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Telecommunication Consumers Education and Protection Fund

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Why in News

Recently, the **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)** has directed telecom service providers to put all **unclaimed subscriber money** in consumer protection fund.

Key Points

- **TRAI** has notified the amendment to the **Telecommunication Consumers Education and Protection Fund (TCEPF) regulations** to remove any kind of ambiguity and facilitate deposit of any unclaimed money of the consumer.
- With this amendment service provider will deposit any unclaimed consumer money of any form such as **excess charges, security deposit, plan charges of failed activations**, or any amount belonging to a consumer, which service providers are **unable to refund to consumers**.
- It provides a time of 12 months or period of limitation specified under law whichever is later, after which unclaimed consumer money should be deposited to the fund.
- **Ambiguity before the amendment:** While some service providers were depositing money only on account of excess billing, others were depositing unclaimed money such as security deposits and plan charges of failed activations.
- **Telecommunication Consumers Education and Protection Fund Regulations** were notified in **2007**

The income from the fund is **utilised** for programmes and activities relating to consumer **education** and **protection**.

Source: TH