

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SRIKANT JENA): (a) The Hon'ble Supreme Court has not passed any final order regarding altering the existing pricing system of essential medicines.

(b) In view of the reply (a) above does not arise.

Radiation from cell phones/towers

39. SHRI BAISHNAB PARIDA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that radiation emitted by cell phones/cell towers can affect male fertility and it links to growth of tumors as well, as per a study;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has issued certain guidelines/risk factors to the users of mobile phones to control any kind of damage to human bodies; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI MILIND DEORA): (a) and (b) Sir, there are no conclusive data available so far on this issue. The review of literature does not establish conclusive evidence on the safety or risk of Radio Frequency Radiation (RFR) emitted from cell phones and cell phone towers but growing body of scientific evidences indicates some bio-effects and possible adverse health effects of RFR which merit further investigations.

Further, Department of Science and Technology (DST) has constituted a committee on 01.10.2012, under the Chairmanship of Dr. N.K. Ganguly, Former Director General (ICMR), having representative from IIT Chennai, Indian Institute of Toxicology Research, Lucknow, Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Environment and Forest, ICMR and DST to examine the harmful effects from Cell towers on the population living in the vicinity and for developing the frame of reference for calling out request for proposals for scientific assessment of health hazards and adverse impact on ecology.

(c) and (d) In respect of Base Transmitting Station (BTS), norms for exposure limit for the Radio Frequency Field (Base Station Emissions) has been reduced to 1/10th of the limits prescribed by International Commission on Non Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) with effect from 01.09.2012.

Strict monitoring and enforcement of revised radiation norms has been initiated by DoT. In 83 cases, where the Base Station Emissions were found to be more than the prescribed norms, corrective actions have been taken immediately.

Further, in respect of Mobile Handsets, the following directions have been issued by Department of Telecommunications (DoT) regarding Specific Absorption Rate (SAR) values:

- (i) SAR level for mobile handsets is limited to 1.6 Watt/Kg, average over a mass of 1 gram of human tissue.
- (ii) All the new design of mobile handsets shall comply with the SAR value of 1.6 Watt/Kg averaged over a mass of 1 gram tissue with effect from 1st September, 2012. However, the mobile handsets with existing designs, which are compliant with 2.0 Watt/Kg averaged over a mass of 10 gram tissue, may continue to co-exist upto 31st August, 2013.
- (iii) From 1st September, 2013, only the mobile handsets with revised SAR value of 1.6 Watt/Kg are permitted to be manufactured or imported in India for domestic market.

Further, 'Precautionary Guidelines for Mobile Users' has been released by DoT in September, 2012 and placed on the DoT website www.dot.gov.in. A copy of the same is given in Statement.

Statement

Precautionary Guidelines for mobile users

Mobile users are advised to take precautionary measures while using a mobile handset as:

1. Keep distance - Hold the cell phone away from body to the extent possible.
2. Use a headset (wired or Bluetooth) to keep the handset away from your head.
3. Do not press the phone handset against your head. Radio Frequency (RF) energy is inversely proportional to the square of the distance from the source — being very close increases energy absorption much more.
4. Limit the length of mobile calls.
5. Use text as compared to voice wherever possible.
6. If the radio signal is weak, a mobile phone will increase its transmission power. Find a strong signal and avoid movement - Use your phone where reception is good.

7. Let the call connect before putting the handset on your ear or start speaking and listening - A mobile phone first makes the communication at higher power and then reduces power to an adequate level. More power is radiated during call connecting time.
8. If you have a choice, use a landline (wired) phone, not a mobile phone.
9. When your phone is ON, don't carry it in chest/breast or pants pocket. When a mobile phone is ON, it automatically transmits at high power every one or two minutes to check (poll) the network.
10. Reduce mobile phone use by children as a younger person will likely have a longer lifetime exposure to radiation from cell phones.
11. People having active medical implants should preferably keep the cell phone at least 15 cm away from the implant.

While Purchasing a Mobile Handset check the SAR value of the mobile phone. It can be searched on internet if its model number and make is known.

Myths and Facts

Various Myths about Mobile Handsets and Mobile base stations:

Myth	Fact
1	2
Mobile phone use cause headaches.	Headaches are not related to Mobile phone use and there is no scientific evidence.
It is safer using a mobile phone in a car as the car shields from the radiation.	The RF radiation is increased by Mobile phones when used in a car to overcome the shielding.
Mobile phones cause brain cancer to the people who use it.	There is no scientific evidence that Mobile Phone can cause brain cancer.
Mobile Base stations are dangerous and one should have distance from it.	It is the antenna from which we should keep distance not from tower and that too if we are positioned facing antenna at comparable height. At the ground level, the intensity of RF radiation from base station is much less.

1	2
Nobody is investigating the health effects of RF radiation.	The World Health Organization, many national & international organizations and independent expert groups are coordinating to investigate health effects of RF radiation.

Misuse of freedom of expression on social networking sites

40. DR. PRADEEP KUMAR BALMUCHU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has started a process to resolve the problems arising out of the freedom of expression in the IT Act;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government is of the view that social networking has turned into a major set-back in the present networking scenario; and

(d) the details of the steps being taken by Government to curb the misuse of freedom of expression in the IT Act?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI MILIND DEORA): (a) and (b) The provisions of the Information Technology Act, 2000 protect the democratic processes and are in line with the freedom of speech and expression and citizen's rights as enshrined in the Constitution of India. The provisions are also based on the international best practices and similar provisions in the legislation of other countries.

The new medium of Internet and social media are expanding and the balance required between rights and obligations of different stakeholders is going to revolve over a period of time. In such a technology advancement arena, there could be a need for consultation on the emerging issues, time and again, to refine understanding on such issues.

(c) The web and social media has emerged as one of the important public communication channels today. It brings social groups together in one virtual place and enables interaction in real time thereby offering a great advantage in accessing and posting the information and expressing the views in day-to-day life. It also has the potential to be misused for variety of purposes.