

Height of absurdity

We had reported on 5.12.2008 that DoT has extended time limit up to 15th December 2008 to exercise option for absorption in BSNL/MTNL to the Group A Officers of DoT on the plea that they can now have a considered opinion after the Govt. approval of Pay revision for CPSE Executives' has come. Since the last date for submission of option for absorption has been extended, one may naturally conclude that the deemed deputation of Group A officers in BSNL/MTNL which was to end on 22.12.2008 is also likely to be extended for some more time. Though it is for the entire Group A Officers for whom the process of absorption is said to be still open, but it is practically only for the ITS Group A Officers, most of whom are yet to take or unwilling to take absorption, since the Group A Officers of other services exercised their option in the year 2005 itself when the absorption process for the first time was initiated. Further the ground on which the date for submission of option has been extended is certainly not a convincing one. It is perhaps the Management just wanted to buy some more time. It appears that DoT is undecided on this vital matter and is very casually handling the issue. It is yet to have any definite contingency plan in case there is no change in the present situation and most of the ITS Group A Officers stick to their stand for not exercising option for absorption in BSNL/MTNL. There are reasons to believe that DoT with the support of BSNL Management is not in a mood to settle the issue once for all. **This calls for a united struggle by all the Employees of BSNL, both Executives and non-Executives, against this damaging stand of DoT/BSNL.** How long the deputation at the senior positions in operation, management, policy making and implementation level in BSNL will continue? Why BSNL will not be allowed to be governed, managed and run by BSNL's own Employees so that all have the same stake in BSNL? Let those ITS Group A Officers who are unwilling to get absorbed be immediately repatriated back to DoT. Unfortunately, there seems to be no possibility of such an action program at this moment.

Meanwhile two Executives' Associations of BSNL have asked their members to exercise option to DoT on the ground that the time limit for submitting option has been extended up to 15th December 2008. **They have deliberately suppressed the fact that the option has been extended only to the Group A officers and not for the Group B Officers or C&D Employees.** The process for absorption of the Group B Officers in BSNL/MTNL was over four years back. The Group B Officers who opted for either BSNL or MTNL also received their Presidential Orders for absorptions as back as in February/March 2004 and those who desired to remain with Government were repatriated back to DoT. Not a single Group B Officer is now available in BSNL/MTNL on deputation. The process of absorption for the Group B Officers is therefore complete and those who are absorbed, under sub rule 4 of Rule 37-A of CCS Pension Rules, ceased to be the Government servants. On the other hand, the process of absorption for Group A Officers is still open. The Orders of Hyderabad and Delhi High Courts to allow some Group A Officers, who had earlier taken absorption in the year 2005 in BSNL/MTNL, to exercise fresh option along with others who are still on deputation and yet to take absorption is on the

context that several changes (improving) the terms of conditions of service were offered now while calling of option for absorption from those who are on deputation. This development in no way is comparable with the case of the Group B Officers or Group C&D Employees whose absorption process is complete and no one is on deputation now. **Since no Group B Officer is on deputation, there is no case for his repatriation.** It is difficult to believe that the Associations who are now asking their members to opt for DoT are not aware of the fact. **But they might be having some other compulsion. May be, they do not want to antagonize the ITS Officers. That is why, perhaps, they are not ready to demand immediate repatriation of those Group A Officers to DoT who have not opted for absorption in BSNL. On the other hand, they are unable to overlook the popular sentiments in all the Executives that those ITS Officers who are on deputation in BSNL for such a long time and unwilling to get absorbed and thereby not ready to identify themselves and integrate with BSNL's own workforce must be taken back to DoT.**

This compulsion might have forced them to evolve a strategy which will neither antagonize the ITS Officers nor their members may question them on their casual approach on this issue. They want every one to believe that how serious are they now on the issue of absorption of Group A Officers through their present call for submitting option by the Group B Officers to DoT. But their present demand of repatriation of the Executives (Group B level) of BSNL/MTNL back to DoT, shows that they are still trying to safeguard the interests of the ITS Group A officers, as they did in October 2005 by passing that ill-famous resolution (which is reproduced below) along with other Unions and writing to the Minister not to act aggressively against the ITS Group A officers just when the then Secretary DoT caused issue of repatriation orders of those ITS officers who did not opt for absorption and expressed willingness only to remain on deputation and also a contingency plan was announced by the DoT to tackle the situation. Further, threatening of mass repatriation back to DoT is one thing and to be serious on asking the members to submit an option, which is non-existing, is another thing.

It is seen that on the same day (8.12.2008), one of the two associations has reported in its website that its office bearers met Director (HRD) and asked for early implementation of pay revision for BSNL Executives. **This clearly shows how serious is this association about their call for going back to DoT since they also know for certain that their current demand for mass repatriation is impracticable and not at all feasible under law.** Otherwise how come they are asking for early implementation of pay revision and for whom it has been asked, if their members are not to be in BSNL? **These Associations would perhaps do better, if they stop playing to the gallery on this very vital and critical issue. Let all Unions/Associations take united stand for repatriation of those on deputation in BSNL in the overall interest of our own Organization and put meaningful pressure on the Government.**

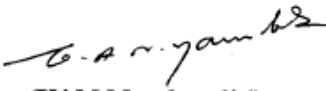
Resolution that was passed and signed by two Executives' Associations against repatriation of the Group A Officers back to DoT:-

RESOLUTION


This meeting of the unions & Associations of executives and non executives in BSNL/MTNL held on 27.10.05 unanimously resolves that

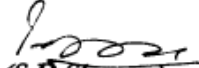
- 1) The BSNL/MTNL should be managed by officials/officers belonging to the respective organizations and end existing di- hierarchy.

- 2) Urges the Hon'ble Communication Minister to resolve the issues raised by ITS officers and pave way for smooth and expeditious absorption in BSNL/MTNL, instead of taking an aggressive position, to safeguard the interest of BSNL/MTNL.



(VAN Namboodiri)
General Secretary, BSNLEU

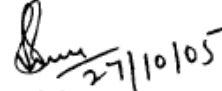

(O P Gupta)
General Secretary, NFTE


(K Vallinayagam)
General Secretary, FNTO


(S D Sharma)
BSNLWRU


(G L Jogi)
General Secretary, SNEA


(K Satyanarayana)
President, AIBSNLEA


(Suresh Kumar)
Secretary General, BTEF