

EDITORIAL

“BSNL Has got No Autonomy”

The Giant Telecom PSU, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited, was formed on 1st October, 2000 with enormous fan fare to compete with the private Cos in order to provide Telecom Services to public on affordable price. It started functioning in very right direction resulting in remarkable reduction in tariff of mobile services and the public were saved from exploitation if not “Loot” from the private operators. The PSU earned huge profits as well as reserved resources within short period. But alas! The political masters as well as the owner, DOT, could not digest and started squeezing the money of the entity. Policy decisions and concessions were changed and reversed to please to private companies at the cost of BSNL.

Six months back very pious and pleasant declarations were made outside and even in parliament to extend financial help to BSNL. But apparently the DOT is not in hurry to act on those declarations. The declarations remain as usual obviously for public consumption. Of course the DoT is interested and in hurry to create unrest amongst the work force to destroy the company as early as possible.

The memorandum of understanding signed between DOT and BSNL at the time of its formation speaks that the Company will enjoy the freedom to work and function and is free to evolve its own rules including relating to its employees. The DOT is now not only pressurizing the company in its functioning but interfering in humane resource matters also.

The BSNL Board consist of DOT representatives besides working Directors of the company. There are many matters particularly of non-executive employees which are pending in Board for approval for long period. The JTO recruitment Rule has been reframed in consultation with the recognized unions and after clearance from the Management it went to Board second time for approval. The Board met on 9th December but the DOT officers objected in the name of “HR Plan”. Similar is the fate of JAO recruitment Rule in which five years service condition has been proposed for departmental candidates in the analogy of JTO. The creation and approval of E-1 scale is also pending in board for last two years.

It is amusing that in the meeting the Government nominees blamed the BSNL authorities for acting on the pressure of the unions. It is ridiculous and ludicrous as HR issues are discussed and deliberated in the National Council without pressure from either side. The Telecom Staff fully understand the game plan of DOT as well as their evil designs. They know that unrest is bound to develop if reasonable demands and claims are unsettled. It is now widely know that it is DOT which is presently creating hurdles in settlement of the issues apparently to disturb Industrial relation in the PSU.

It is high time that the DOT desists from unholy acts and allow BSNL to function smoothly. After all the BSNL belongs to public and same should not be treated as “keep” of the administrative ministry. The company should enjoy the autonomy to function as incorporated in the MOU at the time of formation of the entity. The MOU speaks also that the "personnel administration of the staff, workmen employees being transferred to BSNL" and it is at liberty to employ or engage any further staff, workmen and other employees on such terms and conditions as evolved by BSNL.