

768 doctors recruited in one day in Assam



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Mowsam Hazarika 18 September 2009 16799 views

The Assam government Wednesday appointed 768 doctors in a recruitment drive that is expected to revolutionize the region's rural healthcare sector.

The recruitment campaign has a catch though, as the appointments were made for a one-year period as part of the government legislation that makes it mandatory for all MBBS graduates to serve for a minimum of one year in rural health centres.

'Assam has become the first state in the country to have carried out such a historic recruitment drive by appointing 768 doctors for rural postings in one single day,' Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma told on 16th September,09.

The young doctors would be getting a monthly fixed salary of Rs.25,000, besides free accommodation in their area of posting. 'The MBBS doctors had signed a bond during their admission that they would undergo a year-long compulsory rural posting. The idea of the rural posting is to ensure that each and every panchayat or block has a doctor available,' the minister said. Earlier, the government signed a bond making it mandatory for MBBS graduates to work in rural areas for a period of five years, but it was later revised to just a year. The government norms were not implemented in the past and even after passing the MBBS course students managed to avoid working in rural areas. 'Any medical graduate flouting the bond will have to pay the state government a compensation of Rs.500,000. This is the estimated amount that the state would have incurred for the education of a single student,' the health minister said. A similar bond would be signed for students aspiring to pursue a postgraduate degree in any of the three medical colleges in the state. 'For those wanting to pursue a postgraduate degree from any of the state's three medical colleges, one must be prepared to work for the health department for a minimum of two years, although it was 10 years in the past,' Sarma said.

The three medical colleges at Guwahati, Dibrugarh and Silchar produce about 400 MBBS doctors and 150 postgraduates annually.

'Our focus is on total healthcare across the state,' the minister said.

Already the Assam health department has come up with several ingenious healthcare schemes for the people.

Patients admitted to government hospitals in Assam will receive a day cash allowance of up to Rs.100 besides free meals and medicines.

As part of the scheme named 'Maram' (Assamese for love), a patient in medical college hospitals will receive Rs.100 daily in cash while those in district hospitals will get Rs.75. The scheme came into force from Tuesday.

Earlier this year, the Assam government announced a series of health packages including a Rs.1.8 billion scheme to do away with the traditional gender bias by offering financial assistance to the girl child and radical measures to improve the health of would-be mothers.

Under a scheme named 'Majoni' (Assamese for little girls), a new-born girl child would be given a fixed deposit instrument worth Rs.5,000 while a would-be mother would get Rs.1,000 in cash - Rs.500 each during the first two check-ups.

Assam has also launched an ambitious family planning scheme. Couples choosing not to have babies for two years after marriage will get Rs.5,000 and those who opt not to have children for three years will get Rs.7,500.

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BY MOWSAM HAZARIKA

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