

# Business Standard

## PM Modi announces 'high level task force' to bring structural reform in agriculture

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced a high-level task force to bring structural reforms in agriculture in the country, said NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar here on Saturday.

"The Prime Minister has announced a high-level task force to bring structural reform in agriculture. The task force will be constituted very soon. It will submit its report in 2-3 months. The emphasis is on how to increase production and marketing in the agriculture sector," said Kumar while briefing media persons about the 5th meeting of Governing Council of NITI Aayog.

Kumar said that rainwater harvesting, drought situation and relief measures, aspirational districts, agricultural sector transformation and modernisation, and security-related issues were the key issues discussed during the meeting.

"This is the first time after Independence that there is monsoon deficit continuously for five years. This year the monsoon is projected to be normal at about 96 per cent but still not 100 per cent. Chief Ministers of Maharashtra and Gujarat have told the meeting about the steps taken by them," said Kumar.

Talking about the North East Water Management Committee meeting, Kumar said: "The North East Water Management Committee constituted by the Prime Minister and chaired by me has submitted its report. It will be implemented as all north-east states have agreed to it. It deals with Brahmaputra-Barak river basin development."

Talking about the economy, Kumar said that the meeting has agreed that each and every state would set its own goal of increasing its economy. "The meeting decided that emphasis will be on increasing export," he said.

Kumar said that India's economy is to be made the US \$ 5 trillion dollar economy.

He also informed that Prime Minister Modi suggested that development should be done at block level for which blocks should be selected in the district and development should be done.

Talking about how the devolution from the Centre to the State, Kumar said: "Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman informed the devolution from the Centre to the State has increased by more than two times in the past five years from Rs 20 lakh crore to Rs 41 lakh crore."

NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant said the States had a request that the Central government should review the guidelines of the State Disaster Response Fund. "We will be doing it in cooperation with Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Agriculture," he said.

Kant said that Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath especially mentioned that the Forest Act needs a few changes while Goa and many other states said the production in the mining sector was at a decline.

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