

Wage Revision

Certain facts

Wage revision has become due for BSNL employees w.e.f. 01.01.2007. Even after the lapse of more than one year, management has not started the wage negotiations. The Pay Committee, formed to recommend wage revision for the Executives of all the PSUs in the country, has already submitted its report on 30th May, 2008.

Under these circumstances, it is nothing but natural that the employees of BSNL become anxious, as to why wage negotiation has not started in BSNL? Utilising this opportunity, NFTE has started confusing the employees. They say that wage negotiation has not started in BSNL, only because the recognized union has not so far submitted any memorandum to the management.

Why BSNLEU has not submitted the memorandum?

It is not that BSNLEU has not so far prepared its memorandum for wage revision. In fact, BSNLEU's memorandum was finalized way back in May 2007 itself. It is already placed on BSNLEU's website. A copy of the memorandum is already circulated to all the partners of the United Forum. This fact is known to every one.

Then, why it was not submitted to the BSNL management? There are reasons. Firstly, BSNLEU wants to ensure that one single common memorandum is presented to the management, on behalf of all the unions, whether recognized or unrecognized. This will definitely increase our bargaining power and ensure a better deal for the employees. It is a fact that NFTE is raising some unnecessary issues and is trying to avoid a single memorandum being presented. But we are determined to persuade all the unions.

DoT has not given clearance so far.

Secondly, BSNL requires the clearance from DoT for starting wage negotiations. So far, DoT has not given the clearance. In the exploratory meeting for wage revision, held between the Recognised Union and the management on 11.01.2008, BSNLEU and its alliance partners insisted for immediate starting of wage negotiations. But it was categorically stated by the management that they could not start wage negotiation, unless they get the clearance of the administrative ministry, viz., the DoT. The minutes of this meeting, issued vide BSNL letter no. BSNL/38-1/SR/2006 dated 25.01.2008 states thus:-

“.....Director (HRD), BSNL Board mentioned that as per guidelines issued by DPE vide their OM dated 09.11.2006, the administrative ministry (DoT) has to issue suitable instructions to start wage revision negotiation process for unionized workers w.e.f. 01.01.2007. DDG (SR) has informed that a letter has already been sent to DoT and DoT's guidelines/reply is still awaited.....”

BSNLEU is consistently trying to start early wage negotiations in BSNL. The issue was once again raised by BSNLEU and its alliance partners, in the meeting held with Shri Sidhartha Behura, Secretary, DoT, on 22.05.2008, who assured to do the needful.

The matter was again raised in the National Council meeting held on 17.06.2008, for which the management replied that they still have not received the necessary clearance from DoT. Hence, it is totally a false propaganda that wage negotiation in BSNL has not started, only because the recognized union has not submitted the memorandum.

Other factors

It is a fact that with every wage revision, the gap between the pay and allowances of Non-Executives and Executives widen. Every time the management makes hard bargaining with the Non-Executives. At the same time it is very liberal towards the top officers. This growing disparity has got to be checked. BSNLEU is aware that the Rao committee, constituted to recommend pay revision to the executives would submit its report before 31st May, 2008. So, naturally suggestions are there that before submitting its memorandum, BSNLEU should know what Rao Committee recommends for the Executives.

BSNLEU has already initiated the process of evolving a single common memorandum. It will be submitted to the management shortly. BSNLEU is hopeful that it will get a fair deal to the employees, by uniting all the unions.
