

Hike price of paddy by Sept 1, says M.S. Gill

SARBJIT DHALIWAL
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, AUGUST 9

A member of the Rajya Sabha and former Union Agriculture Secretary, Mr M.S.Gill, has urged the Centre to further increase the minimum support price of paddy by September 1 and free the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices from the administrative control of the Union Ministry of Agriculture.

Rejecting the Rs 10 increase announced by the Centre, Mr Gill said the government should fix the MSP of paddy in such a way that the growing of paddy became profitable for farm-

ers. The present price of paddy was inadequate as the cost of inputs such as diesel, fertilisers and seeds had gone up manifold. He said there should be some saving from the crop to enable the farmer to look after his family.

Mr Gill said a further increase in the MSP of paddy was required to be made by September 1 because the crop would start arriving in the market in the third week of that month.

He said the delay in the announcement of bonus on wheat had earlier hit many farmers hard. "Many farmers had sold their wheat to traders by the time the government announced Rs 50

per quintal as bonus", he said. "And the same thing can happen during the paddy season if the government delays a further hike in the price of paddy", he asserted.

Talking about the commission, Mr Gill said it should be a powerful, independent body with powers to enforce the MSP announced by it. The Union Government should not be able to influence its decisions in any manner. The commission should also not be under the control of the Union Agriculture Ministry, he said. Many a time the commission had to follow the line of the Central Government while fixing the MSP of various foodgrains.