

**Arvind Sawant**

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT - FORMER UNION MINISTER  
(LOK SABHA)



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*Addressed to Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi*

**Subject : Revival of MTNL and BSNL**

*Respected Sir,*

Kindly recall my earlier correspondences as well as request and demands on the floor of the Parliament for the revival of BSNL and MTNL. Also, kindly refer the replies given by the Hon'ble Minister of Communication on the floor of the Parliament as well to my letters, wherein the Hon'ble Minister of Communication has assured every time that his Ministry is initiating necessary measures for the revival of MTNL and BSNL. Once he announced that because of the action of Ministry, the BSNL has come into profit, but alas, it is just a gimmick of a moment not to cherish long.

Sir, finally the Ministry and Department of Communication came with the proposal of "Voluntary Retirement Scheme" as if that was the only remedy for the revival of these companies. Still, I supported it whole heartedly. Thousands of employees opted for VRS from MTNL and BSNL and the target set by the Government to retrench the employees by means of VRS was achieved, without giving thought or proper planning as to how these companies will run with the remaining staff. Today MTNL and BSNL are almost in ICU but can be recovered if the Government desires to do so or else from 'Oxygen Bed' of ICU it will go on to "Ventilator" without any hopes of recovery.



Can it be a pride for the Government ? with the measure of VRS the Government further took a decision to sell the open and excess land of BSNL and MTNL so as to reimburse the budgetary proposal granted for VRS on the name of revival. The duty to sale the land was allotted to the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM). But during the last two years DIPAM failed to sell the land and raise substantial funds.

Before this, in fact, there were number of opportunities to the Ministry of Communication to revive these companies which were deliberately ignored to support the private entrepreneurs e.g. under Digital India programmes, laying of optical fiber was essential and Government provided budgetary support of Rs.35,000 crores for the same. But instead of giving this important work to MTNL and BSNL, which are established companies and has expertise for providing such services as well as reach to nook and corner of the country, the work was allotted to the private entrepreneur. Had the work been allotted to MTNL and BSNL, today they would not have reach to this weak status as well as Government could have achieved the target on time because of the dedicated manpower and would have fetched success to digital India programme.

MTNL has a wonderful data centre set in Mumbai which was created with the assistance of the engineers of I.I.T. but the same was not utilized as expected.

The Dolphin mobile service of MTNL and the Cell-1 of BSNL were the pride of Mumbai, Delhi and rest of the Country respectively.



Even today, one can experience it by visiting some remote places or in hilly areas, the Cell-1 services are available but will not get the service from the other operators. In the case of Mumbai and Delhi as MTNL was not supported to increase BTS because of the paucity of funds the service is deteriorating every day. On one side MTNL is having hardly 600 BTS whereas on the other side Jio has 6000 BTS. It is not that MTNL did not have talent or expertise of engineers but it is the lack of support of the Government which is causing this debacle. Today the mobile equipments of MTNL/BSNL have become old and outdated and needs immediate, immediate replacement. But the Government is not allowing them to buy it from the global market and asking them to procure it indigenously. In India nobody is manufacturing the desired and compatible mobile equipment to serve the nation, but to that also under the pretext of "Atmanirbhar Bharat" the Government is depriving MTNL and BSNL to procure the latest equipment.

Sir, with a severe pain I plea to you that today hardly 900 regular employees are serving in MTNL, Mumbai which caters the area of Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai, Thane, Mira Bhaynder, Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporations and Panvel and Uran Nagarpalika areas. Is it possible to anyone, even if you provide high tech equipment, to maintain such a huge area with 900 employees? While implementation of VRS was in progress, neither the management nor the Government planned for running the business after VRS. Hence, to handle the load of the work the Managements of both MTNL and BSNL opted for contracts and finalized the contractor who engaged the contractual labourers who were untrained and have



never worked in telecom sector. Sir, it is not housekeeping, it is a technical job which needs a serious training. I feel sorry that the action of the Government was like "Rome was burning and Nero was playing fiddle on the roof".

Sir, kindly verify, could they add a single connection either in mobile or in landline services during the last almost a year? Worst of it was that contract was allotted to such companies who were blacklisted and have failed miserably. Their payments were drawn regularly with the certificate that their "Services are Satisfactory. No value addition, no maintenance, no increase in lines and surrendering of landlines has become the only business for MTNL. However, the flaw is being enjoyed by the contractors as there is provision in the contract that the deduction for not attending the fault or if the fault is attended after 48 hours the penalty should not cross 12% of the cost of the tender. A contractor who is being paid Rs.1/- crore per month is bound to get the said amount after deduction of only Rs.12 lakhs as penalty for not maintaining but will be awarded Rs/88/- lakhs for further deteriorating service of MTNL.

Huge Housing Complexes are raising in Mumbai and Delhi who still believe in Government services, they still demand optical fiber but due to paucity of fund, MTNL has failed to fulfill their demand.

Hence with the folded hands I request your honour to grant administrative empowerment and substantial financial support to MTNL and BSNL for following work on top priority :



1. Funds and permission to purchase mobile equipment from the global market.
2. Funds to increase number of BTS towers.
3. Funds and permission for purchase and laying of optical fiber.
4. Permission to recruit the required minimum staff for the maintenance of existing connections and for providing new connections.
5. To grant them necessary training, may be on job, with some expert professional staff, may be even our retired officers.
6. To grant permission to rent out the vacant floors and vacant places of MTNL and BSNL with accountability.
7. To grant permission to use the revenue received through the sale of land and collection of rent for the development of the mobile and landline services by empowering the Executive Director, who is unit head with accountability.
8. To utilize the data centers to its optimum.
9. To merge MTNL & BSNL.

The employees of these companies worked without caring about their lives during the corona pandemic. Nearly 106 Employees of MTNL died in Mumbai and Delhi. But the Management has not shown any kindness or humanity by atleast granting some financial support to bereaved families of the deceased employees. Why they could not extend any help to bereaved families of their own employees ? The answer is no funds !! The death of an employee who scarified his life without caring for himself and his family has no value. Who is responsible for this ?

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Sir, what they need is your kind hearted blessings, love, affection and care for these companies and their dedicated employees and strong will for its revival. I still hope that BSNL and MTNL, the companies with great potential, can bounce back and rise to the occasion, if timely help is blessed on them.

*With Warm Regards !!*

Yours sincerely,

  
Arvind Sawant

Member of Parliament

**Hon'ble Shri Narendra Modi ji,**  
Prime Minister,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.