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Govt appoints new board to supersede MCI

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

The government on Wednesday superseded the Medical Council of India, appointing a board of governors to take over the council's powers and functions pending passage of the National Medical Commission Bill that seeks to replace the MCI.

Following an ordinance that empowered the government, the health ministry issued a notification asking the president, vice-president and other MCI members to vacate their offices immediately. The notification also stated that until a new council was reconstituted, a board would be constituted to take over the functioning of the MCI.

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A committee of eminent persons was needed: FM

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The new board consists of the members of the earlier oversight committee appointed by the ministry following an SC order and two fresh names, Dr Balram Bhargava, the DG of the ICMR, and Dr S Venkatesh, the DG of DGHS. Of the earlier OC members, Niti Aayog member Dr Vinod Paul will be the board chairperson, while directors of AIIMS-Delhi, PGIMER Chandigarh and the National Institute of Mental Health & Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) Bangalore, Dr Randeep Guleria, Dr Jagat Ram, Dr BN Gangadhar respectively, as well as Dr Nikhil Tandon, professor in AIIMS, will be members. Dr Sanjay Shrivastava, former deputy director general of health services has been appointed secretary general to the board. The oversight committee had resigned earlier this month. While the stated reason was that their one-year tenure had ended, sources had told **TOI** that committee was also unhappy with the lack of cooperation from the MCI.

Interestingly, after the NMC Bill could not be taken up in the monsoon session of Parliament that ended on August 10, the health ministry wrote to states and universities to start the process of electing new MCI members as the tenure of 80 of the 103 council members would end in November or December. When the tenure of the current MCI ended on November 4 last year, it had been given an extension of one year.

On Wednesday, finance minister Arun Jaitley said that since the term of the elected body of the MCI was ending shortly, a need was felt to run it by a committee of eminent persons.

Thus an ordinance to enable this was cleared by the cabinet and subsequently signed by President Ram Nath Kovind. With the ordinance being promulgated, secretary general Dr Shrivastava along with local police and an SDM reached the MCI office in Dwarka to seal the premises and asked the staff to vacate

Ordinance allows panel to supersede scam-tainted MCI

7-member Board of Governors appointed

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
NEW DELHI

In a move to enhance governance and quality of medical education, an ordinance was issued on Wednesday, dissolving the Medical Council of India (MCI) and replacing it with a seven-member Board of Governors led by NITI Aayog Member Dr. V.K. Paul. A Bill to replace the

MCI with a National Medical Commission is pending in Parliament.

The Board of Governors include NITI Aayog Member V. K. Paul; All India Institute of Medical Sciences-Delhi (AIIMS) Director Dr. Randeep Guleria; Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research-Chandigarh (PGIMER) Director Dr. Jagat Ram; National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences-Bengaluru (NIMHANS) Director Dr. B. N. Gangadhar; and Professor, De-

partment of Endocrinology and Metabolism Dr. Nikhil Tandon at AIIMS here.

Director General Health Services Dr. S. Venkatesh and Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Professor Balram Bhargava will be the ex-officio members.

Board of Governors

The Ordinance supersedes the MCI and the powers of the Council have been vested in a Board of Governors (BoG). The BoG will continue

to perform till a council is constituted.

Previously, based on the March 2016 '92nd Report' of the Department related to the Parliamentary Standing Committee (PSC) on Health and Family Welfare, and recommendations of a group of experts under late Professor Ranjit Roy Chaudhary, the government introduced the National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill, 2017, in the Lok Sabha, on December 29, 2017.

The Bill provides for sim-

plification of procedures and was aimed at spurring rapid growth in the number of Under and Post Graduate medical seats in the country. The NMC Bill provides for distribution of functions among four autonomous Boards, whose members would be persons of proven ability selected through a transparent process, according to the Union Health Ministry.

The Bill was taken up for consideration in January this year and was referred to the Department-related PSC on

Health and Family Welfare for examination. The PSC presented its 109th Report on the Bill to the House in March, and the Ministry, after examining the recommendations, obtained approval of the Cabinet for moving official amendments.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court, in its judgment in May 2016, issued directions to the Centre to constitute an oversight committee with the authority to oversee all statutory functions of the MCI till a new legislation comes in.

Govt picks new panel to run MCI

NEW DELHI, DHNS: In a surprise move, the NDA government on Wednesday promulgated an ordinance to remove all the office-bearers of the scam-tainted Medical Council of India (MCI) and appoint a seven-member Board of Governor (BoG) to run the medical education regulator for the next one year.

The BoG will be chaired by NITI Ayog member Vinod Paul, a former professor at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi. The other members are: Randeep Guleria, director, AIIMS; Jagat Ram, director, Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh;

BN Gangadhar, director of National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, Bengaluru, and Nikhil Tandon, professor at AIIMS.

Two ex-officio members on the panel are Balram Bhargava, secretary, Department of Health Research and director general of Indian Council of Medical Research, and S Venkatesh, director general of health services in the Union Health Ministry.

Within hours of President

Ram Nath Kovind signing the ordinance, the BoG members reached the MCI headquarters at Dwarka in south west Delhi to take over the administrative affairs of the council.

According to the law, the ordinance to amend the Indian Medical Council Act 1956, needs to be replaced by a legislation within six months. For the moment, it paves the way for the BoG to steer the MCI for one year and stem the rot.

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Govt sacks...

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The BoG may be in place till a new regulatory body — National Medical Commission — comes into effect. A legislation to set up the commission is pending in the Lok Sabha.

In the past, when it was trying to replace the MCI with another governing body, the UPA government too appointed a BoG to run the council. The BoG was in place for three years, but the Centre failed to pass the law in Parliament to create the proposed regulatory body.

Following that exercise, the MCI was reborn in 2013. Two years later, the Supreme Court asked the central government to form an oversight committee to examine all statutory functions of the MCI. In July

2018, the oversight committee members resigned, citing noncompliance of their instructions by the MCI. They said MCI not only misinterpreted the Supreme Court order, but also challenged the authority of the committee. "In such circumstances, when the Supreme Court-mandated panel is unable to function due to noncooperation of the MCI and the NMC bill is pending in Parliament, certain immediate states are required to be taken. Accordingly, the ordinance to supersede the MCI has been promulgated," said an official.

"All the BoG members are eminently qualified and apolitical. Further, five of the seven were members of the Supreme Court-appointed oversight committee. It is expected that the BoG will bring about much-required reforms in the field of medical education and promote access to quality healthcare for all," he said.