

Guest teachers to launch protest on Aug 17

DEHRADUN: Over 6,200 unemployed guest teachers in Uttarakhand are gearing up for a massive show of strength to register their agitation following the high court order that quashed all the notifications issued by the government on their appointment. The provision of hiring guest teachers will be only allowed in the state as a makeshift option till March 31, 2017.

The teachers are now preparing to launch a strike near Parade Ground here from August 17.

The order has come as a blow to 6,214 guest teachers, who are without jobs since March 31 when the education department had scrapped their contracts.

"Education minister Mantri Prasad Naithani and chief minister Harish Rawat assured us help after our contract term ended. They issued a notification in May for reappointment of guest teachers but the high court cancelled it, leaving us in the lurch," vice-president of the guest teachers' association, Harish Arya told TOI.

"If the government is serious about education in the state, an ordinance should be passed for securing our jobs," Arya said, adding that they are ready for a 'Maha Andolan' if their demands were not met.

He said that even if they take up jobs now, they will be on roads again after seven months as the makeshift option is only till March 31.

A brainstorming session was held by the guest teachers on Sunday to discuss strategies for the protest to ensure that it has an impact on the authorities.

"On one hand, there are 1,771 government schools running with single teachers as teachers don't want to go to far-flung areas, while on the other hand teachers like us are not given a chance even when we are willing to teach in hilly regions," said Rohit Hemdani, a guest teacher from Pauri Garhwal.

"Even if the government does not hire us permanently, at least we can be hired on yearly contract," he said.

Meanwhile, many education officials refused to comment citing that the decision about the future of guest teachers has been given by the high court.