



Editorial

BSNL DIDN'T FAIL – TOP LEVEL POLICY DECISIONS DID

As BSNL enters its twenty-sixth year, the occasion calls for a reflection based entirely on parliamentary committee recommendations based on CAG report and BSNL's own submissions, rather than ceremonial optimism or narratives that overlook the real causes of BSNL's prolonged struggles. The evidence placed before the Committee on Public Undertakings (COPU) makes it abundantly clear that BSNL's difficulties arise not from employee inefficiency, but from systemic failures in planning, technology decisions and policy execution at the highest levels. COPU in its Fourteenth Report (18th Lok Sabha) has stated that *"BSNL missed to meet its targets effectively due to poor planning, outdated technology choices, revenue losses, delays and lack of accountability,"* and further recorded that BSNL selected *"25,000 Wi-Fi Hotspot sites without proper feasibility, leading to installation in unviable rural exchanges and resulting in financial losses."* The Committee further noted that *"BSNL lost ₹1.15 crore in OPEX subsidy due to delayed and incomplete commissioning of Wi-Fi Hotspots, despite having pre-procured equipment."* The Committee viewed this as *"shortcomings of planning, execution and regulatory oversight by both BSNL and DoT"* and have recommended *"fixing internal accountability."* These observations are not opinions from outside critics; they are findings of Parliament itself, pointing directly

to failures in project design, feasibility assessment and oversight, all of which lie with management and the administrative ministry, not with employees.

We have repeatedly pointed out that the prolonged delay in launching BSNL's 4G services, stemming from policy and technology decisions beyond the control of its employees, has caused substantial financial and market losses. BSNL's own submissions before the Committee reinforce this truth. BSNL stated before the Committee that *"where our competitors are able to launch 4G and 5G services because they are using foreign technology, they are using tested technology, they are using proven technology, and we are still developing the technology,"* and further explained that *"development of technology of such a complex nature is a time taking process which is delaying my march into a technology upgradation and network expansion. But being a Government entity and the directions of the Government and the support which the Government has provided, we have undertaken this activity under the guidance..."*

BSNL further submitted that *"indigenous 4G and 5G equipment are being used for the first time in BSNL's network, which though is required for the self-reliance of the nation, has its own sets of challenges especially considering that the technology is very complex and available with only four*

countries globally. Since Indigenous 4G and 5G equipment are being used for the first time in BSNL's network, stability and performance of the network in live environment with provision of all features at par with the private operators is a big challenge. The scale of testing and manufacturing involved is also humongous." These statements establish beyond doubt that BSNL's 4G delay was caused by policy-mandated indigenous technology, not by employees.

The Committee itself has noted that *"BSNL's limited 4G coverage, especially in rural areas, has hampered its ability to compete with private operators,"* and observed that *"adoption and deployment of 4G technology began in 2020 despite its global introduction a decade earlier which has placed BSNL at a competitive disadvantage."* The Committee has also noted that *"BSNL has faced a challenging and delayed transition to 4G/5G technology, when compared not just with global standards but with the national standards as well."*

BSNL explained the structural disadvantage clearly: *"Jio has invested 4 lakh crore rupees in the last eight years. Airtel has invested 1.65 lakh crore rupees. These resources didn't come from profit. These investments came either from the promoter or through debt. In Jio, it's 100 percent from the promoter, and in Airtel, it's from both promoter and debt..."* BSNL further stated that *"preference to Make in India, adherence to provisions of GFR has been a limiting factor for BSNL."*

The Committee has recognised this structural disadvantage and recommended that *"when auctioning spectrum, the DoT should consider the current market positions of both private and public sector players, since, unlike private sector operators, public sector units like BSNL have*

social obligations mandated by the Government. Additionally, the DoT should provide clearer guidelines and support mechanisms for state-owned operators such as BSNL, who may face financial constraints." BSNL has also faced financial difficulties in acquiring spectrum due to its inability to raise funds from the market, and the historical debt burden from previous spectrum payments has further strained its financial position. It may be recalled that BSNL was barred from participating in the spectrum auction and was instead required to match the highest bid in every circle, thereby depleting a substantial portion of its reserves. The Committee has also noted that unlike private operators who have received significant investments, BSNL's financial struggles have limited its ability to compete effectively in the market.

Despite these structural constraints and a drastically reduced workforce after VRS, BSNL employees have continued to maintain networks in remote, rural and border areas, often under severe resource shortages. The Committee has acknowledged this by stating that *"while the Committee applaud BSNL for effectively managing operations with a reduced workforce, it also recognize that this may place additional strain on the remaining employees, potentially impacting service quality and employee morale."* Yet, while employees have carried the burden of policy-driven delays and constraints, they have been denied wage revision due from 1.1.2017 in the name of "affordability." The Committee has expressed concern that *"despite recommendations from the 3rd Pay Revision Committee (PRC), BSNL has not implemented these changes due to financial constraints. ITS officers, who are central government employees, receive salaries based on the 7th Pay Commission (CDA pattern), which typically results in higher pay scales compared to BSNL employees."* The

Committee has further stated that *“Committee would like to suggest the Company to address the disparities between ITS and BSNL employees,”* and emphasised that *“the Committee feel that enhancing superannuation benefits and pushing for the implementation of the 3rd Pay Revision Committee recommendations would help improve retirement security for BSNL employees.”* Most importantly, COPU has recorded that *“a prolonged stagnation in pay and benefits can severely impact employee morale and motivation, which is counterproductive to the Company's revival efforts,”* and urged the DoT *“to engage with the Ministry of Finance to explore a one-time exemption or a phased implementation plan for BSNL employees,”* noting that *“a motivated workforce is a prerequisite for a successful turnaround, and its welfare cannot be indefinitely postponed.”*

The narrative is therefore clear and supported entirely by Government documents: BSNL's affordability constraints are the direct result of policy decisions, delayed technology choices, inadequate capital infusion, procurement restrictions and structural disadvantages imposed on BSNL. Employees are in no way responsible for BSNL's losses, delays or market decline, yet they are denied pay revision in the name of affordability. As BSNL marks its 26th anniversary, its continued survival is a testament to the unwavering commitment of its employees, not to policy decisions. The future of BSNL depends on honest recognition of past mistakes, timely technological decisions, adequate capital investment and fair treatment of the workforce that has kept the organisation alive. Pay revision is not a reward but a long-overdue rightful entitlement that cannot be deferred any further.⊖



Important Developments of the Month

- ✚ DoP&PW held a virtual meeting with Pensioners' Associations on 18.09.2026, chaired by Joint Secretary (Pension). This was the first Outreach Meeting on the DLC-5 Campaign. AIBSNLREA was represented by CHQ President Com.V.Chinnappiah. The Joint Secretary explained in detail the DLC-5 Campaign scheduled from 1st November to 30th November 2026, with a target of 2.3 crore DLCs. He noted that out of 68 lakh Central Government pensioners, 57 lakhs are already submitting DLCs, indicating a saturation level, and that this year's focus will be on State Government pensioners and those from autonomous organisations. Mega camps will be organised in cities such as Bengaluru and Kochi, and social-media campaigns will also be undertaken. During the interactive session we conveyed that in contrast to Central Government pensioners, BSNL-absorbed pensioners submit their Life Certificates across the year due to the staggered schedule of submission and that AIBSNLREA regularly circulates DLC submission procedures through WhatsApp groups and also conducts camps in various cities. We acknowledged and appreciated the Joint Secretary's meaningful and engaging interaction with the participants.
- ✚ AGS AIBSNLREA Com. V.P. Arya visited Sanchar Bhawan on 09.09.2026 and met the Sr. DDG (Estt). He discussed two pending issues.

Presidential Order for absorption in BSNL – case of Com. H.S. Sutaria: Sr. DDG (Estt) informed that the matter can now be reviewed only by the Secretary, DoT, and advised us to meet him for further action.

Denial of interest on delayed payment of gratuity – three cases: He stated that the concerned BSNL Circles have been asked to send their reports, and the response from them is still awaited.

✚ The monthly virtual meeting of AIBSNLREA CHQ office-bearers was held on 01.09.2026 under the Presidentship of Com. V. Chinnappiah. He welcomed the participants and mentioned that he was joining from his native village where there is no WiFi and mobile signals are unstable, requesting everyone's patience in case of any disturbance. The General Secretary then reviewed the activities of August 2026. He appreciated the office-bearers for ensuring that 12 Branches conducted their meetings during the month. He shared the happiness of Maharashtra VRS retirees who finally received their regular pension and gratuity, acknowledging the role played by AIBSNLREA in resolving the issue. He added that payment of commutation and the remaining portion of ex-gratia is still pending and expressed hope that these matters will be settled soon without requiring further intervention. He explained the continuous follow-up that led CBDT to state that issuing uniform instructions—after different CCsIT took different decisions on full exemption of ex-gratia for BSNL VRS-2019 retirees—remains under active review and consideration. He expressed confidence that a decision may come early. He also outlined the association's role in securing a reply from CGCA confirming that Form 16 will be issued even when no TDS is deducted, and that Annexure I and II of Form 24Q will be filed for all pensioners so that pension details appear correctly in AIS, Form 26AS, and pre-filled ITRs. He referred to the pending grievance of Com. H. S. Sutaria and the issue of non-sanction of interest on delayed gratuity in three specific cases. CHQ office-bearers then shared updates on organisational activities in their respective areas. They also reported progress in compiling data on ID cards issued and pending across different CCAs. The meeting concluded with the General Secretary thanking all participants for their enthusiasm and dedicated work for the organisation.



Issues taken up

29.09.2026: AIBSNLREA WRITES TO THE CMD BSNL REQUESTING RESTORATION OF WITHOUT VOUCHER FACILITY TO BSNL RETIRED EMPLOYEES:

AIBSNLREA has written to the CMD BSNL mentioning that the facility was revived exclusively for retired employees through Office Memorandum dated 01.04.2017, which clearly stated, "To mitigate the hardship in submission and following up of medical claims by retired employees, the Competent Authority has approved revival of the facility only to retired employees...", pointing out that "The reasons for revival in 2017 remain equally valid today" and "its withdrawal does not significantly reduce BSNL's financial burden and requesting to review the decision urgently and restore the facility. [View the letter](#)

24.09.2026: AIBSNLREA WRITES TO THE DG CGHS REGARDING THE URGENT NEED TO ENSURE UNINTERRUPTED SUPPLY OF RESTRICTED LIVE SAVING CANCER MEDICINE TO SHRI P.K.JINDAL:

AIBSNLREA has drawn the attention of DG CGHS to the fact that despite the clinical notes in the prescription dated 15.09.2026: "AS THE BENEFICIARY IS FROM DISTT. SANGRUR, SO CONSIDERING THE LONG DISTANCE AND AGE FACTOR OF BENEFICIARY LIFE SAVING MEDICINE OD 3 MONTHS IS INDENTED", the Additional Director, CGHS, Chandigarh sanctioned and supplied only one month's pack. AIBSNLREA has requested her to ensure immediate sanction and supply of the remaining two months' quantity (240 tablets) of ABIRATERONE ACETATE 250 mg to Ambala Wellness Centre, as originally indented and clinically justified. [View the letter](#)

21.09.2026: AIBSNLREA WRITES TO THE CGCA, DOT, REQUESTING ACCEPTANCE OF DIGITALLY SUBMITTED LIFE CERTIFICATES OBTAINED THROUGH INDIAN EMBASSIES, FOR BSNL PENSIONERS RESIDING ABROAD:

Pointing out that at present, pensioners residing outside India or even temporarily visiting other countries, are required to obtain their Life Certificate duly attested by the Indian Embassy or Consulate there and send the original physical copy to the concerned CCA. This procedure causes considerable hardship to senior pensioners abroad, who face delays and uncertainties in international postal or courier delivery, incur high courier charges, and remain anxious about the possibility of loss or damage of the physical document in transit, AIBSNLREA has written to the CGCA, DoT, that an additional, secure digital mode of submission may be considered for pensioners residing abroad. [View the letter](#)

10.09.2026: AIBSNLREA REQUESTS AN APPOINTMENT WITH SECRETARY, DOT TO EXPLAIN THE GRIEVANCE OF SHRI H.S.SUTARIA:

AIBSNLREA has written to the Secretary, DoT, seeking an appointment with him to explain the grievance and plight of Shri H.S.Sutaria and to place the correct factual position before him. [View the letter](#)



GOVERNMENT/BSNL ORDERS & LETTERS

29.09.2026: BSNL DISCONTINUES WITHOUT VOUCHER PAYMENT FACILITY UNDER BSNL MRS TO RETIRED BSNL EMPLOYEES:

BSNL has issued order discontinuing 'Without Voucher payment' facility under BSNL MRS to Retired BSNL employees w.e.f. 01.10.2026. [View the BSNL order](#)

23.09.2026: DEPARTMENT OF EXPENDITURE ORDERS DISBURSEMENT OF SALARY/WAGES/PENSION TO THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES AND PENSIONERS FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2026 ON 25.09.2026:

In view of the likelihood of disruption in banking services during the three-day nationwide bank strike from 28.09.2026 to 30.09.2026, DoE has conveyed the decision that the salary/wages/pensions of all Central Government Employees for the month of September 2026 may be drawn and disbursed by the Central Government offices (including Defence, Posts & Telecommunications) on 25th September 2026 (Friday). [View the CGA, DoE OM](#)

11.09.2026: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE RESPONDS TO AIBSNLREA LETTER DATED 12.08.2026 REQUESTING TO EXTEND DIRECT PRIVATE OPD CONSULTATION FACILITY WITHOUT REFERRAL TO ALL CGHS PENSIONER BENEFICIARIES AGED 60 YEARS AND ABOVE:

Department of Health & Family Welfare has responded to AIBSNLREA letter dated 12.08.2026, stating that "At present, the facility of direct private OPD consultation without referral is available to CGHS beneficiaries (aged above 70 years) as per the extant guidelines. The request for extending the facility to beneficiaries aged 60 years and above, as raised in the grievance, is noted." [View the DoH&FW response](#)

10.09.2026: REVISION OF CEILING RATE AND GUIDELINES FOR REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES ON PURCHASE OF STANDARD DIGITAL PROGRAMMABLE AND RECHARGEABLE HEARING AID UNDER CS (MA) RULES, 1944 AND CGHS:

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has issued an O.M. vide S.11030/76/2026-EHS(8398267)/I/3896270/2026 dated 09.09.2026, conveying the decision to revise the ceiling rate and guidelines for reimbursement of hearing aids under CS (MA) Rules, 1944 and CGHS, on the basis of the recommendations of the Technical Committee and with the concurrence of the Integrated Finance Division. [View the MoH&FW OM](#)

09.09.2026: RELAXATION IN AGE AND MARITAL STATUS CRITERIA FOR DEPENDENT SONS AND BROTHERS SUFFERING FROM CRITICAL/TERMINAL ILLNESS UNDER CGHS/CS(MA) RULES, 1944:

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has issued an O.M. vide File no.S.11030/54/2023-EHS(8248513)/I/3893459/2026 dated 01.09.2026, conveying the decision that CGHS/medical attendance facilities may be extended for life to those dependent sons and brothers, who are suffering from critical/terminal illnesses, subject to fulfilment of the prescribed dependency conditions and assessment by the competent Medical Board. [View the MoH&FW OM](#)

07.09.2026: DECENTRALISATION OF APPROVAL PROCEDURE FOR SELECTED STC RELATED CASES UNDER CGHS:

CGHS has issued an O.M. vide File no.56-1/2026-27/CGHS/MSD.E-file No.8392910 dated 01.09.2026, decentralising the procedure for processing cases under Standing Technical Committee (STC) mechanism of CGHS in respect of five categories of procedures and general guidelines applicable to all categories. [View the CGHS OM](#)



**RESPONSE/ACTION TAKEN ON
AIBSNLREA'S REPRESENTATIONS**

25.09.2026: DOP&PW FORWARDS AIBSNLREA LETTER DATED 21.09.2026 REQUESTING CGCA TO ACCEPT DIGITALLY SUBMITTED LIFE CERTIFICATES OBTAINED THROUGH INDIAN EMBASSIES FOR BSNL PENSIONERS RESIDING ABROAD, TO DOT:

DoP&PW has forwarded AIBSNLREA letter dated 21.09.2026 to DoT with a request to look into the matter and redress the same as per extant rules. [View the DoP&PW email](#)

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BRANCHES IN ACTION

30.09.2026: AIBSNLREA JAUNPUR BRANCH (UTTAR PRADESH STATE) HOLDS ITS GENERAL BODY MEETING:

General body meeting of AIBSNLREA Jaunpur branch was held on 07.09.2026 at Telephone exchange Kotwali Jaunpur under the Presidentship of Com.Saheblal, Branch President. Pensioners ID card issue was discussed and related form was distributed. Branch Secretary Com.A.R.Yadav spoke on various pensioner issues. It was unanimously decided in the meeting that the old body will continue further for the next term ahead.

30.09.2026: AIBSNLREA BHOPAL BRANCH (MADHYA PRADESH STATE) HOLDS ITS GENERAL BODY MEETING:

The monthly General Body meeting of AIBSNLREA Bhopal Branch was held on 20.09.2026 at Indian Coffee House, New Market, Bhopal, under the Presidentship of Com. K.Nagrajan. Two minutes' silence was observed in memory of late Com. Santosh Jain and Com. M.C. Sharma, who had passed away. A total of 48 members attended the meeting. The President shared his views regarding AIBSNLREA letter under consideration with the Health Department for facilitating members above 60 years of age for general OPD consultation. The meeting concluded with a Vote of Thanks proposed by Com. M.P. Tiwari and was followed by breakfast. [View the Photo](#)

28.09.2026: AIBSNLREA JUNAGADH BRANCH (GUJARAT STATE) HOLDS ITS GENERAL BODY MEETING:

AIBSNLREA Junagadh Branch held its General Body meeting on 24.09.2026 at Garden Café Resort, Junagadh, under the Presidentship of Com. H. K. Vadukul, Branch President. State President Com. P. B. Parmar, State Secretary Com. B. M. Bhavsar, and State EC Member Com. D. P. Modi were present. Com. Vijarivadhya was felicitated on completion of 70 years. The Branch Secretary spoke about issues to be pursued at the State level. The State President addressed the gathering on pension revision and the Validation Act 2025. The State Secretary spoke on other pension-related matters. After the vote of thanks, the meeting concluded with dinner. [View the Photos](#)

22.09.2026: AIBSNLREA UTTAR PRADESH STATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETS VIRTUALLY:

AIBSNLREA Uttar Pradesh State Executive Committee met virtually on 20.09.2026 under the Presidentship of Com. R. B. Singh, State President and discussed regarding conduct of the next State Conference. It was decided that the Conference will be held at Lucknow in the second half of November 2026, with each Branch contributing Rs.5000 towards its conduct and a delegate fee of Rs.1000 per delegate. Branches shall elect their delegates by 20.10.2026 and intimate the details to the State Secretary or State Financial Secretary. They must also send the delegates' arrival and departure particulars by 10.11.2026 to facilitate proper accommodation and other arrangements. The State Secretary, Com. V. P. Singh, reported that 36 new members had been added since the last State Conference. After general discussions on pensioner issues and organizational matters, the President concluded the meeting conveying thanks to all participants.

14.09.2026: GENERAL BODY MEETING OF AIBSNLREA JABALPUR BRANCH (MADHYA PRADESH) STATE HELD:

The General Body meeting of AIBSNLREA Jabalpur Branch was held on 08.09.2026 at Indian Coffee House, Ghantaghar, Jabalpur, under the Presidentship of Com. C.D. Khadse, Branch President. The President welcomed the members and briefed them on the deliberations of the AIC held at Varanasi. Two minutes' silence was observed to pay tribute to the departed member, Com. T.D. Dravid. Com. A.N. Bhargav and Com. T.N. Pandey addressed the House on the pension revision issue. Two new members attended the meeting. The meeting concluded with a Vote of Thanks proposed by Com. A.N. Bhargav. [View the Photo](#)



STATEMENT OF AMOUNT RECEIVED DURING SEPTEMBER 2026

- 01. Jabalpur Branch (MP State)** deposited Rupees Six Hundred (**Rs600/-**) only on **08.09.2026** towards CHQ quota for two new life members.
- 02. Lucknow Branch (UP State)** deposited Rupees Three Hundred (**Rs.300/-**) only on **15.08.2026** towards CHQ quota for one new life member.

Edited and published by R.R.Balasubramanian, General Secretary, AIBSNLREA

