

## **Wage Negotiation starts in BSNL**

Consequent to the Two Days Strike notice and agreement reached between the management and United Forum of BSNL unions, wage negotiation was initiated on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2008 as agreed to. The Management was represented by Shri Shakeel Ahmad, GM (SR), Smt. Arundati Panda, GM (EF), P.K. Purwar, GM (CA), Smt. Anima Roy, DGM (SR) and P.C. Kandpal, ADG (SR). The Staff Side consisted of S/Shri V.A.N. Namboodiri, General Secretary, BSNLEU, V. Subburaman, General Secretary, TEPU, Suresh Kumar, General Secretary, BSNLMS (BTEF), D.P. Patwa, Dy. General Secretary, AIBCTES, R.S. Chouhan (BSNLEU) and Tomar (BSNLMS).

Com. V.A.N. Namboodiri presented the demands of the non-executives, as already submitted in the Memorandum given to the management. He initiated the discussion by stating that comparing to the CG Employees as also PSU employees the BSNL employees are having wage revision after 11 years since 1996. The Central employees already had revision as per VI CPC report. The govt. has already taken decision on the pay revision of executives in PSUs as per the recommendations of the II Pay Revision Committee. But even the wage negotiation has not started for non-executives till now. Hence there is urgency to speed up the discussion and decision. He demanded for interim relief to be paid to non-executives as the process of negotiation is already delayed. The government has issued instructions for 5 year wage negotiation as per the assurance of Prime Minister to the unions on the background of the strike notice by CPSTU as also BSNLEU for 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2008, and this should be implemented. The disparity between the maximum of executives and minimum of non-executives should be reduced. The minimum wage of Rs.14,000/- demanded by the United Forum is based on scientific principles and should be accepted. The wages in comparable PSUs like ONGC, NTPC, Airport Authority are higher and non-executives in BSNL also should be brought to that level. II Pay Revision Committee has graded BSNL in A+, the highest category, and this should be reflected in the payscales of non-executives. The Perks can be decided early since, these are given usually with prospective effect. HRA at higher percentage be granted on the basis of VI CPC recommendations immediately. He also pointed out that in view of certain recommendations of the VI CPC and II Pay Revision Committee, a supplementary memorandum will be submitted by the unions. He wanted an early favourable settlement.

Other leaders from the staff side supplemented the points raised by Com. Namboodiri.

The official side stated that the issue of Interim Relief has already been referred to DoT and the reply is awaited. They also requested the staff side to consider the declining financial position of BSNL and the impact of pension on the company. The present wage bill consists of 23% of the total revenue and this is liable to be increased to about 33% after wage revision. The official side requested the staff side to consider all these while during the negotiation. The points raised by the staff side will be considered by the management. But so far the govt. has not given any directions to the management. Regarding the open ended payscale, official side stated that it will create problem for pension contribution since the maximum of the scale is taken for calculating pension. The staff side may suggest whether the HRA/CCA is to be brought out from the preview of wage negotiation and settled separately. They also suggested performance related pay and sought the opinion of staff side.

It was decided to continue the discussion in the next meeting. The staff demanded for early meeting. They also wanted the Interim Relief to be decided immediately without further delay.

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