

Delhi Cops' High-handedness against 'Save the Doctor' Campaigners

Express News Service

New Delhi: The organisers of the public rally held by 'Save the Doctor' campaigners at Jantar Mantar here on Thursday have accused the Delhi Police of unnecessarily using force against the participants.

According to them, water cannons were used by the Delhi police on the over 3000-strong crowd, which was protesting peacefully against the mandatory one-year rural service rule for admissions to the medical Post-Graduate courses, besides demanding equalisation of the undergraduate and postgraduate medical seats.

As a result of the police action, what was to be an awareness campaign soon acquired a political dimension, the organisers pointed out.

'Save the Doctor' campaign coordinator Doctor Navneet Motreja also claimed that the protest was hijacked and unnecessarily politicised by unknown 'students'.

"Our plan was to gather at

11 am and discuss the two issues.

Somewhere around 2-2.30 pm, when we started to thank the student community and the doctors for coming out and supporting us, some five to 10 persons suddenly started shouting slogans against (Union Health Minister) Ghulam Nabi Azad."

"They literally hijacked the campaign and urged the pro-

testers to take out a protest to Parliament. They flung themselves at the barricades and the police then resorted to the use of water cannons," he said.

Since the campaign was very much active online, supporters were given the option to download the logo and wear the shirts on the day of the campaign.

"A lot of the supporters were seen wearing shirts

with 'Save the Doctor' logo and belonged to the various city colleges.

So the water cannons were a cause of worry for us, since it was difficult to differentiate between the campaign supporters and those who tried to hijack it," Motreja added.

Several of the participants were overheard saying that the Health Minister wanted to discuss the problems with the doctors' representatives.

"There were such rumours but none of them was true. We will go through proper procedure and take our issue to the Union Ministry of Health and the Medical Council of India (MCI) in writing," Navneet Motreja said.

Speaking to Express, Motreja said, "We are not against the rural posting of the doctors, we are all for it. However, one-year compulsory rural posting makes it 13 years before one becomes a super specialty doctor.

Adding one more year makes it almost impossible for parents to support the aspiring doctor for so long."



Water cannons being used by the Delhi police on the participants of 'Save the Doctor' campaign who were protesting peacefully at the Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Thursday | Express