



ALL INDIA BSNL DOT PENSIONERS ASSOCIATION

[Registered No. S/68836/2010]

Central Head Quarters

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President: A.K. Bhattacharjee

AIBDPA/ Circular No.6 /2020

1st August, 2020

To,

**All CHQ Office Bearers, Circle Secretaries
District Secretaries and Affiliates.**

Dear Comrade,

The Covid-19 pandemic is spreading alarmingly all over the world and India is no exemption. It has become clear that we may have to live with the Corona Virus for some more months or years until an effective vaccine is invented. We being the seniors have to be very vigilant during this period as we are more vulnerable to the pandemic. Let us be inside the home as far as possible and if at all go out for some urgent requirements, we have to adhere to the Covid-19 protocol; wearing the mask, keeping social distance, washing the hands frequently or using the sanitizer. Further we have to strictly follow the instructions of health authorities and the local administration issued from time to time.

Countrywide Protest Standing Dharna on 19-08-2020 against non-payment of Medical Bills & Allowances.

BSNL pensioners are suffering a lot due to non-payment of medical bills, both indoor & outdoor and medical allowance since 2018-19. CHQ has taken up the issue with the BSNL management several times, we wrote to the Hon'ble Minister for Communications and Hon'ble Prime Minister but of no avail. Meanwhile the BSNL management made payment of medical bills upto September, 2019 to the employees along with the June, 2020 salary. This is the first time that retirees are completely neglected and rather discriminated. In the past, the retirees were given priority in medical bill payments. We deserve to be treated at par, the least. This development has naturally created much anger and anguish among the pensioners. On 30-07-2020, Com.V A N Namboodiri, Advisor has brought the issue to the notice of the CMD, BSNL over telephone. But the CMD was not prepared to give any concrete assurance. So Comrades, we have no other alternative other than an agitation against this gross injustice and discrimination.

We are quite aware that the situation in the country is not conducive for conducting an agitation, particularly by the elders. Unfortunately, we are compelled and pushed to the streets by the BSNL management.

The Protest Action should be from 1100 to 1200 on 19-08-2020 by standing with placards before the BSNL offices by all our units. The programme should be held strictly to the Covid-19 protocol, keeping social distance and wearing masks. The participation be limited to 5 to 7 comrades in each centre. Only nearby comrades be organized and those staying far away should not be disturbed. Exemption may be given to areas where prohibitory orders are in force, triple lockdown declared etc. Detailed report and photos be sent to CHQ.

Telepensioner Published as E-journal.

Two issues of Telepensioner, January-March, 2020 and April-June, 2020 could not be printed due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the resultant lockdown. Therefore, combining the two issues, an e-journal was published on 3rd July, 2020. It was sent to all CHQ Office Bearers, Circle Secretaries and to some of the District Secretaries whose WhatsApp numbers were available. It was requested to circulate to the maximum subscribers.

Utilize modern technology for effective functioning.

In the changed situation, it is very important to switchover to modern technology for smoothening our functioning. Some of our Circles are maintaining WhatsApp groups and some are having District level WhatsApp groups also. These are found to be very effective for instant communication. So those Circles which have not yet started WhatsApp are requested to do it urgently. All are not technologists; so we can utilize the services of some other capable comrades for this purpose. If all our Districts also start the WhatsApp, we will have the opportunity to reach out to our entire membership.

But we have to strictly follow some general guidelines in maintaining the WhatsApp groups. In the Circle level group, all the Circle Office bearers and District Secretaries and important functionaries of CHQ be added. So also in the District level group, apart from District Office Bearers and Area Secretaries, important functionaries of Circle and CHQ could be added. One Admin, preferably Circle/ District Secretary be selected and should control the postings. Care should be taken that unwanted and unwarranted matters be avoided and pensioners issues and serious issues of national importance only be posted.

Face Book is another effective medium for communication and many of our comrades have the Face Book account. Unfortunately, it is not being utilized for communicating and popularizing our issues by most of our comrades.

Date of submission of option for Outdoor Medical Facilities, Revalidation of Medical Cards, Digital Life Certificate of SAMPANN Pensioners extended to 30-09-2020.

CHQ has taken up a number of issues in the recent past and our efforts have yielded results by BSNL management and DoT extending the dates of submission of option for outdoor medical facilities, revalidation of Medical Cards and DLC of SAMPAANN pensioners upto 30-09-2020. The issues of the VRS retirees are also being dealt seriously.

Payment of CHQ Quota.

CHQ had taken the initiative of bringing maximum number of VRS retirees to our fold. Effective campaign was held in this regard in many circles and some reports also received. However, very few District Branches have remitted CHQ quota. In some districts, we are aware that difficulties are there for collection of membership from all the new members due to lockdown and other restrictions. It is requested that CHQ quota of whatever amount already received be sent without further delay.

NCCPA Secretariat Meeting and National Executive held through video conferencing.

The Secretariat meeting of NCCPA and National Executive have been held through video conferencing on 16-06-2020 and 16-07-2020, respectively. The detailed NCCPA circulars have already been posted in our website.

National Secretariat meeting had given a call to send email to Hon'ble Prime Minister (narendramodi1234@gmail.com) demanding rescinding of order to freeze the DA/DR of central government employees and pensioners. Following is the text of email.

Respected Prime Minister,

We/I solicit your kind reference to the resolution adopted by the National Secretariat of the National Coordination Committee of Pensioners Association (NCCPA), copy of which has already been submitted to the honourable Prime Minister on 4th July, 2020. We/I being an affiliated member association/member request the honourable Prime Minister to kindly direct the Ministry of Finance to rescind the order in O.M.No. 1/1/2020-E.II(B) dated 23rd April, 2020 forthwith and sanction the dearness relief which has become due from 1.1.2020

Secretary,

All India BSNL DOT Pensioners Association
.....Circle/District/Area Branch

It was requested to be sent by all our units before 31-07-2020. Those who have not sent it are once again requested to send the email urgently.

NCCPA has also called upon all its affiliates to send the following email against the dangerous amendments to the Environment Rules.

secy-moef@nic.in

TEXT OF EMAIL

To,

**The Secretary,
Forest and Climate Change,
Union Government of India,
New Delhi.**

Respected Sir,

The Central Ministry has proposed a change in existing Environment Impact Assessment processes (EIA Notification, 2006) through a draft EIA Notification, 2020. The proposed notification will destroy the process of environmental protection and affecting the environment irreversibly, also making it easier for the corporates to get environmental clearances for their projects. Hence, We the people oppose the draft Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2020, and request you to withdraw the same.

Amidst the pandemic situation, it is improper to take decisions that will have an irreversible impact on the environment. However, the Union Ministry is keen on making changes in Environment rules and granting clearances. It is evident from the fact that over 30 projects, located in some of India's most biodiverse forests have been urgently cleared or taken up for clearance in online meetings during the lockdown (April 23). Site inspections are a crucial component of project evaluation and are difficult during a pandemic. Ministry appears to be relying only on digital documents uploaded by the project developers. Even more surprisingly these projects have been cleared at a time when Covid-19 has revealed dramatically how seriously the loss of forest land and biodiversity can increase zoonotic diseases.

Environmentalists also have raised their voice and wrote to Environment Minister regarding how forest and environment clearances were being granted across India during the lockdown. On that note, shockingly, the Ministry has put out a draft notification for public comments amidst global economic and public health emergency when there is restricted public movement.

Major Issues:

- The new amendment poses a serious threat to the environment and there are some areas of concern like granting post-facto clearances to Industries and leaving aside them with Fine alone in case of any violations. For several projects, the whole process of EIA is made simpler and fails to meet the standards of basic environmental protections. However, in an order on April 1, the Supreme Court held that "ex post facto environmental clearances" are contrary to law. It said: "Environment law cannot countenance the notion of an ex post facto clearance. This would be contrary to both the precautionary principle as well as the need for sustainable development".
- A public hearing has been exempted to many industries (those producing acids, paints, fertilizers, pesticides, etc.) located in Notified Industrial Zone, this will create serious problems in areas that depend entirely on ground and river water for agricultural usage. Public consultation has also been exempted from a list of linear projects. Projects such as roads and pipelines in border areas will not require any public hearing. The 'border area' is defined as "area falling within 100 kilometers aerial distance from the Line of Actual Control with bordering countries of India." That would cover much of the Northeast, the region with the country's richest biodiversity. Exemption from public hearing goes against International environmental law and agreements.
- Increased validity of the environment clearance for mining projects and river valley projects from 30 years currently to 50 years and, 10 years currently to 15 years respectively, thus increasing the risk of irreversible environmental, social, and health consequences on account of the project remaining unnoticed for long.

- Through the draft, it is enough for the industries to provide an annual environmental compliance report rather than half-yearly reports. Past experiences show that industries have continued to provide data that are false and inaccurate. Seeking an annual report provides an opportunity for the industries to further underestimate any socio-environmental issues arising in their projects.
- The Public consultation process is diluted. The period for the public to submit their views and responses during a public hearing for any application seeking Environment clearance has been reduced from 30 days to 20 days. It is aimed at denying the proper opportunity to record the objections of the people of the region.

The various provisions of the draft are aimed at facilitating the government's doctrine of "ease of doing business". Hence, we would like to reiterate that it is our generation that will be a victim of the devastating effects of these twisted and diluted laws like the new EIA draft. In this age of high pollution levels in our cities, we need to strengthen the EIA 2006 instead of allowing amendments that will dilute the rules and encourage environmental violations.

The current draft lacks understanding of the adverse effects of activities like disturbances in eco-sensitive zones, extensive minings. The notification was released on 23rd March 2020, surprisingly right before the day of nationwide lockdown. There has been no wide publicity given to the same except being uploaded on the website. The Covid-19 pandemic has been a time to stay safe and protect oneself. Hence, the government must understand it is not the right time to make amendments in EIA Notification for its aspiration of doing business. We sincerely hope that the Environment Ministry will encourage informed public participation as committed through Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration and the principle of Natural Justice. The EIA can be used to bring India out of the Covid-19 pandemic as an environmentally aware country through a green recovery that strengthens the role of environmental and social protection of all people and nature instead of justifying the present forms of harmful development.

So, we request you to kindly withdraw the Draft EIA Notification – 2020, right now.

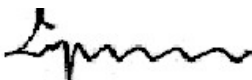
Thanking you,
Secretary,

All India BSNL DOT Pensioners Association
.....Circle/District/Area

Comrades, your all out cooperation is solicited for the successful implementation of the above programmes.

With warm Greetings,

Fraternally yours,



K G Jayaraj
General Secretary.