

Shortage of guards plagues various Jails across Madhya Pradesh

The recent escape of a criminal from jail custody at a hospital in Rewa and the alleged suicide of an undertrial prisoner at a sub-jail in Raisen on Wednesday has brought to fore the lack of security in jails across Madhya Pradesh.

Sources in the jail department in Bhopal, said that 120 jails across the state are facing a shortage of warders, right from the sub-jail to the central jails across the state.

Despite the shortage, the jails are yet to get 842 new guards, whose recruitment was sanctioned by the state government in 2014-15.

But with scam-hit Madhya Pradesh Professional Examination Board (VYAPAM) yet to declare the final results based on written exam and physical test held between February and March, hopes of jails to getting the required manpower remain a pipe dream.

Officials of the state jails department said that while the written exam was conducted by Vyapam, the physical test was conducted by the department.

The list of candidates who cleared, failed or were absent at the physical test, was submitted to Vyapam in April, but the final results are yet to be declared by examination board, some of them said.

Sushovan Banerjee, additional director general of police (jails), however, is hopeful that results will be declared soon and the department will get the required manpower.

Urmila Shukla, Vyapam spokesperson, said due to the pressure of declaring results of a number of entrance examinations and transfers of staff in the board, results of jail guard recruitment could not be declared until now. "Results will be declared within the next few days," she said.

Central jails work with much lesser number of guards than sanctioned.

Sources in the jail department, said the Rewa Central Jail has a sanctioned strength of 134 guards, but only 59 guards are deployed in the prison that has 1,428 prisoners.

In Satna central, against the sanctioned of 132 guards, only 57 warders are manning the prison that has 1,345 prisoners.

Owing to shortage of jail guards, warders are forced to work 10-12 hours every day instead of the four hour duty.

At the Barwani central jail just 48 guards man the prison against a sanctioned strength of 72 that houses 932 prisoners.

In Ujjain central jail that houses 2,100 prisoners, only 100 guards are deployed, while in the Sagar central jail, only 74 guards are deployed to guard 1,577 prisoners.