

Govt. employees to go on strike from May 1 for OPS

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NEW DELHI

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the indefinite strike

A platform of trade unions and associations working among 28 lakh employees of the Union government, including the Railways and Central Public Sector Undertakings, and more than three crore employees and teachers with the State governments have decided to go on an indefinite strike from May 1 demanding the restoration of the old pension scheme (OPS).

The steering committee of the platform, the Joint Forum For Restoration of Old Pension Scheme (JFROPS), has unanimously decided to serve strike notices on March 19 to respective administrations.

The convener of the JFROPS and general secretary of All India Railwaymen's Federation (AIRF), Shiv Gopal Mishra, told *The Hindu* that the decision to go on a strike was taken after discussions with the Union government over the issue collapsed.

"We wrote letters to Prime Minister and Finance Minister urging them to restore OPS. We have also been raising this issue in the Joint Consultative Machinery meetings, but the government ignored our demands and we are now forced to go on an indefinite strike," he said.

Strike ballots were held at the Railways, various departments, and PSUs under the Centre and unions.

"Government employees have waited for 20 years patiently by observing protest programmes without hampering the functioning of the government. Recently, Judicial Pay Commission has recommended defined and guaranteed pensions for judges. Why the government employees are discriminated?," asked C. Srikumar, general secretary of All India Defence Employees Federation.

He added that the strike was imposed on the employees since the government was insensitive towards their genuine grievances and that all unions, except the pro-government Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), would participate in it.

Asked what would happen if the model code of conduct comes into force, Mr. Mishra said they wanted the issue of OPS to be discussed during the elections.