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Gujarat govt suspends EBC quota implementation in 52,000 govt jobs

AHMEDABAD: In a studied move the Gujarat government kept in abeyance the implementation of 10 per cent reservation across admissions in educational institutions and in close to 52,000 upcoming government job vacancies for Economically Backward Classes (EBC). What is significant is that deputy CM Nitin Patel on Friday said that even the Gujarat government's biggest employment drive in over two decades for filling more than 52,000 job vacancies too has been suspended for the time being till the division bench of the supreme court pronounces its decision.

Patel clarified that admissions pertaining to 3,000 odd medical seats carried on basis of EBC quota will not be affected. The EBC quota was brought into effect by an Ordinance passed on May 1 this year by the Anandiben Patel government following the Patidar agitation. "A total of eight EBC notifications issued by our government stands withdrawn. The court has allowed the EBC notification for medical seats and these students will not be affected," says Patel.

Patel said that recruitment procedures for 17,000 teachers jobs in government primary schools, 8,000 jobs in higher secondary schools, 17,000 police personnel and 10,000 odd jobs in various other government establishments was on. "The EBC quota notification stands suspended for these jobs and so are the recruitment procedures till the supreme court division bench," said Patel.

A senior official accompanying Patel told TOI that continuing Dalit agitation, fearing contempt procedures from the Supreme Court and high court were reasons for withdrawal of notification for government jobs. The official further added that on Thursday this week the Punjab and Haryana high court had stayed the Haryana government's decision of giving 10% quota to economically backward persons (EBP) in the admission to state medical colleges. "We were told that the Haryana government too may appeal before the Supreme Court following Gujarat," said the senior official.

Gujarat's petition in the Supreme Court argues that the EBC quota is not a reservation, as the Gujarat HC held, but is a "genuine classification on

economic ground". The petition in the SC was filed by advocate Hemantika Wahi.

Interestingly, the decision for withdrawing the EBC notification was taken soon after the 'twitter townhall' conducted by CM Vijay Rupani on Friday where he was inviting questions from public. Patel said that around evening he had called CM Rupani and officials of the Social Justice and empowerment department and General Administration Department to discuss EBC implementation in upcoming government vacancies in the light of the government's petition pending before a three judge division bench in the Supreme Court since August 9.

A notification was issued around Friday evening by GAD directing all government departments to abstain from providing government jobs or admissions in educational institutions to children and people belonging to the EBC category. It also advised not to cancel school admission given so far on EBC quota prior to August 4 (which is prior to Gujarat HC order) till further orders. The 10 per cent reservation for families with income less than Rs 6 lakh per annum was taken by the previous Anandiben Patel government on May 1 to counter demands for OBC reservation benefits for the Patidar community. Both the Gujarat high court and a division bench of the Supreme Court had disapproved the EBC ordinance as "unconstitutional" and the matter was pending before the larger bench of the Supreme court.