

## **Samsung Galaxy S5 Upstaged by Early Carrier Launch**

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SEOUL, South Korea (AP)

— The global launch of Samsung's latest smartphone has been upstaged by South Korean mobile network companies.

SK Telecom, South Korea's largest mobile carrier, said it will start selling the Galaxy S5 on Thursday, two weeks before the scheduled sales launch on April 11.

Samsung said in a statement that it is "very puzzled" by SK Telecom's decision and is deciding how to respond. It said its schedule of overseas launches remains unchanged.

Other mobile operators, KT Corp. and LG Uplus Corp., are following SK Telecom's move to release the phone early.

The unusual step comes as SK Telecom and other mobile carriers face a 45 day suspension from accepting new customers as a penalty for providing illegal phone subsidies.

South Korea's telecommunications regulator put two other mobile carriers on suspension from this month while SK Telecom must halt selling new phones starting April 5, a week before the Galaxy S5's global launch.

Mobile carriers already have the S5 in stock as Samsung provided them for marketing activities and to fulfil pre-orders on the launch date.

Samsung Electronics announced the latest iteration of its Galaxy S smartphone last month in Barcelona.

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The world's largest smartphone maker refrained from packing too many new features into the phone, saying the S5 will go back to basics. But the S5 comes with tweaks that are intended to appeal to fitness fans, such as a built-in heart rate monitor, pedometer and fitness tracker.

SK Telecom said the S5 is available for 866,800 won (\$808) without two-year contract.

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