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Dalit groups, farm unions clash over Ambedkar event

Move to stop Haryana CM's unveiling of Babasaheb's statue

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NEW DELHI

Tensions are brewing between some Dalit groups and protesting farm unions. The latest trigger is the Samyukt Kisan Morcha's plans to block Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar's from unveiling a statue of B.R. Ambedkar on his birth anniversary on April 14. On Monday, the All India Ambedkar Mahasabha (AIAM) said that "no one will be allowed to prevent celebration of Ambedkar Jayanti".

The AIAM is a platform of Dalit groups who agitated against the amendment to the SC/ST Atrocities Act in 2018.

"It has come to our knowledge that miscreant elements plan to stall Ambedkar Jayanti Program (like Republic Day), in the name of Kisan Andolan and thereby pitting Kisans against the



Fight continues: Farmers at the protest site in New Delhi on Monday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Dalits. We sincerely request the Kisan leaders to keep an eye on such miscreants and urge them to join the Ambedkar Jayanti celebrations across the country," said AIAM chairman Ashok Bharti, in a statement on Monday.

On its part, the SKM reiterated the solidarity of farmers and Dalits, and emphasised that they are "not opposing the unveiling of

the statue of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar. Except for the Chief Minister, if anyone else unveils this statue, the farmers have no objection."

"Those who mocked the Constitution have no right to unveil the statue of Baba Saheb Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar," said Rakesh Tikait, who heads a major faction of the Bharatiya Kisan Union.