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Three way out for Maratha quota

Maharashtra govt can either issue ordinance, file review petition or approach larger SC bench

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THE Maharashtra government is exploring various options to ensure reservation for the Marathas in the state.

The Supreme Court on Sept 9 referred the petitions challenging Maharashtra's 2018 law — the Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) Act, which granted 16% quota to the Maratha community — to a larger constitutional bench. The court also stayed the law's implementation.

The Bombay High Court had upheld the law in June 2019, but it had reduced the quota to 12%



The MVA government did not even change the legal team set up by the previous government. We are exploring avenues as to how to provide relief for Marathas in jobs and admissions

Ashok Chavan, Maharashtra PWD minister

in education and 13% in jobs.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said on Thursday that his government was committed to the Maratha reservation and that a final decision would be taken soon.

Sources said the state government is exploring three options: issue an ordinance, file a review petition against the Supreme Court's interim order and approach the larger constitutional bench.

Thackeray has sought to pacify the Maratha community that has threatened agitation, saying "this is their government, so there is no point in protesting". The CM called an all-party meeting on Thursday which was attended by Deputy CM Ajit Pawar and Opposition leader Devendra Fadnis.

The CM said the SC verdict was "unexpected", and that the government was thinking of what relief could be given to

the Maratha community till the final SC verdict is out.

Ashok Chavan, chairman of a sub-committee for the Maratha reservation has said the Supreme Court's order is only an interim order. "There is hope... we will approach a constitution bench and get justice," he said.

Describing the SC's interim order as "unexpected and surprising", Chavan said the law had been unanimously passed by the state legislature.

Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh has said that 500 posts out of the total 1,500 would be reserved for the Maratha community.