

One cop to guard 500 jail inmates as 50% posts vacant

Nashik: The high number of vacancies and the state-wide strike called by home guards has put the Nashik Central Jail administration in a spot.

About 50% of the 201 posts of constables at the prison are lying vacant, while 30 home guards have recently gone on strike. The home guards were deployed at the jail to make up for the shortage of men-in-khaki.

The state government has approved 201 posts of jail guards of the rank of constables, but only 102 guards are on duty. Also, five of the 30 sanctioned posts at officers' level are vacant. The cumulative absence of security personnel has crippled the security at the prison.

Jail authorities said it is necessary to have adequate staff for efficient administration of the prison. "There are over 3,000 prisoners in the jail. With the staff of hundred, about 40% of the staff is stationed at main gates, watch towers, patrolling and other administrative work," said a senior jail official.

"Given the present strength of guards, one constable has been given the charge of 500 prisoners," he said, adding, "It is difficult to manage and keep a watch on all prisoners and their activities."

Officials said that even the task of frisking many prisoners has become difficult. Another official said the instances of mobiles found in the jail or phones being thrown across the prison walls have been reported. "Fights among inmates are common and to avoid conflicts, the prisoners are often moved between barracks.

Such incidents would be checked effectively if we have adequate staff. We can also take proper steps to prevent mobile phones from reaching prisoners," he added.

The official said it becomes difficult to manage the inmates considering the staff crunch. "A recruitment drive was conducted in Aurangabad; however, no staff has been recruited for Nashik jail. Repeated requests have been made to higher authorities during their visits. The situation has remained the same," he added.

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