

AIKS Press Release on Bt Cotton Seed 20 April 2026 | New Delhi

## AIKS indicts Modi Led BJP Government

### ₹35,000 CRORE CORPORATE LOOT AS FARMERS DIE

#### Public Bt Cotton Research Strangled to Protect Bayer-Monsanto Monopoly

**New Delhi, 20 April 2026** – The All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) today levelled a devastating indictment against the Union Government, accusing it of deliberately sabotaging India's public agricultural research infrastructure to protect the profit interests of multinational seed corporations. Armed with a comprehensive dossier of data, financial records and internal government correspondence, AIKS President Shri Rajan Kshirsagar and General Secretary Ravula Venkaiah charged that the systematic starvation of ICAR, the weaponisation of regulatory bodies, and the deliberate burial of approved public Bt cotton varieties constitute a **"criminal conspiracy"** against India's six million cotton-farming households.

"The evidence is irrefutable: this government has chosen corporate profits over farmer lives," declared Shri Kshirsagar. "While our public universities have developed world-class straight Bt cotton varieties, the Ministry sits on approvals and starves research of funds—because every seed a farmer saves from his own field is a seed packet not sold by Bayer-Monsanto. The Centre is not failing the farmer; it is **actively sabotaging the farmer.**"

#### THE NUMBERS DON'T LIE: ₹35,000 CRORE EXTRACTED

The Indian cotton seed market, currently valued at ₹7,500 crore, is racing toward ₹10,000 crore by 2030—entirely in private hands.

BG-II seeds were priced at ₹901 per packet for 2025-26—an 18.5% hike in four years—forcing farmers to pay an annual "seed tax" exceeding ₹6,000 crore.

Since Bt cotton's introduction in 2002, the private seed industry has extracted an estimated ₹35,000 crore cumulatively from cotton farmers.

Seeds costing ₹500–550 per kg to produce are sold at ₹2,000 per kg—a four-fold profiteering markup—even as cotton prices have crashed from ₹11,000 to ₹7,200–₹8,200 per quintal.

#### A SECTOR IN FREEFALL

Cotton production has collapsed to a seven-year low of 295 lakh bales in 2024-25, down from 370 lakh bales in 2017-18.

India's yield of 465 kg/hectare is less than a quarter of China's 2,170 kg/hectare and well below the global average of 769 kg/hectare. India has fallen behind Pakistan in yield rankings.

Input costs have spiralled to ₹60,000 per hectare; weed control alone consumes ₹20,000 per acre in Bt cotton.

In Marathwada, 269 farmer suicides were recorded in just eight districts in the first quarter of 2025-26—a 32% surge year-on-year. Farmer suicides in Maharashtra now average eight per day.

"Every suicide in Vidarbha and Marathwada is a direct indictment of this government's agriculture policy," said Shri Kshirsagar. "The blood of our farmers is on the hands of those who protect corporate monopolies at the cost of public research."

#### PAKISTAN LEADS WHERE INDIA FAILS

In a damning international comparison, AIKS highlighted that Pakistan has approved dozens of public sector straight Bt varieties—BT CIM-990, CEMB-AAS3 (triple-gene, herbicide-tolerant), IUB-13, CKC-1, CKC-3, and NIAB-545—allowing farmers to freely save and reuse seed without any royalty payment.

"Pakistan has shown the world that public sector Bt cotton works. The only difference is that their government works for their farmers—**ours works for Bayer-Monsanto.**"

## THE SOLUTION EXISTS—AND IS BEING SUPPRESSED

In June 2025, Vasantrya Naik Marathwada Krishi Vidyapeeth (VNMKV), Parbhani, developed India's first public BG-II straight varieties—NH 22037 Bt BG II and NH 22038 Bt BG II—cleared by ICAR's Central Variety Identification Committee. They yield 18–19 quintals/hectare and allow farmers to reuse seed for 2–3 seasons.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis personally launched three straight Bt varieties—NH 1901 BT, NH 1902 BT, and NH 1904 BT—from VNMKV in December 2025.

ICAR-CICR's PKV081-Bt has demonstrated yields of 2,639 kg seed cotton per hectare under rainfed conditions.

Punjab Agricultural University's new BG-II variety is in final notification stages, yet PAU concedes it will be 2–3 years before seed reaches farmers.

## THE GEAC: CORPORATE GATEKEEPER, NOT SCIENCE REGULATOR

Despite MON 531 and BG-II traits being approved since 2002, inserting the same genes into new public varieties still demands years-long fresh GEAC clearance. The regulatory paralysis was so acute that in March 2025, the Supreme Court had to direct the Centre to formulate a national policy on GM crop regulation.

“The GEAC is not a scientific body; it is a corporate toll-gate,” charged Shri Kshirsagar. “Private hybrids get cleared at speed; public varieties are buried in paperwork. This is not incompetence—it is design.”

## AIKS' NON-NEGOTIABLE DEMANDS

1. Immediate nationwide release of all approved public straight Bt cotton varieties (NH 22037, NH 22038, NH 1901–1904 BT, PAU BG-II), targeting 1 million hectares in the upcoming season.
2. Declare public straight varieties “National Public Goods”—available at a maximum of ₹200 per kg with government-absorbed distribution costs.
3. Abolish event-based GEAC approval for public varieties containing already-cleared genetic constructs; institute gene-based fast-track clearance.
4. Double agricultural R&D spending to 1% of agricultural GDP within two years, with dedicated allocations for public cotton biotechnology.
5. Immediate Cabinet approval for the ₹5,000 crore Mission for Cotton Productivity with mandatory disbursement to ICAR and State Agricultural Universities.
6. Mandate a Competition Commission of India investigation into anti-competitive practices by multinational seed corporations.
7. ₹20 lakh ex-gratia for families of cotton farmer suicide victims, with immediate debt relief and sustained livelihood support.

“The question before the Agriculture Minister is no longer about policy—it is about loyalty,” concluded Shri Kshirsagar. “Every day that public straight Bt varieties remain locked in research stations while farmers pay ₹901 per packet to Bayer-Monsanto, this government declares its allegiance to corporate profits over farmer lives.”

AIKS General Secretary Ravula Venkaiah added: “We will take this fight to every village, every mandi, and every street. The farmers of India have the right to save their own seed, access affordable technology, and live with dignity. We will settle for nothing less.”

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