

DAY AFTER INTERIM BUDGET

Centre moves on farmers' scheme, writes to states

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NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 2

TO ENSURE early disbursement of Rs 20,000 crore of the first installment of cash transfers to the largest possible number of small and marginal farmers under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN), the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has written to all states to immediately initiate the work of identification of beneficiaries, expedite the process of updation

of land records, designate a nodal department for implementation, and give adequate publicity to the scheme.

The cash transfer scheme was announced in the interim budget presented in Parliament Friday. The Ministry has sent guidelines to all states and Union Territories, asking the chief secretaries to personally monitor the progress of implementation.

The budget has made provision of Rs 20,000 crore towards the scheme for the current fiscal. This will allow the payment of

one installment of Rs 2,000 each to up to 10 crore farmer families before March 31. The sweeping agrarian distress in the country contributed to the BJP's defeat in the recent Assembly elections, and is likely to be an issue in the Lok Sabha elections. The BJP or NDA are in power in 14 states currently.

According to the guidelines, a small and marginal landholder farmer family for the purpose of the calculation of the benefit is defined as "a family comprising husband, wife and minor children

(upto 18 years of age) who collectively own cultivable land upto 2 hectare as per land records of the concerned State/UT".

The existing land-ownership system in the concerned state/UT will be used for identification of beneficiaries, and those whose names appear in land records as on February 1, 2019, shall be eligible for the benefit. If a Landholder Farmer Family (LFF) has land parcels spread across different village/revenue records, the land will be pooled for determining the benefit.

"Accordingly, it is of utmost importance that the land records are clear and updated and the State/UT Governments are requested to complete updation of land records for the purpose expeditiously. All States/UTs shall endeavour to complete the identification of beneficiaries...", the Ministry has written in its letter.

In some Northeastern states, land ownership rights are community-based and it might not be possible to assess the quantum of LFFs. For such states, the Ministry has written, an alternative imple-

mentation mechanism will be developed and approved by the Committee of Union Ministers of Ministry of DoNER, Ministry of Land Resources, Union Agriculture Minister and concerned CMs or their representatives.

The letter says that states shall prepare a database of beneficiary small and marginal landholder farmer families, capturing name, gender, whether belonging to SC/ST, Aadhaar number (or Aadhaar enrolment number), bank account number and mobile phone number.