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JTET protests: Candidate attempts self-immolation

RANCHI: A Jharkhand Teachers' Eligibility Test (JTET) pass candidate tried to set himself on fire near Raj Bhavan on Tuesday.

Hundreds of JTET pass candidates took out a rally from Jaipal Singh Stadium and were going to gherao the chief minister's residence but were stopped midway near the Raj Bhavan by the district administration. The candidates demanded permission for committing suicide or cancelling of second JTET which will be held on November 20 as the candidates who cleared the first JTET are still waiting for recruitment.

During the protest, Shamim Ali, a JTET pass candidate poured kerosene on himself. However, he was stopped by the police, taken to the nearest Kotwali police station and was let out after he gave a written statement for not repeating the act.

Ali said, "There is no other option than killing ourselves now. This is about the welfare of thousands of candidates who have worked hard to get selected in the examination and now the government is planning to conduct a second examination despite most of the candidates from the first JTET still waiting for recruitment."

In 2013, around 64,000 candidates passed the JTET of which as many as 40,302 candidates who cleared the examination for recruitment as teachers in Class VI to VII and 10,364 for Class I to V are still waiting for jobs. Out of these, there are around 10,000 such candidates who will not be able to sit for another JET examination as they have crossed the eligibility age and this is their last chance of recruitment.

Vir Ranjan Chaudhary, general secretary of Jharkhand TET Pass Candidates Association, said, "This is wrong on the government's part to think about organizing another JTET Examination when so many of us are still waiting for jobs."

He added, "If the government does not think about recruiting the JTET pass candidates within 10 days, we will organize a mass self-immolation in front of the education minister's office."

Meanwhile, school education and literacy department secretary Aradhana Patnaik said that according to rules TET has to be conducted every year and it is being done so in other states. "Recruitment is done on the basis of merit and we have already recruited the 16,000 top performers of JTET," she said.

"If we do not organize JTET then what will happen to those candidates who have passed B Ed in last three years because now one can become a teacher only after clearing TET," she added.

Patnaik said that the second JTET is also an opportunity for those candidates who passed the first JTET but could not get good marks.