Twitter Thread by AIKS



AIKS
@KisanSabha

AIKS condemns @PMOIndia's resort to lies and deceit to deliberately mislead Indian farmers about Kerala Agriculture and role of the Left Democratic Front Government. His comments expose his ignorance about Kerala's agriculture. THREAD. /0

Kerala never passed an APMC Act due to the predominance of spices and plantation crops in the cropping pattern. Kerala's agriculture primarily revolves around commercial crops which occupy about 82% of the cultivated area. /1

Crops like coconut, cashew, rubber, tea, coffee, different spices like pepper, nutmeg, cardamom, cloves, cinnamon etc grown by Kerala farmers have had their own specialised marketing channels sponsored by the concerned commodity boards under by the Ministry of Commerce, GoI. /2

Different Commodity Boards like Rubber Board, Spices Board, Coffee Board, Tea Board, and Coconut Development Board and a system of auctions are in place in the State. /3

The prices of all these crops are dependent on the world market prices and except for one crop that is copra (Dry Coconut) the central government does not even announce any MSP. /4

There is a system of auction and marketing for these crops but different Central Governments over the last 3 decades have been diluting and systematically dismantling the Commodity Boards though these crops earn huge foreign exchange. /5

Proper funds are not allocated, appointments are not made and there have been instances of even Directors not being appointed for a long time. Defunding these Commodity Boards by different Central Governments has led to a situation where they are rendered ineffective. /6

Successive BJP/Congress Govts have entered into unequal Free Trade Agreements like the India-ASEAN FTA putting farmers' lives in danger by allowing dumping of cheap produce leading to price crash here. /7

The implementation of neoliberal policies has accentuated the crisis leading to many farmers committing suicide in Kerala earlier. It was only after the LDF came to power in 2006, set up the Debt Relief Commission and waived loans of distressed farmers these suicides stopped. /8

As opposed to this approach of the Central Govts, the LDF Govt in Kerala has stood with the farmers and assisted them in times of price crashes, through cooperatives helped in value addition and marketing. /9

The extent of marketed surplus of other crops like paddy or fruits or vegetables was never significant enough to require large and regulated wholesale markets like the mandis under the APMC Acts. /10

This does not mean that there are no agricultural markets with specified rules or regulations. There are numerous such markets – wholesale and retail – governed by market rules notified by the State govt from time to time. /11

Kerala procures paddy at Rs.2748/Qtl that is Rs.900/Qtl more than the Central MSP! It has recently announced a royalty of Rs.2000/hectare for rice cultivators spread across 2.05 lakh hectares in the State. /12

LDF Govt announced base prices of 16 vegetables including tubers. It is the only State to have done so. Amidst the pandemic the Kerala LDF has come up with the Subhiksha Kerala Programme and allocated ■3600 crores to strengthen agriculture and cooperatives. /13

Subsidies for different crops/hectare given by the State are as follows:
Paddy (1 harvest/year):■22000
Vegetables:■25000
Cool Season Vegetables:■30000
Pulses:■20,000
Tapioca and Tubers:■30000
Banana:■30000
/14

In additions, there are diff. subsidies provided by the LSG institutions. The 16 varieties of vegetables for which base prices (/kg) have been announced are:
Tapioca:■12
Banana:■30
Wayanadan banana:■24
Pineapple:■15
Ashgourd:■9
Cucumber:■8
Bitter gourd:■30
/15

MSP provided by Kerala Gov. (contd.)
Snake gourd:■16
Tomato:■8
Beans (vallipayar):■34
Okra:■20
Cabbage:■11
Carrot:■21
Potato:■20
Beans:■28
Beetroot:■21

Garlic:■139
/16

Rather than indulging in lies and deceit, @PMOIndia should first try to match these steps and answer why the Commodity Boards are being rendered ineffective and why the Centre without consulting State Govts is entering into unequal FTAs and putting Indian farmers in peril. /17

He should answer why in BJP rules Bihar, where APMC have been done away with in 2006 rice cultivators are forced to make distress sales at ■1000-1200/Qtl way below the centrally fixed MSP of ■1868/Qtl. /18

Lies and deceit cannot mislead farmers any longer. Kerala farmers are also on struggle against the Anti-Farmer Acts with indefinite dharnas at State and District levels. Struggles will intensify if these Acts are not withdrawn. /19