



Major reshuffle of bureaucrats, diplomats likely

ISLAMABAD: Aiming at massive reshuffle in the bureaucracy and diplomatic circle, the government has issued notices to those officials who, it believes, have been appointed on a 'political basis' or have been sticking to their positions for over five years.

It has been learnt that not only the bureaucrats and diplomats, but some top-ranking officials of educational institutions will also be hit as they are on the government's target list.

In the latest development, the government has forced the executive director of the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission, Zulfiqar Ahmad Cheema, to resign and he left his office on Sunday.

A member of the federal cabinet, who wished not to be named, told Dawn on Sunday that notices were being sent to such officials so that they may voluntarily leave their positions, otherwise, they would be removed under the prescribed rules and procedure.

The convention is that those appointed on political grounds themselves offer to quit when a new government takes over.

Three ambassadors of the country Ali Jehangir Siddiqui in the United States, Dr Maleeha Lodhi in the United Kingdom and Tariq Azeem in Canada are being pulled back by the government.

The removal of vice chancellor of the Pakistan Institute of Fashion Design Hina Tayyaba is also on the cards as she has occupied the post for over a decade.

Information minister's warning At a recent press conference, Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry said that those ambassadors and top officials who were appointed on political grounds would be removed soon.

'The government has initiated the process to remove three ambassadors and six other top-ranking envoys from different countries,' he said.

'Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, who has recently undertaken a week-long visit to the US, has also asked the ambassador to the US to pack up,' Mr Chaudhry said.

The government has already removed some top officials from different departments and replaced them with other senior officials.

In some cases, replacements are yet to be made. For example, National Bank of Pakistan president Saeed Ahmed has been removed, but no one has been appointed in his place so far.

Similarly, Information Secretary Ahmed Nawaz Sukhera was removed from his office two days

ago, but no one has replaced him yet.

On the other hand, Muhammad Jehanzeb Khan has recently been appointed as chairman of the Federal Board of Revenue, Muhammad Suleman Khan as director general of the Intelligence Bureau and Mehr Khalig Dad Lak as director general of the National Counter Terrorism Authority. Arshad Khan has assumed the office of managing director of Pakistan Television.

Heads of educational institutes The government has undertaken an exercise to replace heads of top universities of the country, including the Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU), Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) and Islamic International University (IIU).

Vice chancellor of the AIOU Shahid Siddiqui, QAU VC Javed Ashraf and IIU Rector Dr Masoom Sherazi are completing their four-year term in a month or so and, therefore, the government has advertised the posts for fresh appointments.

Similarly, the removal of IIU President Ahmed Yousif Al Draiveesh, a Saudi national who had already completed his term but was reappointed on the same position by the previous Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz government, is also on the cards.

By Syed Irfan Raza | 10/8/2018 12:00:00 AM