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Launched in 2011 by the current king, the de-suung programme encourages citizens from all walks of life to take up a role in nation-building and draws volunteers, called de-suungs.

Once the royal command was issued, the volunteers were screened, ensuring only eligible donors would travel to India. "We started from Thimphu at 6.30am, crossed the border at Phuentsholing by bus and got off at Hasimara station at 4pm. Then we boarded the Kanchankanya Express and reached Sealadah at 8.30am. We had a bus waiting for us there," said Ugyen Wangchuk, a 38-year-old English-speaking de-suung.

"This is the first time I am seeing donors coming in such numbers from another country. It is a bond of blood being

Gift of blood from across border

formed. Patients from Bhutan have been coming here since 2012, the year after Tata Medical Center opened," said director Arun, who has conducted surgery training at a Bhutan hospital.

"The donors get to tour the city the next morning before they board the train back home. "We are planning to visit a mall. We do not have one in Bhutan," said Thinley Dorji, a fire safety officer. The train trip was also a novelty as the mountainous land does



A de-suung badge with the name and blood group

not have railways.

"One of the volunteers was so excited that he said he did not sleep all night and kept looking out through the train window," laughed the consul general.

The second batch of de-suungs is scheduled to arrive on Tuesday.

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Calcutta: A state-aided university to which private BED colleges are affiliated has asked the colleges to fill the vacancies in teaching posts, in compliance with the regulations of the National Council for Teachers' Education (NCTE), before the start of the new session in September.

University officials said the notice had to be issued as many of the colleges lack an adequate number of teachers.

In a notice issued on July 19, Baba Saheb Ambedkar Education University said: "The university wants all the teaching posts to be filled up so that excellence in imparting education in the colleges can

Hiring prod to BEd colleges

be maintained."

The NCTE regulations state a college must have at least eight teachers for 50 students and a minimum of 15 teachers for a batch of 100 students.

Soma Bandyopadhyay, vice-chancellor of the university, said they are reminding the colleges to fill the vacancies in teaching posts before renewing their affiliation.

About 600 private BEd colleges are affiliated to the university.

Last year, the university had barred 253 BEd colleges from admitting students and cancelled their affiliation because they failed to abide by the NCTE regulations.

"One of the reasons why the colleges were barred from

admitting students was that they did not have enough teachers," said an official at the university.

The July 19 notice, signed by the acting registrar, says: "It has also been observed that a sizeable number of colleges are yet to update their ERC (Eastern Regional Council of NCTE) faculty list as was notified earlier."

In the updated faculty list, the colleges must mention the teachers' names and provide their photographs and academic qualifications.

"We are asking the colleges to fill all the posts because we cannot afford to compromise with the quality of education. Last year, we had to act strictly and cancel the affiliation of many colleges after it emerged

that they did not have adequate numbers of teachers. The NCTE rules have to be complied with," said VC Bandyopadhyay.

A university official said they had earlier asked the colleges to recruit an adequate number of teachers. "As many of the colleges have yet to comply, the university was forced to issue the notice last week," he said.

The two-year BEd programme has become crucial because the state school service commission (SSC) has mandated that candidates applying for teaching jobs in government-aided secondary and higher secondary schools must have a BEd degree to be eligible to write the selection test.

IN BRIEF

Car hits Parama divider

PRAGATI MAIDAN: A car hit the divider on the Parama flyover after the driver lost control and overturned early on Monday. Police said the driver escaped unhurt. The vehicle was removed from the flyover with the help of a crane.

READY TO GO



A Durga idol being packed at Kumartuli on Monday. Picture by Gautam Bose

Trader kidnap

CALCUTTA: Trader Mohan Chakraborty, who was allegedly kidnaped and rescued from Gaya, went to Gaya to test the venom of a snake that his kidnapers were allegedly smuggling, police said on Monday. As the snake died in his custody, the men allegedly held him hostage and demanded ransom from his family.

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