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## BSNL top executives asked to rejoin DoT tech wing

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KOLKATA: All top executives of state-owned [BSNL](#) wanting to return to the communications ministry have been directed to join the telecom department's technical wing on November 8.

BSNL has nearly 1,600 Indian [Telecom Service Officers](#) (ITS) who were deputed to it nearly 11 years ago when the telco was spun off as a separate corporate entity from the telecom department.

"The communications ministry has issued blanket transfer orders sensing that a majority of these [ITS](#) cadre, comprising BSNL's senior management, wish to return," a top executive with direct knowledge of the matter told ET.

Last month, the ministry had given a November 4 ultimatum to these officers to either stay back in BSNL or return to the department. They will now join the Telecom Engineering Centre (TEC).

"BSNL has been asked to issue the last pay certificates (LPCs) of all ITS officers relieved to ensure timely disbursement of pay and allowances by the TEC. This will exclude officers who have in the past approached various courts across the country and hearings are still in progress," the official quoted above said.

The sudden transfer orders have raised concerns as [DoT](#) has field units in all state capitals, including fully functional finance wings which handle everything from pension disbursements to subsidy claims. Other executives aware of the developments said there was hardly any space to accommodate an additional 1500-plus ITS officers at its technical wing, while also expressing surprise at mass transfer orders to Delhi despite [TEC](#) having multiple regional offices.

ET had reported last week that BSNL was merging operations and installing a back-up senior management team to take over operations in an emergency situation. Circle heads who have opted to return to DoT have been asked to suggest replacements from the existing pool of absorbed officers as part of a contingency plan. But BSNL circle heads believe this may be easier said than done since the seniority factor could be a hitch.

"It may virtually be impossible to push the case of competent executives we want as replacements unless they are the seniormost in their respective functions.

Seniority still remains the biggest determining factor for key administrative appointments," explained two BSNL circle heads who have opted to return to DoT.

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