

# 2000 PGI nurses hold protest against administration

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Chandigarh: Around 2000 nurses at PGI held a massive dharna on Monday. The protest was held against the PGI administration by the nursing association as they agitated against 6 hours duty roster for the newly joined nurses. They also demanded an increase in allocation of houses to the nursing staff.

On Monday a two hour long talk was held with the welfare association by senior functionaries including PGI's director to address issues related to transportation and security of the nursing staff. PGI officials in a press release mentioned: "In spite of the administrations best efforts to find amicable solutions to address the issues pertaining to the 8 hrs shift duties, in the interest of larger societal good, the nursing welfare association was not satisfied and gathered in the nursing hostel to stage a protest march. As Section 144 Cr PC is applicable in the institute, the police authorities dissuaded them from staging a march."

There are more than 2500 nurses working in the institute, 467 nurses were recently appointed in June, 2015. Out of these, 461 joined and are working in 8 hours shift duty smoothly. The need to switch to 8 hours shift duty instead of 6:6:12 hours shift for the newly recruited staff was felt necessary so as to ensure better nursing care for patients and to decrease the work related impact of extended shift duties on the health of the nursing staff. It is pertinent to mention that the number of working hours for both shifts is same, i.e 40 hours a week. The staff in 8 hour shift works for 40 hours in 5 days and gets 2 days off for rest."

"About 400 new nurses have joined their duty in PGI who are forced to do duty on 8 hour basis while all other nurses are doing duty on 6 hour basis. Discrimination is being done by the PGI administration regarding the duty hours of the newly joined nurses," said Lakhvinder Singh, president, PGI Nurses Welfare Association. He said, "Our staff was locked inside the hostels and not allowed to hold rally outside the director's office."

Since the action of nurses welfare association is illegal and arbitrary based on the request of PGI administration the regional labour commissioner (Central) has also issued notice to the nurses association for conciliation proceedings. The commissioner has asked the PGI and the nursing staff to attend a conciliation proceeding on February 3.