

## **Regarding need to accord permission to BSNL to roll out 4G and 5G services-laid**

**SHRI P.R. NATARAJAN (COIMBATORE):** When the private telcos are speedily rolling out their 5 services, govt owned BSNL has not even rolled out its 4G service and thus lagging behind in providing high speed data service to the customers. In 2022 alone 77 lakh customers have left BSNL. It is in this juncture, govt has announced two important decisions regarding future of the BSNL. The first one is BSNL's 4G & 5G services, the second is the third revival package to BSNL.

In line with Government's decision, the Minister of Communications has made some announcements regarding BSNL's 4G&5G services (economic Times 24.05.2023). BSNL has started rolling out 4G Networks with 200 sites and after a 3 months trial, it will launch an average of 200 sites per day.

The second point is that 4G network of BSNL will be upgraded to 5G by Nove-Dec.2023. The fact of the matter is that BSNL will be in a position to start its 4G service only in Oct-2024. This is because, the TATA Consultancy services (TCS) from which BSNL has been mandated to procure its 4G equipments has not even started supplying the equipments. TCS is expected to complete the supply and installation of 4G equipments to BSNL not before Oct.2024. By the time, BSNL starts its 4G services, customers would have massively left BSNL.

The BSNL could have launched its 4G service atleast 2 year back through software up-gradation of its existing 3G equipments into 4G equipments.

In April, 2020 BSNL floated a tender to procure 1 lakh 4G BTS (Base Transceivers Station) from global vendors. Government has subsequently cancelled these tenders and stated that BSNL should not procure 4G equipments from foreign vendors. Whereas, private telcos like JIO, AIRTEL and VODAFONE IDEA have procured their 4G&5G equipments only from foreign vendors without giving level play ground to the BSNL to compete with foreign telecom giants.Hence, I urge upon the Union Government to take speedy action to allot 4G & 5G to BSNL, a govt-owned CPSU.

