

## India sees the biggest protest in history

13th December, 2020



A huge protest has taken place in India in what could be the largest demonstration in human history. Tens of thousands of farmers descended on the capital New Delhi to voice concerns about new farming legislation. This number is nothing out of the ordinary for a demo. However, history was made when up to 250 million people from a broad cross-section of the subcontinent joined in a 24-hour general strike. The protestors came from all walks of life to show solidarity with the farmers. The scale of the protest forced the government to meet the protesters face-to-face. The numbers made the government change its tactics somewhat, as marches are usually met with a show of force from the police.

India's farmers are up in arms about the enactment of three laws to "reform" the country's agriculture industry. The laws represent a radical upheaval of India's agrarian society. Furious farmers are venting their anger on the streets. They are accusing the government of selling out millions of India's agricultural workers for the benefit of big agri-business. They have set up protest camps around Delhi in what looks like a blockade of the city. A farmers' union representative said: "We will block rail tracks if our demands are not met." He said agriculture was too important for governments to play party politics with. Agriculture Minister Narendra Tomar said he was optimistic about finding a compromise.

Sources: [slate.com](https://www.slate.com) / [gulfnews.com](https://www.gulfnews.com) / [indiatimes.com](https://www.indiatimes.com)

### Writing

Farming is the most important industry in any country. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

protest / human history / farmers / voice concerns / cross-section / solidarity / force / laws / agriculture / upheaval / anger / benefit / blockade / optimistic / compromise

### True / False

- a) The article says hundreds of thousands of people protested in New Delhi. T / F
- b) The article says the demonstration was something out of the ordinary. T / F
- c) As many as 250 million people went on strike to support farmers. T / F
- d) The police changed its tactics and met with protestors. T / F
- e) Indian farmers are angry about four new farming laws. T / F
- f) Farmers are accusing the government of pandering to agri-business. T / F
- g) Farmers have set up protest camps around India's capital city. T / F
- h) India's agriculture minister is not hopeful of moving forward. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                               |                  |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. <b>protest</b>             | a. unusual       |
| 2. <b>voice</b>               | b. agreement     |
| 3. <b>out of the ordinary</b> | c. sample        |
| 4. <b>cross-section</b>       | d. unity         |
| 5. <b>solidarity</b>          | e. disruption    |
| 6. <b>tactics</b>             | f. demonstration |
| 7. <b>up in arms</b>          | g. siege         |
| 8. <b>upheaval</b>            | h. strategy      |
| 9. <b>blockade</b>            | i. express       |
| 10. <b>compromise</b>         | j. very angry    |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of the world's largest protest?
- b) What would make you protest in the streets?
- c) What are the most effective forms of protest?
- d) What do you think of protests in your country?
- e) What do you voice concerns about, and why?
- f) How much help do farmers in your country need?
- g) How should governments deal with large-scale protests?
- h) Have protests ever brought change?

## Phrase Match

- |  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. A huge protest has taken                    | a. India's agrarian society   |
| 2. This number is nothing out                  | b. force from the police      |
| 3. protestors came from all walks              | c. a compromise               |
| 4. made the government change its              | d. of the ordinary            |
| 5. met with a show of                          | e. in arms                    |
| 6. India's farmers are up                      | f. place in India             |
| 7. a radical upheaval of                       | g. out                        |
| 8. They are accusing the government of selling | h. of the city                |
| 9. a blockade                                  | i. tactics                    |
| 10. optimistic about finding                   | j. of life to show solidarity |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- Have you ever protested about anything?
- When was the last time you were up in arms about something?
- What do you think a farmer's life is like?
- How important is agriculture?
- Are big agri-business farms or small farms more important?
- Should we all go back to farming to help Earth?
- What questions would you like to ask the farmers?

## Spelling

- farmers dsnedeced on the capital
- voice concerns about new farming teosalgliin
- people from a bdaor cross-section
- the eobnnutstinc
- show aosdyitri with the farmers
- change its tciacst somewhat
- the nacementt of three laws
- The laws represent a radical hulaaevp
- India's inaaragr society
- a klocbead of the city
- Tomar said he was iopiticmts
- finding a morpomcsie

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. i	3. a	4. c	5. d
6. h	7. j	8. e	9. g	10. b

## Role Play

### Role A – War

You think war is the most important thing to protest about. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): corruption, equal rights or coronavirus.

### Role B – Corruption

You think corruption is the most important thing to protest about. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): war, equal rights or coronavirus.

### Role C – Equal Rights

You think equal rights is the most important thing to protest about. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): corruption, war or coronavirus.

### Role D – Coronavirus

You think coronavirus is the most important thing to protest about. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): corruption, equal rights or war.

## Speaking – Protests

Rank these with your partner. Put the things that are most important to protest about at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                |                  |
|----------------|------------------|
| • Gun rights   | • War            |
| • Racism       | • Climate change |
| • Equal rights | • Corruption     |
| • Coronavirus  | • Food prices    |

### Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	T	d	F	e	F	f	T	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.