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Nimhans chief is among 5 top doctors on MCI panel

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New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday approved the Centre's proposal to re-constitute the oversight committee (OC) which supervised functioning of the Medical Council of India (MCI) with a panel of five eminent doctors.

The five doctors are VK Paul, professor and head of paediatrics in AIIMS; Randeep Guleria, director, AIIMS; Jagat Ram, director, PGI-MER, Chandigarh; BN Gangadharan, director, NIMHANS, Bengaluru; and Nikhil Tandon, professor and head of endocrinology, AIIMS.

The panel will replace the earlier OC headed by ex-CJI R M Lodha, which was appointed by the SC in the wake of largescale irregularities in the MCI's functioning and whose term had ended. The MCI regulates medical education, in-



The panel will replace the earlier oversight committee which was appointed by the SC in the wake of largescale irregularities in the MCI's functioning and whose term ended

cluding recommending grant of recognition to medical colleges. A bench of Chief Justice J S Khehar and Justices J Chelameswar, R K Agrawal, D Y Chandrachud and S Abdul Nazeer was in agreement with solicitor general Ranjit Kumar about the eminence of the five and their suitability to oversee the MCI's work.

However, the CJI had some doubts about these "busy" doctors being able to spare time to oversee the MCI. "We are satisfied with the names. They are all truly outstanding persons and of impeccable integrity. I know some of them. They are very busy doctors and find it diffi-

cult to spare time outside their work. I have experienced that. Sometimes they do not have time to spare for the Chief Justice of India. If they do not have time for the CJI, will they have time for MCI?" he asked.

Having narrated his personal experience, the CJI was quick to add a clarification, "Oversight Committee shall commence its functions forthwith and that liberty is being granted to the Union government to seek substitution of the names in the OC, if the occasion so arises." The bench also permitted the Centre to name one of the five as the OC chairman.

Govt denies visa certificate to doctor for research in US

Cites Acute Shortage In Own Country

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Mumbai: Dashing a medical graduate's hopes of continuing as a postdoctoral scholar in the US, the Central health ministry denied him the permission necessary for his visa, citing an acute shortage of doctors in India. The refusal, the second such for Dr Sunil Noothi, comes despite the Bombay high court pulling up the ministry for its unreasonable and improper decision. The decision is likely to have repercussions on thousands of other research scholars who wish to study in



The HC had clearly said that the central policy against issuing a NORI cannot be made applicable to Dr Noothi, who is a research scholar, not a medical practitioner

the US, said doctors.

The first refusal came in 2015. In its June 28 denial this year, the Centre said that India has 6.9 lakh doctors and needs 4 lakh more by 2022. Allowing Dr Noothi (39) to go abroad would be against public interest, it said. It would violate its policy to stop issuing a No Obligation to Return to India (NORI) certificate since 2011 to doctors aged under 65, said the ministry.

A NORI certificate is a US government requirement to waive its obligatory two-year home residency to J1 visa holders. In 2014, the Indian

government set out a policy to ensure that doctors return to India after completing their training or higher studies in the USA. It banned issuance of NORI except to doctors aged over 65 years. The HC had clearly said that the central policy against issuing a NORI cannot be made applicable to Dr Noothi, who is a research scholar, not a medical practitioner.

Last December, the HC bench at Aurangabad directed the health ministry to reconsider its decision after Dr Noothi challenged the denial of a NORI certificate to him.

Noothi's counsel Rahul Totala said it was a test case, the first such individual challenge in the country filed against the ban on NORI. The Central Maharashtra Association of Resident Doctors (CMARD), had also moved the Aurangabad bench the HC in 2015 to challenge the anti-NORI policy introduced in 2014 as "retrograde". The petition was admitted for hearing by the HC and is pending.

Totala said that Dr Noothi had never practised medicine since his MBBS degree in 2002 and intends to only do research. Totala had assailed the ministry's move as "discriminatory, highhanded and arbitrary". But SB Deshpande, additional solicitor general, had argued that there was a rise in Indian doctors migrating to the US. He said 30% of doctors in the UK and 25% in Canada are of Indian origin.

Nursing institutes in K'taka derecognised

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Bengaluru: The fate of 2 lakh students hangs in balance as the Indian Nursing Council (INC) recently removed Karnataka nursing colleges from its list of recognized institutes.

The trigger was a Karnataka government order issued in May that said govern-

ment and private nursing colleges do not require the INC's approval.

With the INC knocking these institutes off its list, nursing graduates from Karnataka won't be able to

secure jobs outside the state and abroad. Besides, the order has hit fresh admissions this year.

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Order makes it impossible to get loan: Nursing students

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Earlier, setting up of a nursing institute in the state required approvals from INC, the state government, the Karnataka State Nursing Council and Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Science. Also, it had to apply for renewal every year. Now, approvals from the state, KSNC and RGUHS are enough.

Girijamba Devi, secretary, Trained Nurses' Association of India (TNAI), Karnataka branch, said: "With this order, the government has restricted students' opportunities. Besides, Karnataka, home to most nursing institutes in the country, is losing students because of the uncertainty."

The state government had passed

Waiting for court order: Govt official

"The government order was issued based on the Karnataka Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors' Act. When it comes to running a nursing institute in the state, the INC's approval

isn't required as the council focuses only on quality of education. Several cases have been filed in the court and we are awaiting its order," a medical education officer told TOI.

the order in December, but withdrew it after TNAI's objection. "In February, the nursing council sent a letter to the government, stating if the government chooses not to make INC's approval mandatory, then it won't recognize the state institutes. We cannot expect all our students to work only in Karnataka," said Girijamba.

P Bhattacharya, a fourth-year nursing student at a private institute in the city, said: "Besides limiting our scope of getting jobs, the order

makes it impossible to get education loans since no bank is willing to give loan without INC's recognition."

While the Students Nurses Association has filed a case in the Karnataka high court two months ago, TNAI members have spoken to the law minister. They hope for a response by weekend. "If we do not get a positive response, 2 lakh students, faculty and TNAI members will protest the government order," said Girijamba.

SC approves replacement of MCI panel

Bench says it is satisfied with new names

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Tuesday allowed the Centre to replace an oversight committee set up to supervise the functioning of the Medical Council of India (MCI) with a fresh panel of five eminent doctors.

A five-judge Constitution bench, headed by Chief Justice J S Khehar, said the Centre had proposed the names of five eminent doctors to replace the oversight committee led by former Chief Justice of India R M Lodha, whose term had just expired.

"The doctors proposed are all outstanding people. We are satisfied with the names," the bench, also comprising Jus-

tice J Chelameswar, R K Agrawal, D Y Chandrachud and S Abdul Nazeer, said.

The committee, set up by the court on May 2 last year, was to function for a period of one year or till a suitable mechanism was brought in by the Centre to substitute it.

The fresh names suggested by the government are Ran-deep Guleria, Director of AI-IMS, Delhi; V K Paul, Professor and Head of Paediatrics, AIIMS; Nikhil Tandon, Professor and Head of Endocrinology, AIIMS; Jagat Ram, Director of PGIMER, Chandigarh; and B N Gangadharan, Director of NIMHANS, Bengaluru.

DH News Service

SC gives nod to doctors' panel to supervise functioning of MCI

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ New Delhi

TO supervise the functioning of the Medical Council of India, the Supreme Court on Tuesday allowed Centre to appoint five eminent doctors in the Oversight Committee for regulation of medical education and profession in the country.

The doctors' committee will replace the court-appointed panel headed by former Chief Justice RM Lodha, whose term had also come to an end. Solicitor General Ranjit Kumar gave the names of five doctors to be the member of the committee which includes AIIMS director

Randeep Guleria, professor and head of paediatrics at AIIMS V K Paul, professor and head of endocrinology Nikhil Tandon, director of PGIMER Chandigarh Jagat Ram and director of NIMHANS BN Gangadharan.

"We accept the proposal made to this court by Centre. We grant liberty to the Union of India to nominate one of the members of the reconstituted Oversight Committee, as its chairperson," a five-judge Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice JS Khehar said. "They all are people of impeccable integrity. But the whole issue is whether they have time for all this. They do not have time for CJI leave alone

MCI", Chief Justice JS Khehar smilingly told the SG.

The court also listed the duties to be done by the Oversight Committee and said that — it will have the authority to oversee the functioning of Medical Council of India, all decisions/recommendations of MCI will require approval of Oversight Committee before they are communicated to the Central government, the committee will be free to issue appropriate remedial directions for improvement in MCI. The committee will function till the Central government puts in place any other appropriate mechanism, or until further orders.