

## ***“Save BSNL - Save Nation.”***

BSNL Employees Union, the biggest as well as the Major Recognised Union of BSNL, is conducting a “Save BSNL - Save Nation” campaign among the people of the country, with the view to save BSNL from the destructive anti-BSNL policies of the government.

All the private telecom companies have already started their 4G services. However, BSNL, which is a government company, could not start its 4G service yet. The reason for this is that, the Government of India, which is the 100% owner of BSNL, has so far not allotted 4G spectrum to BSNL. The BSNL Unions and Associations are conducting struggles almost for the past 3 years, demanding the government to allot 4G spectrum to BSNL. Shri Manoj Sinha, Hon'ble Minister of State for Communications, had assured the unions and associations on 24.02.2018 and 03.12.2018, that 4G spectrum would be allotted to BSNL expeditiously. However, till date, BSNL has not been allotted with 4G spectrum. We can say that the government is reluctant to allot 4G spectrum to BSNL because the government does not want BSNL to compete on a equal footing with Reliance Jio.

At the time of formation of BSNL in the year 2000, the Cabinet decided that all the assets and liabilities of the Department would be transferred to BSNL. Accordingly, the liabilities have already been transferred to BSNL. But, the assets are yet to be transferred in the name of BSNL. Throughout the country, BSNL is having vacant lands. The value of these vacant lands comes to Rs.1 lakh crore. BSNL has planned to earn upto Rs.10,000 crore per year, by way of renting and leasing out these lands. But, the government is not permitting BSNL to monetise these lands.

Whenever natural calamities come, whether it was Chennai floods, or Odisha cyclone, it is BSNL which provides service for government's relief and rescue operations. Private companies normally close down their services during calamities. Still, the government is treating BSNL with a step-motherly attitude. When BSNL was formed in the year 2000, the government assured that it would provide all financial help to keep BSNL viable. However, so far the government has not extended any financial assistance to BSNL for its revival. It is also important to mention here that the same government has written off Rs.5.5 lakh crores, taken by the corporates as loan from government banks.

Further, the government is also helping many private companies which are in financial stress, by utilising the government's financial companies. It is a matter of serious concern that the government is extending undue favours to Reliance Jio, owned by Mukesh Ambhani. The government is bending the rules to directly and indirectly help Reliance Jio. For example, all the telephone connections for the Indian Railways are being provided by Reliance Jio. Similarly, Reliance Jio has been allowed to provide connectivity in all the Indian Airports. So far as this government is concerned, Reliance Jio is the government company.

Each of the private telecom companies, viz., Vodafone Idea, Airtel and Reliance Jio, are having huge debts of more than Rs. 1 lakh crore. But, BSNL's loan is only Rs.13,000 crore. This amount is very small, compared to the size of BSNL. Still, the government is imposing unnecessary restrictions on BSNL, for taking bank loans, for

it's developmental activities. Thus, BSNL is being denied a level playing field to compete with the private companies. This is being done with the clear objective of weakening BSNL.

BSNL earned a net profit of Rs.10,000 crores in the year 2004-05. However, only because of the anti-BSNL policies adopted by the government, BSNL has become a loss making company. Now, BSNL has to be saved and strengthened for the sake of the people and the nation. Telecommunications is a strategic sector, and the presence of a strong public sector company like BSNL, is very essential in the larger interest of the nation.

Unemployment is a major problem being faced by the nation today. BSNL is giving employment to 1.70 lakh employees. In fact, BSNL is one of the biggest employers of our country. It is a must that BSNL's potential to provide employment should be strengthened. On the contrary, the government is killing BSNL's potential to provide employment. It is moving fast to reduce the strength of BSNL's employees by around 50,000, by way of implementing VRS. The employees unions and associations are fighting against the VRS.

BSNL is people's property. Hence, we have decided to approach the people and seek their support for the survival and strengthening of BSNL. Whichever may be the government, that will be formed after the Parliament elections. We request the people to exert their pressure on the government, to ensure that BSNL is strengthened and is made a vibrant public sector company.

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