

UK tabloid prints phone-hacking apology, increases claims fund

LONDON, UK: The owner of Britain's *Daily Mirror* tabloid made a public apology on Friday for phone-hacking by its journalists and said compensation claims over the scandal will cost it far more than previously thought.



Trinity Mirror, which also owns the *Sunday Mirror* and *Sunday People* tabloids, said it was increasing the amount of money set aside for victims from £4m to £12m (over \$6m to \$18m, over €5m to €16m).

In a statement published on page two of the *Daily Mirror*, the company offered a "sincere and unreserved apology" for hacking, a practice which brought down the rival *News of the World* newspaper in July 2011.

"Such behaviour represented an unwarranted and unacceptable intrusion into people's private lives. It was unlawful and should never have happened.

"We are taking this opportunity to give every victim a sincere and unreserved apology for what happened. We recognise that our actions will have caused them distress for which we are truly sorry," it said.

Trinity Mirror has settled with a number of people whose voicemail boxes were hacked by journalists, including former England football coach Sven-Goran Eriksson and Abbie Gibson, a former nanny for Victoria and David Beckham.

Another eight cases are due to be heard at the High Court in a trial starting on 2 March, including that of former footballer Paul Gascoigne.

In a trading statement, Trinity Mirror said it had become clear "that the cost of resolving these claims will be higher than previously envisaged".

Media mogul Rupert Murdoch shut down the *News of the World* in 2011 amid public and political outrage at revelations of widespread phone-hacking at the paper.

Former editor Andy Coulson, a one-time communications chief for Prime Minister David Cameron, and a number of former journalists have since been jailed over the scandal, which also sparked an overhaul of Britain's system of press regulation.

Source: AFP, via I-Net Bridge

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