

FARMER PROTEST

Farmers from Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh, initiated their 'Chalo Delhi' march following an inconclusive meeting with the Union government. It is the second phase of protest.

Summary Table:

Genuine concerns	Unrealistic demands.
<p>1. Demand 'justice' for victims of Lakhimpur Kheri violence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers were camped at Tikunia in Lakhimpur Kheri district of Uttar Pradesh in 2021, blocking highways to Delhi, in protest against the now repealed farm laws, when four of them were mowed down by a car. A driver and two workers were allegedly lynched in retaliation by angry farmers. A journalist also died in the violence that ensued. • A special investigation team of the UP Police has charged Union minister Ajay Kumar Mishra's son Ashish Mishra of murder and criminal conspiracy, as he was allegedly driving the vehicle. He is out on bail. • Farmer unions have demanded 'justice' for the victims and compensation to the families. They also want cases filed against farmers during the 2020-21 protests to be withdrawn. • Reports suggest the government has agreed to provide compensation to Lakhimpur Kheri victims. • Now, the main accused Ajay Kumar Mishra is out on bail. 	<p>1. Legal guarantee for minimum support price (MSP).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm union leaders are seeking guarantees, backed by law, a minimum support price (MSP) for crops. • The government announces support prices for more than 20 crops each year to set a benchmark, but state agencies buy only rice and wheat at the support level, benefiting around just 7% of farmers . • State agencies buy the two staples at government-fixed minimum support prices to build reserves to run the world's biggest food welfare programme that entitles 800 million Indians to free rice and wheat. • This costs the government \$24.7 billion (over ₹2,000 crore) annually – its largest outgoing subsidy. • In 2021, when the central government repealed the farm laws after India's longest farmer protests in years, the government said it would set up a panel of growers and government officials to find ways to ensure support prices for all produce. • Farmers accuse the government of going slow in fulfilling that promise. • Farm policy experts argue that buying all farm produce at state-set minimum support prices is economically unviable. <p>Pros:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Financial security- Legally guaranteed MSP would ensure farmers fixed remunerations to the farmers by financially securing them against the vagaries of price instability in the market.

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	<p>A case study demonstrating the impact of guaranteed minimum prices for agricultural products can be seen in the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Established in 1962, the CAP aims to support farmers financially, ensure a stable food supply, and secure farmers' livelihoods across EU member states. It does so through direct payments to farmers, market measures to stabilize agricultural prices, and rural development programs - and it was successfully able to do it.</p> <p>Despite its success in providing financial security and promoting sustainability, the CAP has faced criticism regarding its cost, complexity, and the unequal distribution of benefits, often favoring larger farms. Nonetheless, the CAP serves as a significant example of how policy mechanisms can offer financial protection to the agricultural sector.</p> <p>2. Risk Cover- Legal guarantee to MSP would provide security to farmers from the risk of crop failure due to climate change, pests attacks and crop diseases.</p> <p>3. Promotion of crop diversification- MSP law would promote crop diversification as farmers would be incentivised to grow less water-intensive crops like pulses and millets rather than water guzzling crops like rice, wheat and sugarcane.</p> <p>A notable example of successful crop diversification driven by government incentives can be seen in the case of Morocco's "Green Morocco Plan" (Plan Maroc Vert), launched in 2008.</p> <p>This ambitious agricultural policy aimed to increase agricultural productivity, ensure food security, and promote sustainable agricultural practices, including crop diversification, across the country.</p> <p>Before the implementation of the Green Morocco Plan, Morocco's agriculture was heavily dependent on a few key crops, particularly cereals like wheat and barley, which are vulnerable to fluctuations in</p>

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	<p>rainfall. The government recognized the need to diversify agricultural production to stabilize incomes, conserve water, and meet the changing dietary needs of its population, but along with the incentives it also included focused incentives for diversification, water management and Market Access and Value Chain Development for those focused crops.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Baseline or benchmark price- MSP sends a price-signal to the market that if merchants don't offer higher than MSP prices, the farmer may not sell them his produce. Thus, it ensures that the market prices will not be drastically lower than MSP. 5. Solution to rural economic Distress- Minimum Support Price (MSP) can help in injecting financial resources into the rural sector. This will help in solving the problem of rural economic distress, which has been exacerbated due to demonetisation and COVID-19. For ex- Increase in MSP would increase the disposable income of farmers and agricultural labourers which in turn would boost the economy. 6. Right to Farmers- According to Shanta Kumar Report, only 6% of the farm households are able to sell wheat and rice to the government at the MSP rates. MSP Law would give legal rights to farmers to sell their produce to Govt agencies like FCI at MSP, in case they fail to get commensurate prices from the market. <p>Why Unrealistic?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Administrative Costs: Implementing the MSP system requires administrative infrastructure, personnel, and operational expenses. These administrative costs, including monitoring, supervision, and compliance, contribute to the fiscal burden borne by the government. ● Market Distortions: Critics argue that the MSP system can distort agricultural markets by influencing cropping patterns, price discovery mechanisms, and resource allocation. These market distortions may have long-term economic implications and add to

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	<p>the fiscal burden indirectly. Example farmers growing cotton instead of millet in drought prone areas of Marathwada.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● High fiscal burden : Rs 5 trillion is required for implementation of MSP guarantee law. ● Rise in Water guzzling crops like Rice in Haryana. ● Violation of WTO subsidy principle. ● Diversification via MSP and subsidies is impossible due to lack of institutional capacity. The government cannot buy all kinds of crops and store them. Over decades, Food Corporation of India has gained notoriety for grains rotting in its storage.
<p>2. Compensation for families of deceased farmers from previous protests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The farmers have also demanded from the government compensation for families of those who died during the protest, including a job for one family member. 	<p>2. Withdrawal from the World Trade Organisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● According to WTO rules, member countries are required to limit the amount of domestic support they provide to their agricultural producers. This is because excessive subsidies can distort international trade. They also include individual countries' commitments to lower trade barriers and open services markets. Many countries express concern about India's subsidy to its farmers, saying it will affect the global agricultural business. ● Indian farmers want legal guarantee regarding MSP, but WTO rules are exactly the opposite. India has also promised that it will not give any guarantee on fixing its MSP. Due to this, farmers want India to come out of WTO to accept their demands related to MSP. Besides, it should also cancel all FTAs so that it does not have to bow to the conditions of any other country or organization. <p>Why Unrealistic?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India would face opposition in the WTO Dispute Settlement Body, thereby impacting India's Exports . ● It would aggravate economic consequences.

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<p>3. Implementation of MS Swaminathan committee recommendations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Among many things, the protesting farmers are pushing for the implementation of the Swaminathan Committee report. The National Commission of Farmers, led by late Bharat Ratna M S Swaminathan, recommended that the minimum support price should be at least 50 per cent more than the comprehensive cost. • As per this commission's report, there are three variables to determine the production cost. A2 is out-of-pocket expenses met by farmers, which include loans for fertilizers and fuel as well as cost of leasing land. A2+FL refers to the value of unpaid labor such as contribution of family members and others, an addition to paid-out cost. • C2 is the actual cost of production, including account rent and interest foregone on land and machinery owned by farmers. As per the Commission, the formula to calculate MSP would be: MSP= C2+ 50 per cent of C2 	<p>3. Repeal Electricity amendment bill 2020.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrapping the bill because farmers fear the growing privatization of electricity and don't trust the state governments to pay subsidies on time. • Farmers also demand not to raise electricity tariff and no installations of smart meters as per the new electricity bill. • They also demanded free 300 units of electricity for farming and domestic use and shops. • Union Ministers also assured farmers that they will be kept out of the Electricity act. <p>Why Unrealistic?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burden on public exchequer. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Punjab: The state's subsidy bill for providing free electricity to farmers was projected to be over INR 6,000 crores (approximately \$800 million USD) for certain fiscal years. ○ Tamil Nadu: The state has one of the highest agricultural electricity subsidy bills, with figures often exceeding INR 7,000 crores (around \$930 million USD) annually. • Misuse and overexploitation of water. <p>Area Under Water-Intensive Crops:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Punjab: The state dedicates a significant portion of its agricultural land to paddy and wheat. For instance, the area under paddy cultivation in Punjab has often been reported to be around 2.5 to 3 million hectares during the kharif (monsoon) season. ○ Haryana: Similar to Punjab, Haryana also allocates a large area to paddy, though not as extensive as Punjab. The area under paddy cultivation can vary but has been significant, contributing to groundwater stress. • Example Punjab where free electricity and subsidized electricity have led to increased salinity in the soil.

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<p>4. Withdrawal of cases from farmers participated in the protest.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sources indicate that after the union government presented to farmers that they had already complied with various demands of farmers. Out of 3300 cases, over 3077 were withdrawn, 98 cases are pending in court and 53 cases are pending withdrawal which amounts to only two percent. 	<p>4. Farmers demand a waiver on repayment of agricultural loans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Federation of Farmers Association and Sugarcane Cultivators Association have demanded a waiver on repayment of agricultural loan availed by the farmers. • Farmers were in distress either due to flood or drought for the last three years and were suffering crop loss and financial distress. • While the government waives off industrial loans by classifying them as Non-Performing Asset or NPA, the farmers are pressured to repay in full. • Government has released ₹2000 as drought relief, which farmers described as crumbs and said that the farmers were not beggars. • Instead, the government should reimburse the actual loss suffered by the farmers and announce ₹25,000 per acre. <p>Why Unrealistic?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selective Benefit: Farm loan waivers often benefit only a portion of farmers, particularly those with institutional loans from banks. • Moral Hazard and Cycle of Dependency: Loan waivers can create moral hazard by incentivizing risky borrowing behavior among farmers, who may expect future waivers in case of financial distress. • Financial Burden on Government: Farm loan waivers impose a significant financial burden on state and central governments. • Distortionary Effects: Loan waivers can distort credit markets by reducing the willingness of banks to lend to farmers, particularly small and marginal ones perceived as higher credit risks. • Temporary Relief, Not Structural Reform: Loan waivers provide temporary relief to farmers facing financial distress but do not address the underlying structural issues plaguing the agriculture sector, such as low productivity, market volatility, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of diversification.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Political Tool: Loan waivers are often used as a political tool by governments to win electoral support or appease agrarian communities during periods of unrest.
<p>5. Reinstatement of the Land Acquisition Act 2013.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Farmers are demanding compensation for the land taken by the government for different projects. They are also asking for 10% of developed land to be reserved for their families. 	<p>5. Lack of clarity in demand due to multiple demands by multiple Farmer associations.</p> <p>Ex Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM), Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The ongoing protests are spearheaded by the Samyukt Kisan Morcha led by Jagjit Singh Dhallewal and Sarwan Singh Pandher, who were not prominent in the previous farmers' protest. ● Two groups led by Darshan Pal and Balbir Singh Rajewal have given a separate call for a Bharat Bandh on February 16. ● BKU (Ugrahan) has given a separate call for Rail Roko against excessive use of state force in Haryana on February 15
<p>6. Enforce stringent penalties on companies involved in the production of counterfeit seeds, pesticides, and fertilizers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● They also said that the government is on the same page as far as the action of fake seeds and fake pesticides are concerned. 	<p>6. Monthly income to farmers and agricultural Laborers(rupees 10000/month).</p> <p>PM KISAN scheme:Under the scheme, the Centre transfers an amount of Rs 6,000 per year, in three equal installments, directly into the bank accounts of all landholding farmers irrespective of the size of their land holdings</p>

Farm loan waivers: So far, so much

10 states have offered write-offs, some more than once. Nearly all states are implementing these waivers with many riders and in a phased manner to dissipate their financial impact, meaning there is a huge gap between eligible beneficiaries and those who have actually got relief so far.

State	Announced on	Limit* (in ₹/lakh)	Total Amount (in ₹/cr)	Beneficiaries** (in mn)
Karnataka	July 5 2018	2	42,165	4.3
Uttar Pradesh	Apr 14 2017	1	36,359	4.4
Madhya Pradesh	Dec 17 2018	2	35,000	3.4
Maharashtra	June 11 2017	1.5	30,500	3.9
Andhra Pradesh	Aug 2 2014	1.5	24,000	4.9
Rajasthan	Dec 19 2018	Full	18,000	3.3
Telangana	Aug 13 2014	1	17,000	3.6
Punjab	June 11 2017	2	10,000	1
Rajasthan	Feb 12 2018	0.5	8,500	2.8
Chhattisgarh	Dec 17 2018	Full	6,100	1.6
Tamil Nadu	May 23 2016	1.5	5,318	1.2
Chhattisgarh	Dec 26 2015	1	129.7	0.5
Jammu & Kashmir	Jan 23 2017	1	2.4	0.1

*Individual loan not exceeding **Eligible beneficiaries

Present Farmer protest

- The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha had announced that more than 200 farm unions would head to Delhi on February 13 to press the Centre to accept several demands, including the enactment of a law to guarantee a minimum support price (MSP) for crops.

Why Punjab is center of farmer of protest:

- Farm protests have been loudest in states such as Punjab and Haryana, states where the procurement system and MSP mechanism is strong.
- A 2016 **NITI Aayog report** states that 100% of farmers in Punjab sell their crops at MSP.
- According to the government, the number of farmers selling paddy crops on MSP in the Kharif season increased by 70% in 2019 compared to 2015. Similarly, the number of farmers taking advantage of MSP on wheat during the Rabi season also increased by 112% in 2020 compared to 2016.
- A central government committee report states that **only 6% of the country's farmers take advantage of MSP.**
- The biggest problem Punjab agriculture faces today is desertification. Plunging water tables are turning fertile land into desert.
- According to a **Punjab government report published in 2018**, groundwater in about 79% of the state's area is over-exploited, and groundwater resources are likely to be used up completely by 2039, following which only annual replenishable resources will be available for consumption.

Punjab crisis both reason and consequence of farmer protest:

- Punjab which was once a beacon of prosperity and agricultural abundance, now stands on the precipice of economic collapse.
- It is now haunted by the specter of recurring protests that have wreaked havoc on its development and stability.
- The aftermath of the farmers' agitation of 2020-21 continues to cast a long shadow over the state, with various organizations claiming to champion farmers' welfare emerging as opportunistic actors, exaggerating the plight of the very community they purport to serve.
- The economic landscape of Punjab, once characterized by robust growth and prosperity, now bears the scars of prolonged unrest.
- The state's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) languishes below the national average, with double-digit growth remaining an elusive dream for the past five years.
- Persistent revenue deficits, averaging around 70% and reaching alarming levels in recent years, have forced Punjab into a cycle of debt dependency, jeopardizing its fiscal health.
- As Punjab struggles to recover from the protracted protests of the past three years, another wave of demonstrations looms on the horizon.

Way forward:

To placate protesters, the government might agree to provide them a bonus over and above the minimum support price for 2024.

It has fixed this year's minimum support price for wheat at **₹2,275/100 kg, 7% higher than in 2023.**

Dialogue and Negotiation:	The government and farmers' representatives should engage in sincere dialogue and negotiation to address the grievances of the farming community. This dialogue should be inclusive, transparent, and based on mutual respect.
Repeal or Amendment of Farm Laws:	Considering the widespread opposition to the farm laws, the government could consider repealing the laws or amending them in consultation with farmers' unions to address their concerns and ensure that the laws promote the interests of small and marginalized farmers.
Guaranteed Minimum Support Price (MSP):	Ensuring a legal guarantee for MSP for various agricultural commodities could provide farmers with a safety net and help stabilize farm incomes. This could be accompanied by measures to ensure the effective implementation of MSP across all regions and crops.
Debt Relief and Financial Support:	Providing debt relief and financial support to farmers, especially small and marginalized farmers burdened with mounting debts, could alleviate their financial distress and improve their livelihoods.
Investment in Agriculture and Rural Development:	Increased investment in agriculture, rural infrastructure, irrigation facilities, and agri-processing industries could enhance productivity, reduce post-harvest losses, and create additional sources of income for farmers.
Environmental Sustainability:	Promoting sustainable farming practices, conservation agriculture, and natural resource management could help address environmental challenges while improving farm resilience and long-term sustainability.

Access to Credit and Social Security:	Ensuring timely and adequate access to institutional credit, crop insurance, and social security schemes could provide farmers with financial stability and protect them from risks associated with agriculture.
Empowerment of Farmers:	Strengthening farmers' collectives, cooperatives, and producer organizations could empower farmers to negotiate better prices, access markets, and adopt innovative farming practices.
Awareness and Education:	Promoting awareness and education among farmers about their rights, entitlements, and available support mechanisms could empower them to make informed decisions and advocate for their interests effectively.
Long-Term Policy Planning:	Developing a comprehensive and coherent agricultural policy framework, with input from all stakeholders, could provide a roadmap for sustainable agricultural development, rural transformation, and poverty alleviation.

Case Study:

The incident is with respect to "Cancer Train" in Punjab, India. This train gained importance due to the high incidence of cancer among its passengers. Many of these are believed to be agricultural workers exposed to pesticides and other chemicals. The train, officially known as the Bhatinda-Delhi passenger train, gained its nickname because it carries a significant number of cancer patients traveling to Delhi for treatment.

The region of Punjab has faced various environmental and health challenges, including groundwater contamination and high levels of pesticide use in agriculture, which have been linked to increased cancer rates among the population. The "Cancer Train" highlights the urgent need for environmental and health interventions in the region to address these issues and provide support for affected communities.

India’s Agriculture sector:

- Agriculture is the main source of income and employment for more than 50% of the Indian population directly.
- To Enhance the Growth and Stability of The Economy: Agriculture contributes around 17-18% to the GDP of India.
- Agriculture, along with its allied sectors, is the largest source of livelihoods in India.
- An estimated 70% of its rural households still depend primarily on agriculture for their livelihood.

Trends of India Agriculture Sector:

- In 2017-18, total food grain production was estimated at 275 million tonnes (MT).
- India is the largest producer (25% of global production), consumer (27% of world consumption) and importer (14%) of pulses in the world.
- India’s annual milk production was 165 MT (2017-18) thus making India the largest producer of milk, jute and pulses, and with the world’s second-largest cattle population 190 million in 2012.

- India is the second-largest producer of rice, wheat, sugarcane, cotton and groundnuts, as well as the second-largest fruit and vegetable producer, accounting for 10.9% and 8.6% of the world's fruit and vegetable production, respectively.
- The Indian agricultural and allied sector accounted for about 17.5 % of India's GVA, and it ensured food security for the 1.3 billion population of India.
- Many agro-based industries such as textile, leather, sugar, tea, etc., are dependent on the agricultural sector.
- Agribusiness in India is contributing greatly to the national income of India.
- Therefore, it is said that agriculture is the backbone of the Indian economy.
- Agricultural exports constitute around a fifth of the total exports of the country.

Challenges of India's Agriculture Sector:

Challenges	About
Food inflation:	Despite the success in terms of production that has ensured food security in the country, food inflation and its volatility remain a challenge.
Crop productivity:	In India, the crop productivity is much lower than other advanced and emerging market economies due to various factors, like fragmented landholdings, lower farm mechanization and lower public and private investment in agriculture.
Conventional method of cultivation:	In spite of the large scale mechanization of agriculture in some parts of the country most of the agricultural operations in larger parts are carried on by human hand using simple and conventional tools and implements like wooden plough, sickle, etc.
Environmental hazards:	Current overproduction of crops like rice, wheat and sugarcane, has led to rapid depletion of the ground-water table, soil degradation and massive air pollution raising questions about the environmental sustainability of current agricultural practices in India.
Overutilization of fertilizers:	The government spends well over ₹1-lakh crore per annum towards fertilizer subsidy translating into approximately ₹7,000 per farmer. This led to indiscriminate use of fertilizers resulting in irreparable ecological damage, soil infertility, and a toxic food chain. Soil position in Punjab is unhealthy as 246 kg of fertilizers are used per hectare compared to the national average of 135 kg.
Irrigation:	Although India is the second largest irrigated country of the world after China, only one-third of the cropped area is under irrigation. Irrigation is the most important agricultural input in a tropical monsoon country like India.
Agricultural marketing:	Agricultural marketing still continues to be in a bad shape in rural India. In the absence of sound marketing facilities, the farmers have to depend upon local traders and middlemen for the disposal of their farm produce which is sold at throw-away price.

Challenges	About
Manures, Fertilizers and Biocides:	Indian soils have been used for growing crops over thousands of years without caring much for replenishing. This has led to depletion and exhaustion of soils resulting in their low productivity.

About Farmer Protest

- Farmers Protest 2.0 is in motion, this time called 'Delhi Chalo'. Nearly after two years, farmers from Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh, with over 200 unions heading, are marching towards Delhi today after inconclusive talks with Union ministers on Monday.
- Samyukt Kisan Morcha urges farmer organizations to participate in the Gramin Bharat Bandh on February 16, demanding pensions, MSP for crops, and withdrawal of labor law amendments.

History of Farmer protest in the country:**Farmers in Colonial Era:**

- India was a largely agrarian society when the Britishers occupied the country.
- Agriculture was not conducted without its problems, but it was sufficient for the sustainability and livelihood of farmers.
- Most estimates report that around 85% of the population earned their livelihood from agriculture and related sectors during the colonial period.
- However, the Britishers wanted to maximize their own profits at the expense of farmers and peasants.

During the colonial era, farmers had to go through problems like:

- **The exploitation of agricultural laborers:**
 - Zamindars and landlords exploited poor farmers to the point that many even worked as bonded laborers on farms.
- **Unfavorable policies:**
 - The colonial rulers carefully devised policies that benefited those who were already privileged.
 - They were meant to protect and benefit moneylenders and landlords.
- **High taxes:**
 - Tax rates during the colonial era were one of the highest in the world.
 - Even if the farmers' crops failed, they were not exempted from paying taxes.
- **Zamindari system:**
 - It was a major impediment to farmers' economic conditions and growth.
 - It was prevalent mostly in the Bengal presidency.

Farmer movements in India before the 1900s:

Farmer movements in the country before the 1900s were unorganized and staggered.

Indigo Revolt:

- Britishers forced farmers to grow indigo instead of food crops to maximize profits.
- The government in 1860 formed the Indigo commission that ruled that it was illegal to force cultivators to grow indigo.

Deccan Riots of 1875

- They were held to protest against the high money demand of Marwadi and Gujarati moneylenders.

Farmer movements in India after the 1900s**Champaran Satyagraha (1917):**

- In Bihar's Champaran, farmers were forced to grow indigo on at least 3/20th of their farmland, for which they received minimal income.

Kheda Satyagraha (1919):

- In Gujarat's Kheda, farmers' harvest failed due to drought-like conditions.
- However, even then they were forced to pay taxes.

Bardoli Movement (1928):

- Even after a crop failure, the British government refused to omit tax collections and even hiked the land revenue by 30%.

FARMERS' MOVEMENT POST INDEPENDENCE:

- **Peasant movements led by Marxist and Socialists-** such as
 - Telangana Movement (1946-51),
 - Tebhaga movement (1946-1949),
 - Kagodu Satyagraha (1951),
 - Naxalbari Movement (1967) and
 - Lalgarh movement (2009).

Some of the most important struggles that were carried till the beginning of 1980s were:

- Anti-Single Food Zone, 1972
- Struggle against Power Tariff, 1975
- Struggle against increasing water rates and increasing commercial tax, 1975
- Agitation against defective tractors 1977
- Diesel morcha, 1979 .

The 1980s saw the beginning of what is called the **New Farmers' Movement in different parts of India. The reasons were:**

- terms of trade going against agriculture,
- declining purchasing power,

- un-remunerative prices,
- agriculture becoming a losing proposition,

It all began in Maharashtra when Shetkari Sanghatana under Sharad Joshi, a former employee of UN turned farmer, began agitating in a village called Chakan in Pune for remunerative prices for agricultural commodities, particularly for onion.

How to distinguish “peasants from farmers”?

- Is peasant a suitable analytical category in the post-independence period?
- In fact, the concept of “peasant” is now increasingly being replaced by “farmers” for the simple reason that the development paradigm initiated during the post-independence period has created a new category called ‘Market Oriented’ farmers.
- The peasant is simply defined as a social category, who lives at **subsistence level and desists from market competition.**
- On the contrary, the farmer is involved in **market competition and tries to be autonomous** while dealing with production, distribution and cropping pattern issues.
- In Fact the introduction of the **green revolution, new technology, government subsidies etc has created such a category in the recent past.**
- These categories are also called **“rich farmers”**. The struggle that these farmers resorted to in recent years has been conceptualized as **‘New Farmers’ Movement’**.
- The latter movement comes closer to the **Gandhian movement of yesteryears.**
- Some organizations in the New Farmers’ Movement such as the one in **Karnataka vouched for Gandhism openly.**
- Others such as **Shetkari Sanghatana of Maharashtra** did not accept or adhere to Gandhism in total.

Phrases of Current Farmer protest:

Farmer protest 2020:

Spark for protest:

- In the monsoon session of parliament of 2020, the government passed three acts with the intention of bringing reforms in Agriculture.
- However, farmer groups have not received them well and have asked for the repeal of the acts.
- Despite government assurances to bring about amendments for removal of any provisions affecting the livelihood of farmers, the farmers have been unwavering in their demand for the absolute repeal of the acts.

Bills	Features	Concerns raised by Farmers
The Farmers’ Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation)	The act creates a system of sale and purchase of agricultural commodities outside the Agricultural Produce and Marketing Committee (APMC)	APMC act or the Farmers’ Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act: The farmers have stated that doing away with APMCs would pave the way for

Bills	Features	Concerns raised by Farmers
<p>Bills, 2020:</p>	<p>mandis and promotes electronic trading of agricultural produce. It attempts to remove barriers to inter-state trade of agricultural products and to encourage the integration of markets for seamless supply and meeting the demand across the territory of the country.</p>	<p>discontinuation of the MSP system in the future. Therefore, they have demanded a legal status for the Minimum Support Price (MSP) system (see inset). Apart from that, APMCs provide an accountability mechanism where trust is formed due to the registration of arhatiya or middle-men. In the absence of the registration mechanism, there is a scope for cheating the farmer as there is no agency to resolve credit or payments related disputes. Similarly, APMCs have the power to protect the interests of farmers by levying fees or cess on trade and providing necessary services and infrastructure for the facilitation of trade in agricultural produce.</p>
<p>The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020:</p>	<p>The act formalizes the system of contract farming, to eliminate the chances of exploitation of farmers under the presently prevalent informal system. It creates a framework of agreements between a farmer and the private company, which lists the price, quality, grade, standards, quantity and other terms and conditions, before the sowing of seeds. It provides for remunerative price discovery for the farmer to ensure higher returns. It also guarantees a minimum price in case of price variations, while at the same time, ensuring a premium in case of an unexpected rise in prices due to supply distortions or increase in demand. Also, it ensures a quicker resolution of disputes between private players, businesses and corporates on one hand and the farmers on the other by prescribing the time limit for</p>	<p>Contract Farming Act or the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020:</p> <p>The act does not mention the mechanism of fixing the price of the commodities, leading to concerns about the ability of private companies to exploit the farmers by unfair determination of prices in the favor of the former. Farmers have questioned the dispute resolution mechanism, which relied upon the executive. The bill aspires to resolve the disputes at the local level itself to decrease the reliance upon the judiciary, which is hobbled by the pendency of cases. But farmers fear the deep pockets of private corporations and the business-bureaucracy nexus, combined with a lack of resources in case of farmers for a legal battle, would lead to decisions in corporations' favor.</p>

Bills	Features	Concerns raised by Farmers
	<p>each level of the dispute resolution process, i.e. the conciliation board, magistrate and appellate authority.</p> <p>It includes the provision of penalty for contravening the agreement.</p> <p>However, it protects the farmers by providing against the possibility of taking action against the farmers' land for recovery of dues.</p>	
<p>The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2020:</p>	<p>The act delists six commodities viz. cereals, pulses, onion, potatoes, edible oils and oilseeds from the list of essential commodities. However, it creates an exception in the cases of war, famine, natural calamity or extraordinary price rise.</p> <p>It deregulates the storage of these commodities and removes the stock-holding limits, which had been imposed to curb hoarding and black marketing of the essential commodities</p>	<p>The act introduces objectivity in the imposition of stock limits based on the price rise of commodities, while creating an exception even in extraordinary situations. Critics have pointed out that this will undermine food security.</p> <p>Concerns emanate from the possibility of hoarding by the warehouse owners or the corporate storehouses, leading to scarcity of supply of the crops and might lead to artificial inflation. This would harm the poor sections as they spend a larger proportion of their incomes on food related expenses.</p>

Nihang Sikh Conflict during 2020 protests:

- A day after a 35-year-old man was brutally lynched and strung up at the farmers' protest site at Singhu border

Laws repealed in November 2021

- On 19 November 2021, after nearly a year of mass protests against the laws, the Hon'ble Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, made a surprise announcement that his Government would repeal the farm laws.

Do farmers have other demands?

- They also want the **government to honor a promise to double their incomes**, complaining that costs of cultivation have jumped over the past few years while incomes have stagnated, making farming a loss-making enterprise.
- In 2016, **the government pledged to step up investment in rural development, aiming to double farmer incomes by 2022.**
- Farmers also insist that the **government ensure at a least 50% profit** over their overall cost of production.

- They have further asked the government to take action against a **Union Minister whose son was arrested during the 2021 protest** on accusations he ran over and killed four protesting farmers.

Consequences of the farmers protest:

- **Disruption of supply chains:**
 - As Delhi is landlocked between Haryana and UP , and dependent on its supply from other states.
- **Reduced Diesel and gas supply to Punjab.**
- **Inconvenience to the masses:**
 - It led to disruption of working hours of people in NCR.
 - With board exams nearby , such protests affected the school going children as well.
- **Impact on essential services:**
 - As witnessed recently Supreme Court lawyers were not able to attend hearings due to traffic etc .
 - It also led to wrenching of medical services as well.
- **Economy of Protesting sites:**
 - Protests have led to disruption of livelihood of the people in protesting sites due to closure of shops , local haats and vendors.
- **Infrastructure loss:**
 - Protests have led to the great loss of public infrastructure and are a burden on public exchequer.

Tractor trolley turned into living room for protest:

- Sunil Gulia from Haryana spent Rs 40 lakhs on the modification of his tractor-trolley into a home. He added big tires, swanky seats and a powerful sound system. According to him, his trolley house embodied the concept of *baap aur beta* (father and son) since it was the foundational ground for the continuity of the protest, both symbolically and technically.
- Two conjoined trolleys enabled Jalandhar-based Harpreet Singh Mattu to create a home that had a living room complete with fairy lights, mirrors, television and cosmetics, a bedroom, a toilet and a kitchen. Precise attention was paid to details, structure and construction. The walls of this trolley house had square windows with curtains, tube lights, an air conditioner and plastered flooring – a careful mix of techno-aesthetic elements, taking their cue from the flats in gated societies.



What impact will the protests have on the Indian elections?

- Farmers comprise **two-thirds of India's 1.4 billion people**, accounting for **nearly a fifth** of the country's gross domestic product, according to government figures. Hence, farmers form an influential voting bloc, and parties try to gain their support.

Government response:

- The government's reaction to the current protest still seems reactionary, as the borders are being heavily barricaded and Section 144 is in effect at the Ghazipur, Singhu, and Tikri borders. Internet services have been blocked in several regions of Punjab and Haryana, and Rajasthan has sealed its borders with Punjab and Haryana along with the imposition of prohibitory orders in several districts.
- The protest site has witnessed the use of tear gas, drones dropping smoke bombs, stone-pelting, traffic snarls, seizure of vehicles and detention of farmers by the Haryana Police – ignoring lessons from last time that the excessive use of force might provide legitimacy to those who want to radicalize the protest.



Farmers protest elsewhere outside India:

- The farmer protests coincide with **similar demonstrations** by their counterparts in Europe, **but, other than rising costs of cultivation, the concerns raised by European and Indian farmers are different.**
- While Europe's farmers are protesting the **European Union's drive to fight climate change, among other issues**, Indian growers are more focused on state-set assured prices for their crops.

Some Previous year Prelims Questions

- Q1.** Consider the following statements: (2020)
In the case of all cereals, pulses, and oil seeds, the procurement at Minimum Support price (MSP) is unlimited in any State/UT of India.
In the case of cereals and pulses, the MSP is fixed in any State/UT at a level to which the market price will never rise.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
- Ans. (d)**

Q2. With reference to pulse production in India, consider the following sentences:(2020)
Black gram (Urad) can be cultivated as both Kharif and rabi crop.
Green gram (Moong) alone accounts for nearly half of pulse production.
In the last three decades, while the production of kharif pulses has increased, the production of rabi pulses has decreased.
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 2 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans. (a)

Q3. With reference to chemical fertilizers in India, consider the following statements :(2020)
1. At present, the retail price of chemical fertilizers is market-driven and not administered by the Government.
2. Ammonia, which is an input of urea, is produced from natural gas.
3. Sulphur, which is a raw material for phosphoric acid fertilizer, is a by-product of oil refineries.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 2 only
- (d) 1, 2 und 3

Ans. (b)

Q4. In the context of India's preparation for Climate-smart Agriculture, consider the following statements:(2021)

- 1. The 'Climate-Smart Village' approach in India is a part of a project led by the Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS), an international research programme.
- 2. The project of CCAFS is carried out under Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) headquartered in France.
- 3. The International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) in India is one of the CGIAR's research centers.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 Only
- (b) 2 and 3 Only
- (c) 1 and 3 Only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans. (d)

Q5. Among the following, which one is the least water-efficient crop?(2021)

- (a) Sugarcane
- (b) Sunflower
- (c) Pearl Millet
- (d) Red gram

Ans. (a)

Q6. Consider the following statements: (2023)

Statement 1: The Government of India provides Minimum Support Price for niger (*Guizotia abyssinica*) seeds.

Statement 2: Niger is cultivated as a Kharif crop.

Statement 3: Some tribal people in India use niger seed oil for cooking.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Ans. (c)

Some Previous year Mains Questions:

- Q1. How does e-Technology help farmers in production and marketing of agricultural produce? Explain it. (2023)
- Q2. Explain the changes in cropping pattern in India in the context of changes in consumption pattern and marketing conditions. (2023)
- Q3. What are the direct and indirect subsidies provided to the farm sector in India? Discuss the issues raised by the World Trade Organization(WTP) in relation to agricultural subsidies. (2023)
- Q4. Elaborate the scope and significance of the food processing industry in India. (2022)
- Q5. What is an Integrated Farming System? How is it helpful to small and marginal farmers in India?
- Q6. What are the main bottlenecks in the upstream and downstream process of marketing of agricultural products in India? (2022)
- Q7. What are the present challenges before crop diversification? How do emerging technologies provide an opportunity for crop diversification? (2021)
- Q8. How and to what extent would micro-irrigation help in solving India's water crisis? (Answer in 150 words) (2021)
- Q9. How did land reforms in some parts of the country help to improve the socio-economic conditions of marginal and small farmers? (2021)

Some Previous year Interview questions:

Board BB Swain Sir : (2023)

- Tell us three constitutional amendments that we need?
- On legal front?
- Should MSP be legalized?
- What are the issues?
- Why should it not be legalized?
- Why are farmers protesting?

Board BB Swain Sir: (2023)

- WHY PRODUCTIVITY IN AGRI LOW?
- HOW TO RAISE ?
- FARMER SUICIDE REASONS AND SOLUTION?
- WTO ISSUES IN AGRICULTURE?

Board Suman Sharma ma'am: (2023)

- Farmer Suicide in Maharashtra and Solution?
- How can AI be used in agriculture?

- What is your stance on MSP as an economist?
- However, we are announcing it every season. What can be done?
- Few years back there were farmers' protests in Punjab. What was it for?
- Which all were the farm laws?
- What is contract farming?

Board Suman Sharma ma'am: (2023)

- If you were the DM of a district, what would you do to improve farmers' situation?
- Follow up on which larger scheme is the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund part of?

Board BB Swain Sir: (2023)

- How to solve the food crisis?
- Give Issues of agriculture?
- How to solve the debt crisis of agri?
- As a DM how u will solve issues of farmers?
- Food processing--why is the processing industry not gaining ground in india?

Board Dinesh Dasa Sir: (2023)

- China's agriculture reforms?

Board BB Swain Sir: (2023)

- There are a lot of things that have been done to develop agriculture, still we are importing pulses, oilseeds. What can be done?
- After implementing many schemes why farmers are still poor? As a public Administrator what will you do to ensure delivery of schemes?
- Do you think it'll shift our focus from primary sector to tertiary?
- Comment on foreign policy?
- How to revive the agricultural economy?

Board Suman Sharma ma'am: (2022)

- Where do you want to apply artificial intelligence ?(said AI to previous answer)
- How can it be used in agriculture? (As I said agriculture to previous answer)
- What is your stance on MSP as an economist?
- However, we are announcing it every season. What can be done?
- Few years back there were farmers' protests in Punjab. What was it for?
- Which all were the farm laws?
- What is contract farming?

Board RN Chowbey Sir: (2022)

- There are various issues related to monocropping, why are farmers not moving away from wheat & rice ?
- What can be done in this regard ?
- What can be done to increase the yield of other crops ?
- Tell me what the government is doing to double the farmer income ?

Board RN Chowbey Sir: (2022)

- PM Modi has announced doubling of farmers' income? What has been the agricultural growth rate of India in the past few years?
- How can we increase farmers' income?

Board Priti Sudan ma'am: (2022)

- What is your opinion on 3 farm bills that were withdrawn by the government?
- Was the farmers protest driven by the wealthy farmers' leaders or the small farmers also?
- What is the current status of demand by farmers to bring some changes in MSP?
- Are farmers going to protest in the future for the same?