

Govt rushes top PTA appointments to beat deadline

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LAHORE: Despite the ban imposed by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on new recruitments, the Cabinet Division is still moving ahead to hire the chairman and the members of Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA).

The Cabinet Division has short-listed the candidates for the posts of the chairman and members PTA and also hurriedly called a committee meeting to finalise the process before March 16, 2013 when the government will complete its tenure.

According to official documents available with The News, the ECP has imposed ban on all kinds of recruitment through its Order No F 2(2)/2013-Cord dated March 9, 2013 and has rejected the request of the PTA to complete the process of filling the posts of Member Finance and Member Technical of PTA.

The ECP in its letter directed with reference to the PTA Office Memorandum No 5/12/2012 RA/PTA dated February 11, 2013 that the PTA request regarding permission to complete the process of filling of posts of Members Finance and Member Technical has not been acceded by the ECP.

Earlier, in another letter to the secretary cabinet division by the ECP, No F 2920/2013-Cord dated March 5, 2013, the ECP has taken serious notice of hiring the chairman and members of the PTA as it was reported in the newspaper.

In the letter, the ECP stated that the cabinet division request of relaxation of ban in respect of appointment of Members of PTA (Finance and Technical) was under process.

However, the ECP has learnt that the Cabinet Division has appointed Mr Farooq Awan as member of the PTA. Prima facie the action taken is tantamount of violation of the directive of the ECP.

The letter also reads that the ECP has learnt through the press that efforts are being made to materialise the multi-billion dollar 3G auction by influencing the PTA through such appointments.

Interestingly, the Cabinet Division continues the process of appointment in the PTA and it called an emergent meeting of the short-listing committee for appointment of the Member Finance, Member Technical and Member Compliance and Enforcement on March 11 2013. Through this emergent meeting call No 5/12/2012/RA-L/PTA, the cabinet division summoned a meeting of the short-listing committee through most immediate by fax to the members of the committee Secretaries Establishment Division, Ministry of Information Technology, Finance Division, Law and Justice Division, Higher Education Commission, and Chairman Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP).

The meeting was held on the same day at 4:30pm in Additional Secretary-I Cabinet Division.

The Cabinet Division also instructed that if the members of the committee would not be able to attend the meeting than the nominated members on the behalf of the short-listing committee not be below the rank of BS-20.

Cabinet Division Additional Secretary Shahid Ullah Baig said that process was underway.

He said the high court permitted to continue the process but appointment would be made after a final judgement.

He further said that the PTA is an important department and was working without top officials. He said that the appointment in the PTA was crucial.

He said the process of appointment will be transparent and nothing underhand deals would be made in it.