

PIA announces 15pc rise in pension

KARACHI: PIA Managing Director Capt Mohammad Aijaz on Wednesday announced a 15 per cent raise in the pension of PIA retired employees effective from December 1, 2009.

He made the announcement at a get-together of PIA Senior Staff Association and Peoples Unity (CBA).

Speaking at the gathering, the PIA MD said with commitment and dedication of all employees, PIA can achieve profitability which will be beneficial for all employees, stakeholders and passengers.

"All employees have to work wholeheartedly for the airline," he said.

Referring to recent increase in the salaries of PIA employees he assured that if the airline is profitable, they would be given further increase in salaries, even before a demand is made for it by Employees Associations.

But, he said, it depends on the performance of the airline for which all employees have to work hard for the betterment of the airline. He stated that PIA employees would be given 12 per cent shares owned by the government and made partners in the airline soon.

The government wants to give due share to employees and this is a step forward. He said that once the employees know the details of the scheme, they will appreciate it.

He denied rumours saying that no one would be terminated from service. However, those employees who do not work or are working against the airline will not be spared. —APP

Perilous In Air ...as always

Senior PIA employees of excellent

track record are being bypassed by others who are neither qualified nor have the requisite experience. Over the years, PIA has been sending its senior officers on regular foreign postings. The completion of tenures of these foreign postings depended on individual performances. Over the last 15 years, political appointees, unfortunately, have had preferences over seniority, merit and experience. The situation has taken a turn for the worse in the last 14 months.

Senior assignments of Country Managers, Station Managers and now even the position of Finance Managers are being filled by cronies that are hired as local employees. In New York, for instance, a former PIA employee having left the airline has been hired as a local employee by the MD as Country Manager. Similarly the position of Station Manager New York, a position that was

usually filled by senior officers from traffic, has been given to a local employee who had retired recently after payment of adequate compensation. This particular employee enjoys political patronage of a Karachi-based ethnic party and is facing many investigations for financial and administrative irregularities. He is the younger brother of a former friend of the MD who allegedly pilfered Rs 12 crores from Pilots Occupational Disability Benefit Fund.

As if this was not enough, the position of Finance Manager New York has been given to a retired employee too who has already had a long foreign posting of over 10 years previously. All these postings are against PIA rules and would only lead to demoralizing of other senior officers whose turn it was to be posted. Such irregular appointments have also been made in Toronto, Jeddah, Dubai,

Abu Dhabi, Manchester, London etc. The management is abusing its so-called powers of discretion while denying others of their right due to them on merit for such postings. The other major anomaly is that for the first time since 1974, the post of Chief Internal Auditor that is always awarded to a qualified Chartered Accountant, has been given to a simple MBA. PIA's poor balance sheet and losses running into over Rs185 billions, just cannot afford such mismanagement. -T. HASSAN, New York, October 12.