

Note on discussion with the Secretary, DoT.

1. We expressed our extreme unhappiness over the long delay in the refunding Rs.6,700 crore towards BWA spectrum charges, and also the delay in the payment Rs.1,250 crore, assured to be given from the USO Fund. Secretary, DoT, replied that the Minister of Communications himself had taken up the issue of refund of BWA Spectrum charges, with the Finance Minister and assured that everything needed would be done to get the payment expeditiously. Similarly, he assured that steps would be taken for the early payment of the amount from the USO Fund.
2. Another important issue connected with the viability of BSNL is the non - reconciliation of BSNL's accounts by the DoT, for all the 14 years of it's existence. As a result of this, income tax has been levied on BSNL, even on payments made to the DoT by BSNL, such as Licence Fee, etc. Thus, an excess income tax of Rs.7000 crore has so far been collected from BSNL. The Management has gone to the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal on this issue. BSNL can get refund of this Rs.7,000 crore, if the accounts are expeditiously reconciled by the DoT. We strongly demanded that the DoT should expeditiously complete the reconciliation. For this, the Secretary, DoT, replied that the matter was brought to the notice of the DoT only recently, and assured that the reconciliation would be completed by the end of May.
3. In the matter of Pension Contribution we expressed our strong protest since the Government is fleecing extra money from BSNL. We pointed out that Pension Contribution for the entire Central Government Employees is being calculated on the basis of basic pay only. Whereas, in the case of BSNL Employees, it is being calculated on the basis of maximum of the payscale. Thus, the government is fleecing Rs.300 crore extra from BSNL every year, and that the government has so far fleeced Rs.2,400 crore extra from BSNL in the last 8 years. We complained that the DoT has not bothered to settle this issue, despite it is vigorously being demanded by the Forum for the past so many years. We strongly demanded that this Rs.2,400 crore should immediately be refunded to BSNL. The Secretary, DoT, assured that the issue would be looked into.
4. BSNL is paying salaries to it's employees who are deputed to the TERM CELL. This amount is not being refunded to BSNL by the DoT, despite repeated demands, and has got accumulated to Rs.400 crore. We demanded that this amount should immediately be refunded to BSNL. The Secretary, DoT, assured that needful would be done.
5. We pointed out that it was the government which blocked BSNL's network expansion for nearly 7 years, by repeated cancellations of BSNL's tenders, floated for procurement of equipments. Recently the Minister of Communications has also confirmed this. Hence, we demanded that the government should give a soft loan of Rs.10,000 crore, at 1% interest, for the procurement of equipments and expansion of networks. However, this demand was not accepted.
6. As regards compensation for BSNL's Rural Landline services, we pointed out that BSNL is having 28,000 exchanges in the rural parts of the country, as a result of which the Company is incurring an annual loss of Rs.10,000 crore. We also pointed out that, the

government has assured in 2000 that it would compensate the loss incurred by BSNL, on account of Rural Landline service, and demanded that this loss should be fully compensated. The Secretary, DoT, replied that BSNL's loss is already being compensated through payments from USO Fund.

7. On the issue of non-settlement of 78.2% IDA merger for the retirees, we expressed our bitter resentment that the DoT has so far not sent the Cabinet Note, and that the matter is being unnecessarily delayed by the DoT for years together. We conveyed that the poor pensioners are suffering because of this delay by the DoT. The Secretary, DoT, assured that this would be done without further delay.
8. We expressed that transfer of assets to BSNL has so far not been done by the government, despite specific assurance has been given at the time of formation of BSNL in 2000. It was also pointed out that in many circles the DoT has unilaterally taken over many of BSNL's buildings. For this, the Secretary, DoT, assured that the needful would be done for early transfer of assets.
9. On the issue of future pension revision of the BSNL retirees, we demanded that the issue should be referred to the 7th Pay Commission. In this regard, the Secretary stated that revision of pension of the BSNL retirees does not come under the terms and reference of the 7th Pay Commission. However, it was assured that the issue would be referred to an appropriate forum for necessary settlement.

Other demands of the strike were not discussed for want of time. These will further be persued with the DoT.
