



All India Graduate Engineers & Telecom Officers Association

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GS/AIGETOA/2020/81

Dated 07.08.2020

To,

Shri Anshu Prakash Ji,
Hon'ble Secretary, Dept of Telecom,
Sanchar Bhawan, New Delhi.

Subject: Regarding up-gradation of existing 2G/3G mobile network, deployed in BSNL's Phase-VII & VIII.4 projects to support 4G in BSNL and readiness for 5G Network in BSNL- Reg.

Respected Sir,

With reference to the subject cited above, we would like to submit our concern over the delay in implementation of some important aspects of BSNL revival plan announced by the Government of India in October 2019 along with allocation of 5MHz spectrum for roll out of 4G Services on pan India basis on the key initiative of our Hon'ble MoC & IT, Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad Ji. We would like to draw your kind attention regarding delay in 4G network expansion in BSNL, where the company decided to follow two strategies for deployment of 4G nodes in its network as given below:

1. ***Procurement of 50K 4G sites (28 million lines) with associate equipment for Pan India basis through Phase IX Tender with costing of about Rs 8000 Cr.***
2. ***Up gradation of existing up-gradable 2G/3G nodes to 4G by addition of minimal incremental hardware and software, being proprietary in nature through add on order.***

Your benign authority is already aware that due to issues raised by some segments and instructions from DoT, the Phase IX tender has been cancelled by BSNL on 01.07.2020, which has seriously dented BSNL's early plan for full-fledged 4G rollout across the Nation. Sir, BSNL is badly suffering due to the delay in providing quality high-speed wireless data service in absence of 4G network to the customers while other competitors are gaining out of it. BSNL has been losing its customer base owing to the reason and its revenue from the segment is severely hit because of non-implementation of full rollout of 4G services across the Nation. This becomes further more significant in the current scenario, where high speed data has now become essential commodity due to multifold increase in the concepts of Work from Home and Online Classes for kids in the current pandemic period. While all other Telecom Service Providers are capturing potential market because of availability of 4G services but BSNL has been forced to remain an outside player owing to handicap of not having 4G services in its arsenal.

New Tender procedure for deployment of 4G networks will further take approximately 9 to 10 month time and there after deployment will take its own time, in this way it will take around 1-1.5 years time to complete the rollout of the service. This will push the already depleting market share of mobile segment of BSNL further downwards and ultimately it will lead to our negligible presence in the market in this segment. By the time, BSNL will be able to rollout 4G, other service providers will offering 5G services in India.

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As the retendering process will take time, another way for faster deployment of 4G in BSNL's network is by upgrading existing upgradable 2G/3G mobile RAN network of Phase-VII & Phase-VIII.4 Projects to support 4G also by addition of minimum hardware and software through their respective OEMs through add on order and via negotiation route, being proprietary in nature. Being an only Government PSU in telecom sector with all India presence, full-fledged 4G services to BSNL customers are very much needed, as without 4G services survival of the company appears to be bleak. So, this options needs to be seriously explored that BSNL can deploy their 4G services through expansion of existing upgradable 2G/3G mobile network of Phase-VII & VIII.4 to support 4G by their OEMs. It is learnt that the technical committee of DoT is also examining the aforesaid route for deployment of 4G nodes, which is yet to submit its recommendations. We request for an expeditious action on the same to let our beloved company survive these testing time.

In the meanwhile we request that BSNL should also be allowed to simultaneously make itself ready for launch of 5G services by optimizing the use of spectrum in 900 MHz band and by putting in place a roadmap for start of 5G network for BSNL with the usage of its most precious 900MHz for better coverage in low cost or allow us to use 700 MHz or 800 Mhz .

In light of the above, we request for your kind intervention in ensuring the clearance of all the requisites in a timely manner to enable BSNL to rollout its 4G services without any further delay. It is a fact that time is the essence of capturing any market and any further delay in deployment of 4G network will only hamper the revival path of BSNL.

With warm regards,

Sd/--
[MD.WASI AHMAD]
General Secretary

Copy to:

1. Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad Ji, Hon'ble MoC & IT, Govt of India, New Delhi for kind intervention Pl.
2. Shri P. K. Purwar, CMD BSNL for kind information and N/A please.
3. Shri S. K. Mishra, Director (CM), BSNL Board for kind information and N/A please.
4. All other functional Directors, Dir(CFA)/Dir(HR)/Dir(Fin)/Dir(EB), BSNL Board for kind information pl.