

News monitored for: COAI

# Need 1L mobile towers a yr: Telcos

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**New Delhi:** Arguing against any further reduction in electro-magnetic radiation levels mandated for mobile towers, the telecom industry has said 1 lakh new towers are required annually to expand and provide seamless services across the country, including newer and advanced technologies such as 4G and proposed 5G, and internet of things (IoT).

The stand taken by the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) — the body that represents top companies such as Airtel, Vodafone, Idea Cellular and Reliance Jio — comes days after the Supreme Court ordered shutdown of a mobile tower in Gwalior over possible concerns on the health of an individual due to radiation.

“The fears around impact from radiation are unfounded. The radiation standards stipulated in India are at one-tenth of the generally accep-

## RADIATION FEARS UNFOUNDED: COAI

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▶ Against global radiation standard of 4.5 watts per square metre in the widely-used 900MHz frequency, the stipulation mandated in India is 0.45 watts per



square metre after norms were strengthened in 2012, says Rajan Mathews, director-general of COAI

▶ The telecom ministry has backed the industry's views on radiation from towers and has pro-actively sought installation of towers across establishments, including govt buildings

ted global standards,” Rajan Mathews, director-general of COAI, told **TOI** here.

There are nearly five lakh mobile towers spread across the country, and there have been constant concerns raised in some quarters over any possible ill-effects from radiation. However, Mathews said these concerns are invalid as “it has been proven in many studies, as well as judgements

of various high courts, that there is no credible impact on the health of individuals”.

The telecom ministry has backed the industry's views on radiation from towers and has pro-actively sought installation of towers across establishments, including government buildings.

“We do not agree with the concerns on health hazards raised by certain individuals and

activists. Every industry follows safety norms mandated by the government, and we also do the same,” Mathews said.

He said that against the global radiation standard of 4.5 watts per square metre in the widely used 900MHz frequency, the stipulation mandated in India is 0.45 watts per square metre after norms were strengthened in 2012. “A large number of countries across Europe are at 4.5 watts per square metre, while in the US it is 6 watts per square metre.”

He said any move to make the standards more stringent will be counter-productive and instead of objecting to the tower infrastructure there was a need to give a push to its expansion. “We have to at least add one lakh towers annually over the next few years to match the growth of mobile data traffic and to incorporate newer technologies. If these do not come up, programmes such as Digital India will suffer.”