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BSNLEU/ 604 (DEV)

08.08.2022

To,

Shri Ashwini Vaishnav ji,
Hon'ble Minister of Communications,
Government of India,
Sanchar Bhawan,
20, Ashoka Road,
New Delhi- 110 001

Respected sir,

Sub: - **Holding the BSNL employees responsible for the present state-of-affairs of BSNL is unfair – reg.**

BSNL Employees Union (BSNLEU), being the Main Recognised Trade Union in BSNL, wishes to bring the following to your kind notice, for favour of information and necessary action.

Following the announcement of the Revival Package for BSNL, the Hon'ble Minister of Communications has addressed the meeting of the Heads of the circles of BSNL on 04-08-2022. The Times of India has reported on the speech of the Hon'ble Minister. (copy enclosed)

As can be seen, the whole report of the Times of India, is about the stern message given by the Hon'ble Minister, to the 62,000 BSNL employees. As per the Times of India report, the Hon'ble Minister has given the following warnings to the BSNL employees:-

"Perform or perish" ; "you have to do what is expected, otherwise pack up" ; "anyone not performing will be compulsorily retired" ; "we will use Rule 56 (J) to order premature retirement".

Undoubtedly, the Hon'ble Minister has held the BSNL employees responsible for the present state-of-affairs of BSNL. We wish to submit that, this is unfair and does not reflect the ground reality. In this connection, we would like to bring the following points for favour of your kind information.

- (1) The private operators were allowed to start their mobile service in 1995 itself. However, the government service provider was not allowed to start its mobile service, together with the private operators.
- (2) BSNL was allowed to launch its mobile service only in October, 2002, i.e., seven years after the private operators launched their mobile service. However, by December, 2004, BSNL was all set to overtake Airtel in the mobile segment.
- (3) BSNL earned a net profit of Rs.10,000 crore in the year 2004-05.
- (4) However, from 2006 onwards, BSNL was not allowed to procure equipments for its mobile network expansion. In 2007, the then Hon'ble Minister of Communications directed BSNL to cancel its 45 million line tender. Till 2012, all the tenders floated by BSNL were cancelled under one pretext or the other.
- (5) This was the period when the mobile service grew exponentially in our country. While the private companies flourished due to this growth, BSNL suffered. In 2009-10, BSNL went into loss and it was not able to come out of it till today.
- (6) The unions and associations in BSNL organised many agitations demanding that, the government should remove the road-blocks created in BSNL's equipment procurement.
- (7) From 2013 onwards, BSNL started procuring equipments. Together with this, the unions and associations of BSNL organised many campaigns such as, "The Customer Delight Movement", "Service With A Smile", "BSNL at Your Door Steps", etc., to improve the quality of BSNL's services, customer satisfaction and to increase the Company's revenue.
- (8) Beyond their working hours, the employees voluntarily organised "Road Shows", "Melas" and "Mini Melas" and did marketing of BSNL's products. These steps voluntarily taken by the employees undoubtedly helped BSNL to increase its market share.
- (9) Due to the combined efforts of the Management and employees, BSNL earned operating profit in the years 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17.
- (10) In his Independence Day speech from the Red Forts on 15th August, 2015, Shri Narendra Modi ji, the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, proudly mentioned that, BSNL had started earning operating profit.

- (11) Thereafter, due to the "Predatory Pricings" implemented by Reliance Jio, all the telecom companies, including Airtel, went into loss. It is needless to state that the "Predatory Pricings" of Reliance Jio dented BSNL's financial position seriously.
- (12) On 23rd October, 2019, the government announced a Revival Package for BSNL and MTNL. Allotment of 4G spectrum to BSNL was a part of this Revival Package. However, BSNL was never able to take advantage of this, due to the road-blocks created by the government, in BSNL's 4G launching.
- (13) BSNL could have launched its 4G service at least two years ago, had the Company been allowed to upgrade its 49,300 existing BTSs into 4G BTSs. Unfortunately, the government did not allow BSNL to upgrade its BTSs. This has severely hampered BSNL's revival.
- (14) After permission was denied for the upgradation of BSNL's existing equipments, the Company floated a tender in March, 2020, to procure 50,000 4G BTSs. Had this procurement materialised, BSNL would have launched its 4G service by this time. However, based on a flimsy complaint given by the TEPC, BSNL's tender was cancelled, as per the direction of the government. It is proved beyond doubt now, that none of the affiliates of the TEPC is having the technology to supply 4G equipments to BSNL. This only indicates that, the TEPC has been used as a tool to disrupt BSNL's procurement of 4G equipments.
- (15) Thereafter, BSNL has been directed to procure equipments only from Indian vendors and not from global vendors. When government imposed this condition on BSNL, it knew pretty well that no Indian vendor was having **proven 4G technology**.
- (16) When all the private companies, viz., Reliance Jio, Airtel and Vodafone Idea are procuring their equipments from global vendors like Nokia, Ericsson and Samsung, why BSNL alone should be directed to procure 4G equipments only from Indian vendors. This is nothing but **denial of level playing ground**, which has severely affected the Company's revival.
- (17) For the past 12 years, the private operators are offering superior service with their 4G technology. It is obvious that, with its 2G and 3G technologies, BSNL was unable to compete with the private operators. As a result, BSNL has started losing its customers. According to TRAI's report, in May, 2022 alone, BSNL has lost 5.3 lakh customers. Only the government is responsible for this and not the employees.
- (18) The TCS has been identified to supply 4G equipments to BSNL. 30th November, 2021 was the deadline fixed by the DoT, for TCS to complete its "Proof of Concept (PoC)". Many extensions were given to the TCS to complete its PoC. However, the TCS has not been able to complete its PoC till date.
- (19) When the private operators are having world class equipments, supplied by global vendors, why BSNL alone is being compelled to procure the unproven and substandard equipments of Indian vendors. Why level playing field is being continuously denied to BSNL?
- (20) In earlier procurements of BSNL, more than one vendor participated in the tendering process and supplied equipments to BSNL. However, presently, BSNL has been compelled to procure equipments only from TCS. Being the sole vendor, TCS has not accepted BSNL's Purchase Order (PO) placed on 31.03.2022, for the procurement of 6,400 4G BTSs. TCS is dictating terms to BSNL. BSNL has got no other go, but to accept the terms and conditions of TCS.
- (21) Even at this late stage, BSNL can start its 4G service in the very profitable South Zone and West Zone, within a few weeks, if the Company is permitted to get its 19,000 existing BTSs upgraded by Nokia. This upgradation will only cost BSNL around Rs.500 crore. BSNLEU, vide its letter no.BSNLEU/604(DEV) dated 28.06.2022, has already brought this to the notice of the Hon'ble Minister of Communications.

From the above points, it becomes clear that, only the anti-BSNL and pro-private steps taken by the government from time to time, have contributed to the downfall of BSNL. The employees are in no way responsible for it. As in the past, even today the BSNL employees are ready to walk the extra mile for the early revival of BSNL. At the same time, the government should ensure that BSNL is not denied of the level playing ground.

Thanking you.

Yours sincerely,



(P.Abhimanyu)
General Secretary

Encl: As above.

Copy to: (1) Shri K. Rajaraman, Secretary, Telecom, Department of Telecommunications, Sanchar Bhawan, 20, Ashoka Road, New Delhi – 110001

(2) Shri P.K. Purwar, CMD BSNL, Bharat Sanchar Bhawan, Janpath, New Delhi – 110001

(3) Shri Arvind Vadnerkar, Director (HR), BSNL, Bharat Sanchar Bhawan, Janpath, New Delhi – 110001

MTNL Has No Future, Says Minister | Mfg Key

Perform or pack up: Vaishnaw to BSNL staff

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New Delhi: In one of the most stern messages to BSNL employees, telecom minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has asked them to let go of 'sarkari' attitude, warning the 62,000-strong workforce that anyone not performing well will be made to compulsorily retire and sent home packing. On the much-smaller MTNL, he said that it "does not have any future".

In a meeting with the senior management of the struggling telecom PSU, Vaishnaw — who just spearhea-

ded Rs 1.64 lakh crore revival package for BSNL — said, "You have to do what is expected of you. Otherwise, pack up. You should not have any doubt on this. This will be the norm, and this will be the new normal — perform or perish."



The minister asked the staff to be fiercely competitive now, especially as they have to fight top private sector companies such as Jio and Airtel for customers, top sources told TOI.

"People who do not work are free to take VRS and go home. If they show resistance in

taking VRS, we will use 56J (a Rule used to order premature retirement)... So, you have to perform the best, or be ready to pack up and go home. That's absolutely clear. Don't have any doubts about this in your mind," warned the minister, pointing out that around 70 officers were asked to retire under Rule 56(J) in the Railways Ministry (a Cabinet charge that is also held by him).

He said that apart from managing operations inefficiently, the staff of BSNL has also failed to provide a clean and hygienic environment at the telephone exchanges and their offices.