

## **Karnataka plans to recruit 15,000 constables this year**

With policemen in Karnataka threatening to go on mass leave on June 4 to protest against poor working conditions and wages, the state's Congress government Saturday assured them that the demands would be addressed.

The proposed move by policemen, which gathered momentum on social media, had been largely ignored till this week by the government. The government took the issue seriously after officers in police stations in various districts began handing over signed petitions this week to their supervising officers, indicating that they would be on leave on June 4. Things came to a head Friday when policemen went on a snap protest over the detention of a constable who was distributing pamphlets regarding the leave in Davangere, where PM Narendra Modi is scheduled to hold a public meeting Sunday. They returned to work only after their colleague was released.

President of All Karnataka Police Association V Shashidhar said 50,000 of 85,000 policemen in the state will go on leave on June 4.

State home minister G Parameshwara Saturday said at a press meet that wage issues will be addressed in the impending revision of police pay commission. "Salaries of policemen in Karnataka will be brought on a par with that of any other state." He warned that policemen who take part in protests would be dealt with strictly.

Bengaluru – At least 15,000 police constables in Karnataka are showing no signs of backing down from their decision to go in for an unprecedented mass strike on Saturday protest against what they call inhuman working conditions.

The state government has however declared it illegal and ordered officers not to approve casual leave and also asked state government doctors not to issue medical certificates to anyone.

On Wednesday, the police barged into the house of Shashidhar, president of Karnataka State Police Welfare Association and sent him to jail for 15 days. Karnataka Director General of Police (DGP) Omprakash said "police can't go on a strike. No man in uniform can form union and boycott work. We are aware of their grievances. The chief minister himself has promised to address them. The police association itself is illegal. Shashidhar is a dismissed constable. I am sure there will be no

strike on Saturday. It will be like any other day for the police department". The constables however have applied for a casual leave on Saturday.

The Police Association has submitted a list of demands to the government through the DGP, who is the head of police force. Some of their demands include – increase in salary on par with neighbouring states like Telangana, fixed working hours, end to exploitation by superior officers, new wage board, time bound promotion, better housing, scrapping of orderly system, medical facilities and better more allowance.

Under ESMA, constables who don't report to work on Saturday can be dismissed from the job.

Karnataka chief minister Siddaramaiah said "We are sympathetic towards their demands. But, under no circumstances, strike will be tolerated or allowed. Men and women in uniform can't do this whatever may be their demand and grievance".

Karnataka has over 73,000 police constables. More than 25,000 posts are vacant and the state is planning to recruit 15,000 constables this year.