

Badal rejects wheat MSP enhancement as 'too meagre'

Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal Thursday rejected the hike of Rs.20 per quintal in the minimum support price (MSP) of wheat announced by the central government, saying it was 'too meagre'.

MSP for wheat was enhanced to Rs.1,100 per quintal from last year's Rs.1,080 per quintal, but according to Badal, this was 'woefully inadequate and unjustified'.

The Punjab chief minister said he had recently met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar and asked for the MSP to be increased to Rs.1,400 per quintal.

Punjab is the largest contributor of foodgrains to the country's national kitty, providing over 50 percent of the country's output.

In a statement, Badal said a hike of Rs.20 per quintal was a cruel joke on the beleaguered farmers, especially those from Punjab, who were in distress due to the low returns and exorbitant cost of agricultural inputs such as diesel, fertilizers and pesticides.

'The centre's decision to hike the MSP of wheat by just Rs.20 per quintal can never be the answer to the agony of the farming community. The centre should have realized the sad plight of the farmers, which is compelling them to take extreme steps to end their lives,' the statement said.

Badal accused the central government of pursuing anti-farmer policies, maintaining that this was making agriculture a non-viable profession.

(© IANS / India eNews)