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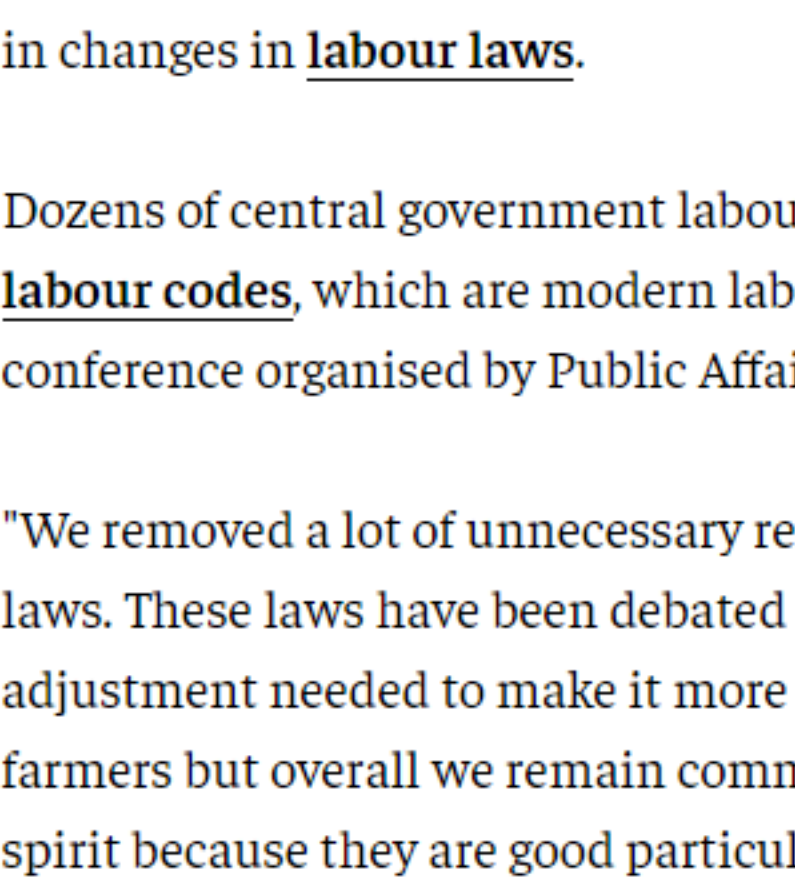
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Synopsis

Dozens of central government labour laws are now being replaced with four labour codes, which are modern labour codes, he said addressing a virtual conference organised by Public Affairs Forum of India.

Agencies



The government remains committed to implementing new farm laws in spirit because they are good particularly for small **farmers**, Principal Economic Adviser **Sanjeev Sanyal** said on Wednesday amid the ongoing protest against these laws.

As part of factor market reforms, he said, the government has also brought in changes in **labour laws**.

Dozens of central government labour laws are now being replaced with four **labour codes**, which are modern labour codes, he said addressing a virtual conference organised by Public Affairs Forum of India.

"We removed a lot of unnecessary regulations ... same thing we did with farm laws. These laws have been debated for 20-30 years ... there may be some adjustment needed to make it more smooth for certain segments of the farmers but overall we remain committed to implementing these farm laws in spirit because they are good particularly for small farmers," he said.

They allow essentially a market to be created after all nobody would want their products to be sold through a particular mandi, he added.

He clarified that existing mandis are not going to disappear but they will remain and compete with others.

However, thousands of farmers have been demanding a rollback of these three laws-- Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020, the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on **Price Assurance** and Farm Services Act, 2020 and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020.

These farmers have been protesting at several border points of Delhi since November 28 last year, demanding a repeal of the three laws and a legal guarantee to the minimum support price (**MSP**) procurement system for their crops.

Enacted in September last year, the three laws have been projected by the Centre as major reforms in the agriculture sector that will remove middlemen and allow farmers to sell their produce anywhere in the country.

However, the protesting farmers have expressed their apprehension that the new laws would pave the way for eliminating the safety cushion of the MSP and do away with the mandi (wholesale market) system, leaving them at the mercy of big corporates.

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Pradip Guhliote

This is not a law only but there is known provision against corruption

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Kishore Shivani

FARMERS ARE NOT ANNADATTAS BUT LOOTERS OF GOVT AND TAXPAYERS MONEY. THEY CONSUME 75 % OF LAND AND WATER RESOURCES OVER 70% OF FREEBIES UNDER GOVT WELFARE SCHEMES AND BPL DEMAND LOAN WAIVERS NOT ONLY THESE LAWS BE RIGOROUSLY IMPLEMENTED ...

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Sathish

No wonder why Sardarji jokes are famous. Middleman in North are confusing the farmers there for their political benefits. They get money from external forces, to continue the protest on behalf of lot of innocent farmers. Next time if farmers protest for a genuine reason, no one will listen to them!!

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Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar to present agriculture road map today

By Rituraj Tiwari, ET Bureau

Last Updated: Feb 20, 2021, 07:44 AM IST

Synopsis

Tomar will discuss promoting water conservation and crop diversification while aligning cropping system to agro-climatic conditions at the district level for optimum use of resources," said a senior agriculture ministry official.

Agencies



Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar will present a road map reimagining agriculture for future challenges before the governing council of Niti Aayog in presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday.

"Tomar will discuss promoting water conservation and **crop diversification** while aligning cropping system to agro-climatic conditions at the district level for optimum use of resources," said a senior agriculture ministry official.

He said that the agenda also includes deliberations on promoting food processing and agro-based industry and exports.

"The government has launched many agro-based funds including the Rs 1 lakh crore **agri infrastructure** fund. The minister will discuss plans on how to encourage states to utilise these funds. For growth, a focused intervention is needed to develop robust agri infrastructure including an electronic marketplace and value chain," the official said.

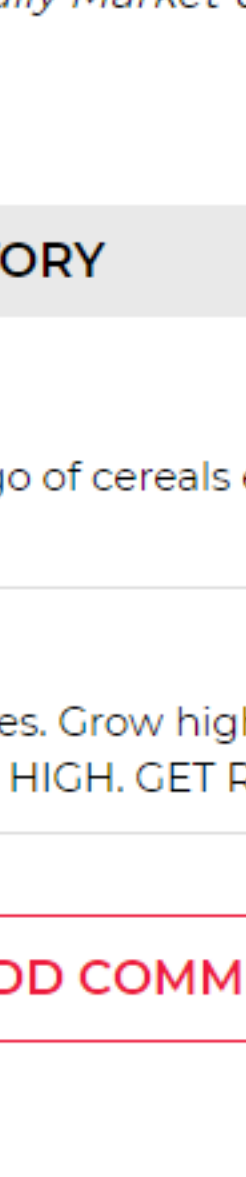
The government has divided the farm ecosystem into seven agro-climatic zones for assessing the cropping pattern to address the issue of climate change. It will help to move towards precision agriculture with optimum water and nutrient use through drip irrigation, fertigation, conservation agriculture and mechanisation.

"Climate changes are happening across the globe. We need to realign our crop planning as per the changes in climate and monsoon pattern. This will increase our productivity and help select the right crop to plant," the official said.

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He said that the government has sharpened its focus on crop diversification to ensure better realisation for **farmers** and encourage them to grow high-value horticulture crops. Planting of food grains like wheat and rice, which are in surplus, will only suppress prices.

"We have launched programmes to divert farmers from planting water-guzzling rice to pulses and nutri-cereals in Haryana and Punjab. Areas under rice have been reduced a bit but we need a more focused approach and incentivisation to promote crop diversification," he said.

The official said that agriculture minister Tomar will also share plans to promote agri exports, which can help double the farmers' income.

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Narendra Singh Tomar

Crop Diversification

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Harikesh A

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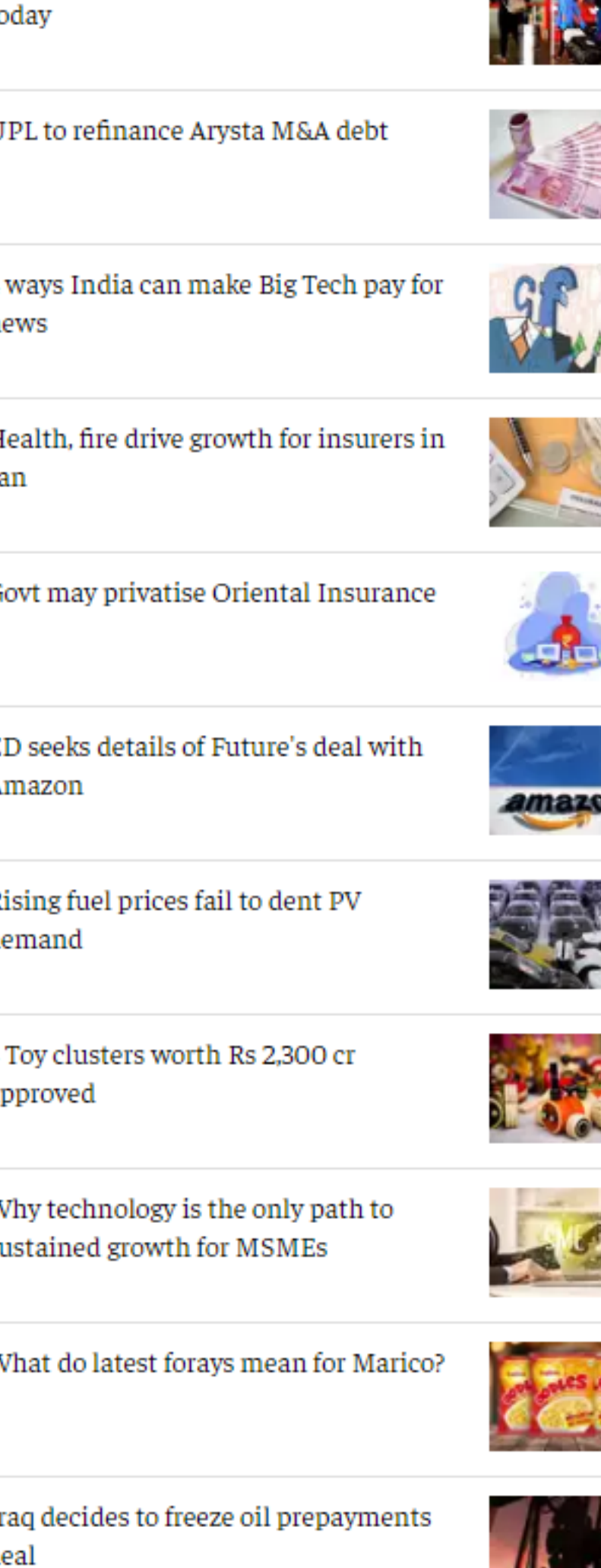
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Rs 2.97 lakh cr more food subsidy to be released this fiscal; Punjab, Haryana asked to use e-mode for farm payments

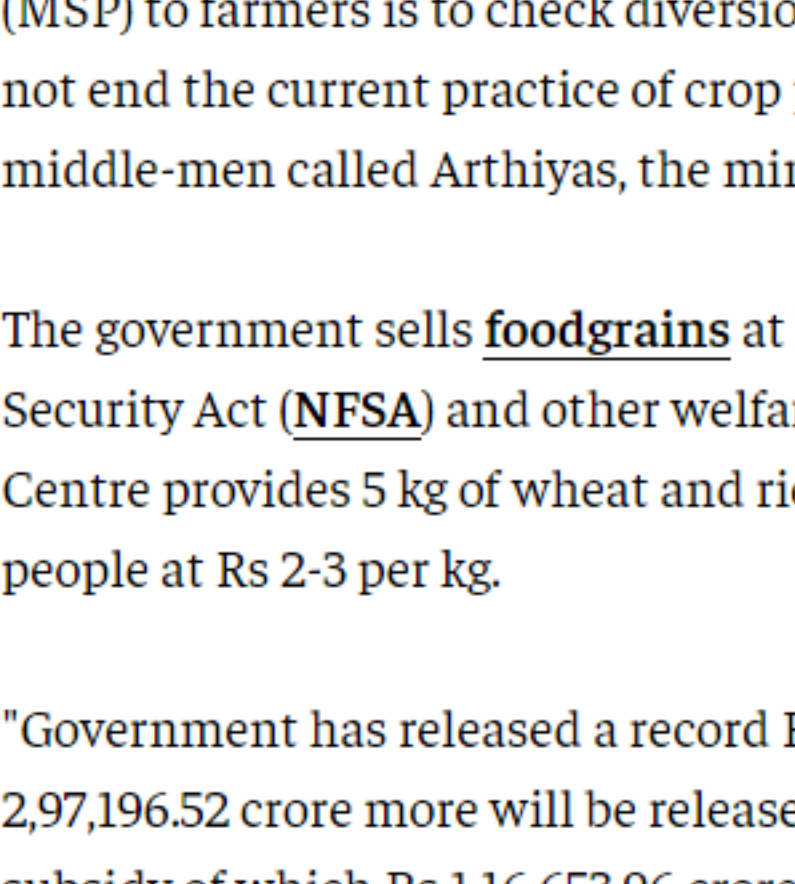
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Last Updated: Feb 19, 2021, 06:02 PM IST

Synopsis

While the usage of electronic modes to transfer the minimum support price (MSP) to farmers is to check diversion and avoid delays, the new system would not end the current practice of crop procurement through mandis and middle-men called Arthiyas, the ministry said.

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The government will release nearly Rs 3 lakh crore more **food subsidy** in the remaining two months of the current fiscal as the look to clear all previous backlogs, the food ministry said on Friday, adding that states such as Punjab and Haryana will compulsorily have to use electronic modes to pay crop price (**MSP**) to farmers.

While the usage of electronic modes to transfer the minimum support price (MSP) to farmers is to check diversion and avoid delays, the new system would not end the current practice of crop procurement through **mandis** and middle-men called Arthiyas, the ministry said.

The government sells **foodgrains** at huge subsidy under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and other welfare schemes. Under the food law, the Centre provides 5 kg of wheat and rice per month per person to over 80 crore people at Rs 2-3 per kg.

"Government has released a record Rs 1,25,217.62 crore this year and Rs 2,97,196.52 crore more will be released during this financial year towards food subsidy of which Rs 1,16,653.96 crore is reflected in PFMS towards Punjab," the statement said.

PFMS refers to the Public Financial Module System.

About Rs 24,841.56 crore is reflected towards Haryana.

According to the recent Budget paper, food subsidy rose sharply to Rs 4,22,618.14 crore in the Revised Estimate (RE) of 2020-21 fiscal from Rs 1,15,569.68 crore in the Budget Estimate, as the Centre distributed additional foodgrains free of cost to help poor mitigate the impact of COVID-19 pandemic.

For the next fiscal, food subsidy is estimated at Rs 2,42,836 crore.

"Government of India has no intention to eliminate Arthiyas in Punjab and Haryana and no directions have been issued to eliminate Arthiyas from the mandi system," the ministry added.

The government said that electronic mode of payment ensures that all participants including farmers, Arthiyas and mandis receive their payments directly online in order to ensure transparency and trail of payments.

"This is not a replacement of the current **APMC** system. It only strengthens transparency and elimination of leakages," it added.

Stating that e-mode of MSP payment is already in force across India, the ministry said the Centre has been trying to ensure the same in Punjab and Haryana at least since 2015-16.

"The central government is regularly pursuing with Punjab and Haryana governments for ensuring direct online payment into farmer's accounts since 2015-16. However, both the state governments have been routinely approaching the Centre for granting exemption/seeking time for implementation of direct online payment initiative.

"The government of India has therefore, directed **State Government** of Punjab and Haryana to ensure online payment to farmers through e-mode from upcoming season and that no further relaxation on this account will be accorded," the ministry said.

The ministry informed that e-mode of payment has already been adopted partially by Haryana and Punjab. A part of payment for this paddy procurement was done through the e-mode only.

"Direct online payment to farmers predates the three farm laws. In Punjab, payment of MSP was paid to the farmers through Arthiyas and in Haryana, FCI made payment of MSP directly to farmer's bank accounts under online mode, whereas state agencies made payment of MSP to the farmers partly through Arthiya and partly directly to farmer's account through online mode as per option given by the farmers in e-Kharid portal," the statement said.

The three new farm Acts were enacted in September last year. Thousands of farmers, mainly from Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh, have been protesting at Delhi borders from over two months now, seeking repeal of three farm laws and a legal guarantee of the MSP.

The state agencies have to ensure the use of Expenditure Advance Transfer module (EAT) of Public Financial Module System (PFMS) while making payment, as mandated by the Union Ministry of Finance.

The state governments have to integrate their online payment system with PFMS. The online payment system should have the feature of online registration of farmers and online payment to them as mandated by the Centre.

"Online procurement System ushers in transparency and convenience to the farmers through proper registration and monitoring of actual procurement. All States have also been encouraged to procure the produce of the farmers online," the statement said.

Through e-procuring module deployed by procuring agencies, farmers get latest/updated information regarding MSP declared, nearest purchase centre, date on which the farmer has to bring his produce to the purchase centre etc.

This has not only reduced the waiting period for delivery of stock by the farmers but also enables the farmer to deliver stock as per his convenience in the nearest mandi.

E-mode of payment ensure all value chain participants including farmers, Arthiyas, mandis etc get their payments directly instead of getting paid through another value chain participant (e.g. Arthiya paying the farmer). This ensures transparency and benefits for all. This is not a replacement of the current APMC system, the statement said.

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Pradeep Lenka

Hopefully - With this direction the strike by the middle man against the Farm Laws will come to an end

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