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K. L. A. - APMC Bill

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Assembly clears contentious APMC Bill

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Legislative Assembly passed the Karnataka Agricultural Produce Marketing (Regulation and Development) (Amendment) Bill on Thursday, with Cooperation Minister S T Somashekhar allaying farmers' fears on minimum support price (MSP).

The Bill was passed with the Opposition benches being empty. The Bill, which was earlier passed in the Legislative Council, will now be sent to the Governor for his assent.

During a discussion on the Bill, Somashekhar said 60 companies were given the licence to procure agricultural produce from farmers between 2013 and 2018.

"Till now, not a single complaint has come. I've visited 27 districts and held talks with APMC leaders. Nowhere was it expressed that this would trouble farmers," Somashekhar said.

The minister said the Centre had repeatedly claimed that the amendments had nothing to do with MSP.

"The MSP will continue. Even our government and the CM have announced this. These amendments have been brought to ensure farmers get the right price for their produce," he said.

Piloting the Bill, Somashekhar said the amendments would allow farmers to sell their produce anywhere they want by removing restrictions.

"There was a provision to levy a penalty of Rs 2,000 to Rs 5,000 for selling the produce outside APMCs (mandis) without a licence, which we are amending," he said.

BSP MLA N Mahesh said that the farmers would agree with the Bill provided it came with an assurance that minimum support price regime will remain intact.

Bengaluru