

Vodafone brings solar power mobile phone to India

July 27 2010, By DA YAN , Associated Press Writer

(AP) -- Vodafone Essar Ltd. has unveiled a solar-powered mobile handset in India to better serve the nation's energy-starved rural masses.

India has been adding nearly 20 million mobile subscribers each month, many of them in rural areas, where electricity supply can be patchy at best.

A third of Indians don't have access to electricity, but they do get plenty of sun.

Samsung launched a solar-powered handset about a year ago, and [Vodafone](#) is now joining in the effort to bridge that infrastructure gap.

"This launch is likely to enable more people in rural India to go mobile," Vodafone Essar Chief Executive Marten Pieters said in a statement.

The VF 247 Solar Powered phone, priced at 1,500 rupees (\$32), should be available in stores next month.

It needs eight hours of direct [sunlight](#) to be fully charged and can support more than eight days of use on standby and four hours of talk time. It also comes with an electronic charger, an [FM radio](#) and a powerful torch light.

Vodafone Essar, a leading wireless provider in India, is a unit of Vodafone Group PLC.

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