

# Pakistan Farmer Protest in Islamabad

After almost a week of sit-in protests, starting September 28<sup>th</sup>, at Pakistan's Capital Islamabad, government came down and agreed to their demands and farmers called off their protests on October 4<sup>th</sup>. Since September 21, tens of thousands of farmers have travelled to the capital twice, each time because the administration has disregarded their mutually agreed-upon requests. More than 25000 farmers from Pakistan's Punjab Province participated in this week long protest. Farmers of various organisations came together under Kisan Ittehad Pakistan (KIP) and took up the protests. Their demands include

1. Reduction in prices of fertilizers including Urea and DAP.
2. Reduce the recently increased tube well power tariff from Rs. 36 per unit to the previous rate of Rs 5.35 per unit.
3. Fix the MSP of wheat at Rs. 2400 per mound (40 Kg) and Sugarcane at Rs. 280 per mound.
4. Reduces the prices of pesticides.
5. Take effective steps to stop black marketing of fertilisers.
6. Provide loans to farmers at low-interest rates.
7. Cancel fuel adjustment charges (FAC) of Rs 11.37 per unit.
8. Remove blockade of irrigation canals and release water for irrigation immediately.

The government announced that it will announce a special farmers package in the coming days that will address all these issues.

It should be noted that Agriculture is a provincial subject and the federal govt. cannot address some of the issues of the farmers. However, electricity and fertiliser prices are controlled by the federal government.

Most of these issues are not new. Electricity tariffs, MSP, Canal blockades, FCA are almost recurring every year. Farmers are protesting and governments are announcing packages. But most of these promises are left unfulfilled. But this time farmers turned in large numbers and reached the capital city akin to the Indian famers protest in Delhi. Amid pressure from IMF to increase electricity tariffs and reduce subsidies, it must be seen how the government fulfils its promises and if it fails how the huge farming community responds. [The role of IMF in Pak is dealt in an article in Class Struggle May 2022 Issue]

\*Rs =Pakistan Rupee, PKR ; 1\$ > 200 PKR