

JOINT FORUM OF NON-EXECUTIVE UNIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS OF BSNL

JF/2023/07

Date: 03.03.2023

To,

Shri P.K. Purwar,
Chairman & Managing Director,
Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd.,
Bharat Sanchar Bhawan,
H.C. Mathur Lane,
Janpath, New Delhi – 110001.

Sir,

Sub: - **Merger of MTNL with BSNL - expressing views of the Non-Executive Unions and Associations of BSNL-
req.**

We wish to bring the following to your kind notice for favour of information and necessary action.

It is learnt that, the Union Cabinet has taken decision on 27th July, 2022, for the merger of MTNL with BSNL. It is also learnt that, the government has constituted a Committee of Secretaries to look into the issue and to give recommendations to the government with regards to the merger of MTNL with BSNL.

The issue of merging MTNL with BSNL is being discussed for the past many years. However, the government could not take a decision for implementing the merger of MTNL with BSNL. The most important reason being the fact that, MTNL is a listed company, whereas BSNL is not a listed company and is fully owned by the Government of India.

There are other reasons, including the financial viability of merging MTNL with BSNL. Whatever issues existed earlier against the merger of MTNL and BSNL are still existing. The employees of BSNL are genuinely apprehensive that, the merger of MTNL with BSNL should not doom the future of the later. In view of this, we, the 11 unions and associations representing the 30,000 Non-Executives of BSNL, place the following views to be considered by the Group of Secretaries and the Government.

(1) Delisting MTNL before merger with BSNL.

MTNL is a listed Company, whereas, BSNL is not a listed Company and is 100% owned by the Government of India. In view of this, the BSNL employees are having the genuine apprehension that, any step taken to merge MTNL with BSNL will open the backdoor for starting disinvestment in BSNL. Hence, we strongly demand that, MTNL should be delisted before it's merger with BSNL.

(2) Government should take over the liability of MTNL.

It is learnt that, MTNL is having a huge financial liability of Rs.28,000 crore. BSNL's financial condition is already fragile. Under this circumstance, in the name of merger, if MTNL's financial liability of Rs.28,000 crore is loaded on BSNL, then it will be the end of the road for BSNL. If BSNL is to drown due to the merger of MTNL with BSNL, the employees cannot accept that. Hence, we strongly demand that, the financial liability of Rs.28,000 crore of MTNL should be taken over by the government and not loaded on BSNL.

(3) Financial assistance for the restoration of MTNL's networks.

MTNL's networks, including mobile, landline, FTTH, etc., are in tatters, both in Delhi and in Mumbai. A huge investment is required to restore these networks. If sufficient investment is not made to restore the MTNL's networks at Mumbai and Delhi, then the whole purpose of merging MTNL with BSNL will be defeated. In the present situation, BSNL is not having the financial wherewithal to invest a huge sum of money for the restoration of MTNL's networks. It is informed by the CMD BSNL, to the unions and associations that, the government had already approved an amount of Rs.1,800 crore for the restoration of MTNL's networks. So far as our information goes, Rs.1,800 crore, approved by the government is a paltry amount for restoring MTNL's networks. Hence, we demand that, the government should fully extend financial assistance to BSNL, for restoring the MTNL's networks. We demand that, the government should undertake a study to arrive at the exact amount required for the restoration of MTNL's networks. Based on this study, the government should extend financial assistance to BSNL for the restoration of MTNL's networks. Merger of MTNL with BSNL will become a huge burden on BSNL, if necessary financial assistance is not provided to BSNL, for the restoration of MTNL's networks.

(4) **Settlement of Wage Revision to BSNL employees.**

Even though it is not an issue related to the merger of MTNL with BSNL, we, the unions and associations of the Non-Executives, wish to fervently appeal to the government to consider settlement of the Wage Revision of BSNL employees. Settlement of Wage Revision is being denied to BSNL employees, on the plea that, BSNL does not fulfill the **Affordability Criteria** laid down by the 3rd Pay Revision Committee. It will not be out of context to mention that, BSNL has become loss making not because of the non-performance of BSNL employees. Further, it is also pertinent to quote the statement of Shri Ravishankar Prasad, Hon'ble erstwhile Minister of Communications who has stated that, **"BSNL which earned Rs.10,000 crore net profit in 2004, became loss making only due to the wrong policies of the erstwhile government."**

Once again, Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, Hon'ble Minister of Communications, had stated on the floor of the Parliament, as recently as on 14th December, 2022, **"Those days are gone for certain people, from the other side of the House, for who BSNL was always a cash cow...."** (Times of India dated 15.12.2022).

So, when the Hon'ble erstwhile Minister of Communications, as well as the present Hon'ble Minister of Communications, have asserted that, BSNL has become loss making only because of the wrong policies of the erstwhile government, how is it fair on the part of the government to deny Wage Revision to BSNL employees, under the pretext that, BSNL does not meet the **Affordability Criteria** of the 3rd Pay Revision Committee.

The employees are straining their every nerve, to ensure the early revival of BSNL, as per the Revival Package offered by the government. Settlement of Wage Revision of BSNL employees will motivate and inspire the employees in a great way, to achieve the avowed revival plan of the government. Hence, we earnestly implore upon the government to consider early settlement of the Wage Revision of BSNL employees.

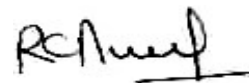
Thanking you,
Yours sincerely,



(CHANDESHWAR SINGH)
GS, NFTE & Chairman, JF



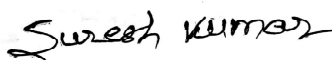
(P.ABHIMANYU)
GS, BSNLEU & Convenor, JF



(R.C. PANDEY)
GS, BTEU



(K. JAYA PRAKASH)
GS, NUBSNLW (FNTO)



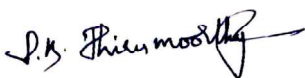
(SURESH KUMAR)
GS, SNATTA



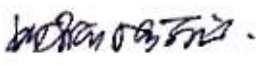
(SURESH KUMAR)
GS, BSNLMS



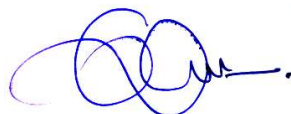
(S.P. SHARMA)
GS, BSNL WRU



(P.K. THIRU MOORTHY BABU)
GS, BSNL DEU



(M. RAMASUNDRAM)
GS, BSNL EC



(ANIL KUMAR)
GS, BSNL ATM



(J. Vijaya Kumar)
GS, TEPU

- Copy to: (1) Shri K. Rajaraman, Secretary, Telecom, Department of Telecommunications, Sanchar Bhawan, 20, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110 001.
(2) Shri Ali Raza Rizvi, Secretary, Department of Public Enterprises, CGO Complex, Lodi Road, New Delhi – 110003.
(3) Dr. T. V. Somanathan, Secretary, Department of Expenditure, Minister of Finance, New Delhi – 110001.
(4) Shri Tuhin Kanta Pandey, Secretary, Department of Investment and Public Asset Management, Minister of Finance, New Delhi – 110003.