



HIGH COMMISSIONER OF INDIA
LILONGWE (MALAWI)

Plot No. 55, Area 9,
Post Box No.1482, Lilongwe, Malawi
Phone No.:00-265-1750011
Fax:00-265-1755346
E-mail: hc.malawi@mea.gov.in
Website: www.hcililongwe.in

My dear fellow countrymen,

The Year 2020 is nearing its end. Because of the Covid pandemic, there had not been much physical activities. However, people across the world interacted through virtual mode. The Government of India organized many multilateral events through virtual mode, including CII-EXIM Bank Conclave from 22-24 October 2020 wherein Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs, GoM participated and spoke about "India-Africa Forum Summit IV - Addressing Critical Needs of African Countries".

As part of developmental initiatives in Malawi, I made a presentation of 1,000 MTs Rice worth INR 5.3 Crore to Government of the Republic of Malawi on 26 Oct. This gift was handed over to the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Honourable Agnes Nkusa Nkhoma, M.P. This gift of rice is another prominent milestone in furthering the goodwill and friendship between India and Malawi and I am sure it will be well-appreciated in times of Covid.

The issue I want to majorly focus upon is the one that has been attracting increasing attention, namely, that of recently enacted Farm Laws. Briefly speaking, the Government has enacted two new Farm Laws for agriculture and has amended the Essential Commodities Act.

- **Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion & Facilitation) Act.**
- **Farmers' Empowerment and Protection Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act.**
- **Modification in the Essential Commodities Act.**

The first law enables farmers to sell to markets of its choice, whether APMC or otherwise. The second law makes it easier for farmers, especially small farmers, to enter into contract farming and hedge against market risks. The third step removes arbitration in regulating supply of essential commodities under extraordinary circumstances.


Any misapprehensions on these laws need to be dispelled. They are aimed at creating of 'One Nation, One Agricultural market'. Like rest of the country, farmers too will connect directly to global markets. They **do not** affect the system of public procurement at Minimum Support Price (MSP). The reforms puts squarely "Farmers first and removes intermediaries and increase farmers bargaining power visa-a-vis markets. Farmers will not have to pay a long list of market fees, taxes and cesses.

Agriculture sector in India has the largest number of farmers. In addition to the agricultural reform laws, the Government has taken many initiatives for the welfare of the Farmers. **22 crore Soil Health Card have been issued to farmers and schemes like Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana and PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana** to name a few **have benefited a large number of farmers**. Just yesterday, the Cabinet has approved **assistance of about INR 3500 crore for 50 million sugarcane farmers** and their dependents, as well as the five lakh workers employed in the sugar mills and related ancillary activities.

The PM's vision is to help farmers at every step – **Beej Se Bazaar Tak**. The aim is to **double the Farmers' income by 2022** and to make our farmers prosperous and agriculture profitable and self-sustaining. As the nation responds to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat', Aatmanirbhar farmers will lead the way.

Overall the reforms are an important step in GOI's state target of doubling farmers income by 2022. They together incentivize private sector investments access the entire cold chains, reducing post harvest losses and ensuing better prices for farmers considering the precarious economic conditions of the small and marginal farmers and the benefit that will accrue to them, an informed debate on this issue is of utmost necessity.

With my greetings to you all for a Happy & Healthy New Year 2021. Stay Safe, Stay Healthy!


(Anurag Bhushan)
16 December 2020