

## Samyukta Kisan Morcha Press Release



236th Day, 20th July 2021

Parliament Protest Plans stand as announced - Protesting Farmers will hold Kisan Sansad near Parliament on every working day of the Parliament Session: SKM

United Nations Food Systems Summit vulnerable to corporate takeover - this is exactly what our struggle here in India is against: Samyukt Kisan Morcha

In Sirsa, the stand-off between SKM and administration continues - Hunger Fast of Sardar Baldev Singh Sirsa enters Day 3 - SKM once again demands the immediate release of 5 arrested farmers - Haryana BJP and JJP leaders continue to face black flag protests everywhere

Samyukt Kisan Morcha is going ahead with its plans for Parliament Protests on all days of the Monsoon Session, as already announced. Kisan Sansads will be organised at Jantar Mantar by 200 protestors each day, and farmers will showcase how deliberative democratic processes are to be run, to strengthen Indian democracy. The 9 Member Coordination Committee of SKM held a meeting with senior officials of Delhi Police. The plans will be executed in an orderly, disciplined and peaceful manner. 200 selected protestors will leave from Singhu Border each day, with ID cards. SKM also stated that any violation of discipline will not be tolerated.

The current farmers' movement has already contributed much to the strengthening of our democracy. The Kisan Andolan has played the constructive role of an opposition party so far, in raising people-centric issues. Farmers, as a large proportion of our citizens, are seeking accountability from elected governments, and demanding that governance be close and accessible to ordinary citizens. The farmers' movement has thrown a big challenge to the Union Government legislating on Agriculture and (agricultural) Markets, which are state government subjects. The current struggle has also raised legitimate perspectives on how policy- and law-making should take on board citizens' perspectives, concerns and lived experiences. The farmers have already come up with a slogan around "Save Agriculture, Save Democracy". These protests at Jantar Mantar, from 22nd of July, will present issues from the ground, and it is expected that the People's Whip issued to all Parliamentarians will ensure that our issues are raised inside the Parliament, said SKM.

Today too, on Day 2 of the Monsoon Session of the Parliament, the farmers' movements demands and slogans were reflected in the Parliament. SKM would like Parliamentarians to note that crores of farmers are watching the MPs in action carefully, and are taking note of whether the People's Whip is being followed or not.

Samyukt Kisan Morcha is fighting against corporate control over our food and farming systems here in India, and against our Government abdicating its responsibility and obligation to protect citizens' interests. Meanwhile, an international process is underway in the United Nations. Called the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), a pre-summit meeting is slated in Rome between July 26th and 28th 2021, while the actual Summit will be in September in the USA. Samyukt Kisan Morcha recognises the corporate influence on the United Nations' Food Systems Summit. The UNFSS appears very vulnerable to 'corporate takeover', even as it talks about "nature positive solutions" for the

crises in our food systems, and this is not acceptable. Instead of such a process being led by citizens' collectives including farmers' and consumers' unions, it has been taken over by entities that are mostly seen in Davos with eyes set on profits and wealth accumulation. These are entities mimicking progressive innovative solutions evolved from grassroots, including by indigenous knowledge and innovations, but modified now to provide greater opportunities for corporates. Citizens of the world will not be fooled by green-washing and other tactics of profit-hungry corporations any more. It is time that we collectively set right our food systems to prioritise social equity, economic justice and profitability for ordinary citizens and small enterprises, environmental sustainability, nutrition security, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, regeneration of natural resources, control of such resources in the hands of farming communities etc. SKM warns against any derailing of real localised solutions, accompanied by fundamental structural shifts that re-affirm community control over our food systems. Such localised sustainable food systems cannot be ignored at the behest of corporate consultants and others, in the UNFSS processes.

In Sirsa, the indefinite hunger fast of Sardar Baldev Singh Sirsa has entered Day 3 today. The stand-off with the administration continues, even after a meeting between the administration and farmers' delegation yesterday. After a July 11th 2021 protest against the Deputy Speaker of Haryana Assembly Ranbir Gangwa, cases have been falsely foisted in the name of more than 100 farmers, with serious charges like sedition included. SKM demands that all cases be withdrawn and five arrested protestors be released immediately. In Sirsa itself, Deputy CM Dushyant Chautala was met with black flag protests yesterday, despite his convoy being diverted from Ramayan toll plaza where a large gathering of protestors took place. In Charkhi Dadri, another BJP leader Babita Phogat had to face black flag protests from farmers.

In Chandigarh, three arrested farm activists got bail yesterday. The Chandigarh Police could not show the involvement of the arrested in the incidents of Saturday involving two BJP leaders, and consequently, the bail was granted. The lawyers' group fighting on behalf of the protestors will also apply for quashing of the FIRs, which led to false and fabricated cases foisted on the protestors by Chandigarh Police.

In Karnataka, farmers will mark July 21st 2021 as the 41st Martyrs' Memorial Day in Nargund of Gadag district. It was on this day in 1980, two farmers were killed in police firing in an agitation against a so-called "betterment levy" imposed on farmers by the government. The current agitation led by SKM will feature prominently in the Martyrs Memorial this year.

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