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## Supreme Court orders National Task force for healthcare worker safety amid protests

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India's Supreme Court has mandated the formation of a national task force to enhance security for healthcare workers following the brutal rape and murder of a doctor, which ignited widespread medical strikes and protests.

The 31-year-old doctor's body was discovered on August 9 at a state-run hospital in Kolkata, leading to nationwide outrage over violence against women. The tragedy has spurred doctors' associations from government hospitals across India to initiate strikes, disrupting non-essential services, with protests entering their second week.

In response to the escalating unrest, the Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice D. Y. Chandrachud, called for an urgent review of safety protocols in healthcare facilities. The court emphasized the

need for a comprehensive national protocol to safeguard medical professionals from violence, highlighting the severe lack of institutional safety norms.

The order expressed grave concern over the vulnerability of medical professionals due to inadequate protective measures, noting that the absence of security personnel in healthcare units is commonplace.

The murdered doctor, reportedly on a 36-hour shift, was found in the hospital's seminar hall, where she had been sexually assaulted. Her parents have petitioned the Kolkata High Court, suspecting gang rape.

The ongoing protests, led by healthcare workers and supported by tens of thousands of citizens, demand swift and effective action to protect women in the workforce, especially in high-stakes professions.

The Supreme Court underscored the urgency of implementing changes, stressing that the nation cannot wait for another tragedy before ensuring safe working conditions.