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General Secretary

# **BSNL EMPLOYEES UNION**

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## **Press statement**

**Dated: 21.05.2020**

### ***BSNLEU calls for lunch demonstration today.***

BSNLEU, the Main Recognised Union of BSNL, has called on the employees to organise lunch hour demonstrations today, the 21<sup>st</sup> May, 2020. In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, BSNLEU has called on the employees to organise the lunch hour demonstrations, by wearing masks and by maintaining social distance. The issues for which the lunch hour demonstrations are being organised, are as follows:-

**1. Roll back the decision to increase working hours from 8 hours a day to 12 hours a day.**

BSNL Employees Union vehemently opposes the increasing of working hours, from 8 hours a day to 12 hours a day, by certain state governments. Ever since coming to power in 2014, the Narendra Modi government has been taking all out efforts to amend the Labour Laws of the country, in favour of employers. One such move was to amend the Factories Act, to increase the working hours beyond 8 hours a day. However, the amendment of the Labour Laws is being stoutly resisted by the Central Trade Unions, which have gone on nationwide General Strikes. It is in this backdrop, that with the green signal from the Centre, certain state governments, including Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha, etc., have increased the working hours from 8 hours a day to 12 hours a day. This is a total violation of the decision of the ILO. The ILO has decided that the working hours should be 8 hours a day and 48 hours a week. Government of India has ratified this decision of the ILO and has all along been following it. Now, utilising the restrictions imposed on account of the lock-down, the above mentioned state governments have silently increased the working hours to 12 hours. The working class has achieved the 8 hour working day, by shedding blood and by making immense sacrifices. We cannot allow the government to increase the working hours beyond 8 hours a day. BSNLEU demands that the above mentioned state governments should immediately roll back the increase in the working hours.

**2. On time payment of salary to the employees.**

The BSNL Management is not paying salary to the employees on time. It is regrettable that payment of salary to the employees has become the last priority of the BSNL Management. Even the salary for the month of April, 2020, is being disbursed only today. We demand the on time payment of salary to the employees every month.

**3. Contract workers' issues.**

The contract workers in BSNL have not been paid the wages for the past 10 months. Around 10 contract workers have committed suicide so far. This issue has been raised in the Parliament also, by some MPs. Further, the BSNL Corporate Office has issued letter on 30.09.2019 for the retrenchment of the contract workers, as well as for the reduction of their working hours. Now, the Finance Ministry, as well as the Labour Ministry have issued instructions, stating that the contract workers should not be deprived of their wages during the lock-down period. But the BSNL Management is not implementing these instructions. In addition to this, the BSNL Management is outsourcing all the works, which have so far been done by the contract workers. As a result of this, again large scale retrenchment of the contract workers is taking place. BSNLEU demands that the wage arrears of the contract workers should be paid by the Management immediately and it should give up all measures that are aimed at retrenching the contract workers.

**4. Curtailment of the medical facilities of the employees.**

At a time when the entire nation is struggling hard to control the spread of the COVID-19, the BSNL Management has taken the retrograde step of curtailing the existing medical facilities of its employees. According to the letter issued by the BSNL Management on 08.05.2020, the ceiling on expenditures to be incurred for Outdoor Treatment, has been drastically reduced from 23 days to 15 days. While the top officers of the Company are availing luxuries at the cost of the Company, it is highly deplorable that the existing medical facilities of the ordinary employees are being curtailed. BSNLEU demands that the Management should withdraw its letter dated 08.05.2020, and the ceiling on expenditure for Outdoor Treatment should be restored back to 23 days.



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