

8 months after rolling back farm laws, Centre sets up MSP panel

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Nearly eight months after the government repealed the three controversial farm Acts, it has constituted a high-powered panel under the chairmanship of former agriculture secretary Sanjay Agarwal to make the minimum support price (MSP) mechanism more effective and transparent as promised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his televised address announcing the repeal.

The names of three members from the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), the main grouping that spearheaded the year-long agitation at Delhi's borders, have been withheld, pending receipt by the government, stated a gazette notification.

NITI Aayog member Ramesh Chand, Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad Professor Sukhpal Singh, Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Chairman Dilip Sanghani, secretaries of the Departments of Agriculture, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Food and Consumer Affairs, Cooperation and Textiles, along with representatives from the state governments of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Sikkim, and Odisha will also form part of the panel.

From the farmer groups, other than SKM, who have been included in the panel include Gunvant Patil, Krishan Bir Singh Choudhury, Pramod Kumar Chaudhary, Gunni Prakash, and Sayyed Pasha Patel.

Patil, Patel, and Bir Singh Choudhury



had been supporters of the now-repealed farm Acts and opposed SKM. A few, said sources, are even considered close to the ruling dispensation. Interestingly, Agarwal, who will chair the panel, was at the helm when the three farm Acts were brought in and was at the forefront of more than 10 rounds of negotiations that the agitating farmers had with the central government during the agitation. Meanwhile, among other names, representatives of agriculture

TASK CUT OUT ON MSP

- Suggest ways to make MSP available to farmers by making it effective and transparent

- Give more autonomy to the CACP

ON NATURAL FARMING

- Strategise to turn Krishi Vigyan Kendras and other research institutes into knowledge centres for natural farming

- Suggest setting up laboratory chains for organic certification

ON CROP DIVERSIFICATION

- Map existing cropping patterns

- Suggest a system that ensures a remunerative price to farmers for the sale of the new crop

universities and institutions have also been included in the panel. Joint secretary (crops) in the Ministry of Agriculture will be the member secretary in the panel. "During the agitation, farmers were assured that a panel would be formed to look into their demands for legalising MSP. If you look at the terms of reference of this committee, it talks about finding ways and means to ensure effective MSP for farmers," says Avik Saha, member of Jai Kisan Andolan.