a rise as farmers' protests disrupt supply chains, according to a trader at Ghazipur Mandi as the farmers' protests continued for the fifth day.

A trader reported a Rs 4 increase in carrot prices over the past 15 days due to supply issues from Punjab. He expressed concern that further disruptions caused by the ongoing protests could lead to price hikes for other vegetables as well.

The vegetable trader at Ghazipur mandi said, "The price of carrots has gone up by Rs 4 in the last 15 days after supply from Punjab was disrupted following farmers' protest. This could lead to a rise in the price of vegetables. This issue between the farmers and the Government should end soon."

The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (non-political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha have given a "Delhi Chalo" call to press the BJP-led Centre to accept their demands. Farmers from Punjab began their march to the national capital on Tuesday but were stopped by security personnel at the Shambhu and Khanauri border points between Punjab and Haryana.

The protesting farmers have been camping at the border points since the start of the March on Tuesday, February 13.



Farmers at the Punjab-Haryana Shambhu border during their 'Delhi Chalo' protest near Patiala district on Saturday. (PTI)

Farmer leader Pandher asks Centre to bring ordinance to give legal guarantee for MSP

CHANDIGARH, Feb 17 (PTI)

FARMER leader Sarwan Singh Pandher on Saturday demanded that the Centre should bring an ordinance on giving a legal guarantee to MSP, a key demand of farmers currently camping at the Shambhu and the Khanauri points of the Punjab-Haryana border. The demand comes a day before the fourth round of talks between farm leaders and Union ministers over their various demands.

Stating that the Centre has a right to take "political" decisions, Pandher said, "If it (Centre) brings an ordinance and it can bring it overnight, if it wants so. If the Government wants resolution of farmers' protest, then it should bring out an ordinance with an immediate effect that it will enact a law on MSP, then discussion can proceed further."

Speaking to reporters at the Shambhu border, Pandher said as far as the issue of modalities is concerned, any ordinance has a six-month validity.

General Manoj Pande visits forefront military innovation unit of USA

NEW DELHI, Feb 17 (IANS)

GENERAL Manoj Pande, Chief Of Army Staff (COAS) visited the Defence Innovation Unit (DIU), the forefront military innovation unit of the US Army, in San Francisco.



He interacted with Doug Beck, Director of DIU and

Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Defence, the Army said on Saturday. According to the Indian Army the COAS also visited the California National Guard.

The visit by the COAS highlights the shared values and interests that underpin the partnership between India and the US, aimed at further enhancing bilateral cooperation and development in Defence and security domains.

PRAYER TO HOLY SPIRIT

Holy Spirit thou who makes me see everything and show me the way to reach my ideal. You who gives me the divine gift to forgive and forget the wrong that is done to me and who are in all instances of my life with me. I, in this short dialogue want to thank you for everything and confirm once more that I never want to be separated from you, no matter how great the material desires may be. I want to be with you and my loved ones in your perpetual glory. Amen.

Persons must pray this for three consecutive days without stating one's wish. After third day your wish will be granted. No matter how difficult it may be. Promise to publish this soon as your favour has been granted.

Thank you Holy Spirit.

Pak polls rigging

Prohibitory orders imposed in Islamabad as Imran's party begins protests

ISLAMABAD/LAHORE, Feb 17 (PTI)

AUTHORITIES on Saturday imposed prohibitory orders here in Pakistan's capital as jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan's party began nationwide protests against alleged rigging and stealing of its mandate in the recent elections.

Criticising the outcome of the polls, which saw the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf par-

ty-backed independent candidates emerging as the largest group by winning over 90 National Assembly seats, the PTI announced holding countrywide "peaceful protests" against what it termed "record-high rigging".

The protests began with a march in Wana in South Waziristan of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The party has decided to sit in the Opposition in Parliament.

Nawaz's PML-N slams Imran Khan's party for seeking US intervention

LAHORE, Feb 17 (PTI)

THE Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has criticised jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan and his party for seeking US intervention in the alleged "rigging" of the February 8 polls, saying "it goes against Pakistan's sovereignty." PML-N leader Marriyum Aurangzeb also called out Khan and his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party for inviting the US despite accusing it in 2022 of bringing down his Government.

Khan on Thursday sought the help of the US with a special message to Washington that it should play a role and voice concern about his country's "rigged" general elections. On Friday, Aurangzeb, while addressing a press conference along with party leader Ataullah Tarar, took exception to Khan inviting the US to interfere in the country's elections: "Absolutely not, we are not slaves! It goes against Pakistan's sovereignty," The Express Tribune website said.

There should be **two-state solution**: Jaishankar on situation in Gaza at Munich conference

NEW DELHI, Feb 17 (PTI)

INDIA maintained for many decades that there should be a two-state solution to the Palestine issue and an increasing number of nations are now not only endorsing it but considering it as "more urgent" than before, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Saturday amid concerns over the prevailing situation in Gaza.

Jaishankar made the remarks at an interactive session at a security conference in Munich in presence of US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock.

The External Affairs Minister described the October 7 attacks on Israeli cities by Hamas as "terrorism" but at the same time, referring to Tel Aviv's response, said Israel has an international obligation to observe the humanitarian law. Jaishankar said it is important that Israel should have been very mindful of civilian casualties.

Explaining New Delhi's position on the conflict, he said there are different dimensions to it, and broadly classified them into four points.

"Number one -- we must be clear that what happened on October 7 was terrorism; no caveats, no justification, no explanation. It was terrorism," he said.

"Number two, as Israel responds, it is important that Israel should have been very mindful of civilian casualties. It has an international obligation to observe humanitarian law," Jaishankar said.

The External Affairs Minister, mentioning point number three said the return of hostages today is imperative.

The External Affairs Minister also highlighted India's long-held position on the Palestine issue.

Oil prices not rising despite Middle East tensions

NEW YORK, Feb 17 (IANS)

WHEN Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, the price of oil jumped to over \$100 a barrel. But despite the threat of an escalation of tensions in the Middle East and attacks on Red Sea shipping, oil markets have yet to see such moves this time around, media reported.

Oil prices spiked last month following US-led strikes on Houthi targets in Yemen in response to repeated attacks on commercial ships in the Red Sea. Crude prices have been volatile as Wall Street assesses path for interest rates, US dollar and geopolitical strife, CNN reported. Still, they remain well off their 2022 highs. West Texas Intermediate crude futures, US benchmark for oil, settled at \$77.59 a barrel on Thursday, while international benchmark Brent crude futures settled at \$82.86 a barrel. One factor that could be keeping the cap on oil prices is waning demand. A report from International Energy Agency released on Thursday forecasts that growth in global demand will slow to 1.2 million barrels per day in 2024 from 2.3 mn bpd in 2023. That comes after demand growth fell to 1.8 mn bpd during fourth quarter of 2023 from 2.8 mn bpd the prior quarter, CNN reported.

INDIA'S

Fresh fruit exports surge 29 per cent, footprint spreads to 111 countries

NEW DELHI, Feb 17 (IANS)

FRESH fruits have emerged as a standout performer in India's agri export basket with a robust growth of 29 per cent in the nine-month period from April to Dec 2023, according to the latest data compiled by the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA).

The market footprint of India's fresh fruits has now spread across 111 countries during this period compared to 102 destinations in the previous year as the commodity leads in the \$100 million plus category of exports.

During April-November 2023, several key commodities



witnessed substantial growth compared to the previous year, like, bananas: 63 per cent, and kesar and dasheri mango: 120 per cent and 140 per cent, respectively, Lentils (dried and shelled): 110 per cent, Fresh eggs: 160 per cent.

During the period from April to December 2023, the export value of Basmati rice surged by 19 per cent, reaching USD 3.97 billion compared to USD 3.33 billion in the previous year.

Simultaneously, the quantity of exports witnessed a notable growth of 11 per cent, increasing from 31.98 lakh metric tons to 35.43 lakh metric tons within the same timeframe.

Basmati rice found its way to the top markets, with Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the US, and the UAE emerging as the top five destinations for these exports. This robust performance underscores the enduring popularity and global demand for Basmati rice, further solidifying its position as a major agricultural product in India's export portfolio.

The export of processed vegetables also surged by 24 per cent during this period followed by Miscellaneous processed items.