



Editorial

IT IS NEVER TOO LATE...

Reports about DoT sending its proposals on Pension Revision of BSNL pensioners to DoP&PW are doing rounds, with one association claiming to be moving towards Victory stand AGAIN and another claiming that it was because of them DoT has moved the proposal for pension revision with 0% fitment and notional fixation of pension for those retiring after 1.1.2017. The former, of course, admits that they do not know what proposal has been sent by DoT to DoP&PW, further asserting that nobody knows. Meanwhile stories of a former member of Telecom Commission influencing the MOC who was his junior and another person asking his son in PMO to look into this, are also viral in the social media.

We do not want to comment on this reported development, as we are sad that instead of focusing on and directing all efforts to achieve pay revision which itself will lead to pension revision as per the settled law on the issue, time and energy are being spent by serving employees' unions and associations as well as some pensioners' associations, demanding pension revision without pay revision by putting forth illogical arguments, while justifications for pay revision are aplenty and logical.

But our apprehension is that, if at all the DoT has sent any proposal for pension revision without pay revision, it could be another tactic of DoT to just satisfy a group of chest thumping leaders who continue to build castles in the air to keep their flock amused. Or there could be some other hidden agenda for DoT to benefit its own cadres, which it is trying to push through in the guise of demand of pensioners associations.

Pay revision of BSNL employees is being denied mainly on the ground of 'affordability' of BSNL to bear the additional expenditure on account of pay revision. There are solutions to this issue, but no one has shown any interest to pursue these solutions. The affordability clause itself can be got relaxed for BSNL. Regrettably, so far, DoT did not pay heed to numerous representations for relaxation of 'affordability clause' on the genuine ground that BSNL has to meet the social obligation of the Government of India to provide services in rural and remote areas and thus cannot aim at profit. Earlier, when BSNL submitted a proposal for pay revision of its executives with 15% fitment, explaining in detail the justifications for relaxing the affordability clause, DoT just forwarded it to DPE without supporting the proposal, seeking

only comments from the DPE as to whether the affordability criteria be relaxed for implementing pay scale revision in BSNL as per 3rd PRC. DPE, on its part, had clarified that this would “require approval of Cabinet for which DOT may examine the issue at its end for necessary action”. But DoT never took any action for seeking cabinet approval for relaxing the affordability clause. At that crucial juncture, all these so-called champions for the causes of BSNL employees and pensioners, instead of putting pressure on DoT for follow up action, went in hiding.

BSNL has been paying pension contribution in respect of employees absorbed from erstwhile DoT on the maximum of the pay scales, citing an irrelevant Fundamental Rule 116, which is meant for only those who are on deputation. Even otherwise, DoT did not implement the DoP&T O.M. dated 19.11.2009, which allows payment of pension contribution on actual pay w.e.f. 1.1.2006 under the same FR 116. BSNL Executives are covered under time bound financial upgradation Scheme after every 4/5 years and the non-executive employees after 7/8 years. Thus, none of the BSNL employees remain on the maximum of the scale in a particular grade for more than 4/5 years in case of the executives and 7/8 years in case of the non-executives. Thus, there is no justification at all to calculate pension contribution for the BSNL Employees basing on their pay scale instead of their

actual pay. Had BSNL been allowed to pay pension contribution on actual pay in accordance with DoP&T OM dated 19.11.2009, and the excess payment made by BSNL to this date is refunded, BSNL will be able to implement its proposal for pay revision of its employees and executives with 15% fitment benefit without any financial constraints. Neither the recognised unions and associations in BSNL nor the DoT ever pursued this issue with the seriousness and fiscal importance it deserved.

All along, it may be seen that DoT had never acted in favour of BSNL employees and pensioners where it had all the discretion and powers to do so. Neither did it move a finger to get anything done in favour of BSNL and its employees, when every rule and law was in favour of doing so. Therefore, to believe that DoT has worked out something in favour of pension revision without pay revision can only be wishful thinking. Any proposal for pension revision without pay revision will be against the essence of Supreme Court verdict to remove an anomaly and DoP&PW cannot be expected to agree to create a new anomaly and look for its resolution. Let wisdom dawn upon all unions and associations that pay revision is still realisable, if seriously pursued. Let them stop fooling the pensioners and start focussing on realising pay revision. It is never too late to change course or make amends for the past mistakes. □



Important Developments of the Month

- ✚ AIBSNLREA had represented to the Secretary, DoT regarding non-settlement of medical claims of BSNL Pensioners since 2018-19, stating that though bills pertaining to 2018-19 and 2019-20 have now been partially paid, claims for remaining years are not yet settled and had requested that BSNL may be directed to make payment of all pending claims both for with voucher/without voucher and indoor treatment. DoT has now replied to the letter that "Due to cash inflow shortage the pending bills of Medical of retirees could not be released. However continued interaction with CBB section is being made for the funds. Depending upon future cash inflow suitable action to clear the payment will be taken in coming months of financial year."
- ✚ BSNL vide its letter No.BSNLCO-CA/25/4/2021-CA-ERP-FICO/ dated 30.08.2022 has communicated to the circles that the Corporate CBB section has allotted funds to the circles for making payment of medical bills upto 31.03.2022 to retired employees. The letter further says that "Going forward, the Circles should post the parked Medical bills of retired employees and deduct TDS, as applicable and these will be disbursed along with salary of working employees on monthly basis."



Issues taken up

29.08.2022: AIBSNLREA WRITES TO THE CONTROLLER GENERAL COMMUNICATION ACCOUNTS ON NON-SERIOUS APPROACH BY MOST OF THE CCAs TO INITIATE/COMPLETE THE ASSIGNED TASK OF ISSUE OF IDENTITY CARD TO THE PENSIONERS:

AIBSNLREA had been requesting all authorities in DoT and BSNL to take appropriate action on issue of Pensioner Identity Card at the earliest and therefore it is a matter of satisfaction now that CCAs have been instructed by DoT to issue Pensioner Identity card. AIBSNLREA has drawn the attention of CGCA New Delhi to the fact that the issue has not been taken seriously by a few CCAs who have failed to even issue a circular on the matter, while some others issue the ID card selectively some SSAs, leaving out other SSAs. Mistakes also galore in the details printed. AIBSNLREA has therefore requested CGCA to look into the matter and advise all PCCAs/CCAs to complete the action within a targeted date to be fixed by the CGCA office. [View the letter](#)

22.08.2022: AIBSNLREA WRITES TO THE DIRECTOR, CGHS, NEW DELHI REQUESTING HIM EARLY APPROVAL FOR UNCEMENTED THR WITH MOP IN RESPECT OF SMT SUBASINI B DEVTA :

AIBSNLREA has written to the Director, CGHS, CGHS Directorate, New Delhi drawing his attention to the Addl. Director, CGHS, Ahmedabad letter, forwarding an application from Shri Benimadhab B Devta, BSNL Pensioner, along with relevant documents, requesting approval for Implant cost of UNCEMENTED TOTAL HIP REPLACEMENT + PLATING in respect of his wife Smt. Subasini B Devta, which is still pending approval

from his office. AIBSNLREA has requested him to look into the case urgently and cause approval of the procedure immediately thereby providing relief to the beneficiary from pain and mental depression. [View the letter](#)

21.08.2022: AIBSNLREA WRITES TO THE SECRETARY (PENSION) DoP&PW ON ENHANCEMENT OF FIXED MEDICAL ALLOWANCE (FMA) FROM RS.1000 TO RS.3000 PER MONTH:

AIBSNLREA has written to the Secretary (Pension), DoP&PW, drawing his attention to the Minutes of 32nd meeting of SCOVA wherein it has been recorded that "JS (Pension), DoPPW informed that a proposal to increase the amount of Fixed Medical Allowance is under consideration. Based on the data received from the concerned Departments, financial implications on the proposal are being worked out and a reference will be made to Department of Expenditure shortly" and that action was required to be taken by DoP&PW. Secretary (Pension), DoP&PW has been requested to ensure early resolution of the issue. [View the letter](#)

20.08.2022: AIBSNLREA WRITES TO THE SECRETARY (PENSION) DoP&PW ON HEALTH INSURANCE SCHEME FOR PENSIONERS INCLUDING THOSE RESIDING IN NON-CGHS AREA – SUDDEN DISAPPEARANCE OF THIS ITEM FROM AGENDA OF PENDING CASES OF SCOVA - REQUEST FOR RE-INCLUSION AND PURSUAL TILL FINAL RESOLUTION:

AIBSNLREA has written to the Secretary (Pension), DoP&PW, pointing out that quite surprisingly the issue of Health Insurance Scheme for pensioners does not find a place in the list of agenda items remaining unresolved, in the Minutes of 32nd meeting of SCOVA, as if the issue has been resolved. The Action Taken Report of the decisions taken in 31st meeting of SCOVA said to have been sent to the Pensioners' Associations, is not available in any public domain, including the official website of DoP&PW/SCOVA. It is therefore not known how the issue of Health insurance Scheme for pensioners including those residing in non-CGHS areas has been resolved, also in the absence of any follow up action order in this regard. We would only like to assume that the issue has been taken off the agenda by mistake. AIBSNLREA has therefore requested the Secretary (Pension) requesting him to get the item re-included in the agenda for the next SCOVA meeting and to ensure early resolution of the matter once for all. [View the letter](#)

19.08.2022: AIBSNLREA WRITES TO THE SECRETARY (EXPENDITURE) GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ON ADDITIONAL QUANTUM OF PENSION ON ATTAINING THE AGE OF 65 YEARS, 70 YEARS AND 75 YEARS:

AIBSNLREA has written to the Secretary (Expenditure) GOI, drawing his attention to the Minutes of 32nd meeting of SCOVA wherein it has been stated that ""On the issue of Enhancement of Additional Pension on attaining age of 65 years, 70 years and 75 years, JS (Pension), DOPPW has informed that the proposal is under consideration in consultation with DoE and DOEA on the aspects of funds availability in the Budget" and requesting him to get the issue resolved at the earliest. [View the letter](#)

17.08.2022: AIBSNLREA WRITES TO THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS ON REVISION OF PAY SCALES OF BSNL EMPLOYEES:

AIBSNLREA has written to the Minister of Communications requesting him to re-examine the matter in the light of Considerable reduction of staff-strength through VRS in the year 2019, justification to withdraw Unjust decision for calculation of pension contribution on 'actual pay' under FR-116 for the absorbed employees, suggesting implementation of revised pay scales, fitment benefit, increment and Dearness allowance with temporary capping on other allowance for the time being, Relaxation of 'affordability clause' of DPE O.M No.W-02/0028/2017-DPE(WC)-GL-XIII/17 dated 03.08.2017 as BSNL has to meet the social obligation of the Government of India to provide services at affordable rates to the customers and thus cannot aim at profit and pointing out the Glaring discrimination between BSNL employees and those on deputation in the matter of revision of pay. [View the letter](#)

10.08.2022: AIBSNLREA WRITES TO THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS ON BSNL REVIVAL PACKAGE 2022 – THE MUCH NEEDED BUT MISSING CLAUSE IN THE CABINET DECISIONS:

AIBSNLREA has written to the Minister of Communications conveying that that the Government is again and again missing an important step, without which all efforts to revive BSNL are bound to fail. The letter refers to IIM Ahmedabad recommendation that "The Board of Directors should also include professional who have had experience of running large businesses. The board should not have only civil servants and academicians as Independent Directors who have not been associated with running of business. Academicians for top-ranked Indian Management institutes or foreign institutes may be offered for board positions". It had specifically recommended that "The top leadership of BSNL should be evaluated by DoT and should be made accountable for the profits and health of the organisation. We even suggest that the top leader (CMD) should be a professional who has had experience of running business rather than a government servant who is appointed on a fixed-tenure by the government." The letter further says that unless those in BSNL top Management and the policy makers in the DoT are made accountable for their action, mere providing funds by the Government is not going to help BSNL in any way. AIBSNLREA has therefore requested to "set up an independent on-going review mechanism, with very low representation from the Government, for assessing the efficacy of BSNL Board decisions", as has been suggested by the IIM Ahmedabad. [View the letter](#)

08.08.2022: AIBSNLREA WRITES TO THE CONTROLLER GENERAL OF COMMUNICATION ACCOUNTS ON MIGRATION OF PRE-ROLLOUT PENSIONERS TO SAMPANN – ERRONEOUS DEDUCTION OF TDS THROUGH SAMPANN EVEN AFTER SUBMISSION OF PROOF OF INVESTMENT EARLIER TO BANKS:

It has been brought to our notice that the pensioners of Maharashtra Circle, who were migrated from Bank of Baroda to SAMPANN last month, are in a rude shock as TDS has been deducted from their pension despite their investment in tax saving deposits and due intimation given to the banks earlier. AIBSNLREA has since written to the CGCA New Delhi, mentioning that without cautioning the migrated pensioners and also without following the requirement of explaining to them the process of submitting the declaration online and further even before the deadline of 9th October is over, recovery of TDS has been made in a very casual manner, putting the pensioners in unwanted

trouble. AIBSNLREA has requested CGCA New Delhi to ensure that TDS recovery is not made without following the laid down processes mentioned above and that no pensioner is put into problem on this count. [View the letter](#)

07.08.2022: AIBSNLREA WRITES TO THE SECRETARY (PENSION) ON GRANT OF ONE NOTIONAL INCREMENT FOR PENSIONARY BENEFITS TO THOSE EMPLOYEES WHO HAD RETIRED ONE DAY BEFORE THEIR ANNUAL INCREMENT BECAME DUE:

AIBSNLREA has pointed out that a large number of applications are being filed in various CAT Benches by the affected pensioners praying for extension of the benefit. Already, at least three High courts have ruled in favour of the pensioners on the issue and the Supreme Court has once dismissed a SLP. Except that the issue will be further delayed, we believe that finally the law will prevail. It will be a good gesture on behalf of the UOI to voluntarily order extension of the benefit IN REM to all similarly placed pensioners, without waiting for the disposal of the SLP and has requested Secretary (Pension) DoP&PW to have the matter re-examined with compassion and order extension of the benefit of notional increment for pensionary benefits to all the similarly place pensioners. [View the letter](#)



GOVERNMENT/BSNL ORDERS & LETTERS

30.08.2022: BSNL DECIDES TO DISBURSE MEDICAL BILLS OF RETIRED EMPLOYEES REGULARLY ALONG WITH SALARY OF WORKING EMPLOYEES ON MONTHLY BASIS:

In response to repeated representations from AIBSNLREA, DoT had a fortnight back replied that "Due to cash inflow shortage the pending bills of Medical of retirees could not be released. However continued interaction with CBB section is being made for the funds. Depending upon future cash inflow suitable action to clear the payment will be taken in coming months of financial year." [View the DoT reply](#). Now BSNL vide its letter No.BSNLCO-CA/25/4/2021-CA-ERP-FICO/ dated 30.08.2022 has communicated to the circles that the Corporate CBB section has allotted funds to the circles for making payment of medical bills upto 31.03.2022 to retired employees. The letter further says that "Going forward, the Circles should post the parked Medical bills of retired employees and deduct TDS, as applicable and these will be disbursed along with salary of working employees on monthly basis." Branch Secretaries should monitor payment and report to CHQ in due course, both about payments made and about left out claims, giving details. [View the BSNL letter](#)



RESPONSE/ACTION TAKEN ON AIBSNLREA'S REPRESENTATIONS

24.08.2022: CCA MAHARASHTRA&GOA INFORMS AIBSNLREA THAT RE-FIXATION OF PENSION OF SHRI V GANAPATHIRAMAN RETD DGM IS UNDER PROCESS:

AIBSNLREA had taken up the issue of delay in re-fixation of pension of Shri V Ganapathiraman, Retd DGM in order to remove the anomaly in pension of absorbed BSNL employees who retired within the period of 10 months from 01.10.2000. After a few exchange of communications, CCA Maharashtra&Goa has informed us that the case is presently under process and pension will be refixed in due course. [View the CCA MH&GOA letter](#)

12.08.2022: RESPONSE FROM DOT TO AIBSNREA LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY, DOT, REQUESTING TO DIRECT BSNL TO CLEAR ALL PENDING MEDICAL BILLS:

AIBSNLREA had represented to the Secretary, DoT regarding non-settlement of medical claims of BSNL Pensioners since 2018-19, stating that though bills pertaining to 2018-19 and 2019-20 have now been partially paid, claims for remaining years are not yet settled and had requested that BSNL may be directed to make payment of all pending claims both for with voucher/without voucher and indoor treatment. DoT has now replied to the letter that "Due to cash inflow shortage the pending bills of Medical of retirees could not be released. However continued interaction with CBB section is being made for the funds. Depending upon future cash inflow suitable action to clear the payment will be taken in coming months of financial year." [View the DOT reply](#)

07.08.2022: PCCA MUMBAI RESPONDS TO OUR LETTER ON DELAY IN RE-FIXATION OF PENSION OF SHRI V GANAPATHIRAMAN RETD DGM :

PCCA Mumbai Circle has responded to AIBSNLREA letter, requesting more details to sort out the issue. [View the PCCA Mumbai response](#)

03.08.2022: RAILWAY BOARD RESPONDS TO AIBSNLREA LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE PRIME MINISTER REQUESTING RESTORATION OF SENIOR CITIZEN CONCESSION IN TRAINS:

In response to AIBSNLREA letter addressed to the Prime Minister of India requesting restoration of senior citizen concession in trains, the Railway Board has responded stating that "Covid-19 Pandemic has adversely affected the financial condition of Railways. In spite of this challenge, Indian Railways has continued concession in fare to four categories of persons with disability, eleven categories of Patients and Students. However, cost of granting concessions weighs heavily on Railways, hence scope of extending concessions to all categories of passengers including Senior Citizens is not desirable." [View the response of Railway Board](#)



BRANCHES IN ACTION

30.08.2022: AIBSNLREA CHANDIGARH BRANCH BIMONTHLY GENERAL BODY MEETING HELD:

A bimonthly General meeting of AIBSNLREA Chandigarh Branch was conducted at Hotel PEARL in Industrial Area-2 CHANDIGARH on 29-08-2022. The Branch Secretary welcomed and thanked the members for sparing their valuable time. Shri M.D. BHASIN

President of the Branch addressed the house and spoke on efforts taken by CHQ and aggressively fighting for release of Medical Claims of the members. He appreciated the efforts of CHQ for arrears of 78.2% fitment benefit from 1.1.2007 through court with the next date of court case being 14th of September. The President also discussed the issue of CGHS and the house wanted simplified procedures in switching over to CGHS. Due to crowd in CGHS dispensary the demand for opening of more dispensaries was also discussed. The President said the demand is being pursued. He spoke on enhancement of fixed medical allowance from 1000 to 3000, this case was too taken by CHQ. Shri Vinesh Bhatia who retired under VRS scheme joined AIBSNLREA Chandigarh Branch as a life member. Snacks and tea were served and sweets were distributed by Branch Secretary Shri M.K Kalra in view of the birthday of his son. The meeting ended with a happy note.

04.08.2022: AIBSNLREA KURUKSHETRA BRANCH HOLDS ITS GENERAL BODY MEETING:

A General Body meeting of Kurukshetra branch was held on 3.08.2022 at 11.00 AM in Haryana Tourism Neelkanthi Yatri Nivas under the chairmanship of Shri S K Verma. Thirty one members were present including two new Life members enrolled in the meeting. The Branch Secretary greeted the gathering and welcomed the new Life Members. Shri D S Sandhu OS North briefed the members about the status of cases taken up at the CHQ level viz migration to SAMPANN, revival of BSNL, restoration of concession to Sr citizens in trains, Improvement in functioning of CGHS, supply of Form16/16A by email, revision of IDA wef 01.07.2022 , efforts to get early payment of pending medical reimbursement bills of BSNL pensioners, status of court case and many more. [View Haryana section of State News page for full report].

02.08.2022: UJJAIN BRANCH (MP STATE) OF AIBSNLREA HOLDS A GB MEETING:

AIBSNLREA, Ujjain Branch of Madhya Pradesh State held a General Body meeting on 26.07.2022 at Surana Palace Hotel. The members first observed two minutes silence in memory of their colleague-members who expired during the Covid-19 period. After discussions on various issues, election of new Office-Bearers of the Branch for next term was taken up. The body was elected unanimously. [View the list of office bearers](#)



STATEMENT OF AMOUNT RECEIVED DURING AUGUST 2022

Dharamshala Branch (Himachal Pradesh State) deposited Rupees two thousand two hundred (Rs. 2200/-) only in the S/B Account of CHQ with Canara Bank on 30.08.2022 as CHQ quota for 11 new life members.

Edited and published by Shri S Basu, General Secretary, AIBSNLREA.