

Two reforms introduced for Mobile User Protection to promote a cleaner and safer digital ecosystem

Fresh KYC for SIM Swap/Replacement

Facial based biometric authentication permitted in addition to thumb and iris based biometric authentication

Complete KYC of end-users for business connections

Registration of Point-of-Sale (POS) by Licensee

Blacklisting of fraudulent POS for 3 years

Indisputable verification of each POS, i.e. Franchisee, Agents, and Distributors

52 lakh suspected Mobile Connections disconnected with Sanchar Saathi

Over 3 lakh mobile handsets traced with Sanchar Saathi

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With increasing digitalization of social-economic activities in the country, the use of telecom resources, including mobile services, is increasing rapidly for availing the online services. Digital connectivity is an enabler of social, economic and transformational mobility. Hence, it is important to promote safe utilization of Telecom resources in order to facilitate protection of mobile users.

In strengthening Government of India's commitment to foster a digitally inclusive society while maintaining the highest standards of security and customer protection, Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of Communications, Railways and Electronics & IT, today launched two reforms towards digital transformation and enhancing customer Protection

1. KYC Reforms
2. Point of Sale(POS) registration Reform

These two reforms are in direction of earlier reforms introduced with a launch of Sanchar Saathi, a citizen centric portal that has empowered India's fight against the menace of cybercrimes and financial frauds.

Point-of-Sale (POS) Registration Reforms- This reform introduces the process for mandatory registration of Franchisee, Agents and Distributors (PoS) by Licensees. This will help in eliminating the rogue PoS who by fraudulent practices issue SIMs to anti-social/anti-national elements.

The PoS registration process includes indisputable verification of PoS by Licensee. The process mandates written agreement between the PoS and the Licensees. If a PoS indulges in any illegal activities, it will be terminated and blacklisted for a period of 03 years. All the existing PoS will be registered as per this process by Licensees within 12 months.

This will help in identifying, blacklisting and eliminating rogue PoS, from the licensees' system and provide an encouragement to the upright PoS.

KYC Reforms-KYC is a process to uniquely identify a customer and enable his traceability before providing him telecom services. Strengthening of the existing KYC process is one of the tools in protecting the subscribers of telecom services from any probable frauds and thereby enhancing the confidence of general public in the digital ecosystem.

To prevent misuse of printed Aadhaar, the demographic details will mandatorily be captured by scanning QR code of printed Aadhaar. In case of disconnection of a mobile number, it will not be allocated to any other new customer till expiry of 90 days. A subscriber has to undertake complete KYC for replacement of his SIM and there will be bar of 24 hours on outgoing & incoming SMS facilities.

In addition to thumb impression and iris-based authentication in Aadhaar E-KYC process, facial based biometric authentication is also permitted.

Introduction of business connections for issuing of mobile connections to entities (for ex. company, organizations, trust, society, etc). Entities can take any number of mobile connections subject to complete KYC of all of its end-users. SIM will be activated only after successful KYC of end users and physical verification of premise/address of the entity.

Department of Telecommunications, through the transformative reforms introduced stand as a resolute commitment to safeguarding the interests of citizens of the country. Through rigorous and comprehensive measures, department aims to fortify customer security and bolster protection against the growing threat of telecom frauds. By combining cutting-edge technology with vigilant oversight, Department is steadfast in the mission to promote the highest level of safety and trust within the telecommunications landscape to provide a secure and reliable communication environment for all.

Details guidelines will follow.

IMPACT OF SANCHAR SAATHI- A CITIZEN CENTRIC PORTAL OF MOBILE USER PROTECTION

- i. 'Sanchar Saathi' portal was launched on World Telecommunication Day (17 May 2023) for protection of mobile users.

- ii. 'Sanchar Saathi' portal empowers mobile subscribers to:
 - a. Find out mobile connections registered in their name,
 - b. Report connections registered fraudulently in their name, if any, and
 - c. Report stolen/ lost mobile handsets & block them.
- iii. With the help of 'Sanchar Saathi' portal and ASTR tool, around 114 Crore active mobile connections have been analyzed. The outcome is:
 - a. More than 66 lakh suspected mobile connections were detected
 - b. Failing re-verification more than 52 lakh mobile connections have been disconnected
 - c. More than 67000 Points of Sale (PoS) have been blacklisted
 - d. About 17000 mobile handsets have been blocked
 - e. More than 300 FIRs have been registered against more than 1,700 Points of Sale (PoS)
 - f. More than 66000 WhatsApp accounts have been blocked
 - g. About 8 lakh bank/wallet accounts used by fraudsters have been frozen
- iv. Out of about 18 lakh subscribers complaints about fraudulently registered mobile connections in their name, 9.26 lakh complaints have been resolved
- v. Out of 7.5 lakhs complaints about stolen/ lost mobile handsets, 3 lakhs mobile handsets have been traced
- vi. Since January 2022, 114 illegal Telecom setups unearthed and action taken by LEAs

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