

## BSNL offers new schemes as the festive season begins

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At the onset of the festive season, the country's largest internet service provider, BSNL, has announced that it will offer free BSNL Customer Line Identification (CLI) based dialup internet access for two months for its PSTN customers. The scheme entails new and existing BSNL customers to use their internet connection without paying the connection charges i.e. Rs 6 per hour at present till October 31, 2008. The company would invest about Rs 3-4 crore towards infrastructure setup and would charge its customers nothing. There are about one crore dial up internet connections in the country, of which BSNL holds about 35% of the market share. Dial up being the cheapest and the best means of providing internet services in class B and class C cities in India, the country's telecom giant has taken this initiative to increase internet reach in the country.

Speaking to *FE*, Anil Jain, DDG, Broadband BSNL said, "We have about 1,000 new customer additions per day, which we expect to increase significantly to about 5,000 additions per day. This would increase internet penetration in the rural and semi-urban areas in the country." Out of the 3.1 crore BSNL landline customers, nearly 1.4 crore are located in rural areas. "Therefore, our rural customers would take the most of the benefit of the scheme" expects Jain. BSNL has partnered with Ahmedabad-based IT firm, Elitecore Technologies Ltd as a franchisee to support this innovative instant internet service. Elitecore director and COO, Nikhil Jain informed that since the broadband services were not available in many small cities and towns, an easy and cheap mode of internet connection was required. Jain said, "By such an initiative during the festive seasons, people would gain more exposure toward the internet and become aware about the schemes."