

ASUS Zenfone Max (2016)

ASUS has launched an improved version of its Zenfone Max. This new handset – just 5.2mm at its thinnest, and available with a black, orange- or a blue-textured back – comes with a fully-laminated 5.5-inch HD display; a 1.5GHz Snapdragon 615 octa-core processor; a choice of either 2GB or 3GB RAM; 32GB storage (with a microSD card slot for more); a 5MP wide-angled selfie camera, and 13MP rear shooter with laser auto-focus and dual-LED flash for natural-looking crisp captures. The mainstay of this device, however, is its 5000mAh battery that promises a whopping 900 hours of standby time, or 37.5 hours of 3G talk time, or up to 22 hours of continuous video playback. Over and above that, you can also use the Max's battery and the OTG cable that comes in the box to recharge your other gadgets.

flipkart.com ₹9,999 (2GB RAM), ₹12,999 (3GB RAM)



Nextbit Robin

The Nextbit Robin – available in mint and black – comes with a soft-touch polycarbonate body that packs in a 1.8GHz Snapdragon 808 processor, 3GB RAM, 32GB storage, a 13MP rear-facing camera with autofocus, and a 5MP front-facing snapper with a dual-tone LED flash. It is fronted by a 5.2-inch, full-HD Gorilla Glass 4 display, and is equipped with a fingerprint sensor – as well as a 2680mAh battery that's rated to last an entire day on a full charge. But what differentiates this device from other smartphones is its 'free' 100GB cloud storage. When the Robin is charging and connected to Wi-Fi, it backs up all your apps and photos to your cloud account, and archives the least-used of these when space runs low. Robin leaves thumbnails of all archived content on the phone, making it easy to just tap and restore. So when you want to access something, tap to open it like you normally would, and Robin brings it back from the cloud right away.

www.flipkart.com ₹19,999

Coolpad Max

The dual-SIM Coolpad Max allows you to run two accounts for WhatsApp, Facebook, Messenger, etc. This feature could be useful to folk who want to keep their personal and professional lives separate. For security, it comes with a fingerprint scanner, and you also get encrypted 'private space' for sensitive apps and data. The device – available in gold and rose gold – sports a 5.5-inch full-HD Gorilla Glass 4 display and a bead-blasted aluminium back. Inside you get a 1.5GHz octa-core Snapdragon 617 processor, 4GB RAM, 64GB storage and a 2800mAh battery that promises up to three-hours of talk time with just a five-minute charge. Its second SIM slot can alternatively be used for a microSD card. For the click happy, it comes with a 13MP rear camera with dual-tone LED flash and 5MP selfie snapper.

amazon.in ₹24,999



CHROMECAST 2

Google's new Chromecast is a disc-shaped device that plugs into your TV's HDMI port to let you view photos, stream videos, and even run apps from your Android handset, tablet, iPhone, iPad, Mac, Windows laptop and Chromebook. You will, of course, need to install the Google Cast app on your smartphone, tablet or computer, and you will also need an active Wi-Fi internet connection.

Set up is fairly simple: Plug the Chromecast 2 into an HDMI port; power it up via a plug point; use the TV remote to switch the AV source to HDMI and follow the onscreen instructions to connect to your home Wi-Fi. The device comes with all the necessary instructions and cables you will need to set it up and get it running.

Once it is set up, you can use the Chromecast 2 to view YouTube, Netflix, Plex, NPR One and other video services on your TV. Just tap the Cast button in these apps.

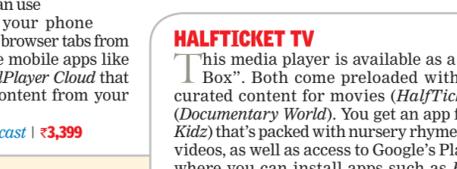
Apart from streaming video content from the web, you can use Chromecast 2 to mirror your phone and tablet screen, as well as browser tabs from your laptop. Plus, there are mobile apps like EZCast, LocalCast and RealPlayer Cloud that let you stream personal content from your smartphone and tablet.

www.google.co.in/chromecast | ₹3,399

The Chromecast 2 is not equipped with internal memory where you can store multimedia files, nor does it include a USB port or a memory card slot for storage expansion. If you want to play content off a pen drive, memory card, or portable hard drive, then consider the HalfTicket TV devices or the Amkette EvoTV 2.

All three gadgets run on the Android operating system and support myriad audio/video file formats such as AVI, MP4, MOV, Windows Media files, MP3 and high-quality audio types like OGG and FLAC.

Setting these up is similar to the Chromecast: connect the player to a free HDMI port, power it up, switch your TV source, and follow the manual's instructions to connect to your Wi-Fi network.



STREAM AND PLAY ONLINE VIDEOS ON YOUR TV

HOW TO

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If you want to watch YouTube videos on your television, or stream those holiday videos from your laptop or pen drive to its big screen, you will need to buy a smart TV that comes with built-in Wi-Fi and digital format support. But if you think your existing 'flatscreen' still has a few years of service left in it, you might want to consider a media player to convert your telly into a web-enabled entertainment centre. Just make sure your TV set has a free HDMI port...

HALFTICKET TV

This media player is available as a "Smart Stick" or a "Streaming Box". Both come preloaded with streaming apps that offer curated content for movies (HalfTicket) and documentaries (Documentary World). You get an app for children (Hoopla-Kids) that's packed with nursery rhymes and educational videos, as well as access to Google's Play Store from where you can install apps such as Facebook, Amazon and Flipkart.

The HalfTicket TV devices are equipped with motion-sensing remotes, which makes it easy to navigate its on-screen user interface. That said, some Android apps might suffer from random lags, as they may not be compatible with large format displays. These niggles will require an over-the-air update to iron out optimization issues. Still, HalfTicket TV works well for streaming audio and video content from the internet.

So which one should you buy? Well, consider the Smart Stick if you're looking for portability. This device comes with 8GB internal storage and a slot for microSD memory cards. You can even use its included USB OTG cable to plug in a pen drive or portable hard drive. But if you want more connectivity options, then consider the Streaming Box. It has two USB ports, a microSD slot and an Ethernet port for wired connectivity to your home network. If your TV doesn't have an HDMI port then you can use the included A/V cable to make your TV 'smart'.

store.halfticket.tv | ₹3,999 (Smart Stick), ₹4,999 (Streaming Box)



AMKETTE EVOTV 2

Like the HalfTicket TV players, the Amkette EvoTV 2 is also an Android-based box with access to Google's Play Store. But in terms of functionality, it packs in so much more. For instance, it works with the Google Cast app, so you can push YouTube videos to the player just like you would with the Chromecast. Plus, if you install its Chrome browser extension, then you can view the tab on your television too. The included "air mouse" lets you input text quickly; control apps and movie playback.

It is even possible to watch videos saved on your laptop, PC or Mac machines. For this, you need to install Servio (servio.org) on your computer; import the media files and launch its pre-installed companion app on the EvoTV 2.

The box comes pre-loaded with apps like Eros Now and Netflix for movies, and popular TV channels, which let you watch your favourite soaps and sports matches online.

The EvoTV 2 comes with four USB ports, one of which is utilized by the remote's wireless receiver. But you can use the three free ports to connect a portable hard drive, a pen drive and even a wireless keyboard. Plus, you get an SD card slot, so you can browse the photos you took with your digital camera on a bigger screen.

evotv.amkette.com | ₹6,999

TIP: You will need a good internet connection for smooth streaming of online videos. You should subscribe for a minimum speed of 5Mbps with preferably unlimited data. Also, these set-ups work best if the Wi-Fi router is in close proximity to your TV set for better wireless signal fidelity.

It should be noted that glass partitions and walls between the device and router will weaken your Wi-Fi signal thus marring your video streaming experience.

buyer's guide

I'm looking for a printer for home use within a budget of ₹7,500. My children will mostly use it for school projects, while I will use it to print a few documents every week. Should I buy an inkjet printer, or should I opt for laser?

—Alok Gupta, V Kamat, Karan Singh, Rahul Shah

Whether you should buy an inkjet or a laser printer, depends on what you would be printing, and how often you would be using the device to print. Since you have mentioned that your kids will be using the device, we would suggest an inkjet MFD (multi-function device) as an option. These also allow you to scan and photocopy documents.

Here are a few points that will help you make your decision...

■ Pricewise, inkjets cost less than laser printers. Also, inkjet cartridges are cheaper to buy. That said, laser printers make more efficient use of printer toner – and in the long run, are more economical, especially when it comes to cost per page.

■ If you intend on printing images and snapshots, then opt for inkjets as they are capable of better colour reproduction, and printing on photo paper.

■ Laser printers, on the other hand, are better suited for text documents, and can output sharper fonts with faster print speeds. Also, laser toner doesn't smudge in case you accidentally spill water on your printed sheets.

■ If you're convinced about an MFD, then inkjets are the way to go, as laser colour MFDs are much more expensive, costing well over ₹10,000.

If you need a device to print a few documents every week – or perhaps, print colour photos and graphics, then opt for an MFD inkjet printer (preferably colour) with a digital scanner and copier functions. But if you need to print documents in bulk, then opt for a laser printer for its economies of scale and crisp output.

► **Inkjet (Colour) Printer:** Epson L130 (₹7,500) Note: This printer is not equipped with a scanner or copier, but comes with proprietary ink-tank technology that promises up to 4,000 pages in black and 6,500 pages in colour on a single refill, making it extremely economical and on a par with laser printers.

► **MFD (Colour) Inkjets:** Canon Pixma E460 (₹4,000), HP Deskjet Ink Advantage 2545 (₹5,200), HP Deskjet Ink Advantage 3545 (₹6,000), Canon Pixma MG5770 (₹6,800). Note: All the inkjet MFDs listed above allow for wireless printing from mobile devices.

► **Laser (B&W) Printers:** Samsung ML-1676 (₹5,800), Canon LBP 2900B (₹7,500), HP P1106 (₹7,500).

► **MFD (B&W) Laser:** Ricoh SP 2105U (₹7,000), Samsung SCX-3401 (₹7,600)

Still, before you decide on any model, we suggest you talk to your local dealer about availability and price of print cartridges/toner and their print yield (number of printouts per refill), as these factors play a big role in the operational costs of your device.

—Savio D'Souza

Can't decide which gizmo is right for you? Looking for buying suggestions? Write to techtonic@timesgroup.com

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LimeRoad enters men's category

Digbijay.Mishra @timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: LimeRoad, a social-shopping platform for women, is diversifying into the men's category – a move aimed at expanding its scale. The four-year-old company, founded by former eBay and Facebook employees, is introducing its men's range with about 60,000 products along with a lakh of scrapbooks for men.

The move is aimed to boost its gross merchandise value (GMV), which has grown about 60% over the last three months, according to the Gurgaon-based startup. LimeRoad clocked a GMV of about Rs200 crore in the year-to-date period. GMV is overall sales by merchants on an e-commerce platform, without factoring discounts and returns.

"The women's style market is much more fragmented and we wanted to prove our mettle with the toughest segment first. Having gotten some measure of success with that difficult-to-please segment, we felt it was the right time to broaden our business to welcome men as well," said Suchi Mukherjee, founder and CEO at LimeRoad.

The Tiger Global-backed company will compete with fashion focused e-tailers such as Myntra, Jabong, besides the horizontal e-commerce players like Amazon and Flipkart.

Tatas foray into e-comm with Tata Cliq

Mumbai: India's biggest conglomerate Tata Group launched an e-commerce venture on Friday as it seeks to cash in on rising purchasing power in a market dominated by deep-pocketed international retailers and startups backed by global tech investors.

The group said it developed its Tata Cliq over a year-and-a-half at a cost of "several hundred million dollars" to be a marketplace for in-house and partner companies to sell apparel and electronics. Tata said its focus was profit margins and unit economics, and not just growing sales via discounts. REUTERS

Average CEO pay falls 15% after years of steady rise

A mere \$19.3 million. That's how much compensation Wells Fargo's chief executive, John G Stumpf, was awarded last year, making him perfectly representative of the best-paid CEOs in the country.

Among the 200 highest-paid chief executives at US companies with annual revenue of at least \$1 billion that filed proxies by April 30, the average pay was, give or take a few thousand dollars, equivalent to Stumpf's own: \$19.3 million.

Yet by the topsy-turvy standards of corporate pay, what's remarkable is not how big that number is, but how small.

After years of steady rise, the average compensation among the top executives in 2015 was down 15% from \$22.6 million in 2014, according to the Equilar 200 Highest-Paid CEO Rankings, conducted for The New York Times.

By other measures, too, CEO pay declined. Cash and stock awards, the main components of pay packages, fell last

TOP PAID CEOs	
\$94.6m 881%*	56.4 4%
DARA KHOSROWSHAHI EXPEDIA	LESLIE MOONVES CBS
54.1 22%	53.2 53.2
PHILIPPE DAUMAN VIACOM	MARK HURD ORACLE
CEO pay for 2015; % change over 2014 Source: NYT/Equilar	

year. Among the companies in the rankings, the biggest pay package, worth \$94.6 million, went to Dara Khosrowshahi of Expedia. For the first time since 2012, no company awarded its chief more than \$100 million.

All of which raises a tantalizing prospect: Has executive pay finally peaked? Have the CEOs and the compensation committees that set their pay discovered something approaching modesty?

Some experts say that is

the case. "We're hearing a great deal more concern from compensation committee chairs about absolute pay," said Kenneth Daly, CEO of the National Association of Corporate Directors, a trade group for board members.

What is certain is that last year's weak stock market pulled down the value of executive pay packages. After posting fairly consistent gains for years, the S&P 500 stock index and the Dow Jo-

nes each fell slightly in 2015. Because the average compensation package was 69% stock, lower share prices meant less pay for CEOs.

But the relation between pay and performance remains tenuous at best. Several CEOs reaped huge windfalls, even while presiding over precipitous declines in total shareholder return.

Take Philippe Dauman, the embattled chief of the media conglomerate Viacom. Dauman was awarded \$54.1 million last year, a 22% raise from 2014. Over the year, Viacom shares plunged 43%.

Or consider Stephen A Wynn, the Las Vegas casino magnate. He made \$20.7 million, down 19% from 2014. That may seem like an appropriate haircut, but shares of Wynn Resorts plunged 54%, wiping out half its value.

Such flagrant disparities – CEOs are paid tens of millions of dollars for running troubled companies – rile critics. NYT NEWS SERVICE

'RBI may wait and watch before further rate cuts'

► From P 1

Perhaps more important at this juncture is to ensure that current and past policy rate cuts transmit to lending rates," Rajan had said last month. The government and RBI were hoping that banks would be more aggressive with rate cuts from April after the finance ministry opted for sharp reduction in rates on small savings schemes such as PPF and post office deposits.

In fact, the 60 basis points fall in the base or the benchmark rate of top 10 banks is in many cases more than the benefit that has accrued to home loan borrowers. Bank customers have always complained of being short-changed, especially when the reduction in deposit rates has been much steeper at around 120 basis points (100 basis points equal one percentage point) and impacts senior citizens the most.

The tardy transmission of

TIMES VIEW: The Reserve Bank of India and the government are correct in pushing banks to pass on the benefits of lower interest rates to borrowers. Lower rates can spur demand in sectors such as housing, which are languishing with lakhs of unsold units. For several years, banks have pocketed the gains of lower rates with only a portion of the overall policy cut flowing to borrowers. Banks have instead focused on maintaining their margins by reducing deposit rates, which is impacting senior citizens. It is only in recent years that the RBI has started pushing banks to pass the benefit and it should act firmly to protect the interest of consumers.

interest rate cuts by the central bank into the banking system may also force the RBI to adopt a wait and watch posture for now, said a source. "Inflationary pressures are there and the transmission of policy rates cuts have been slow. Therefore the RBI may prefer to wait and watch before cutting rates further," said a senior government official.

Data in recent months has complicated the policy choice. Both retail and wholesale price inflation data have pointed to rising pressure led by some food prices. Global cru-

de oil prices have also rallied and edged close to \$50 a barrel. While there is no immediate threat to the overall economy, the central bank may prefer to remain cautious, say officials. Industrial output data has remained volatile but still shows the sector remains sluggish.

While RBI expects retail inflation to remain around 5% in the current fiscal year it has called for a strict watch on the prices front and hopes the supply side management by the government would help moderate prices.

No conflict with order on differential pricing: Trai chief

► From P 1

Trai's new consultation paper had led to fears among a certain section of net neutrality activists that the regulator is having a rethink on its landmark order on differential tariffs, which had led to the end of zero-rated platforms such as Facebook's 'Free Basics' and 'Airtel Zero'.

"If there is a sale at a shop in Connaught Place, the deal should be open to everybody and not only to a select few, say only to those who enter from a particular road. Similarly, we are making a pitch for a telco-agnostic solution which will make the discounted or free content available to all subscribers and not restrict it to the users of only one mobile service," Sharma said. "This has no conflict with the order on discrimi-

natory pricing." Facebook's 'Free Basics' provided access to only a few websites and was open to subscribers of only Reliance Communications. This had led to the service being labeled as a "walled garden".

The Trai chief said the differential tariffs order would "in no way" run in opposition to the present consultation. "We are not compromising on any principle. Through the new consultation, we want to implement a toll-free equivalent in the world of data. This could be for services such as health, governance, knowledge about government schemes, or any other type of data. We are exploring this model. The only condition is that this should be unrestricted and without the involvement of telecom service providers."

Asked whether it would be right if established and deep-

pocketed companies provided their services free of cost, he said, "Why not? Every content provider should be able to promote itself... People are free to price content or provide incentives to visit their content. However, the pipe (telecom provider) should not have any role here."

On whether this would stifle startups and curb innovation as newer players would not be able to subsidise their content, he said, "Innovation and startup is not socialism."

Trai's consultation paper has come in for some criticism. Net neutrality activists fear this is a "discriminatory pricing model", and would not conform to the guidelines explicitly laid out in Trai's differential pricing regulation.

Trai has sought comments by June 16 and has fixed June 30 for counter-comments.

Sensex gains 1% to end at 6-month high

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Sensex rallied over 1%, or 287 points, on Friday to close at an over six-month high level at 26,654 on the back of a good monsoon forecast and better-than-expected corporate results. In the last four sessions, the sensex has rallied over 1,400 points (5.5%) as Dalal Street celebrated completion of two years in office of the Narendra Modi government. During this period, investors' wealth has also jumped Rs 3.2 lakh crore with BSE's market capitalisation now at Rs 98.82 lakh crore. On a weekly basis, the sensex gained 5.3%, or 1,353 points, its best weekly gain in almost three months.

Friday's rally was led by strong gains in SBI, Sun Pharma, HDFC and Reliance. SBI said in the January-March quarter it had earned a net profit of Rs 1,264 crore.

EXECUTIVE DIGEST



POSTPONING PAIN: Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will postpone a sales tax hike planned for next year, perhaps by as much as three years, says a report. He is expected to justify the move as part of G7 efforts to avert another global financial crisis

12m US cars recalled over Takata airbags

Washington: Eight automakers said on Friday they are recalling more than 12 million US vehicles for defective Takata air bag inflators, widening the largest-ever auto safety effort to more passenger-side devices. Honda Motor Co is recalling 4.5 million US vehicles while Fiat Chrysler is recalling 4.3 million, according to the documents. REUTERS

At ₹10k cr, IOC 2nd most profitable PSU

New Delhi: Indian Oil Corp (IOC) on Friday reported a record net profit of Rs 10,399 crore in 2015-16 to become nation's second most profitable PSU, even as it posted an 80% drop in March quarter earnings because of inventory losses.

Its net profit was second only to Oil and Natural Gas Corp's Rs 16,004 crore net profit in 2015-16 fiscal.

IOC net profit in 2015-16 was almost double of Rs 5,273 crore net profit in the previous fiscal, company chairman B Ashok told reporters here.

"We have had an outstanding year in terms of both operating performance and profit," he said.

Refineries processed a record 56.2 million tonnes of crude oil 2015-16, up from 53.6 million tons in the previous year while fuel sales soared 6% to record 72.7 million tons. IOC maintained its leadership position with 45.5% market share. AGENCIES