

Cabinet reshuffle

Khaleej times

19 February 2008

The UAE's development drive has gained such momentum that it seems to have started a life of its own. No sooner than the Federal National Council celebrated its first successful year since incorporating democratic norms has the cabinet been reshuffled to breathe new life in the administrative machinery. Proposed by His Highness Shaikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, the proposal was quickly accepted by His Highness Shaikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE and Ruler of Abu Dhabi. And the glee of expatriates and locals alike owes to the understanding they have now formed of the rulers' drive and commitment to progress as the UAE has graduated into a much more serious entity in the comity of nations than before.

It is very encouraging to note that of the seven new faces, two are women, taking the total number of females in the cabinet to four, doubling the previous number. As is apparent from recent high level initiatives, the leadership is keen on tapping the tremendous potential held by the female work force, encouraging women from all walks of life to take part in the nation building process.

Significantly, the cabinet move also reflects valuable lessons learnt from various state visits headed by the prime minister as a new portfolio of foreign trade has been specially created, while industrial affairs have been shifted from the ministry of finance and industry to the ministry of economy. These are important steps, setting the trend of things to come as the UAE is in the process of augmenting its trade relations with countries from the East to the West. Therefore, we can expect considerable increase in industrial output as well as foreign trade in the months and years to come, meaning economic diversification, job creation and subsequently a fairer distribution of national wealth.

The UAE has indeed catapulted from a financial/economic safe haven for expatriates mainly from South Asia to one of the most attractive financial hubs of the modern integrating economy in a very short time. The pace of progress is a testament to the leaders' vision. Furthermore, it is equally admirable that those at the helm have not displayed the least bit of lethargy, which would seem natural following such impressive progress at such hectic pace. It is this realisation that makes initiatives such as the cabinet reshuffle that much more important.

The people are that much happier because of the knowledge that those in charge are not wasting so much as a second to capitalise on the uniqueness of the UAE. For those admiring the present, thinking this is as good as it gets, there are surely much more pleasant surprises in store.