

Hearts Full of Scepticism, Indian Farmers Agree for Talks with Delhi Government

Wondering whether the central government will be as open-minded as they are trying to project, farmers formally accept the government's offer to talk on December 30.

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Asia-Pacific Research, December 30, 2020

[Sabrangindia](#) 29 December 2020

Region: [South Asia](#)

Theme: [Justice](#), [Society](#)

Talks between farmers and the Centre are all set to take place on December 30 afternoon as the Sanyukta Kisan Morcha sends a letter to the government confirming the appointment on December 29, 2020.

However, they reminded the central government that discussion should focus on:

1. Modalities to be adopted to repeal the three Central Agricultural Laws
2. Procedure and provision for legal guarantee, procurement of profitable MSP as suggested by the National Farmers Commission for all farmers and agricultural commodities;
3. Amendments to the "Commission Ordinance for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region and adjoining areas, 2020" to exclude farmers from the penal provisions of the Ordinance
4. Procedure for withdrawal of draft 'Electricity Amendment Bill 2020' to protect the interests of farmers.

"A rational solution to the relevant issues would require that our dialogue run according to this agenda," said farmer leaders.

Additionally, Swaraj India leader Yogendra Yadav sent a video voicing concerns of farmers organisations. The video may be viewed below:

In a press release, the All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC) dismissed all rumours of alternate issues to be discussed in the meetings stating that there is no "possibility of any discussion in tomorrow's talks until the agenda of repeal of the three farm Acts and the Electricity Bill 2020 is taken up first."

It also asked the Agriculture Minister, whose department talked of making decisions on "issues, logic and facts" in the government letter, to keep in mind that the option of repealing the laws has been his table for the last seven months.

Regarding the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance & Farm Services Act, the Farmer's Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation)

Act and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, the AIKSCC said:

“It is illogical for the government to assert that these Acts benefit farmers. Crores of farmers who know the reality of Companies better than him have been sitting at his doorstep for over a month. The Acts will undermine government mandis, help bind farmers in contracts, create a large chain of middlemen for supervision, supply, etc., input costs, reduce prices, raise farmer debts and lead both to increased alienation from land and suicides.”

Dubbing the laws, ‘Contract Acts’, farmer leaders said they provide for farmers borrowing by mortgaging and for recovery of dues from land. They alleged the government is deliberately misleading the nation by asserting that it will promise MSP and procurement, while its own NITI Ayog Vice Chairman Ramesh Kumar wrote that the government has massive storage problems and has no intention to buy.

Addressing local protests, the organisation hailed nearly 10,000 farmers who assembled in Patna on Tuesday in solidarity the farmers’ struggle. They decried the lathi-charge that took place. Similarly, they thanked the massive turnout witnessed at Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu.

“AIKSCC has hailed all the participating farmers and their organizations for the exemplary discipline they have shown in their peaceful protest, despite repression. With rising BJP propaganda against farmers their fear of losing land and markets to Corporate rises,” said the AIKSCC.

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