

Competence rewarded

Mini-Cabinet reshuffle has rewarded efficiency and competence. We need more of the same

One defining characteristic of the Narendra Modi Government over the past four years has been the ability of some of its Ministers to consistently put both their feet in their mouths effortlessly. Of course, some of this has been happily played up by an English language media equally consistent in their hostility towards Modi, but there can be no denying that seemingly daily missteps by the same cast of characters has deflected from of the very good work done by members of Narendra Modi's council of ministers. It is therefore heartening to see that that two of the more consistent performers among them, Piyush Goyal and Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore and have been given promotions, albeit in the former's case a seemingly temporary one.

Olympic silver medalist Rathore has seemingly transformed the sports ministry with some smart investments and working towards visible success, something that paid off in the recently concluded Commonwealth Games in Australia. Goyal's track record in trying to set right India's electricity sector already saw him elevated to the Railways job where he has performed admirably, improving the safety record of the



behemoth. Their appointments to the top jobs in the Information and Broadcasting and Finance Ministries respectively could bring in a fresh impetus to both. To be sure, Goyal is just a placeholder until the overworked and ill Arun Jaitley recovers from his renal transplant, which could take weeks or months. However, Goyal faces challenges in trying to combat an uncertain global scenario as the US recently torpedoed the Iran nuclear deal which has led to an immediate rise in global crude prices. This in addition to US President Donald Trump's threats of a trade war which will certainly impact India in its

crossfire. Rathore too faces challenges as public broadcaster *Prasar Bharti* combats budgetary issues and the Government wants to rein in the menace of 'fake news' on the internet, although that technically falls under the Technology Ministry. Possibly Rathore will oversee the creation of an unified Communications Ministry, something that is much needed in today's day and age. That said, the Modi government has to rein in some ministers that are prone to making gaffes which do their public relations no good whatsoever. Given the minimal interaction that the Modi Government has with the media and the lack of an official spokesperson, some of these seemingly minor gaffes or well-intentioned proposals can snowball into massive controversies. These are sometimes made worse by those Ministers seeking constant publicity or the need for approval by the media instead of doing their jobs well. Perform or perish should be the mantra in any Government, but that is easier said than done.