

BSNL union welcomes revival package, opposes voluntary retirement scheme

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HYDERABAD , OCTOBER 26, 2019 08:26 IST

UPDATED: OCTOBER 26, 2019 08:26 IST

The BSNL Employees Union has welcomed the Union Cabinet's decision to revive the public telecom body through financial package and by granting the 4G spectrum, but it is strongly opposed to the voluntary retirement scheme (VRS) proposed as the overall package recently.

All India general secretary of the employees union P. Abhimanyu on Friday told a press conference that while the BSNL staff across the country are "very happy" about the government finally recognising the "strategic importance" of having the public sector telecom body functioning. The funds proposed to be released by the Central government for funding VRS could be alternatively used to fund modern equipment, he said.

'Not against monetising'

"Every year about 10,000 employees retire and there have been very few recruitments in the lower cadre of junior engineers, telecom officers and so on. We have been fighting for the last four years with the government to revive BSNL, and against any retrenchment as it is a route towards privatisation. However, we are not opposed to monetising our assets like selling lands," he explained.

Mr. Abhimanyu blamed "policy decisions" of all the previous governments for promoting interests of the private players over BSNL and pointed out that the mobile telephony licence was given seven years after the market was opened up.

TRAI 'partisan'

"The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) too has been playing a partisan role and has been taking decisions at the cost of others, ignoring the predatory pricing in the market," he charged. The employees union leader said the first priority for BSNL would be provide 4G services as it would be relevant for next four years at least.

"It could take upto 15 months to equip our 70,000 towers across the country with the latest equipment to provide quality 4G mobile services. But, what we are promising customers is quality service and customer relationship on par with the best private player in the field," Mr. Abhimanyu added.

Telangana circle secretary J. Sampath Rao and others were present.