

ALL UNIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS OF BSNL (AUAB)

No: UA/2018/54

13th December, 2018

Circular

To

All the Circle Secretaries and District Secretaries,
Constituents of the AUAB.

Hold Joint General Body meetings during the period from 26th to 29th December, 2018.

Comrades,

At the outset, the AUAB at the national level, wishes to heartily congratulate you all, for the excellent preparations done for the indefinite strike, which was to start from 03.12.2018. It was only in the backdrop of the extensive preparations made by the AUAB, as well as the unprecedented support given by the media for our demands, that the Hon'ble Minister of State for Communications called the AUAB for discussion on 03.12.2018 and settled some of the important issues.

The AUAB meeting, held at New Delhi on 11.12.2018, has decided to call on the circle and district level AUABs, ***to hold Joint General Body meetings at all the SSAs, during the period from 26th to 29th December, 2018***, and explain about the decisions reached on 03.12.2018, between the Hon'ble Minister of State for Communications and the AUAB. This statement is being issued by the AUAB, to provide you with the details of the settlement, so that they can be explained to the employees.

The notification for the indefinite strike was served on the Secretary, Telecom and CMD BSNL on 15.11.2018. Thereafter, country wide preparations started with state level meetings in very short period. Initially DoT and Hon Minister was not even in a mood to meet AUAB. But when the mobilisation for the strike picked up momentum, coupled with the media support, it started generating heat in the government circles. On Sunday, 02.12.2018, Ms. Aruna Sundararajan, Secretary, Telecom, invited the AUAB for talks. The talks went on for almost 4 hours in the presence of senior officers of DoT and BSNL which showed the seriousness of government. The Secretary was serious in resolving the issues and responded very positively on each of the demands, and explained the initiatives taken by the government so far during last two weeks, to settle the issues. In that meeting, we were told by the Secretary, Telecom, that, the Hon'ble MoS(C) was returning to Delhi at 8:00 pm on 02.12.2018 and would be meeting the AUAB at 10:00 am on 03.12.2018, and requested defer the strike programme, since the Hon'ble MoS(C) is keen to resolve the issues. Till that date, the Hon'ble Minister of State for Communications was engaged in the election campaigning in Rajasthan, and had been out of Delhi.

At this point of time, the AUAB leaders had to take an important decision with regards to going ahead with the indefinite strike. The indefinite strike was to start from 00:00 hrs on 03.12.2018. At the same time, the Hon'ble Minister of State for Communications had decided to meet the AUAB at 10:00 am on 03.12.2018. So, a crucial question came before us. The question was, whether to go ahead with the strike as per the decision or not?

After threadbare discussion in it's meeting on the evening of 02.12.2018, the AUAB came to the unanimous conclusion that it was not wise to go on strike from 00:00 hrs on 03.12.2018, when the Hon'ble Minister of State for Communications has called the AUAB for talks at 10:00 am on the same day. The AUAB strongly felt that we should defer the strike at least for some time, so that the talks between the AUAB and the Hon'ble Minister of State for Communications can take place in a cordial atmosphere. This is the reason why the strike was initially deferred for one week.

Some friends may argue as to what was the necessity to defer the strike for one week, even if the Hon'ble Minister of State for Communications was to meet us on the next day? We wish to make it clear to our comrades that, struggle plays only one part in settling our demands. The other significant part is negotiation. We require struggle to create necessary pressure on the Government / Management, to force them to come

to the negotiating table. Once the pressure is created, then negotiation is very much required to settle the demand.

Through our massive country wide preparations, we have created the necessary pressure on the Government, to make them to come over to the negotiating table. When they had agreed to come for negotiation, we also should go for the negotiation. We cannot say that, we will go on strike as per our decision already taken, even if the Hon'ble Minister of State for Communications calls us for talks.

We should not forget that, even if we go ahead with the strike from 03.12.2018, after 3 or 4 days, again we have to go to the Minister only for settling our issues, since he is the person who has to take our 3rd Pay Revision issue to the Cabinet, for getting the necessary approval. So, the AUAB unanimously decided that we should defer the strike for some time, to create a conducive atmosphere for the talks to be held with the Minister at 10:00 am on 03.12.2018.

In accordance with the above understanding, the AUAB deferred the strike for one week and went for talks with the Hon'ble Minister of State for Communications on 03.12.2018. In the talks, apart from the Hon'ble Minister of State for Communications, all the top officers of the DoT were present. CMD BSNL and Director (HR) were also present. Very serious discussions took place on all our demands. Settlement was reached in respect of allotment of 4G spectrum to BSNL, Payment of Pension Contribution on actual basic pay and Pension Revision of the retired employees. The details are as follows:-

1. Allotment of 4G spectrum to BSNL:

DoT had already prepared the Cabinet Note for allotting 4G spectrum to BSNL, and immediately after the notice was issued for indefinite strike, it was sent for Inter-Ministerial Consultation. The Hon'ble Minister of State for Communications stated that he had deputed the Addl. Secretary, DoT, for completing the process of Inter-Ministerial Consultation expeditiously. Further, he assured that, once this process is completed, he would take up the issue in the next Cabinet meeting itself, for getting approval.

2. Payment of Pension Contribution based on actual basic pay:

As regards the issue of Payment of Pension Contribution based on actual basic pay by BSNL, the Hon'ble Minister of State for Communications informed that the DoT had already written to the Ministry of Finance, with a positive recommendation, to solve this issue and the same had reached Ministry Finance. A favourable reply is awaited from the Finance Ministry, after which this problem will be settled.

3. Pension Revision:

As regards Pension Revision of the BSNL retirees, it was informed that the DoT had agreed our demand to de-link the pension revision of BSNL retirees, from the Pay Revision of the serving employees. AUAB had taken the stand that Pension Revision is no way linked with Pay revision or the affordability of BSNL and it is finally accepted by DoT. This is a major breakthrough and will strengthen our demand for Pay Revision with full 15% fitment.

In fact, the DoT had already started taking serious steps on these issues, immediately after the AUAB issued strike notice on 15.11.2018. These are very big achievements for the financial revival of BSNL. We should not underestimate these achievements. Further, it is also very important to consolidate these gains. It means, immediately getting Cabinet approval for allotment of 4G spectrum and Finance Ministry's approval for pension contribution on actual basic pay, are very essential. All these demands have taken a definite shape in the DoT and have been moved it to other nodal Ministries, for their clearance. The role of Secretary, Telecom, and Hon'ble MoS(C) are very crucial in this regard.

Similarly, for the first time, the Hon'ble Minister of State for Communications has accepted that pension revision of BSNL retirees will be de-linked from pay revision of the serving employees.

4. 3rd Pay Revision:

As regards the 3rd Pay Revision issue is concerned, no final settlement is reached. But, there is significant improvement in this regard. So far, the DoT had been taking a negative position that, BSNL employees cannot be given wage revision. However, our massive preparations for the indefinite strike have forced them to change their stand. In the meeting held on 03.12.2018, both the Hon'ble Minister of State for Communications, as well as the DoT officers indicated that, they were prepared to consider settling 3rd

Pay Revision, but 15% fitment could not be given. The arguments and views of the Hon'ble MoS(C) and the Secretary, Telecom, are as follows:-

- ❖ BSNL will not be able to pay salary, if 3rd Pay Revision is settled with 15% fitment.
- ❖ The projection shown by BSNL for meeting the additional expenditure for 3rd Pay Revision, mainly based on 4G services will not be accepted by Cabinet, before the allotment of 4G spectrum.
- ❖ If both the proposal of 4G spectrum and 3rd PRC are taken together to the Cabinet, both may be rejected.
- ❖ Other sources for additional income should be worked out, to make the proposal for 3rd Pay Revision acceptable.
- ❖ Meanwhile the Non-Executives wage revision negotiation also to be concluded before taking a final decision. Thereafter it will be easy to get it approved.

5. Pending issues of 2nd PRC:

It is a big breakthrough when CMD agreed to increase the contribution by another 3% by March 2019 and the remaining contribution in the next financial year during the meeting with AUAB on 30.11.2018.

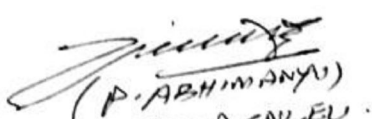
Another major change in the approach of DoT and the Hon'ble MoS(C) is the agreement to have an institutional mechanism in DoT to monitor the progress on various demands. As per this mechanism, the AUAB will periodically sit with the DoT officers and review the progress in the settlement of the issues.

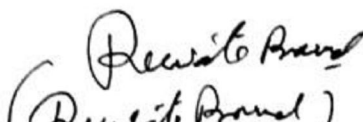
After talks with the Hon'ble Minister of State for Communications, meeting of the AUAB took place. Now, the question before the AUAB was, to go ahead with the strike or to defer it. After threadbare discussions the AUAB took the decision that the strike should be deferred at least for 45 days. This decision is taken with a view to have some more discussion with the DoT, to find an amicable settlement. Further, we have to ensure that 4G spectrum is allotted to BSNL immediately, and also Pension Contribution is taken from BSNL based on actual basic pay. Without settlement of these two issues, settlement of 3rd Pay Revision is meaningless, since the Company will not be having money to pay salary in the revised pay scales.

Under the above mentioned circumstances, the indefinite strike from 03.12.2018 has been deferred. But, the AUAB wishes to inform the employees that the strike has not been called off. We want to settle the 3rd Pay Revision, by making some more persuasion at the DoT level. If our efforts to settle the issues amicably in a reasonable time, fails, then the AUAB will not hesitate to go on Indefinite strike. Hence, all our comrades are requested to understand the situation. We also request the AUAB at circle and district levels to keep the employees prepared to go on struggle whenever it is required.

Thanking you,


Yours fraternally,

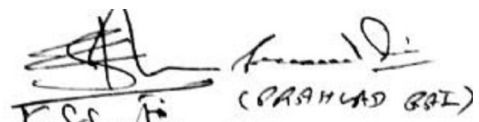
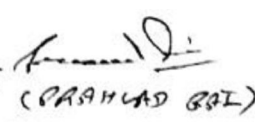

(P. ABHIMANYU)
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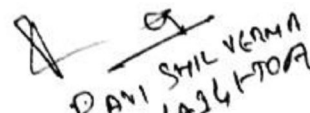

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