

### Doctors take to streets for more PG seats

dna correspondent @dna

In order to press for their long-pending demand to make the number of seats in undergraduate and postgraduate (PG) levels equal, over 200 MBBS students, interns and postgraduate aspirants alike, came out together on the streets on Monday. Wearing their campaign logo 'Save the doctors' on black T-shirts, they organised a protest march and lit candles at Haji Ali.

According to Medical Council of India (MCI) statistics, as against 47,688 MBBS seats, there are only 12,500 postgraduate (clinical) seats. Another 7,000 seats are in the non-clinical side, a less preferred option.

Charu Dutta Arora, an intern of TN Medical College, said, "The nation needs specialist doctors. If the government doubles the PG seats public medical colleges and a one-year rural stint is added in the PG course, a large number of specialist doctors would be available to serve at primary healthcare centres."

The Centre had put a rider of one-year rural posting for PG aspirants. The medical fraternity is against the move as it takes away a precious year of MBBS doctors without the assurance of a PG seat later. Besides, the fate of aspirants from states like Maharashtra is unclear as they don't have vacancies in rural areas.

Doctors pin their hopes on the formation of new MCI board. "Till now, MCI is being governed by a handful of nominated members. An elected board will have freedom for such reforms," said Dr Shivkumar Uttare, IMA member.