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BSY Cabinet okays more land reforms



ANUSHA RAVI @Bengaluru, 16

BARELY months after it made amendments to the Land Reforms Act to allow industries to buy agricultural land, the Karnataka Cabinet on Thursday gave in-principle approval for further amendments, doubling the ceiling on land holdings and removing restrictions on non-agriculturists purchasing agriculture lands. While the cabinet approved the policy decision, it will be tabled in the Legslat. As-

sembly as a Bill for discussion before it becomes an Act. Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister J C Madhuswamy and Revenue Minister R Ashoka announced the decision to repeal Sections 79-A (Prohibition on acquisition of land by certain persons), 79-B (Prohibition of holding agricultural land by certain persons), 79-C (Penalty for failure to furnish declaration) and Section 80 (Bar on transfers to non-agriculturists). The cabinet has also approved doubling the ceiling on

land holdings from 10 units per family of five to 20 units, under Section 63. The upper limit of holdings, however, will not exceed 108 acres per family. "In the last 45 years, ever since the Act came into force, some 83,171 cases of contention under Section 79 A, B, C and Section 80 have been filed, but the government has not been able to recover even 1 per cent of the land. But the same restrictions have been abused to harass farmers and landowners. We are amending the law

so that the harassment ends and the process of land purchase is smoother, even for non-agriculturists," Ashoka said. He pointed out that simpler land reform Acts in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu have been attracting investors and Karnataka is looking to generate more revenue by ensuring ease of business. The Opposition, which has been stonewalling the move to dilute the Land Reform Acts, has raised a red flag, calling it a retrograde move. P5

We shouldn't end up paving the way for land mafia: Congress leader

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"THESE Sections were in the Act to protect the interests of farmers. We shouldn't end up paving the way for the land mafia to grab land and exploit agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes. Such decisions defeat the purpose of land reforms. One should not be given a free hand to go around accumulating land while poor farmers suffer,"



said former Revenue Minister and senior Congress leader R V Deshpande. He, however, welcomed the decision to bring the Bill for discussion in the Assembly. "Increasing the ceiling on land holding is useful to develop land. Many youngsters, who are software professionals, are returning to agriculture, but are buying land in neighbouring states because

our laws are stringent. We have decided to encourage development and also facilitate industries," said Minister Madhuswamy. Karnataka has been steadily diluting or repealing restrictions in the Land Reform Act ever since Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa's return from the World Economic Summit in Davos where many industries are said to have raised concerns over the restrictive land rules in Karnataka.