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Swami Agnivesh meets Bihar Governor, says talks positive

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Social activist Swami Agnivesh on Tuesday met Bihar Governor Satya Pal Malik with eight demands of workers of the closed Motihari sugar mill.

Two workers of the mill immolated themselves on April 10 in protest of non-payment of long-pending dues. Naresh Srivastava (50) and Suraj Baitha (50) had written to several officers of East Champaran district administration in March, warning that they would immolate themselves if their demands were not met. Though the Bihar government recommended a CBI probe into the matter in June, the agency has not yet taken over the case.

Swami Agnivesh told The Indian Express, “For the first time, we see a ray of hope. The Governor patiently listened to us and assured that he would discuss all our demands with the state government after Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Patna trip on October 14. Purnima Devi, widow of Naresh Srivastava, and Maya Devi, widow of Suresh Baitha, have been assured of government jobs”.

Agnivesh said they had deferred a protest meeting of Motihari sugar mill workers in Delhi later this week after “positive talks” with the Bihar governor. “I tried to meet Bihar CM four times, but could not get an appointment. We want to know if the CBI is taking over the probe or not,” said the social activist.

He said the eight demands of the mill workers include the immediate arrest of the owner of the closed mill, dropping off 38 “false” cases against mill workers and one-time settlement of their dues.

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