

Regarding need to ensure fair compensation on agricultural land proposed to be acquired from farmers in Punjab- laid

DR. AMAR SINGH (FATEHGARH SAHIB): Punjab Government has recently announced that it plans to acquire 65000 acres of prime agricultural land near major cities under its land pooling policy. However the State Government has decided to do so without paying any monetary compensation to the affected farmers. The land Acquisition Act was passed in 2013 with the aim to ensure that consent and fair compensation would always be part of all future state led efforts to take land from private land holders especially farmers. However in Punjab's case the Government has proposed a scheme where farmers will get back 1200 yards for every acre of their land acquired. This at the face of it violates the spirit of natural justice. State action to take away private property has to be followed with full and fair monetary compensation. The unfairness of the proposed state scheme is accentuated by the fact that the land being acquired especially outside Ludhiana is worth Rs. 3-4 Cr per acre. To take away such valuable land from a farmer without financial compensation needs to be stopped. If carried out it will set an unfortunate precedent and defeat the purpose of having an all encompassing law like the land acquisition act.