

40. Farmer agitation instigation by arhatiyas and middleman fearing loss of Rs 6000 crores says BJP leader

By Gopal Krishna Agarwal,

Amidst the ongoing protests against the newly introduced farm laws, BJP leader and spokesperson for economic affairs, Gopal Krishna Agarwal has informed that the agitation has been instigated by commission agents known as arhatiyas after fearing annual loss of ₹6000 crores worth of commission.

As per reports, the BJP has accused the Congress and the commission agents of provoking the farmers for their ulterior motives. Gopal Krishna Agarwal said that it has been a long-standing demand that the government create alternatives markets for farmers and bring about a revolution in the agriculture sector. He reiterated that the introduction of the new farm bills was a step in that direction. The BJP leader added that the efforts of the government are being marred by a motivated campaign of opposition parties and commission agents. He stated that there are about 25,000 commission agents in Punjab, who would make ₹6000 crores by taking a cut of 8.5%. Agarwal said that the new farm laws have threatened the control of commission agents over the markets and that they are therefore spreading rumours, surrounding the Minimum Support Price (MSP) and the 'abolishment' of the Mandi system, with the support of the Congress party.

Farm laws meant to end the monopoly of commission agents

On being asked why the government does not give assurance to farmers in writing about the MSP, he clarified that the new farm laws have no connection to MSP. Gopal Krishna Agarwal emphasised that Mandi system and

MSP would remain the same, as it has been all these years. This point has been clarified by the central government including the prime minister multiple times.

He pointed out that the farm laws are specifically meant to end the monopoly of the commission agents at APMC (Agricultural produce market committee). He further added that the agents would force the farmers to sell their produce at the local market, as it would help them earn a commission of 8.5%.

Gopal Krishna Agarwal clears the confusion about MSP

The BJP spokesperson said that the BJP government has decided to purchase 15% of the total farm produce at the Minimum Support Price, as compared to 6% by the previous governments. “Those spreading rumours about MSP must realise that the Central government fixes the Minimum support price but the State governments have to purchase the crops at that price. The State governments are not financially sound to procure 100% of the farm produce, in addition to low storage capacity,” he remarked.

BJP leader questions timing of agitation, emphasises on the need for private investment

He had also questioned the timing of the renewed protests. Agarwal said that questions surrounding the agricultural laws were addressed in June itself. He added that the resurgence of the agitation in November implied that the farmers have been provoked and misled. The BJP spokesperson emphasised that while the warehousing and cold storage facilities are low in India, private investment in the particular sector will benefit the farmers as there is grain surplus in the country.