

The Indian Express

Will give job opportunities to 5 lakh Maratha youths: Devendra Fadnavis



In the face of the ongoing protests by the Maratha community in demand of reservation in jobs and education, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis Sunday said the state government would provide employment opportunities to 5 lakh youths from the community through skill development.

Fadnavis said short- and long-term plans, both administrative and political, were ready to address the unrest.

“Our plan is to provide employment opportunities to 5 lakh youths from the Maratha community using skill development and finance,” he said. The CM appealed to the Kranti Maratha Morcha to come forward for a dialogue with the state government.

Fadnavis said the government planned to hold discussions with various sections of the community in almost all districts across western Maharashtra, Marathwada, Vidarbha, Konkan and north Maharashtra to address their concerns of rural poverty and agriculture crisis. Formation of a sub-group of ministers and district representatives across party lines is also on the agenda.

Reiterating that the government was positive about providing reservation to the community, he said, “My government passed the law for Maratha reservation. But the matter is in court. We have collected 1,200 documents to substantiate the Marathas’ right to reservation.”

In a veiled attack on his political rivals, Fadnavis said, “Let us keep petty politics aside.”

Acknowledging that the community staged the protest rallies in a disciplined and restrained manner, the CM said, “A sizeable section within the community is facing educational and economic backwardness. The problem has its roots in the past legacy and the system, which needs to be uprooted.”

The CM said the “flaws” in the system had long been neglected, which resulted in the problems.

Accepting limitations in reservation, Fadnavis said he was working to accommodate the larger concerns of Maratha youths by opening up the private sector for them. “The (proposed) 15 per cent reservation would create only 900 seats in 6,000 (government) colleges, whereas 1.47 lakh private institutions with greater space have failed to accommodate the concerns of the poor Marathas who cannot afford higher fees,” he said.

Earlier, Fadnavis paid floral tribute to the late Mathadi leader Annasaheb Patil on his 83rd birth anniversary. Addressing the gathering of Mathadi workers (head loaders) at Navi Mumbai, he announced several welfare schemes for the community.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, the government will include housing for Mathadi workers, he said. In the agriculture produce market committees, rules will be framed to facilitate employment for Mathadi workers’ children, the CM added.