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PM Modi says farm bills will end rule of 'powerful gangs'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

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New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday kept up his offensive on opponents of agriculture trade reforms and said those were meant to end the rule of "powerful gangs" which have been exploiting farmers.

"Powerful gangs emerged in the country who used the shield of existing laws to cash in on the helplessness of farmers all these years. How long could this be allowed to go on? It was necessary to change this system and our government has shown these changes," he said, adding that recommendations of the Swaminathan Committee calling for liberalisation of trade in agricultural products had been shoved into the deep freezer because of the resistance of vested interests.

The PM also rebutted the allegation that the reforms measures would spell the dismantling of the scheme to provide minimum support price to farmers and the existing mandis under the Agricultural Produce Marketing

Act. He said the government will start during his speech at a web-based function to mark the laying of optical fibre network and launch of highway projects in poll-bound



The PM dismissed as a lie claims that mandis would become extinct after the reforms

Bihar and just a few hours before the government announced an increase in MSP for Rabi crops: the near-overlap being seen as meant to be a refutation of the allegation of MSP's demise.

Modi also said how during the coronavirus pandemic, record purchase of wheat was made from farmers and over Rs 1 lakh crore was given to farmers at MSP which was more than 30% over last year.

He said the government will start during his speech at a web-based function to mark the laying of optical fibre network and launch of highway projects in poll-bound

to anyone at any rate and anywhere he wished to.

"Now, he has got many more options besides the mandi of his area. Now, if he gets more profit in the market, then he will go to the market and sell his crop. Apart from mandi, if you get a profit elsewhere, then you will go there and sell, it will be possible due to the freedom from all bonds," he said.

The PM dismissed as lie that mandis would become extinct in the wake of the reforms. "They will continue to operate as usual," he said as he emphasised the efforts under his government to improve the functioning of APMCs with computerisation.

He said the soon-to-be-enacted laws started giving benefits since being promulgated as ordinances and gave the example of bulk buyers of potatoes sourcing their requirements directly from cold storages.

He added that ground reports from Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan showed that farmers there had received 20-30% more for pulses. He said that in Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal, farmers had received 15-25% more price for pulses than last year directly, he said.