

United struggle is the need of the hour.

The wage revision and the subsequent pension revision in BSNL is facing a crisis due to the shift in the stand of Department of Telecom in the matter. It is reported that in the meeting of the Committee of Secretaries held under the chairmanship of the Cabinet Secretary on 12.05.2007 to consider the 3rd PRC report, the Additional Secretary, DoT did not ask for exemption of Affordability condition for BSNL. So the Committee of Secretaries has not suggested any such changes in their report to the Central Government.

BSNL Employees Union took a very serious note of it and convened the meeting of all unions and associations (Executives & Non-Executives) on 02.06.2017 and took a historical decision for struggle demanding pay revision, pension revision, superannuation benefits for the BSNL recruited employees and withdraw ban of trade union activities. The three phased agitational programme is (1) Mass Dharna on 20.06.2017 (2) Hunger Strike on 13.07.2017 and (3) One Day Strike on 27.07.2017. It is a significant fact that pension revision is given equal importance with wage revision. The decision of struggle was duly conveyed to the CMD BSNL by a delegation of leaders of all the unions and associations. Notice is also given for the action programme to both BSNL and DoT.

In this background, the CMD BSNL has written to both Secretary, DOT and Secretary, DPE highlighting the salient points for implementation of wage revision and pension revision in BSNL. The CMD has rather effectively argued by stating "I would also draw your attention to the Recommendations of the 3rd PRC (para 5 of the Executive Summary) in which the Committee has recommended that affordability conditions shall not be applicable to such CPSEs which are formed to perform specific agenda of the Government of India to meet the objectives of the National Telecom Policy 1999. Therefore, the condition of affordability, may not be insisted in case of BSNL." The CMD in his letter has also stated that "pension revision of about 2 lakh retired employees is directly linked with implementation of 3rd PRC recommendations." It is also reported that Directors of BSNL Board has met the Minister of Communications in this regard on 16.06.2017 to avoid a showdown.

But comrades, history has taught us, no basic and major issue of workers and pensioners is granted by the government without struggle. So there is nothing to be panic or disappointed. BSNL pensioners achieved their pension revision for the pre 2007 pensioners and also pension revision on 78.2% IDA merger only through sustained struggles by employees and pensioners. The joint movement of the BSNL workers on both occasions conducted two strikes each for it which reality nobody can deny. It is also noteworthy that mention of pensioners in the agreements of 2007 wage revision and 78.2% IDA fixation agreement was the base for DoT to initiate action on pension revision.

So comrades, let us mobilise maximum pensioners in the struggle chalked out by All Unions and Associations starting from the Dharna on 20th June, 2017 and culminating in the One Day Strike on 27th July, 2017. The success of this united struggle will be the key to achieve both wage revision and pension revision.
