

The Tribune

Kargil war porters demand govt jobs ‘promised’ to them

Porters of the Kargil war today hold a protest rally in Jammu demanding job, which was promised to them by the government after the end of war in 1999.

There are about 1,100 porters, 500 from Jammu, Samba and Udhampur and 600 from Pathankot and Himachal Pradesh, who were hired by the Army to port ammunition and food in the Ladakh region during the war.

The porters alleged that they were promised that they would be given preference in recruitment in the Army and they all would be recruited, but the government didn't keep its promise. Dozens of porters today gathered in Jammu to protest against the government demanding job in the Army.

“We helped the Army during the war as true nationalists and we are proud of that. But the government has never recognised our services to the nation and has done nothing for us even after promising us jobs after the war,” said Romesh Kumar, president, All India Porters’ Union (AIPU).

“We feel ashamed of our government when the stone-throwers and anti-national elements get jobs as well as compensations, but we poor people, who had put our lives on risk for the sake of our country, are still unemployed,” he added.

During the war, 10 porters had lost their lives for which the government paid financial aid and one job to the family member of the deceased, but rest of the porters are still waiting for their engagement as per the assurances made by the government.

“After the war, the authorities handed over a certificate to every porter and verbally assured us preference in recruitment in government job keeping in view our service to the nation in the hour of need,” said Romesh Kumar.

Porters have also submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister’s Office.