BSNL – GOOGLE OFFER

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) is offering Google Nest Mini and Nest Hub devices at ₹99 and ₹199 per month respectively for 13 months to subscribers who opt for annual payment option for Broadband DSL or Bharat Fibre services.

As part of the offer, the total cost of the Google Nest Mini drops to ₹1,287 (₹99 x 13 months). The costs of a new Google Nest Mini speaker is ₹3,999. On the other hand, the Nest Hub which costs ₹8,999, will be available at ₹2,587 (₹199 x 13 months).

Only those subscribers who will opt for the annual payment of their Broadband (DSL/Bharat Fibre) plan with at least a fixed monthly cost of ₹799 will be eligible to get the Google Nest Mini at the offer price.

To be eligible for the Google Nest Hub promotional offer, only one time annual payment of Broadband (DSL/Bharat Fibre) plan with at least a fixed monthly cost of ₹1,999 will get the Nest Hub for ₹199 per month.

ANANT AMBANI JOINS JIO BOARD

Anant Ambani, has joined the board of Jio Platforms as an additional director.

Anant Ambani, 25, is the youngest of the three Ambani siblings. Akash and Isha Ambani had joined the boards of RIL’s telecom and retail ventures - Reliance Jio Infocomm and Reliance Retail- back in 2014, and have also joined the board of Jio Platforms since.

Anant Ambani joins Jio Platforms at a time when the oil to telecom behemoth is looking...
to transition itself from an energy-centric conglomerate to one focussing increasingly on consumer technology.

**SONYLIV NEW BRANDING**

SonyLIV has come with a new look. The original content catalogue will launch in June as part of a new LIV Premium subscription pack.

SonyLIV 2.0 now comes build with a refreshed and enhanced user experience and offers a glimpse into its engaging repertoire of originals that will soon go live on the platform. The new programs will have real-life incidents to book adaptations to some thrilling fictional narratives; these originals will feature some of the most popular faces in the world of entertainment.

**GOOGLE TO BUY STAKE IN VODAFONE**

When Facebook is trying to have a slice of the Indian market, can Google be left behind? Google is looking at buying a stake of about 5% in Vodafone Idea, India's third-largest telecom player. Vodafone Idea is a joint venture between UK's Vodafone Group and Aditya Birla Group.

Google's parent Alphabet was exploring the prospect for acquiring a stake in Jio but was found to be left behind and Facebook succeeded in securing a deal. Pursuing Vodafone Idea is a smart move and would potentially pit Google against Facebook and an increasingly dominant Jio but the company could also make multiple investments in India.

Reliance Industries' Jio Platforms has secured more than $10 billion in investment from Facebook and private equity groups including KKR, General Atlantic, Vista Equity Partners, and Silver Lake. Bharti Airtel’s Bharti Telecom raised $1.1 billion recently.

Vodafone Idea is set to complete its merger integration by June and they have been losing customers and revenues and market share rapidly.

**DOT OFFERS RELIEF FOR TELCOS**

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has offered a major relief to telcos by extending the compliance deadline for meeting their minimum network rollout obligations (MRO) to September 30 amid continuing
lockdowns, invoking the force majeure clause in operator licence rules. This has come as a major relief to Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea.

The telcos were staring at the prospect of stiff penalties of around ₹ 50 crore per MRO violation, starting June due to DOT not extending the compliance timelines beyond May 31, earlier. But the repeated reminders from operators proved fruitful and DOT announced that “Due to a unforeseen situation in the wake of Covid-19, the force majeure clause of the (telco) licence is applied and relaxations are being granted to licensees whose due date of registration for fulfilment of MRO is between March 25 and September 30”. The last date of registration for telcos to meet their minimum rollout obligations without levy of liquidated damages (LD) is September 30.

AIRTEL ACQUIRES VOICEZEN

Airtel acquired a strategic stake in Voicezen, a start up focused on conversational AI technologies.

This gives Airtel preferred access to Voicezen’s technologies, which can be deployed across its customer touch points in multiple languages.

The acquisition has been made by the company under its fast expanding Airtel Startup Accelerator Program. Voicezen is the third start up to become a part of the Airtel Startup Accelerator Program. Gurgaon based Voicezen has been working on developing advanced solutions that leverage machine learning, AI, speech to text and voice technologies to offer real time analytics to help brands serve customers better.

Voicezen will get the opportunity to deploy its technologies on a massive scale and work closely with Airtel on developing India-first platforms of the future.AI is a big focus area for Airtel given the deep positive impact the technology can have in transforming customer experience.

BHARATI TELECOM SELLS STAKE

Bharti Telecom is looking at reducing its debts. The promoter company of Bharti Airtel, has raised ₹ 8,433 crore ($1.15 billion) by selling a 2.75% stake in the telecom operator to investors Blackrock, Fidelity, Segantii Capital, Norges Bank and Key Square Capital, and local fund
houses including HDFC Mutual Fund and SBI Mutual Fund.

BTL said the stake sale proceeds would be used to fully repay its debt, which was raised primarily to finance the acquisition of Bharti Airtel equity shares in the past – in 2016, 2017 and through the ₹25,000-crore rights issue in March 2019. With BTL becoming a zero-debt company, Bharti Airtel’s credit profile too will be augmented as it would benefit from deleveraging on a consolidated basis including any debt of promoter holding company.

The combined 58.98% holding of Bharti Airtel’s promoter group – Sunil Mittal-owned entities and Singtel – came down to 56.23%. Sunil Mittal’s Bharti Enterprises and Singtel own 50.56% and 49.44%, respectively, in BTL.

The BTL stake sale also lowered the effective shareholding of Bharti Airtel’s promoter group entities, SingTel and the Mittal family, to under 32% from 33.3% and to about 24% from 25.7%, respectively. GIC of Singapore has a 2.79% stake in Bharti Airtel.

**EROS – STX MERGER TO FOCUS ON CONTENT**

Eros Now merged with Hollywood studio STX Entertainment to create Eros STX Global Corporation. The new entity has $125 million of incremental equity from new and existing STX Entertainment equity investors, including TPG, Hony Capital, and Liberty Global; and a superior liquidity and robust balance sheet, including a $350 million JP Morgan-led credit facility.

There also is an increased financial scale with over $600 million in pro forma revenue for calendar 2019 and over $300 million of highly-predictable aggregated future revenue from STX Entertainment films already released through 2019. Eros Now is bullishly looking at expanding its OTT and content play.

**NEW CHANNELS ON ZEE5**

ZEE5 added TV9 to its rich roster of regional news channels giving consumers option to choose from various languages available. TV9 is now going to be available on the ZEE5 platform to bring to viewers daily updates via their flagship channels TV9 Telugu, TV9 Kannada, TV9 Marathi, TV9 Gujarati, TV9 Bharatvarsh, and News 9.