

Editorial

CALCULATED MOVE of Government to make BSNL a Sick Industry

State owned telecom firm Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. (BSNL) has paid license fee for 3G spectrum Rs. 10,700 crores to the Govt. and keeping ready to pay BWA spectrum charges of Rs. 9000 crores shortly. The Govt. is auctioning two slots of 20 MHz of Pan India. BSNL and MTNL which have already been given BWA spectrum ahead of private operators will have to pay the winning bid amount in each service area. The Govt's revenue from telecom spectrum action is set to cross Rs. 1,00,000 crores almost thrice the figure of Rs. 35,000 crores projected in the union budget. Govt. has already collected Rs. 67,719 crores from license fees for 3G spectrum. Bids for Broadband Wireless Access in all 22 Circles touched Rs. 19,000 crores. Three licenses will be issued in each Circle, this translates into revenue of Rs. 31,956 crores.

The 3G and BWA spectrum charges from BSNL and MTNL equal to the winning bid amount in service area is not at all justified being the state owned firms, since both the CPSEs were not party to the bidding process and having social obligations to provide reliable and affordable telecom services in rural part of the country in view of withdrawal of ADC. In view of the stiff competition in telecom sector and continuous dip in BSNL's profit, Govt. should have waived off or deferred payment or at least paying the benchmark amount of Rs. 1750 crores from BSNL. But Govt. mounted severe pressure on BSNL Management to immediately pay the spectrum fees and BSNL Management without protesting / urging for deferred payment released 3G spectrum fees. It reflects the indifferent attitude of administrative ministry towards BSNL.

The indefinite strike call given by Joint Action Committee of BSNL Non-Executive Unions and Executive Associations was withdrawn following the meeting that was held by Hon'ble MoC&IT on 20th April 2010 with the representatives of JAC. The meeting was attended by Chairman TC, Member (S), CMD BSNL, Director (HR) BSNL and others in a very congenial atmosphere and after the written assurance given by the MoC&IT that he would be behind us, the agitation was withdrawn. But it is more than 2 months after the Hon'ble

MoC&IT meeting, almost all the issues are still pending without much progress due to the casual attitude of the DOT administration and BSNL Management.

JAC in its meeting held on 09.06.2010, after detailed discussions and analyzing the status of the issues decided to resort the agitation programme for early settlement of the following issues

1. Immediate procurement of 10 million lines this year as assured.
2. Waiver of 3G and BWA spectrum charges
3. Grant of 78-2% IDA with effect from 01-01-2007
4. Revision of IDA Pension without any discrimination to those retired before 01-01-2007
5. Settlement of ITS absorption issue
6. Issue of direction to Government/PSUs only to use BSNL/MTNL services

And decided to go for the organizational Action Programmes i.e. Lunch hour demonstrations on 14th June, 2010 and Massive Dharna on 16th June 2010 at CHQ, Circle and SSA levels. The BSNL Management, in the face of our agitation simply gave up in despair as if it has got no responsibility towards BSNL and its employees. BSNL Management who has no commitment and concern towards BSNL has never made efforts for settlement of the demands of JAC and similarly the DOT administration has never shown the ownership towards BSNL for its growth and survival. BSNL Board has further reduced the size of GSM lines equipment from 10 million to 5-5 millions GSM lines through ----- tenders ignoring the assurance given by Hon'ble MoC&IT. There is no secret that the sense of accountability and responsibility towards BSNL of unabsorbed ITS officers is the main reason of BSNL's downfall and Govt. has completely failed in completing the ITS officers absorption process in BSNL.

Non-revision of IDA pension of BSNL pensioners retired before 1.1.2007 is also betrayal on the part of Govt. Non-implementation of 78.2% IDA w.e.f. 01.01.2007 as per DPE OM dated 02.04.2009 has seriously frustrated BSNL employees. Hence, Govt. in a calculative way is trying to make BSNL a sick industry so it can easily be disinvested and finally be privatized. BSNL's reserves of Rs. 30,000 crores will shortly be finished in paying the 3G/BWA

spectrum fees of approximately Rs. 20,000 crores. And Rs. 4000 crores for BSNL employees wage revision access payment etc. By the end of the FY 2010-11 BSNL cash in hand will be Rs. 12,000 crores which may affect the payment of our salary, perks and allowances. In case the Govt. fails to implement the Hon'ble MoC&IT assurances given to JAC or again tries to play with us, we shall not hesitate to give them a befitting reply. Let us keep ready to resume the war.