

BSY tries damage control on Panchamasali quota demand

Asks BC panel for a report on including Lingayat sub-sect under 2A

BENGALURU, DHNS

Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa's camp has been in damage control mode since Friday night after he appeared to rile the influential Panchamasali Lingayats by saying he will not decide on their demand for Category 2A reservation.

On Friday afternoon, Yediyurappa declared on the floor of the Legislative Assembly that he had no authority to act upon this issue, asking the agitators to approach New Delhi directly. This angered not only legislators, but also pontiffs who are rallying for the Category 2A demand.

Hours later, Yediyurappa ordered the Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes to prepare a report on including the Panchamasali sub-sect under Category 2A. Then, Small Scale Industries Minister C C Patil and Mines & Geology Minister Murugesh Nirani, both Panchamasalis, issued a joint statement in support of Yediyurappa, thanking him for taking the necessary steps.

The Panchamasali leaders are taking out a *padayatra* to press for their demand.

At present, the Veerashaiva-Lingayats currently get 5% reservation under Category 3B. If the numerically-strong Panchamasalis are moved from Category 3B to Category 2A, political equations will be altered. Under Category 2A, there are 102 castes and their sub-sects sharing 15% reservation and they are likely to go up in arms if the Panchamasalis are put in the same basket with them.

Lingayats are seen as the BJP's core support base. Upsetting the sub-sects may cause a split in the community, which could be disadvantageous to the BJP.

Law and Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai also defended Yediyurappa on

'Put Vokkaligas also in Cat 2A'

JD(S) Bengaluru City president R Prakash on Saturday urged Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa to include Vokkaligas under Category 2A. At present, Vokkaligas come under Category 3A with a 4% reservation. In a letter to Yediyurappa, Prakash said the agriculture-dependent Vokkaliga community had suffered oppression for centuries. "You have said that you will take all communities along. Without discriminating, if Vokkaligas aren't included under Category 2A with Panchamasali Lingayats, our community seers and political leaders will hit the streets in protest," he said.

RESERVATIONS FOR BACKWARD CLASSES IN KARNATAKA

- 4% for Category 1 (mainly Golla and Uppara communities)
- 15% for 2A (Kuruba, Idiga, Dalit Christians, Buddhists etc)
- 4% for 2B (Muslims)
- 4% for 3A (Vokkaliga, Kodavas, Christians, Jains etc)
- 5% for 3B (Veerashaiva-Lingayats, Lingayat subgroups and Bunts)

Saturday. "It was Yediyurappa who identified Panchamasali Lingayats as an OBC group by putting them in Category 3B during his first tenure as the CM," he said.

"Legally, we have seen many times in other states such as Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh that such proposals get stayed in courts. To ensure such troubles don't occur, Yediyurappa has sent this Category 2A proposal to the backward classes commission. Once the report comes, CM will decide," he said.