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**Mata announces Rs 200-cr project to help farmers**

Friday March 16 2007 00:41 IST

MUMBAI: Maharashtra Chief Minister Vilasrao Deshmukh held a high-level meeting with Mata Amritanandamayi at the Sahyadri government guest house here on Thursday on the issue of suicides by farmers of Vidarbha and sought her assistance.

After the meeting Mata announced that the Mata Amritanandamayi Math would undertake a Rs 200-crore project to tackle the problem of suicides by farmers of Maharashtra, Kerala and other states.

Mata is currently on an all-India tour and arrived here from Pune on Wednesday. She expressed deep concern about the large number of suicides by the cotton growers of Vidarbha.

Besides the Chief Minister, Chief Secretary D.K.Sankaran and other senior officials briefed Mata about the extent of the problem and the steps taken by the government to tackle it.

Mata appreciated the efforts made by the Maharashtra Government. "But the problem cannot be solved through economic packages alone. What is needed is social and spiritual intervention to make farmers realise that suicide is not the way out as it only creates problems for their families," Mata observed.

She stressed the need for personal counselling of vulnerable persons and recalled the experience of Math volunteers in dealing with a similar problem in the Wayanad district of Kerala.

Apart from the Chief Minister and Chief Secretary, those who



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attended the meeting included senior Cabinet Minister Patangrao Kadam, Ministers Balasaheb Thorat, Ramraje Njmbalkar, principal secretaries Sarogi and Pande, divisional commissioner, Amravati, Goyal, Mata's seniormost disciple Amritaswarupanandapuri and other senior devotees.

first list of 317 names

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