



Editorial

THE YEAR 2014 IS NOW PART OF HISTORY

With the clock just crossing 12 in the midnight of this December 31st, the year 2014 comes to an end and becomes part of the history. A new year also dawns with greater hope and expectation to all human beings. It is but natural that at the juncture of bidding farewell to the past year and welcoming the New Year, one would like to remember the great happenings of the past year and simultaneously re-write his wish list for the New Year. As the pensioners, we also are no exception to this exercise.

During the year 2014, no doubt we had some points to cheer about when the Government raised the limit of personal income tax relief to the senior citizens from Rs 2.50 lakhs to 3.00 lakhs and also increased the exemption limit for deposits under Section 80 C of IT Act from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 1.50 lakh to all. Thus, the senior citizens did receive an effective gain in exemption limit of Rupees one lakh in their personal income tax. Government also introduced Aadhar based Digital Life Certificate for Pensioners dispensing with the need to visit the pension disbursing banks to submit their annual Life Certificates for continuation of payment of their monthly pension. This is certainly a big relief to the ageing pensioners. The BSNL Pensioners

have also been allowed to opt for CGHS facilities in place of BSNLMRS. At least those BSNL pensioners residing in CGHS areas are now having the option to choose between BSNLMRS and CGHS facilities according to their own wishes. Government has also simplified the procedure for payment of pension in respect of freshly retired employees. These employees will no longer be required to submit an undertaking "to refund or make good any amount to which he is not entitled" to the authorized Banks disbursing their pension for the first occasion. Now onwards, the undertaking in a prescribed format will be collected from the retiring employees along with their Pension Papers and finally sent to the Bank along with their PPOs to avoid delay.

Government is now also considering proposal for utilization of unclaimed deposits in PPF and Post Office Saving Schemes for the benefit of senior citizens. A Committee, constituted by the Government, had invited suggestions from all concerned on utilization of these unclaimed deposits. The matter is still under consideration and a decision on this matter in the near future may benefit the senior citizens of the country. **[Continued in next page]**

But when we look at some other important issues pertaining exclusively to the absorbed BSNL pensioners, we have reasons to feel cheated and frustrated. Department of Telecommunication is yet to issue orders extending the benefit of revision of pension to the pre-2007 and post-2007 BSNL pensioners who retired between 1.1.2007 and 9.6.2013 following issue of a DPE OM allowing effective merger of 78.2% DA in place of 68.8%, as ordered earlier, as the fitment benefit in the revised pay scales w.e.f. 1.1.2007. A proposal on this issue, which has been approved by DOP&PW and DOE, is yet to be sent by Department of Telecommunication to the Cabinet Secretariat seeking approval of the Cabinet. No doubt, the proposal does not envisage full justice to the said pensioners, but all are eagerly waiting for a decision. Hopefully, before the end of this financial year Orders on this issue will be issued giving partial relief only. Thereafter, another war has to be waged to get the full justice in this case. Department of Telecommunication is yet to settle another long pending case for removal of anomaly in pension of absorbed BSNL pensioners who retired between 1.10.2000

and 31.07.2001. The issue is now under discussion with DOPP&W for long and DOT is also gathering some statistical information through BSNL to resolve the case. Let us hope that DOT gets this issue resolved at least during the New Year. Non-extension of benefit of fixation of pay and pension to the Group C Employees of DOT who got absorbed in BSNL and opted to retain Government Pay Scale i.e. CDA pay scale till their promotion or retirement, whichever is earlier, is another long pending unsettled issue bothering the affected absorbed employees/pensioners. DOT, which offered this benefit under Para 4 of DOP&PW No. 4/18/87-P&PW(D) dated 5.7.1989 at the time of absorption of these employees, had been dragging its feet over the issue. But of late, it seems to be inclined to settle the matter under pressure and collecting some information from BSNL to process the case further.

Let us hope that all these issues will be resolved in the New Year 2015. AIBSNLREA, on its part, will continue to monitor the progress of these issues and pursue them for their logical and early settlement.

INCREASE IN IDA W.E.F. 1.1.2015

According to calculations based on All India Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers, IDA is to be increased w.e.f. 1.1.2015 by 2.2% for CPSEs where last pay revision was implemented w.e.f. 1.1.2007 and by 3.5% where last pay revision was implemented w.e.f. 1.1.1997.

26TH MEETING OF SCOVA TO BE HELD ON 3.2.2015

Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare has since notified that the 26th Meeting of SCOVA will be held on 3rd February 2015. However the venue of holding of the meeting is yet to be announced. The agenda to be discussed in the next meeting along with Action Taken Report on old items are also not yet circulated. However, two important old items of interest for the BSNL pensioners i.e. Anomaly in fixation of pension of DOT Employees absorbed in BSNL who retired

between 1.10.2000 and 31.07.2001 and Merger of 78.2% IDA with basic pension benefit to the absorbed BSNL pensioners are to find place in the ATR of old items with their current status.

ACTION TAKEN ON AIBSNLREA'S REPRESENTATIONS

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE FORWARDS AIBSNLREA'S REPRESENTATION ON INORDINATE DELAY IN INTER-MINISTERIAL CONSULTATION DEPRIVING THE ABSORBED BSNL PENSIONERS OF THEIR REVISED PENSION BY ALLOWING FITMENT BENEFIT WITH MERGER OF 78.2% DA TO THE SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATION: AIBSNLREA had represented to Prime Minister of India, vide its No. AIBSNLREA/CHQ/2014/22 dated 14.10.2014, regarding inordinate delay in inter-ministerial consultation on the proposal for allowing revision of pension by allowing fitment benefit with merger of 78.2% DA to the absorbed BSNL pensioners and sought for his kind intervention [Posting dated 15.10.2014 in this website may be viewed to read the representation]. Prime Minister's Office has forwarded the said representation to the Secretary, Department of Telecommunication, vide their No. PMO ID No. PMO/PMP/14/00032948 dated 28.11.2014, for appropriate action.

EXTENSION OF BENEFIT OF DEFERRED OPTION UNDER PARA 4 OF DOP&PW NO. 4/18/87-P&PW(D) DATED 05.07.1989 TO THE ABSORBED GROUP C & D EMPLOYEES IN BSNL- DOT SEEKS ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM BSNL: It was reported in this website, vide posting dated 13.11.2014, that in order to take a decision on this long pending issue DOT had sought for some specific information from BSNL. Accordingly, BSNL Corporate Office had also asked, vide its letter No. 1-15/2011-PAT (BSNL) dated 12.11.2014, all its CGMs to furnish those information so as to compile them and forward the same to DOT. Now DOT has asked one additional information for which BSNL has sought the help of its CGMs. *[To read the BSNL letter, posting dated 02.12.2014 may be viewed]*

ISSUES TAKEN UP

AIBSNLREA RAISES THE ISSUE OF DISCRIMINATION METED OUT TO THE ABSORBED BSNL EMPLOYEES FOLLOWING THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO ALLOW PAYMENT OF PENSION TO THE MTNL ABSORBED EMPLOYEES BY THE GOVERNMENT WITHOUT RAISING THE LEVEL OF PAY SCALES OF THE BSNL ABSORBED EMPLOYEES AT THE SAME LEVEL OF MTNL EMPLOYEES: Government had issued orders in April 2014 to allow payment of pension to the MTNL absorbed employees by the Government as in BSNL on the condition that the level of pay scales in MTNL will be lowered to the same level as that of BSNL employees during next wage revision. This decision allows the MTNL employees to continue to have their higher pay scale for over long 17 years in addition to the newly granted benefit of payment of pension by the Government. It may be recalled that BSNL absorbed employees were granted one stage lower pay scales than those granted to the MTNL employees on the plea that BSNL absorbed employees enjoy the benefit of payment of pension by the Government but it was not the case with the MTNL absorbed employees. AIBSNLREA has now taken up the issue with MOC&IT and demanded that "the pay

scales in BSNL be also brought at the same level as that in MTNL w.e.f. 01.10.2000 and the pension of retired absorbed employees of BSNL be revised accordingly." *[To read the letter, view posting dated 03.12.2014 in this website]*

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

GOVERNMENT RAISES THE LIMIT OF PAYMENT OF THE PORTION OF THE DEATH GRATUITY TO THE GUARDIAN, IN ABSENCE OF NATURAL GUARDIAN, OF THE MINOR: Government of India (Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare) has issued orders, vide No. 7/3/2013-P&PW(E) dated 02.12.2014 raising the limit of the amount of the portion of the Death Gratuity to be paid in favour of the minor to his guardian in absence of his/her natural guardian. As per the existing orders an amount of Rs 10,000/- (or the first Rs 10000/- where amount exceeds Rs. 10000/-) in favour of the minor could be paid to his/her guardian, in absence of natural guardian, without production of a formal guardianship certificate but subject to production of an indemnity bond. Now, the Government has decided that payment of death gratuity of a minor to the extent of 20% or Rs 1.5 lakh, whichever is less, may be paid to his/her guardian, in the absence of natural guardian, without production of formal guardianship certificate but subject to production of indemnity bond with sureties. *[To read the Order, view posting dated 04.12.2014 in this website]*

BRANCHES IN ACTION

NEW BRANCH OF AIBSNLREA FORMED IN ERODE OF TAMILNADU STATE: A new Branch of AIBSNLREA in Erode (Tamilnadu State) was formed in the inaugural meeting of the Branch held on 13.12.2014. Shri Govindasamy, AGM Admn Erode, who will be retiring shortly, presided over the meeting. S/Shri S.Mali and V.Selvarajan of All India Central Government Pensioners' Association, Erode and Shri R.R.Balasubramanian, Vice President of Chennai Branch of AIBSNLREA addressed the gathering. Shri R.Chinnathambi, Retd. DE, Shri K.Sivanandham, Retd.SDE and Shri S.Komaraswamy, Retd.DE have been elected as President, Secretary and Finance Secretary respectively. *[To get the list of all office-bearers, posting dated 14.12.2014 in this website be viewed].*

ANNUAL GENERAL BODY MEETING OF AIBSNLREA, CHENNAI BRANCH (TAMILNADU STATE): Annual General Body Meeting of AIBSNLREA Chennai Branch (Tamilnadu State) was held on Wednesday, the 10th December 2014 at 1700 Hrs., in the Lecture Hall of The Institution of Electronics & Telecommunication Engineers - IETE Chennai Centre, 37, Conran Smith Road, [Near Satyam Theatre] Gopalapuram, Chennai - 600086. Shri V. Sivaswamy Branch President presided over the meeting. After welcome address, Shri B Jayaraman Branch Secretary presented the minutes of the previous General Body Meeting held on 11.06.2014 which was approved by the House. Secretary then placed the Annual Report before the House detailing the activities of the Branch during the period under review. After its approval by the House, Financial Report was presented by Shri S. Ashok Kumar, Finance Secretary of the Branch. President pointed out that Cash balance on hand is very meagre and urged the

members to donate liberally. Shri N.Devanna reminded that our earlier appeal for donations on the occasion of Pension revision has not been fully honoured by our members and requested that efforts must be taken to collect from all who are yet to pay and complete the process. House also directed to increase the Membership by taking all efforts. President requested everybody to help in this regard. Shri V.Chinna Pappiah, AGS CHQ explained the actions taken by CHQ in 78.2% IDA merger issue and in Anomaly case of those who retired between 1-10-2000 to 31-07-2001. He appreciated the services of Shri R.R.Balasubramanian in maintaining our Web site. Shri R.R .Balasubramanian, in his address, detailed elaborately the confusion created by other Associations in IDA Merger Issue. He opined that the issue would have been settled long back if such unwarranted interpretation had been avoided. With the permission from Chair, Shri Raghunathan informed the House that, in the cases of prolonged medical treatment, in the earlier occasion, on the basis of the same prescription issued by the doctor for a period of one year, the cost of medicines purchased for every three months was reimbursed. But now based on the instructions received from BSNL H/Q, Administration refuses to reimburse the cost of the Medicines purchased, once in three months, as per the first prescription issued by the doctor and also insists to get fresh prescription from the Doctor, on every occasion and to attach with every claims submitted once in every three months. This will involve additional expenditure both for the Pensioner and Administration since the Doctor is to be paid for every consultation made once in every three months. So, it was decided to take up this common issue with BSNL H/Q through CHQ. Shri Dhakshiknamurthy suggested that CHQ should initiate action for getting representation in SCOVA. It was also decided to have our further meetings in the morning hours as LUNCH MEETINGS. After this, Election process started and the following were elected as Office Bearers: S/Shri V.Sivaswamy, R.R.Balasubramanian and R.Kasiswanathan were elected as the President, Vice President and Secretary respectively of the Branch. S/Shri K.Selvarajan and C.R. Rajasekaran were also elected as the Assistant Secretary and Financial Secretary respectively of the Branch. Shri R.Kasiswanathan, newly elected Secretary addressed the House. He sought the cooperation of every one in strengthening AIBSNLREA. He also informed the members that through E Mail he will be communicating and also sharing vital information on different subject of importance in addition. With Vote of thanks by Shri B.Jayaraman, the meeting came to an end.

STATEMENT OF PAYMENTS RECEIVED BY CHQ DURING DECEMBER 2014

Pune Branch (Maharashtra State) has deposited Rupees two thousand (Rs 2000/-) only in the CHQ's Bank Account with Syndicate Bank on 02.12.2014 as quota for 10 new Life Members.

Chennai Branch (Tamilnadu State) has deposited Rupees Eight hundred (Rs 800/-) only in the CHQ's Bank Account with Karur Vyasya Bank on 10.12.2014 as quota for 4 new Life Members.

Edited and published by Shri S.Basu, General Secretary, AIBSNLREA