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Centre offers to pause farm laws

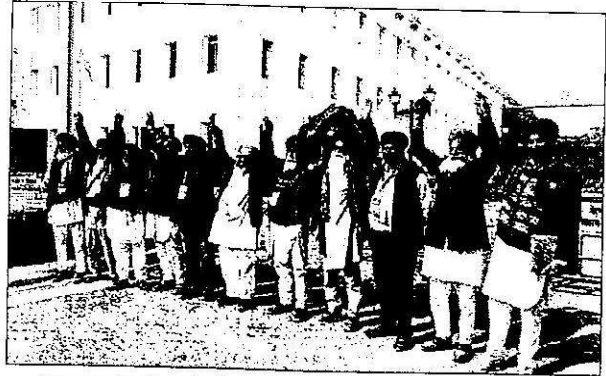
Ready to put them
on hold for 1.5 yrs;
farmer unions to get
back tomorrow

SAGAR KULKARNI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Bowing to pressure, the Modi government on Wednesday offered to suspend the implementation of the three contentious farm laws for up to 18 months as they continue talks with the agitating farmers to address their concerns over the reforms.

The offer to suspend farm laws for a longer duration was made by Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar during the tenth round of talks with the farmers' unions, who have been protesting on the Delhi borders for 57 days.

"We said that the government is ready to put on hold the farm laws for one or one-and-a-half years. I am happy that the farmer unions have taken this very seriously and said that they would consider it tomorrow (Thursday) and convey



Farmer leaders before the 10th round of talks with the government. PTI

their decision on January 22," Tomar told reporters after the five-hour meeting.

Farmer leaders said the government also offered to submit an affidavit in the Supreme Court on suspension of the laws for a "mutually agreed" period and set up a committee to find a solution.

"Today's talks raise the hope of resolving issues about farmers' protests," Tomar said.

The government was under pressure to ensure the end of the agitation, particularly after they announced their plans to take out a 'Kisan Parade' in the national capital on Republic Day.

Last week, the Supreme

Court had stayed the implementation of the three laws and set up a committee of experts to address concerns on the legislations.

Tomar said the Supreme Court-appointed committee and the talks between the government and farmers' representatives can continue parallelly.

Thousands of farmers — mostly from Punjab and Haryana — are camping on the borders of Delhi since November 26 protesting against the three farm laws which they claim would put farmers at the mercy of big businessmen and end the minimum support price (MSP) regime.