

23 ECONOMY

UNSOLICITED COMMERCIAL COMMUNICATIONS ON THE RISE OVER LAST 3 YRS

Telcos, Trai yet to rein in telemarketers; more complaints in 2018 than in 2016

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 10

NOTWITHSTANDING A slew of measures taken by the telecom regulator to deal with the menace of unsolicited commercial communications (UCC), or pesky calls and messages, the number of complaints received by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) has been on a rise over the last three years.

In 2018, a total of 369 complaints were received – more than double of 161 in 2016. According to data provided by the Ministry of Communications in the Lok Sabha, during 2019, 155 complaints have been received till July 10.

“For addressing the menace of UCC effectively, Trai had reviewed the framework for controlling UCC and laid down a revised framework controlling UCC on July 19, 2018 through the Telecom Commercial Communication Customer Preference Regulation, 2018. These regulations are under implementation and have paved the way for effective control of UCC,” Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister of Communications, said in a written reply in the Lok Sabha last month.

On August 6, the regulator asked telecom firms to submit status report over complaints regarding pesky calls on monthly

EXPLAINED

Trai directive on pesky calls could act as deterrent

AIMING TO check telemarketing calls, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) has asked telecom companies to submit monthly status reports from September about complaints they receive on pesky calls.

With this, the telecom regulator has initiated action on setting up a monitoring system for the new telecom framework, which aims to crack down on unwarranted telemarketing calls and messages. Given that the complaints on pesky calls in 2018 increased significantly from 2016, the Trai directive is a much needed step in the right direction.

basis starting September, setting in motion a monitoring system for the new framework that aims to check unwarranted telemarketing calls and messages.

“... the Authority ... hereby directs all access service providers to submit ... compliance reports, with effect from month ending September 2019, on monthly basis, and within ten days from the end of each calendar month,” the telecom regulator said in its latest directive.

In addition to the revised framework for controlling pesky communications, Trai had also launched a ‘do not disturb’ app for users to lodge complaints re-

garding such calls and messages that would be forwarded to the concerned telecom operator by the regulator.

“As per the regulations, a customer, who has registered his telephone number for not receiving UCC, may make a complaint about receipt of UCC to his service provider. The service provider from whose network the UCC had originated has to take action on the complaint as per the regulations.

“However, some of the consumers have also made complaints to Trai. Since as per the regulations the service providers have to take action on com-

NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY TRAI				
TELECOM COMPANIES	2016	2017	2018	*2019
MTNL	0	0	1	0
BSNL	9	8	5	1
Aircel	0	2	1	0
Airtel	51	106	159	70
Idea	18	27	21	6
Reliance Communications	3	1	2	0
Reliance Jio	0	1	15	11
Tata Tele Services	0	4	3	0
Telenor	0	0	1	0
Vodafone	80	128	161	67
TOTAL	161	277	369	155

Source: Ministry of Communications, Lok Sabha; *Up to July 10

plaints, the same are forwarded to the service providers for necessary action,” Prasad noted in his Lok Sabha response.

“Since September 2011, based on consumer complaints, the service providers have so far disconnected telecom resources of 18,19,470 Unregistered Telemarketers and blacklisted 5,89,589 such unregistered telemarketers. Also a penalty of Rs 4,16,45,000/- was deducted from the security deposit of registered telemarketers and deposited with Trai. Further, 16 registered telemarketers were blacklisted,” he added.

As per the regulations, if

UCCs originate from unregistered telemarketers, on first violation, a warning is issued and a temporary usage cap is imposed during investigation.

On the second instance of violation, the usage cap is imposed for a period of six months.

On third and subsequent instances of violations, all telecommunication resources of the sender are to be disconnected for a period up to two years and the originating access provider puts the sender under blacklist category, during which period no telecom resource is provided to the telemarketer by any other service provider.

QUARTERLY RESULT

NIIT Q1 NET AT ₹1,090.4 CRORE

New Delhi: Skills and talent development company NIIT Ltd on Saturday posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 1,090.4 crore for the June quarter, and said its board has approved a buyback programme of up to Rs 335 crore. **PTI**

JET AIRWAYS RESOLUTION

‘Three offers for grounded Jet; Etihad Airways skips bidding’

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, AUGUST 10

THREE ENTITIES have submitted expression of interest for the grounded Jet Airways, but Etihad Airways has not expressed any interest, sources said, which could prove to be a setback for the airline’s resolution process.

Saturday, August 10, was the last date for submission of EoIs for the resolution of the grounded carrier. Sources said that at least three expressions of interest (EoIs) have been received so far from interested applicants.

A Panama-based entity, Avantulo Group, is understood to be one of the parties that has submitted an EoI, sources said. Two private foreign equity companies have also expressed interest in taking over the grounded carrier.

Over the next few days, the resolution professional (RP) for Jet Airways will evaluate these bids and is expected to issue a provisional list of eligible applicants, if any, by August 13.

Etihad Airways refused to comment on the developments. It had been reported last week

PANAMA-BASED ENTITY AMONG 3

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■ Eligible resolution applicants have time till September 12 to submit their plans

that the deadline for submission of EoIs had been extended to give Etihad more time to take a final call on Jet Airways.

Eligible resolution applicants have time till September 12 to submit their plans.

The final resolution plan for Jet Airways is expected to be submitted on September 27 before the National Company Law Tribunal

(NCLT) for its approval.

On June 20, the tribunal initiated insolvency proceedings against the airline following an application moved by the State Bank of India (SBI). In its order, the NCLT sought a speedy resolution for Jet Airways as it was considered a matter of “national importance”.

While passing the order, judge VP Singh urged that the resolution process should be completed within 90 days. Significantly, on the last date of the submission of EoIs, Jet Airways also informed the exchanges of its updated shareholding information for the quarter ended June 2019.

The shareholding pattern for the June quarter showed Naresh Goyal’s stake in the airline to have come down to 24.99 per cent from 51 per cent in the quarter ended March. It also stated that as on June, Etihad’s stake in Jet Airways remained unchanged at 24 per cent in the June quarter.

Jet Airways halted operations on April 17 after lenders refused to provide emergency funding. Since then, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has re-allocated the airline’s slots to other airlines on a temporary basis till October. **FE**

Programme to obtain biodiesel from used cooking oil launched in 100 cities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 10

STATE-RUN OIL marketing companies (OMCs) IndianOil, Bharat Petroleum and Hindustan Petroleum on Saturday launched a programme to procure biodiesel made from used cooking oil in 100 cities across the country.

The programme was formally launched by Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, under which the three OMCs would invite expression of interest from private entities for setting up plants to produce biodiesel from used cooking oil.

Initially, the biodiesel would be procured by the OMCs at an assured rate of Rs 51 per litre, which would be increased to Rs 52.7 in the second year and Rs 54.5 per litre in the third year.

The minister also launched Repurpose Used Cooking Oil (RUCO) sticker and a mobile phone application for collection of used cooking oil (UCO) to ensure that it does not come back to ecosystem.

The sticker would be affixed by the food joints, hotels and restaurants in their premises to show that they supply UCO for producing biodiesel.



Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan with Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan and Petroleum Secretary MM Kuttu, at the inauguration of ‘World Biofuel Day’ in New Delhi, Thursday. **PTI**

Addressing an event to mark ‘World Biofuel Day’ here, Pradhan said, “Biodiesel is available in many forms other than used cooking oil. It is waste to wealth. We will celebrate World Biofuel Day as alternative energy day.”

“Like Amul, where milk is collected from households and then converted into a commercial product, there will be RUCO movement. The biggest issue (with biofuels like compressed bio gas) was offtake guarantee. More than 300 firms have got letter of intent for compressed bio gas. Its implementation is a challenge. But we are targeting 5,000 such units till 2024.”

He also said, “China has a

larger population but its (energy) distribution is not that organised as compared to our three oil marketing companies. That includes city gas distribution firms also.

“Under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Scheme, we would achieve the target of providing 8 crore LPG connections by September end. Already, there is 20 per cent reduction in chest congestion disease reported in India due to the clean fuel movement.”

Regarding ethanol blending, he said, “We would also make ethanol from surplus food stock. At present we produce ethanol from sugarcane molasses. Non-subsidised bio mass would be converted into energy.”

BRIEFLY

BSR quits as Reliance Power statutory auditor

Mumbai: BSR & Co tendered its resignation as one of the statutory auditors of Reliance Power with effect from August 9, the company said in an exchange note dated the same day. An annexure to the company’s note stated, “On review of the annual continuance process, BSR has expressed its inability to continue as auditors of the company for the reasons included in ‘Basis for Qualified Opinion’ in their audit report dated June 08, 2019, for the financial year ended March 31, 2019.” BSR served as statutory auditors of the company for the last two financial years and “have submitted clean audit reports up to the quarter ending December 31, 2018, ie for six consecutive quarters,” it further said.

Anurag Adlakha appointed Yes Bank CFO

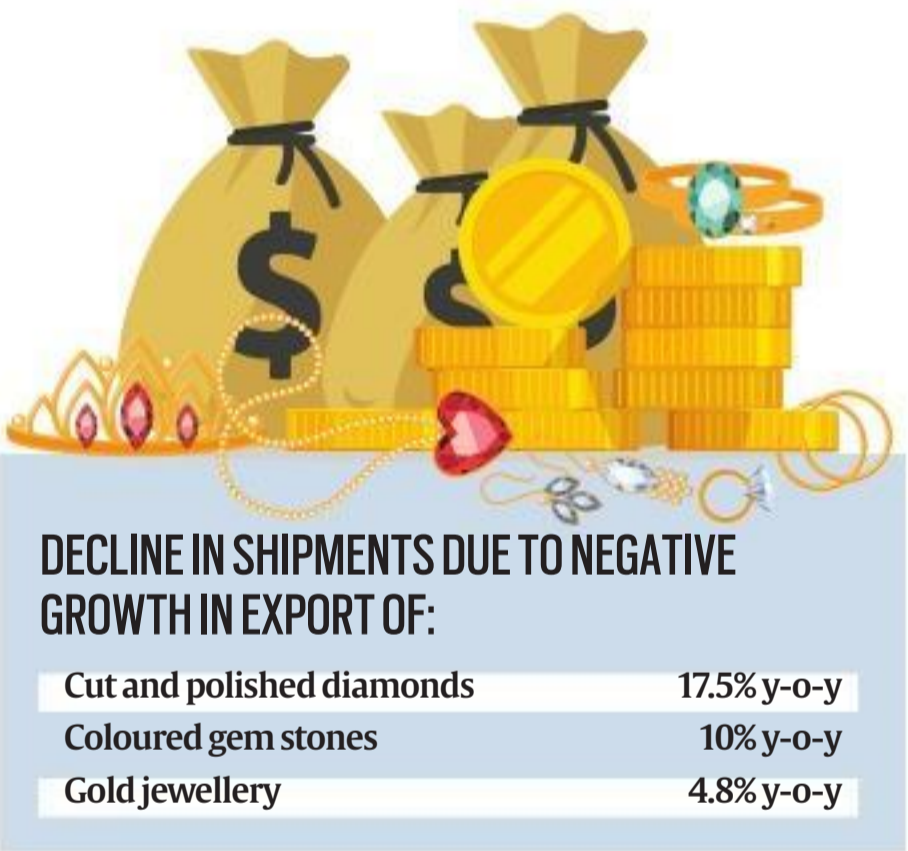
Mumbai: Private lender Yes Bank on Saturday announced appointment of Anurag Adlakha as the group’s chief financial officer (CFO) following approval from the board of directors. The bank stated that re-designations have been made with a view to strengthen its overall financial management and strategy functions. Adlakha will take over from Raj Ahuja, who will now take over as group chief strategy officer, responsible for leading the strategy, planning and projects function of the bank. In a separate notification, the bank said Saturday it had allotted 2,11,600 equity shares of face value of Rs 2 under the Employee Stock Option Plan. **ENS**

Future Enterprises Q1 net loss narrows

New Delhi: Future Enterprises Ltd on Saturday reported narrowing of its consolidated net loss to Rs 8.59 crore for the quarter ended June 2019. The company had posted a consolidated net loss of Rs 16.80 crore in the year-ago period, Future Enterprises Ltd said in a BSE filing. **PTI**

Gems, jewellery exports dip 8.48% in Apr-July

Exports of gems and jewellery declined by 8.48 per cent to \$9.7 billion during April-July this fiscal, mainly on account of slowdown in demand in major developed markets, according to data from the Gems and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC)



\$10.6 bn:

Exports of gems and jewellery during April-July period of financial year 2018-19

15%:

Contribution of the labour-intensive gems and jewellery sector India’s overall exports

\$4 bn:

Total value of exports of gold jewellery during April-July period of current fiscal, as per GJEPC data

\$309 mn:

Value of exports of gold medallions and coins during period under review

\$30.96 bn:

Value of gems and jewellery exports in fiscal 2018-19, having declined 5.32%

INDIA’S TOP FOUR EXPORT DESTINATIONS FOR GEMS AND JEWELLERY:

- United States: One-fourth of India’s total exports
- Europe, Japan, China

I-T unearths ‘₹700 crore undisclosed income’ in TN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 10

THE INCOME Tax Department has conducted a search and seizure operation in Tamil Nadu and detected an undisclosed income of Rs 700 crore, read an official statement.

The search was launched early on Tuesday at 55 premises in various places of the state, including Chennai, Coimbatore, Thanjavur, and also in Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Goa.

“The Income Tax Department conducted a search and seizure operation on August 6, 2019 in the case of one of the major producers of beer and IMFL (Indian-

Searches carried out on ‘certain businessmen’ in Meghalaya

New Delhi: The Investigation Wing of Income Tax Department of North East Region (NER) carried out searches on certain businessmen in Meghalaya found to be involved in running a web of petrol pumps managed and controlled as benami proper-

ties, the Centre said Saturday.

In the enforcement operation that commenced early Friday and went on till wee hours of Saturday, over Rs 2 crore of unaccounted cash and incriminating documents have been seized by officials of the department, it said. **PTI**

made foreign liquor) in Tamil Nadu,” the Finance Ministry said in a statement. The premises included residences of the promoters, key employees and some of the suppliers of materials, it said.

The search teams gathered evidence of over-invoicing and return of cash by suppliers. Inflation by over-invoicing amounted to suppression of taxable income of almost Rs 400 crore over a period

of six years, it said. The search also resulted in unearthing of evidence of similar tax evasion by another leading business group in the same liquor industry.

Consequently, the department began a search operation in the case of the second group Friday, the statement said. About seven premises of this group at Chennai and Karaikal were covered in the search operation’s second phase.

The search is still in progress and the suppression of taxable income detected in this group has been estimated to be about Rs 300 crore, it said. The search has so far resulted in detection of undisclosed income of Rs 700 crore, it added.

Huawei launches first product with its own OS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
DONGGUAN, AUGUST 10

CHINESE TELECOM giant Huawei, which has been caught in the crossfires of the Washington-Beijing trade war, on Saturday unveiled a new smart television, the first product to use its own operating system (OS).

The television will be available from Thursday in China and marks the first use of Harmony OS, chief executive George Zhao said, adding that it will be marketed by its mid-range brand, Honor.

Huawei revealed its highly-anticipated Harmony OS on Friday as an alternative operating system for phones and other smart devices in the event that looming US

sanctions prevent the firm from using Android technology.

American companies are theoretically no longer allowed to sell technology products to Huawei, but a three-month exemption period – which ends next week – was granted by Washington before the measure came into force. That ban could stop the tech giant from getting hold of key hardware and software, including smartphone chips and elements of the Google Android operating system, which runs the vast majority of smartphones in the world, including Huawei’s.

Huawei has been blacklisted by US President Donald Trump amid suspicions it provides a backdoor for Chinese intelligence services, which the firm denies.

‘IMF encouraging China to pursue more flexible rate’

DAVID LAWDER
WASHINGTON, AUGUST 10

THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund (IMF) on Friday stood by its assessment that the value of China’s yuan was largely in line with economic fundamentals, but an IMF official said the fund was encouraging China to pursue a more flexible exchange rate with less intervention.

James Daniel, director of the IMF’s China department, said that an assessment of China’s economic policies found the yuan exchange rate in 2018 to be “not significantly over-valued or under-valued.”

The IMF’s views on the yuan are at odds with those of its largest

shareholder, the United States, which this week declared China a “currency manipulator” after it allowed the yuan to slip below 7 to the dollar to 11-year lows.

US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin is seeking to engage the IMF to help “correct” an unfair trade advantage from Beijing’s currency actions, but Daniel declined to say how the IMF was responding to the request.

“Our discussions with the US Treasury are ongoing on a range of issues,” Daniel told reporters on a conference call, echoing an earlier statement from an IMF spokesperson. The IMF said in the report that a worsening of trade tensions with the US could put China’s economic and financial stability at risk. **REUTERS**