

ZAIN INTRODUCES LOCAL DATA ROAMING OFFER FOR B2B CUSTOMERS

REINFORCING COMPANY'S ARRAY OF OFFERINGS AND SOLUTIONS TO CORPORATE SECTOR

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, introduced its latest offering for corporate customers, enabling them to enjoy the same local Internet caps while roaming with Zain's premium partners abroad.

Zain's offer comes as part of its vision to embrace the current digital business transformation, wherein the company continues to acknowledge the significance of Internet services usage when travelling abroad as well as the importance of corporate customers' need to constantly stay connected to their business and customers.

Corporate customers who are subscribed to the 'Smartphone Global' package can now enjoy the same Internet cap of their current local Internet plan as soon as they choose one of Zain's premium partners when they arrive to their destination. Alternatively, corporate customers can also activate Internet roaming pay-as-you-go for KD 7 weekly.

In efforts to add extra convenience to

the roaming experience, Zain also offers corporate customers with a real-time control solution, providing usage visibility and allowing them to use the Internet more while monitoring their bill in real time. In addition, Zain provides a special feature for Smartphone Global service to control usage.

The feature will suspend the Smartphone Global service whenever the Internet cap is exhausted. This will allow corporate users to avoid any bill shocks while roaming. Zain is constantly keen to maximize Internet usage transparency, and with that invites customers to monitor their real-time data usage during their travels by visiting connect.kw.zain.com

As a leading telecommunications company, Zain is committed to enhancing its existing partnerships and further partnering with leading regional and global network providers. Zain partners with leading mobile operators to offer customers more choices to join the net-



work they desire at their convenience, including the biggest providers in the GCC, Europe, the US, Asia, and more.

Zain continuously offers services that are tailored to match its corporate customers' expectations and needs during their travels, and to keep them connected to their businesses and customers with more convenience and around the clock.

Launching a range of offerings and programs, Zain aims primarily to provide and develop innovative solutions for corporate customers. The company recently launched its "Colocation Data Center" (CDC) to offer corporate customers an ideal platform with reliable support and advanced solutions to store and host their digital datacenter. Zain also partnered with Vodafone to launch Machine-To-Machine (M2M) services on its ultra-fast network. Zain is also planning to launch more enterprise services in 2016 and 2017 to enable its customers to be more agile in their business.



A hand holding an iPhone next to the Apple logo in New York City. — AFP

MULTI-BILLION APPLE WINDFALL PUTS IRELAND IN UNUSUAL BIND

DUBLIN: The European Commission's demand for Apple to pay Ireland some 13 billion euros in back taxes has put the country in the strange position of refusing the windfall for fear of scaring away valuable investment. Rather than welcoming the cash-equivalent to around five percent of its gross domestic product the government has vowed to appeal the ruling, fearing an ever-greatest cost to its economy and jobs.

Finance Minister Michael Noonan said he disagreed "profoundly" with Brussels while Apple chief Tim Cook warned the ruling threatened jobs and investment in Europe. Cook said Apple, the world's most valuable company, was now in the "unusual position" of being asked to pay taxes to a government that says they are not due. But opposition politicians urged Ireland, which has suffered years of austerity following a painful recession during the eurozone, to take the Silicon Valley giant's cash.

"EUR13bn Apple Tax could build 86,000 council houses. Shelter for Apple but none for the homeless," tweeted left-wing opposition politician Richard Boyd Barrett. More than seven out of 10 people in a national radio poll also thought that Dublin should take the money, piling pressure on the government.

'Greater tax fairness'

But Ireland has to weigh up the cash windfall against the potentially more long-term damage the ruling could do to its image as a low-tax place to do business. Multinationals with major operations in Ireland now employ more than 170,000 people-one in ten workers-and the corporate tax rate of 12.5 percent is one of the lowest in Europe.

This corporate tax regime has been one of the cornerstones of its strategy for attracting inward investment and it has been spectacularly successful in doing so in recent years. With 5,000 workers and another 1,000 promised, Apple is the single biggest employer in Cork, Ireland's second-biggest city, and one of several US tech giants with their European hubs in Ireland.

Although the case pertains solely to Apple, the tax practices of other Dublin-

headquartered multinationals such as Google and Facebook have been heavily criticised internationally in recent years. On revenues of 12.4 billion euros in 2011, Google paid just 22 million euros in taxes in Ireland.

Irish MEP Brian Hayes said he feared the ruling could damage Ireland's future ability to attract investment, although it will likely be welcomed in many European capitals, particularly in Paris. The Irish corporate tax rate has been widely criticised by Ireland's EU partners, while France is a leading critic of a race-to-the-bottom among EU member states to cut tax and social conditions to attract foreign investment.

"I have no doubt this will cause significant reputational damage to the country and that is why the government must appeal this decision," Irish MEP Hayes told national broadcaster RTE. Investment house AJ Bell said in a note that the decision "could deter fresh investment by leading corporations, to the potential detriment of employment and income tax contributions".

'Rich with talent'

Apple was quick to point out that it invested in Ireland when the country was struggling economically. Cook noted that the company had opened its first facility in Cork in southwest Ireland in 1980 at a time when the area was beset by "high unemployment and extremely low economic investments".

"Apple's leaders saw a community rich with talent and one they believed could accommodate growth if the company was fortunate enough to succeed," he said. "As our business has grown over the years, we have become the largest taxpayer in Ireland, the largest taxpayer in the United States, and the largest taxpayer in the world," he wrote.

Meanwhile, one trader said that Britain, which voted to leave the EU in June, could end up being the beneficiary. "If Ireland cannot offer sweetheart deals within the EU, the City of London can perhaps offer something more appealing outside the bloc," said Neil Wilson from currency trader ETX Capital. — AFP

2016 HONDA CR-V ACHIEVES HIGHEST OVERALL SCORE FOR COLLISION SAFETY

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

KUWAIT: The stylish and versatile 2016 Honda CR-V has received a 5-Star Overall Vehicle Score, the top score available in the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) New Car Assessment Program (NCAP). Earlier, the CR-V earned a TOP SAFETY PICK+ rating from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), making it a collision safety leader and standout choice in the SUV market. The 2016 CR-V, has also been recognized by KBB.com's expert staff of editors for their ability to meet the needs of families, with a keen focus on various factors including safety and performance.

"Consumers have made the CR-V America's best-selling SUV for good reason, and this top government safety rating just adds one more appealing and class-leading attribute," said Jeff Conrad, senior vice president and general manager of the Honda Division. "Honda is committed to offering vehicles that deliver advanced safety, fun-to-drive performance and connectivity, with top fuel economy ratings. CR-V is that kind of vehicle."

In receiving the 5-Star Overall Vehicle Score from NHTSA, the 2016 CR-V also met the requirements of the agency's technologies. The 2016 Honda CR-V utilizes the latest generation of Honda's Advanced Compatibility Engineering (ACE) body structure which helps make the CR-V highly effective at absorbing and dispersing the energy of a frontal collision crash.

Key Safety and Driver-Assistive Features:

- * In addition to the application of Honda's ACE(tm) body-structure, the 2016 CR-V features a host of standard active and passive safety features and offers many standard and available driver-assistive technologies, such as:
- * SmartVent Front Side Airbags
- * Side Curtain Airbags with Rollover Sensor
- * Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children (LATCH)
- * Vehicle Stability Assist (VSA) with Traction Control
- * Motion-Adaptive Electric Power Steering (EPS)
- * Anti-lock Braking System (ABS)
- * Honda LaneWatch (EX, EX-L Navi)
- * Hill Start Assist (HSA)
- * Expanded View Driver's Mirror



* Multi-Angle Rearview Camera with Guidelines

Honda Safety Leadership

Honda has a long history of leadership in the development and application of advanced technologies designed to enhance the safety of all road users, including automobile occupants, motorcycle riders and pedestrians. The company operates two of the world's most sophisticated crash test facilities, and is responsible for numerous pioneering efforts in the areas of crashwor-

thiness, airbag technology, collision compatibility and pedestrian safety.

Based in part on advancements to Honda's Advanced Compatibility Engineering(tm) (ACE(tm)) body structure, Honda is a leader in third-party crash test ratings within the industry. The company also is broadly applying advanced safety and driver-assistive technologies. Also, all Honda vehicles have applied a rearview camera as standard equipment since the 2015 model year.

WHY THE EU SAYS APPLE MUST PAY IRELAND \$14.5BN IN TAX

LONDON: The European Commission (EC) ordered Apple Inc. to pay Ireland unpaid taxes of up to 13 billion euros (\$14.5 billion) yesterday as it ruled the firm had received illegal state aid.

What is the EC alleging?

The European Union's (EU) executive arm has ruled that Ireland made a deal with Apple that had no basis in tax law. The Commission said this involved cutting Apple's tax bill to almost zero, in return for Apple building factories in Ireland. The EC says that is unfair and that Apple must pay Ireland the tax it would have paid if normal tax rules were applied.

Why does the EU care if Ireland does not tax Apple?

The EU believes sweetheart tax deals help divert investment and jobs away from countries where it would normally go. Also, the tens of billions of dollars in profits which Apple enjoys tax free in Ireland each year are generated almost exclusively outside Ireland. Hence, Ireland's deal deprives other EU countries of tax revenue they might otherwise earn.

Is Ireland about to land a windfall?

Not anytime soon. Ireland's finance minister said he plans to appeal the ruling in Europe's highest court. That will likely take two years or more and Apple may make legal challenges and is also likely to be able to fight any demands from Ireland's Revenue Commissioners in Irish courts, tax lawyers say.

Might Apple settle?

It can certainly afford to, with more than \$200 billion in cash or readily marketable securities. But since \$13 billion is not a major sum for Apple, investors won't be too worried about the uncertainty it faces and consequently it won't be under pressure from shareholders to settle. The company has been aggressive in defended its tax practices, with CEO Tim Cook testifying to Congress on the issue.

What does the US government think?

The US Treasury and lawmakers have criti-

cized the EU approach of using competition law to challenge tax rulings. They say the approach is targeting US companies, deviates from accepted international practice and threatens US investment in Europe.

A US Treasury Department White Paper last week said "it continues to consider potential responses should the Commission continue its present course".

U.S law allows the President to double taxes on citizens and companies from countries which apply "discriminatory or extraterritorial taxes" on US firms. If the EC prevails, does this means that multinationals won't be able to avoid tax in the EU?

No. The Commission's case against Ireland

was helped by its ability to secure access to documents in which Irish officials were unusually frank about the agreement they made with Apple.

EU states wanting to secure investment by helping companies avoid tax will in future be more careful about leaving a paper trail which could suggest a tax ruling is a sweetheart deal.

The EU's principal legal adviser on tax, Richard Lyal, wrote in a legal journal last year that "It is likely to be only in extreme cases that one can with confidence say that a particular decision reflects a misapplication of the chosen method". Without evidence of an "extreme" deviance from accepted norms, the Commission would likely be reluctant to initiate a tax case. — Reuters

IMF INSISTS ON INTERNATIONAL AUDIT OF MOZAMBIQUE DEBT

MAPUTO: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is demanding an external forensic audit of Mozambique's public debt to regain investor confidence after a scandal over more than \$2 billion in secret loans, its local representative said yesterday.

Parliament and the attorney-general's office have launched investigations into the undisclosed borrowing in 2013 and 2014 but the government has balked at opening up its books to outside auditors. However, the IMF, which suspended assistance when the loans came to light this year, has insisted on external scrutiny as a precursor to resuming financial aid to what is one of the world's poorest countries. "It is important to move quickly to an international forensic audit," its representative, Alex Segura-Ubiergo, said

in an interview on Radio Mozambique, the public broadcaster.

"Investors are still interested in investing in Mozambique and this will bring foreign exchange, will bring dollars, but for this we need also the return of confidence," he added.

The debt crisis and aid suspension has hit Mozambique hard, with its currency, the metical, losing nearly 40 percent against the dollar since January and economic growth slowing to below 4 percent. With foreign debt soaring towards 100 percent of GDP, the government has been forced to revise its 2016 budget, which now shows a deficit equal to 11.3 percent of GDP, while the central bank hiked interest rates by 300 basis points in July to try to prop up the currency and contain inflation. — Reuters



TOKYO: A woman walks past an electronic stock board showing Japan's Nikkei 225 index at a securities firm in Tokyo yesterday. — AP