

Indian firm launches handset with 'AAA' battery power

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This combination of undated pictures released by Olive Communications shows a front (L) and rear (R) view of their cellular telephone which is powered by a single "AAA" sized battery.

An Indian mobile phone company has launched a low-cost handset that uses commonly available AAA-sized batteries aimed at the hundreds of millions who live in areas where power supplies are erratic.

Priced at 1,699 rupees (35 dollars), Olive Telecommunications' "FrvrOn" -- short for "forever on" -- has a rechargeable lithium-ion [battery](#) common to mobile phones, but also a facility to include a AAA,

dry-cell battery.

"We have electrification all across the country but the power supply is erratic," marketing manager Ravi Perti told AFP.

"With our phone, all one needs to do is pack a few extra cells (batteries) if one is travelling in areas where one expects power supply disruptions."

He said the phone would run for three hours non-stop on the lithium battery and for another hour with a conventional battery.

Though predominantly for the rural market, the handset "is suitable for the urban user as well. It is aimed at the heavy duty user who would need emergency battery backup," Perti said.

Government figures show more than 10,000 impoverished Indian villages have no access to grid electricity. Power cuts are common even in the smarter suburbs of cities including New Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata.

Based in Gurgaon, a sprawling city next to the Indian capital New Delhi, Olive Telecommunication is a manufacturer of [handsets](#) and laptops.

[India](#), the world's fastest-expanding mobile market, adds an average of 15 million customers every month, according to figures from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) posted on its website.

According to government figures, 45 out of every 100 people in India now have a [mobile phone](#) and use is rising sharply in rural areas thanks to the world's lowest call costs.

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