

# SoBo residents up in arms against 'dangerous' cell towers

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The radiation caused by the antennae of mobile phone towers is creating unrest among South Mumbai people as they want a new policy with retrospective effect. "It is becoming a national issue and all people, political parties are coming forward to find a solution to it, except the municipal corporations," says Prakash Munshi from Malabar Hills, who along with actor Juhi Chawla has been holding mobile phone radiation awareness campaigns.

He claims that the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation commissioner Sitaram Kunte has promised that new policies will come out in July, but also mentions that if there is any stay-order from the state government, it would not be accepted by them.

"We have taken the issue to the Central government, had a meeting with South Mumbai MP Milind Deora at Priyadarshini Park and finally the standing committee of the Parliament (Information Technology) has invited the Mumbaiers to Delhi sometime in June," adds Munshi.

The memorandum submitted in March 4, which includes letters, norms of setting up telecom towers, its harmful effects, photographs of various types of towers and antennae in Mumbai has been signed by eminent South Bombay residents such as actors Juhi Chawla, Farhan Akhtar, Zoya Akhtar, Dr Ashish Mehta of Breach Candy Hospital and Saifee Hospital, Dr Anand Gokarni, senior physician, Bombay Hospital and residential associations of Cuffe Parade, Malabar Hills, Darar Parsi Colony, Feder Road, among others.

"The number of mobile phone towers is not a problem, as they are metal poles of steel brackets. The antennae are the problem as the power transmitted by them cause the radiation, which is directly proportional to the volume of power transmitted. Now, antennae fixed on sidewalls of residential buildings are



Multiple mobile phone antennae above Haji Ali Juice Centre

affecting people and deadly diseases like cancer and leukemia are spreading exponentially," says an expert.

The citizens resent the stay-order passed by the Bombay high court, which states that they are not allowed to touch the antennae as they come under the Essential Services Act. Also they complained that the municipal body, cellular organisations and the government are keeping on passing the liabilities, for which normal civilians are getting victimised.

"Health is the fundamental right of

every citizen granted by the Constitution of India. We cannot let these mobile operators gather wealth at the cost of our health. Precaution is necessary, otherwise there will be another Bhopal gas tragedy-like incident in Mumbai," says a Dadar Parsi Colony resident.

Health experts suggest that danger signs with warnings, such as "Maintenance staff should not be allowed near the antennae for more than 15 mins" need to be put up in residential buildings with antennae.

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