

BSNL unions oppose stake sale, retrenchment

Our Bureau

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The All-India Joint Action of Committee (JAC) of BSNL unions has warned the Government and the management that it will not allow any plan to disinvest stake or to retrench employees in the garb of improving the functioning of the public sector telecom company.

"We are told that the two-day Telecom Commission meeting which began in Delhi on Wednesday is discussing both the divestment and retrenchment as suggested by the commission headed by Mr Sam Pitroda. We are not going to allow it," Mr V.A.N. Nam-

boodri, Convener of the JAC, said.

He was addressing the first of the series of national-level meetings planned by JAC here on Wednesday. Similar meetings will be held in Bangalore on Thursday and Chennai on Friday. "We will build support for our demands," he said.

The JAC, which commands membership of three lakh BSNL staff, said it would hold meetings with MPs to win over their support.

TENDER CANCELLED

"There has been a deliberate attempt by the Government to weaken the public sector telecom company. It has violated



Mr V.A.N. Namboodri

its own promises made in the National Telecom Policy of 1999 that promised free licences. The market share of BSNL as also its revenue and profit have gone down significantly due to the cancellation of ten-

ders in 2008 and 2010," he said.

"While the tender for 45.5 million connections was reduced to half, the DoT cancelled the tender for 93 million connections on flimsy grounds, leading to a severe capacity crunch. When it is not a security issue when private players use the Chinese equipment, how can it be when BSNL proposes to use the same," he asked.

While appreciating the need for secure networks, he felt that there should be a level playing ground for BSNL to expand and increase the numbers. "While we are asked to pay the licence fee to ensure a

level playing ground with private companies, we are not allowed to procure equipment to increase capacities and expand," he regretted.

With regard to the collection of Rs 18,500 crore as licence fee for 3G and broadband spectrum licences, Mr P. Ashokbabu, All-India General Secretary of BSNLEU (BSNL Employees Union), said the effort was to evaporate the Rs 38,000 crore reserve funds the PSU accumulated over a period of time.

"They showed a loss of Rs 5,600 crore and would spend Rs 18,500 crore on spectrum licence, consuming most of the reserve fund," he argued.