

Jharkhand doctors go on one-day strike

Doctors in Jharkhand went on a one-day strike Saturday in support of government-contract doctors, who are demanding regularisation of their services.

'The state government is overlooking the demand of the contractual doctors. We have gone on strike in support of demand of the contractual doctors,' said R.C. Jha, secretary of Jharkhand unit of Indian Medical Association (IMA).

The emergency services have been kept out of the ambit of the strike.

The doctors on contract are on strike since May 26 demanding regularisation of their services. They want direct interview and exemption from written examination when being considered for regular jobs.

The state government had made it clear that they would have to appear in written examination and interview. Preference of ten marks and ten years age relaxation will be given to the contractual doctors for regular recruitment.

The Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC) has initiated the process to appoint 1,070 doctors. The doctors on contract allege that the state government is not fulfilling its promise regarding doctors' recruitment.

In 2003, 1,800 doctors were appointed on contract. About 620 doctors are still working on contract while the rest have quit.

The state government has, however, said that no further relaxation would be given to contractual doctors.

'There is no question that further relaxation would be given to doctors. We have already given them ten years age relaxation and ten marks preference in the examination,' said Bhanu Pratap Shahi, health minister of Jharkhand. He also threatened to sack the striking contractual doctors.

The contractual doctors' strike has affected medical services in rural areas of the state as most of them are posted there.

The Congress party, a key ally of the Madhu Koda government, has supported the demand of the contractual doctors.

'We find no problem to regularise the services of the contractual doctors,' said Subodh Kant Sahay, union minister and Congress Lok Sabha MP from Ranchi.

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