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After 25 days, Panchamasalis halt stir as CM gives assurance

Govt To Decide On The Issue In 6 Months: BSY

TIMES NEWS NETWORK 16/3/24

Bengaluru: Panchamasalis, who launched a dharna 25 days ago to push for a change in their reservation status, ended the protest on Monday after chief minister BS Yediyurappa assured them the government would decide on their demand in six months.

POLITICS & POLICY

"Since the government has responded positively, we withdraw our protest. We will resume it after six months if the government fails to keep its promise," said seer Jaya Mrutyunjaya Swami, who is leading the movement.

Panchamasalis are an influential subsect of the Veerashaiva-Lingayat community. Currently, they come under the 3B category (5 per



TENSION EASES: Jaya Mrutyunjaya Swami, who is leading the Panchamasali movement, accepted the govt offer on Monday

cent) of the OBC reservation matrix. They want to move to the 2A category (15 per cent).

The seer carried out a 708-km padayatra from Basavakalyan in Bidar to Bengaluru to put pressure on the government. After a huge rally in the city, he announced a dharna at Freedom Park on February 21, demanding time-bound assurances of a decision on the issue.

On Monday morning, BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, who supports the Panchamasali agitation, raised

the issue in the assembly. Yediyurappa then informed the house that the government was studying the issue. "We have sought a report from the Backward Classes Commission and an expert committee headed by retired high court judge has been constituted. They will submit their reports in six months. As soon as I get them, I will make an appropriate decision," he said.

Yediyurappa appealed for cooperation from the sect and urged the seer to end the

dharna. When Yatnal sought some clarification, law and parliamentary affairs minister Basavaraj Bommai said that Yediyurappa had promised appropriate steps within the framework of the law.

Yatnal pointed out that the Permanent Backward Classes Commission had questioned the expert committee's formation. "I request the CM to seek recommendations from the Permanent Backward Classes Commission and take necessary steps in six months. This is the assurance we want; nothing else," he added.

Yediyurappa reiterated the point of taking a call after seeing the reports. Yatnal then said: "As the CM has given an assurance, I request the seer to halt the agitation for six months. If things don't work out, we are with you (seer)."

Meanwhile, speaker Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri and some BJP legislators questioned the government over the delays in implementing

the quota for economically weaker section. "It was one of the Narendra Modi government's major decisions before the 2019 general elections, but poor people from upper castes in Karnataka, especially students, are yet to benefit from it," Kageri said.

Mangaluru South MLA Vedavyas Kamath drew the government's attention to problems faced by various communities. "Every time a member from the Gouda Saraswat or Saraswat community goes to seek an income affidavit, the government says they are not eligible. Many communities have been left out," Kamath said.

BJP's chief whip, V Sunil Kumar, said that a delegation had already made representations before Yediyurappa and revenue minister R Ashoka, but the government was yet to issue an order declaring all communities outside the reservation category eligible for the 10 per cent quota.

Bommai said that the government would issue the order soon.