

Clip: 1 of 1

Medicos protest compulsory rural posting

Shiv Sunny

NEW DELHI: Medical students protesting against mandatory rural posting, to be eligible for admission to postgraduate colleges, were on Thursday confronted with water cannons when they tried to march from Jantar Mantar to Nirman Bhavan to meet the Union health minister.

The students alleged that they were met by baton-wielding policemen because of which 10 students, including three women, were injured.

Police officials, however, denied hitting the students.

"Nobody has approached us with injuries. We had to resort to mild use of water cannons after the students started breaking the barricades. We called up the hospitals where the students were supposedly treated and they denied that any student was admitted with injuries," said SBS Tyagi, Deputy Commissioner of Police, New Delhi.



Medical students brave water cannons during a protest at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Thursday against the government's decision to make one year rural posting mandatory for doctors. PTI

The DCP also denied that batons were used to tackle the students, adding that water cannons were used as they violated Section 144. "Had we used batons, we would not have taken them to meet the offi-

cial," he said.

But Dr Anirudh Lochan, national secretary of the Young Doctors Association of India, narrated a different story. "I have met the injured students at Lady Harding Medical Col-

lege where they were treated. One girl has her eyes bandaged and another suffered an ankle fracture," he said, adding that others suffered minor injuries.

Over 2,000 medical students from Delhi and some other

states gathered at Jantar Mantar on Thursday to stage a dharna, following which they decided to march towards Nirman Bhavan. Though they were stopped by the police, they were determined to continue with their march, following which the police took harsh steps.

In the meeting with the student representatives, the government promised to examine their grievances and take necessary action. But the students said the promises fell short of their expectations. "They did not say that they would halt the implementation of the policy until we are consulted," said Lochan.

The use of water cannons on the students have left them angry. "Till now we were contemplating a normal strike, but now we will go on an indefinite strike if the government does not relent," Lochan said, adding that the Resident Doctors Association (RDA) members may also join the protests.

DH News Service