

Scrapping of Dadupur-Nalvi project is anti-farmer, illegal and unconstitutional-  
Surjewala

PRESS RELEASE

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"The Haryana cabinet decision of shelving the Dadupur-Nalvi canal project is anti-farmer, illegal and unconstitutional and the Congress party will oppose this anti-people step at all levels", declared senior Congress leader and national media in-charge of the Indian National Congress, Mr. Randeep Singh Surjewala at Shahbad on Sunday.

Mr Surjewala was addressing the huge 'farmers dharna', which was organized by former Shahbad legislator Mr Anil Dhantori. The indefinite hunger strike and 'Dharna' entered the 51st day today, which is being organized as part of the ongoing struggle for saving the crucial Dadupur Nalvi Canal project.

Many noted farmer leaders including the President of Kissan Union Mr Gurnam Singh Chadhuni and Harpal Singh also addressed the large number of farmers, who converged from different parts of northern Haryana at the dharna site to register their protest against the state government's decision to shelve the canal project. Many former ministers, former MLAs and senior Cong leaders also participated in the day long protest.

Describing the Dadupur Nalvi project as lifeline of northern Haryana, Mr Surjewala said that the Congress party understands the importance of the project and will ensure its completion. He said that the attitude of the BJP government in the state is completely anti-peasant. "Rather than paying full compensation to the farmers of Dadupur Nalvi Canal project, the state cabinet cancelled the project. Shelving the project is illegal and unconstitutional as the amendment bill brought in that regard has not yet got the approval from the President of India", he added. He said that the Congress is completely with farmers in their struggle and the fight of farmers' rights in this struggle would be fought firmly inside and outside the assembly besides the courts.

Mr Surjewala alleged that the BJP government in Haryana has bartered the interests of farmers and it was time for a decisive battle against the Manohar Lal Khattar government. He said the state farmers will give a befitting reply to the Khattar government for the "treachery".

Calling the BJP governments decision another tughlaki farman (diktat), he said that close to a lakh hectare of land of 225 villages of Ambala, Yamuna Nagar and Kurukshetra will be denied irrigation in a single stroke due to this decision, proving the BJPs apathy towards the poor and the farmers.

Addressing the agitated and angry farmers, Shri Surjewala reminded that Dadupur-Nalvi Canal Project was started by Congress in the year 1985. In October, 2005; Congress restarted the Project and acquired 1019 acres of land for water recharging and irrigation through construction of Shahbad Feeder, Shahbad Distributory and Nalvi Distributory. He said that nearly 200 crore rupees have been paid in compensation for the land alone, besides spending another 111.70 crore rupees in construction of these canals. After spending over 300 crore rupees in restoring the underground water table and providing irrigation, Khattar Government is seeking to destroy the entire project on account of its myopic, parochial and anti-farmer's approach.

Mr Surjewala said that Khattar Government has now become infamous for its unthought and unconsidered 'tughlaki farmans'. Do the CM and his Government even understand that farmers will have to spend nearly 40 lakh rupees per acre in filling up the

canal passing through their land, which is 58ft wide and 30ft deep? This is equivalent to the cost of one acre. In addition, BJP Government wants the farmers to repay entire compensation along with 15% interest per annum. This would mean that farmers will have to sell their remaining land or the Government will confiscate their property. Unfortunately, present Government does not even know that they have constructed a 10 KM road on the land acquired for the canal, besides constructing bridges for the National Highway. Will the Government now uproot the entire road network and newly constructed bridges of the National Highway constructed at the cost of crores of rupees of public money and change the alignment of the National Highway by seeking fresh permission from Forests, Environment and other agencies, Mr Surjewala asked? CM, Mr Khattar has even forgotten that the current government did not find any water in the ongoing Saraswati Canal Project. They executed a face saving formula by releasing water from Dadupur-Nalvi Canal in the Saraswati Project at Village 'Uncha Chandana', Yamuna Nagar. Shutting down the Dadupur-Nalvi Canal Project would automatically mean shutting down of the Saraswati Canal Project, resulting into further insurmountable loss to the public exchequer.