

Clip: 1 of 1

Doctors protest compulsory rural posting

Press Trust of India

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Doctors of several hospitals, including AIIMS, on Thursday protested here against the Government's decision to make one-year rural posting compulsory for medicos applying for post-graduation entrance exams.

Hundreds of doctors of AIIMS, Vardhman Mahavir Medical College in Safdarjung Hospital, Lady Hardinge Medical College, Maulana Azad Medical College and University College of Medical Sciences protested at Jantar Mantar, demanding that rural postings should be made a part of post-graduation. The protesting doctors said if at all the rural post-

ing was to be introduced before post-graduation, then it should be made voluntary and not be an eligibility criterion for applying for PG courses, sources said.

As the protest intensified, police had to use water cannons to disperse the crowd.

A delegation of medicos also met Union Health Secretary, Keshav Desiraju, who said their demands were justified and would be looked into in a "broader perspective," the doctors said.

The doctors said they were willing to serve in rural areas, but expressed concern over poor infrastructure and lack of basic facilities in the primary health centres.

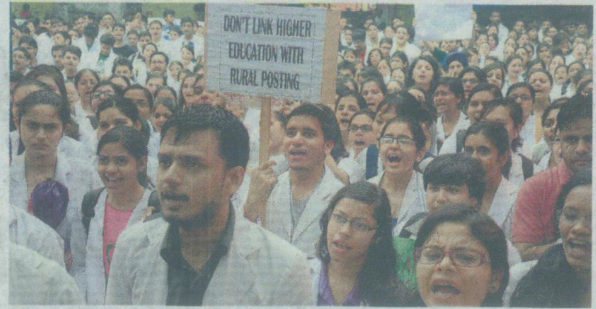
"There are no proper labs to

carry out the investigations in primary health centres. There are also no lab attendants or nurses. The infrastructure is also poor. Moreover, safety of female doctors in rural areas is also a question," one protestor said.

They also demanded that the number of under-graduate level and post-graduate level medical seats be made equal.

The protest was part of 'Save the Doctor' campaign launched by the Indian Medical Association and Association of Healthcare Providers.

The Government recently decided to make it mandatory for all MBBS doctors to undergo one year rural posting to sit for post-graduation entrance examination.



Up in arms: Medical students protest in New Delhi on Thursday. — Monica Tiwari