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## Compensation amount leaves villagers unhappy

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Panchkula: The Haryana Urban Development Authority's (HUDA) "meager" compensation for land has left several Panchkula villagers unhappy. On Friday, HUDA announced the compensation for the land acquired for the Pinjore-Kalka Urban Complex, the new township near Pinjore-Kalka in the district. Villagers say the authorities have been unfair in distribution and have threatened to move court. They have also given a representation to Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda.

While in Bhagwanpur village, the compensation awarded is Rs 91 lakh an acre, in Bhogpur this is around Rs 33 lakh and in Meerapur Bakshiwala it is Rs 26.5 lakh an acre. Aruna Sachdeva, who owns 7 acres in Bhogpur, says, "The compensation is meagre. With the money HUDA is offering, we would not be able to buy a decent house. The compensation is not acceptable to us. Within a radius of a few hundred metres, the compensation being awarded differs widely."

Sachdeva had been teaching in different countries before she decided to settle in India. She used all her savings to buy the 7-acre land that is now being acquired. "I had earlier given a representation to HUDA and even written to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), requesting the

authorities to leave 2 acres of my land as I wanted to start a centre for empowerment of women. However, this has not been heeded to," she says.

While on the one hand the residents are ruing the disparities in compensation, they are also not satisfied with the criteria adopted for awarding compensation. Rajeev Syal, a resident of Bhogpur who owns land in Islam Nagar, says two to three groups of villagers would move court in the coming week. "Three different awards cannot be there in the same notification, as has been done. Our fight for enhanced compensation will continue till justice is done. HUDA is acting like a broker. While we have been paid a pittance, the property rates are extremely high. Once we go to buy property, we have to dig deeper in our pockets," says Syal. Land Acquisition Officer D S Kairon denied the allegations, arguing that they followed the acquisition policy of the government. "We are prepared in case the villagers decide to move court. The acquisition has been done as per the norms," he claimed.