



Editorial

ANOTHER EPISODE OF CRIPPLING BSNL

BSNL's rapid progress towards becoming the Number One Mobile operator, even after it was allowed late to enter the mobile market in the year 2002, was halted in the year 2007, when BSNL was forced to cancel its tender for capacity addition. BSNL started its downwards journey then onwards due to capacity crunch and consequent inability to compete with other operators.

When this sad episode is still fresh in our minds, BSNL is facing a similar situation now, struggling to launch its LTE based 4G services, long after other operators launched it in the year 2015. Hopes were raised after the Government approved a revival package in October 2019 with an assurance of administrative allotment of spectrum and providing capital infusion by the Government. But after nearly 18 months, BSNL's plan to launch its 4G services is still on paper, with apathy and interference from the DoT/Government.

BSNL floated its tender for planning, engineering, supply, installation, testing, commissioning and annual maintenance of 4G mobile network for 50000 sites in North, East, West and South Zones on turnkey basis, in March 2020. The spoiler came in the form of a complaint from Telecom Equipment and Services Equipment Promotion Council (TEPC) to the PMO that the tender flouted Government of India's Make in India Policy and was heavily in favour of multinational

companies. The tender was cancelled following the complaint.

A DoT panel formed to study the issue recommended allowing only Indian companies to provide core network products and services to BSNL. It also recommended that the core of the 4G network should be built by domestic vendors under a System integrator model and not global firms like Ericsson or Nokia. In January 2021, BSNL floated an Expression of Interest for prior registration/Proof of Concept (PoC) from Indian companies interested in participating in its upcoming tender for 4G services. Simultaneously BSNL raised some concerns about the System Integrator Model. BSNL had written to DoT that its survival depended on early rollout of 4G services and so far, there was no proven Indian core available. It had said that it apprehended that barring TCS, which has tied up with C-DoT to develop a core, others may not be successful. Even if domestic vendors were successful in trial runs, they would take further time to produce requisite quantities, which would further delay the rollout of its 4G services. BSNL had said that as per the expression of interest floated by it, firms need to complete the trials in 4 months, but except TCS, most firms had sought for extension of the time frame to 6-8 months. Though BSNL did not mention, under this new model, BSNL would end up paying more compared to the capex of private telecom operators due to two different networks that will comprise its existing legacy 2G and 3G network built by traditional vendors and

the new 4G network via the SI model. And the question of backward compatibility with BSNL's legacy networks remained.

The DoT has now agreed in-principle to BSNL proposal to split its tender into two parts for rollout of 4G services into two parts and has called it Hybrid 4G rollout Plan. The empowered technology group (ETG), headed by Principal Scientific Advisor K Vijay Raghavan, has also given the go ahead to BSNL to split its tender for rollout of 4G services into two parts. Under the first part, 50,000 sites have been reserved exclusively for the Indian vendors and under the second part, the rest of the 50,000 sites have been set aside for the global vendors such as Ericsson, Nokia, and the rest. As per reports, Indian companies can also participate in the sites that have been reserved for foreign vendors if the trial of their technology is completed in time successfully. With this, BSNL hopes to roll out its 4G services in the next 10 months.

But the larger questions remain. 'Hybrid 4G services' is itself a misnomer.

Hybrid technology means a blend of two different technologies, like '4G/5G Hybrid.' It is not known how splitting the tender into two parts can be called a hybrid. While the initial tender called by BSNL in March 2020 talked about 50000 sites, this 'Hybrid' rollout Plan talks about 1,00,000 sites with 50000 sites offered to global vendors and the other 50000 sites to Indian vendors. Whether it is just a ploy to go back to the March 2020 tender, dropping the idea of System Integrator, only time will tell. If really half the number of sites will have Indian vendors and the other half offered to global vendors, in the future two entirely different types of network will exist, adding to the compatibility issues.

But the irrefutable truth is that the plan to rollout 4G by BSNL has been unfortunately handled by the powers-that-be, by proposing arbitrary rules, now and then changing the terminology, thus effectively delaying 4G entry by BSNL, if not blocking it, at a time when the private players are moving towards 5G. This is unfortunate and unacceptable. ●



IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS OF THE MONTH

- ▶ BSNL Corporate Office, vide its Office letter No. BSNLCO-ADMN/12(12)/4/2021-ADMN dated 26.03.2021, clarified that "The family pensioners (dependents of the deceased BSNL employees) who get CGHS facility by surrendering BSNLMRS card/facility are also allowed for one time reimbursement of CGHS subscription fee paid to CGHS authority for migrating to CGHS facility".
- ▶ DOP&PW, vide its OM No. 3(6)/2021-P&PW(H)-7083 dated 09.03.2021, issued instructions for establishment of an effective monitoring mechanism to regularly monitor the progress of pension cases. The OM also prescribed other measures to ensure timely payment of retirement dues to the retiring employees.
- ▶ DOT, vide No. 13-6/2020-21/BA&IT/54 to 86 dated 04.03.2021, conveyed its decision to add a feature in SAMPANN for payment of Fixed Medical Allowance to

the BSNL IDA Pensioners opting for FMA. DOT also evolved an interim process and advised the CCAs to follow the same till the required feature is added in SAMPANN.

- ▶ BSNL, vide its No. BSNLCO-A/11(11)/8/2020-ESTAB dated 05.03.2021, issued detailed instructions to the Circles to release payment of fourth and final installment of ex-gratia to the BSNL VRS-2019 retirees in ERP/SAP latest by 10th March, 2021.

WAGE REVISION FOR BSNL EMPLOYEES- MOSC REPLIES IN RAJYA SABHA

Minister of State for Communication Shri Sanjay Dhotre has since tabled a reply in Rajya Sabha on 18.03.2021 in response to the unstarred question No. 2570 on the issue of wage revision for BSNL employees vis-à-vis revision of pension of BSNL IDA pensioners. The MOSC has stated in the reply that BSNL is incurring losses since 2009-10 and does not fulfil the criteria under affordability clause as per DPE guidelines dated 03.08.2017 on pay revision in CPSEs w.e.f. 01.01.2017 and as such the pay revision was not considered. MOSC has further stated in his reply that BSNL continues to incur loss despite many employees opting for VRS. In regard to pension revision, it has been stated that since it is linked with pay revision of serving employees, this has to wait implementation of 3rd PRC in BSNL. [View the RS Reply](#)

DECREASE IN IDA W.E.F. 1.4.2021

According to calculations based on All India Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers, IDA is to decrease w.e.f. 1.4.2021 by 1.1% for CPSEs where last pay revision was implemented w.e.f. 1.1.2007 and by 1.8% where last pay revision was implemented w.e.f. 1.1.1997.



ISSUES TAKEN UP

31.03.2021 AIBSNLREA ADDRESSES SR GM (ESTT), BSNL CORPORATE OFFICE ON THE ISSUE OF NON-COMPLIANCE OF THE ADVICE GIVEN TO CALCUTTA TELEPHONES BY ESTABLISHMENT BRANCH OF BSNL CORPORATE OFFICE IN THE MATTER OF PAY FIXATION OF THE OFFICIATING JTOs WHO OPTED FOR FIXATION OF PAY IN REVISED PAY SCALES ON THE DATE OF THEIR REGULAR PROMOTION: In a letter addressed to Sr GM (Estt), BSNL Corporate Office, AIBSNLREA has drawn his attention on the issue of “Non-compliance of the advice given by Establishment Branch of BSNL Corporate Office, vide its No 5-21/2021/Estt.IV/CPGRMS/24019 dated 16.02.2021, in the matter of pay fixation of the officiating JTOs, who were promoted in 2008 and opted for fixation in revised pay scale from the date of their regular promotion”, by Calcutta Telephones. The Association has pointed out that though BSNL Corporate Office conveyed that the pay fixation (done by CTD) did not seem to be correct and even indicated the manner in which the pay fixations are to be made, the reply received from Calcutta Telephones makes it clear that it is not ready to follow the advice and the rules. The Association has also pointed out several other omissions and commissions in the pay-fixation order issued by Calcutta Telephones.

Enclosing a copy of the Order issued by Kerala Telecom Circle in the matter of pay fixation of exactly similarly placed persons, the Association has requested to issue specific instructions to CTD to follow the methodology mentioned in the Kerala Telecom Circle order, vide its No. AGM(HR)/Pay Anomaly/JTO(O)/2013(Part)/34 dated 05.01.2021, without giving any room for the CTD administration to find a new excuse or raise a new query. [View the letter](#)

22.03.2021 AIBSNLREA ADDRESSES PGM(PERS), BSNL TO EXPEDITE APPROPRIATE ACTION ON THE VC REQUEST BY KARNATAKA TELECOM CIRCLE IN RESPECT OF SHRI G P BIRADAR, RETD DE, BANGALORE TELECOM DISTRICT TO SETTLE HIS LONG PENDING PENSION AND OTHER RETIREMENT BENEFIT CASES: AIBSNLREA had been requesting for early settlement of final pension and other consequent retirement benefit cases of Shri G P Biradar, Retd DE, Bangalore Telecom District. Earlier, while disposing of the Grievance Docket No. DOPPW/E/2020/15400 registered in CPENGRAMS basing on a representation from the Association, Karnataka Telecom Circle had stated in the comment section of its Status Report that “The officer retired on 31-12-2010. He has requested for final superannuation pension, release of leave encashment, DCRG & commuted value of pension. At the time of retirement, a CBI court case was pending against him. He has been exonerated by the designated court process. On receipt of VC, all eligible payments will be made”. Now, having learnt that Personnel Branch of Corporate is yet to respond to the VC request from Karnataka Telecom Circle, AIBSNLREA has requested PGM (Pers) to expedite action on the VC Request. [View the letter](#)

16.03.2021 AIBSNLREA TAKES UP THE ISSUE OF WITHHOLDING OF EX-GRATIA PAYMENT IN ADDITION TO GRATUITY OF SHRI B M NYAMATI, RETD CAO, BANGALORE WHO IS FACING A DEPARTMENTAL PROCEEDING: AIBSNLREA has taken up the above issue with Secretary (Pension), DOP&PW, since CGMT, Karnataka Circle, citing provision in Para 7(ii) of BSNL Order No. 1-15/2019-PAT(BSNL) dated 04.11.2019, expressed its inability to accede to our request to release ex-gratia payment to Shri B M Nyamati, Retd CAO, Bangalore Telecom District who was served a charge-sheet just a day earlier to his retirement under BSNL VRS-2019 on 31.01.2020. The Association has pleaded that though BSNL stated in the above-said Para of its Order dated 04.11.2019 that the VRS-retirees, facing departmental/judicial proceedings, be paid all the other retirement benefits as in Rule-69 of CCS (Pension) Rules, 1972, it ordered to withhold payment of even Ex-gratia in addition to Gratuity. Since the BSNL VRS-retirees also draw pension from Central Civil Estimate, they are governed by CCS (Pension) Rules, 1972 and BSNL cannot tinker with any provision of CCS (Pension) Rules, 1972. As the Rule-69 of CCS (Pension) Rules, 1972 provides for withholding of only “Gratuity” of an employee facing Departmental/Judicial proceedings, BSNL cannot add another condition to withhold payment of Ex-gratia in addition to Gratuity. Referring to the OM No. 25013/7/77-Estt(A) dated 26.08.1977 issued by Dept of Personnel & Administrative Reforms, the Association has further stated that in the present case, the accepting authority committed a grave mistake which has landed Shri B M Nyamati in an unprecedented situation and financial trouble. Had his option for VRS not been accepted, citing contemplation of disciplinary proceedings, he would have remained in service and would have drawn full salary till conclusion of the proceedings. Allowing one to go on VRS and denying his benefits payable under VRS, is completely untenable and illegal. AIBSNLREA has, accordingly, requested for intervention of Secretary (Pension), DOP&PW so that BSNL

immediately releases Ex-gratia payment to Shri B M Nyamati, Retd CAO, BG TD by keeping his DCRG payment alone as withheld till the final outcome of the charge-sheet is known. [View the letter](#)

03.03.2021 AIBSNLEA WRITES TO SR GM (ESTT), BSNL CORPORATE OFFICE IN THE MATTER OF WRONG PAY FIXATION CASES OF THE OFFICIATING JTOs OF CALCUTTA TELEPHONES WHO EXERCISED OPTION FOR FIXATION IN REVISED SCALE FROM THE DATE OF THEIR PROMOTION: AIBSNLREA has since addressed a letter to Sr General Manager (Estt), BSNL Corporate Office thanking him for his office letter No. 5-21/2021/Estt-IV/CPGRAMS/24019 dated 16.02.2021 on the above issue, which was sent under the signature of DGM(Estt-II) BSNL CO to the CGM, Calcutta Telephones, requesting to furnish as to how the pay fixations in these cases were done. In this letter, BSNL C.O. has clearly stated that 'fixation does not seem to be correct' and also explained how the pay fixation in these is to be done. AIBSNLREA, in its letter, has now again pointed out some glaring irregularities in pay fixation and requested to examine the same while coming to the final conclusion in the matter after receiving the report from Calcutta Telephones. [View the letter](#)



RESPONSE/ACTION TAKEN ON AIBSNLREA'S REPRESENTATIONS

30.03.2021 BSNL REPLIES TO THE REPRESENTATIONS OF AIBSNLREA SEEKING INTERVENTION OF SECRETARY (PENSION) IN THE MATTER OF REFUSAL BY BSNL TO EXAMINE AND REDRESS THE GRIEVANCES OF THE BSNL IDA PENSIONERS: AIBSNLREA had sought intervention of Secretary (Pension), DOP&PW in the matter of refusal by BSNL to examine and redress the genuine grievances of the BSNL IDA pensioners and disposing of the same by using a common phrase "It is the Policy matter of BSNL" in the Remarks column of the related registered Grievance Dockets. One of such grievances taken up was regarding submission of self-declaration of life certificate to continue with the concessional telephone facility [View postings dated 26.10.2020 and dated 03.11.2020 in this website to read the letters]. Now, BSNL has just sent identical reply in response to these representations stating that '... The matter has been examined and your request has not been acceded by competent authority'. [View the BSNL letter](#)

29.03.2021 BSNL REPLIES TO AIBSNLREA'S REPRESENTATION TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA SEEKING HIS INTERVENTION IN THE MATTER OF VIRTUAL DENIAL OF MEDICARE FACILITIES UNDER BSNLMRS TO THE BSNL IDA PENSIONERS AND DRASTIC REDUCTION IN THEIR ANNUAL CEILING LIMIT: Following drastic cuts ordered in Annual Ceiling limit for reimbursement of medical claims for outdoor treatment in respect of the past BSNL retirees, AIBSNLREA had sent an SOS MESSAGE to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India urging him to come to the rescue of the hapless BSNL IDA pensioners who are virtually being denied of any Medicare facility under BSNLMRS [View posting dated 09.07.2020 in this website to read the letter]. Now, BSNL Corporate Office has responded to the said representation and has stated that its Order dated 08.05.2020 regarding annual ceiling limit for outdoor medical reimbursement is a policy decision duly approved by the management

of the BSNL and also informing that ‘However, your suggestion has been noted’. [View the BSNL letter](#)

21.03.2021 BSNL ISSUES FINAL SUPERANNUATION ORDER FOR SHRI S V ROJED, RETD SDE, QA & INSPECTION CIRCLE WHO WAS ACQUITED OF CHARGES BY THE CBI COURT ON 25.10.2018- ANOTHER LONG PENDING CASE BEING PURSUED BY AIBSNLREA STANDS SETTLED: AIBSNLREA had been requesting BSNL Corporate Office to issue the final superannuation order of Shri S V Rojed, Retd SDE, QA & Inspection Circle following his acquittal of charges along with some others by the CBI Special Court at Dharwar (Karnataka) on 25.10.2018. Because of non-issue of his final superannuation order, his final pension, release of DCRG etc were not being settled. Now, BSNL has issued his final superannuation order permitting him to retire w.e.f. 31.03.2012 vide its No. BSNLCO-PRII/22/10/2020-PERII dated 10.03.2021 and disposed of the grievance dockets No. DOPPW/E/2020/31142 and DOPPW/E/2021/01609 which were registered based on the representations of AIBSNLREA vide No. AIBSNLREA/CHQ/2020/153 dated 28.12.2020 and No. AIBSNLREA/CHQ/2021/03 dated 14.01.2021 respectively [View postings dated 28.12.2020, 13.01.2021 and 14.01.2021 in this website]. Issue of this has paved the way for settlement of his retirement benefits. [View the Status Report for First Docket](#) [View Status Report of Second Docket](#)

20.03.2021 BSNL RESPONDS TO THE REQUEST OF AIBSNLREA TO SHIFT ALL OFFICIAL AND CONCESSIONAL TELEPHONE CONNECTIONS OF BSNL AND ITS RETIRED EMPLOYEES FROM MTNL TO PROPOSED BSNL NETWORK IN DELHI AND MUMBAI: As BSNL was to start its own landline services in Delhi and Mumbai service areas, AIBSNLREA had requested CMD, BSNL to shift all official and concessional telephone connections of BSNL and its retired employees from MTNL to proposed BSNL network in Delhi and Mumbai. The Association argued that this would not only help BSNL to avoid incurring expenditure in reimbursing the telephone bills of the retirees but also help the retirees by not having to pay the bills themselves to MTNL and then wait, without result, to get the reimbursement. Further, once BSNL starts operation of its own network, there is no justification to use the telecom services from other network by incurring huge expenditure [View posting dated 17.02.2021 in this website to read the letter]. Now, BSNL has stated in its reply that BSNL is yet to start its services in Delhi and Mumbai and the suggestion of the Association is noted for consideration after services are started by BSNL. [View the BSNL reply](#)

14.03.2021 KARNATAKA TELECOM CIRCLE ACCEDES TO THE REQUEST OF AIBSNLREA TO ISSUE ORDERS GRANTING TIME BOUND FINANCIAL UPGRADATION TO SHRI SHRIKANT B MOHARE, RETD ACCOUNTS OFFICER, GULBARGA TELECOM DISTRICT: AIBSNLREA had last taken up the above issue with CGMT, Karnataka Telecom Circle, vide its No. AIBSNLREA/CHQ/2021/09 dated 10.02.2021, requesting to issue Orders granting two consecutive Time Bound Financial Upgradation to Shri Shrikant B. Mohare, Retd Accounts Officer, Gulbarga Telecom District who retired from service on 31.08.2016 and against whom a judicial proceeding was earlier pending. Now Karnataka Telecom Circle has disposed of the related Grievance Docket by issuing the Order granting him Financial upgradation from E3-E4 scale to E4-E5 scale with effect from 01.10.2014. [View KTK Circle Order](#)

09.03.2021 KARNATAKA TELECOM CIRCLE EXPRESSES ITS INABILITY TO ACCEDE TO THE REQUEST OF AIBSNLREA TO RELEASE EX-GRATIA PAYMENT TO SHRI B M NYAMATI, RETD CAO, BANGALORE TELECOM DISTRICT ALSO A VRS-RETIREE CITING A PROVISION IN THE BSNL ORDER DATED 04.11.2019: AIBSNLREA, vide its No. AIBSNLREA/CHQ/2021/05 dated (view posting dated 25.01.2021 in this website to read the letter), had requested CGMT, Karnataka Telecom Circle to release the Ex-Gratia payment to Shri B.M.Nyamati, Retd CAO who was served with a charge-sheet just a day before his retirement under BSNL VRS-2019 on 31.01.2020. Now Karnataka Telecom Circle, while disposing of the related Grievance Docket, has cited the provision in Sub-clause 7(ii) of BSNL Corporate Office instructions issued vide No. 1-15/2019-PAT (BSNL) dated 04.11.2019 which states that in respect of VRS-optees facing Departmental/Judicial proceedings, payment of Ex-gratia and Gratuity shall be released only on the conclusions of and based on the outcome of vigilance/disciplinary proceedings. [View the BSNL, KTK letter](#)

GOVERNMENT/BSNL ORDERS AND LETTERS



27.03.2021 FAMILY PENSIONERS WHO GET CGHS FACILITY BY SURRENDERING BSNLMRS CARD/FACILITY ARE ELIGIBLE TO CLAIM REIMBURSEMENT OF ONE-TIME SUBSCRIPTION PAID TO CGHS- CLARIFIES BSNL: BSNL Corporate Office, vide its Office letter No. BSNLCO-ADMN/12(12)/4/2021-ADMN dated 26.03.2021, has clarified that “The family pensioners (dependents of the deceased BSNL employees) who get CGHS facility by surrendering BSNLMRS card/facility are also allowed for one time reimbursement of CGHS subscription fee paid to CGHS authority for migrating to CGHS facility”. [View the BSNL Order](#)

12.03.2021 DOP&PW ISSUES ORDERS PRESCRIBING MEASURES TO ENSURE TIMELY PAYMENT OF RETIREMENT DUES TO THE RETIRING EMPLOYEES: Expressing concerns that despite the timelines prescribed in rules/instructions and simplification/streamlining of the procedures through BHAVISHYA, the issue of PPO and payment of retirement benefits to the retiring employees continue to be delayed in large number of cases, the DOP&PW, vide its OM No. 3(6)/2021-P&PW(H)-7083 dated 09.03.2021, has issued instructions for establishment of an effective monitoring mechanism to regularly monitor the progress of pension cases. The OM also suggests other measures to ensure timely payment of retirement dues to the retiring employees. [View the DOP&PW Order](#)

07.03.2021 DOT DECIDES TO INCLUDE PAYMENT OF FIXED MEDICAL ALLOWANCE THROUGH CPMS FOR THE BSNL IDA PENSIONERS: DOT, vide No. 13-6/2020-21/BA&IT/54 to 86 dated 04.03.2021, has decided to add a feature in SAMPANN for payment of Fixed Medical Allowance to the BSNL IDA Pensioners opting for FMA. Accordingly, DOT has evolved an interim process and advised the CCAs to follow the same till the required feature is added in SAMPANN. It is to clarify that BSNL IDA pensioners also, who opt for CGHS but reside in areas not covered under the Scheme, receive FMA. [View DOT Order](#)

05.03.2021 VRS-2019 RETIREES- DOT RELEASES FUND: Following release of fund for payment of fourth and final installment of ex-gratia to the BSNL VRS-19 retirees by DOT, BSNL, vide it's No. BSNLCO-A/11(11)/8/2020-ESTAB dated 05.03.2021, has issued detailed

instructions to the Circles to release the payment in ERP/SAP latest by 10th March, 2021. [View the BSNL order](#)



STATEMENT OF AMOUNT RECEIVED DURING MARCH, 2021

Smt Shobhana Lokhande, widowed daughter of Late Shri Kshirsagar, Retd Sr Clerk, BSNL Amravati (DOT pensioner) has deposited Rupees two thousand (Rs. 2000/-) only in the S/B Account of CHQ with Syndicate Bank on 30.03.2021 as donation on settlement of her family pension case.

Shimla Branch (Himachal Pradesh State) has deposited Rupees two thousand four hundred (Rs. 2400/-) only in the S/B Account of CHQ with Syndicate Bank on 19.03.2021 as CHQ quota for 12 new Life Member.

Thanjavur-Kumbakonam Branch (Tamilnadu State) has deposited Rupees four hundred (Rs. 400/-) only in the S/B Account of CHQ with Syndicate Bank on 17.03.2021 as CHQ quota for two new Life Member.

Shri R J Christopher, Retd SDE, & Life Member of Thanjavur-Kumbakonam Branch (Tamilnadu State) has deposited Rupees five thousand (Rs. 5000/-) only in the S/B Account of CHQ with Syndicate Bank on 14.03.2021 as donation on settlement of his case for counting of training period as service for the purpose of pension.

Erode Branch (Tamilnadu State) has deposited Rupees two hundred (Rs. 200/-) only in the S/B Account of CHQ with Syndicate Bank on 05.03.2021 as CHQ quota for one new Life Member.

Shri G Banuprasad, Red SDE, Bangalore Telecom District has deposited Rupees five hundred fifty (Rs. 550/-) only in the S/B Account of CHQ with Syndicate Bank on 03.03.2021 as Life Membership charges and Admission fee.

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