

NFTE-FNTO AGREE FOR IPO AND VRS? (Contd.)

After our exposure of the double talk of NFTE-FNTO alliance and their silent agreement for IPO and VRS, FNTO has gone on damage control mood.

Further, it had gone to attack BSNLEU on the same points which it had raised at the time of membership verification and which the workers have out rightly rejected. The slanders and abuses hurled by it had recoiled thus making its defeat more damaging. In the first verification, NFTE got 1,05,209 votes and FNTO got 40,215 votes, together which comes to 1,45,425 votes. But jointly they now got only 95,225 votes, 50,1999 less than they got in the 1st verification. On the contrary, BSNLEU got 89,496 votes in first verification and in the present verification got 1,24,053 votes, 34,557 votes more than in 1st verification. Why the reduction for NFTE-FNTO alliance and more for BSNLEU led United Forum? It is only because of the correct path taken by BSNLEU and United Forum in protecting and advancing the rights of workers and safe guarding BSNL through sustained struggles.

In counter to our point that NFTE and FNTO agreed to go on strike on 11th July 2007, only one hour after BSNLEU declared strike, FNTO has countered by stating the absurd that BSNLEU was against strike and agreed only in the last minute.

The facts are well known to all. After the meeting with Hon'ble Minister, General Secretary FNTO wanted to defer the strike. Again in the Joint Forum meeting held in the night of 10.07.2007, some unions including FNTO wanted to defer the strike, as according to General Secretary FNTO, the majority number of unions were of the same opinion. General Secretary, BSNLEU, who is also the Convener of Joint Forum stated that we should go on strike and if there is no consensus or unanimity, then each union can take its own decision and accordingly BSNLEU has decided to go on strike.

Simultaneously, General Secretaries of AIBSNLEA and SNEA(I) both declared their decision to go on strike. It was only after about an hour that FNTO intimated the Convener over phone that FNTO and NFTE will also join the strike. This is a fact known to everybody. Now, the crude attempts to twist the facts will only recoil as the abuses and slanders had recoiled earlier.

With regard to the strikes, the allegation that BSNLEU deferred all the strikes has no relation with facts. In addition to the one-day strike on 11th July 2007, BSNLEU had gone on strike many times, the last being on 20th August 2008 on the demands of PSU workers including that of BSNL workers. It is to be noted that FNTO did not participate in any of these strikes except that of 11.07.2007, that too as already stated earlier.

Of course, there were also strikes that were deferred. The proposed strike on 6th January 2006 was deferred after Secretary, DoT assured in writing that BSNL will not be disinvested / privatised, last mile cables will not be unbundled, government will make all efforts to grant Navaratna status to BSNL etc. This was a unanimous decision by the Joint Forum.

Another deferrment was the proposed strike of 7th May 2008 on the demand of starting wage negotiation and connected matters. FNTO did not issue strike notice and kept away. The strike was deferred after Prime Minister met the Trade Unions and assured five year wage agreement, 50% IDA merger etc. Government had already issued orders on both. There had been similar circumstances when negotiation has taken place and the Joint Forum or United Forum reviewed and unanimously taken decisions to defer the strike.

Why FNTO has disassociated from the meeting of Joint Forum in which decision was taken to go on agitation on the issue of ITS absorption. It has given its reason for disassociation with Joint Forum stating that its members are being transferred by management at the initiative of BSNLEU. However, it was not able to cite any such transfer case. When enquired with management, they also stated that no such case was pointed out to them.

The reason for disassociation of FNTO with Joint Forum is well understood. Its commitment not to oppose IPO and VRS and agitation on ITS absorption etc are well known.

Of course, every union has the right to take its own decision. The track record of all unions are before the workers. During the last three verifications, the BSNL workers have taken their decision accordingly. Getting desperate and frustrated will not help anybody.