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Urges govt to stabilise prices of farm produce

BENGALURU, DHNS *9/12/2021*

Opposition Congress, unhappy over the state government's response to procure all crops at Minimum

Support Price (MSP), opening procurement centres and removing restrictions on procurement, staged a walkout in Legislative Assembly on Tuesday.

During a discussion on MSP and crop procurement held since noon, Opposition leader Siddaramaiah raised questions on delay in opening the procurement centres and low procurement target of some crops in Karnataka, such as paddy. While the expected yield of paddy was around 29 lakh metric tonnes, the government would procure only 2.1 lakh tonnes, he said.

Siddaramaiah also demanded the government to enact a law similar to Kerala and Punjab under which any crop procurement below MSP was penalised. "The Central government should make sure that all crops come under MSP," he said, adding remunerative prices should also be paid as per the recom-



Opposition leader Siddaramaiah speaks on minimum support price for crops in Legislative Assembly on Tuesday.

mendations of Swaminathan Report.

Senior Congress leader HK Patil noted that there was a revolving fund of around Rs 2,500 crore and urged the government to procure maize using these funds as farmers who cultivated the crop were under distress. "Only way to

double farmers income is by ensuring MSP," he said.

Law and Parliamentary Affairs J C Madhuswamy said that though the government was ready to procure any amount of paddy or ragi, it could not procure maize as per Centre's directions to buy only such crops that could be

used in the Public Distribution System.

On increasing procurement targets for paddy, he said that the limits were set based on previous years' procurement. "We are willing to petition the Centre to increase the target to 10 lakh metric tonnes. But, the argument will fail if we do not reach the allotted target (during the year)," he said.

Congress was left unhappy with the government response as the import policy of the Centre has dipped prices for crops, such as pepper. "The government should at least try to stabilise the prices," Siddaramaiah said before the party staged a walkout.

JD(S) leader H D Revanna urged the government to emulate states, such as Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, and procure maize at Hobli level.

Madhuswamy responded saying that he would discuss the procurement of maize with the chief minister.