

JOINT FORUM OF **BSNL UNIONS / ASSOCIATIONS OF** **NON-EXECUTIVES & EXECUTIVES**

Press Release

2nd June, 2008

DROP PROPOSALS TO LIST BSNL AND IMPOSE VRS

The Joint Forum of BSNL Unions / Associations of Non-Executives and Executives expresses its strong protest against the move of the Government to enlist BSNL in share market and impose Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) to the employees.

Entire BSNL workers are against listing, disinvestment and privatisation of BSNL. The example of VSNL is before them, which was sold to M/s.Tata for Rs.1320 crore, even when it had a cash reserve of Rs.1200 crore in addition to other assets.

BSNL has sufficient reserve, i.e. about Rs.40,000 crore to implement its expansion programmes. The reduction in profit this year, 2007-2008, compared to last year is due to the fact that the management failed to ensure supply of equipments for the expansion of mobile services. This resulted in drastic reduction of BSNL market share. Proposal to cancel the 45 million order for GSM lines last year by management and Ministry could be thwarted and atleast 50% ensured only by the sustained struggle of workers including one-day strike on 11th July 2007.

One of the arguments raised by management/DoT is that listing is necessary for grant of Navaratna status. However, HAL has been recently granted Navaratna status, which is not listed. There are similar other PSUs. Further, LIC is not listed but it has a market share of about 80. It is clear that listing is being proposed to gradually privatise BSNL, as in the case of VSNL.

The proposal for Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) is unwarranted. Already 2½ lakh workers have been reduced, from 6 lakh to 3½ lakh, due to retirement and ban on recruitment for the last 20 years. About 10,000 officials are retiring every year without any replacement. Due to advanced technology, there are

chances of staff becoming surplus in certain places. They can be redeployed. VRS is not the panacea.

Joint Forum in its meeting on 31-05-2008 passed a unanimous resolution protesting the BSNL/DOT move to enlist BSNL and introduce VRS.

The Joint Forum has given call to employees to wear "Black Badge" today, while in office, against listing of BSNL and VRS. Hon'ble Prime Minister is being urged for dropping the above proposals, if any, telegraphically by our Branch Unions. Processions to press our demands are also being organised throughout India. A memorandum in this connection is being submitted to all concerned.

We demand the Management and Government to drop the unwarranted move for listing BSNL and imposing VRS, failing which the workers will be compelled to resort to direct action.

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