

Information note to the Press (Press Release No. 180/2012)

For Immediate Release

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India

TRAI issues Direction on measures for addressing the menace of missed calls (wangiri calls) from international locations prompting customers to respond.

New Delhi, 7th September, 2012: With a view to protecting the interest of prepaid cellular mobile telephone service consumers from the menace of missed calls (wangiri calls) and calls relating to winning of prizes or lottery from international numbers, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) today issued a Direction to all Access Service Providers regarding provision of ISD facility to prepaid cellular mobile telephone service consumers and advisory to consumers through SMS at periodic intervals.

2. TRAI has been receiving complaints from consumers about missed calls from international telephone numbers, which are often premium numbers charging high tariff, prompting the consumers to make call to such numbers. TRAI has also been receiving complaints from consumers about calls and SMS from international numbers informing them about winning of prizes or lottery and prompting consumers to call a particular number to claim the prize or lottery money. These numbers are international numbers, which are often premium numbers charging higher tariffs. By responding to such calls/SMS the consumers have to pay unintended charges.

3. TRAI has been in discussion with the service providers and industry associations from October 2011, about implementation of measures for controlling the above menace. After considering the various options for addressing the problem, the Authority felt that certain unscrupulous parties are exploiting the ISD facility provided on prepaid cellular mobile telephone service numbers by inducing consumers to make ISD calls unknowingly. Therefore, to protect the subscribers from unintended deduction of amount from their pre-paid account, the Authority has directed all Access Service providers as follows:

- (i) Ensure that no ISD facility is activated on pre-paid SIM without the explicit consent of the consumer;
- (ii) Inform all pre-paid subscribers having ISD facility, through SMS, within ten days of the date of issue of this direction, that ISD facility of the subscribers shall be discontinued after sixty days and if such subscribers want to continue with ISD facility, they should give their explicit consent for availing such facility within sixty days of the receipt of the SMS;
- (iii) Discontinue, after the expiry of sixty days of the date on which the subscriber is informed through SMS, ISD facility of all such pre-paid cellular mobile telephone service subscribers who have not given explicit consent for continuing with ISD facility;
- (iv) Inform through SMS, within ten days of the date of the issue of this direction, all pre-paid cellular mobile telephone service consumers not to respond to missed calls from unknown international numbers with prefix other than “+91” or calls about winning prizes or lottery and send such SMS to the consumers every six months; and
- (vi) Provide easy and transparent opt-in and opt-out facility to the consumers of the cellular mobile telephone service for activation or deactivation of ISD facility.

4. The Direction has already been placed on TRAI's website www.trai.gov.in. For any clarifications on the Direction, contact Shri A. Robert J. Ravi, Advisor (Quality of Service), Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, Mahanagar Doorsanchar Bhawan, Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg, New Delhi-110 002 (Telephone:011-23230404, Fax: 011-23213036, Email:advqos@trai.gov.in).

(Rajeev Agrawal)
Secretary