

Recycling smartphones may help keep gorilla habitats intact

Leslie D'Monte
leslie.d@livemint.com
MUMBAI

Most phone users in India may not see the connection, but your reluctance, or even laziness, to recycle that discarded phone could be a major reason for the dramatic decline in gorilla populations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

According to a new paper by University of South Australia (Unisa) researchers and Zoos Victoria, if "conflict" metals, including gold and coltan (primarily used in the production of tantalum capacitors for electronic devices), used to manufacture cell phones can be recovered from old mobile phones, there will be less incentive to mine gorilla habitats for the same minerals.

The researchers published their paper in *PLoS ONE* on Wednesday. Unisa conserva-

tion psychologist and great ape expert Carla Litchfield, the paper's lead author, explains: "For every 30-40 mobile phones that are recycled, on average, one gram of gold can be recovered... Just as mobile phone sales are soaring, and gold content is increasing in some smartphones, natural sources of gold are expected to run out by 2030."

The authors point out the barriers to recycling used phones, including lack of e-waste recycling points in many countries, secrecy around the phones' mineral composition, privacy concerns around accessing old data, and just plain hoarding.

Estimates suggest in Germany alone more than 8,000 tonnes of precious metals will lie in unrecycled mobile and smartphones by 2035, while by 2025 in China, an estimated nine tonnes of gold, 15 tonnes of silver and 3,100 tonnes of cop-



VIRUNGA NATIONAL PARK

India is ranked fifth among the world's top e-waste producing countries after the US, China, Japan and Germany.

per will be out of the supply loop from 350 million unrecycled phones.

The Global E-Waste Monitor, 2017, published by the United Nations University estimated India generates about 2 million tonnes of electronic waste, or e-waste, annually (2016). Nearly 82% of this is personal devices. The report ranked India 5th among the world's top e-waste producing coun-

tries after the US, China, Japan and Germany. According to a 2017 ASSOCHAM-KPMG study, *Electronic Waste Management in India*, computer equipment accounts for 70% of e-waste.

The recent population estimates of Grauer's gorillas, according to the DRC, show a dramatic 73-93% decline, with less than 4,000 remaining in the wild. The species is now listed as critically endangered.

The researchers, meanwhile, are seeing some positive results from the first six years of the ongoing "They're Calling On You" mobile phone recycling programme run by Zoos Victoria, a part of a national campaign operating across Australian zoos.

Zoo visitors and the broader Victorian community were educated about the value of recycling discarded phones to extract special metals used in their construction. Distinguished primatologist Jane Goodall launched the national mobile recycling campaign at Melbourne Zoo in 2009 to educate visitors about the link between mining in the DRC, the destruction of gorilla habitats, and the importance of mobile phone recycling.

Consequently, by 2014, zoo

visitors in Victoria donated over 115,000 old phones for recycling. "This number may seem a drop in an ocean, representing just 0.01% of the one billion retired phones, but when you look at the result in the context of a state of six million people, it is very impressive," says Litchfield.

The 'conflict' metals (also referred to as 3TG—tungsten, tantalum, tin and gold), which are mined in the eastern DRC, not only destroy gorilla habitats, but also fund wars and human rights abuses, according to activist groups. Activists have repeatedly called for attention to the links between Congo's minerals and its protracted armed conflicts, according to US-based activist group Enough Project.

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INDIA INC SAYS POLICY STANCE ON EXPECTED LINES, SEEKS STEPS TO IMPROVE CREDIT FLOW

FC BUREAU

New Delhi

India Inc Wednesday said the RBI's decision to maintain status quo in its monetary policy was on expected lines in view of headwinds and sought more measures by the central bank to improve the credit flow to the economy.

"There is an urgent need to improve the credit flow to the real economy. GDP growth is already showing signs of slowing down. With crude oil prices down, we need to take further measures

for the revival of animal spirits in the economy and give more momentum to it," Ficci president Rashesh Shah said.

Industry body Assocham said that the RBI's decision to keep the key policy rate unchanged is on expected lines in the backdrop of rupee appreciation, softening of oil prices and benign food inflation.

The Reserve Bank expectedly kept interest rates unchanged but held out a promise to cut them if the upside risks to the inflation do not materialise. It also coaxed banks to lend more in order to support the slowing economy.



RBI's policy stance on expected lines, need steps to improve credit flow, says India Inc

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With all the six member of the monetary policy committee (MPC) voting for a hold on rates, the RBI kept benchmark repurchase (repo) rate at 6.5 per cent.

EEPC India Chairman Ravi Sehgal said that while the RBI amply details risks in the global trade scenario and slowdown outlook in the US and EU, the two top markets for Indian exports, its credit policy review provides no relief to exporters who are faced with increased headwinds.

The Reserve Bank's decision to maintain status quo on rates Wednesday did not sur-

prise bankers also, who said the move was "pragmatic" and "accommodating" as also more in consonance with market expectations.

At the same time, they hoped the central bank going forward would ease its monetary policy to support the economy if upside risks to inflation do not materialise.

The RBI in its fifth bi-monthly monetary policy review kept the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent. It also lowered the retail inflation forecast for the second half of the current fiscal to be in the range of 2.7-3.2 per cent.

Commenting on the RBI policy, SBI Chairman Rajnish Kumar said the decision to keep rates on hold was more in consonance with market expectations but the "policy guidance was a pleasant and pragmatic surprise".

He further said the significant downward revision in inflation projections and assurance of continued durable liquidity was most reassuring to market participants in terms of a stable and predictable interest rate structure.

B Prasanna ICICI Bank Head - Global Markets Group said the post-policy statement by RBI governor Urjit Patel emphasised the scope of change in the policy stance if upside risks to inflation do not materialise.

"Going forward, we believe the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is likely to remain on a prolonged pause. This also gives us confidence that the scope for a cut in rates becomes possible if realised inflation in the next few months were to confirm or undershoot the revised path forecasted by the MPC," Prasanna said. P11

आरबीआइ का फैसला उम्मीद के अनुरूप : उद्योग

नई दिल्ली, प्रेद्र: भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक द्वारा मौद्रिक नीति समीक्षा में ब्याज दर पूर्ववत रखने के फैसले पर भारतीय उद्योग जगत ने कहा है कि मौजूदा चुनौतियों को देखते हुए आरबीआइ का फैसला उम्मीद के अनुरूप ही है। हालांकि उद्योगों ने कहा कि अर्थव्यवस्था में नकदी प्रवाह बढ़ाने के लिए प्रयास किए जाने चाहिए।

फिक्की का मत

उद्योग संगठन फिक्की के अध्यक्ष रशोष शाह ने कहा कि अर्थव्यवस्था में कर्ज प्रवाह बढ़ाने की सख्त जरूरत है। सकल घरेलू उत्पादन (जीडीपी) में सुस्ती के संकेत दिखने लगे हैं। कच्चा तेल सस्ता होने के बाद अर्थव्यवस्था में सुधार के लिए कदम उठाने की जरूरत है।

रियल्टी सेक्टर की प्रतिक्रिया

इस सेक्टर की कंसल्टेंसी फर्म नाइट फ्रैंक के चेयरमैन व मैनेजिंग डायरेक्टर शिशिर बैजल ने कहा कि इस फैसले से रियल्टी सेक्टर को राहत मिलेगी। अगर ब्याज दर में बढ़ोतरी होती तो मांग पर प्रतिकूल असर पड़ता। जेएलएल इंडिया के कंटी हेड रमेश नायर ने कहा कि आवासीय परियोजनाओं में मांग सुघरने के संकेत मिल रहे हैं। जनवरी-सितंबर के दौरान नई परियोजनाओं और बिक्री में वृद्धि देखी गई है। आरबीआइ के फैसले से मांग को प्रोत्साहन मिलेगा।



एसोचैम की राय

एसोचैम ने कहा कि ब्याज दर में कोई बदलाव न करने का फैसला आशा के अनुरूप ही है। अर्थव्यवस्था के समक्ष मौजूद चुनौतियों के चलते यह कदम उठाया गया।

