

Farmers' movement akin to salt satyagraha: Lok Satta

Written by

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Lok Satta Party Working President D. V. V. S. Varma said that the proposed Andhra Pradesh farmers and tenants' march to Karnataka to sell paddy and rice defying the State Government's restrictions is akin to the salt satyagraha launched by Mahatma Gandhi.

Addressing a media conference, Mr. Varma said the State Government has gone into a comatose state either because of internal power struggles or endless corruption scams. Otherwise, it ought to have lifted restrictions on export of fine varieties of paddy and rice outside Andhra Pradesh by now.

He recalled that the Federation of Independent Farmers' Associations (FIFA) had warned the Chief Minister ten days ago that farmers and tenants would violate the restrictions on February 18 and 19 if the Government did not lift them by February 17.

Mr. Varma said that Andhra Pradesh enjoyed the dubious distinction of being the only State in the country which restricted paddy and rice movement outside the State. Even the Government of India conceded the farmers' demand for permitting rice exports outside the country but the State Government would not relent.

Why should farmers be denied the right to sell their produce anywhere when there are no similar curbs on industrialists?

Mr. Varma pointed out that a Government which announced a minimum support price for a produce should ensure that the farmer gets it. The farmer in Andhra Pradesh is not receiving the minimum support price for paddy, leave alone a remunerative price. Although paddy fetches Rs.150 more than the MSP for a bag of 75 kg in Karnataka, Andhra farmers cannot move it there.

FIFA is launching the farmers' satyagraha march under the leadership of Lok Satta Party President Dr. Jayaprakash Narayan on February 18 and 19. Farmers and tenants will march from Yemmiganur in Kurnool district to Mantralayam, cross the Tungabhadra and enter Gilkasugur Camp in Karnataka to effect token sale of rice.

Mr. Varma released a poster and a pamphlet on the proposed farmers' satyagraha march.

Lok Satta Party General Secretary Katari Srinivasa Rao said that Dr. JP will be defying the Essential Commodities Act in the interests of farmers. Therefore, farmers irrespective of their parties, regions and crops they grow should join the movement meant to liberate them.

Lok Satta Party Secretary Bandaru Ramamohana Rao, and Greater Hyderabad unit President M. Satyanarayana took part in the media meet.