

## **The New Indian Express**

### **Dharmendra Pradhan urges Govt to fill up all the vacant posts without delay**

BHUBANESWAR: Union Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas Dharmendra Pradhan lambasted the State Government on the 'teachers on call' scheme again on Monday.

Expressing concern over declining education standard in schools of the State due to large number of vacancies in teaching post, Pradhan said as many as 1,07,752 newly aided teachers, Gana Sikshyaks and Sikshya Sahayaks are teaching in primary schools on contractual basis.

“It is the responsibility of the Government of a welfare state to ensure that teachers are paid well so that they can take proper care of the students,” Pradhan said in his message on social media on the occasion of the Teachers' Day and Ganesh Puja on Monday.

Stating that 13,977 posts of high school teachers have fallen vacant in the State, the Union Minister said the Odisha Government has preferred to fill up these posts through its 'teacher on call' scheme when large number of unemployed B.Ed and Certified Teachers (CT) are waiting for regular jobs.

“It is humiliating to treat teachers like cab drivers. I urge the State Government to stop the unethical practice of appointing teachers on contractual basis with a distressingly low salary. Regularise their jobs and fill up all the vacant posts without delay,” he said.

Quoting official records, the Union Minister said there is no high school in 38 gram panchayats in the State while 376 schools do not have their own buildings.

He further said out of 53,252 schools, 42,070 schools do not have a playground which is about 80 per cent of the total schools in the State.

While the minimum requirement of a school is to have at least one room for each class, there is no such provision in 41,670 schools which is nearly 80 per cent of the total schools in Odisha, he lamented.

Reacting to Pradhan's statement, BJD spokesperson and former minister SN Patro said the Union Minister, instead of politicising the issue, should worship guru on Guru Divas.

"Whatever Pradhan has said is far from truth. Before giving such irresponsible statements, he should read the Central guidelines on 'teacher on call' which is followed by the several states," Patro said.