San Jose State homecoming tradition returns after two years, hundreds attend

By Christine Stevens
STAFF WRITER

Many San Jose State community members expressed joyous relief about reconnecting with peers at the university’s 14th annual “Fire on the Fountain” Thursday night.

While the homecoming tradition was canceled in 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic, hundreds of people gathered on Tower Lawn from 4-9 p.m.

International business junior Anika Puri said it was her second time at Fire on the Fountain since attending her freshman year.

“It reminds me of high school in the sense that everyone comes out and has this spirit and there’s this whole atmosphere of everyone coming together,” Puri said.

The event featured an alumni social, student organization fair, student performers and a pyrotechnics show followed by the homecoming court announcement.

Puri said she enjoys the Fire on the Fountain performances because they portray a wide variety of cultures, reflecting SJSU’s diverse campus.

Some performances included Spartan WUSHU, a contemporary Chinese performance based martial art, Korean Entertainment Club, the Sikh Student Association, Spartan Mambo and Grupo Folklorico.

Local activists: agricultural protesters in India need US backing

By Saumya Monga
STAFF WRITER

Many San Jose State community members continue to support farmers in India who’ve been protesting since three contentious agricultural laws passed in September 2020 pertaining to the “mandi system.”

Amar Singh, Bay Area Kisaan Movement co-founder, said the mandi system is a market for farmers to sell their crops.

As “Kisaan” stands for farmers in Punjabi, Singh said the group has been organizing local protests in support of repealing India’s recent agricultural laws for more than a year.

“When these new laws that went into place, the [minimum support price] was taken away in the mandi system. When the farmers go there to sell their crop, they’re going to be at the mercy of these big corporations that can basically put any price on anything,” Singh said.

These laws also take away the governance,” Singh said.

The minimum support price is the lowest price farmers are guaranteed for their produce, according to a Feb. 3 Juggernaut article.

The Juggernaut is a media company that reports on South Asia, which consists of countries in the Indian subcontinent, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan, according to its website.

India’s recent farm laws eliminate the minimum support price. Hundreds of farmers have been protesting since September 2020, with hundreds of thousands of farmers marching through India’s capital to demand the repeal of the recent laws.
HOMECOMING
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The Sirens of Sparta, SJSU’s co-ed dance team, said they’re excited to attend Fire on the Fountain for the first time.

“I think the performance was just impeccable so I gave them all a 10 out of 10,” Mendes said. He said the biggest benefit of the event is the positive interaction faculty and others are a part of the SJSU family and show their school spirit.

“Everyone was Having so much fun and it’s a great way to finish midterms as well,” Mendes said.

Coming back to campus has been a little hard for recruitment but I feel like Fire on the Fountain is a good opportunity for us.

Esiah Gomez, Spartan Spectrum dance team member, promotes Friday’s homecoming football game.

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FARMERS
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support price and most likely apply to Punjab and Haryana states, according to the Juggernaut article.

Farmers from Punjab and Haryana, the two last states under the mandi system, would be wealthier than those from other states according to the same Juggernaut article.

The agricultural laws were developed under Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s plan to bring all states under similar market laws, according to the same article.

These laws abolish the mandi system, which Serial wrote: Farmers from Punjab and Haryana had already removed, according to the same article.

The biggest rally within the monthly-long demonstrations took place in India on Saturday, according to a BBC article.

Farmers in India are demanding the government to bring all states under one law for agricultural real estate, according to the BBC article.

Whatever you’re eating or you’re wearing, where do you think it is coming from? Singh said. “A lot of these things are taking our entire food system back full circle.”

When the mandi system was removed in 1966-67, farmers began getting cheaper prices as farmers were left to bargain against large industrial buyers who controlled food processors, according to the same article.

Farmers’ rights
Political science associate professor Katia Leander said any disruption to India’s food supply would affect the rest of the world because of its large population and food export.

“The second-largest population in the world so any sort of disruption to the food available to Indians has a worldwide impact on the food frontend,” Leander said. “Someone who cares about hunger as a global issue [should] be concerned about the food supply in India because India makes up about 18% of the world’s population, according to Worldometer, a world statistics provider.

About 65% of the Indian labor force relies on agriculture, which accounts for about 15% to the country’s $7.27 trillion economy, according to a Nov. 20, 2020 New York Times article.

“Anything that you’re eating or you’re wearing, where do you think it is coming from?” Singh said. “A lot of these things are taking our entire food system back full circle.”

Singh said he wishes a more diverse group of farmers came up to the Bay Area to join the Bay Area Kisaan Movement has been organizing monthly protests and demonstrations, it’s crucial for more residues to get involved.

“Let us to talk about [the protests] and raise awareness,” Singh said. “The struggle is getting everyone to come together.”

Singh said he would do a more diverse group of people came out to the protests in the Bay Area instead of just Punjabi-Americans.

“The Bay Area’s a very diverse place. We need international solidarity. I think it is very important to let the people from Punjab and Haryana know their voice is not being heard right now while they’ve been protesting for the past year,” Singh said.

Singh said despite the challenges, the unity of first generation young people fighting for their grandparents in India is amazing.

He said he also inspired by older farmers in India.

“I am [still] putting myself in [the farmers’] shoes and thinking how fortune we are and then using that as energy to keep going forward. I think they have a lot of awareness because [the farmers are] the real professionals,” Singh said.

Singh said it’s important to educate surrounding people on what’s happening in India.

The land is our blood. The land is our right,” Singh said. “So we must be true to what we come from and be a voice for our people.”

Anything that you’re eating or you’re wearing, where do you think it is coming from? A lot of these things are coming from [India] so everything comes back full circle.

Amar Singh
Bay Area Kisaan Movement co-founder

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WEDNESDAY, OCT. 13, 2021

Saumya Dhillon, Spartan Spectrum dance team member, promotes Friday’s homecoming football game.

SAUMYA DHILLON | Jefe Lopez

CLUBS & DEPARTMENTS

Club and departments on campus including the Chula Vista Latinx Student Success Center, Tony Lopez, interim president and English senior, said this was the first club at the table on Fire on the Fountain even though they’ve been on campus since 2011.

Lopez said the club joined in hopes of gaining 15-20 new members.

“Coming back to campus has been a little hard for recruitment,” Lopez said. “But I feel like Fire on the Fountain is a good opportunity for us.”

Britanie Navarrette, social science senior, added Chicano/Latino center’s student success center.

“I’m so happy and to be a part of that,” Navarrette said. “We’ve got 8 p.m., professiona fire dancers came on stage and tribal rings of fire while grinding to rock and pop songs. The performers breathed fire and dressed as Krusty Fortes, a performer from Infinite Spin Performing Arts, and Organic Pyrotechnic Services.

Advocacy momentum
Indi agriculture has continued to escalate with demonstrations and protest camps occurring throughout the country, according to an Oct. 4 New York Times article.

The government has responded with drastic measures including violence and internet outages, according to the New York Times article.

Both Singh and Gill agreed it’s hard to keep the momentum, especially because it’s been more than a year since the farmers began protesting.

“The farmers are serious about this, they’re not going to let the government just hear them and literally push them around. Their voice was not heard before the laws were passed, their voice [is] not being heard right now while [they’ve been protesting for the past year],” Singh said.

Singh said despite the challenges, the unity of first generation young people fighting for their grandparents in India is amazing.

He said he also inspired by older farmers in India.

“I am [still] putting myself in [the farmers’] shoes and thinking how fortunate we are and then using that as energy to keep going forward. I think they have a lot of awareness because [the farmers are] the real professionals,” Singh said.

Singh said it’s important to educate surrounding people on what’s happening in India.

The land is our blood. The land is our right,” Singh said. “So we must be true to what we come from and be a voice for our people.”

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WEDNESDAY, OCT. 13, 2021

Saumya Dhillon, Spartan Spectrum dance team member, promotes Friday’s homecoming football game.
Spartans lose in homecoming game

By Estevan Lopez

Homecoming was not a welcome return for San Jose State as the football team fell short 19-13 against San Diego State on Friday night at CEFCU Stadium.

The Spartans (3-4, 1-2 MWC) took the No. 24, undefeated Aztecs (6-0, 2-0) to double overtime but a late interception on quarterback Nick Nash set the stage for the Aztecs' game-winning touchdown.

The first half of the game was not as thrilling, however. Both teams were scoreless in the first quarter and could only muster a combined 12 points in the form of three field goals.

SJSU almost scored off a Nash 35-yard touchdown pass to wide receiver Charles Ross but it was called back by a face mask penalty in the first quarter.

The Spartans trailed the Aztecs 6-3 at halftime in a low-scoring defensive showcase. SDSU ranks 10th nationally in rushing the ball as it averages 244 yards a game. Yet, the Spartan defense held the Aztecs to only 70 yards on 36 carries.

Head coach Brent Brennan said he was thrilled with his team's defensive performance but penalties stopped any offensive momentum the Spartans created.

"I thought [we] battled tough but the thing that's going to make us sick are the penalties which are just ridiculous," Brennan said. "We need to eliminate them because we missed opportunities to win."

SJSU ended the game with a season-high 12 penalties that cost the team 101 yards.

The defensive showdown resulted in a combined total of 14 punts, with one punt by the Aztecs being 86 yards which pinned the Spartans in their own end zone.

SJSU kicker Matt Mercurio tied the game at 6-6 with a field goal in the fourth quarter and eventually had the game in his hands in the final seconds.

Nash and the Spartan offense moved down the field in the last minutes of regulation to set up Mercurio for the game-winning field goal with about 20 seconds left. Mercurio looked to be the hero for SJSU but missed the field goal wide right, sending the game to overtime tied at six points.

The game came to overtime after SDSU scored first to tie the game again at 13-13. SJSU almost gained control of the game in double overtime but Nash was intercepted by the SDSU defense in the end zone.

The Aztecs capitalized by scoring the walk-off touchdown in the following drive, winning the game 19-13. Nash finished the game with 16 of 34 pass attempts and one interception.

"I think there's a lot of positives that we can take out there but what hurt was penalties and making dumb mistakes, but you know it was a hard-fought battle. Obviously, it hurts to lose," Brennan said.

The sole spark on offense for SJSU was running back Tyler Nevens as he finished the game with a total of 74 yards rushing and one touchdown.

"I think we played great tonight and our chemistry as an offense came together and we're more sound than ever before in the past weeks," Nevens said.

Nevens' touchdown came in overtime after SJSU scored first to tie the game again at 13-13. SJSU almost gained control of the game in double overtime but Nash was intercepted by the SDSU defense in the end zone.

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"I think there's a lot of positives that we can take out there but what hurt was penalties and making dumb mistakes, but you know it was a hard-fought battle," Nash said. "Obviously, it hurts to lose."

Before the game, SJSU inducted former wide receiver and Super Bowl-winning NFL player James Jones, who was in attendance, into the SJSU Ring of Honor after the first quarter.

Jones was congratulated with a TV message by Brennan and his former Packers teammates Aaron Rodgers, Randall Cobb and Devante Adams who said, "You are a legend."

Rodgers, who played with Jones on the Packers from 2005-06, said in the video, "No one talks as much about their alma mater as you do. I'm so thankful to have played with you for so many years and to call you a close friend."

The Spartans (3-4) look to bounce back as they are expected to take on the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (0-6-1) on Oct. 21 at Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas at 8 p.m.

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San Jose State running back Shamar Garrett runs with the ball past the Aztecs' defensive line during the first quarter at CEFCU Stadium Friday.
Parents shouldn’t get to decide whether their child wants to play with the G.I. Joe action figure or the Barbie doll, the decision should be left to the child. California Gov. Gavin Newsom passed a bill on Oct. 9 mandating major retail stores to include a gender-neutral toy aisle for children. Assembly Bill 1084 will force retailers that employ more than 500 people to have non-gendered toy sections starting in 2024, according to an Oct. 11 Washington Post article. The bill is helping children feel less pressured to conform to a certain gender stereotype and allows them the freedom to express themselves from a younger age. To limit a child to a toy section that matches their biological sex is not only wrong but unfair and damaging to a child’s developing interests. However, one of the biggest issues when discussing gender-neutral toys is gender dysphoria.

Gender dysphoria is a mental health disorder where adults or children experience intense emotional distress because they feel they were born as the wrong gender, according to the Child Mind Institute website. The Child Blind Institute also specified being transgender or gender non-conforming is not a mental disorder. Gender identity isn’t the issue, the turmoil that comes from being unable to express that identity creates those detrimental symptoms. It’s crucial for children to express themselves early on as gender dysphoria can affect a child as early as 7 years old, according to a June 16, 2020 Cedars-Sinai article. Cedars-Sinai is a nonprofit academic healthcare organization that provides a wide range of community benefits, according to its website. A 2016 Cedars-Sinai study found 73% of transgender women and 79% of transgender men first experienced gender dysphoria by age 7.

All 1084 will help children feel comfortable in their own skin and encourage them to play with toys they’re interested in. The bill will not ban male and female gendered aisles but will add a gender-neutral aisle that applies to children’s products and toys but not clothing, according to an Oct. 10 KTVU article.

Gender-neutral aisles not only help children explore themselves but also help parents give children freedom to choose who they are. This could build healthier relationships and futures for their children.

This is a step in the right direction to help end gender dysphoria and let children have a feeling of independence and security from a young age. People who have gender dysphoria have a higher rate of suicide than the general population, according to The Recovery Village website. About 52%-59% of people with gender dysphoria attempt suicide in their lifetime. The Recovery Village is a drug and alcohol rehab program that delivers comprehensive treatment for substance abuses and co-occurring mental health disorders, according to its website.

Many children who have issues with gender at an early age struggle later in life with mental illnesses as they deal with the fact that society won’t accept a child right to choose who they want to be, according to a June 17, 2018 Research Digest article.

If a girl is drawn to cars and building toys then she’s labeled from a young age as a tomboy and if a boy is drawn to dolls then he’s seen as girly. This could be extremely damaging to a child’s mental health and sense of self. However, gender-neutral toys help avoid depression and further struggles in their adult lives. Gender-neutral aisles not only help children explore themselves but also help parents give children freedom to choose who they are.

This could build healthier relationships and futures for their children. However, some Republican leaders believe AB 1084 isn’t beneficial for kids and the government shouldn’t tell parents how to shop for their children, according to an Oct. 9 Associated Press News article. The government isn’t telling parents how to shop, it’s expanding gender paradigms that are pushed by society and allowing freedom for kids to express themselves.

In fact, for parents who believe their child should choose what interests them, starting with a gender-neutral toy section is beneficial. This law will help many children explore who they are as an individual.

The way children perceive their place in the world based on their gender matters. We should be more sensitive to the experiences of others in order to build a more inclusive society.

Royvi Hernandez contributed to this article.

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