

Tamil Nadu slams NMC bill, exit test for medical graduates

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CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu, which has the most number of state-run medical colleges in the country, has shot off a letter to a parliamentary standing committee, reviewing the National Medical Commission Bill, saying that the bill “portrays a lack of understanding of ground realities and the principles of federalism enshrined in our constitution.”

The state has also opposed the proposal of licentiate exam for all MBBS passouts. **TN raises doubts over new bill seeking to replace MCI**

Tamil Nadu, which was forced to admit students to medical colleges on the basis of the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), has now found a new route to seek exemption.

In a five-page letter to the chairman of the parliamentary standing committee, health secretary J Radhakrishnan opposed the National Medical Commission Bill and sought exemption from NEET. He also opposed the exit or licentiate exam that medical graduates have to clear to practise.

The state has expressed “strong reservations” on certain provisions of the NMC bill drafted to replace the Medical Council Act, 1956, from the time it was conceived.

“While TN acknowledges the need for reforms in the present regulatory mechanism for medical education, the draft bill [reveals] a complete lack of understanding of the ground realities in the country and the principles of federalism enshrined in our constitution,” the letter said.

Tamil Nadu has more than one lakh doctors. The bill, the letter said, vests all decisionmaking powers on medical education with the Centre, seeking to completely undermine powers of states. The states will have no role in policy issues relating to manpower planning, curriculum and course design, it said, adding, “This is unacceptable to Tamil Nadu.”

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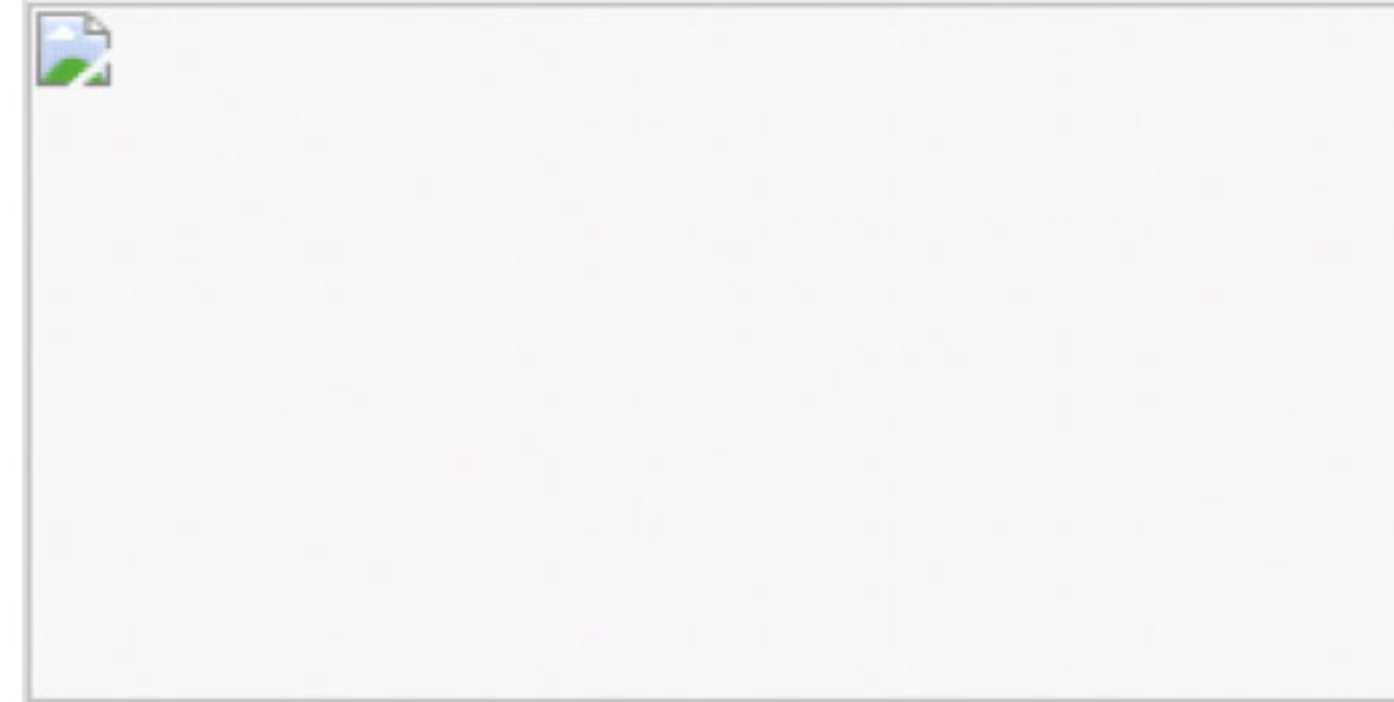
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The bill seeks to limit each state’s representation in the NMC to just one nominee on a rotational basis, compared to the six representatives per state in the MCI. The proposed representation, which does not take into account a state’s total population or number of doctors, will make the committee lopsided, the letter said. The state also has no representation in the committee’s technical bodies, which will take key decisions, it added.

Taking the side of several doctors’ bodies, the state also opposed a proposal for a ‘crosspathy’ programme — allowing professionals in traditional medical streams to practise allopathy after a bridge course. It asked the committee to take into account its “legitimate” concerns while deliberating and making recommendations on the bill.

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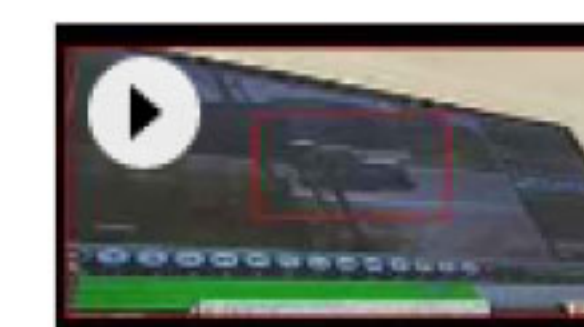
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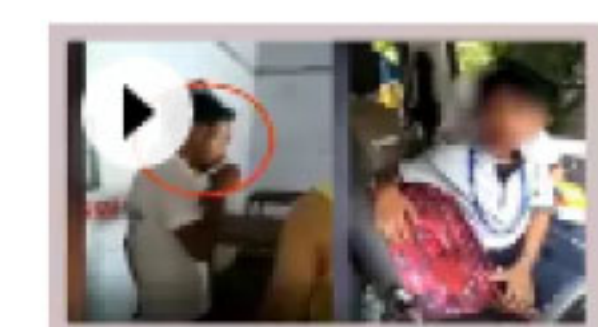
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