

CABINET DISCUSSED QUOTA ISSUE AT LENGTH: CM

Opinions of ministers Nirani, C C Patil, Shettar, Savadi, Bommai elicited on demands of various communities

Panchamasalis to hold rally in city tomorrow

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AS protesters from different communities have kept the reservation issue on the boil, Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa said these various demands are under the consideration of the government and that discussions are being held. "As rules and guidelines need to be followed, the demands for reservation are being examined," he added.

He revealed that the cabinet meeting on Thursday evening discussed the reservation issue at length. Opinions were sought from Lingayat Panchamsali ministers Murugesh Nirani and C C Patil and other Lingayat ministers Jagadish Shettar, Deputy Chief Minister Laxman Savadi and Home Minister Basavraj Bommai.

Over the last few weeks, the State Government is facing intense pressure from many communities, including Panchamsalis (Lingayats) seeking inclusion in backward 2A list, Kurubas demanding a change in the status from backward classes to Scheduled Tribe and Valmikis aiming for more reservation within the ST list.

Recently, Social Welfare Minister Sriramulu had said

that the government is conducting an anthropological and genealogical study of the communities and that 26 districts have been covered.

Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister K S Eshwarappa, who has been leading the protest for ST status for Kurubas, has said that while the community is seeking the ST status, it will not eat into the 3 per cent quota for STs, but will seek an increase in the overall reservation.

Meanwhile, Prof Ravi Verma Kumar and Ashok Harnahalli, both of whom have served as Advocates General, said that the reservation issue has to be decided legally and not politically.

If Banajiga Lingayats could be included in the 2A category when Jagadish Shettar was chief minister, why cannot Panchamsalis be given the same status, asked Panchamsali seer Vachananda Swamiji. But former Backward Classes Commission chairman Dr CS Dwarakanath said, "2A is for those who engage in certain work skills. Banajiga Lingayats are not included in the category, but Balijas, who make garlands, are. The reservation is only for education purpose."



Members of the Kuruba community protesting at Maurya Circle in Bengaluru on Friday | ASHISHKRISHNA HP

Hundreds of Kurubas protest in B'luru

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HUNDREDS of members of Karnataka Pradesh Kurubara Sangha held a protest in front of the Gandhi statue near Maurya Circle on Friday, demanding the inclusion of the community in the Scheduled Tribe list.

The protesters demanded that once the anthropological and genealogical studies

are done, they should be sent to the Central Government. They argued that Kurubas are already included in the ST list in Kodagu, Bidar, Kalaburagi and Yadgir districts.

They said that protests will continue till the government agrees to their demand. "RDPR Minister K S Eshwarappa is not pushing for ST status for Kurubas. He should pursue it before the Central Govern-

ment," they said.

Hundreds of participants from different districts arrived in Bengaluru on Friday morning to take part in the protest, which was led by Kurubara Sangha president in-charge Subramanya D, former mayors Venkatesh Murthy M Ramachandrappa and J Huchappa, Sangha treasurer Devraj Subbarayappa, leaders Krishnamurthy, Rajendra Sanakki and others.

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FORMER minister P C Sidanagoudar said on Friday that over 10 lakh members of the Panchamsali community will take part in a rally in Bengaluru's Palace Grounds on February 21, demanding 2A OBC status.

He said that the demand is not new. "During his tenure as CM, BJP leader Jagadish Shettar constituted a committee under C M Udasi to consider the demand. The committee found our demand to be genuine and recommended reservation... but successive governments failed to act upon it," he added.

The demand for reservation is only for education and government jobs. "Technical and legal glitches surface only while including our sect in the 2A category," he said.

Meanwhile, leaders of Karnataka Rajya Parishista Jati Misalati Hechhala Samiti have demanded that the percentage of reservation for Scheduled Castes be increased to 35% from the present 15% within 30 days. If not, they would launch an agitation, they warned.