Farmers' issue

What is the issue?

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- Police force was deployed to deal with the farmers who were supposed to stage a road blockade in Chhattisgarh.
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- The officer was instructed not to use force even if the agitation turned violent.
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What is the background of the issue?

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- The Chhattisgarh Kisan Mazdoor Mahasangh, an alliance of 21 organisations, was staging a "chakka jam" (road blockade) on the outskirts of the state capital.
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- The Chhattisgarh government did not want what happened in Madhya Pradesh (MP) where six farmers were killed when the police opened fire on them.
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- Instead of directly confronting the farmers, the police officer diverted the traffic on National Highway 6.
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- In Chhattisgarh, farmers are not buying cash crops and hence remain unaffected when crops fails.
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- Interest-free loan is another issue that fails to charge them up.
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- This year they had to dump and destroy quintals of tomatoes because the demand was sluggish.
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- Government in Chhattisgarh had failed to fulfil its 2013 assembly manifesto that it would enhance the minimum support price of paddy to

Rs 2,100 a quintal, besides a bonus of Rs 300 to farmers against procuring each quintal of paddy.
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- The other demands included procuring every grain of paddy, waiving crop loans, and implementing the report of the Swaminathan committee.
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What is the history behind farmer's agitation in Chhattisgarh?

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- Farmers of the region launched the first satyagraha in the freedom movement.
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- In July 1920, The "Nahar (canal) Satyagraha" started at Kandel village (about 80 km from Raipur).
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- The farmers of Kandel launched a movement against the British government, which had imposed the irrigation tax.
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- A payment warrant of over Rs 4,000 was issued against them.
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- The farmers defied the order and refused to pay.
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- In return, the government started suppressing the villagers and took away their cattle.
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- The Kandel Satyagraha continued even as the British government took many into custody and tortured them.
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- The leaders then decided to urge Mahatma Gandhi to support and lead the movement.
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- The British government swung into action after sensing the expansion of the movement at the national level and asked the deputy commissioner of Raipur to probe the matter.
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- Based on his report, the British government wrote off the tax and returned the cattle. The decision was taken before Gandhi reached Raipur to lead the agitation.
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Source: Business Standard

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