



**TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA**



**DRAFT NOTIFICATION**

**TELECOM CONSUMERS PROTECTION (THIRTEENTH AMENDMENT)  
REGULATIONS, 2026**

**No. ---- of 2026**

**New Delhi,  
7<sup>th</sup> April, 2026**

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**Stakeholders are requested to furnish their written comments by 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2026. The inputs/ comments may be sent, preferably in electronic form, to Advisor (Financial & Economic Analysis), TRAI on the email ID [fea1-div@traigov.in](mailto:fea1-div@traigov.in), which will be posted on TRAI's website [www.traigov.in](http://www.traigov.in).**

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**(\_\_ OF 2026)**

**No. RG-8/(2)/2025-ADV\_FEA-I** ---- In exercise of the powers conferred upon it under section 36, read with sub-clauses (i) and (v) of clause (b) of sub-section (1) of section 11, of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997 (24 of 1997), the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India hereby makes the following regulations further to amend the Telecom Consumers Protection Regulations, 2012 (2 of 2012), namely:-

- 1. Short title and commencement---** (1) These regulations may be called the Telecom Consumers Protection (Thirteenth Amendment) Regulations, 2026;  
(2) They shall come into force after thirty days from the date of their publication in the Official Gazette.

2. In regulation 4 of the Telecom Consumers Protection Regulations, 2012, in sub-regulation (2), in clause (c), in sub-clause (iii), for the fourth proviso, the following proviso shall be substituted, namely-

*"Provided also that the service provider shall offer Special Tariff Vouchers, exclusively for Voice and SMS, with the validity period corresponding to the each validity period of Special Tariff Vouchers being offered by them for Voice, SMS and data, whether with or without value added services.*

*Such Voice and SMS Special Tariff Vouchers shall be priced with largely proportional reduction in tariff compared to Special Tariff Vouchers of corresponding validity with Voice, SMS and data."*

(Atul Kumar Chaudhary)  
Secretary

Note.1. - The Telecom Consumers Protection Regulations, 2012 were published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part III, Section 4 dated the 6<sup>th</sup> January, 2012 vide notification number No. 308-5/2011- QOS dated the 6<sup>th</sup> January, 2012.

Note.2. - The Telecom Consumers Protection Regulations, 2012 were amended vide Notification No.308-5/2011-QOS and published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part III, Section 4 dated the 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2012.

Note.3. - The Telecom Consumers Protection Regulations, 2012 were further amended vide Notification No.308-5/2011-QOS and published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part III, Section 4 dated the 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2012.

Note.4. - The Telecom Consumers Protection Regulations, 2012 were further amended vide Notification No.308-5/2011-QOS and published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part III, Section 4 dated the 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2012.

Note. 5. -The Telecom Consumers Protection Regulations, 2012 were further amended vide Notification No.308-5/2011-QOS and published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part III, Section 4 dated the 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2012.

Note.6. - The Telecom Consumers Protection Regulations, 2012 were further amended vide Notification No.308-5/2011-QOS and published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part III, Section 4 dated the 27<sup>th</sup> November, 2012.

Note.7. - The Telecom Consumers Protection Regulations, 2012 were further amended vide Notification No.308-5/2011-QOS and published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part III, Section 4 dated the 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2013.

Note.8. - The Telecom Consumers Protection Regulations, 2012 were further amended vide Notification No.308-3/2012-QOS and published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part III, Section 4 dated the 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2013.

Note.9. - The Telecom Consumers Protection Regulations, 2012 were further amended vide Notification No.308-1/2015-QOS and published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part III, Section 4 dated the 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2015.

Note.10. - The Telecom Consumers Protection Regulations, 2012 were further amended vide Notification No.301-23/2015-F&EA and published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part III, Section 4 dated the 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2015.

Note.11. - The Telecom Consumers Protection Regulations, 2012 were further amended vide Notification No.301-7(2)/2015- F&EA and published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part III, Section 4 dated the 19<sup>th</sup> August, 2016.

Note. 12.- The Telecom Consumers Protection Regulations, 2012 were further amended vide Notification No. 301-20/2020-F&EA and published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part III, Section 4 dated the 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2020.

Note.13 – The Telecom Consumers Protection Regulations, 2012 were further amended vide Notification No. RG-13/1/(1)/2023-ADV\_ FEA-I and published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part III, Section 4 dated the 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 2024.

Note 14.- The Explanatory Memorandum explains the objects and reasons of the Draft Telecom Consumers Protection (Thirteenth Amendment) Regulations, 2026 (-- of 2026).

## **Explanatory Memorandum**

### **Background**

1. Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, through the Twelfth Amendment to the Telecom Consumer Protection Regulations, 2012 (the principal regulation) dated 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 2024 inserted the following proviso, after the third proviso, in sub-clause (iii) under clause (c) of sub-regulation (2) of Regulation 4:-

*"Provided also that the service provider shall offer at least one Special Tariff Voucher exclusively for Voice and SMS with validity period not exceeding three hundred and sixty-five days."*

2. The said provision intended to give certain segment of consumers an option to pay for the services they require in general and in particular benefit consumers especially the elderly persons, low-income users, and digitally less-active individuals, who often find data-inclusive packs economically inefficient and unnecessary.

### **Issues with the Telecom Consumer Protection Regulations (12<sup>th</sup> Amendment):**

3. Subsequent to the implementation of the above provision, Telecom Service Providers introduced Special Tariff Vouchers (STVs) exclusively for Voice and SMS. However, it is observed that only a few STVs are being offered, primarily with two longer validities viz. 80 / 84 days and/or 336/365 days.
4. It is also observed that while introducing these Voice and SMS only packs, TSPs initially fixed relatively higher prices. The prices were not reduced in proportion to the removal of data benefits from bundled plans. In simple terms, even though data services were excluded, the reduction in price was not reasonable or commensurate. This situation reduced the intended benefit to consumers, though later the TSPs reduced the price of these packs reasonably upon consumer outcry.
5. Also, after the introduction of these exclusive Voice and SMS STVs, several

concerns and representations from consumers and their associations have been received by the Authority, expressing need for shorter-duration voice and SMS only packs.

6. The key concerns are summarized below:

- The low-income group consumers are being deprived of affordable shorter duration choices.
- The low-income group consumers, esp. those living in rural areas or using feature phones, require shorter validity packs so that they can recharge as per their requirements.
- The existing packs are being offered in only two options of approximately quarterly and yearly validities. These higher validity packs require relatively substantial one-time payment, which may be challenging for such low-income group consumers.
- Whereas the STVs with Voice, SMS and data are offered with many validity options, Voice and SMS only packs are offered with limited choices.
- Consumers who do not use data have limited choices available and are placed at a disadvantageous position. This lack of parity goes against the objective of ensuring fair, equal and non-discriminatory choices for all consumers, regardless of their service requirements.

### **Need for introduction of adequate choices for Voice and SMS only Packs**

7. The Authority observes that the objective of the Telecom Consumers Protection Regulations is to ensure fair choice and protection for all categories of consumers, including low-income users, consumers in rural areas, non-tech savvy and even elderly persons who primarily require Voice and SMS services and have limited or no need for data services.

8. It has been noted that while Telecom Service Providers offer Special Tariff Vouchers (STVs) with Voice, SMS and Data across multiple validity periods, corresponding options exclusively for Voice and SMS are not always made available for the same validities. As a result, consumers who do not require

data are often compelled to purchase bundled packs containing data, leading to avoidable expenditure and limited choice.

9. The Authority is of the view that the manner in which the TSPs have implemented the TCPR 12<sup>th</sup> Amendment, the outcome has been inadequate.
10. Absence of choices in the Voice and SMS only STVs corresponding to the validities of bundled STVs dilutes the regulatory intent of consumer choice and disproportionately affects non-data users. Ensuring parity in validity options between bundled STVs and Voice and SMS only STVs is therefore necessary.
11. The proposed amendment seeks to address this issue by mandating that for every unique validity period offered under Special Tariff Vouchers with Voice, SMS and Data (whether with or without value added services), the service provider shall also offer a corresponding Special Tariff Voucher exclusively for Voice and SMS. This approach ensures sufficient validity choices for the consumers vis-à-vis STV with Voice, SMS and data benefits.
12. The amendment will enhance transparency, prevent forced procurement of unwanted bundled services, and ensure that consumers who do not require data are not made to pay for it or placed at a disadvantage. At the same time, it provides consumers with greater choice of Voice and SMS-only packs, placing them at par with data-inclusive packs.
13. In view of the above, the Authority considers it necessary to modify the relevant provision of the principal regulations to ensure that Voice and SMS only STVs are made available with validities corresponding to all unique validities of bundled STVs, thereby fulfilling the consumer protection objectives of the Regulations.
14. Hence, the Authority proposes to modify fourth proviso of sub-clause (iii) of clause (c) of sub-regulation (2) of regulation 4 of the principal regulations as follows:

*"Provided also that the service provider shall offer Special Tariff Vouchers, exclusively for Voice and SMS, with the validity period corresponding to the each validity period of Special Tariff Vouchers*

*being offered by them for Voice, SMS and data, whether with or without value added services.*

*Such Voice and SMS Special Tariff Vouchers shall be priced with largely proportional reduction in tariff compared to Special Tariff Vouchers of corresponding validity with Voice, SMS and data.”*

15. The substitution of the above proviso shall ensure that the TSPs are offering an STV for each of the period corresponding to the STV with Voice and SMS bundled with data (with or without value added services). This shall make available adequate choices for the intended consumers.
16. In view of the past experience, it is felt necessary that the Authority takes proactive steps to ensure that the Voice and SMS only packs are priced with reduction largely proportional with respect to the corresponding validity of STV with Voice, SMS and data, so that it remains affordable to the consumers. The price of Voice and SMS only STVs needs to be fixed in a fair and reasonable manner. Since these packs do not include data and only offer the benefits of Voice and SMS, their price should be reduced to the extent proportionate to reduction of data from their corresponding bundled services that offer Voice, SMS and data (with or without value added services). In view of above, a suitable amendment will be made in the item (6) - 'Tariff for prepaid service' of Schedule II of TTO, 1999.
17. Further, these Voice and SMS only Special Tariff Voucher packs shall be published and made available to consumers in line with the directions on tariff publication dated 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2020. Telecom service providers shall ensure that such STVs are clearly published, prominently displayed and made easily accessible and available across all customer touchpoints, including customer care centres, points of sale, retail outlets, official websites, and mobile applications. This will help consumers make informed choices without any difficulty.
18. Based on the experience gained, the Authority may review the proposed Telecom Consumers Protection (Thirteenth Amendment) Regulations, after a period of six months.

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