

## **The New Indian Express**

### **BJP fires teacher recruit board salvo at Odisha government**

BHUBANESWAR: As the ruling BJD took strong exception to Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's remark on the 'teacher on call' scheme, the BJP on Monday asked the State Government to explain the fate of the proposed Teachers' Recruitment Board.

"It has been more than a year, but Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's announcement for setting up a teachers' recruitment board is yet to take shape," BJP general secretary Prithviraj Harichandan told a media conference here.

Finding that a large number of teacher posts remained vacant for years together in Government and aided schools of the State during performance review of School and Mass Education Department on June 16, 2015, the Chief Minister had directed the department to set up a Teachers' Recruitment Board within a month.

The proposed board is yet to be constituted while the number of vacancies of teacher post from primary to secondary level is more than 55,000, Harichandan said.

In a reply to a question of senior BJD MLA Prafulla Samal, School and Mass Education Minister Debi Prasad Mishra had informed the Assembly that 43,810 teacher posts in primary and upper primary schools were lying vacant by March 31, 2016.

While responding to a separate question from Taraprasad Bahinpati of Congress, the Minister had admitted that Government and aided high schools are facing a shortage of about 14,000 teachers.

Instead of addressing the problems of the education sector, Harichandan said the ruling party leaders are trying to divert the attention of the public by politicising every issue.

Defending the Union Minister, BJP vice-president Samir Mohanty said the former's remark on the 'teacher on call' scheme was never intended to disrespect the teachers but to tell the Government to treat them properly.

Mohanty said the ruling party is trying to raise a controversy out of nothing as the Government is in the eye of storm after the Kalahandi incident.

Cooperation and Excise Minister Damodar Rout strongly disapproved the remarks of Pradhan on the teachers and said this shows the culture and upbringing of the Union Minister.