

## **The Tribune**

### **Pharmacists boycott duties, demand regularisation of jobs**

Members of the Rural Health Pharmacists United Front, Punjab, and Class IV employees staged a protest in front of the Zila Parishad office here today. The members of the front and Class IV employees have been demanding the regularisation of their services. They also boycotted their duties for indefinite time period.

The protestors raised slogans against the government and threatened to intensify the protest if their demands were not met.

The members said the three panel meetings with the Chief Minister and two with Deputy CM failed to bear fruit. The first panel meeting with Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal was held on April 24. They met the CM for the second time on July 26 and third meeting was held on August 16.

Pharmacist staff and Class IV employees working at as many as 1,186 dispensaries have been demanding regularisation of their services for a long time. In these dispensaries, about 50 posts of pharmacists and around 500 posts of doctors are lying vacant.

In June 2006, doctors and pharmacists were appointed in rural dispensaries on a contractual basis. In 2011, doctors were regularised and pharmacists and Class IV employees were promised that they would get regularised soon.

Navdeep Kumar, a member of the Rural Health Pharmacists United Front, said, "In 2006, the doctors got authority to appoint pharmacists and sweepers. The government gave them Rs 30,000 per month to recruit pharmacists and sweepers. However, we were given Rs 2,500 while the sweepers got Rs 500 each per month. In 2011, the government started giving us a one-year contract with Rs 7,000 per month salary and Rs 3,000 as salary to sweepers. There was no provision of an increment in the contract. This is an exploitation of employees. From last many years, we have been working under the government and following all norms of a regular government job but the government is not regularising us."

The members said they were not recruited by the government through its procedure by giving an advertisement in newspapers while we were recruited by doctors.