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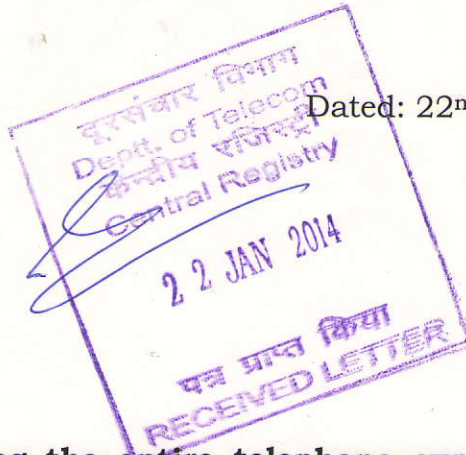
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No.AIBSNLOA/CHQ/2014/5

Dated: 22nd January 2014

To

Shri M. F. Farooqui,
Secretary,
Dept. of Telecommunications,
New Delhi.



Subject: Proposal for shifting the entire telephone expenses paid the Central Government – mobile, landline, broadband and enterprise bills – to BSNL and MTNL and to give exclusive rights to them - reg

R/Sir,

We would like to draw your kind attention to various media reports stating that 'GSM industry body The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) has written to Department of Telecom against implementing a proposal mandating government staff and enterprises to use only the networks of state-run telecom operators BSNL and MTNL, saying any such proposal will be anti-competitive.' The reports also state that the Director General of COAI has said in its letter that "We once again reiterate that any such move would be arbitrary, incorrect and unjustified and would be anti-competitive and against all principles of level playing field".

2. In the letter, the industry body is reported to have said that implementing the proposal will violate Article 14 of the Constitution and would be against various judgments of the telecom tribunal which had asked that BSNL/MTNL be treated equally with other private operators. COAI has also reportedly wanted DoT to ensure fair competition and level playing field the private operators should be given the same opportunity as the state-run telcos and the proposal of mandating only BSNL/MTNL connections for government employees and enterprises should not be implemented.

3. The COAI crying foul on this issue is nothing but a ploy for putting pressure on the Government to abandon its rightful decision on the plea of level playing field. If at all anyone is to complain about absence of level playing field, it should be BSNL and not the private operators. It is the Government owned PSU - BSNL which is always shouldering the responsibility of fulfilling the Government's social obligations like providing communication facilities in rural and remote areas, despite making huge losses due to this. Reports of the private operators violating radiation norms, CAF (Customer Application Form) norms and yet escaping penalty are nothing new. Some

private operators continuously avoiding payment of dues to BSNL through non-stop litigations is also a fact known to everyone.

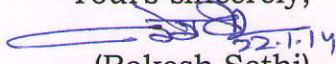
4. Only a few days back, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has further extended by one year the reservation quota policy for M/s ITI Ltd., by reserving 30 percent of procurement orders placed by BSNL for products manufactured by M/s ITI Ltd., and 20 percent of the network rollout orders for its turn key projects. No such conditions prevail for the private operators. A long list of such inequalities can be cited.

5. **We would like to point out that Government of India taking a policy decision mandating its departments and undertakings to go for only BSNL/MTNL services cannot be a violation of any fundamental right as is being sought to be projected by the COAI. Moreover, it is the prerogative of the Government to decide which service provider it would chose to get services for its Departments.** Throughout the country, a large number of private companies, multi-national companies and industries mandate purchase of a certain brand of mobile connections for its employees and this has been the practice continuing for years now.

6. Therefore, we request you to brush aside the pressure tactics by the COAI and to implement without further delay, the policy mandating all Government departments and Government PSUs to surrender all telecommunication facilities provided by private operators and to shift to the network of BSNL/MTNL which are public assets.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,


(Rakesh Sethi)

9/c General Secretary

Copy to: 1. Shri Kapil Sibal,
Minister of Communications & IT
2. Shri P.Chidambaram,
Minister of Finance &
Chairman of the GoM on
Revival of BSNL & MTNL
3. Shri R.K.Upadhyay,
CMD, BSNL