

Pims management told to put house in order

- Hospital admin told to fill vacant posts, clear pending dues of doctors
- Doctors' protest disrupts ombudsperson's team visit to Pims

By Ikram Junaidi

ISLAMABAD: A visit of the adviser to the federal ombudsperson to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences was disrupted by a protest organised by young doctors, who accused the management of trying to mislead the delegation through some stopgap measures, such as whitewashing of the building.

On the other hand, the management was directed by the ombudsperson to hire staff on vacant posts and take measures, such as installing fans at wards, to facilitate patients at the hospital which was in dismal condition when the team arrived on Tuesday.

The young doctors, who organised the protest, named the executive director, Rana Imran Sikander, for the alleged mismanagement at the hospital as well as the deficiency of facilities, even in the intensive care unit.

They claimed that the management was "taking revenge from those who were pointing out problems" at the largest public sector hospital.

Meanwhile, a senior doctor told *Dawn* that the protest was aimed at settling scores against the hospital management on the occasion of the visit of the adviser, Ahmad Farooq.

Another doctor said some young doctors tried to create disturbance and hindrance in the admin block during the visit which had been ordered by the prime minister.

"The delegation had come to discuss how to improve services in the Islamabad Capital Territory and ask about the existing issues of Pims and possible solutions. The meeting was attended by the

Pims administration which was led by Executive Director Prof Rana Imran Sikander," he said, adding that the delegation was informed that the hospital was under severe strain due to a large number of patients and that there was no referral system functional at the hospital.

Similarly, the executive director told the delegation that Pims was also managing patients from all provinces.

As the meeting was underway, some doctors gathered outside the ED's office and raised slogans against the director and attempted to disrupt the meeting.

"The fact is that these medical officers have received recovery notices from the health ministry for payment of dues, as they were residing in the hostel and simultaneously receiving house rent allowance," he alleged.

Pims Spokesperson Dr Mubashir Doha said that the doctors were trying to pressurise the ED as an inquiry had been initiated against them.

Fill vacant posts

On the other hand, Ombudsperson Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi directed the Pims administration to take immediate steps to fill vacant posts at the hospital and make new MRI machine functional by November.

He stated that there was no justification to stop the salaries of emergency doctors and their pending salaries may be paid immediately.

He also directed the administration to increase the number of beds in the emergency department and install fans in all wards.

He gave these directions on receiving a report from the inspec-

tion team that had visited the hospital.

Upon its arrival, the team found the hospital crowded with patients and there were four patients lying on a single bed with nobody present there to attend to them. In some wards, there were no fans.

The emergency doctors also raised slogans upon seeing the inspection team.

The team was informed about the shortage of staff at the hospital which caters to almost 10,000 patients daily.

Currently, 396 doctors are working at Pims, while 415 posts for doctors and 283 slots for nurses are vacant.

A total of 1265 vacancies are available at the hospital, including the paramedical staff.

There is only one MRI machine in the hospital and the other machine, donated by Japan, will be ready by October.

There are 28 ultrasound machines at the hospital to carry out ultrasounds of more than 300 gynae patients daily.

The ombudsperson directed the Pims administration to fill the vacancies according to rules and regulations and immediately pay dues to the emergency doctors as well as ensure regular monthly payment.

The team will submit its final report with recommendations within a week.

The recommendations of the ombudsperson will be implemented in letter and spirit, said the spokesperson.

Recently, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif ordered the authorities concerned to build a 'health tower' at Pims to house hospitals, medical and nursing universities, modern laboratories and diagnostics centres.