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'Earning, RIP': Docs say as JU offers Rs 700 for 2 hrs

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KOLKATA: A Jadavpur University notice, seeking applications from specialist doctors to work for two hours for three days a week at the health centre on the campus in exchange for Rs 700 a day, has elicited mixed response from the medical fraternity.

Many doctors called the employment notice, seeking applications for an eye specialist, an ENT specialist and a skin specialist "objectionable", with some pointing out that a doctor's expertise was being put on a par with a pathology technician's skill.

A pathology technician is also sought, who will have to work for three hours a day, thrice a week. The technician will be paid Rs 10,000 a month, which adds up to more than a specialist doctor's earning at the health centre in a month.

One of the first public responses came from Yogiraj Ray, in-charge of the infectious diseases unit at SSKM Hospital. "Earning, RIP," he posted online. "It is unfortunate that a government-backed institute, like JU, is looking to hire doctors at such a low rate. There are very few jobs for young doctors, who are offered poor salaries at both private and state hospitals. Senior medics are often cheated by renowned hospitals who don't pay them their dues. Everyone should realize doctors, too, need to be paid a decent salary," he told TOI.

Senior oncologist Subir Ganguly, who has worked in both public and private sectors, too, felt the amount was paltry. "It is highly objectionable that a doctor's expertise is being considered on a par with a technician's. It is

against the interest of the medical professionals. JU authorities should have a rethink," he said. Internal medicine consultant Arindam Biswas felt this undermined a doctor's capabilities. "A doctor is a skilled individual who works to save lives. He or she deserves to be paid well. In any case, our doctors are paid much less than that in other places." He added the JU notice probably showed it was time for doctors to move out of Kolkata.

However, some had a different view on the notice as well. A senior surgeon felt what was being offered was fair if the university was looking for fresh medical graduates and not specialists. "Medical graduates get paid Rs 350 an hour for ICU duty at many hospitals. So, Rs 700 for two hours on a campus can't be deemed very unfair," he said. "Also, JU is a state-run university and its intent is not to make a profit."

JU registrar Snehamanju Basu said, "We agree the rate for specialist doctors is low but we had no alternative. Since financial approvals are difficult to get in the current situation. We were compelled to continue with rates fixed in the previous EC meeting. There is a scarcity of specialist doctors and to tide over the crisis, the notice was published. We will rectify it as soon as we can hold a new EC meeting."