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MPs' blame game over plight of farmers

Need for consensus among parties over prices of farm produce stressed

Staff Reporter

ELURU: The MPs from the ruling Congress and their counterparts from the opposition TDP indulged in a blame game over the plight of farmers at a convention held here on Monday under the aegis of the Andhra Pradesh Rytanga Samakhya.

The samakhya organisers invited BJP MP Venkaiah Naidu, his Congress counterparts K.S. Rao and Lagadapati Rajagopal and K. Yerran Naidu and Kanigalla Narayana from the TDP in a bid to make the programme apolitical and to highlight the issues confronting farmers beyond political considerations.

Mr. K.S. Rao held the 'politics of opportunism' by the parties in the Opposition responsible for the low prices of the agricultural produces. The government dilly-dallied over conceding the demand of farmers for remunerative price for their produces, fearing angry protests from the opposition parties over its upward trend related to prices of all the essential commodities as a cascading effect, Mr. Rao stated. The Congress senior Lok Sabha member highlighted the need for a consensus among the MPs from all parties over increase of prices of farm produces in line with the rise in the input cost from time to time. There was no need for the parties and the general public to feel nervous about the impact of



UNITED FOR A CAUSE: All-party leaders Lagadapati Rajagopal, K.S. Rao, K. Yerran Naidu, M. Venkaiah Naidu and others at a convention in Eluru on Monday. - PHOTO: A.V.G. PRASAD

the rise in the prices of agricultural products on the general price rise.

Major bottlenecks

TDP MPs K. Yerran Naidu and Kanigalla Narayana took serious exception to the Congress MPs blaming the opposition parties for the raw deal meted out to farmers. Mr. Naidu sought to know from the UPA regime as to who stopped it from implementing the Swaminadhan Commission's recommendations in the last four years. The report of the commission, , was gathering dust for such a long

time, he regretted.

Mr. Venkaiah Naidu said the State-sponsored Public Distribution System (PDS) and the subsidy rice scheme were the major bottlenecks coming in the way of increasing the prices of farm products. The government's levy policy was forcing farmers to part with major portion of their stocks at a low price, he added.

Joint fight

Mr. Yerneni Nagendra-nath, president of the 'samakhya', urged the TDP MPs to put up a joint fight with the

BJP, a major force in Parliament, on the farmers' issues. He said that the 'samakhya' decided to call for a joint meeting with the Lok Satta, the BJP and the TDP shortly to explore like-mindedness and consensus among them over the problems faced by farmers. Quoting surveys, Mr. Sitarama Swamy, the founder president of the 'samakhya', warned that 43 per cent of farmers expressed their desire to quit farming in future. If this would become a reality, the country would face serious shortage of foodgrains, he said.