

Narendra Modi reshuffles bureaucrats ahead of US visit

Livemint September 24, 2014

The government transferred as many as 48 senior civil servants late on Tuesday night in what is perhaps the most significant reshuffle of senior bureaucrats at the Centre.

The transfers were announced on the website of the department of personnel and training, the nodal ministry for bureaucratic appointments, some four months after the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government took office.

“This is the first time that such transfers have happened en masse at the Centre,” said one of the transferred officials who did not wish to be identified.

State governments are known to effect such bulk transfers, but it has never before happened at the Centre.

“They have brought in several new people from states. The move seems (designed) to place their own people in sensitive posts in areas of coal, petroleum, finance and foreign ministries,” another bureaucrat aware of the situation said on condition of anonymity. “Some of the old ones have been sent to obscure positions”

While 39 officers belong to the Indian Administrative Service, the others belong to allied services including the Indian Forest Service, Indian Postal Service, Indian Audits and Accounts Service, Indian Civil Accounts Service and the Central Secretariat Service.

The transfers are of officers at the level of joint secretary or above.

“The concerned ministry has no say in such appointments any more. The decisions are being taken directly by the prime minister,” the second person cited above said.

On 8 August, the new government issued a strict set of guidelines to bureaucrats on how they should conduct themselves.

A third official said the new government was studying the credentials of each official. “Their backgrounds are being checked intensely. Earlier, that was not the case and any officer whom the minister desired, was appointed. Now the ministers have no say,” the third official said.

A fourth official claimed that a similar en masse appointment could happen in the case of directors, who are one rank below joint secretaries.

[I.S. Chahal](#), a close aide of former home minister [Sushilkumar Shinde](#) and a joint secretary in the home ministry, has been appointed as joint secretary in women and child development ministry. Dilip Kumar, a 1995 batch IAS officer of the Punjab cadre, will replace Chahal.

Besides him, Hitesh Kumar S Makwana, Rajit Punhani and Gopal Krishna Dwivedi have also been appointed as joint secretaries in the home ministry. Makwana, a 1995 batch IAS officer of

the Tamil Nadu cadre, was on a compulsory wait list in the ministry of shipping. He has been appointed in place of S. Suresh Kumar, a 1988 batch IAS officer of the West Bengal cadre, who completes his extended deputation on 28 September.

Punhani, a 1991 batch IAS officer of the Bihar cadre, has been appointed in place of Nirmaljeet Singh Kalsi, a 1984 batch IAS officer of the Punjab cadre, who was adviser in the inter-state council secretariat. Dwivedi, a 1993 batch IAS officer of the Andhra Pradesh cadre, has been appointed in place of R.K. Srivastava, a 1984 batch IAS officer of the Jharkhand cadre, who completed his tenure on 27 August.

Umesh Sinha, a 1986 batch IAS officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre, has been appointed as deputy election commissioner (JS level) in the Election Commission. Arti Bhatnagar, a 1990 batch officer of the Indian Defence Accounts Service, has been appointed as joint secretary (security) in the Cabinet Secretariat. Sonali Singh, a 1987 batch Indian Civil Accounts Service officer, has been appointed as additional secretary (JS level) in the Central Vigilance Commission