

sound suggestion

The number of people opting for properties exposed to noise pollution along busy roads is dwindling at a rapid pace

NOISE POLLUTION HITS REALTY MARKET

The increasing sound pollution outside residential and commercial establishments owing to incessant traffic has begun to have an adverse effect on the realty market in these localities, says **VIVEK SHUKLA**

A Kumar, a senior journalist, was one of the moving forces in building a cooperative group-housing society in IP Extension, in East Delhi. Now, he is planning to shift to some quieter place, as the incessant traffic outside the society has made his life miserable.

The peace loving Kumar is not the only person who is at the receiving end of traffic noise, round the clock. There are a large number of residential societies, commercial buildings and other institutions in the capital and the NCR, which face the brunt of unbearable traffic noise, through the day, and night. Naturally, this incessant sound pollution caused by vehicular movement also results in ailments for people who are exposed to them for any length of time. The situation has reached a point when, today, the number of people opting for properties exposed to noise pollution along busy roads is dwindling at a rapid pace.

Doctors say that those who work in a noisy environment suffer from circulatory, digestive, metabolic, neurological, cardiac and psychiatric symptoms. High-decibel sound affects efficiency in performance and causes behavioural changes.

Take the case of South Delhi. Long and unending traffic jams with ear-splitting noise, even on public holidays, are taking away the sheen off some of the better-known posh South Delhi colonies, especially those close to the Outer Ring Road.

Even a couple of years ago, you would hardly remember an instance when you would be assaulted by the rude honking inside your home or office. Things have changed now.

Raghav Joshi, a resident of Lajpat Nagar 3, says that apart from the massive traffic jams and parking woes, mindless honking has made the life of many residents of his locality very tough.

All this has a cascading effect on the realty scene too.

Today, there is hardly any buyer or tenant for properties on the main roads. Realty ex-



perts say that big-ticket tenants are moving out from houses in places like Panchsheel Park, SDA, Hauz Khas, Mayfair Garden and the like, which are situated right outside the main road.

Even new tenants are ignoring such places when they look for rented accommodations.

Localities, right from Nehru Place to R K Puram, are badly suffering due to the chaotic traffic and noise pollution on the Outer Ring Road. The worst part is that nobody is sure when things will take a turn for the better.

Anil Makhijani of Mak Realtors paints a very grim picture of the whole scenario. According to him, there used to be many people always on the look for accommodation in areas like Panchsheel Park, SDA, Hauz Khas and Mayfair Garden. Apparently, they do not even mind living in houses on main roads. "You cannot say this applies to all these areas or other colonies close to the Outer Ring Road, only due to sound problem," Makhijani says.

Naturally, in order to save themselves from such a messy situation, many tenants staying in areas close to the dreaded Outer Ring Road have moved to areas

like Defence Colony, Lajpat Nagar 3, South Extension, and Safdarjung Enclave in the recent months. Those with offices in Gurgaon or Noida have either shifted or are planning to move houses.

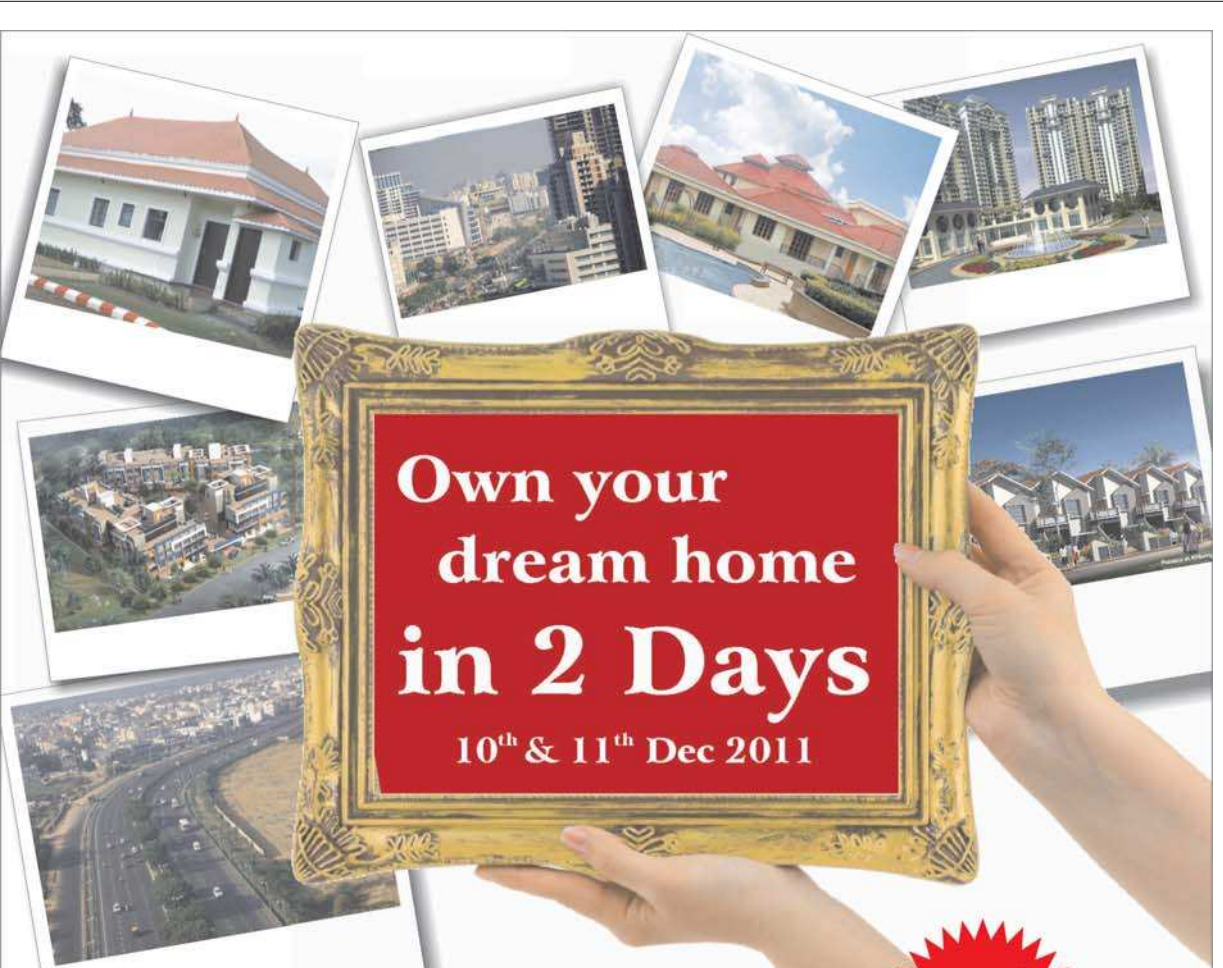
Is your house or office also situated on the main road? Ravinder Verma, a Delhi-based architect, suggests that planting creepers and shrubs in the space between the building and the road helps to filter out noise, but only to some extent. There are several reasons why one may want to have some part of their room or apartment soundproofed. If you live in an apartment exposed to severe noise pollution, it may be wiser to have the walls soundproofed.

Experts also suggest that in order to

control noise in a building facing a busy road, one must minimize the number of openings facing the source of noise. It, however, involves a great deal of planning to ensure that it does not mar the aesthetics or affect the circulation of air inside the building. Doors and windows will have to be carefully positioned to cut out the noise, yet ensuring adequate ventilation at the same time.

An architect of Kothari Associates is of the view that if you are going to construct your house, then it would be advisable for you to construct brick walls with a continuous hollow between the layers, as this is an effective method of insulating a building from external noise sources. You can also keep flowerpots and shrubs on top of the structure as a natural sound filter. Another solution is

to apply architectural acoustics in the construction. **Sanjay Khanna, whose firm Kailashnath Projects Pvt Ltd redevelops residential and commercial properties, says that even they think twice before developing properties which are situated on a main road, as they find it very difficult to find buyers for these properties.**



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- A RESIDENT OF LAJPAT NAGAR 3 SAYS THAT APART FROM THE MASSIVE TRAFFIC JAMS AND PARKING WOES, MINDLESS HONKING HAS MADE THE LIFE OF MANY RESIDENTS OF HIS LOCALITY VERY TOUGH. ALL THIS HAS A CASCADING EFFECT ON THE REALTY SCENE

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Downturn boon for MNCs in retail

Continued from page 1

In order to bring transformation into the sector and help the retail industry boost up their bottom line, fundamental paradigms of working needs to be challenged. The conventional manner of forecasting needs to be jettisoned, Chowdhury says.

The sudden surge in the interest of international players to enter the Indian market has provided huge business opportunities for property consultancies with expertise in retail services. Hypermarkets like Carrefour, Tesco and Wal-Mart have a business model based on thin margins and high volumes. This is how they keep their prices at cut-throat low levels. They also bring their own logistics, warehousing and overall back-end support capabilities with them and are powered by a deeply-researched understanding of footfall dynamics, Pankaj Renjhen says.

Unlike run-of-the-mill malls, they are not dependent on multiplexes, food courts and anchors to drive footfalls to their establishments. They generate their own footfalls by the sheer power of bargains, Renjhen says.

Some of the more prominent Indian hypermarket chains had a monopoly on this front so far, but will now be challenged to upscale their operations and upgrade their backend, logistics and support systems in order to compete with these global retail giants, he adds.

However, this will not lead to wiping out of the mom-and-pop shops in the country. Seventy per cent of the country still consists of rural areas, which do not offer the vital ingredients that can spell success for these retail giants, Renjhen says. These would include automobile ownership and credit card penetration, on which these retail giants are completely dependent. The rural area will continue to be serviced by the existing mom-and-pop retail system.

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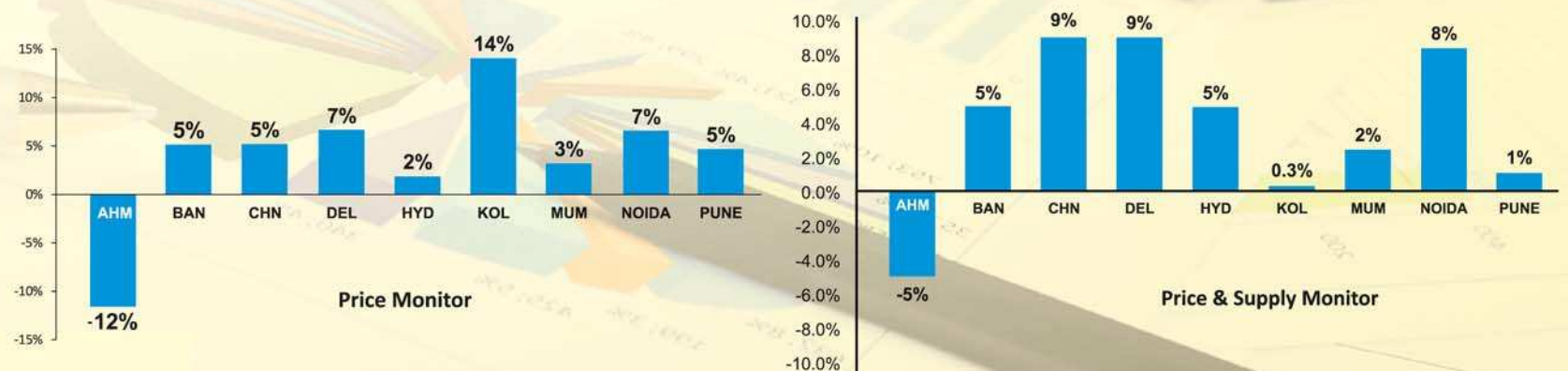
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