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It's official now: Radiation from your cell phone may be killing you

The mobile phone which you think is your best friend is in fact a hidden enemy. It is working insidiously for your body's degeneration, oxidation and, ultimately, death

Priya Adhyaru-Majithia

After many years of debate over the health hazards posed by mobile phones, a recent report finally establishes it. The exhaustive report has been submitted recently to the Department of Telecom by Prof Girish Kumar of IIT-Bombay's department of electrical engineering.

Kumar, who has done extensive research on cell phone radiation and its effects warns against excessive use of cell phones as they put users, to increased risk of cancer, brain tumour and many other health hazards. More so in case of children.

The major health hazards of radiation from cell phones and cell towers are as given below:

- ▶ A 400% increase in the risk of brain cancer among teenagers using cell phones. Children are more vulnerable to cell phone

radiation. The younger the child, the deeper is the penetration of electromagnetic radiation as children's skulls are thinner.

- ▶ Excessive use of mobile phones can also cause cancer in anyone. Use of cell phones for more than 30 minutes per day for 10 years increases the risk of brain cancer and acoustic neuroma.
- ▶ Cell phone radiation causes irreversible damage to male fertility. Studies have found 30% lower sperm count in intensive users of mobile phones.
- ▶ Cell phone frequencies can cause damage to the DNA of the body's cells. Radiation causes 'free radical formation' inside the body's cells; the free radicals are known to be carcinogenic.
- ▶ Cell phone frequencies interfere with the functioning of other life-saving gadgets, including implanted pace-makers, and may,



therefore, cause sudden death.

- ▶ Mobile phone exposure can activate the stress response in human and animal cells which causes production of stress proteins. This is proof enough that the body recognises radiations from cell phones as potentially harmful.
- ▶ Electromagnetic fields caused by cell phone and cell tower radiation degrade the immune system and stimulate allergic/inflammatory responses, including rashes, sores, biting sensations and lesions.
- ▶ People using cell phones for more than 30 minutes a day for more than four years are at a higher risk of hearing loss. Cell phone radiation can cause tinnitus and damage the auditory hair cells present in the inner ear. Once damaged, these cells can never regenerate.
- ▶ Frequent use of mobile phones can also

damage the visual system in many ways. Cell phone frequencies (900, 1800 MHz and 2450 MHz) damage epithelial cells and increase the temperature within the eye.

- ▶ Cell phone emissions weaken bones and can cause reduction in melatonin (a type of antioxidant which is immune system enhancer) levels.
- ▶ An increased risk of salivary gland cancer is linked to the use of mobile phones.
- ▶ Exposure to electromagnetic fields can cause sleep disorders and neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.
- ▶ Due to consistent electromagnetic background noise, bees and birds become disoriented and cannot return to their hives and nests. It has adverse effects on animals, plants and the environment.

Special feature on Mobile hazards, p6

BRIEFLY

▶ **ULFA chairman Rajkhowa released from jail**

Arabinda Rajkhowa, chairman of the outlawed United Liberation Front of Asom (Ulfa), was released early Saturday from jail in Guwahati. He said the outfit was ready for unconditional peace talks. p6

▶ **Nano sales fly on easy availability of finance**

After witnessing an all time low sales numbers in November, Tata Motors' Nano is back in business. Easy finance schemes and growing customer confidence have led to better sales numbers in the December. p6

▶ **Car bomb kills 21 at Egyptian church**

A bomb exploded in front of a crowded church half an hour into the New Year, hitting worshippers emerging from a holiday Mass in the Egyptian city of Alexandria and killing at least 21 people in an attack that raised suspicions of an al-Qaeda role. p9

New telecom policy soon

Kapil Sibal promises clear and transparent regime on spectrum, licensing, tariffs

New Delhi: India plans to overhaul its decade-old telecoms policy, framing new rules on licensing, spectrum allocation, pricing, and mergers, telecoms minister Kapil Sibal said on Saturday, seeking to revamp a high-growth sector hit by several scandals.

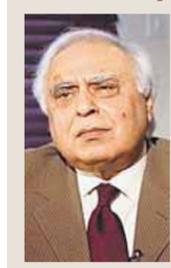
Sibal, who took over in November after his predecessor A Raja resigned following charges of irregularities, said the process would start in the next 100 days.

India's most recent telecoms policy was framed in 1999, when the sector was dominated by the state monopoly and when few imagined the country would rapidly become the world's fastest growing market for mobile phone services.

Fifteen operators serve more than 700 million users and add 17 million more each month.

The cut-throat competition has brought down call rates to the cheapest in the world and operators last year paid billions of dol-

Curbs on pesky calls from Feb 1



The telecom minister said recommendations on unsolicited calls and SMSes will come into effect from February 1, 2011. On December 28, Trai had put off the January deadline. As per the guidelines, Trai had said a hefty penalty of up to Rs2.50 lakh will be imposed for violation of the telemarketing guidelines, which could be followed by blocking repeat offenders' connections. A different set of numbers starting with '70' will be issued to telemarketers to help unregistered subscribers identify commercial calls and decide whether to accept or reject such calls.

lars to the government for third-generation radio airwaves.

But the sector has been hit by several controversies, including the CAG report that India lost \$39 billion in revenue due to irregularities in the grant of licences in 2008.

Raja, who resigned, said he was only following existing rules and

his actions ensured cheap calls.

The new policy would aim to balance cheap tariffs, operator profitability and government revenue, Sibal said.

"All three must be served. One should not override the other," he told reporters.

The scandal, potentially India's largest graft case, has had the op-

position block parliament demanding an investigation by a joint parliamentary committee, paralysing policymaking.

The telecoms ministry has asked five operators to defend their licences against the state auditor's charges they were not eligible for the 85 licences they received in 2008.

Investors are tracking the case as a reflection of India's business environment and cancelling licences could cast doubts about the reliability of government policy and contracts.

"Eleven years have passed since NTP '99 and many changes have taken place thereafter. Action will be initiated to formulate a comprehensive NTP 2011," Sibal told reporters while releasing the 100-day agenda for his ministry.

He did not elaborate if changes would be made to the existing policy in respect of allocation of spectrum on the basis of first-come first-served. **Contd p16**

City realtors turn to small towns for the big profits

Builders explore prospects in provincial towns as land in A'bad is now too costly

Jitendra Dave AHMEDABAD



It seems small is where the big opportunity lies now for the city's major real estate players. They are exploring small towns for construction opportunities that could yield big gains. A number of factors - better growth opportunities, relatively cheaper land, good road connectivity with Ahmedabad and other major cities, and the overall development of the state - are luring the realtors to virgin territories. Moreover, provincial towns also offer small realtors an opportunity for growth.

Among the nearly one dozen real estate players exploring opportunities in small towns are Galaxy Group, Venus Infrastructures, Pacifica Group, JP Infrastructure and Balaji Group to name a few. Sources in the city's realty sector said some of the major players are exploring Patan, Anand, Mehsana, Surendranagar, Kadi, Kalol, Bhavnagar, Sanand and similar small towns in the state for new opportunities.

The realtors expect good response from buyers in the small towns, too, as the state's overall industrial and agriculture growth has also benefited the provinces. But builders say the potential of the market in the small towns has to be assessed before they

New markets

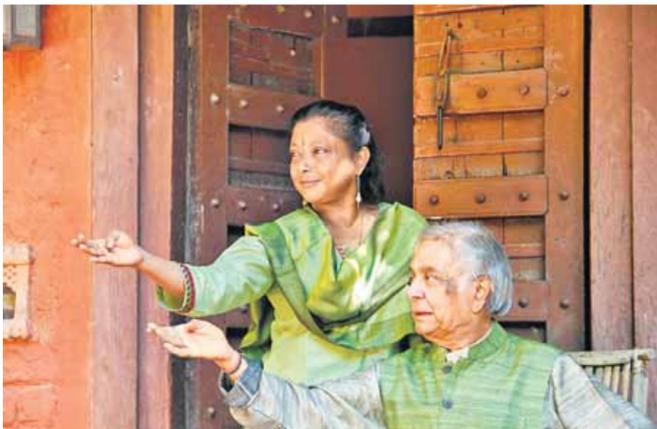
- ▶ Provinces have also benefited from Gujarat's prosperity; hence realty mkt in small towns is booming
- ▶ Relatively cheap land, good road connectivity with A'bad has made small towns attractive for realtors
- ▶ Small towns like Patan, Anand, Mehsana, Kalol, Surendranagar & Bhavnagar give small builders chance for growth

can decide on the size of projects suitable for them.

Uday Bhatt, chairman and managing director of Galaxy group of companies, said that as the land prices in Ahmedabad had touched the sky, one has to explore other markets as well. His company is looking at Patan and Surendranagar for their new projects.

Ahmedabad realty market is moving towards stagnation, said Rajesh Vaswani, executive director of Venus Infrastructure which is looking for opportunities in Vadodra. **Contd p16**

KATHAK LEGEND, WHO PERFORMED AT SAPTAK FESTIVAL, SAYS DANCE CAN GIVE DIVINE BLISS



Pandit Birju Maharaj and Saswati Sen in a dance mudra -Piyush Patel,DNA

Dance for the moment, not money: Birju Maharaj

Priya Adhyaru-Majithia AHMEDABAD

"Faith in art for art's sake is dying," said Pandit Birju Maharaj, the legendary Kathak dancer of Lucknow Gharaana. The 72-year-old maestro performed in Ahmedabad on Saturday, the first day of the Saptak festival. He was accompanied on stage by Saswati Sen, 50, his disciple for the last 40 years who is widely acclaimed as his 'shadow' dancer.

The duo performed 'Mayur Ki Gat', their popular composition which the city's discerning audience demands every time they perform here. They also danced a few thumris that the late

Nandan Mehta liked so much and paid him a special tribute on the first day of the music festival he started many years ago.

"Mehta was a unique artist who nurtured many others with pure dedication and love for music," said Birjuji. "It is commendable that his institute is taking his vision forward."

The dance legend said today's youths take up music or dance expecting fame immediately. Most of them get their guidance from popular TV reality shows which present artists with half-cultivated skills for lesser goals like money, he said.

"Young learners think they have reached the top

when they have not yet mastered the art form," he said. "They get distracted and do not pursue the art to a deeper level. Many are diverted into using art for worldly gains. They forget that art is divine because its pursuit leads to spiritual bliss."

Both Birju Maharaj and Saswati Sen feel that the Saptak music festival helps preserve the selfless pursuit of art and restores faith in art as an end in itself.

"Music and dance are like a prayer," said Birjuji. "They connect the dancer with a spiritual energy which then manifests itself through the dancer's body and his movements."

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 ▶ More on p2

Lock of room holds key: Report

Pradip R Sagar & Aditya Kaul DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has said that while "direct evidence" in the Aarushi murder case has been manipulated, there is strong "circumstantial evidence" against the slain girl's father, Rajesh Talwar.

The CBI closure report, which may be examined by a Ghaziabad court on Monday, says that Aarushi's parents were unable to explain the lo-

cation of Aarushi's room keys. "Rajesh and Nupur had earlier stated that they used to lock Aarushi's bedroom at night. The door of Aarushi's bedroom had a lock which could be opened from the inside without a key, but once shut, it could not be opened from the outside with-



out a key," said the report, which stated that the parents could not explain whether they had closed the door at night and why they could not find the keys in the morning.

The CBI report also said that on May 16, 2008, when the UP police was busy investigating the scene of the murder, some friends of Dr Talwar, including Rajiv Kumar and Rohit Kochar, had noticed blood stains on the handle of building's terrace door, which was locked.

The realtors expect good response from buyers in the small towns, too, as the state's overall industrial and agriculture growth has also benefited the provinces. But builders say the potential of the market in the small towns has to be assessed before they

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