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It's BJP vs BJP in House as Yatnal raises quota issue

Cong applauds MLA for debating Panchamasali row; Oppn questions relevance of committee to study reservation demands

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

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OPPOSITION parties in the Assembly on Wednesday had to do nothing but sit back and watch as BJP MLAs took on their own government. BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, who is a known critic of the government, raised the issue of Panchamasali Lingayat stir over re-categorisation of reservation on the floor of the House during the Zero Hour only to be countered by his party colleague MP Renukacharya and eventually Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai.

All that Congress members did was watch the fight play out and applaud Yatnal's criticism of the Yediyurappa government.

"The chief minister had said he will respond to the demands of the Panchamasali community ... but today, he has gone missing from the House. Leader of Opposition Siddaramaiah is showing concern for the community by letting me talk. Seems like the Speaker is under pressure too to not let me raise this matter," said Yatnal, amid applause from Congress, reminding the House that thousands from the community are sitting in protest at the Freedom Park in Bengaluru.

The retort came from Renu-



BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal speaks during the Assembly session at Vidhana Soudha, in Bengaluru on Wednesday



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Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, BJP MLA

kacharya even before Bommai could respond on the issue. "Don't say the CM is missing. We support your cause, but that doesn't mean you should lash out at the CM," Renukacharya said.

Yatnal demanded that the government set a deadline as to when Panchamasalis can be included in the 2A reservation

category. "I am not some random guy on the street. I have been a union minister. Let me remind the party that we have to go before the people in two years. A wrong impression is being spread about our government and party. If the government doesn't have the will to provide this reservation then I will stage a sit-in protest

in the House and those protesting at Freedom Park will go on a hunger strike," Yatnal said.

Bomma said that measures are being taken to accommodate the demands of all communities. "If all demands are to be met then the reservation will increase to 56 per cent. That means we will have to show special cause for increasing reservation more than the allowed 50 per cent. We will ensure justice to all communities without legal complications," he said, adding that the Cabinet has approved forming of a three-member committee to look into the issue.

Yatnal saw the committee as a mere eyewash and an attempt to buy time. Siddaramaiah insisted that the committee would be irrelevant.

Giving a breakup of existing reservation, Bommai said apart from 3 per cent quota to STs and 15 per cent to SCs, Category 1 with 95 castes and 196 sub-castes has 4 per cent quota, Category 2A with 103 castes and 290 subcastes has 15 per cent, Category 2B which includes minorities has 4 per cent, Category 3A with three castes and 47 subcastes has 4 per cent, while Category 3B with six castes and 42 subcastes has 5 per cent reservation in education and jobs.

Justice Subhash Adi to head 3-member panel

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CHIEF Minister BS Yediyurappa on Wednesday appointed members to the high-powered committee to review quota demands of various communities.

Former Upalokayukta and retired High Court judge Justice Subhash B Adi will lead the three-member committee that will also include K Ratnaprabha, former chief secretary, and Dr BV Vasanthkumar, assistant professor, Maharani Arts College, Mysuru.

The appointment came on a day BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal raised the issue of Panchamasali-Lingayat agitation demanding their inclusion under 2A category of reservation.

The Cabinet took a decision to set up the committee weeks ago to address various quota-related demands. Panchamasalis are demanding inclusion under 2A category from the current 3B category and the request has been forwarded to the Backward Classes Commission.

Kurubas are demanding to be included under ST category and an ethnographic study is under way at University of Mysore SCs and STs, especially the Valmikis, have demanded higher reservation, which has been recommended by the Nagmohan Das committee.

The three-member committee is tasked with reviewing all quota-related demands and guide the government on Constitutional and legal parameters. "Since the total reservation will exceed the 50 per cent cap if demands of all communities need to be met, we need to ensure it stands legal scrutiny. We need to prove with data that increasing reservation should be considered as a special case as per Indra Sawhney case judgment and this committee will help us with it," said Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai.

The committee will be allowed to set its own limitation and deadlines to submit a detailed report on the various quota demands and how many of them can be met and on what conditions.

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