

Reliance Retail plans to launch cameras, electronic wearables

BY KALPANA PATHAK
kalpana.p@livemint.com

MUMBAI

Reliance Retail, the retail arm of Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL), is planning to launch cameras, electronic wearables, dongles and tablets under the Reconnect brand, said two people aware of the development.

Reliance Retail plans to sell these products through Reliance Digital stores.

The company already offers a range of electronic products including, computer mouse, mixers, blenders, television sets, speakers, etc. through Reliance Digital stores and online.

"RIL already has the brand Reconnect in the market and the new products would be launched under the same brand. Tablets are in the pilot phase and are being tested with the employees. Other products are in the launch pipeline," said one of the two people aware of the development. He spoke on condition of anonymity.

RIL did not reply to an email sent on 29 December.

RIL also sells smartphones and smart television sets under the Lyf brand and Jio phones under the Jio brand. The television sets are to work with Jio's 4G network and content services.

Last January, Reliance Retail started selling LYF phones through Reliance Dig-



The Reliance Industries unit plans to sell these products through its Reliance Digital stores. **BLOOMBERG**

ital and Digital Xpress stores and on mylyf.com—the phone's official website. RIL has four variants of the Lyf phones, namely: Flame, Earth, Water and Wind and the company may launch more variants going forward.

According to a joint study by the industry chamber Assocham and NEC Technologies released in June 2017, India's electronics market is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 41% for three years to cross \$400 billion by 2020.

In 2014-15, India's share in the world in total electronics hardware production stood at 1.5% or \$32.46 billion.

The second RIL official spoken to said the firm is currently focusing on its latest offering, the Jio Phones, and after meeting demands for the same, other segments would be looked into. "As we go along and as technology evolves, changes will happen in our

bouquet of offering. Currently, we have Jio Phones on our mind. Whatever 3G smartphones exist in the market, are upgrading to 4G. But there is a huge market out there which is still 2G feature phones and all those guys are yet to be connected to the world. Jio Phone would also boost our subscriber base," said the second RIL official on condition of anonymity.

RIL announced the launch of Jio phone, its feature phone in August. The phone can be bought at Rs1,500, which has a provision of being refunded after three years. It offers a larger screen, access to apps, 4G data and 4G VoLTE calls. Jio Phone users will have to pay Rs153 a month. A weekly plan of Rs54 and a two-day plan of Rs24 is on offer.

The customer base of Reliance Jio has touched 160 million, Akash Ambani, had said at the RIL family day on 23 December.

NEW TARGETS

M&AS MAY TOUCH \$50BN IN 2018

■ Transactions likely to focus on sectors such as healthcare, telecom, energy, realty

New Delhi, Jan. 1: India is likely to see mergers and acquisitions (M&As) worth \$50 billion in 2018 on the back of plenty of stressed corporate assets on offer at tempting valuations, according to a study.

The Assoccham Year Ahead Outlook observed that India's M&A transactions witnessed a quantum jump of 170 per cent in valuations and over 70 per cent in the number of transactions in the year gone by on the basis of various estimates.

According to different data compilations, there were a total of 944 transactions (664 domestic and 280 cross-border) in 2017 worth \$46.5 billion (\$13.1 billion domestic and \$33.4 billion cross-

border), said the chamber.

This was against a total of 553 transactions (358 domestic and 195 cross-border) worth \$17.5 billion (\$7.2 billion domestic and \$10.3 billion cross border) in 2016.

The chamber pointed out that there has been a quantum leap in M&A transactions in India with more focus on sectors such as healthcare, telecom, energy, real estate, media & entertainment, banking, insurance, oil, cement and consumer products.

"The M&A opportunities in 2018 would remain robust given the fact that lot more assets continue to remain under stress. Several big ticket projects referred

to the NCLT (National Company Law Tribunal) under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code would see change in promoters in areas like real estate, steel etc.," Assoccham secretary general D.S. Rawat said.

The chamber suggested easing of guidelines and legislative support in the Income Tax Act and the Competition Act to boost mergers and acquisitions (M&A) activity in India.

"Amendments in the Stamp Act, 1899 to bring uniformity of Stamp Duty in all Indian states particularly to M&A transactions can prove to be a catalyst for the future M&As in India," Assoccham said.

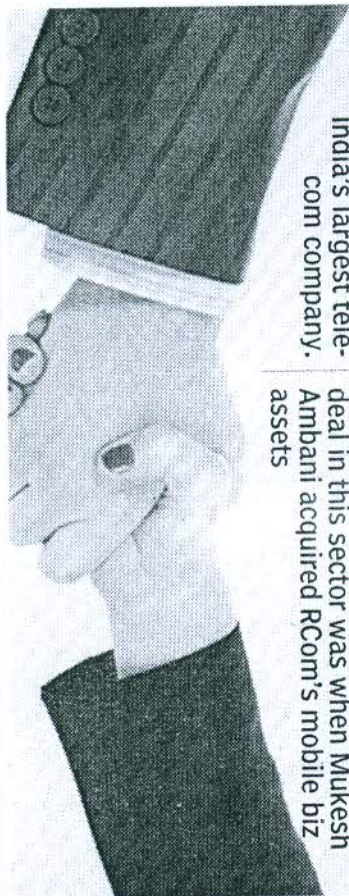
— PTI

MERGER IN TELECOM SECTOR IN 2017

■ VODAFONE-IDEA MERGER On March 20, Idea Cellular decided to merge with Vodafone's Indian arm to create India's largest telecom company.

■ TATA TELE-AIRTEL/AIRTEL-TELENOR Airtel acquired Telenor India in the month of February, to create a combined database of 315 million subscribers. Then in October, Tata Teleservices decided to merge with Airtel for the same reason.

■ RCOM-JIO The entry to jio into telecom sector saw the sector go through a consolidation phase. The last major deal in this sector was when Mukesh Ambani acquired RCom's mobile biz assets



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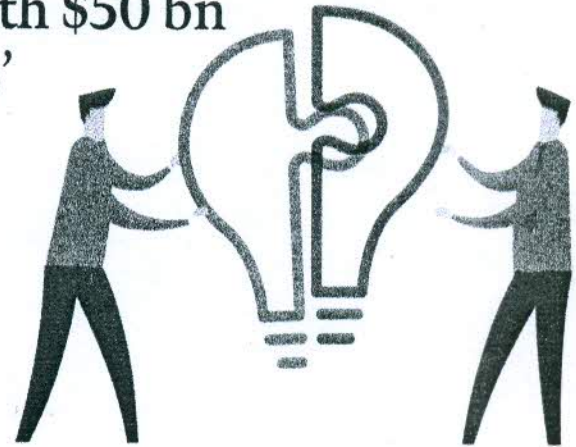
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THE SUGGESTIONS

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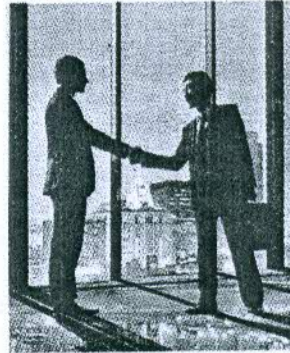
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