



S K Y W A T C H

FORECAST: Feb 1
Mainly clear sky.
Shallow fog in the morning

MAX: 26
3.9°C above normal

MIN: 5
3.5°C below normal



At the Ghazipur border around midnight on Saturday. Since the protest site doesn't have Internet, many walk a distance to find connectivity. *Gajendra Yadav*

CHARKHI DADRI MLA WITHDRAWS SUPPORT FROM BJP-JJP GOVT

Haryana khaps take up task of guarding farmers

SUKHBIR SIWACH & ANANYA TIWARI
CHANDIGARH, NEW DELHI, JANUARY 31

FOLLOWING CLASHES at the Singhu border, khap panchayats in Haryana said they will take up the responsibility of protecting farmers at the capital's borders. The announcement was made amid growing support for the farmers' agitation in the state.

On Sunday, khap leaders, along with a big cavalcade of vehicles, arrived at Singhu and Tikri. "Nobody can dare to target our kisan brothers who are staging dharnas peacefully. All of Haryana and Delhi stands by you," senior khap leader Sombir Sangwan announced at Singhu.

An independent MLA from Charkhi Dadri constituency, Sangwan, apart from withdrawing support from the BJP-JJP government, had resigned as chairman of the Haryana Livestock Development Board in support of the agitation two months ago.

In a speech, Sangwan said, "Sikh gurus and Sikh brothers have played the biggest role in protecting Hindustan... After farmers from Punjab took the lead to launch the agitation, it has now spread to Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and other parts of the country. Punjab farmers have done a great job in saving our democracy."

According to Sangwan, thousands of farmers from villages that fall under the jurisdiction of the khaps in Jakhar, Birohar, Gehlawat and Sangwan reached Delhi borders on Sunday.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, he claimed "paid workers" were sent to Singhu to break up the protest: "10,000 youths from Haryana will be on standby, who will reach any spot if needed in an hour. We have asked khaps in the surrounding areas of Delhi to keep an eye out for paid workers. It is our responsibility to provide security to farmers."

Villages, meanwhile, have given a call to boycott BJP-JJP leaders. Several khaps have announced that leaders of the ruling alliance won't be allowed to enter villages until the three "anti-farmer laws" are repealed.

On Sunday, villagers of

Daulatpur summoned former Fatehabad MLA Balwan Singh Daulatpuria to a social panchayat. He said: "They told me I won't be allowed to remain in the BJP. I accepted their decision as I preferred the support of my brothers from the village and farmers."

A former INLD MLA, Daulatpuria had joined the BJP ahead of the 2019 Assembly polls. "The Centre should repeal the three laws, keeping in mind the sentiments of farmers," he said.

In several villages in the state, funds are being collected from villagers to continue the agitation for a longer period.

Even as the Haryana government extended suspension of mobile internet services till Monday evening, hundreds of farmers continued to mobilise and head to the dharna sites. The impact of the video of BKU leader Rakesh Tikait weeping continued to be seen among farmers.

Paramjeet, a sarpanch from Rohtak district, who arrived at Tikri on Saturday, told *The Indian Express*, "Earlier, most tractors from Haryana used to head back home at night. But now, we have got food, firewood and essentials with us. We will stay here in support. Around 1,500 tractors have come after khap panchayats across Haryana decided to send more men to the protests."

Jitender Deshwal (42) from Jhajjar district said, "We came on January 26 for the parade but went back the same day. Now we are coming to stay." Pradeep Deshwal, who was accompanying him, said, "We have been part of the protest for three months. To support the movement, we have 100-150 tractors with us. We are against the BJP-driven conspiracy to defame the movement on Republic Day."

Menpal (32) from Hisar district said, "Around 10 of us from Mirchpur village arrived here on Friday. I have been a part of this protest for two months on and off. We went back on Republic Day as there were too many people here. We will stay here now."

Suresh (52), who was with Menpal, said, "We will only go back when they repeal the three laws. The farmers did not do any propaganda or violence. I was part of the parade and I was only able to go up to Peeragarhi."

— many for the first time.

They have conducted rallies around the site, raised slogans near the main stage, held lathis while helping volunteers in security, and chipped in for the langar. On Sunday, several women protesters said they had walked up to 10 km to reach Singhu. Many said they have left their farms to join the movement while others said they will stay for the weekend to help their "farmer brothers".

Babli (40), a farm labourer from Sangrur in Punjab, said she

Ghazipur changes security measures: ID checks, walkie-talkies

AMIL BHATNAGAR
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 31

THREE DAYS after Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait made an emotional appeal against vacating the Ghazipur protest site, the crowd at the Ghazipur protest site continued to swell as farmers arrived from several parts of West UP, Punjab and Haryana.

On Sunday, the main stage at the protest site was packed with hundreds of people listening to the day's speeches. Some were even seen standing on the

dividers due to lack of space.

Farmers have also beefed up security following the violence at Singhu to ensure "anti-social elements" do not enter the protest. "We have set up checking booths at entry points and keep in touch through walkie talkies; we also check IDs of all those entering the site. The crowd is growing every day and we are well equipped. We had made arrangements for tents and blankets for over 1 lakh people on Republic Day; this is coming in handy for those joining now. Everyone is doing their own bit for the cause," said



Farmers are checking IDs of those entering the site. *Abhinav Saha*

‘BJP shared doctored video of CM supporting farm laws’ In FIR against protesters, three farm laws find mention

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 31

SENIOR AAP leader and Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia Sunday said his party would take legal action against the BJP for circulating a "doctored video" of AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal. In the video, shared by the official Twitter handle of Delhi BJP, Kejriwal can purportedly be heard praising the three farm laws, against which farmers have been protesting for several months, the last two at Delhi's borders. It was later deleted.

"Yesterday, BJP tweeted a video claiming CM Kejriwal has supported the three farm laws. This doctored video was created by selectively editing a long interview of Kejriwal's and placing fake bytes in some places," Sisodia said at a press conference. He also showed a clipping of the interview where Kejriwal had given to a news channel on the farm laws, along with the video shared by BJP.

In the interview, Kejriwal had spoken about the laws, why the Centre claims they will help farmers and what the objections to the law are. In the video shared by BJP, he can only be heard talking about the benefits of the three laws.



Sisodia said AAP will take legal action against BJP

In the tweet accompanying the video, Delhi BJP's official handle had said: "CM Kejriwal listing the benefits of the farm laws passed by the Modi government. What happened now? This is CM Kejriwal's dual nature."

In December, the Delhi Assembly had passed a resolution rejecting the three laws. Kejriwal, and other ministers, have repeatedly spoken out against the laws.

BJP Delhi IT cell head Punit Agarwal did not comment on why the video was shared. He, however, said, "They are making an issue out of a 15-second clip but have no answer for why one of the laws was notified by them. These promises were also part of their manifesto in Punjab."

Sisodia said it was pitiable that BJP was having to use Kejriwal's fake video to "save farm laws". "Despite having their government at the Centre and in many states, as well as having PM Modi as their leader, they have lost people's trust. Hence, they have to use Kejriwal's fake video to save the farm laws... BJP knows Kejriwal is the only leader with credibility, hence, they have used his doctored interview... PM Modi has enumerated the benefits of farm laws on several occasions, but farmers have understood they are being cheated. When BJP couldn't explain the farm laws to the farmers, it started branding them traitors and Khalistani. Then BJP conducted a sponsored protest at Red Fort and disrespected the national flag. Now, the public has understood BJP's ill-intentions and does not believe in their conspiracies," he said.

Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor, meanwhile, hit out at AAP for blaming BJP for the Red Fort violence. "It's sad that the deputy CM has levelled allegations against BJP and raised questions on the credibility of the Centre without any basis, even as farmer leaders, including Rakesh Tikait, have expressed willingness to talk to the PM."

NAVJEEVANGOPAL
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 31

IN AN FIR registered at Paschim Vihar police station on January 26 against protesters, including farm union leaders, in connection with the violence at Nangloi Chowk during the kisan rally on Republic Day, Delhi Police said the laws were aimed "at providing farmers with multiple marketing channels and a legal framework for farmers to enter into pre-arranged contracts regarding their agriculture produce".

The FIR was registered on a complaint by Paschim Vihar SHO Tejpal Pal Singh under sections of the IPC, Epidemic Diseases Act and Disaster Management Act. When contacted, Singh said, "I am not authorised to speak to the media. My DCP is authorised to speak to the media." DCP (Outer district), Dr A K Koan could not be reached for a comment.

The FIR stated 18 policemen were injured and 15 men from various districts of Malwa region of Punjab were detained.

Referring to the Presidential assent to the Bills on September 27, 2019, the FIR, a copy of which was accessed by The Indian

Jitendra Singh, a representative of the Sanyukt Kisan Morcha. A control room was set up earlier, through which farmers co-ordinate with leaders at Singhu for any directives or instructions.

On one end of the highway, police have placed sharp coiled wires and laid stones in between barriers. Routes remain diverted a few metres from the UP Gate flyover.

Meanwhile, more langar tents have come up to cater to the new arrivals who came in tractors and private vehicles from Western UP cities includ-

ing Meerut, Muzaffarnagar, Moradabad, Hapur and Bijnor via NH-24.

Several responded to calls made in their villages to join the protest. "There is a movement taking place in villages that the government must pay heed to. We are here for our leader Tikait and we will not leave till our demands are met. This site is going to be historic since thousands more are yet to come. This agitation will shake the foundations of those who believe they can trample the rights of farmers," said Nilesh Singh from Muzaffarnagar.



Protests have been on since Nov 26 last yr. *Abhinav Saha*

Express, noted that "... some people objected to the Bills and labelled these corporate friendly and anti-farmer".

"The laws were initially protested mainly by some farmers in Punjab, and some political parties joined in on the pretext that the laws would hurt the farmer's earnings... canards were spread that farmers will lose their land to corporates and APMC-run mandis will cease to exist, further the government will do away with minimum support price for agricultural produce. The government... tried to dispel the misgivings but protests started which initially remained localised in Punjab. On 26.11.2020, some protesting farmers were stopped

by Haryana Police from marching towards Delhi for protesting against the said farm laws. Violence broke out and the above protesting farmers and their leaders broke through the barricades and continued with their march towards Delhi. On 27.11.2020, protesters started travelling with their tractors and trolleys to borders of Delhi and Haryana. Police arrangement was in place at Tikri border to stop them from marching towards Delhi," read the FIR.

It detailed "11 rounds of negotiations between union cabinet ministers and 36 farm union leaders and others", giving the contact details of all 36 leaders.

The FIR also stated that the Supreme Court intervened and stayed implementation of the laws till the outcome of the report by a committee it set up. "The central government also proposed to stay implementation of the laws for one-and-a-half years. However, on 22.01.2021, negotiations broke down and resulted in a stalemate," it said.

Meanwhile, a team of cyber experts from Gandhinagar-based National Forensic Science University is joining the Delhi Police in its probe into the violence at Red Fort.

STEPPING UP

Among new arrivals in Singhu, women in front: ‘We will fight, won’t leave’

JIGNASA SINHA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 31

THE FARMERS' protest at Singhu border has had men at the forefront for over two months now. But apprehension that their loved ones would be arrested, determination to show support, and BKU leader Rakesh Tikait's emotional appeal from the Ghazipur border in UP have led to hundreds of women farmers arriving at the protest site over the last two days

— many for the first time.

They have conducted rallies around the site, raised slogans near the main stage, held lathis while helping volunteers in security, and chipped in for the langar. On Sunday, several women protesters said they had walked up to 10 km to reach Singhu. Many said they have left their farms to join the movement while others said they will stay for the weekend to help their "farmer brothers".

Babli (40), a farm labourer from Sangrur in Punjab, said she

and her friends came to Singhu on Saturday after they saw a video of Tikait crying and declaring that the agitation against the Centre's three farm laws will continue. "Police can't treat us like animals. My husband was part of the tractor march on Republic Day and was thrashed by police outside the Singhu border. He didn't even go to Delhi and wasn't part of the group that hoisted the flag. At Ghazipur, police harassed Tikait. We feel insulted. We have been targeted. I will stay



Women farmers at Singhu, Sunday. *Gajendra Yadav*

here with my friends. My mother is taking care of my children. We will cook lunch for protesters and at night, we will set up tents near our tractors," she said.

Dalbir Kaur (47), a farmer from Patiala, came with her uncle and aunt to Singhu on Saturday evening after hearing speeches of "farmer leaders of BKU" and other unions. "My husband has been protesting here for nearly two months. We have a sugarcane farm and also grow vegetables. Yesterday, I got my

two sons and came here. We were given a few placards and held rallies near the stage. I will have to leave tomorrow, but don't count me out. I am ready to sacrifice my life for this movement. Police and the government can harass us but we won't quit," she said.

Kaur and a group of 5-10 women shouted slogans alleging "police brutality" and against the new farm laws.

Another protester, Mandeep (50), said she has come to help

the farmers who were injured during the clashes on Republic Day. "I have bought two containers of milk and dry fruits... I was shocked to know that many of my farmer brothers from Kapurthala were grievously injured. I have come with my husband because both of us want to help farmers. We respect Tikait ji and will protest here until the new laws are repealed. Police can lodge cases and call us terrorists. We will fight them. We won't leave," she said.