

ALL INDIA BSNL RETIRED EXECUTIVES' ASSOCIATION

WEST BENGAL STATE BRANCH

3A, Chowringhee Place, 3rd Floor, Kolkata-700013

News Letter Cum Secretary's report 12th Issue

Dated 6th August 2016

On behalf of AIBSNLREA West Bengal State Branch I welcome all members and Pensioners assembled in this august House.

OBITUARY:- With deep anguish, the Association mourns at the sad demise of our members i) Tapan Kumar Mitra Ex. SDE WBTC expired on 16.01.16 ii) Amal Krishna Roy Ex. SDE, CTD & Asst. Secretary of our Association expired on 07.03.16 iii) Dilip Kumar Nag Ex. CAO, CTD expired on 11.06.16 iv) Dhruva Ranjan Biswas Ex. DE CTD on 11.07.16 since our last General Body Meeting held on 10th December 2015. We express our heart-felt condolences to the members of the bereaved families. Today, the 6th August is observed as Hiroshima Day all over the World in protest against dropping of Atom Bomb on the common & innocent peace loving people. We also express our sincere grief and pledge for the peace & humanity.

- 1) Ist All India Conference of AIBSNLREA held in Bhubaneswar on 2nd & 3rd July 2016:-** Since its formation in April 2008, it was the first ever opportunity for the members of AIBSNLREA to meet in a national event on 2nd & 3rd July at Hotel Prangan in Bhubaneswar. The conference witnessed large number of participation by retired executives from all over the country. West Bengal State Branch with 19 delegates took active part in the conference. There were lively discussions on many issues, related to BSNL Pensioners in particular and senior citizens of the country in general. Discussions were held to amend the Rules and Regulations of the Association. Various resolutions were moved by the branches and states. Branch Secretaries' reports revealed the organisational strength and activities of AIBSNLREA all over the country. Comrade V.Chinnappaiah and Comrade Santimoy Basu have been elected unanimously as President and General Secretary respectively. Comrade Sadhan Kumar Ghosh of West Bengal has also been elected as Organising Secretary (East). Participants returned back with clarity and contentment regarding AIBSNLREA's stand on issues like pension revision for IDA pensioners, 78.2% IDA merger etc.
- 2) 78.2% DA Merger for BSNL Pensioners:** - After sustained persuasion for several years, Central Cabinet approved on 05-07-2016 the fitment benefit of 78.2% to BSNL pensioners who retired prior to 10-06-2013, notionally from 01-01-2007 and actually from 10-06-2013. However increase in the amount of DCRG, leave encashment and commutation of Pension in respect of these pensioners shall not be increased on this account. The long awaited order was issued by DOT on 18-07-2016. BSNL endorsed the DOT order on 26-07-2016 to all Circles and units for necessary action. Our state Branch has written to all the CGMs in West Bengal and requested to initiate action and demanded to evolve an effective mechanism for monitoring the whole process at different level for early disposal (Copy enclosed). It is unfortunate that DOT has played a discriminatory role between two groups of BSNL pensioners retired before and after 10-06-2013. Since the relief will only be partial, we shall have to start another struggle to get the full relief. Even this partial relief was delayed for about two years, since the Department Of Expenditure (DOE) approved the DOT's proposal for allowing 78.2% merger in Oct 2014. This delay is mainly due to dilly-dally tactics of the bureaucracy and also negative roles played by some of the Pensioner's Organisation.
- 3) Annulment of Pension Liability on BSNL:** - DOT has issued order implementing the cabinet decision on 05-07-2016 by annulling the condition that the pension liability of the Government shall not exceed 60% of the receipts to the Govt. from BSNL for the items specified in OM dated 15-06-2006. We welcome the above decision of the Union Cabinet that would reduce the undue burden on BSNL in grave situation when the 60% receipts from BSNL on dividends etc by DOT falls short of the expenditure on account of payment of pension. But now for the past few months, we noticed that

a vicious propaganda was orchestrated that unless the 60:40 clause is removed, no revision of pension with 78.2% is possible. **It is really a wonder how it slipped out of their mind that DOE had already cleared the very proposal from DOT for revision of pension with fitment benefit by merger of 78.2% DA in October 2014 itself i.e. almost two years back from now and also advised DOT to seek approval of Cabinet for the same. Moreover, was there any single incidence that any BSNL retiree was ever denied of his pension during the last 16 years due to presence of the pension liability clause? Certainly, not.** The very idea of the said propaganda was just to create panic in the minds of BSNL pensioners. They subsequently stated that as per the reply that they received through RTI, the pension of BSNL pensioners is being paid from the Consolidated Fund of India. This information which they received now, that the pension of the absorbed BSNL pensioners is paid from the Consolidated Fund of India, was a known fact since long to many – but unfortunately not to them. Thus when the pension of a BSNL pensioner is paid from the consolidated fund of India, why there ever be a problem for payment of pension or revision of pension to a BSNL Pensioner ?

Now let us see what is happening with MTNL. All of us know that MTNL is in red for over a decade. As per Rule 37A the pension of MTNL pensioners was to be paid by a trust. But the trust was never formed and the MTNL itself was paying the pension to its pensioners and not the Government. There was a long pending demand by MTNL employees that they also be paid pension by Government in the same way as the pension of the BSNL pensioners is paid. After dragging its feet for quite a few years, the Government finally issued a G.O. on 03/03/2014 and amended Rule 37-A to allow the pension of the MTNL pensioners also to be paid by Government. What happened by that decision? The liability of MTNL towards payment of pension to its pensioners was fully shifted to the Government. No Order was ever issued for pension liability between DOT and MTNL.

We have been arguing that the 60:40 formula as evolved by DOT and asking BSNL to pay the amount exceeding 60% of dividend etc, would hurt BSNL finances and its viability, but it is in no way going to affect the BSNL pensioners from receiving their full pension. A pensioner is not going to receive 60% of pension from Government and rest 40% from BSNL. His full pension is assured as Government's liability. The issue of 60:40 formula is an internal matter between DOT and BSNL and does not alter the pension liability position of the Government. Further this formula vis-à-vis "arrangement" is not permanent. If need be, it can be modified or even annulled depending on the requirement. **But the Government's liability to pay pension remains.** Now the recent Cabinet decision annulling the pension liability clause vindicated our stand.

- 4) Pay Fixation of Executives on Promotion and Consequent Re-fixation of Pension of Post 2007 Retirees in Executive Cadre:-** The Executives who got their pay fixed on promotion giving a notional increment equal to the increment drawn by the executive, thereby drawing roughly 0.1% less on every subsequent increments. This accumulated on every subsequent promotion and hence affected the Pensionary benefits though marginally. Now BSNL has clarified vide order No. 1-05/2015-PAT (BSNL) dated 04-04-2016 that in case of Promotion/Up-gradation, the Executive will be granted a notional increment **@ 3% of the existing basic Pay** for fixation of Promotion w.e.f. 01-01-2007 on actual basis. The effected Pensioners may now apply to the BSNL administration for re-fixation of Pay on Promotion/Up-gradation.
- 5) De-linking of Revised Pension from qualifying service of 33 years in respect of the absorbed BSNL Pensioners:-** Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare, vide its OM No. 38/37/08-P&PW(A) dated 06.04.2016, has issued orders for de-linking of revised pension from qualifying service of 33 years for revision of pension of pre-2006 pensioners. DOP&PW OM conveys that "It has now been decided that the revised consolidated pension of the pre-2006 pensioners shall not be lower than 50% of the minimum of the pay in the Pay Band and the grade pay (wherever applicable) corresponding to the pre-revised pay scale as per fitment table without pro-rata reduction of pension

even if they had qualifying service of less than 33 years at the time of retirement”. BSNL has now endorsed the above order vide No. 40-22/2011-Pen(B) dated 29-07-2016.

- 6) Effect of 7th CPC recommendation on Pensioners:-** At last 7th Pay commission’s recommendation was accepted by Government and Central Govt. Employees/Pensioners will get enhanced salary/Pension on this basis w.e.f. September 2016. The salary/Pension will be raised by 14.29% that is the lowest increase after 3rd Pay Commission.
- 7) Formation of 3rd PRC:-** Under the chairmanship of Justice Satish Chandra (Retd.), the 3rd Pay Review Committee has been formed vide GOI notification dated 9th June 2016 to review and revise the existing structure of emoluments of the CPSE Executives. The committee will make its recommendation to the Govt. within a period of 6 months and will be effective from 01-01-2017.
- 8) Retired BSNL Employees can now avail CGHS facilities:-** BSNL has now issued Orders vide no. BSNL/Admin.1/14-15/09 (Pt) dated 29.07.2016 asking retired BSNL employees desirous to opt for CGHS facilities to approach DOT to indicate their equivalent basic pay and grade pay as per Central Pay Scales on their Pension Payment Order (PPO) to facilitate evaluation of subscription and room rent of the beneficiary. Onetime payment of CGHS subscription to be made by the optees will finally be reimbursed by BSNL. The retired employees who opt for CGHS facilities will have to surrender BSNLMRS.
- 9) Medical Facilities in BSNLMRS –** There is no denial that the Medicare Facilities offered by BSNL to the Pensioners is far from satisfactory. In case of In-door treatment, the panel of Hospitals approved by the circles does not include names of reputed hospitals. Facilities for cashless treatment, though agreed upon, are being denied by the hospitals since the concerned BSNL units delay their payment. In case of outdoor treatment, ever since the facility for medical allowance was withdrawn, many Pensioners are facing difficulties. For last one year or more, reimbursement of medical bills is badly delayed for BSNL pensioners. Our Association has written several letters and met the administration. Though we have been told that delay is due to implementation of ERP etc. yet we strongly demanded simultaneous payment with the serving employees.

Organizational Report:-

The executive committee of the State Body meets every 1st & 3rd Tuesday of each month at Ranigunje Coal House to discuss various problems of the Pensioners & enroll the new members. The present Membership strength of the State Branch has been steadily increasing which has now exceeded 600. We call upon all the retired executives to unite & join AIBSNLREA that will strengthen the organization to achieve our demands.

Friends, ours is a mighty organization having its presence all over India working for the welfare of BSNL retired executives under the experienced leadership since formation in 2008. We fought a long battle for revision of pension of pre-2007 retirees and despite all odds and sabotage, we could succeed and finally able to achieve the pension revision. We do hope that this time too, through our sustained efforts and solidarity we would be able to protect our legitimate rights and privileges.

Thank you all.

Long live AIBSNLREA.

Comradely yours,
Sd/-

(S.R.Palit)
State Secretary