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SAMENA TRENDS

FOR SAMENA TELECOMMUNICATIONS COUNCIL'S MEMBERS

BUILDING DIGITAL ECONOMIES

THIS MONTH

FROM NETWORKS TO DEVELOPMENT PLATFORMS

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SAMENA TRENDS

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From Networks to Development Platforms

Governments no longer treat connectivity networks as mere technical infrastructure managed largely by operators. This approach has visibly changed over the years. That is, as digital services expand across education, healthcare, finance, and government administration, telecom infrastructure is becoming part of national development strategy.

Rising data demand is now driving continuous investment in network infrastructure expansion and capacity. Operators are extending fiber infrastructure, upgrading mobile systems, and strengthening national backbones to support larger volumes of traffic and connected devices. At the same time, satellite systems are becoming a practical complement to terrestrial networks. They help extend connectivity to remote communities, maritime routes, and areas where ground infrastructure is difficult to deploy.

Together, these systems are forming a layered digital environment. Fiber networks move large volumes of data between cities and across borders. Mobile networks connect people, businesses, and devices in everyday life. Satellite systems extend connectivity where terrestrial networks cannot easily reach. When combined, in what we increasing refer to as TN-NTN integration, these layers create the technical base on which many digital services depend.

Another dimension alongside connectivity is now also evident. Governments are paying closer attention to where national data is stored and processed, and how advanced digital systems are developed and operated. Some countries are building domestic capabilities to train and run these systems using local infrastructure and national data resources. Telecommunications networks support this effort by carrying the data between users, data centers, and computing facilities. In this way, connectivity infrastructure also supports the digital capabilities that governments increasingly see as strategic.

Because of these developments, telecommunications infrastructure now supports services that directly impact economic performance and social development. Governments can centralize services online, health systems can provide remote care and exchange data securely, and education can reach students beyond traditional classrooms. Financial services and digital marketplaces broaden economic participation, while farmers and small businesses gain access to markets and information previously out of reach. Together, these capabilities, and the transformation they enable, demonstrate how networks function as a foundation for national development, not merely as channels for connectivity.

For regulators and policymakers, this transformation has clear implications. That is, the challenge now lies beyond just assigning spectrum or approving infrastructure. Networks now determine which regions, sectors, and communities can participate in digital systems at all. Policy decisions about how terrestrial and satellite layers interact, where compute and data reside, and how critical services are secured directly shape national digital capacity.

The need has never been more dire for operators, regulators, and technology providers to coordinate around measurable outcomes, and not only discuss abstract targets. This means prioritizing investments that expand not only coverage but also resilience in the wake of new societal and geo-political challenges, redundancy, and reliability where digital services are most critical. It also means planning for human capacity: engineers, network specialists, and operators who can maintain systems that now combine multiple technologies and governance layers.

Bocar A. BA
Chief Executive Officer
& Board Member
SAMENA Telecommunications
Council

Telecommunications networks have therefore moved from being tools of connection to being instruments of control and capability. Regulation today is about how national digital infrastructure enables or limits economic, social, and strategic outcomes. Every spectrum decision, investment rule, or security standard now carries implications far beyond the sector itself.

Managing telecom networks today is managing the platforms on which modern societies function, and this requires treating networks as active instruments of national capability.

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SAMENA Council On

Intelligent Networks for Sovereign & Sustainable Futures

Global Cross-Sector Leadership to Converge in Dubai for SAMENA Council 20th Anniversary & Leaders' Summit 2026

With the esteemed patronage of the Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA) of the United Arab Emirates, the SAMENA Telecommunications Council is pleased to announce the 2026 edition of its invitation-only Leaders' Summit, marking the Council's 20th anniversary. The Summit, to be held at Atlantis The Palm, Dubai, will bring together government leaders, regulators, global industry CEOs, investors, and heads of international organizations for an unparalleled dialogue on the future of digital convergence and collaboration. The agenda of the Leaders' Summit 2026 will be defined under the global theme "Intelligent Networks for Sovereign & Sustainable Futures"

The 2026 Summit is not only a celebration of SAMENA Council's two decades of industry support and contributions to the ICT ecosystem, it is a defining moment to shape the next twenty years of digital growth and innovation across the region. In a technology and business landscape, where rapid convergence between telecommunications, artificial intelligence, and space-based connectivity is driving change and innovation, the Leaders' Summit 2026 will explore how intelligent networks can enable sovereign and sustainable futures. Leaders and experts will discuss AI-native and autonomous networks, the evolution of 5G-Advanced, future-ready broadband, and hybrid connectivity integrating terrestrial, satellite, and device-to-device technologies. The Summit will also examine edge and distributed intelligence, national strategies for sovereign AI, cybersecurity and trust, sustainable digital infrastructure, ecosystem and operator transformation, and the emergence of new value chains defining the digital economy.

> *The Leaders' Summit 2026 will explore how intelligent networks can enable sovereign and sustainable futures. Leaders and experts will discuss AI-native and autonomous networks, the evolution of 5G-Advanced, future-ready broadband, and hybrid connectivity integrating terrestrial, satellite, and device-to-device technologies.*

"The Year 2026 reflects on and continues the SAMENA Council's legacy of fostering industry-wide collaborations and strategic support to ICT sector stakeholders. We have another opportunity this year to shape the next decade of digital progress for citizens, businesses, our economies, and accelerate progress on the SDGs," said Bocar BA, CEO of SAMENA Council. "The Leaders' Summit 2026 provides a platform for policymakers, industry change-makers, and investors to align on strategies, partnerships, and innovations that will deliver intelligent, secure, and sustainable networks and communications capabilities for the region and beyond."

Held in the UAE, a recognized global hub for digital leadership, the Leaders' Summit 2026 will feature high-level discussions on spectrum governance, AI frameworks, regulatory readiness, and digital sovereignty, alongside investment-focused dialogues connecting capital with frontier technologies and scalable markets. Participants from Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia, and beyond will explore cross-border collaboration, regional integration, and harmonized policies that support inclusive, interoperable digital ecosystems.

The Leaders' Summit 2026 is being organized with the steadfast support of telecom operators led by the SAMENA Council Board of Directors and chaired by stc Group, with legacy sponsorship from Huawei, in strategic cooperation with Smart Africa and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

As the region's premier forum for leadership and collaboration, the SAMENA Council Summit offers companies and ecosystem players an opportunity to engage with decision-makers, explore strategic partnerships, and showcase solutions that will define the next era of digital transformation. Organizations interested in sponsorship or participation are encouraged to connect with SAMENA Council to explore collaboration opportunities.

Final date of the Leaders' Summit 2026 is to be reconfirmed in March.

SAMENA Council On

Upper 6 GHz Spectrum

SAMENA Council Highlights Upper 6 GHz Spectrum as a Catalyst for Driving Next Stage of Cellular & WLAN Ecosystems

As a part of its recent advocacy work in representation of the shared interests of telecom operators, governments, technology providers, and the wider digital ecosystem, the SAMENA Council has highlighted the growing strategic importance of the Upper 6 GHz (U6) spectrum (6.425 GHz - 7.125GHz) as a key enabler of the next phase of development across both cellular and WLAN ecosystems, emphasizing its role in supporting inclusive digital growth, innovation, scientific progress, and long-term economic value-creation. In a panel discussion, held during the 19th edition of the TR Summit in Dubai, the SAMENA Council emphasized that U6 GHz band, beyond its contribution to expanding capacity and improving performance, offers a unique opportunity to advance digital inclusion, accelerate innovation, and unlock new possibilities across cellular and WLAN environments. While much of the discussion around U6 GHz often focuses on technical performance, the SAMENA Council noted that the band also carries broader, less obvious implications. Izhar Ahmad, Director – Industry Affairs & Communication, representing the Council stated: "In an era increasingly shaped by AI, U6 GHz can support more advanced data-driven collaboration and experimentation across sectors. This joint spectrum and AI capability has the potential to reinforce innovation ecosystems as well as contribute to progress in areas such as scientific research, amplifying new discoveries, transformation across industries, and speeding up wider digital service innovation." "U6 GHz also has relevance for national digital strategies, including emerging approaches to materializing Sovereign AI", he added. From a regulatory and policy standpoint, the SAMENA Council observed that the global approach to U6 GHz allocation remains fragmented. Across regions including Asia-Pacific and South America, countries broadly fall into three groups: those that have allocated the band for IMT use, those that have designated it for WLAN, and those that initially favored WLAN before later shifting toward IMT. Izhar Ahmad mentioned that "In the case of the UAE, we have an exceptional example. Following WRC 23, and through the allocation of this spectrum for IMT use, the advancement of 5G and 5G Advanced, Fixed Wireless Access, and the issuance of a 6G roadmap, the UAE has demonstrated outstanding regulatory clarity." While varying approaches around the globe reflect individual national considerations, greater coordination and harmonization would help unlock broader ecosystem benefits and improve efficiency, the SAMENA Council emphasized. Looking ahead, the SAMENA Council reiterated the need for a balanced approach to U6 GHz development, with particular emphasis on how value is assessed and extracted from spectrum resources. Regulatory frameworks should be aligned with national ICT visions and be grounded in a clear assessment of how economic, social, and innovation value can be drawn from the newly available spectrum. "Maximizing value from each of the 700 megahertz contiguously available in this precious band will require alignment between cellular and WLAN ecosystems, supported by national ICT priorities, standardization, chipset development, and compelling use-cases. The U6 spectrum should be guided by real-world use-cases that encourage cross-industry innovation, while ecosystem development should advance both cellular networks and WLAN environments to ensure seamless experiences for people, machines, and interconnected devices", Izhar Ahmad concluded.

> *"Success hinges on addressing four parallel priorities: achieving regulatory clarity, technological readiness, service innovation, and ecosystem balance, while maximizing value from each of the 700 megahertz contiguously available in this precious band. This will require alignment between cellular and WLAN ecosystems, supported by national ICT priorities, standardization, chipset development, and compelling use-cases."*
>
> **Izhar Ahmad**
> **Director - Industry Affairs & Communication, SAMENA Council**

UK Regulator Outlines Upper 6GHz Proposal

The regulator explained its approach would divide the band, with Wi-Fi services prioritized in one part and mobile the other. It noted clear technological conditions and controls would be attached. It described its proposal as pioneering, highlighting the two service types traditionally had to use different bands to avoid interference. Ofcom believes its plan would support Wi-Fi while improving mobile services "where demand is the greatest", including paving the way for 6G. It claims the spectrum-sharing approach would help the broadband sector provide "advanced Wi-Fi to businesses, industry and homes", while enabling mobile companies to "keep up with demand in busy locations, support data-hungry technologies like virtual reality and AI, and prepare for the introduction of 6G in future". Ofcom's consultation opened on 9 January. It proposes existing low power Wi-Fi technology be able to start using part of the spectrum by the end of 2026, with mobile coming "later" and a focus on improving services in densely populated areas. The mobile industry strongly argues for the upper 6GHz band to be allocated exclusively to operators. Responding to Ofcom's proposal, GSMA spectrum engagement director Luiz Felipe Zoghbi said it is "concerned that introducing prioritized sharing in the upper 6GHz band risks constraining future mobile deployment at a time when global decisions on 6GHz for IMT are quickly evolving". He added the industry organization also "underlines the importance of alignment with the recent RSPG opinion and broader worldwide harmonization frameworks, which are essential to ensure economies of scale, sustainability, device interoperability and efficient spectrum use". "Looking ahead, the 6GHz band is essential for the 6G development and for enabling advanced use cases across industry, services and society, and preserving a clear pathway for mobile in this band is essential for the UK to sustain leadership, unlock innovation and drive long-term economic growth."

Nigerians to See Impact of New 6Ghz, 60GHz Spectrum Bands Before Year's End

The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has assured Nigerians that the benefits of the newly opened 6GHz and 60GHz spectrum bands will begin to be felt before the end of the year, as the regulator moves to expand network capacity and improve telecom service quality nationwide. The assurance was given by Atiku Lawal, Head of the NCC's Spectrum Administration Department, during the closing session of a stakeholder engagement on the Spectrum Roadmap 2026–2030 and the guidelines for opening the lower 6GHz band for Wi-Fi 6 and the 60GHz license-exempt band for multi-gigabit wireless systems. Lawal described the roadmap as more than a technical policy document, saying it is designed to support broadband expansion, innovation, and Nigeria's ambition of building a $1 trillion digital economy by the end of the decade. "I cannot give an exact time, but from experience, you should begin to see these services being used before the end of the year," he said, noting that Nigerians typically adopt new technologies rapidly once spectrum resources become available. He explained that the decision to open the new bands is driven by the surge in connected devices. Nigeria currently has more than 200 million active lines, with

over 90 percent of connections delivered wirelessly. "Spectrum is what connects all these devices. It is a finite resource, and the more of it we make available, the better the quality of service Nigerians will enjoy," Lawal said. The additional spectrum is expected to reduce network congestion, improve data speeds, and enhance user experience. It will also create opportunities for innovation across banking, commerce, education, and healthcare. Lawal said improved connectivity could enable services such as remote medical consultations, allowing specialists in urban centers to support patients in rural communities. He also revealed that the NCC is exploring emerging technologies such as direct-to-device satellite communication, which allows mobile phones to connect directly to satellites without relying solely on terrestrial base stations. Unlike traditional satellite services that require large antennas, newer technologies enable direct connectivity from standard devices. The Commission has published a discussion paper on direct-to-device services and is seeking feedback from industry stakeholders and the public.

SAMENA Macro-View

The Unified Frontier: Engineering a Multi-Layer Digital Infrastructure

Telecommunications in 2025–2026 is not experiencing routine upgrades. It is undergoing structural reinforcement. Traffic volumes, coverage expectations, satellite density, AI deployment, and spectrum policy are moving at the same time. Operators and governments are no longer managing separate domains. They are aligning fiber networks, satellite constellations, cloud cores, and regulatory controls as parts of one system.

What connects these developments is load. Data growth is forcing redesign. Redesign is accelerating hybrid terrestrial and satellite architectures. Hybrid architectures are pulling governance and sovereignty into day-to-day engineering decisions. Infrastructure strategy and national policy now move together.

> *AT&T reports average daily volumes close to one exabyte, roughly a tenfold increase over a decade. At this scale, optical transport, metro aggregation, and core routing layers feel pressure simultaneously. Capacity planning is no longer cyclical. It is continuous.*

Terrestrial Networks: When Scale Changes the Rules

Daily traffic has reached levels that alter how networks are built and financed. AT&T reports average daily volumes close to one exabyte, roughly a tenfold increase over a decade. At this scale, optical transport, metro aggregation, and core routing layers feel pressure simultaneously. Capacity planning is no longer cyclical. It is continuous.

In the Gulf, e& UAE is upgrading its EMIX backbone with Cisco to 400G links to accommodate about 20 percent annual traffic growth. This is not excess capacity. It reflects predictable saturation under current demand curves.

National statistics show similar patterns. The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority reports more than 27,000 petabytes of annual data usage, while cell site fiberization remains around 18 percent. When radio speeds increase faster than transport depth, end-user experience becomes uneven. Fiberized site ratio is therefore becoming a primary indicator of network quality.

Large infrastructure programs follow the same logic. The Fiber Broadband Association recorded 11.8 million new fiber homes passed in 2025. Broadband Infraco partnered with Huawei on an 800G optical backbone. Oman Broadband is approaching one million connections. These projects are justified by measurable outcomes such as latency reduction, redundancy, and cost per transported gigabit.

Wireless backhaul is also being stretched. du demonstrated a 25 Gbps E-band microwave link to support dense 5G sites. India now counts more than 400 million 5G users. Load effects are visible in shared infrastructure. Data from Ookla shows median 5G speeds in Malaysia declining as adoption accelerated. For operators, this means higher busy-hour margins and dual-path resilience are no longer optional.

Corporate decisions reflect these pressures. Telenor has reduced exposure in parts of Asia, including the sale of its stake in True Corporation, concentrating capital in core markets. Proximus selected Nokia for cloud core modernization. Zain Group and ZTE secured strong CDP climate scores, linking energy performance with financing access. Scaling networks now requires scaling balance sheets and operational discipline.

> *As satellite density increases, governance becomes operational. Algeria launched the ALSAT-3A satellite, and Oman initiated its national satellite program. The World Space Sustainability Association convened stakeholders in Dubai to address collision and traffic management. Orbital congestion is now treated as a planning variable, not a distant concern.*

Even with deeper fiber and stronger cores, terrestrial networks cannot reach every geography or provide full redundancy. That limitation is bringing satellites into the core design conversation.

Satellite Systems: From Coverage Gap to Infrastructure Layer

Satellite connectivity is no longer a fallback. Starlink reports roughly nine million users, adding tens of thousands daily. The Federal Communications Commission has authorized SpaceX to deploy thousands of next-generation satellites. Throughput improvements, including onboard switching from Xsight Labs, are pushing satellite performance into direct comparison with fixed wireless.

Device integration is changing adoption dynamics. Beeline Kazakhstan completed a satellite-to-app voice call using a standard smartphone. Kyivstar registered millions of users for satellite text services within weeks. Airtel Africa and Orange Côte d'Ivoire are integrating satellite into national coverage strategies. Arabsat partnerships are extending media and broadband reach across EMEA.

As satellite density increases, governance becomes operational. Algeria launched the ALSAT-3A satellite, and Oman initiated its national satellite program. The World Space Sustainability Association convened stakeholders in Dubai to address collision and traffic management. Orbital congestion is now treated as a planning variable, not a distant concern.

Terrestrial and orbital layers are therefore being engineered as complements. When one saturates, the other provides resilience. That interdependence introduces new control challenges.

> *Across regions, a clear pattern emerges. Traffic growth, satellite expansion, automation, cybersecurity enforcement, and spectrum reform are not isolated trends. They reinforce each other.*

Governance and Control: Sovereignty Enters the Engineering Domain

As networks integrate AI-driven automation and satellite layers, governance moves closer to the core of infrastructure planning.

> *Higher terrestrial load drives satellite integration. Satellite density raises governance requirements. Automation increases efficiency but elevates risk exposure. Spectrum discipline determines how efficiently both terrestrial and orbital layers operate. Capital allocation follows regulatory clarity and operational resilience.*

MeetKai and the GSMA are building language models that include thousands of underrepresented languages. Pakistan is developing Beep, a secure state messaging platform. The United Arab Emirates has formalized AI governance through AIATC frameworks. These initiatives reflect a shared objective: maintain control over data, models, and inference capacity within national jurisdictions.

Automation is entering live networks. e& enterprise and IBM have deployed AI-based operational tools. TM Forum has validated autonomous fault-healing capabilities from ZTE. As systems become more self-correcting, accountability becomes more complex. The ETSI has introduced cybersecurity standards for AI. Cisco has introduced defensive controls for AI supply chains. SK Telecom is contesting a major fine linked to a data breach, calculated on global revenue. Cyber exposure now affects enterprise value directly.

Spectrum decisions complete the picture. The upper 6 GHz band remains contested. Ofcom is testing a shared access model. The Nigerian Communications Commission has opened new high-frequency bands to support national digital expansion goals. Saudi Arabia, ranked highly in the ITU Regulatory Maturity Index, has used dedicated spectrum to support industrial networks through Aramco Digital. Regulatory structure is now a competitive differentiator.

Conclusion: One System, Multiple Layers

Across regions, a clear pattern emerges. Traffic growth, satellite expansion, automation, cybersecurity enforcement, and spectrum reform are not isolated trends. They reinforce each other.

Higher terrestrial load drives satellite integration. Satellite density raises governance requirements. Automation increases efficiency but elevates risk exposure. Spectrum discipline determines how efficiently both terrestrial and orbital layers operate. Capital allocation follows regulatory clarity and operational resilience.

National examples reflect this alignment. Iraq has digitized hundreds of government entities. Egypt, through the National Telecom Institute, has trained tens of thousands to support workforce demand. Infrastructure expansion and human capacity development are progressing together.

The defining feature of this period is integration. Digital infrastructure now behaves as one coordinated system. Its strength depends on how effectively fiber depth, satellite reach, operational automation, and regulatory discipline are aligned. The countries and operators that manage these layers as a single architecture will shape the next phase of digital growth.

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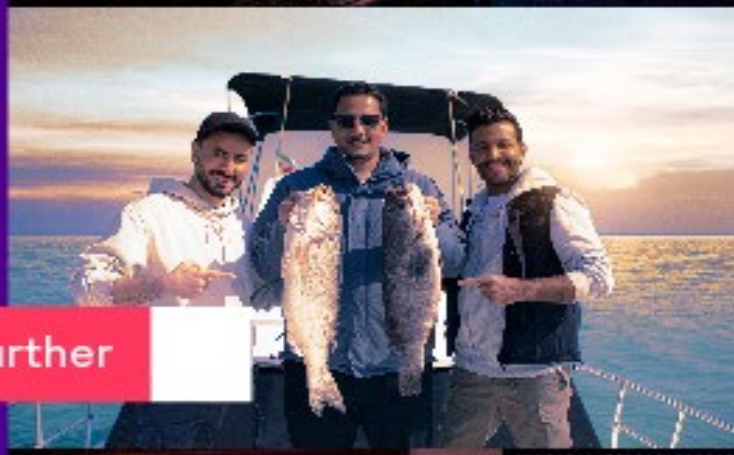


stc

MEMBERS NEWS

stc Named Strongest Brand in the Middle East and Among World's Top Telecom Brands

stc group announced its consolidated financial results for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2025, recording the highest revenues in its history at SAR 77.8 billion, reflecting a 2.5% increase compared to the previous year. Net profit rose by 12.5% after excluding non-recurring items, demonstrating the strength of the group's business model and the continued execution of its sustainable growth strategy. Gross profit increased to SAR 37.7 billion, while operating profit reached SAR 14.4 billion. Earnings before interest, taxes, zakat, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) amounted to approximately SAR 24.5 billion, marking a 6.1% increase after excluding non-recurring items. This growth was driven by improved operational efficiency and disciplined management of costs and capital investments. The Group also announced a dividend distribution of SAR 0.55 per share for the fourth quarter of 2025, in line with its approved dividend policy. Alongside its strong financial performance, stc group continues to invest in developing employees' capabilities and skills. Over the past year, the group achieved notable progress in talent development through programs such as the Partner Development Program, Job Attachment initiatives, and stc Academy. It also sponsored the Human Capability Initiative Conference, during which it launched a public training platform aimed at equipping national talents with the skills required for the future labor market, underscoring its commitment to building digital capabilities and enhancing competitiveness. In addition, stc plays a key role in supporting the organization of major international events and religious seasons such as Hajj and Umrah. The group also continues to support national forums and major events through reliable digital infrastructure that strengthens the readiness of vital sectors with high efficiency. stc provides advanced connectivity solutions and digital services aligned with the highest international standards, contributing to strengthening the Kingdom's position as a leading destination across various sectors. These efforts, combined with the brand's strong presence, reinforce stc group's position as a leading digital enabler in the region. Eng. Olayan bin Mohammed Alwetaid, group CEO of stc, stated that the results reflect the group's ability to achieve sustainable profitable growth while diversifying income sources and strengthening digital infrastructure. He noted that during the year, the group expanded its network to exceed 10,800 5G sites and 3.75 million fiber-to-the-home connections, in addition to conducting the first regional trial of the 7 GHz spectrum in preparation for 6G technologies. The year also witnessed the expansion of STC Bank to more than 8 million customers, as well as the signing of strategic partnerships to establish dedicated data centers with capacity reaching up to 1 gigawatt. The group also concluded multi-billion-riyal strategic agreements in digital infrastructure and issued USD 2 billion in sukuk, which were oversubscribed more than four times, reflecting investor confidence in the group's strong financial position. On the sustainability front, the group's MSCI rating improved to AA, and it received a five-star EFQM certification. stc maintained its position as the strongest brand in the Middle East for the sixth consecutive year. According to the Brand Finance 2026 report, the group ranked first among the strongest brands in the Middle East, third globally as the strongest telecom brand, and ninth globally as the most valuable telecom brand, placing it among the top ten telecom companies worldwide by brand value. This ranking reflects the group's strong presence in international markets and the confidence of investors and customers, reaffirming its commitment to innovation and investment in digital infrastructure and advanced technologies. These achievements demonstrate the integration of strong financial performance, capability development, and digital leadership, reinforcing the group's position as a key partner in supporting sustainable development.

stc Group Showcases Localization Leadership at PIF Private Sector Forum 2026

stc Group, Saudi Arabia's leading digital enabler, concluded its participation at the PIF Private Sector Forum 2026, emphasizing its ongoing commitment to advancing the Kingdom's local content agenda and digital transformation. Hosted at King Abdulaziz International Conference Center, the two-day event provided stc group with a strategic platform to showcase leadership in localization through high-impact agreements, targeted partner development initiatives, and its flagship Rawafed program which advances Saudi Arabia's local tech industry. Visitors to stc's booth learned about the group's leadership in localizing digital and telecommunications infrastructure. Subsidiaries such as solutions by stc, channels by stc, sirar by stc, sccc by stc, and the group's technology unit showcased solutions covering digital platforms, logistics services, localized 5G devices, cybersecurity, API monetization, data protection and advanced analytics capabilities. The booth offered an overview of the local content journey, from the development of internal business functions and technical solutions by Saudi professionals, designing products tailored for local and regional markets, and the culmination of localized supply chain models. Furthermore, stc showcased investment opportunities in manufacturing, telecom and digital infrastructure through the Rawafed program, paving the way for interested entities to plan future cooperation with stc's partner relations teams at the Forum. In parallel, stc celebrated the graduation of the 2025 cohort from the Partner Development Program (PDP). The program supports partners by providing targeted training and coaching across specialized tracks, including Project Management, Cybersecurity Essentials, Finance for Business Success, and Business Proposal Development. The 2025 program featured innovative gamified learning and expert-led coaching sessions, designed to help partners integrate practical insights into their operations. A key highlight of stc's participation was the signing of five agreements aimed at advancing critical Saudi capabilities. These included enhancing the Kingdom's network inspection infrastructure through collaboration with Wire Filter; improving wireless network performance and monitoring with Saudi Net Link; localizing the production of Customer Premises Equipment (CPE) devices in partnership with Huawei and Interkey; localizing technical quality assurance tests with GCC Technical Services Co.; and supporting Saudi Arabia's environmental sustainability goals by deploying smart tree technology in partnership with Alheyad Alsufri Environmental Service Company (Netzero). These agreements reinforce the group's commitment to directing investments into Saudi-based partners and technologies, strengthening local innovation, and supporting economic growth. stc group's activities at PIF Private Sector Forum 2026 showcased a clear, strategic approach toward building a resilient and competitive Saudi ICT sector, aligned with the Kingdom's broader objectives for economic diversification and innovation.

stc Group Signs an Agreement to Implement the "Silklink" Project in the Syrian Arab Republic

stc Group, Saudi Arabia's leading digital enabler, announced that it has signed an agreement to implement the Silklink project in the Syrian Arab Republic. This signing comes after the Group winning a competitive process for the project, which was attended by most regional telecommunications companies. With an investment of more than SAR 3 billion, Silklink aims to enhance telecommunications infrastructure and connect Syria regionally and internationally via a fiber-optic network extending over 4,500 kilometers, alongside the establishment of data centers and international submarine cable landing stations. The project provides high data transfer capacities and greater reliability, enabling telecom operators in Syria and the region to offer advanced communication services, and support digital applications, cloud services and the Internet of Things, in addition to improving internet quality and raising the efficiency of the digital infrastructure within Syria. The Silklink project is an extension of stc Group's strategy to expand its investments in cross-border digital infrastructure, and to build a regional connectivity system linking Arab, Asian and European markets, which enhances the Group's position as a leading digital enabler in the region and supports its plans for sustainable growth in the telecommunications and digital services sector.

stc Named Strongest Brand in the Middle East and Among World's Top Telecom Brands

stc Group has been named the strongest brand in the Middle East and the most valuable telecommunications brand in the region, according to the latest report issued by Brand Finance. The Group also ranked as the third strongest telecommunications brand globally and the ninth most valuable telecom brand worldwide, highlighting its growing global stature and strong brand performance across international markets. Brand Finance evaluates more than 5,000 brands annually across various sectors, measuring brand strength and value based on financial performance, market presence, and consumer perception. The Global ranking reflects brands that demonstrate sustained growth, resilience, and long-term competitiveness. The group noted that this achievement reflects its ongoing investments in digital infrastructure and advanced technology solutions, including fiber expansion, cloud services, and artificial intelligence, enabling businesses and communities to accelerate their digital transformation. stc continues to strengthen its regional and international presence through strategic partnerships and investments, while enabling digital transformation across key economic sectors, in line with Saudi Vision 2030 and the Kingdom's ambition to become a global digital hub. This recognition underscores stc group's commitment to delivering world-class digital services and building a future-ready digital ecosystem that supports sustainable economic growth in the Kingdom and beyond.

stc Recognized Prestigious 5-Star Level by EFQM for Organizational Excellence

stc, the digital transformation enabler, has been recognized by the EFQM 2025 Global Institutional Excellence a prestigious 5-Star rating from the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM), becoming the first Saudi company to achieve this level of recognition across all its business units and operations within the private sector in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This milestone stands as evidence of stc's institutional excellence and also makes it the first telecommunications company globally to obtain this rating under the EFQM 2025 Model, reaffirming its leadership in performance and innovation. Mathad F. Alajmi the Group Chief Legal and Risk Officer and General Counsel, at stc, said: "This achievement goes beyond internal processes; it strengthens the trust our customers and partners place in us. By operating at a 5-star level, we ensure that our digital solutions are backed by a resilient and agile organizational culture. We remain committed to continuous improvement to support the region's digital economy." The EFQM model provides a comprehensive management framework used by organizations worldwide to assess operational performance. It evaluates entities against specific criteria, including strategy execution, innovation capabilities, and stakeholder value. Achieving the 5-star rating indicates that stc group's management systems meet established benchmarks for operational efficiency and organizational resilience.

Arabsat Pilots AUDIMATIC's Real-Time IoT Viewership Detection Technology

Arabsat, one of the world's leading satellite operators, has subscribed to AUDIMATIC's real-time television viewership detection platform to monitor satellite TV reach and channel activity across the MENA region. Through this subscription, Arabsat gains access to AUDIMATIC's real-time, IoT driven analytics, enabling continuous visibility into satellite television viewing behavior, including channel performance, viewing distribution, and satellite reach. The platform provides second-by-second detection signals, allowing Arabsat to observe how regional and international linear TV channels are consumed in real time. The subscription supports Arabsat's initiatives to enhance visibility into satellite viewership trends. Access to real-time detection signals allows Arabsat to follow overall shifts in channel activity and regional consumption patterns, contributing to a broader understanding of live satellite viewing behavior. Badis Khaldi, Founder and CEO of AUDIMATIC, said: "By subscribing to AUDIMATIC, the first satellite linear TV audience tool, Arabsat gains real-time visibility into satellite TV channels audiences and satellite reach. This marks an important step toward greater transparency in satellite measurement and provides actionable insights into live viewing behavior across regional and international channels." Yaser Hassan, Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Arabsat, commented: "Access to real-time viewership signals supports Arabsat's ongoing efforts to strengthen visibility across our satellite ecosystem. Integrating this capability gives us an additional layer of insight into channel activity and consumption trends, enabling us to better serve our clients and partners."

ARABSAT Selects ACTIA Aerospace to Power Next-Generation Ground Infrastructure for ARABSAT-7A

ARABSAT has selected ACTIA Aerospace to design, supply, and deploy a new generation of Q/V-Band RF Gateway systems, forming a critical part of the ground segment for its upcoming ARABSAT-7A software-defined satellite. The advanced gateway infrastructure will enable higher capacity, improved performance, and greater flexibility across ARABSAT's next-generation network, supporting dynamic traffic management and future service innovation. This collaboration reinforces ARABSAT's strategy to invest in cutting-edge ground technologies that complement its space assets, ensuring resilient, scalable, and high-throughput connectivity for customers across the region and beyond.

Arabsat Strengthens Regional Connectivity Through Strategic Partnership with Galaxy Telecom

At the Arabsat Telecom Forum 17, Arabsat signed an Agreement with Galaxy Telecom, marking another important milestone in expanding the region's digital infrastructure. This partnership underscores Arabsat's continued commitment to strengthening strategic alliances and delivering high-quality, reliable, and future-focused connectivity across the region, enabling new opportunities for enterprises, governments, and communities to thrive in an increasingly connected world.

Arabsat Signs Strategic Reseller Agreement with ADMC Across MENA and EMEA

Arabsat has signed a strategic reseller agreement with ADMC to expand the delivery of advanced media and connectivity solutions across the Middle East, North Africa (MENA), and Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA) regions. The partnership is aimed at strengthening Arabsat's regional presence while enhancing access to its satellite-based services for a broader customer base. The agreement was formally signed by Dr. Badr Alsuwaidan, President and Chief Executive Officer of Arabsat, and Mr. Ayman Zeibak, General Manager of ADMC. Through this collaboration, ADMC will act as a reseller of Arabsat's services, enabling the two companies to combine their expertise to meet growing demand for reliable media distribution and connectivity solutions. Both parties noted that the partnership represents an important milestone in their growth strategies, reinforcing their commitment to supporting broadcasters, enterprises, and service providers with innovative, high-quality satellite and communications services across key regional markets.

e& and IBM Unveil Enterprise-Grade Agentic AI to Transform Governance and Compliance

Global technology group e& and IBM (NYSE: IBM) announced a strategic collaboration to advance towards an enterprise-grade agentic AI foundation at e&, starting with policy, risk, and compliance. Unveiled at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos, the initiative reflects e&'s move beyond traditional natural language processing (NLP)-based chatbots toward governed, action-oriented AI embedded in core enterprise systems. e& and IBM have introduced an agentic AI solution built on IBM watsonx Orchestrate – a product offering more than 500 tools and customizable, domain-specific agents from IBM and its partners – to help employees and auditors quickly access and interpret legal, regulatory, and compliance information. Integrated with IBM OpenPages and the broader watsonx portfolio, the solution delivers clear, traceable responses aligned with enterprise governance requirements. A joint proof of concept delivered by IBM, GBM (Gulf Business Machines) and e& within eight weeks demonstrated how agentic AI can operate at enterprise scale under real-world conditions. IBM's Client Engineering team led the design and integration of the agentic AI solution, with GBM supporting delivery through project coordination and deep familiarity with e&'s OpenPages and watsonx Assistant environment. The work showcased AI capabilities that move beyond traditional question-and-answer tools, enabling reasoning and action while remaining aligned with e&'s governance, risk, and compliance framework. "Our ambition is to move beyond isolated AI use cases toward enterprise-scale agentic AI that is trusted, governed, and deeply integrated into how the organization operates," said Hatem Dowidar, Group CEO, e&. "By collaborating with IBM, we are embedding intelligence directly into our risk and compliance processes, enabling faster decisions, consistent policy interpretation, and a foundation for broader agentic AI adoption across the enterprise." IBM watsonx Orchestrate enables agentic AI that goes beyond chat-based interactions, allowing AI agents to reason, orchestrate tasks, and integrate with enterprise systems under governance

controls. For e&, it provides a foundation for trusted, explainable AI that can scale across compliance and other enterprise domains. It helps to streamline compliance tasks, reduce response times, and enables 24/7 self-service access across the organization. The initiative also aligns natively with watsonx.governance, already in use at e&, providing a strong foundation for AI governance, explain ability, and compliance by design. By embedding agentic AI directly into the OpenPages governance, risk, and compliance platform, this represents one of the early enterprise-grade agentic AI implementations in the region, demonstrating how AI can support trusted, human-led decision-making under regulatory and operational requirements. The deployment also demonstrates the flexibility of IBM's AI and model gateway approach, enabling large language models to run across hybrid environments, including customer-managed infrastructure, while remaining governed under enterprise controls.

e& and MEVCA Announce Three-Year Strategic Partnership to Strengthen the Middle East's Venture Capital and Innovation Ecosystem

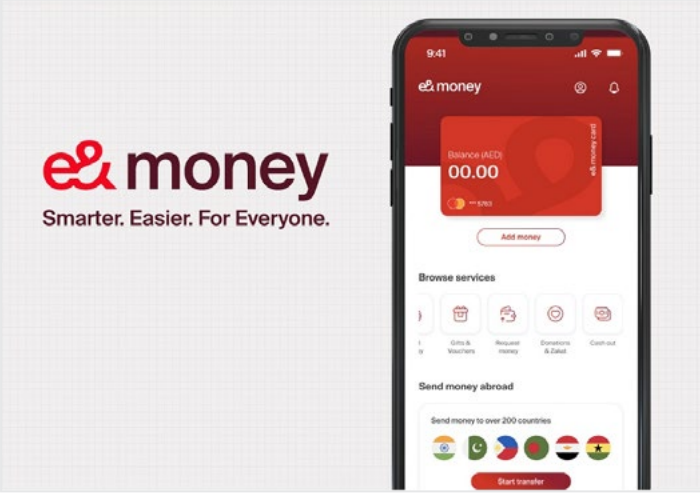
e&, a global technology group, and the Middle East Venture Capital Association (MEVCA) has announced a three-year strategic partnership to strengthen the venture capital and innovation ecosystem across the Middle East, the first partnership of its kind for the association. The partnership brings together e&'s regional scale, digital capabilities, and corporate innovation agenda with MEVCA's role as the leading industry body representing venture capital and private markets across the region. Together, both entities will collaborate to support knowledge sharing, ecosystem development, and engagement between corporates, investors, founders, and policymakers. As part of the partnership, e& will serve as MEVCA's first corporate anchor partner and join the association's board, collaborating on industry research, curated events, thought leadership and ecosystem-driven programming to support entrepreneurs across the region. The collaboration will also support constructive dialogue between the private sector and policymakers to help enable a more connected, investable innovation environment. Harrison Lung, Group Chief Strategy Officer, e&, said: "As the first technology group to join MEVCA's Board, e& is committed to strengthening collaboration across founders, investors and corporates—helping create clearer pathways from innovation to scale and supporting the region's digital and innovation ambitions." Noor Sweid, Chair, MEVCA, said: "We are pleased to partner with e&, a regional and global technology leader, as we continue to build a strong, connected, and forward-looking investment ecosystem. This collaboration reinforces MEVCA's mission to serve as a platform for dialogue, insight, and value creation across venture capital, private equity, and the broader innovation economy." The partnership will be launched at the MEVCA Investors Summit 2026 at ADGM in Abu Dhabi. The summit brings together senior leaders from venture capital, private equity, corporates, and public sector stakeholders from across the region.

e& Enterprise and Emergence Bring Data-Sovereign Agentic AI to Regulated Industries in MENAT

e& enterprise, the digital transformation arm of global technology group e& and Emergence, the US–based leading agentic frontier company, announced a strategic partnership to accelerate the adoption of next-generation AI solutions across enterprises throughout the MENAT region (Middle East, North Africa and Türkiye). The collaboration aims to help organizations unlock operational efficiencies, faster and more accurate insights, stronger governance, and higher productivity, through the deployment of advanced autonomous AI agents. Emergence is widely recognized as a leading agentic AI research lab, founded by some of the world's most accomplished AI veterans. As part of the partnership, e& enterprise becomes a key distribution and implementation partner for solutions built on the Emergence AI platform. Enterprise clients will gain unprecedented deployment flexibility — from cloud-agnostic installations to fully on-premises, air-gapped environments — supported by white-glove advisory and implementation services. Organizations across MENAT will be able to access the full power of the Emergence platform while retaining complete sovereignty over their data, models, and proprietary workflows, an essential requirement for regulated industries. "This partnership marks a pivotal moment in the evolution of enterprise AI across the MENAT region," said Amit Gupta, VP & Head of Data, AI and Fintech at e& enterprise. "Enterprises are moving quickly to operationalize AI, and they need solutions that deliver real impact—not just experimentation. As AI becomes increasingly agentic, data governance has become one of the most critical

enablers of safe, scalable automation. Emergence serves as the intelligence layer that brings built-in governance, observability and controls into every workflow. Our partnership introduces a new class of autonomous AI capability to the region—systems that can automate complex processes, accelerate decision-making, and enforce governance by design while ensuring full data and model sovereignty. This collaboration reflects our commitment to helping customers deploy AI safely, confidently, and at scale." "Every organization we work with shares the same challenge: they want to scale AI, but their data and processes are too fragmented and still require constant human oversight," said Satya Nitta, Co-founder and CEO of Emergence. "Agentic automation changes this by allowing enterprises to finally understand their data and then make use of it far more quickly—saving months of human effort—to drive actionable insights. Our platform creates a unified, intelligent foundation where our autonomous agents can reason, act, and deliver measurable value. Partnering with e& enterprise allows us to bring this capability to organizations across the MENAT region, helping them reduce operational friction, strengthen governance, and deploy agentic systems that drive real competitive advantage." Powered by Emergence's Semantic Intelligence platform, agents can automate multi-step processes across systems—spanning use cases such as semiconductor yield analysis, pharmaceutical research, and financial reporting. Using a three-tier framework (Foundation, Intelligence, Transformation), the platform first automates foundational data work (discovery, mapping, unification, and entity resolution), then applies the Intelligence layer to define the concepts, relationships, and rules that deliver deep, contextual understanding. Within the Transformation layer, Emergence's ACA engine (Agents Creating Agents) builds bespoke agents that automate complex workflows end-to-end, enabling faster decisions, lower manual effort, and rapid time-to-value. By combining Emergence's agentic AI platform with e& enterprise's extensive regional presence and deep enterprise relationships, organizations across MENAT will gain access to forward-deployed AI solutions capable of solving the "last-mile problem" — the complex, business-specific integrations and operational nuances that generic AI products cannot address. The announcement comes at a time of rapid AI investment across the region. According to P&S Intelligence, the GCC artificial intelligence market alone is estimated at USD 12.3 billion in 2025 and is forecast to reach USD 26.0 billion by 2032, driven by enterprise demand for automation, process optimization, predictive analytics, and faster, more confident decision-making. In the GCC, 19% of organizations have already moved from pilots to full-scale implementation of Agentic AI, with 74% planning adoption.

e& Money Opens a New Era in Financial Access Following Finance Company License



e& money announced the beginning of a bold new era in its journey to reshape digital finance in the UAE, following the approval of a Finance Company license from the Central Bank of the UAE. This milestone marks more than an expansion of services. It signals a shift in ambition from enabling transactions to unlocking financial opportunity. Over the past years, e& money has transformed how people pay, send, and spend. More than 2 million customers rely on the app for everyday payments, international remittance, and card spending making it one of the UAE's most inclusive digital payment ecosystems with the highest number of active users in the country. These strong foundations have built scale, trust, and deep data intelligence, positioning e& money to take its next decisive step. With the Finance Company license, e& money is expanding beyond payments into lending — not as a standalone product, but as an integrated part of a connected financial experience. This evolution reinforces e& money's long-term vision of financial inclusion and its ambition to be a true financial superapp — one that supports customers across their full financial journey, from everyday transactions to moments that enable growth, stability, and progress. At the heart of this new chapter is a data and AI-driven approach to credit. By leveraging real transaction behavior, alternative data, and advanced analytics, e& money has developed an enhanced credit scoring model designed to responsibly extend access to credit to new segments of society, including individuals who may not have previously been eligible for loans. Khalifa Al Shamsi, CEO of e& life and e& international, said: "In a digitally advanced economy like the UAE, access to credit is still not a given. While the UAE has achieved near universal financial inclusion, gaps remain when it comes to conventional lending. With this next chapter, we are rethinking how credit is assessed and delivered, using data and technology to open doors for people who have long been overlooked." Under this new phase, e& money will progressively introduce a range of fit-for-purpose lending solutions, rolled out in stages. These will include buy-now-pay-later offerings, early wage access, credit cards, and other solutions — all designed with transparency, affordability, and strong customer protection at their core. This expansion strengthens e& money's role within the broader digital ecosystem of e& and reinforces its position as a catalyst for inclusive growth and digital transformation in the UAE. As e& money enters this new era, its focus remains clear: to make financial services simpler, fairer, and accessible — and to turn everyday financial activity into real opportunity for everyone.

e& Carrier & Wholesale Expands Fujairah SmartHub Capabilities with GNX Connectivity

Global connectivity provider, GNX, has expanded into the e& Carrier & Wholesale (C&WS) ecosystem, the international wholesale arm of the global technology group e&, with a new Point of Presence (PoP) at e&'s SmartHub Fujairah campus in the UAE. The Middle East continues to see rapid digital acceleration, driven by large-scale investments in AI infrastructure, hyperscale cloud platforms, and enterprise digital transformation. As international businesses expand into and across the region, demand for resilient, low-latency, and globally integrated connectivity is increasing sharply. e&'s SmartHub Fujairah plays a critical role in meeting this demand. Strategically located at one of the region's key subsea cable landing stations, the Fujairah Campus serves as a major digital gateway between Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and beyond. With GNX now on-site, international enterprises and service providers will gain direct access to high-performance, carrier-neutral infrastructure, enabling more diverse routing options, improved resilience, and cost-effective global connectivity across multiple continents. This expansion in international traffic and interconnection is accelerating demand for strategically located, carrier-neutral hubs such as e&'s SmartHub Fujairah. "We are excited to be joining up with e& Carrier & Wholesale (C&WS) as one of their connectivity partners in the region," says Rutger Bevaart, CEO at GNX. "It strengthens performance and reliability for our existing customers with operations in the Middle East, while creating additional capacity to support the rapidly growing demand for global connectivity services driven by AI, cloud, and enterprise expansion." By tapping directly into e&'s SmartHub Fujairah, GNX is deepening its integration with e&'s infrastructure ecosystem. The new PoP enables closer proximity to subsea cable systems, faster international interconnection, and seamless integration with GNX's global backbone spanning Europe, APAC, and the Americas. At the same time, it strengthens its portfolio with international, carrier-neutral connectivity, cross-connect services, and IP transit solutions — all delivered through GNX's automated platform and supported by a team of global internet and network experts.

e& Carrier & Wholesale and TNS Global Launch 'South Route' to Boost Central Asia-UAE Digital Connectivity

e& Carrier & Wholesale, the international wholesale arm of the global technology group e& and TNS Global, a leading international carrier in Central Asia, announced a collaboration to launch a new corridor offering a high-performance connectivity route between Kazakhstan and the UAE. The new South Route expands digital pathways between Central Asia and the Middle East, offering customers greater path diversity, resilience and low-latency connectivity. It connects Kazakhstan and other Central Asian states to the UAE over diverse, multi-operator terrestrial segments. The route is engineered to support growing international capacity, hyperscale demand, cloud interconnects, and carrier-grade services, while reducing dependency on single transit corridors. The South Route is part of a broader vision to transform Central Asia into a digital bridge between continents and to expand reliable terrestrial connectivity beyond traditional routes. Nabil Baccouche, Group Chief Carrier & Wholesale Officer at e&, said: "With South Route, we're expanding resilient terrestrial options between Central Asia and the Middle East, enabling operators, hyperscalers, and enterprises to reach critical hubs with secure, scalable, low-latency connectivity. This corridor complements our regional interconnection fabric and strengthens access to the UAE's role as a key digital hub for the wider region." "This collaboration with e& represents a significant step in strengthening digital ties between Central Asia and the Middle East," said Obaid Rahman, Group CEO of TNS Global. "By leveraging diverse terrestrial routes, we are enabling more resilient and flexible connectivity options for operators, enterprises, and global partners." e& brings its strong regional presence and international expertise to the collaboration, reinforcing the UAE's role as a key digital hub. Together, TNS Global and e& aim to support

hyperscalers, carriers, and enterprises seeking secure, high-capacity connectivity across emerging and established markets. With a round-trip delay from Almaty of approximately 48 milliseconds, the South Route delivers competitive latency while benefiting from TNS Global's extensive fiber-optic footprint across Kazakhstan and its 30 trans-border connections. The route is designed to diversify international paths and build scalable digital corridors linking Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, supporting ambitions to build a modern-day Digital Silk Route.

Omantel Completes Major Network Upgrade, Unlocking 5G Standalone Capabilities

Omantel has successfully completed a major upgrade to its network, marking an important step in the company's journey toward enabling full "5G Standalone (5G SA)" services. The enhancement was delivered seamlessly, with no disruption to customers, and strengthens Omantel's foundation to support the next wave of digital technologies. With this upgrade, Omantel is now positioned to roll out advanced 5G SA use cases, including next-generation voice services (Voice over 5G), tailored network solutions, reduced capabilities-RedCap, large-scale IoT connectivity, and ultra-low latency applications. These capabilities will accelerate innovation, drive digital transformation, and open new opportunities for individuals, businesses, and industries across the Sultanate. As Oman's trusted digital partner, Omantel continues to play a leading role in shaping the region's connectivity landscape. This milestone reinforces the company's long-term technology roadmap and its commitment to building a resilient, future-ready network that delivers tangible value to the economy and society. "Completing this upgrade is a proud moment for Omantel. It reflects our determination to stay ahead of technology trends and to bring meaningful digital progress closer to our customers. As a regional digital powerhouse and local innovation enabler, we are committed to ensuring that Oman remains at the forefront of connectivity and innovation" Samy Ahmed Al Ghassany Chief Tech and Digital at Omental Omantel has succeeded, through the integration of its operations, processes, and extensive expertise in communications and digital technology, in establishing its position as a leading telecommunications company within the Sultanate of Oman and beyond. The company's innovative approaches have contributed to providing state-of-the-art solutions to consumer and business

sectors alike. To achieve the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, Omantel invests in emerging technologies and provides cutting-edge ICT solutions including cloud, AI, smart solutions, and cybersecurity while harnessing its technological capabilities to enhance innovation and leadership in advanced technologies.

Fitch Upgrades Omantel to 'BBB-' with Stable Outlook, Affirming Its Strategic Strength

Omantel is proud to announce that Fitch Ratings has upgraded its Long-Term Issuer Default Rating (IDR) to 'BBB-' with a Stable Outlook, marking a significant milestone in the company's journey as a national and regional digital leader. The upgrade follows Fitch's decision to raise the Sultanate of Oman's Long-Term Foreign-Currency IDR to 'BBB-' with a Stable Outlook on 8 December 2025. The rating upgrade reflects Omantel's strong financial fundamentals, strategic importance to the national economy, and its expanding role as a regional technology enabler. It underscores the company's resilience, operational excellence, and disciplined execution of a long-term strategy focused on sustainable value creation. At a national level, the upgrade underscores Omantel's contribution to Oman Vision 2040, particularly in advancing digital inclusion, supporting economic diversification, and enhancing quality of life across the Sultanate through future-ready digital infrastructure and services. Fitch views Omantel's Standalone Credit Profile (SCP) as commensurate with 'bbb' peers in Western Europe, citing the company's strong domestic presence in both post-paid and pre-paid mobile segments, as well as its leading market share across Oman's fixed and mobile markets. While Omantel operates in a competitive environment

alongside other national incumbents, Fitch notes that the company benefits from lower foreign exchange risk compared to many regional peers. Omantel is rapidly transforming into a regional technology leader. Through strategic investments in next-generation infrastructure, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, Internet of Things, and cybersecurity, the company is enabling innovation and cross-border connectivity - positioning Oman as a hub for digital excellence and reinforcing its role in shaping the future of regional communications. On this occasion, Eng. Aladdin Baitfadhil Chief Executive Officer of Omantel, stated "This upgrade to investment-grade status is a landmark moment for Omantel and for Oman. It validates our strategic vision and our commitment to customers, shareholders, and society. More importantly, it strengthens our ability to invest in cutting-edge technologies that touch people's lives every day - from education and healthcare to business and entertainment. As Oman's leading technology Group, we are proud to contribute to the nation's prosperity while positioning Omantel as a regional leader in digital innovation and sustainable growth". Omantel remains steadfast in its strategy of innovation, sustainability, and customer empowerment. The company's leadership is built on a foundation of trust, resilience, and forward-looking investments that ensure Oman and the wider region are ready for the opportunities of the digital future. This rating upgrade is both a recognition of past achievements and a catalyst for continued growth - reinforcing Omantel's role as the backbone of Oman's digital transformation and a regional champion of technological progress.

Zain Upgraded to Top 'A' Score in CDP Climate Change 2025, Region's Only Telecom Operator at This Leadership Level

Zain Group, a leading provider of innovative ICT and digital lifestyle communications operating in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, has achieved the top 'A' score in the recently published CDP Climate Change 2025 disclosure cycle, marking a significant milestone in the Group's climate action journey. CDP is a global non-profit platform that enables organizations to measure, manage, and disclose environment-related data, with scoring designed to recognize robust transparency and credible action toward climate goals. This 'A' leadership-level score reflects Zain's strengthened commitment to environmental accountability and climate action, supported by comprehensive governance structures, enhanced risk management, and clearly defined decarbonization initiatives aligned with global standards. The recognition underscores the Group's progress in embedding climate considerations into strategic planning, operational resilience, and long-term value creation across its footprint. Zain's climate change leadership is further underscored by CDP benchmarks showing average scores of 'B' for Telecom and Data Centers, and 'C' for the global average, with Zain being the only company based in Kuwait to achieve an 'A' leadership level score. Out of 21 disclosers and out of 252 globally disclosing telecommunications services companies, only 30 received an 'A' score, placing Zain in the top 12% of the industry. Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO, commented: "Addressing climate change should be a key priority for every organization and everyone living on this planet. Zain's acts with the belief that sustainable growth and climate leadership must go hand in hand." He added, "As we continue to scale our digital infrastructure across the region in driving meaningful connectivity, we are equally committed to accelerate our transition and reduce emissions throughout our operations to achieve Net Zero by 2050. We firmly believe this commitment will create value to all our stakeholders." Jennifer Suleiman, Chief Sustainability Officer & Mohammed AlMurshed, Chief Technology Officer at Zain Group, jointly added: "Achieving an 'A' score from CDP is a testament to the rigor, transparency, and action embedded in our climate governance and operational execution. This recognition reinforces our commitment to SBTi-aligned targets, renewable energy expansion, and comprehensive climate-risk management across our value chain. We remain focused on pursuing transformational digital innovations and delivering measurable emissions reductions while strengthening resilience and long-term value across all our markets." Operating across diverse markets increasingly exposed to rising temperatures, prolonged heatwaves, water scarcity, flooding, and energy infrastructure volatility, Zain Group has prioritized climate resilience and decarbonization to safeguard network performance and

business continuity and proactively address its environmental impacts. Additionally, the rapid growth of data usage, network expansion, and rollout of energy-intensive technologies such as 5G and data centers further amplify the company's environmental impact. Managing these challenges requires balancing connectivity growth with decarbonization, addressing both physical and transition risks, and ensuring that climate considerations are embedded into business strategy and processes, governance, and risk management processes. Zain's latest CDP recognition further validates the Group's contribution to building a more resilient future, highlighting Zain's role in encouraging wider corporate climate action across the region by demonstrating how ambition can be translated into accountable, data-driven progress.

Zain Kuwait Named Country's Best and Most Innovative Telecom Company

Zain Kuwait has been named the 'Best Telecom Company' and 'Most Innovative Telecom Company' in Kuwait 2025 during the annual excellence awards organized by International Finance. The step marks a new achievement that reflects the company's leading track record in delivering digital innovations for its customers, and its solid leadership position in the local telecom sector through an advanced infrastructure that keeps pace with the needs of the digital economy. During the 13th edition of the ceremony held in Dubai, Alia Al-Awadhi, Media Relations Department Manager at Zain Kuwait, received the two awards. The annual ceremony by International Finance, headquartered in London, brought together business leaders and major regional institutions, and highlighted the most distinguished entities through its annual rankings specializing in economy, finance, and business. This recognition builds on Zain's strong history of accolades reflecting its operational and commercial excellence. The two recent awards spotlight Zain's innovation journey, which centers on preparing networks for next-generation technologies with the launch of 5G-Advanced (5G-A), adopting smart AI-powered solutions and automation operations, in ways that enhance performance efficiency and service quality, and improve the digital experience across multiple scopes. This is in addition to the company's continued focus on investing in the development of network infrastructure and accelerating the shift toward digital operating models that are more efficient, agile, and intelligent, while strengthening its role in supporting Kuwait's national development priorities through a digital infrastructure capable of enabling the country's vital sectors. This excellence is further reflected in a high-impact technical achievement recently delivered by Zain Kuwait, after becoming the first in the region to complete a trial achieving an ultra-high network throughput of 31 Gbps, using advanced multi-carrier spectrum aggregation by combining sub-6 GHz bands with millimeter wave (mmWave). This test confirms the network's readiness to deliver exceptional capacity, low latency, and advanced performance to support the next generation of digital services. Zain continues to cement its leadership in 5G-Advanced innovations through a wide-scale infrastructure designed to the highest standards to support smart cities and IoT applications, alongside initiatives that enhance connectivity reliability and make the digital experience simpler and more impactful in everyday life. This innovation-driven approach is also reflected in the development of network experience and services by deploying AI tools in the field, such as a smart digital assistant for site engineers to accelerate fault resolution and reduce downtime, as well as leading Open RAN trials and improving energy efficiency across network infrastructure.

Zain Great Idea: Demo Day Unlocks a New Wave of Regional Innovation and Investment Momentum

Zain Group, a leading provider of innovative ICT and digital lifestyle communications operating in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, hosted Demo Day as the decisive and concluding milestone in the journey of its flagship startup accelerator Zain Great Idea (ZGI), opening the door to partnerships and investment for entrepreneurs from six Arab countries where the Group operates across the regional map. At the event, founders from 11 tech startups across six of Zain's

regional markets (Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE) delivered pitches to a select audience of investors, business partners, and executive leaders from across the region. They showcased their business progress and strategic growth plans and had the opportunity to connect and engage directly to explore potential pathways for investment, collaboration, and partnerships. The event was held at the Four Seasons Hotel Kuwait, joined by Zain Vice Chairman and Group CEO Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi, Sheikh Jaber Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and CEO of Zain Kuwait Nawaf Al-Gharabally, along with senior executives from Zain Group and its operating companies. This directly reflected Zain's vision of turning business accelerators into real growth engines and platforms that empower startups. Zain Ventures is unlocking new growth pathways by exploring partnership and investment opportunities with the current Zain Great Idea cohort. This embodies the company's commitment to turning acceleration tracks into scalable funding and growth opportunities. The step also comes as part of Zain Ventures' strategy of linking innovation to outcomes by enabling promising startups to accelerate their expansion, strengthen their readiness for commercial and investment partnerships, and enter new markets with greater confidence. Bader Al-Kharafi said: "The final stop of this journey is where ideas turn into opportunities, and opportunities into real partnerships and investments. It is the moment of transformation that will take these ideas to the market. In every idea, I find new inspiration, and with guidance and mentorship, young people's ideas turn into a reality that shapes the future." He added: "This gathering creates opportunities that transform dreams into value and innovation into reality. Today, we test the strength of the business models we have built together, to see the extent to which they can generate economic value." Al-Kharafi explained that over the past 15 years, Zain Great Idea has not been "a passing local initiative," noting: "Our objective was to establish a smart ecosystem that connects talent with opportunity, an ecosystem that turns ideas into startups that lead change."

AT&T Completes Acquisition of Lumen Mass Markets' Fiber Biz

AT&T has completed its acquisition of Lumen Technologies' Mass Markets fiber business for $5.75 billion in cash, the company announced. The deal transfers more than 4 million customer locations and an estimated more than 1 million fiber subscribers into AT&T's footprint across 11 states, expanding the telecom giant's fiber network and customer base. AT&T said the purchase will accelerate its plans to expand fiber coverage, including a target to reach more than 60 million total fiber locations by the end of 2030. "AT&T Fiber, America's best and top-rated technology for getting on the internet, will be available to millions more people as we expand the service in 32 states," AT&T CEO John Stankey said in the statement. He added the acquisition will create jobs, "boost U.S. connectivity" and give more consumers the option to purchase both fiber broadband and AT&T's 5G wireless services from a single provider. AT&T also linked the transaction to its broader commercial strategy, saying that combined fiber and wireless offerings can increase customer retention and generate higher returns from converged relationships. The announcement contained the customary caveat that forward-looking statements are subject to risks and uncertainties and that actual results may differ. AT&T said it will integrate the acquired assets and expects to grow fiber penetration in the new footprint over time, positioning the company to strengthen its competitive standing in the U.S. broadband market.

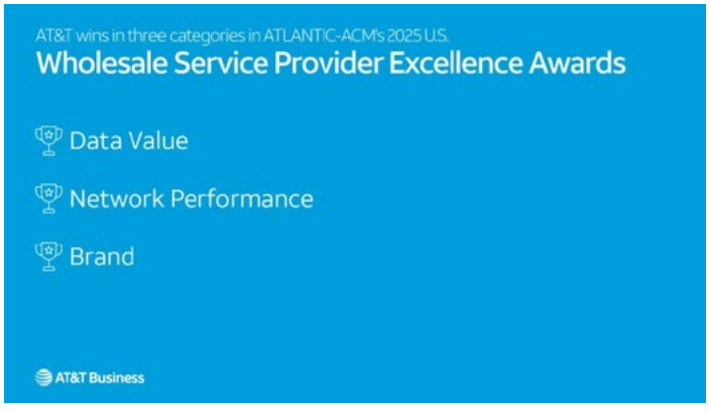
AT&T, Cisco launch SA 5G IoT Platform

AT&T upped momentum around its standalone (SA) 5G network deployment, advancing an existing collaboration with Cisco to help enterprises reap the fullest benefits of the technology for IoT uses. The companies launched a compatible IoT platform using AT&T's infrastructure and a package of Cisco products involving control and convergence to provide programmable network functions including network slicing and self-aware performance adjustments. Cisco stated the platform could spur uses in connected vehicles, smart cities and digital healthcare based on the key tenets of SA 5G; very-low latency, Other elements brought into play include edge computing and a potential global reach using Cisco's converged core and various data centers. Enterprises also stand to gain access to "intuitive tools for lifecycle management, diagnostics and automation" through the centralized control platform. The companies pitched the deepened collaboration as an "important milestone", one which sets them on a path to employing AI to offer dynamic control and real-time adjustments.

AT&T Strikes Connectivity Deal with AWS, Amazon Leo

AT&T struck an agreement with Amazon Web Services (AWS) to combine the operator's fiber footprint with cloud and AI capabilities, while also teaming with Amazon Leo's low Earth orbit (LEO) satellite network to strengthen connectivity across the US. As part of the arrangement, AT&T is migrating on premises workloads to AWS Outposts, using AWS Professional Services and tools such as Amazon Q Developer and other AWS Agentic Services to speed network modernization while improving operational efficiency. The operator stated those moves will also improve its resilience posture. AT&T is providing fiber links to AWS data centers, bolstering the hyperscaler's infrastructure for customers deploying advanced AI applications at scale. Amazon Leowill provide internet connectivity services to AT&T for fixed broadband services to business customers in areas where terrestrial connectivity is limited. Shawn Hakl, SVP for product at AT&T Business, stated the collaboration will create a more resilient, scalable and intelligent connectivity ecosystem across the US. In 2021 AT&T inked a cloud-related arrangement with Microsoft to move its 5G core network to Microsoft Azure.

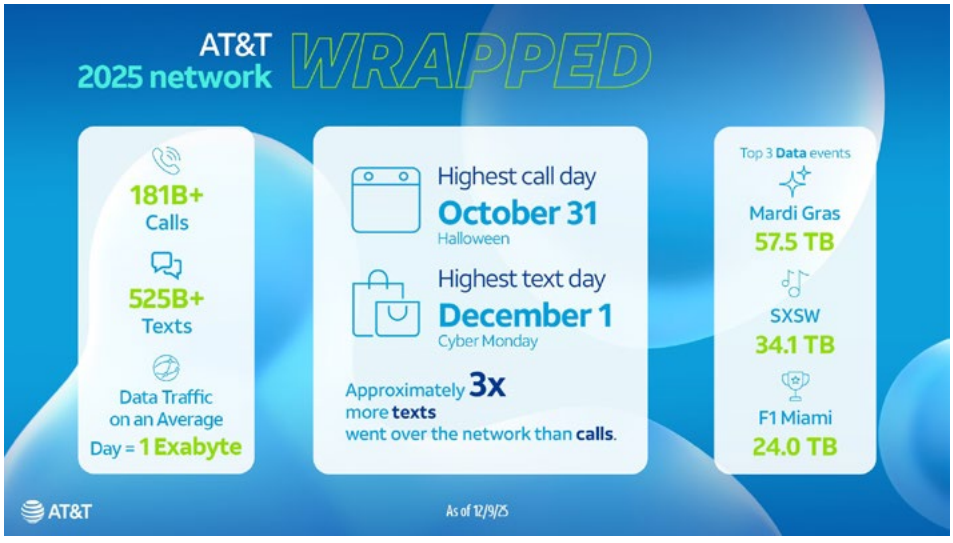
AT&T Recognized for Network Performance, Data Value, and Brand



AT&T has been recognized by ATLANTIC-ACM in its 2025 U.S. Wholesale Service Provider Excellence Awards for Network Performance, Data Value, and Brand in the Large ILEC & Cable category. The honors are based on ATLANTIC-ACM's 28th annual U.S. Wholesale Report Card study, which compiles detailed reviews from approximately 350 unique wholesale customers and more than 1,450 carrier-specific evaluations across multiple service and product categories. The 2025 study highlights Network Performance as the leading factor in wholesale customer buying decisions, followed by Network Security, Price, and Service Delivery. The report also notes rising importance of SLAs and stronger spending expectations for Wavelength, Dark Fiber, Broadband, and Ethernet. "We're honored to receive this recognition from our customers and ATLANTIC-ACM. It's a testament to the strength of our converged network—unifying fiber, wireless, and IP transport to deliver consistent connectivity and resilience—and the dedication of our team. AT&T is committed to delivering industry-leading performance and value, making us the trusted partner of choice for wholesale solutions." — Chad Townes, SVP Partner Solutions, AT&T The study also quantifies current wholesale trends and purchasing dynamics across metro and long-haul services, helping carriers benchmark against industry peers and identify operational and product opportunities.

AT&T's Daily Data Traffic Tops One Exabyte

AT&T's global network carries an average of one exabyte of data per day, an increase of more than 1,000% over the past decade. For decades, AT&T has been at the forefront of connecting people and businesses, continually pushing the boundaries of what's possible. This relentless drive has resulted in a reliable network that now moves an exabyte of data – one billion gigabytes - across our network on an average day. An exabyte is an almost unimaginable amount of data. It's the equivalent of streaming billions of hours of video or trillions of songs. It's like stacking 20 billion filing cabinets on top of each other or downloading every book ever written, thousands of times over, every single day. If you streamed HD video 24/7, it would take you over 32,000 years to watch 1 exabyte of movies! Every photo, video, message, and email our customers send and receive adds to this incredible total, demonstrating the vast scale our network supports daily. Handling this amount of data requires a network that is not only powerful, but also reliable and highly secure, so you can stay connected with confidence. This level of data is possible when you have the largest wireless and Fiber network in North America.1 But our leadership doesn't stop at size; we also have the Best Overall Wireless Network Performance, Most Reliable Wireless Network AND Fastest Wireless Network2 of any carrier.



Just ten years ago, we moved only 91 petabytes of data across our network each day. The leap to an exabyte marks an astonishing 1,000% increase over the past decade and more than 11,000% increase over the past 20 years! With 2025 in the books, we saw extraordinary growth that redefined what's possible for our network. Here's a look at the numbers below: Looking ahead, the future of AT&T will be shaped by our steadfast dedication to innovation, strategic investments in advanced infrastructure, and a relentless focus on keeping people connected wherever they are and whatever they do. As data demand continues to surge, AT&T is poised to meet the challenges of tomorrow by investing in cutting-edge technologies, expanding our fiber and 5G networks, and enhancing network reliability and speed. With a focus on building the networks of the future, we're dedicated to helping ensure that the next era of connectivity is faster, smarter, and more accessible for everyone.

Cisco Reports Second Quarter Earnings

Cisco reported second quarter revenue of $15.3 billion, net income on a generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) basis of $3.2 billion or $0.80 per share, and non-GAAP net income of $4.1 billion or $1.04 per share. "Cisco's strong second quarter and first half of fiscal 2026 demonstrate both the power of our portfolio and the fundamental role we continue to play in connecting and protecting customers in a rapidly evolving landscape," said Chuck Robbins, chair and CEO of Cisco. "With over 40 years of customer trust, global scale, and a relentless focus on innovation, we believe Cisco is uniquely positioned to deliver the trusted infrastructure needed to securely and confidently power the AI-era."

"In Q2, we delivered double-digit growth on both the top and bottom lines which exceeded the high end of our guidance and puts us on track to deliver our strongest revenue year yet in fiscal 2026," said Mark Patterson, CFO of Cisco. "Operating margin was also above the high end of guidance, as we continue to drive profitability by exercising financial discipline. We see strong, broad-based demand for our technology solutions and remain focused on capturing the significant opportunities we see ahead."

Cisco Unveils new AgenticOps Innovations to Simplify and Scale AI-driven IT Operations

Cisco has announced new AgenticOps innovations for the AI era. First launched last year, AgenticOps is an agent-first IT operating model for autonomous action with built-in oversight. New capabilities unveiled across networking, security, and observability further transform how IT teams operate at scale. "For teams responsible for operating and securing distributed networks and infrastructure, AgenticOps represents a profound and fundamental shift away from complexity," said Jeetu Patel, President and Chief Product Officer, Cisco. "This is the true power of Cisco as a platform. By delivering agentic capabilities aligned to critical IT operations priorities, we're combining Cisco's unique cross domain visibility, purpose-built models, and governance together to supercharge teams." Last year, Cisco introduced AgenticOps and redefined how AI is applied in networking to manage the growing complexity of modern IT operations. Powered by advanced AI and unified network data, including the Deep Network Model, solutions like Agentic Workflows and AI Canvas help IT teams troubleshoot faster and automate securely. Now, Cisco is extending agentic-driven operations across networking, security, and observability, delivering AgenticOps to support IT operations in cloud, on premises, air gapped industrial, enterprise, data center, and service provider environments. New tools, skills, and platform enhancements across networking, security, and observability include:

Operating Networks at AI Scale with Intelligent Execution

Campus, Branch, and Industrial

- Autonomous Troubleshooting: End-to-end agentic investigations across campus, branch, and industrial networks triage connectivity and experience issues, cutting MTTR to minutes.
- Continuous Optimization: Context-aware agentic recommendations to prevent performance degradation before users feel it.
- Trusted Validation: Risk-aware agentic assessments validate network changes against live topology, configuration, and telemetry, including identifying impact and blast radius.
- Experience Metrics: Transforms thousands of network signals into a single view focused on clear, actionable metrics for user experience, such as Time to Connect, Capacity, and Roaming.
- Agentic Workflow Creation: Create production-ready, deterministic automations within Cisco AI Assistant.
- Data Center: Early detection and intelligent event correlation with AgenticOps for data center networks enables the delivery of prescriptive recommendations to optimize performance.
- Service Provider: Accelerating the journey to autonomous networking, agentic capabilities in Crosswork AI identify, diagnose, and resolve complex, multi vendor issues in service provider networks with greater speed, accuracy, and confidence.
- Turbocharging Firewall Operations in Cisco Security Cloud Control
- Proactive Recommendations: Proactive analysis of firewall traffic allows agentic policy capabilities to identify and recommend more robust zero trust controls for sensitive applications.
- Operational Efficiency: AgenticOps troubleshooting and optimization capabilities detect issues such as elephant flows impacting firewall performance.
- Continuous Compliance: Agentic compliance capabilities continuously evaluate firewall configurations to automatically identify PCI-DSS deviations and recommend remediations to stay compliant.

Visibility and Control Across Agentic Applications

Tracking the performance, cost, quality, and behavior of LLM and agentic applications, AI Agent Monitoring in Splunk Observability Cloud visualizes agent workflows.

Sharon AI & Cisco Launch Australia's First Cisco Secure AI Factory with NVIDIA

Cisco (and SharonAI Holdings Inc. and its subsidiaries ("Sharon AI"), a leading Australian neocloud, announced the launch of Australia's first Cisco Secure AI Factory in partnership with NVIDIA. This initiative marks a significant leap forward in providing Australia with secure, scalable and high-performance sovereign AI capabilities with all data and AI processing kept within the country. By delivering robust national digital infrastructure and upholding data sovereignty, the Cisco Secure AI Factory helps power an AI-enabled economy, supporting the development, adoption, and responsible use of AI in alignment with Australia's new National AI Plan. Sharon AI will offer a variety of solutions tailored to different customer needs and industries. Customers will also have access to a sandbox environment to experiment with proof-of-concepts. At the foundation of these offers is the Cisco Secure AI Factory with NVIDIA, powered by:

- Cisco's UCS servers, together with Cisco security and networking portfolio delivering accelerated AI capabilities, and Nexus Hyperfabric as part of the Nexus One unified management plane.
- 1024 NVIDIA Blackwell Ultra GPUs, delivering breakthrough performance and flexibility for complex AI and machine learning tasks.
- VAST Data's cutting-edge storage systems provide the fast, reliable, and scalable data access to support demanding AI workloads.
- NEXTDC's world-class Australian data centers provide resilient, sovereign hosting for all critical infrastructure.

"AI innovation is accelerating and Cisco is delivering the critical infrastructure Australia needs to move fast and adopt AI safely and securely. The Cisco Secure AI Factory enables enterprises and governments to harness their data for differentiation, unlocking innovation and competitive advantage, by strengthening sovereign capabilities and building a trustworthy AI ecosystem. This collaboration positions Australia at the forefront of secure, responsible AI," said Stefan Leitl, Vice President & General Manager, Cisco Australia & New Zealand. "We are excited to have partnered with Cisco and NVIDIA to accelerate enterprise AI and high-performance compute adoption throughout Asia-Pacific. This 1024 NVIDIA Blackwell Ultra deployment has been architected and deployed alongside Cisco to ensure together we can bring unprecedented value to customers. We look forward to further collaboration with the Cisco team to drive enterprise AI adoption and additional clusters in 2026 and beyond," said James Manning, Co-Founder and CEO, Sharon AI.

Cisco Launches New Cisco 360 Partner Program, Built with Partners for the AI Era

Cisco announced the launch of the Cisco 360 Partner Program after fifteen months of co-design with partners. Cisco's success is built on close collaboration with its partners to meet customer needs in the fast-changing AI world. Now, Cisco is boosting how it supports partners while making it easier for them to help customers. The new program, built for developers, consultants, managed services providers, resellers, and other partner business models, better equips Cisco partners to deliver customer outcomes in the areas of AI-ready data centers, future-proofed workplaces, and digital resilience. The Cisco 360 Partner Program is designed to provide clarity and empower partners to drive more predictable profitability. At the same time, with the new Cisco Partner Locator tool, customers can now search for the right partner across key Cisco portfolios like Security, Networking, Collaboration, Services, Splunk, and Cloud and AI Infrastructure. "With our partners, we've strengthened what is already a world-class ecosystem to deliver even greater value and help our mutual customers connect, protect and thrive," said Tim Coogan, Senior Vice President of Global Partner Sales at Cisco. "The Cisco 360 Partner Program helps us differentiate based on our expertise. We appreciate that we're measured on the value we bring; that only benefits our mutual customers," said Nicko Roussos, Senior Vice President, Cisco Strategy & Transformation, TD Synnex. Cisco's recent AI Readiness Index shows that being AI ready is a competitive advantage for companies. Meeting these needs relies on expert partners collaborating to provide essential infrastructure, services, and AI-native capabilities. The Cisco 360 Partner Program recognizes partner expertise and rewards value creation across the customer lifecycle—empowering partners to provide secure, agile solutions that support customers through transformation.

Cisco Announces New Silicon One G300, Advanced Systems and Optics to Power and Scale AI Data Centers for the Agentic Era

Cisco continues to transform the network into an AI innovation platform, unveiling the Silicon One G300, a 102.4 Tbps switching silicon designed for massive AI cluster buildouts. The Cisco Silicon One G300 will power new Cisco N9000 and Cisco 8000 systems that push the frontier of AI networking in the data center. The systems feature innovative liquid cooling and support high-density optics to achieve new efficiency benchmarks and ensure customers get the most out of their GPU investments. In addition, the company enhanced Nexus One to make it easier for enterprises to operate their AI networks — on-premises or in the cloud — removing the complexity that can hold organizations back from scaling AI data centers. "We are spearheading performance, manageability, and security in AI networking by innovating across the full stack - from silicon to systems and software," said Jeetu Patel, President and Chief Product Officer, Cisco. "We're building the foundation for the future of infrastructure, supporting every type of customer—from hyperscalers to enterprises—as they shift to AI-powered workloads." "As AI training and inference continues to scale, data movement is the key to efficient AI compute; the network becomes part of the compute itself. It's not just about faster GPUs – the network must deliver scalable bandwidth and reliable, congestion-free data movement," said Martin Lund, Executive Vice President of Cisco's Common Hardware Group. "Cisco Silicon One G300, powering our new Cisco N9000 and Cisco 8000 systems, delivers high-performance, programmable, and deterministic networking – enabling every customer to fully utilize their compute and scale AI securely and reliably in production." The new Silicon One G300 is a 102.4 Tbps switching silicon that exemplifies Cisco's rapid innovation and sets a new standard for AI backend networking. It is designed to power massive, distributed AI clusters with high performance, security, and reliability. The G300 uniquely offers Intelligent Collective Networking, which combines an industry-leading fully shared packet buffer, path-based load balancing, and proactive network telemetry to offer better performance and profitability for large-scale data centers. It efficiently absorbs bursty AI traffic, responds faster to link failures, and prevents packet drops that can stall jobs, ensuring reliable data delivery even over long distances. With Intelligent Collective Networking, Cisco can deliver 33% increased network utilization, and a 28% reduction in job completion time versus simulated non-optimized path selection, making AI data centers more profitable with more tokens generated per GPU-hour. Cisco Silicon One G300 is highly programmable, enabling equipment to be upgraded for new network functionality even after it has been deployed. This enables Silicon One-based products to support emerging use cases and play multiple network roles, protecting long-term infrastructure investments. And with security fused into the hardware, customers can embrace holistic, at-speed security to keep clusters up and running. Cisco Silicon One is the industry's most scalable and programmable unified networking architecture, offering a complete portfolio of networking devices across AI, hyperscaler, data center, enterprise, and service provider use cases. Introduced in 2019, Cisco Silicon One is playing critical roles in major networks around the world.

Cisco Highlights Measures to Secure AI Agents and the AI Supply Chain in the Middle East

As the conversation around artificial intelligence shifts toward AI agents capable of autonomous action, Cisco is highlighting the importance of securing both AI agents and the broader AI supply chain across enterprise environments. Across the Middle East, organizations are increasingly exploring AI agents for use cases spanning government services, financial services, energy and large enterprise operations. Cisco's AI Readiness Index 2025 underscores this momentum, as 92% of organizations in the UAE and 91% in KSA already intend to develop or deploy AI agents across a variety of use cases. At the same time, organizations continue to face practical challenges, including infrastructure limitations, workforce planning gaps, and security. Fady Younes, Managing Director for Cybersecurity at Cisco Middle East, Türkiye, Africa and Romania, said: "As AI agents move from experimentation to real-world deployment across the Middle East, organizations are facing new security considerations. From the third-party components used to build AI systems, to how autonomous agents interact with data and tools, securing the full AI lifecycle is becoming increasingly important for maintaining digital trust and resilience." Cisco introduced AI Defense as a security solution for the development and deployment of enterprise AI applications.

As the AI risk surface continues to expand, the platform has evolved to include AI supply chain scanning and purpose-built runtime protections for AI agents. Modern AI development relies on a wide range of third-party and open-source components such as models and datasets. While these assets accelerate innovation, third-party AI assets introduce risk. A compromised component in the supply chain effectively undermines the entire system, creating opportunities for code execution, sensitive data exfiltration, and other insecure outcomes. Cisco AI Defense addresses AI supply chain risk by scanning model files and MCP servers in enterprise repositories to identify and flag potential vulnerabilities before deployment. This is particularly relevant for Middle East organizations operating in regulated sectors such as government, financial services, and critical infrastructure.

Protecting AI agents at runtime

A production AI application is susceptible to any number of explicitly malicious attacks or unintentionally harmful outcomes—prompt injections, data leakage, toxicity, denial of service, and more. When Cisco AI Defense was launched, its runtime protection guardrails were specifically designed to protect against these scenarios. Bi-directional inspection and filtering prevented harmful content from both user prompts and model responses, keeping interactions with enterprise AI applications safe and secure. With agentic AI and the introduction of multi-agent systems, there are new vectors to consider: greater access to sensitive data, autonomous decision-making, and complex interactions between human users, agents, and tools. To meet this growing risk, Cisco AI Defense has evolved with purpose-built runtime protection for agents. AI Defense will function as an MCP gateway, intercepting calls between an agent and MCP server to combat new threats like tool compromise.

Supporting secure AI innovation in the Middle East

Cisco continues to invest in AI security research and collaboration to help organizations manage emerging risks. By combining AI security expertise with networking capabilities, Cisco AI Defense is positioned to support organizations across the Middle East as they advance national AI and digital transformation agendas.

The DNA Explained: General Authorization with q Single Passport Notification Under Fully Harmonized Conditions

The Digital Networks Act (DNA) envisages further harmonization of the general authorization regime for the provision of electronic communications networks and services that has been in place in the EU since 2002.

Key elements of the proposal are:

- a refined scope of networks and services that are subject to general authorization;
- the single passport procedure enabling provision of services in multiple member states;
- fully harmonized general authorization conditions;
- streamlined notification procedures and reporting requirements.

Our new report offers an in-depth analysis of the European Commission's ambitions for further harmonization of the general authorization regime.

MaiaSpace Scores Eutelsat LEO Launch Deal

Eutelsat continued preparing to expand its low Earth orbit (LEO) satellite constellation by securing a launch agreement with rocket company MaiaSpace. The satellite company selected MaiaSpace's reusable mini launcher, which is 50m tall, 3.5m in diameter, employs four engines and provides a launch mass capacity of up to 4 tones in inclined orbits. Eutelsat stated the agreement covers multiple LEO launches, with the first expected in 2027. It expands the company's orbital options. Eutelsat chief engineering officer Arlen Kassighian said MaiaSpace brings a "complementary launch option", an expansion which should assure service provision and contribute to "continuity of service" with its current constellation. MaiaSpace CEO Yohann Leroy highlighted the importance of securing a deal with "an experienced and renowned satellite operator", which he argued proves the company's credentials "for deploying or replenishing" constellations. Eutelsat announced the deal a matter of days after revealing it would order more LEO birds from Airbus.

Eutelsat and Viewsat Renew Capacity Agreements to Support Development of Broadcast Market in MENA Region

Eutelsat announce the renewal of multiple capacity agreements with Viewsat, reinforcing a long-standing partnership and a shared focus on supporting the continued development of the broadcast market in Egypt and the wider Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Through this renewed collaboration at the 7/8° West video hotspot, Eutelsat and Viewsat will continue to deliver reliable broadcast services tailored to the needs of Egyptian broadcasters. The agreements reflect the positive momentum of the relationship between the two companies and highlights the importance of the Egypt market within Eutelsat's regional video strategy. Viewsat is part of the ViewMedia group, a global media service provider specializing in content distribution and delivery across multiple platforms. They provide broadcasters of all sizes, tailored, cost-effective broadcast solutions that include managed playout services, online streaming, and satellite broadcasting. The Eutelsat 7/8° West video neighborhood is the number one broadcast position in the Middle East and North Africa, reaches 66 million of satellite TV homes in the region and distributing over 950 channels. Over the years, Eutelsat and Viewsat have built a strong operational partnership, combining Eutelsat's satellite infrastructure with Viewsat's expertise in media distribution and customer support. This collaboration allows broadcasters to benefit from continuity of service, operational flexibility, and solutions adapted to evolving market requirements. Raymond E. Rahm, RVP MENA Sales of Eutelsat's Video Business Unit said, "These renewed agreements further underline the strength of the long-term partnership between Eutelsat and Viewsat. Together, we remain focused on sustainable growth, market development, and delivering reliable satellite solutions to broadcasters and media customers across Egypt and the wider MENA region." "We are delighted to renew our various capacity agreements with Eutelsat across its satellites serving the East and MENA beams. This renewal demonstrates the strength of our partnership and our shared commitment to growing the business in Egypt, which remains a key market for Viewsat. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with Eutelsat and expanding our services together", added Awaes Jaswal, Chief Executive Officer of Viewsat.

Eutelsat Signs Almost €1bn in Export Credit Agency financing for the Procurement of LEO Satellites for Its OneWeb Constellation

Eutelsat announces that it has signed a c. €1bn Export Credit Agency (ECA) financing for the procurement of LEO satellites for its OneWeb constellation. The financing will be provided by a pool of commercial banks, which will benefit from a French State guarantee, obtained through its export credit agency, Bpifrance Assurance Export for an amount of c.€975m-eq. It will be provided to Eutelsat Communications SA and will rank pari-passuwith other debts of that entity. Its disbursement remains subject to several conditions precedent, including a bond issuance at Eutelsat Communications. The financing backs the recently announced contract with Airbus Defence and Space for 340 LEO satellites, on top of the 100 already ordered, to be manufactured at Airbus' Toulouse facility. These satellites will ensure full operational continuity for customers of the OneWeb LEO constellation, by progressively replacing existing satellites as their operational life comes to an end. Jean-Francois Fallacher, Chief Executive Officer of Eutelsat said: "We are delighted to secure this crucial aspect of Eutelsat's refinancing plan. We are grateful to the French State for its unwavering support. This funding significantly strengthens our financial structure and gives us the means to support the deployment of our LEO activities". Société Générale acted as Sole Global Coordinator and Sole Bookrunner, and Mandated Lead Arranger (MLA) on this financing together with Commerzbank Aktiengesellschaft, Credit Agricole Corporate and Investment Bank (acting also as Facility Agent), ING Bank N.V and Helaba – Landesbank Hessen-Thüringen. Rothschild & Cie acted as financial advisor to Eutelsat. Latham & Watkins LLP acted as legal advisor to Eutelsat. De Pardieu Brocas Maffei acted as legal advisor to the lending banks.

Eutelsat and Singapore's Can Marine Partner to Deliver Maritime Connectivity Services

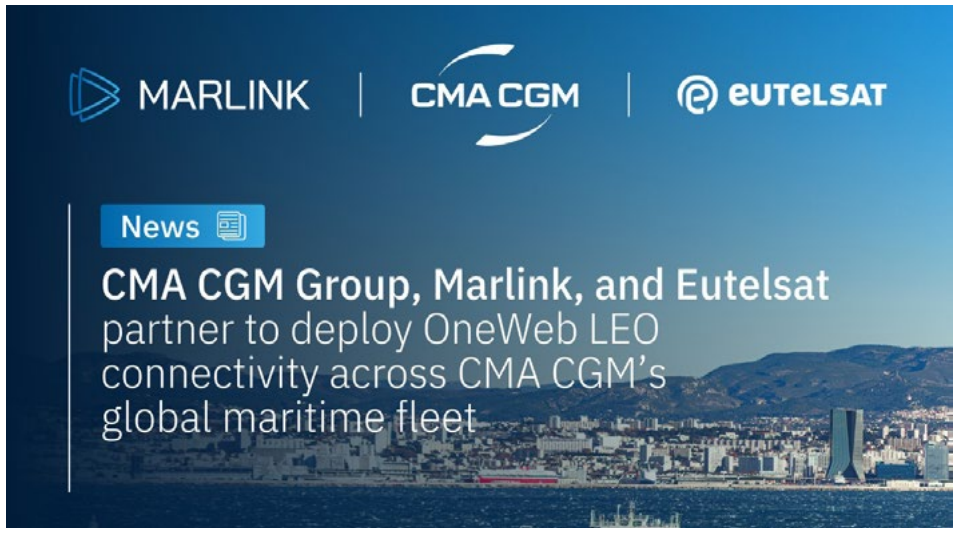
Eutelsat and Singapore's Can Marine are partnering to deliver state-of-the-art maritime connectivity services leveraging Eutelsat's OneWeb LEO constellation. Can Marine is a maritime connectivity integrator serving commercial shipping and offshore operators. The company provides end-to-end satellite communications solutions, from network design to service delivery and support. Can Marine enables predictable, secure connectivity for modern maritime operations. It will leverage OneWeb LEO capacity to deliver cutting-edge services to the global fleets of key APAC customers, focused on merchant shipping and offshore energy. Neha Idnani, Regional Vice President for the APAC region at Eutelsat's Connectivity Business Unit commented: "We are absolutely delighted that Can Marine has entrusted Eutelsat and its OneWeb LEO connectivity solution to support it in delivering services meeting the highest industry standards to its customers. We look forward to developing our partnership in the years to come and supporting Can Marine as it reinforces its position as a key marine electronics and solutions provider in the South East Asia region." Lim Ding Liang, Vice President of Can Marine added: "As the maritime industry accelerates its digital transformation, connectivity is no longer just an enabler, it is core operational infrastructure. Our partnership with Eutelsat and access to OneWeb LEO connectivity allow us to move beyond traditional communications and support a new generation of digital vessel capabilities. This collaboration gives our customers a future-ready platform to improve operational efficiency, enhance safety, and support crew welfare, while laying the foundation for continued innovation across global fleets."

Eutelsat Signs Launch Agreement with MaiaSpace for Future LEO Satellite Launches

Eutelsat and MaiaSpace have signed a multi-launch agreement for the future launch of LEO satellites, starting in 2027. The agreement adds to Eutelsat's options for access to space, providing additional assurance of operational continuity for customers of its OneWeb constellation. Founded in April 2022, MaiaSpace designs, manufactures, commercializes, and operates the first reusable and eco-designed mini launcher in Europe, which prefigurates the future family of sovereign and competitive European launch vehicles. With its large, 3.5-meter diameter fairing, a launch mass capability of up to 4 tons in inclined orbits, and the addition as an option of the Colibri kick-stage increasing mission flexibility, the MaiaSpace launcher offers a compelling solution for various missions, in particular for the deployment or replenishment of broadband satellite constellations. Arlen Kassighian, Eutelsat's Chief Engineering Officer, said: "We're delighted to be bringing the MaiaSpace launch solution into our LEO constellation deployment strategy adding a complementary launch option alongside our existing partners. By broadening our launch portfolio, we can continue

delivering efficient and resilient services to our customers while ensuring continuity of service for the existing constellation. It also reinforces our commitment to meeting customer demand while strengthening the resilience of our access to space."
Yohann Leroy, Chief Executive Officer of MaiaSpace added: "We are honored to be entrusted by Eutelsat for part of its upcoming LEO satellite launches. This agreement with an experienced and renowned satellite operator confirms that Maia is well-suited for deploying or replenishing satellite broadband constellations."

CMA CGM Group, Marlink, and Eutelsat Partner to Deploy OneWeb LEO



CMA CGM Group, Marlink and Eutelsat have announced a partnership to deploy OneWeb LEO connectivity across CMA CGM's global maritime fleet. The solution integrates European-based Eutelsat OneWeb's Low Earth Orbit (LEO) services combined with existing LEO and GEO networks within a broader hybrid network architecture, enabled by Marlink's purpose-built edge platform, XChange NextGen. Under this new, multi-year agreement, OneWeb LEO services will be deployed on more than 300 CMA CGM vessels over the next nine months. Delivered and integrated by Marlink, the solution combines multi-orbit satellite networks, introducing multiple layers of resilience and advanced capabilities to strengthen CMA CGM's global connectivity services. The deployment represents a high-availability architecture implemented at unprecedented fleet scale within the maritime sector. CMA CGM will benefit from a high-throughput, low-latency connectivity environment to support the accelerating digital transformation of its fleet. Robust, continuous connectivity at sea enables operational efficiency, real-time data exchange, and enhanced services for crews, allowing vessels to operate with digital performance comparable to shore-based environments while supporting future digital use cases. The solution also supports decarbonization objectives by enabling real-time optimization of routes, speeds and fuel consumption, helping reduce emissions and improve operational efficiency. Designed on the XChange NextGen edge cloud platform, Marlink unlocks its Possibility Platform for CMA CGM across cyber security, IIoT data collection, cloud enablement and centralized fleet-wide network orchestration, ensuring predictable performance and service continuity independent of sailing routes. The CMA CGM Group is a global player in sea, land, air and logistics solutions, present in 177 countries and operating a fleet of more than 650 vessels serving over 420 ports worldwide. It has been an anchor shareholder of Eutelsat since 2022, reflecting a shared commitment to reliable, high-performance satellite connectivity supporting French and European digital sovereignty. Ramon Fernandez, Executive Vice President Chief Finance Officer, CMA CGM Group said: "Through this partnership, CMA CGM continues to strengthen its global connectivity framework in support of reliable and secure maritime operations. The integration of OneWeb's LEO services contributes to the robustness of our fleet-wide connectivity, supporting operational efficiency and crew welfare. It also aligns with our commitment to trusted solutions and to strengthening digital sovereignty, while reflecting a pragmatic, long-term approach to connectivity that meets our industrial, performance and sustainability objectives." Jean-Francois Fallacher, Chief Executive Officer of Eutelsat commented: "This agreement marks a major milestone in the deployment of OneWeb's LEO services in the maritime sector. By integrating OneWeb into CMA CGM's connectivity ecosystem, we are supporting a robust, future-proof solution that meets the growing demand for high-performance, low-latency connectivity at sea. We are grateful to CMA CGM Group's long-standing support of Eutelsat, and excited to see it materialize into an industrial partnership. We are also delighted to work with our long-standing partner, Marlink, to further push the boundaries of maritime connectivity." Erik Ceuppens, Chief Executive Officer, Marlink Group said: "Building on more than 20 years of close partnership and co-creation with CMA CGM, we are proud to jointly lead the transition into the multi-LEO future. This landmark project highlights Marlink's proven ability to deliver advanced digital solutions at scale for the world's leading shipping companies. As digitalization becomes an increasingly critical business priority for the maritime industry, we are pleased to equip CMA CGM with a resilient, next-generation network solution, including Eutelsat OneWeb that enhances operational efficiency, safety, and decarbonization across its global fleet."

Claro Peru and Huawei Deploy World's First Commercial EcoMatrix Site

Claro Peru, one of the country's leading telecommunications providers, and Huawei successfully deployed the world's first commercial EcoMatrix site. Featuring a highly integrated design that enables simplified and green deployment of all sub-3 GHz bands on a single pole, Huawei EcoMatrix outperforms conventional counterparts in actual tests across a host of metrics: 1.8 dB better coverage, 30% less antenna installation space required, and 35% site-wide energy saving. These strengths will help deliver higher-quality mobile network services for Peruvian consumers and drive the country's digital transformation. As its services expand, Claro Peru faces mounting challenges in network operations, with OPEX rising year on year. In Latin America, some tower companies calculate lease fees based on wind load area, yet conventional solutions usually have high wind loads due to a large number of devices. Moreover, energy-inefficient base stations consume a lot of energy and raise electricity costs. Claro has also struggled to simplify site deployment and maintenance in multi-band settings. Supported by multiple innovations, EcoMatrix precisely addresses these challenges and brings operators four core benefits in network construction. Simplified site deployment: EcoMatrix allows Claro Peru to deploy the 700 MHz, 850 MHz, 1.9 GHz, and 2.6 GHz bands on a single pole, with only three boxes required per site (compared with 15 boxes previously). Extremely low energy consumption: The EcoMatrix radio units integrated GigaGreen RRUs, bringing 35% site-wide energy savings after this commercial deployment in Peru. There is even more energy saving potential, brought by the "0 Bit 0 Watt" deep dormancy feature, and future GigaGreen RRUs which can be flexibly combined into the EcoMatrix solution. Superb performance: EcoMatrix integrates true ultra-wideband RRUs and antennas, and leverages innovative signal direct injection feeding (SDIF) technology to eliminate the need for cables, significantly reducing feeder loss and internal insertion loss, maximizing spectral efficiency and network performance. Optimal evolution: The solution's modular design allows operators to flexibly and smoothly scale networks by introducing new spectrum resources, even when the antenna installation space is limited. Operators do not need to erect new poles or modernize installed sites, and can deploy networks in phases according to spectrum availability, to better protect their long-term investments. Juan David Rodríguez, Chief Technology Officer of Claro Peru, remarked on the solution: "We use Huawei EcoMatrix to deploy more bands at a tower site with a much smaller antenna footprint. Our site and spectrum are now more efficiently utilized, and our network is ready for continuous 5G evolution and flexible spectrum expansion. We are delivering better digital experience to users and contributing to Peru's digital transformation." EcoMatrix is designed to help operators worldwide boost revenue, reduce costs, enhance efficiency, and achieve sustainability. Claro Peru's successful deployment validates its value and showcases a path to building a lean, green, and efficient network that scales easily.

Huawei Collaborates with BBI in Building an Intelligent All-Optical Backbone Network to Advance South Africa's National Broadband Strategy

South Africa's national broadband infrastructure company Broadband Infraco (BBI) has partnered with Huawei to build a national intelligent all-optical backbone network. The network directly supports the goals of South Africa's national broadband strategy, SA Connect, and will bring affordable, stable, and high-quality broadband to all people in South Africa. As a state-owned enterprise mandated by the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies (DCDT) to expand South Africa's broadband infrastructure, BBI is implementing the upgrade as part of its Backbone Network Expansion Strategy. The collaboration aims to extend ICT infrastructure nationwide and make connectivity more affordable, closing gaps between urban and rural areas as well as between South Africa and industrialized nations. BBI has utilized Huawei's Optical Cross-Connect (OXC) technology to deliver high-

speed, flexible transmission with 800G wavelengths across its network—a leap that will support the vast expansion of broadband access networks envisioned under SA Connect. It also enables massive volumes of data to be transferred between cities or data centers in real time, powering applications in healthcare, education, e-commerce, and e-government, as well as fueling South Africa's digital economy. To date, through its intelligent all-optical backbone and partnerships with local service providers, BBI has connected over 13,000 public Wi-Fi hotspots and more than 2 million homes in rural areas nationwide and regions with underdeveloped network services. The network will also support South Africa's new optical fibre route, which connects Johannesburg to the Kopfontein border, thereby strengthening high-speed cross-border connectivity across the SADC region. The full backbone will span all nine provinces of South Africa and extend to the borders with Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe, providing broad regional access. Gift Zowa, CEO of Broadband Infraco, summarized the mission by saying, "We are bridging the digital divide on two fronts, closing the digital inequality gap at home and narrowing the gap between South Africa and the world's most industrialized nations. We are addressing one of SA Connect's primary goals, the DCDT's flagship broadband connectivity project, to make connectivity inclusive and bring stable, high-capacity broadband to all South African communities and government facilities by 2030." Huawei will continue to collaborate with Broadband Infraco to expand South Africa's national broadband infrastructure, building a connected, intelligent, and prosperous society, where every South African can benefit from a digital future.

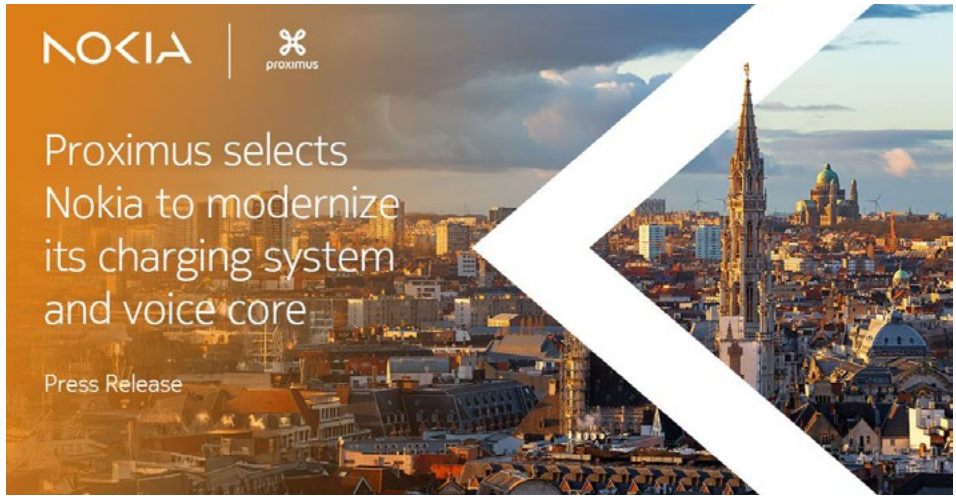
Microsoft Pledges US$50 Billion by 2030 to Expand AI Access Across the Global South

Microsoft said it remains on track to invest US$50 billion by 2030 to expand access to artificial intelligence across emerging markets in the Global South, framing the move as part of a broader effort to narrow what it calls the growing “AI divide”. The US technology giant made the announcement at the India AI Impact Summit, arguing that AI must be distributed more widely if developing economies are to fully benefit from the technology. It said that when adopted by young and rapidly growing populations, AI presents a significant opportunity for emerging markets to accelerate productivity and close economic gaps with advanced economies, describing it as one of the defining growth opportunities of the 21st century. According to data from Microsoft, the Global North uses AI two times more than the Global South. Microsoft said that as of November it had reached 117 million people in Africa with AI-enabled technologies through partnerships with companies including Cassava Technologies and Mawingu. These initiatives focus in part on extending last-mile connectivity to rural and underserved urban communities. The company said it is working towards reaching 250 million people globally through similar programs. Alongside infrastructure expansion, Microsoft highlighted increasing demand in emerging markets for greater sovereign control over data. Governments are seeking more options spanning public cloud, private sovereign offerings and deeper collaboration with national partners, reflecting a broader push for digital sovereignty. In its most recent fiscal year, Microsoft said it invested more than US$2 billion in programs aimed at building AI skills across the Global South. This funding includes financial grants, technology donations, training initiatives and discounted access to products and services. The announcement comes as concerns grow over a widening global AI gap - with advanced economies rapidly scaling compute and infrastructure, while many developing nations risk being left behind without targeted investment in connectivity, skills and localized cloud capacity. Microsoft said acting with urgency is critical to ensure that AI development is inclusive rather than concentrated in a handful of markets.

Microsoft Confirms Saudi Arabia Datacenter Region to Go Live in Q4 2026

Microsoft has confirmed that customers will be able to run cloud workloads from its Saudi Arabia East datacenter region starting in Q4 2026, marking a significant milestone in the company’s long-term investment in the Kingdom and its support for Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 digital and AI ambitions. Located in the Eastern Province, the new Azure cloud region will include three availability zones with independent power, cooling, and networking infrastructure, designed to deliver high availability, security, and resilience for mission-critical workloads. The deployment will enable public and private sector organizations to run cloud and AI applications locally with low latency and data residency capabilities, supporting regulatory compliance and operational performance. The announcement represents the next phase of Saudi Arabia’s cloud and AI development, as the country moves from infrastructure build-out toward large-scale AI adoption. Microsoft said ongoing collaboration with Saudi government entities and regulators has focused on aligning infrastructure with national security, compliance, and responsible AI requirements, including exploration of sovereign cloud services alongside the Public Investment Fund and Site. Saudi Arabia’s Minister of Communications and Information Technology, Eng. Abdullah bin Amer Al-Swaha, described the milestone as a step toward building trusted AI infrastructure that supports national competitiveness and innovation. Microsoft Vice Chair and President Brad Smith highlighted the company’s commitment to enabling secure, sovereign-ready digital foundations that allow organizations to adopt cloud and AI technologies with confidence.

Proximus Selects Nokia to Modernize Its Charging System and Voice Core



Proximus has chosen Nokia to modernize its online charging system and voice core, adopting innovative, cloud-native solutions to enhance automation and support new business models. Proximus will migrate its entire customer base (fixed and mobile), as well as more than 1,000 products, to Nokia's cutting-edge cloud-native charging solution, Nokia Converged Charging. The agreement covers the full replacement of a competitor's existing charging system. Proximus will also implement Nokia's cloud-native Voice Core, Subscriber Data Management and Policy solutions to improve network automation and support flexible scaling. Furthermore, the upgrades enable Proximus to advance its journey toward more autonomous networks while launching new 5G monetization services. All solutions will be deployed on Proximus' own cloud with Red Hat OpenShift, the industry's leading hybrid cloud application platform powered by Kubernetes. * Cloud-native solutions provide the modularity, automation and intelligence required to make networks increasingly self-managing, self-optimizing and self-healing. By modernizing this area of its operations, Proximus will be in a better position to securely deliver innovative services and unlock revenue streams from emerging use cases that span IoT, content, gaming, advertising and beyond. Kal De, SVP, Product and Engineering, Cloud and Network Services at Nokia said. Nokia has been a key supplier and trusted partner for many years, consistently delivering high-quality solutions that span multiple domains. In addition to its expertise in secure migration and network integration, Nokia provides us tailored solutions that address our needs. We look forward to working together to accelerate the next stage of Proximus' digital transformation.

Nokia Strengthens Edge AI Capabilities Through Strategic Collaboration with Blaize on Hybrid Inference Solutions Across APAC

Blaize Holdings, Inc, a global leader in programmable, energy efficient AI computing, announced a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Nokia Solutions and Networks Singapore Pte. Ltd. ("Nokia"), a company duly incorporated and validly existing under the laws of Singapore. Targeting the Asia Pacific markets, the MOU establishes a framework for joint exploration, development, and deployment of Practical AI and Physical AI systems designed for real world operation, combining Nokia's leadership in networking, automation, and cloud infrastructure with Blaize's programmable AI inference platform. Together, the companies aim to enable Real World AI that operates reliably at the edge and across hybrid environments where latency, power efficiency, and operational resilience are critical. Under the MOU, Blaize and Nokia intend to collaborate on:

- Edge and hybrid AI inference use cases, integrating Blaize's Hybrid AI platform with Nokia's IP networking, data center networking, and automation systems
- Reference architectures and solution blueprints that position Blaize as a complementary AI inference layer alongside Nokia's AI networking infrastructure
- Joint validation of AI inference deployments for telecom, industrial, and smart infrastructure environments
- Go to market and ecosystem initiatives, including customer workshops, pilot programs, and solution demonstrations focused on production ready AI

The collaboration reflects a shared belief that the next phase of AI adoption will be driven by inference at scale, not just model training. By pairing energy efficient AI inference at the edge with centralized GPU resources in the cloud, Blaize and Nokia are addressing the growing demand for Hybrid AI architectures that balance performance, cost, and operational efficiency. "Our collaboration with Nokia marks an important step forward in delivering Practical AI and Physical AI at scale," said Dinakar Munagala, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Blaize. "By combining Nokia's leadership in connectivity and automation with the Blaize AI inference platform, we are enabling Real World AI that runs efficiently at the edge while integrating seamlessly with cloud and GPU infrastructure. This Hybrid AI approach allows organizations to deploy inference where it matters most and turn intelligence into real operational outcomes." Nokia intends to contribute its

expertise in networking, automation, and cloud infrastructure, including leadership in IP networking, industrial connectivity, and intelligent network operations. Blaize intends to provide its AI inference hardware and software platform, designed to complement GPU based systems by enabling scalable, low power inference closer to where data is generated, and actions are taken. "Our work with Blaize is accelerating, and we are excited to build on this momentum into the coming year," said Sang Xulei, Senior Vice President and Head of Network Infrastructure, Asia Pacific at Nokia. "As demand grows for Practical AI and Physical AI systems that operate in real world environments, Blaize's energy efficient AI inference platform gives us the flexibility to extend Hybrid AI architectures across networks, edge systems, and cloud infrastructure. Together, we are enabling scalable, production ready intelligence that brings AI closer to where data is generated and actions are taken in the region." The collaboration leverages Blaize's specialized AI inference platform, chosen for its ability to support real world AI deployment across edge, cloud, and data center environments. The MOU is non-binding and outlines a cooperative framework under which the parties may pursue specific projects through future definitive agreements in the Asia Pacific region. The collaboration will focus on enabling secure, scalable, and energy efficient AI inference deployments that integrate seamlessly into existing network, cloud, and industrial environments.

Citymesh Goes Live with World's First Commercial Mobile Service on 5G Core SaaS, Powered by Nokia and AWS

The world's first commercial mobile service on 5G Core SaaS, powered by Nokia and Amazon Web Services (AWS), is now live with Belgium's Citymesh, marking a new era in how telecommunications providers can choose to build and scale their networks. The software-as-a-service model, which transforms core networks and their operations into flexible, subscription-based services, reduces the upfront capital investment and operational complexity of traditional network deployments. It delivers catalog-based service creation, on-demand network capabilities, and rapid feature deployment, with predictable cost control through subscription pricing and pay-as-you-grow infrastructure. Citymesh is using Nokia's Core SaaS for Business, running on AWS's global cloud infrastructure, to serve enterprises across venues and events, airports, hospitals, offshore settlements, first responders, drone operators, and transportation sectors, and to power its new mobile offering for self-employed professionals and small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The solution allows Citymesh to design intuitive, customized service plans without having to conduct extensive telecommunications engineering or ongoing integration work. Running on AWS global cloud infrastructure provides the scalability to handle unpredictable demand spikes across diverse enterprise environments without requiring upfront infrastructure investments. The platform's multi-region architecture ensures telecommunications-grade availability, while comprehensive security controls meet stringent industry requirements. Launching the world's first commercial 5G Core SaaS service is a major milestone for Citymesh. With Nokia's Core SaaS on AWS, we can scale faster, reduce complexity and upfront investment, and deliver secure, high-performance connectivity tailored to our enterprise customers. And what's more, it allows us to develop a telecom offering tailored for all businesses, including the self-employed and SMEs. said Robin Leblon, CTO, Citymesh. Nokia's Core SaaS for Business delivers telecom-grade reliability with AWS security and performance across a comprehensive service catalog, including 4G and 5G Core, network slicing, IMS core, IoT services, automation, and security capabilities. Operators scale capacity on demand without managing hardware while exposing network capabilities through APIs (application programming interfaces). Telecom SaaS represents a paradigm shift in the telecommunications industry. Partnering with leaders like AWS helps us deliver cloud-native infrastructure that makes advanced connectivity simple and intuitive for providers, allowing them to subscribe to services only when needed and growing their spend with demand. Running on AWS, Nokia enables telecommunications operators to launch and scale telecommunications services with the elasticity, reliability, security, and trust the industry demands, while dramatically reducing operational complexity. This collaboration shows how AWS' Cloud is enabling telecommunications providers to innovate faster and respond more quickly to market opportunities said Fabio Cerone, Managing Director, EMEA Telco Business Unit, AWS. Nokia's Core SaaS for Business is available to telecommunication providers worldwide.

Westcon-Comstor Strengthens Partnership with Nokia to Drive Growth in Middle East and Africa

Westcon-Comstor, a global technology provider and specialist distributor, announced an enhanced collaboration with Nokia aimed at accelerating growth and delivering greater value to channel partners across the Middle East and Africa (MEA) region. This strategic initiative builds on the strong foundation between the two companies and introduces new measures to capitalize on market opportunities and drive channel success. Under the expanded partnership, Westcon and Nokia will collaborate closely on joint market engagement – shifting from fulfilment to a dedicated focus on proactively driving growth. Westcon will onboard direct touch sales resources in select geographies and proactively engage with partners and end customers to identify opportunities for Nokia solutions. Meanwhile Nokia will provide specialist insight for Westcon sales teams on identified whitespace Nokia technologies, ensuring deep technical expertise and market readiness. Both organizations will co-manage pipeline development and forecasting, facilitate escalation within Nokia and support co-selling in key, must-win opportunities. The partnership will also include co-marketing events designed to raise awareness and drive demand for Nokia's portfolio across MEA. "Our strengthened collaboration with Nokia in the MEA region exemplifies the strategic partnerships that we are increasingly forging with vendors," said David Grant, CEO at Westcon-Comstor. "As the channel evolves, driving more distribution-led business is one of our key priorities and this agreement illustrates how we are adding ever greater value in line with our commitment to partner success." "This enhanced partnership with Nokia marks a significant step forward

in our commitment to delivering cutting-edge technology solutions in the MEA region," said Rakesh Parbhoo, Executive Vice President, Middle East and Africa at Westcon-Comstor. "By combining Nokia's innovation with Westcon-Comstor's channel expertise, we are creating new opportunities for partners to grow and succeed." "We are excited to strengthen our collaboration with Westcon-Comstor to bring Nokia's industry-leading fixed, IP and optical network solutions to the partners across MEA," said Kamal Ballout, Head of Enterprise and Partners for Network Infrastructure, Middle East and Africa at Nokia. "Their deep market reach and proven ability to deliver value to partners make them an ideal ally. Together, we will help deliver the breadth of connectivity expertise, performance and security our customers need in the region."

Nokia and AWS Showcase Industry-First Agentic AI-Powered Network Slicing with du and Orange

Nokia announced a new collaboration with Amazon Web Services (AWS) to bring the first agentic AI-powered 5G-Advanced network slicing solution in a live 5G network. The intent-based 5G slicing innovation combines Nokia's advanced network slicing with AWS AI platform technologies to empower telecommunication providers in delivering premium services precisely where and when they are needed. du and Orange are the first to explore the innovation in their respective networks. Nokia's innovative AI slicing solution, powered by AWS, uses agentic AI to analyze real-world internet data, including locations, events, traffic, incidents, and maps, enabling telecommunications providers to deliver adaptive network slicing. This agentic AI-powered approach unlocks significant customer value across diverse applications and use cases by creating premium services that respond intelligently to dynamic conditions, ensuring optimal performance precisely where and when customers need it. Furthermore, telecommunication providers can face challenges optimizing network performance during unpredictable events like traffic surges, emergencies or mass gatherings, which can result in suboptimal service quality and inefficient resource utilization. Autonomous network slicing intelligence dynamically adapts and manages even the most

challenging traffic conditions across varied geographical areas. Pallavi Mahajan, Chief Technology and AI Officer at Nokia commented: "This innovation marks a major milestone in the evolution of AI-native networks. By combining Nokia's advanced network slicing capabilities with agentic AI, we are enabling operators to deliver premium, intent-based services that adapt dynamically to real-world conditions. Nokia is advancing connectivity by unlocking new value streams for telecommunication providers and supporting next-generation applications and differentiated services for enterprises, industries and consumers." "Network slicing has long promised to unlock new revenue streams for operators, but manual configuration and static policies have prevented end customers from accessing on-demand provisioning," said Amir Rao, Global Director, GTM & Telco Solutions at AWS. "By integrating agentic AI capabilities through Amazon Bedrock with Nokia's application, operators can now deliver intelligent, context-aware network slicing that responds dynamically to real-world conditions from traffic surges to emergency situations. This transforms network slicing from a technical capability into a true business enabler, allowing operators to monetize their 5G investments through differentiated, premium services that adapt automatically to customer needs. Agentic Network Slicing is the beginning of an era that will enable telecommunications providers to enable real-time intent-based service provisioning for end customers."

Oman Broadband Continues to Achieve Tangible Milestones in Supporting Digital Economy

Oman Broadband aims to cover one million residential units over the next three years, in a manner that enhances the core digital infrastructure and expands the reach of high-quality services across various sectors. Eng. Sultan Ahmed Al Wahibi, CEO of Oman Broadband, clarified that the total number of units covered by the fiber-optic network reached 926,884 by the end of November 2025 across the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman. This includes 415,792 units in Muscat Governorate and 511,092 units outside it. He added that the total number of subscribers reached 326,406 active subscribers, surpassing the 320,000-subscriber mark for the first time since the company's establishment. This is clear evidence of the success of the expansion strategy and the achievement of service quality. He affirmed that the company is focusing on expanding the coverage of the fiber-optic network. The network coverage in Muscat Governorate exceeded 87 percent of units, and approximately 56 percent outside the governorate, of the total units in Oman during 2025. He indicated that the company's plan includes connecting one million residential units to the fiber-optic network over the next three years, while enhancing investment in the underlying infrastructure and expanding partnerships with various stakeholders to ensure the achievement of this goal. He stated that the company is working on developing digital networks in Sultan Haitham City, Al Khuwair Downtown, and the A'Thuraya City project. This aligns with smart city standards and ensures the readiness of the infrastructure for future expansion, while providing high-speed services for education, residential and commercial facilities, and government services. He said that the company's investments and movable assets have exceeded approximately RO 327 million since its establishment in 2014, reflecting its ongoing commitment to developing the telecommunications sector and enhancing the digital infrastructure in the Sultanate of Oman. The CEO of Oman Broadband explained that the expansion of the fiber-optic network during 2025 included the wilayats of Bukha and Dibba in Musandam Governorate, while the wilayats of Khasab and Madha had their coverage completed in previous project implementation stages. The fiber-optic network coverage also included a number of wilayats across various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman. He affirmed that the Sultanate of Oman has witnessed tangible progress in the field of telecommunications infrastructure in the recent period, evident in this remarkable growth in the number of subscribers and the expansion of the fiber-optic network. This contributes to supporting the digital economy and improving the quality of life and public services across various sectors. He pointed out that the Omanization rate has exceeded 99 percent of the company's national workforce, while the percentage of work awarded to small and medium enterprises reached 39 percent, with initiatives

implemented to support, qualify them for larger projects, and obtain international certifications. He affirmed that the company continues to support community initiatives and social investment, encompassing education, health, sports, and youth empowerment, to promote sustainable development and quality of life in the Sultanate of Oman. It is worth noting that Oman Broadband is a key enabler of digital transformation in the Sultanate of Oman through its ambitious projects to expand the core digital infrastructure and extend fiber-optic network coverage to include various governorates and wilayats, including rural areas. The company seeks to connect more homes and institutions to high-speed internet according to global standards, which contributes to enabling the digital economy and enhancing the quality of life and public services in the fields of education, health, business, and government services.

Ooredoo Group, Syntys Acquire Qatar Q Data Facilities

Ooredoo Group has announced the acquisition of Q Data's hyperscale facilities in Qatar through Syntys, transferring ownership of two Tier III-certified, carrier-neutral data centers located within the Qatar Free Zones. Q Data QFZ LLC operates hyperscale infrastructure serving leading cloud and AI customers. The portfolio includes 5MW of live capacity and 7.5MW under development, adding 12.5MW to Syntys and bringing its total live IT capacity in Qatar to 26MW. The seller is Doha Venture Capital, a subsidiary of the Qatar Free Zones Authority. Ooredoo Group has announced the acquisition of Q Data's hyperscale facilities in Qatar through Syntys, transferring ownership of two Tier III-certified, carrier-neutral data centers located within the Qatar Free Zones. Q Data QFZ LLC operates hyperscale infrastructure serving leading cloud and AI customers. The portfolio includes 5MW of live capacity and 7.5MW under development, adding 12.5MW to Syntys and bringing its total live IT capacity in Qatar to 26MW. The seller is Doha Venture Capital, a subsidiary of the Qatar Free Zones Authority. She added that the acquisition supports Syntys' regional expansion plan to reach more than 120MW of installed capacity

across MENA by 2030, accelerating growth through established, cash-generating assets in a strategic market. Syntys was spun out from Ooredoo Group's regional data center operations and now operates facilities across MENA. The acquisition complements Ooredoo's broader digital infrastructure portfolio, including the sovereign AI cloud launched in 2025 to provide local access to advanced computer services for public and private institutions in Qatar.

stc Bahrain Provides IoT Solutions to NBH Loop

stc Bahrain, a digital enabler, announced delivering a strategic project with the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports to provide private connectivity for the SOS Infrastructure & Service for NBH (Nasser bin Hamad) Loop. NBH Loop was officially inaugurated by His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, His Majesty the King's Representative for Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs and Chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports. The 50-kilometer dedicated cycling path, the longest of its kind, is located in Zallaq, Bahrain. The cycling track is designed to meet international standards to promote a healthy lifestyle and provide a safe, car-free environment for cyclists of all levels. It also serves as a dedicated path for walking and running, with amenities including bike rentals, making it a premier destination for active lifestyles. This offering highlights stc Bahrain's leadership in delivering advanced and secure infrastructure for national projects and its commitment to enhancing public safety and smart city development in the Kingdom. Under this agreement, stc Bahrain provided reliable private connectivity & Internet of things (IOT) solutions for all SOS emergency stations strategically located along the cycling path in Zallaq. This critical connectivity will be powered by stc's advance 5G network, ensuring seamless communication and rapid response capabilities for emergencies. His Excellency Sh. Hamad Mohammed Al Khalifa, Assistant Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, stated that this partnership reflects the Council's direction toward developing an integrated sports infrastructure aligned with the highest international standards, while contributing to the promotion of sports participation and a healthy lifestyle within the community. NBH Loop is one of the landmark projects that embodies the vision of His Highness Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa to create a sustainable sports environment that enhances quality of life and community wellbeing. He added that the provision of a dedicated connectivity network for emergency stations along the track represents a key pillar in enhancing public safety and ensuring rapid emergency response. This initiative also underscores the importance of public-private sector collaboration in delivering national projects with significant sporting and societal impact. He further commended stc Bahrain for its cooperation and its role as a national partner in supporting digital transformation and smart city initiatives in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Hesham Mustafa, Chief Business Officer, stc Business, stated, "We are proud to be a part of this vital project, which further establishes stc Bahrain's role as a trusted partner for large-scale government digital infrastructure initiatives. NBH Loop is a landmark development for Bahrain, promoting health and well-being across the community. By enabling its SOS emergency stations with our advanced IOT solutions, we are directly contributing to the safety and protection of all road users and reinforcing Bahrain's smart city vision."

stc Bahrain Wins "Most Innovative Community Engagement Program" at the International Finance Magazine Awards 2025

stc Bahrain, a digital enabler, has been recognized with Most Innovative Community Engagement Program for its stc Fereej initiatives at the International Finance Magazine Awards. These achievements reflect the company's continued commitment to enriching local communities, in alignment with Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030. This award recognizes the impact of stc Fereej, which blends heritage preservation with practical social support. The Fereej Majlis initiative restores traditional gathering spaces across all governorates, preserving cultural value while upgrading facilities. The Home Renovation program, delivered with the Royal Humanitarian Foundation and the Mother and Child Welfare Society, has improved living conditions for 20 families in 2025, bringing the total renovated homes to 47. These projects also boost the local economy through partnerships with Bahraini suppliers and service providers, extending benefits to the wider community. Sh. Zeyad Al Khalifa. Chief Government Affairs Officer of stc Bahrain, commented: "Winning this award is a proud milestone for stc Bahrain and for the Kingdom. Through stc Fereej, we are protecting our heritage while improving lives, reflecting our belief that innovation succeeds when it delivers value for both individuals and society."

stc Bahrain Partners with CFI to Deliver Advanced ICT Solutions

stc Bahrain, a digital enabler, announced its partnership with CFI, the region's leading online trading provider, to provide advanced ICT solutions and connectivity services. The collaboration positions stc Bahrain at the core of CFI's financial operations, delivering secure, resilient and compliant connectivity to support continuous service delivery and uphold the highest standards of data protection. By enabling CFI with advanced infrastructure, stc Bahrain is contributing to Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030 and enhancing the performance and reliability of the Kingdom's financial sector. Through this agreement, stc Bahrain will deploy a high-availability network supported by next generation firewall protection, secure connection management and centralized data protection. Operational resilience will be reinforced through integrated UPS, smart CCTV services and security access control systems, enabling CFI to maintain regulatory compliance and protect critical financial operations. Hesham Mustafa, Chief Business Officer at stc Bahrain, commented: "Our partnership with CFI reflects stc Bahrain's commitment to delivering secure and reliable ICT solutions that meet the highest industry standards. By providing CFI with the connectivity and protection it needs, we are supporting its operational excellence, strengthening the resilience of Bahrain's financial sector, and contributing to Bahrain's vision for a diversified and sustainable economy." "Our collaboration with stc

Bahrain reinforces CFI's commitment to operational excellence, security, and future-ready infrastructure. Together, we're enabling the seamless delivery of trading services while supporting Bahrain's ambitions as a regional financial hub." Yaseen AlSamerrai, Country CEO. stc Bahrain continues to enable key industries with innovative and secure technology solutions, advancing digital transformation and spearheading the Kingdom's Economic Vision 2030.

ZTE Recognized on CDP Climate a List for Third Consecutive Year, Ranking Among the Global Top 4%

ZTE Corporation, a global leading provider of integrated information and communication technology solutions, has once again secured an "A" score for climate change from CDP, ranking among the top 4% of companies globally. This marks the third consecutive year that ZTE has received CDP's top ranking, making it the only company in mainland China to achieve this distinction for three years running in recent years. The recognition not only underscores strong international acknowledgement of ZTE's environmental governance and climate action, but also highlights the company's leadership as an industry pioneer in advancing the global transition toward a low-carbon economy. CDP, an authoritative international platform for environmental information disclosure, has developed a globally recognized measurement system to assess corporate progress in climate action, transparency, and comprehensive performance. Its scores are widely used to inform investment and procurement decisions. In 2025, over 22,100 companies globally—representing more than half of the world's market capitalization—disclosed data on climate change, forests, and water security through CDP. Receiving the highest "A" score indicates that a company ranks among the top 4% globally in climate governance, target setting, action effectiveness, and risk management capabilities. ZTE has deeply integrated green and low-carbon principles into its development strategy, paving "green digital pathway" through four key dimensions—Green Operations, Green Supply Chain, Green Digital Infrastructure, and Green Empowerment—to help various industries accelerate their green transformation. For Green Operation, ZTE implemented several energy-saving and emission-reduction initiatives, resulting in an absolute electricity savings of 45 million kWh. The company recorded a 13.4% reduction in Scope 1&2 emissions compared to the previous year. Its telecom products saw an 8.39% reduction in physical emissions intensity during the use and maintenance phase, while its terminal products achieved a 5.02% year-on-year reduction in absolute emissions over the entire product lifecycle. ZTE reduced its Scope 1&2&3 carbon emissions by 14.317 million tons in 2024 compared to 2023 levels. For Green Supply Chain, ZTE has integrated green innovation strategy requirements into supplier management IT systems, including agreement signing, on-site audits, and performance assessments. To date, the company has conducted Corporate Social Responsibility on-site audits for over 450 production suppliers, guided 152 suppliers in completing organizational-level carbon inventories, and assisted 51 suppliers in establishing carbon reduction targets and measures.

For Green Digital Infrastructure, ZTE currently holds over 800 green patents. So far, the company has conducted carbon footprint assessments for 240 products, covering all its product categories. Through its end-to-end green solutions, ZTE continues to help global operators save over 10 billion kWh of electricity annually. For Green Empowerment, ZTE has integrated cloud and network infrastructure, IoT, big data, AI and other cutting-edge technologies with traditional industries to achieve a win-win outcome of development and emission reduction. The company has partnered with over 2,000 leading industry players to carry out 5G-powered innovative green practices across 18 sectors—including steel, metallurgy, electronics manufacturing, ports, rail transit, mining, and power—pioneering more than 100 innovative application scenarios.

CTECC and ZTE Redefine Disaster Response with Air-Space-Ground Intelligent Emergency System

ZTE Corporation, a global leading provider of integrated information and communication technology solutions, in collaboration with China Telecom, has jointly built an integrated Air-Space-Ground-Intelligence Emergency System, setting a new standard for disaster response. In recent years, intensifying global climate change has led to a surge in extreme weather events. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has pointed out that during the "golden 72 hours" following a major disaster, the ability to rapidly restore communications directly determines the outcome of rescue operations. When roads are blocked, power grids collapse, and networks go down, the resulting "triple disruption scenario" turns disaster-stricken areas into "information islands", posing severe threats to public safety and rescue command efficiency. In this context, the resilience of communication networks has become the lifeline of emergency response and disaster relief. In January 2025,

China Telecom Group established China Telecom Emergency Communications Co., Ltd. (China Telecom Emergency), aiming to centralize and optimize emergency communications operations. The company integrates strategic emerging business capabilities from Tiantong satellite communications, unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) technology, E-Sirfing See Link, IoT, and Beijing Global Safety Technology Co, Ltd., adopting an integrated Air-Space-Ground-Intelligence technical architecture as its core. Its mission is to enhance its dual-use capabilities for routine and emergency scenarios, provide industry-leading assurance services, actively integrate into the national emergency system, and strive to become the leading force in national emergency communication support. By leveraging expertise in emergency communications—supported by high- and low-orbit satellite resources, high- to low-altitude UAV capabilities, dedicated emergency network systems, AI computing power, and unified platform operation services—China Telecom Emergency has built an integrated Air-Space-Ground-Intelligence emergency support system. This system, tailored to emergency scenarios and practical requirements, facilitates on-site support and assurance, multi-dimensional sensing, resource scheduling, intelligent analysis, and decision assistance. It significantly improves the speed and efficiency of emergency response, providing strong communication safeguard to protect people's lives and property.

AIS and ZTE Achieve AIR RAN Commercialization for Differentiated Experience at Thailand BMMF#15

ZTE Corporation, a global leading provider of integrated information and communication technology solutions, has successfully completed AIR RAN commercial deployment with AIS during the Big Mountain Music Festival #15 on December 6-7, 2025. AIR RAN enables experience monetization from data volume to experience value, delivering differentiated experience assurance and exceptional performance under high-load and extreme congestion scenarios, marking a milestone breakthrough in 5G and AI integration for large-scale events. As Thailand's largest outdoor music festival, BMMF#15 creates extreme regional traffic surges and complex service models with tens of thousands of attendees. In the field, downlink PRB utilization remains higher than 80% while uplink PRB exceeds 60%, far surpassing typical network load levels. Traditional experience assurance approaches face a huge challenge in addressing such congestion and may cause video buffering and messaging delays. ZTE AIR RAN solution, with an embedded intelligent computing board in legacy BBU, leverages AI-driven user experience perception and intelligent resource scheduling to achieve millisecond-level resource allocation and close-loop experience evaluation for key apps like short videos and instant messaging, delivers guaranteed premium experience for high-value customers with zero video lag and zero message delay. With the AIR RAN solution, TikTok throughput increased by 23.74% for a smoother video playback in extreme downlink congestion scenarios, while Line instant messaging throughput improved by 31.86% under high uplink load - enabling a 250MB file upload in just 2 minutes. This delivers supreme experience at BMMF, allowing attendees to instantly share favorite concert moments with friends even in highly-congested networks, improving customer satisfaction and laying a solid foundation for experience monetization. Besides experience monetization, the AIR RAN solution also helps AIS enhance network efficiency—including spectrum, energy, and O&M efficiency — while strengthening network competitiveness and creating differentiated advantages through refined operations. This delivers a replicable paradigm for AIS's 5G intelligent network evolution.

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ARTICLE

Rethinking AI Deployment: The Case for Sovereign AI

As governments around the world, and particularly in developing and least developed countries, accelerate digital transformation, the need for AI that is designed, trained, and governed in alignment with national values and infrastructure has become a strategic necessity. Increasingly, this means AI systems that are locally rooted and focused on domestic priorities.

> *Sovereign AI is a deployable model that demands strategic choices today. How AI is deployed will determine not only who benefits from it, but who delivers it, governs it, sustains it, and ultimately trusts it.*

The global AI ecosystem, as it currently stands, is largely shaped by models trained in a narrow set of specific languages and cultural frameworks. These architectures, though technically sophisticated, often struggle to serve the realities of multilingual nations, public service environments, or sectors with specific regulatory needs. For many governments, this raises legitimate questions: How can national data be protected? How do we ensure that AI solutions are inclusive and locally relevant? How do we avoid long-term dependencies on external or "borrowed" systems?

Enter a new generation of AI providers answering these questions with grounded, scalable solutions. Among them is MeetKai, a Sovereign AI company specializing in post-training optimization, local-language reasoning models, and national AI platforms. Its flagship MKA1 Platform enables governments, enterprises, and consumers to build and operate fully sovereign AI ecosystems—ensuring data control, deep localization, and long-term value creation—and has emerged as a partner in building national AI capability, often described as an "AI sovereignty stack." MeetKai's approach supports a country's right to govern its AI destiny by delivering platforms that integrate with local infrastructure, operate in local languages, and continually evolve under local oversight.

"We believe the future of AI must be inclusive, language-diverse, and embedded within sovereign ecosystems," says MeetKai Co-Founder and CEO James Kaplan. "The next chapter of digital transformation will be written in the languages and contexts of the global emerging powerhouses and not just in Silicon Valley."

Grahme Deasy
Chief strategy Officer
MeetKai

meetkai

> *Cost is often the deciding factor when it comes to AI deployment. For many emerging economies, building or licensing advanced AI models is simply too expensive to be sustainable. MeetKai focuses on reducing deployment and operating costs through post-training optimization, lowering the financial barrier to running large models at scale.*

Many countries are discovering that artificial intelligence does not automatically translate into real-world impact. While global platforms continue to advance quickly, their systems often fail to fit the linguistic, economic, and regulatory realities faced by much of the world.

Because most AI systems are built around a small group of dominant languages, this limits their usefulness in public services such as healthcare, education, agriculture, and government administration. MeetKai approaches this differently. Its MK-A1 platform is designed to reason directly in languages such as Swahili, Urdu, Brazilian Portuguese, and Spanish, rather than relying on translation from English. This makes it possible to deploy AI in everyday national services where accuracy, cultural context, and trust matter.

Infrastructure presents another constraint. Many countries depend on foreign cloud providers to run AI systems, which can introduce costs, delays, and concerns about control. MeetKai's technology is built to run on existing national telecom infrastructure, allowing locally anchored operators, including state-backed ones, to deploy and manage AI services themselves. This shifts AI from being an imported service to something operated within national systems that already serve millions of users.

Cost is often the deciding factor when it comes to AI deployment. For many emerging economies, building or licensing advanced AI models is simply too expensive to be sustainable. MeetKai focuses on reducing deployment and operating costs through post-training optimization, lowering the financial barrier to running large models at scale. As co-founder Weili Dai puts it, "We've engineered our technology to enable local deployment without placing the heavy financial and technical burden that usually comes with AI models developed by global platforms." Her point is less about novelty than practicality.

Finally comes the issue of data governance. Governments increasingly want assurance that sensitive data stays within national borders and is managed by domestic institutions. In line with frameworks such as Brazil's AI Legal Framework and Pakistan's digital policy efforts, MeetKai's deployments are structured so that data remains local, is governed under national rules, and contributes to domestic economic activity rather than being exported elsewhere.

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MeetKai's collaborations with governments and telecom operators across—and beyond—the SA-ME-NA region, from AXI Systems in Pakistan to sovereign AI initiatives in Brazil, show that sovereign AI is rapidly becoming—and increasingly must become—the most practical path to national resilience in the AI age. In a world where fewer than 20 of the world's 7,000+ languages are supported at high fidelity by major AI platforms, nations risk being left behind if they don't act. At its core, sovereign AI ensures that digital progress aligns with national priorities, protects cultural identity, and creates shared prosperity.

MeetKai's recent partnership with GSMA, announced in December 2025, marks a major milestone. It paves the way for telecom operators to play a catalytic role in distributing localized, inclusive AI services to billions of people. This positions the telecom sector as a steward of national innovation.

As James Kaplan puts it: "The telecom industry has the reach, infrastructure, and trust to become the engine of sovereign AI. Our collaboration with GSMA is about unlocking that potential—at scale and with sovereignty at the core."

Rethinking AI deployment ultimately means shifting the focus from access to control, and from experimentation to long-term capability. As governments address challenges linked to language inclusion, cost, infrastructure dependence, and data governance, sovereign AI is emerging as a practical response to real constraints. This entails aligning AI systems with national infrastructure, local languages, and domestic governance frameworks. This approach also reframes national AI capability as foundational infrastructure that can successfully and inclusively support public services, economic resilience, and overall digital growth.

For policymakers and industry leaders in the SA-ME-NA region and beyond, the implication is clear. Sovereign AI is no longer a distant ambition; it is a deployable model that demands strategic choices today. How AI is deployed will determine not only who benefits from it, but who delivers it, governs it, sustains it, and ultimately trusts it.

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REGIONAL NEWS

Oman–UAE Space Partnership Sets Regional Model

Space cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates serves as a living model of regional partnerships, according to astronaut and UAE Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Dr. Sultan Saif al Neyadi. Speaking during the second edition of the Middle East Space Conference in Muscat, Dr. Al Neyadi highlighted the strategic and economic significance of regional collaboration in the space sector. "Space cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates holds particular importance, serving as a living model of regional partnerships that build capabilities and open new horizons for scientific research and advanced technology," he said. He noted that cooperation between the two countries extends beyond policy alignment to practical joint initiatives that strengthen long-term sustainability in the sector. "This cooperation includes the exchange of expertise and training, as well as joint projects in satellites and remote sensing, strengthening both countries' roles in developing a sustainable space sector that serves the region and the world. In this context, I am pleased to extend my sincere congratulations to the Sultanate of Oman on the occasion of its accession to the Artemis Accords — a step that reflects its commitment to enhancing international cooperation in the field of space and continuing the journey of exploration to the Moon and beyond, in service of humanity's future." Dr. Al Neyadi emphasized that progress in the space sector is closely linked to innovation, people, and strong partnerships. "These achievements demonstrate that success in the space sector is only realized through innovation, investment in human capital, and strong international and regional partnerships. Engineers, scientists and astronauts are the cornerstone of any progress and supporting youth and providing opportunities is the path to developing a dynamic space sector — an investment in the future and a means for our region to embody global competitiveness." He also underlined the growing economic role of space-related activities and their relevance to the digital economy. "Space has become more than scientific exploration. It is a catalyst for innovation, a pillar of the digital economy and a platform for enhancing international cooperation. Space data, satellite technologies and planetary exploration are no longer confined to distant nations; they have become an expanding field open to entrepreneurs, investors and innovative youth." Reflecting on his own experience, he said cooperation remains the defining factor behind meaningful achievements in space. "I realized that success in space can only be achieved through cooperation and shared knowledge; and that teamwork and international partnerships are the key to any achievement in this vital sector."

Morocco's Largest Telecoms Operator Reports US$760 Million Profit in 2025

Maroc Telecom, Morocco's largest telecommunications operator, reported a net profit of 6.97 billion dirhams (US$760 million) for 2025, marking a sharp increase compared to the previous year when earnings were impacted by a major regulatory settlement. The result represents a 288 percent rise from 2024, reflecting improved financial performance following the absence of exceptional costs linked to a dispute resolution payment. Despite the strong headline profit growth, adjusted net profit declined by 4.9 percent to 5.65 billion dirhams as the company increased investment in next-generation network infrastructure, particularly the rollout of 5G services in Morocco. Capital expenditure accounted for 25.6 percent of total revenue, highlighting the operator's focus on long-term network modernization and capacity expansion. Consolidated revenue remained largely stable, slipping slightly by 0.1 percent to 36.6 billion dirhams. Subscriber numbers increased by 3.6 percent to reach 77 million customers, driven primarily by growth across Maroc Telecom's African subsidiaries operating under the Moov Africa brand, while the domestic subscriber base in Morocco remained steady at around 22 million users. The company also announced plans to distribute a dividend of 4 dirhams per share, representing a total payout of approximately 3.5 billion dirhams. Maroc Telecom, listed on both the Casablanca Stock Exchange and Euronext Paris, is majority owned by UAE-based e& (formerly Etisalat) alongside the Moroccan state, and operates across multiple African markets including Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, and Togo

CST Concludes a Series of Awareness Meetings with Investors and Entrepreneurs in the Space Sector

The Communications, Space and Technology Commission (CST) has concluded a series of specialized awareness sessions on investment in the Space sector, organized in partnership with the Venture Capital and Private Equity Association (VCPEA). The series included a session aimed at enhancing the relationship between investors and promising Space companies, as well as raising awareness among the Association's investors of the promising opportunities in this vital sector. The series featured many initiatives including awareness events for investors and promising companies, as well as educational workshops. The concluding session started with a brief presentation highlighting key emerging technologies in the Space sector and the investment opportunities they offer, followed by a panel discussion moderated by the CEO of VCPEA, Mr. Qusai AlSaif, with the participation of several investors in the Space sector. The discussion explored recent developments witnessed by entrepreneurs and investors in the Space industry, highlighted key enabling technologies, such as AI and IoT, and examined their impact on other sectors, including food security, urban development, and defense, with the sector's growing investment volume and rapid adoption of its solutions. This session is part of CST's efforts to develop a stimulating investment environment in the Space sector, enhance its role as an innovative economic driver contributing to the diversification of income sources, enable national talents, and support the growth of startups in alignment with the goals of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030.

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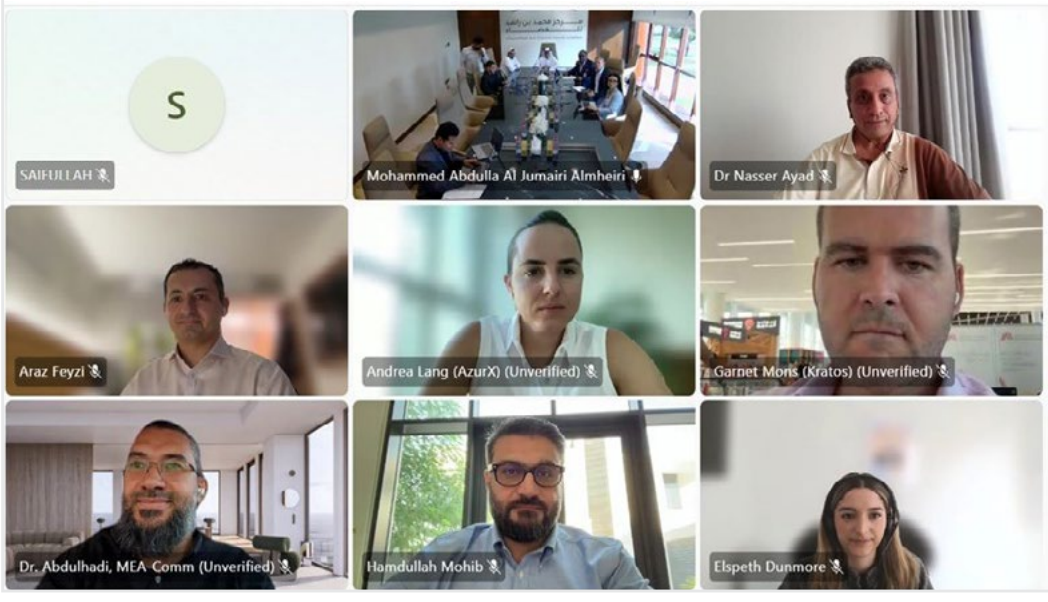
World Space Sustainability Association (WSSA) Brings Together Diverse Space Community to Accelerate Coordinated Efforts in Addressing Orbital Safety & Space Sustainability Issues

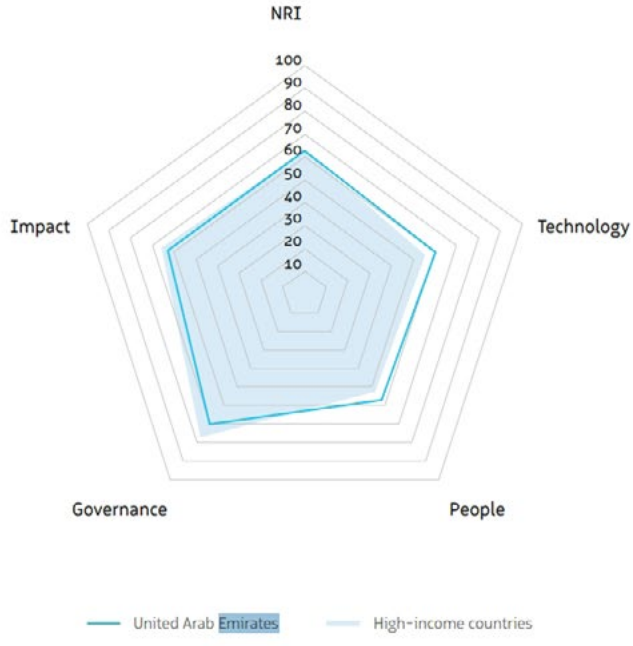
The World Space Sustainability Association (WSSA) convened another leadership dialogue and membership meeting in Dubai, reinforcing the Association's mission to accelerate global collaboration on space sustainability. The gathering brought together a broad spectrum of stakeholders from across the international space ecosystem, including Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC), elseco, Bahrain Space Agency, G2Sky Group, Kayhan Space, MEA-COMM, Marlan Space, Leolabs, Kratos Space, Slingshot Aerospace, and AzurX, along with supporting bodies and observers including Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA), SAMENA Council, and the U.S. Embassy's Space Affairs Office. The diverse participation reflected the WSSA's expanding role as a unifying platform for governmental, commercial, cross-industry, academic, and digital communications actors working to advance practical, cooperative solutions that ensure a safer and more sustainable orbital environment. During the opening of the stakeholders' dialogue session, the WSSA Board Advisor, Bocar BA, who also serves as CEO of the SAMENA Telecommunications Council, welcomed new members and reaffirmed the Association's commitment to responsible practices, cross-sector collaboration, and innovation in support of the long-term sustainability and safe use of outer space. He acknowledged the critical contributions of the WSSA's Founding Members since its launch at the World Government Summit 2022 (WGS 2022). Hosting the meeting, Adnan Al Rais, Assistant Director General of the Space Operations and Exploration Sector, MBRSC, emphasized the WSSA's growing role as a multi-stakeholder, non-profit platform advancing shared priorities among spacefaring nations and diverse industry players. Participants echoed this message, highlighting increasing member engagement and the value of sustained cooperation. During the meeting, members reviewed the WSSA's guiding materials, reaffirming the shared purpose, values, and strategic priorities shaping the Association's next phase of coordinated action. The session ensured alignment across all participating stakeholders as the WSSA continues to expand its global initiatives. Bocar also introduced the WSSA's newly established Working Groups, each designed to address critical dimensions of global space sustainability. The discussion covered Space Traffic Management, Space Traffic Coordination, Space Situational Awareness, and Space Debris Removal. Members offered insights on regulatory alignment, data interoperability, tracking accuracy, end-of-life standards, and long-term debris mitigation. Several organizations expressed readiness to take on leadership roles within these groups to support coordination and debris-related initiatives. Throughout the dialogue, the participants emphasized the importance of aligning the WSSA's efforts with global discussions and emerging international standards, while maintaining steady engagement with governmental entities, and cross-industry and cross-sector stakeholders. "We should feel encouraged by the fact that this meeting marks an important milestone in the WSSA's ongoing effort to foster collaboration across the space ecosystem. The need for responsible space practices has never been more urgent, and it is a pleasure to see ecosystem partners and key stakeholders tackling pressing challenges in outer space's sustainability", remarked Bocar. The discussions at the space stakeholders' meeting have set the stage for critical next steps that will drive meaningful progress in space sustainability, and has successfully given way to tackle new mission areas, to help unite the global space community. By bringing together a diverse community of stakeholders, the WSSA is fostering the collaboration needed to ensure that space remains a safe, accessible, and sustainable resource for future generations.



UAE Features High in Network Readiness Index Top 50

The UAE leads Arab states in its access to, and use of, information and communications technology (ICT), according to findings of the 2025 Network Readiness Index (NRI) published by Portulans Institute in a new partnership with the World Governments Summit. The UAE ranked 26th globally, thanks to impressive levels of investment in and adoption of future technologies. The NRI is one of the leading global indices on the application and impact of ICT in economies across the world. In this latest version, "AI Governance in a Global Context: Policy and Regulatory Approaches", the NRI maps the network-based readiness landscape of 127 economies on their performances across four pillars: Technology, People, Governance, and Impact, with each pillar comprised of three sub-pillars, and a further 53 variables. The UAE exhibits exceptional strengths in Access to digital infrastructure (5th) and openness to Future Technologies (6th), particularly in mobile network coverage (1st), Internet access in schools (1st), and the adoption of emerging technologies (3rd). The country excels in Government promotion of emerging technologies (2nd) and digitized public services (16th). The UAE's digital infrastructure benefits from affordable handset prices (1st) and strong international internet bandwidth (15th). However, there is room for improvement in Regulation of digital technologies (50th), especially when it comes to privacy protection by law content (125th). Rafael Escalona Reynoso, CEO of the Portulans Institute and co-editor of the NRI said: "The NRI 2025 highlights that digital readiness outcomes increasingly reflect differences in governance quality and institutional execution rather than income level alone. This dynamic is particularly evident in the governance of advanced digital technologies, including AI, where regulatory coherence, public-sector capacity, and implementation choices shape how effectively technological adoption translates into system-wide economic and social outcomes." The Arab states include three economies with outstanding digital performance as compared to income level, with Morocco and Jordan surpassing expectations in Technology, People, and Governance, and Tunisia exceeding expectations in Technology and People. Saudi Arabia ranks second in the region and is 34th globally, followed by Bahrain (36th), Qatar (50th), and Oman (59th). Overall, 12 Arab State nations feature in this year's NRI. Reflecting on this year's theme, Bruno Lanvin, co-editor of NRI, said: "The AI race has entered a new phase. This phase is characterized by the collision of two trends: The now widespread consensus on the transformative power of AI on productivity, employment, innovation and competitiveness; and divergent approaches about AI's business models (closed or open), and governance (ethical, environmental, informational). Such divergences need to be reconciled before the next wave of changes gathers momentum in technology (quantum computing), society (acceptance, education) and the global economy (access, energy)." Origins of the NRI: Initially launched in 2002 by the World Economic Forum, the NRI was redesigned in 2019 by its founders and co-editors, Soumitra Dutta and Bruno Lanvin, to reflect how technology and people need to be integrated within an effective governance structure in order to have the right impact on our economy, society and the environment. This 2025 edition marks the seventh edition of the redesigned model of the NRI. The NRI model recognizes the pervasiveness of digital technologies in today's networked world and therefore rests on four fundamental dimensions: Technology, People, Governance, and Impact. This holistic approach means that the NRI covers issues ranging from future technologies such as AI and Internet of Things (IoT) to the role of digital transformation in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

	Rank (Out of 127)	Score
Network Readiness Index	26	62.60
Pillar/sub-pillar	**Rank**	**Score**
A. Technology pillar	17	60.25
1st sub-pillar: Access	5	84.90
2nd sub-pillar: Content	54	27.74
3rd sub-pillar: Future Technologies	6	68.11
B. People pillar	19	57.12
1st sub-pillar: Individuals	16	66.37
2nd sub-pillar: Businesses	41	37.83
3rd sub-pillar: Governments	11	67.17
C. Governance pillar	42	70.24
1st sub-pillar: Trust	55	65.33
2nd sub-pillar: Regulation	50	67.05
3rd sub-pillar: Inclusion	28	78.33
D. Impact pillar	34	62.80
1st sub-pillar: Economy	42	38.42
2nd sub-pillar: Quality of Life	11	84.57
3rd sub-pillar: SDG Contribution	61	65.40

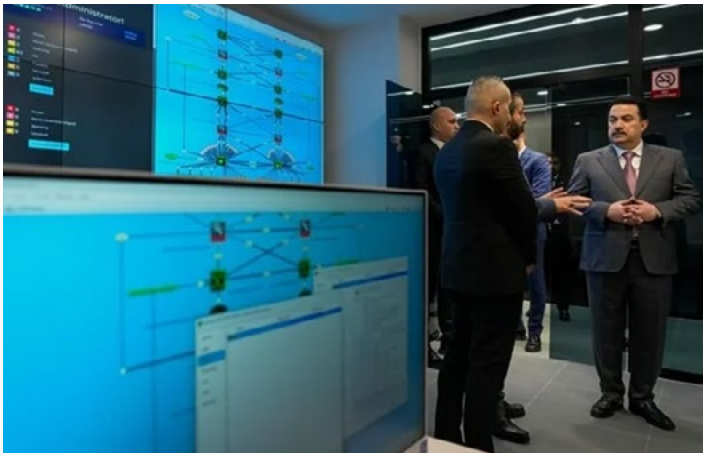


PTCL Flash Fiber Wins Ookla Awards for Best Fixed Network and Best ISP Gaming Experience in Pakistan

Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited's flagship broadband service, PTCL Flash Fiber, has been recognized by Ookla with two major awards: Best Fixed Network for the full year 2025 and Best ISP Gaming Experience for the second half of 2025 in Pakistan. The recognition is based on findings from Ookla's Speedtest Connectivity Report for Pakistan covering H1 and H2 2025. The awards reflect PTCL Flash Fiber's performance in delivering high speeds, low latency, and consistent user experience across its fiber network. The Best Fixed Network award is determined through Ookla's key performance indicator model, which evaluates download and upload speeds, latency, video streaming quality, and web browsing performance. It represents one of the highest distinctions in fixed broadband performance measurement. In H1 2025, PTCL Flash Fiber was named the Fastest Provider in four regions of Pakistan. During H2 2025, it expanded its leadership, emerging as the Fastest Provider across the majority of regions, according to published Ookla data. The Best ISP Gaming Experience award for H2 2025 highlights PTCL Flash Fiber's optimized network infrastructure tailored for online gaming. The award reflects strong performance in latency reduction and connection stability, critical factors for competitive gaming and high-bandwidth digital use. PTCL stated that the recognition underscores its continued investment in fiber expansion and next-generation infrastructure. The company aims to further extend its fiber footprint nationwide to meet rising demand for high-speed connectivity and enhanced digital experiences.

Iraq's Digital Transformation: 859 Government Entities Adopt eGovernance

Iraq has reached a major milestone in its digital transformation journey, with 859 government entities fully integrated into the national e-governance program, according to the Government Media Team. Since its launch, the initiative has enabled the electronic exchange of nearly four million official documents across state institutions. Government spokesperson Haider Majeed said the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers is steadily moving toward making official email the primary communication channel between all government bodies. This transition is central to efforts to streamline administrative procedures and improve institutional efficiency. The digital program aims to reduce bureaucracy by limiting paper-based processes and accelerating government transactions, while also lowering costs linked to physical correspondence and logistics. It further strengthens transparency and security through advanced encryption and unique digital identifiers for each institution and employee, helping prevent document forgery and data leaks. Majeed noted that the electronic document management system was developed entirely by Iraqi engineers and technicians within the General Secretariat. The program has since expanded to include specialized platforms, such as a Ministry of Interior system connected to police stations for tracking stolen vehicles and revenues, as well as a digital database for managing and verifying private sector company data. Since its launch on September 10, 2020, the system has integrated ministries, independent authorities, governorates, and their affiliated departments. The General Secretariat continues to oversee compliance, while providing technical infrastructure and staff training to ensure a smooth transition toward modern, paperless administration. The government views the digital transformation as a key pillar in combating corruption and delivering faster, more efficient public services to Iraqi citizens.



CST Participates in the World Defense Show and Issues the Defence & Security Spectrum Outlook

The Communications, Space and Technology Commission (CST), in partnership with military and security entities, issues the Defence & Security Spectrum Outlook during the third version of the World Defense Show 2026 (WDC2026). CST also held a Panel discussion titled "Enabling Defense and Security Applications Through Radio Spectrum Roadmaps and Outlooks" with the participation of experts in the field. The outlook aims to enhance the efficiency of spectrum use to support Advanced defence and security technologies in the Kingdom, and improve the spectrum's governance for government entities in accordance with the national frequency plan, while enable those entities to meet their operational requirements and spectrum needs. The outlook also focuses on analyzing the current use of radio spectrum for defense and security applications, addressing challenges related to its management, and identifying priority bands, therefore enabling advanced technologies in areas such as Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV), radars, Sensors & IoT devices, Space networks & Satellite communications, and international mobile telecommunications (IMT) for defense and security applications. The outlook includes developing methods for reallocating and sharing frequency bands to enhance government and civil applications, establishing clear regulatory frameworks and integrated coordination among relevant authorities, and improving the governance of spectrum management by strengthening the role of the National Spectrum Coordination Committee (NSCC). In addition to monitoring the outcomes of the World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-27) to ensure alignment of national directions with global developments in spectrum management. The panel discussion "Enabling Defence and Security Applications Through Radio Spectrum Roadmaps and Outlooks" featured Dr. Sami Alhumaidi, KSU Faculty member & Chairman of the Spectrum Advisory Group at CST, Dr. Lawrence Schuette, Director for Research and Technology Programs at Lockheed Martin, Eng. Thamer Binkhamis, General Manager of the General Directorate of Electronic Warfare at PSDSARC, and Eng. Ayman Maghrabi, General Manager of Radio Spectrum Assignment at CST, which was moderated by Eng. Omar Alsalik, Director of Government Radio Spectrum at CST. CST participation in the WDC2026 is part of its enabling and regulatory roles in enhancing the spectrum management and elevating the efficiency of its uses to support vital sectors in the Kingdom, keeping pace with global developments and strengthening these sectors' ability to adopt advanced technologies.

Bahrain Urges Residents to Update Mobile Devices to Receive Emergency Alerts

Bahrain has urged citizens and residents using Apple devices to update their phones to iOS version 26.2 to ensure they receive emergency alerts promptly and completely during critical situations. The Ministry of Interior clarified that this directive applies only to iOS users, while Android and Huawei device users do not need to take any action. The update aligns with Bahrain's recent approval of a phased pilot operation of a wireless emergency alert system designed to enhance public safety and civil protection. The system will deliver timely information before, during, and after emergencies, significantly improving how authorities communicate with the public in urgent situations. The initiative was reviewed during a Civil Defence Council meeting, where officials assessed the early warning project and discussed improving emergency procedures, coordination between sectors, and overall national readiness. The system will be tested in stages and initially deployed in designated emergency zones once infrastructure and operational preparations are complete. In the region, Kuwait has also taken similar precautionary measures. On January 15, Kuwait announced that it would conduct routine monthly testing of its warning sirens on the first Monday of every month at 10am. The country has also carried out joint training programs to enhance response efficiency for chemical, biological, and radiological incidents.

Egypt Secures US$3.5 Billion Spectrum Deal to Fuel Next Phase of Digital Growth

Egypt has signed a US$3.5 billion agreement with the country's four mobile operators to significantly expand available spectrum, supporting the next phase of digital transformation and future network technologies. Under the agreement, Telecom Egypt, Vodafone Egypt, Orange Egypt, and e& Egypt will collectively acquire 410 MHz of additional spectrum, effectively doubling their existing holdings in a single transaction. Communications Minister Amr Talaat described the move as a major step toward enabling next-generation services and strengthening the country's digital infrastructure. The government noted that the newly allocated frequencies equal the total amount of spectrum distributed to operators in Egypt over the past three decades, highlighting the scale of the initiative. The signing ceremony was attended by Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouli, underscoring the strategic importance of the agreement for Egypt's long-term digital economy ambitions. The deal is expected to support network capacity expansion, improved service quality, and the rollout of advanced technologies, positioning Egypt for accelerated growth in mobile connectivity and digital services.

Nigeria's Mobile Internet Speed Doubled in 2 Years, Driven by 4G Adoption and Data Usage

Internet speed in Nigeria has witnessed a significant leap as average mobile download speed increased from 7.1 Mbps to 14.7 Mbps between the first quarter of 2023 and the fourth quarter of 2025. This is according to a report by nPerf, an internet speed test platform. The report attributed the performance to two factors. First, the rising adoption of 4G networks. Second, the increase in data consumption by Nigerian internet users. Industry data from the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) further backed this claim. Internet users used 1.236 million terabytes in November 2025, a significant increase from over 517,000 terabytes in January 2023. The 4G network has also witnessed increasing adoption, attributed to the continuous rise in smartphone usage and internet users' addiction to social media platforms. In less than two years, 4G has witnessed a meteoric rise to become the leading network usage in Nigeria. Its market share increased by 131.4% from 25.06% in May 2023 to 51.99% in November 2025. Aside from the impact of 4G network adoption and data consumption on the download speed performance, upload speed is not left out. The nPerf report revealed that upload speed increased by more than four times (4x) in two years, from 1.77 Mbps to 7.28 Mbps. The performance is credited to sustained investment by Nigerian Telcos. According to nPerf, the result "reflects the growing adoption of digital services and places additional pressure on mobile infrastructures." In addition, the report noted that there's been a jump in 4G testing activity on MTN, Airtel, and Globacom networks, up from 49% in 2022 to 64% now. This shows that more people are shifting from 2G/3G to 4G networks and an improved 4G coverage, as revealed in the industry data. Nigerian telcos were also praised for the modernization of their networks through various partnerships. Recall that MTN and Airtel partnered to improve coverage in rural areas. Also, MTN recently agreed to lease its spectrum to T2mobile (formerly 9mobile), allowing users to enjoy quality and consistent connectivity. The credit for infrastructure upgrade comes amid recent efforts by Nigerian telcos to improve connectivity nationwide. The NCC EVC, Dr Aminu Maida, while commenting on the Q4 2025 Network Performance Reports, pointed out that operators deployed infrastructure worth more than $1 billion into the industry in 2025. This cut across the extension of tower sites, an increase in fibre-optic cable layouts, and other facilities. The move also forms part of the operator's pledge to bolster investment strategies and its operational performance following the 50% telecoms tariff adjustment.

Pakistan Assumes Presidency of Digital Corporation Organization

Pakistan assumed the presidency of Digital Corporation Organization (DCO), succeeding Kuwait at the fifth General Assembly session of the DCO. "I would like to reaffirm Pakistan's unwavering support for the DCO," said Pakistan's IT minister Shaza Fatima, while addressing at the fifth GA session. "Together through collaboration and shared purpose we can ensure that digital transformation delivers inclusive growth and shared prosperity for all and as a founding member Pakistan is proud to see it growing and see it prospering and working towards a shared future." Pakistan was one of the first five countries, along with Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Jordan, and Kuwait, which launched the DCO in November 2020. It was also the first to host the DCO's Digital Foreign Direct Investment (DFDI) Forum in 2025, which attracted global leaders and investment commitments. The annual gathering of DCO brings together representatives of various states and international organizations to discuss the digital economy and the challenges associated with its growth. This year's theme is 'Inclusive Prosperity in the Age of AI'. As Council President, Pakistan will have an enhanced role in shaping the DCO's collective workstreams, aligning shared digital priorities and strengthening cooperation on cross-border digital issues. The leadership position is expected to amplify Pakistan's voice on key areas such as digital skills development, innovation, inclusive growth, data governance and AI readiness, while deepening engagement with international partners. Talking about emerging technologies and its risks, the minister noted that while these technologies bring a lot of opportunity, "they also come with challenges that we haven't met with before". She said there is a much more systematic impact of AI coming in, in addition to the tactical level issues. "There are certain softer threats but there are also hard threats that we are looking at in this age of intelligence." She noted that at a more complex level, cybersecurity and cyber threats are critical issues. "Data, which is the new gold, demands a serious conversation, particularly around indigenizing AI technologies and building trust, which will remain at the core of AI adoption worldwide." The minister shared that Pakistan will host the SCO, assume the chair of the ECO, and take over the presidency of the DCO.

Sri Lanka and Pakistan Launch Digital Partnership

Sri Lanka and Pakistan have agreed to strengthen cooperation in the digital economy by establishing a Joint Working Group on Information Technology and Digital Economy, marking a new phase in bilateral collaboration focused on emerging technologies and digital transformation. The decision was made during the 13th session of the Sri Lanka–Pakistan Joint Economic Commission (JEC) in Colombo, where both sides reaffirmed their commitment to expanding economic cooperation beyond traditional trade and investment. The Pakistani delegation was led by Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Haroon Akhtar Khan. Officials from both countries emphasized the need to build partnerships in digital infrastructure, IT services, e-governance, and skills development to support modern economic growth. Discussions also covered industrial cooperation and bilateral trade expansion. Sri Lanka invited Pakistani pharmaceutical companies to explore investment opportunities, highlighting potential for joint ventures and technology transfer in the health sector. Both sides agreed to enhance collaboration in the SME sector, recognizing its role in employment, innovation, and economic resilience, and discussed measures to promote SME linkages and knowledge exchange. The meeting concluded with a commitment to continue engagement through institutional mechanisms to translate these initiatives into practical outcomes.

Pakistan Announces 5G Spectrum Auction in March in Bid to Boost Internet Speeds

The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has announced that it will hold a 5G spectrum auction in March, a move aimed at improving Internet speeds and connectivity in the South Asian country. The development comes at a time of mounting pressure on Pakistan's telecommunication networks and Internet service providers, with users and businesses complaining of slow speeds and frequent disruptions as a limited spectrum struggles to serve the South Asian nation of over 240 million. Pakistan has more than 130 million broadband connections but access remains uneven, though its IT exports reached a record $3.8 billion in Fiscal Year 2024–25, up from $3.2 billion the previous year, marking an 18 percent year-on-year increase, according to the Pakistan Software Export Board. The PTA said the spectrum auction for Next Generation Mobile Services/5G will be held on March 10, following constructive regulatory coordination and extensive stakeholder consultations, aimed at ensuring a smooth, transparent, and well-participated auction process. "The confirmed timeline provides telecom operators and prospective bidders with adequate preparation time and reflects PTA's commitment to facilitating optimal participation while ensuring full alignment with procedural and regulatory requirements," the authority said. It urged all interested parties to review the information memorandum for NGMS/5G in Pakistan and stay informed through updates on the PTA website. Information Technology (IT) Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja last month said the quality of Internet service in Pakistan is not at par with international best practices or even regional standards, and one of the fundamental reasons for this was the non-availability of the spectrum. Pakistani Internet users currently operate on about 274 MHz of spectrum, compared with around 600 MHz in Bangladesh, that leads to congestion, she told a news conference on Dec. 23, likening the situation to "trying to run eight lanes of traffic through two lanes." She said the spectrum auction will help improve Internet services in the country.

CRA, Qatar Participates In 48th GCC Telecommunications Bureau Technical Committee Session

The Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA), representing the State of Qatar, took part in the 48th meeting of the Technical Committee of the Telecommunications Technical Bureau at the GCC General Secretariat, held in Bahrain from January 20 to 22, 2026. The meeting brought together telecom regulators and technical experts from GCC member states to coordinate regional priorities on wireless communications and radio spectrum management. The session serves as a key regional platform for aligning technical and regulatory approaches among GCC countries, supporting unified regional positions at Arab and international forums and strengthening collective engagement in global regulatory processes amid rapid technological change. During the meeting, the Qatari delegation made several technical contributions, including presenting a consensus working paper on the 6 GHz frequency band. The paper addressed rising demand for wireless services and stressed the need for balanced, forward-looking spectrum allocation that supports innovation while ensuring long-term sustainability.

Qatar also submitted a working paper on applications installed on certain mobile devices, examining regulatory and technical considerations related to network performance, consumer protection, and compliance with national frameworks. In addition, the delegation presented a paper on harmful interference affecting positioning systems, outlining associated challenges and potential mitigation measures. The meeting also provided an opportunity for Qatar to highlight its hosting of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2026, reaffirming the country's readiness to contribute to global ICT decision-making and its commitment to inclusive, secure, and future-ready digital development. CRA's participation underscored its ongoing role in strengthening regional cooperation, supporting spectrum harmonization, and advancing shared GCC objectives in wireless communications.

Algeria Reaches Milestone as 3 Million Households Connect to Fiber Broadband

Algeria has connected three million households to fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) broadband services, marking a significant step forward in the country's digital transformation agenda. The milestone was announced by Sid Ali Zerrouki, Minister of Post and Telecommunications, in a video message highlighting progress under the government's national broadband strategy. Zerrouki said the expansion reflects the strategic directives of the President of Algeria to extend high-speed digital infrastructure across the country. He noted that authorities have adopted a comprehensive all-fiber communications approach aimed at ensuring equitable access to next-generation connectivity nationwide. The Ministry of Post and Telecommunications has coordinated the large-scale deployment, with sustained institutional backing enabling rapid rollout across both urban centers and regional areas. The minister emphasized that the initiative supports Algeria's ambition to rank among Africa's leading digitally connected nations. Reaching three million fiber-connected households represents a major boost for digital inclusion, service quality and economic development. Zerrouki described the achievement as a collective national success and indicated that further expansion of digital infrastructure is expected in the coming phases.

International ICT Workshop Begins in Nepal

The IEEE International Conference on ICT and Photonics (ICTP 2026) and the KAIST Global Digital Innovation and Impact (GDI) workshop began at Hotel Centric in Kathmandu, bringing together researchers, academicians, innovators, and students from Nepal and abroad to foster collaboration in digital innovation and emerging technologies. ICTP 2026 marks a historic milestone as the first-ever IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) conference organized in Nepal. The three-day conference is jointly organized by Research and Innovation Center Nepal (RICON) and Nepal Engineering College (affiliated to Pokhara University), with technical sponsorship from the IEEE Nepal Chapter and IEEE Photonics Society Nanjing Chapter, co-organized by KAIST (Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology) Global Digital Innovation. More than 200 national and international researchers, academicians, innovators, and students are attending the workshop. Addressing the workshop, Tae-young Park, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Nepal, congratulated the organizers for hosting this landmark scientific event and described it as "a proud and significant moment for Nepal's scientific and academic community." He commended the efforts of Conference Chair Prof. Bikash Nakarmi, Dean Prof. Dr. Seung Hun Han of KAIST's Graduate School of Global Digital Innovation (GDI), and the organizing committee for successfully convening a global platform

for dialogue and collaboration. The Ambassador highlighted the importance of holding ICTP 2026 alongside the Global Digital Innovation & Impact Workshop led by KAIST GDI, with the support of the Ministry of Science and ICT of the Republic of Korea. He said that such collaboration reflects the growing partnership between Nepal and Korea in science, technology, and digital innovation. He added that the ICT sector remains one of the priority areas of bilateral cooperation between Nepal and the Republic of Korea. The government of the Republic of Korea, through the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), has been continuously supporting the Government of Nepal in strengthening its ICT infrastructure and digital capacity. The Government Integrated Data Centre (GIDC), the primary data center of the government of Nepal located in Singha Durbar, Kathmandu, was established with significant financial and technical assistance from the Korean government. The GIDC is responsible for storing, managing, and backing up public data. Similarly, the Disaster Recovery Centre (DRC) in Hetauda, also supported by the Korean government, serves as a backup system for the GIDC and is designed to minimize data loss resulting from natural or human-induced disasters, including earthquakes. Another milestone initiative supported by the Korean government is the establishment of a modern Cyber Bureau for Nepal Police through USD 8 million KOICA grant. This project aims to enhance digital forensic capabilities and combat the rising threat of cybercrime, with the facility expected to become operational around the end of 2026. The Ambassador also expressed encouragement to young researchers and students participating in the conference, noting that they are the future leaders who will shape the digital world. Emphasizing the transformative role of ICT, photonics, artificial intelligence, and digital governance, he stated that technological advancement—guided by sound policy and strengthened by international cooperation—can serve as a powerful driver of sustainable and inclusive growth. He reaffirmed the Republic of Korea's commitment to sharing its development experience, supporting capacity building, and enhancing cooperation with Nepal in digital transformation and innovation-driven development.

The UAE Shapes the Future of Global Digital Development at the UN General Assembly in New York

H.E Eng. Majid Sultan Al Mesmar, Director General of the Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA), led the UAE delegation on an official visit to the United Nations headquarters in New York from 15–17 December 2025. The visit focused on major global events dedicated to the comprehensive review of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+20), a multilateral summit addressing the future of the internet and international ICT governance. The visit featured a comprehensive program, including delivering the UAE national statement to the General Assembly and participating in strategic sessions on digital transformation and global internet governance. In DG keynote address to the UN General Assembly on 16 December, Eng. Majid Sultan Al Mesmar highlighted that the world stands at a crossroads. Despite 74% of the global population having internet access, around 2.2 billion people remain unconnected, representing a fundamental challenge. DG stated: "In an era where connectivity is essential for education, healthcare, and economic empowerment, what we face today is not just a digital divide—it defines the growth and future of nations". Eng. Al Mesmar also showcased the UAE as a practical model, citing the inclusion of over 450 national projects in the WSIS Stocktaking database and recognition with more than 60 international awards. He emphasized that the UAE will continue supporting global efforts to bridge the knowledge gap. The UAE delegation participated in Digital@UNGA, where during the session "Sustainable Digital Transformation Journey," Eng. Al Mesmar highlighted that the UAE's experience is based on a "Future Engineering" approach with three pillars: proactive investment in the telecommunications sector as a backbone, developing government mindset, and strengthening public digital infrastructure (DPI). The delegation concluded its participation in the critical session titled "Connecting the Dots: WSIS, Internet Governance Forum, and the Global Digital

Compact". Eng. Al Mesmar delivered a strategic intervention calling for an end to the "isolated islands" among international organizations, likening their relationship to a "single engine," and noted:

- WSIS: Represents the foundation and infrastructure.
- Internet Governance Forum (IGF): Serves as the platform for comprehensive dialogue.
- Global Digital Compact (GDC): Acts as the compass guiding future principles and shared values.

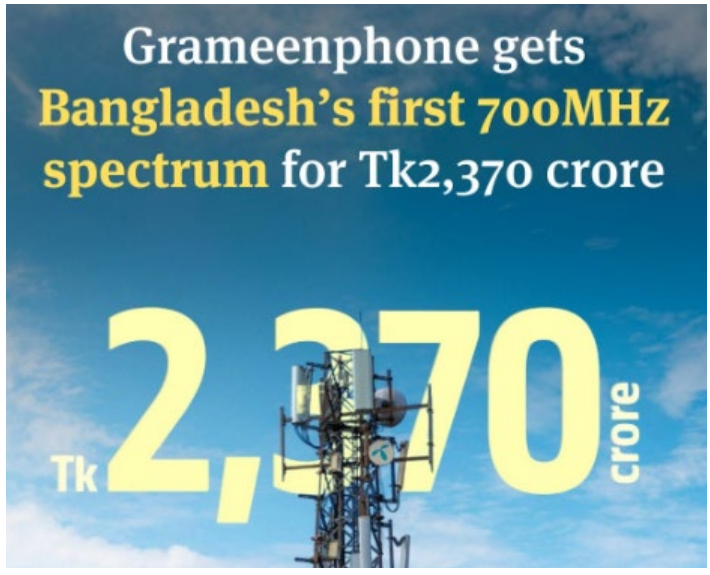
H.E Eng. Majid Sultan Al Mesmar, urged the international community to make these pathways interoperable, ensuring a digital future that is not only connected but also constructive and sustainable for all.

Saudi Arabia Ranks Second Globally in ITU Digital Regulatory Maturity Index 2025

Saudi Arabia has secured second place worldwide in the International Telecommunication Union's (ITU) Digital Regulatory Maturity Index 2025, ranking just behind Germany among 193 countries and retaining its position in the highest "Leading" maturity category. The achievement was announced by the Communications, Space and Technology Commission (CST). CST Acting Governor Eng. Haitham bin Abdulrahman Alohali said the ranking reflects strong leadership support, alignment between national digital economy priorities and international multi-stakeholder frameworks, and effective cooperation between public and private sector entities through participatory regulation. He noted that Saudi Arabia's regulatory approach emphasizes measuring social and economic impact while fostering innovation and inclusive growth. According to CST, progress has been driven by policies promoting digital inclusion, development across sectors such as science, agriculture, and finance, and international commitments including Saudi Arabia's accession to the Tampere Convention, which supports the rapid provision of telecommunications resources for disaster response. Achieving the "Leading" maturity level has contributed to accelerating digital economy growth, expanding the telecom and technology market, boosting competition, attracting investment, and strengthening the Kingdom's role within the ITU. The milestone reflects coordinated efforts across multiple government bodies, including regulators, economic authorities, digital governance entities, and sector-specific institutions. Saudi Arabia's ranking underscores the Kingdom's continued advancement in digital regulation as part of its broader transformation agenda, reinforcing its position as a global benchmark in regulatory maturity.

Grameenphone Secures 700MHz Spectrum

Grameenphone was the sole winner in Bangladesh's 700MHz spectrum auction, securing a 10MHz allocation after rival Robi Axiata withdrew following a strategic and technical review, Dhaka Tribune reported. In a stock market filing, Grameenphone stated it received acknowledgment from the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission confirming the spectrum assignment letter will be issued. The operator acquired the spectrum at the base price, generating BDT23.7 billion ($193.8 million) for the government. The spectrum has a 15-year license, with the amount to be paid in 10 instalments. Both Banglalink and state-owned Teletalk also opted not to participate in the sale. Just 10MHz of the 25MHz available was sold. The regulator earlier revised its auction terms, lowering the base price by 10 per cent and cutting the maximum spectrum per operator to 10MHz from 15MHz. Grameenphone was the largest mobile player in the country with 85.2 million connections at end-2025, followed by Robi (57.8 million), Banglalink (34.6 million) and Teletalk (6.7 million), data from GSMA Intelligence showed.



Digico Solutions Collaborates with AWS to Accelerate Cloud and AI Transformation in Saudi Arabia

Digico Solutions, a specialized cloud and AI consultancy, has announced a strategic collaboration agreement with Amazon Web Services (AWS) to accelerate digital transformation across Saudi Arabia's key industries. This agreement brings together Digico Solutions' deep local market expertise and the advanced cloud and AI technologies of AWS to help private and public-sector organizations modernize their digital infrastructure, operationalize AI at scale, and drive innovation in alignment with the Kingdom's Vision 2030 objectives. The collaboration supports Vision 2030's digital transformation priorities, including but not limited to advancing the Kingdom's position as a global digital hub, enhancing government digital services efficiency, and fostering innovation-driven economic diversification. By enabling organizations to adopt cloud and AI technologies and supporting compliance with local data residency requirements through the upcoming AWS Region in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the collaboration between Digico Solutions and AWS contributes to building a resilient, future-ready digital economy. "This collaboration strengthens our ability to deliver world-class cloud and AI solutions specifically designed for the Saudi market," said Anas Khattar, CEO of Digico Solutions. "We're empowering organizations to modernize rapidly while meeting local compliance requirements and supporting the Kingdom's digital transformation goals." Digico Solutions will focus on accelerating cloud migration, AI enablement, and digital skills development across high-impact sectors including fintech, e-commerce, logistics and manufacturing, and media and entertainment.

Sama X Wins License to Launch SpaceX Broadband Connectivity in Bahrain

Sama X, a company of Alghanim Industries Group, one of the largest privately held companies in the Middle East, said it has secured the license from Bahrain's Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) to deliver SpaceX's high-speed Starlink satellite broadband connectivity to the users across the kingdom. With this, Sama X will be bringing to Bahrain the expertise and resources to tackle complex connectivity challenges and translate them into seamless solutions tailored for the region. Serving professionals, enterprises, and public sector organizations, Sama X will enhance high-speed Internet connectivity across all corners of Bahrain, both on land and in national waters, using Starlink's low-Earth-orbit (LEO) constellation to deliver reliable primary or backup connectivity solutions. The company's regional growth builds on its vision to simplify access to digital prosperity through its latest-generation satellite-based connectivity solutions. As the first authorized Starlink global reseller with a unique local presence and flexible business model, SamaX is set to deliver ubiquitous high-speed satellite broadband across the kingdom, both on land and at sea. "Bahrain stands as a beacon of technological progress and innovation within the region, and we are honored to play a role in advancing this legacy," remarked Amit Somani, the CEO of Sama X. "Starlink's revolutionary LEO technology

enables unparalleled connectivity for businesses and communities alike – regardless of location. Whether a startup in Juffair, a school in Riffa, or an oil-rig off the coast, every corner of Bahrain can now benefit from high-speed Internet access tailored to its needs," he stated. The company's regional growth builds on its vision to simplify access to digital prosperity through its latest-generation satellite-based connectivity solutions. Serving professionals, enterprises, and public sector organizations, Sama X will enhance high-speed Internet connectivity across all corners of Bahrain, both on land and in national waters, using Starlink's low-Earth-orbit (LEO) constellation to deliver reliable primary or backup connectivity solutions, he added. According to him, SpaceX's Starlink system is the most advanced satellite internet constellation. "Since 2020, SpaceX has launched more LEO satellites than all other providers combined, creating an infrastructure capable of fiber-like speeds without the limitations of ground-based networks. As an authorized reseller, Sama X offers an end-to-end solution that includes custom consultations, rapid installation, and 24/7 support in English and Arabic," he added. Aligned with Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030, Sama X is committed to helping the kingdom realise its goals of sustainable development and technological leadership. By enabling smarter connectivity solutions, the company aims to facilitate the transformation of Bahrain's digital landscape, making reliable internet a cornerstone of national progress.

Oman's Digital Economy Investments Hit RO 1.2 Billion

Oman's digital economy has attracted RO 1.2 billion in Information Technology investments over the past five years, the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology announced during a press briefing in Muscat. Eng. Said bin Hamoud Al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, revealed that nearly 70 percent of these investments were driven by direct foreign capital, reflecting growing international confidence in Oman's digital transformation agenda. The government's digital transformation program accelerated sharply in 2025. Overall performance rose from 73 percent at the end of 2024 to 94 percent by the close of 2025. The average digital maturity across government entities reached 85 percent, up from 77 percent a year earlier. By the end of 2025, 2,869 priority government services had been simplified, while 2,277 core services and automated permits were fully digitized, compared to 1,700 services at the end of 2024. According to the minister, digital services have reduced in-person visits to government offices by approximately 25 percent. The Ministry launched the Unified National Portal for Government Services, consolidating around 36 digital services under a single platform. It also introduced the "Thiqah" digital identity application to enable secure access to e-services and electronic document signing. The "Tajaob" platform was launched to receive public suggestions, complaints, and reports, strengthening participatory digital governance. To build national digital capacity, the Ministry introduced the Irtiqaa Program, providing specialized training in digital project management, change management, and data analytics. Employment trends highlight deeper structural change. Omanization in the ICT sector rose from 38 percent in 2024 to 45.5 percent in 2025. In technical, specialized, and leadership roles, Omanization increased to 69 percent from 63 percent. The Makeen initiative has trained more than 11,000 graduates and jobseekers since launch, including 2,032 beneficiaries in 2025. It also approved 21 freelance ICT activities, expanding flexible employment pathways. Supporting startups remains a central priority. The Oman Startup Hub now serves as a national digital interface connecting entrepreneurs with investors, incubators, accelerators, and support institutions. To date, more than 200 technology startups, 48 incubators and accelerators, and over RO 127 million in funding have been registered. The Ministry also launched the National Open Data Portal, providing access to official government datasets in open formats to support innovation, research, and private-sector engagement. Plans are underway to establish a Fourth Industrial Revolution Centre focused on artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, robotics, and big data analytics. Oman's global standing in digital development improved significantly in 2025. The Sultanate ranked 41st in the E-Government Development Index, 50th in the Network Readiness Index, and achieved Tier One status in the Global Cybersecurity Index. It advanced in the UN ESCWA E-Government Services Maturity Index, ranked first in the Arab world and 50th globally in the 2025 Postal Development Index, and achieved first place in West Asia and ninth globally for open data in 2024. In semiconductors, the Ministry supported the second Global Semiconductor and Electronic Chips Executive Summit in Oman, bringing together around 140 international CEOs across design, cooling technologies, and equipment manufacturing. Building on this momentum, Oman announced a National Semiconductor Program to integrate public and private sector efforts, focusing on R&D, workforce localization, and the establishment of a Semiconductor Centre of Excellence. A five-year talent roadmap will train Omani professionals in chip design, cooling technologies, and advanced manufacturing in collaboration with international partners. The program aims to position Oman as a neutral regional hub for semiconductor investment, offering regulatory stability, advanced digital infrastructure, and access to global markets. The space sector is also expanding. By 2025, employment exceeded 400 across public and private entities, with 25 companies active in 2024. The sector contributed 0.041 percent to GDP. Oman signed an agreement in 2025 to design, manufacture, and launch a national satellite, with implementation expected in 2026 to establish sovereign space capabilities.

Egypt Signs MoUs with 30 ICT Companies to Advance Digilians initiative

Egypt's Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), in collaboration with the Egyptian Military Academy, has signed Memoranda of Understanding with 30 local and international ICT companies to implement the presidential "Digilians" initiative. The signing ceremony, attended by ICT Minister Amr Talaat and Director of the Egyptian Military Academy Ashraf Salem Zaher, reflects the country's commitment to building a future-ready digital workforce. Digilians is a fully funded national scholarship program designed to train young Egyptians across all governorates in Information and Communication Technologies. Delivered in partnership with leading technology firms, educational institutions, and international universities, the program offers multiple academic tracks in software development, artificial intelligence, data science, networks, infrastructure, cybersecurity, embedded systems, electronic systems, and digital arts. Participants can choose from a four-month Intensive Diploma, a nine-month Specialized Diploma, a 12-month Professional Master's, or a 24-month Master of Science pathway, enabling learners to progress based on ambition and capability. The MoUs were signed by Vice ICT Minister for Infrastructure and Digital Transformation Raafat Hindy alongside representatives from the 30 partner organizations, including EMC Egypt (Dell), Fortinet, Google, Huawei Egypt, IBM Egypt, Microsoft, Palo Alto Networks, Vodafone Egypt, Brightskies, and Cloudflare. These companies will provide training content, certification vouchers, project supervision, technical mentoring, and field placements. They will also host workshops, mentor hackathons, participate in job fairs, and connect graduates to employment opportunities across their networks. Minister Talaat conveyed a message from President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, underscoring that Digilians aims to create a new generation of highly skilled ICT professionals capable of driving innovation and strengthening Egypt's global standing in technology. He stressed that the program goes beyond technical training, equipping participants with soft skills, language proficiency, and real-world workplace exposure to compete in an increasingly digital global economy. Director Zaher affirmed the Egyptian Military Academy's commitment to providing the resources required to deliver Digilians and similar programs, in line with presidential directives. The initiative aligns with Egypt's Digital Egypt strategy, combining academic rigor with industry immersion to build a competitive and sustainable digital workforce. By empowering youth with advanced skills and practical experience, Digilians is positioned to accelerate national digital transformation and support the growth of Egypt's ICT sector.

Pakistan's Telecom Sector Hits 200 Million Subscribers

Pakistan's telecom sector crossed major growth milestones during FY2024–25, with total subscribers surpassing 200 million and sector revenues exceeding Rs1 trillion, according to the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Annual Report 2024–25. The report shows broadband connections crossed 150 million, while telecom coverage expanded beyond 92 percent nationwide. Broadband penetration exceeded 60 percent, reflecting continued digital adoption across both urban centers and underserved regions. Financial performance strengthened during the year, with sector revenues rising 12 percent year-on-year to over Rs1 trillion. Contributions to the national exchequer increased to Rs402 billion in 2025, up from Rs336 billion in 2024. Sector-wide investments also grew by 9 percent to $838 million. Telecom infrastructure expansion drove sharp growth in data usage, which reached 27,727 petabytes in 2025. Around 95 percent of cellular networks are now 4G-enabled, supported by 17.21 Tbps of international bandwidth. Pakistan is further enhancing global connectivity through the addition of four new high-capacity submarine cable systems. PTA facilitated multiple connectivity initiatives across Pakistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan, including the National Roaming initiative aimed at improving coverage in remote and commercially less viable areas. The report highlights strong progress in local manufacturing, with over 95 percent of mobile devices now produced locally, including 68 percent smartphones, supporting import substitution and domestic industry growth. Pakistan's cybersecurity posture also improved during the year, with the National Telecom Security Operations Center addressing cyber threats and contributing to a 13 percent reduction in consumer complaints. PTA said its ongoing priorities include 5G readiness, enhanced cybersecurity frameworks, and building a resilient, future-ready digital economy.

Egypt Scales Digital Training with National Telecom Institute

Egypt's National Telecommunication Institute (NTI), operating under the strategic direction of the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, closed 2025 having reached 49,310 beneficiaries through nationwide digital skills and workforce programs. Training was delivered across NTI's two main Cairo campuses and an expanded national network of more than 24 Digital Creativity Centers (Creativa). The opening of the Digital Creation Center in Al-Maraa in the new administrative capital further extended access beyond major urban hubs. Employment-linked tracks defined the year. The Digital Youth of Egypt | Ready for Employment program trained 1,742 participants, achieving an employment rate exceeding 87% through partnerships with more than 85 local and international companies. Complementary pathways such as Career Launch and Job-Tech delivered 100% employment outcomes for participants. Through the Digital Youth Creativity Centers – Free Work Initiative, 6,551 interns were trained, with over 73% securing freelance work or completing real-world projects. Technical depth and national scale remained central. NTI's Cyber Security Academy trained more than 5,000 participants across 15 governorates. The Summer Internship Program graduated over 10,000 students, while the Capacity Up initiative equipped 2,476 new trainees with market-aligned skills. International partnerships with AWS, Cisco, IBM, Huawei, Red Hat, VMware, Fortinet, and Avaya enabled global accreditation and industry-ready training across cybersecurity, AI, cloud, and enterprise technologies. Government digital transformation was a core pillar. Nearly 10,000 public-sector employees were trained in 2025, including 9,354 under the Digital Leadership Program. A further 7,262 AI Ambassadors were trained to promote responsible AI adoption across institutions. Academically, NTI accredited six diploma specializations in Networks, Cybersecurity, Artificial Intelligence, and Data Science, enrolling 487 interns in diploma and master's programs under the Digital Pioneers Initiative. Its infrastructure spanning fiber, mobile labs, cloud facilities, and applied research supported national telecom standards and delivered 2,600 printed electronic circuit panels for student and industry use.

MoU Signed to Enhance Digital Transformation Projects in Oman

The National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Future Cities, a subsidiary of Omantel Group, to strengthen cooperation in advanced technical fields supporting digital transformation projects in the Sultanate of Oman. The agreement focuses on collaboration in data cleaning and processing to ensure high-quality datasets, as well as the development of solutions based on artificial intelligence technologies. The MoU was signed by Dr. Khalifa Abdullah Al Barwani, Chief Executive Officer of NCSI, and Eng. Abdullah Rashid Al Badi, Chief Executive Officer of Future Cities. Dr. Al Barwani said the agreement reflects NCSI's efforts to expand partnerships with national entities in the areas of AI and data quality improvement. He noted that the collaboration will enable the center to adopt innovative solutions for developing and analyzing statistical data, enhancing its ability to provide accurate and reliable indicators to support decision-making. Eng. Al Badi stated that the MoU represents an important step in expanding Future Cities' role as a technology partner for government institutions. He explained that the partnership will leverage the company's expertise in data cleaning and Internet of Things technologies to strengthen Oman's national data ecosystem. He added that combining capabilities from both organizations will support the development of smart solutions that improve government service efficiency and advance smart city initiatives. The agreement aligns with national efforts to accelerate digital transformation and leverage future technologies, supporting Oman's readiness in big data, artificial intelligence, and smart city applications.

New 450MHz Network to Boost Industrial Connectivity in Saudi Arabia

Aramco Digital, the technology subsidiary of Saudi Aramco, is preparing to launch the Kingdom's national industrial communications network operating in the 450MHz band. The network is designed to deliver secure and highly reliable connectivity for industries that depend on continuous operations and resilient communications across critical assets and facilities. As part of the rollout, Aramco Digital will introduce a portfolio of 450MHz-based industrial digital solutions, including sector-specific connectivity packages and a new generation of smart radios built for demanding industrial environments. These smart radios combine rugged, industrial-grade design with advanced capabilities such as AI, enhanced sensing, extended battery life through improved energy efficiency, and real-time data processing at the device level. The network will support a wide range of industrial IoT use cases, including asset condition and performance monitoring, fleet and equipment tracking, air quality and environmental sensing, smart video surveillance, metering, lighting and infrastructure control, and industrial mobility solutions. According to Aramco Digital, these capabilities will improve operational transparency, enable automation, and drive efficiency across both industrial and service sectors. The launch follows regulatory milestones achieved in 2024, when the Saudi Arabian Communications, Space & Technology Commission granted Aramco Digital a Specialized Radio Network License in the 450MHz band, followed by approval to provide specialized wireless telecommunications services.

Pakistan Ranks Among Region's Most Affordable Mobile Data Markets

Pakistan is among the region's most affordable mobile data markets, with prices starting at just $0.12 per gigabyte and a 2GB mobile broadband basket priced at $1.02, according to an official document cited by Wealth Pakistan. A Broadband Deals (UK) survey places Pakistan and Cambodia jointly among the world's 10 cheapest mobile data markets, ahead of India at $0.16 per gigabyte. Data from the International Telecommunication Union further confirms Pakistan's position, showing its 2GB mobile broadband basket as the lowest among several regional peers, including Bangladesh, Uzbekistan, India, Bhutan, and Nepal. Despite low consumer prices, Pakistan's telecom sector continues to face structural financial challenges. The country records one of the lowest Average Revenue Per User (ARPU) figures in the region, standing at $1.12 in the first quarter of 2025, compared to $15.84 in Singapore, $14.67 in the Maldives, and $9.14 in Malaysia. This highlights a significant gap between affordability for consumers and financial sustainability for operators. The document notes that the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has the mandate to designate operators with Significant Market Power (SMP) and regulate their tariffs. Jazz has been classified as the SMP operator in the retail mobile market and must seek prior PTA approval for tariff changes under the Mobile Tariff Regulations 2025. Other operators, including Telenor, Ufone, and Zong, can revise tariffs without prior approval, although PTA retains the authority to intervene if consumer interests are affected. PTA also manages a consumer complaint system through an online portal and mobile application, enabling users to lodge complaints, request refunds, and seek regulatory action. The authority monitors published tariffs against approved rates to ensure transparency and compliance. Rising macroeconomic pressures have significantly increased operating costs for mobile operators. Between March 2021 and May 2024, fuel prices rose by 158%, inflation increased by 83%, the policy rate surged by 214%, and the Pakistani rupee depreciated by 44% against the US dollar. These factors have driven higher financing and operational expenses, contributing to tariff adjustments across the sector. Industry data from 2020 to 2024 shows average annual revenue growth of 9% for the mobile sector, compared to average annual inflation of 17%, indicating that revenues have not kept pace with rising costs. Over the five-year period, revenue growth was recorded at 11% for Jazz, 3% for Telenor, 12% for Zong, and 11% for Ufone, underscoring continued margin pressure across the industry.

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COORDINATION IN SPACE

The Geopolitics of Space Traffic and the Expanding Digital Economy

Whenever executives and policymakers discuss the future of the digital economy, the conversation naturally gravitates toward terrestrial infrastructure. As digital transformation strategies mature across the SA-ME-NA region and globally, policymakers and industry leaders are focusing on strengthening terrestrial infrastructure that powers national competitiveness.
We talk endlessly about fiber-optic backbones, advanced 5G mobile networks, AI data centers, sovereign cloud platforms, and edge computing nodes, but there is a massive blind spot in this conversation. A critical infrastructure layer operates beyond terrestrial boundaries: Satellites!

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As our reliance on space-based services increases, orbital sustainability must be understood not as a peripheral technical matter, but as a core component of long-term economic resilience. If we do not urgently solve the problem of how we coordinate traffic in space, the foundation of our modern digital economy is at severe risk.

The New Reality of Space: Crowded, Fast, and Dangerous
To understand the stakes, we first need to understand the physics and scale of the problem.

The past decade has seen a fundamental shift in space activity. The commercialization of launch services, advances in small satellite manufacturing, and growing participation by governments and private-sector companies have accelerated satellite deployment rates. Low Earth orbit (LEO), in particular, has become a focal point for broadband constellations, Earth observation networks, IoT platforms, and experimental integration of non-terrestrial networks.

Araz Feyzi
Co-Founder & Chief Technology Officer, Kayhan Space
Chair of the Space Traffic Coordination working group at the World Space Sustainability Association (WSSA)

To understand the sheer scale of this growth, consider the numbers: from the dawn of the Space Age in 1957 until 2014, humanity launched roughly 2,500 active satellites into orbit. In just the last decade, that figure has exploded, with over 10,000 new satellites deployed into LEO. And this is only the beginning. Recent regulatory applications filed with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) propose launching hundreds of thousands, and cumulatively over one million, additional satellites as commercial giants and state-backed entities race to secure orbital real estate.

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Today, more than 10,000 active satellites share this orbital highway with thousands of decommissioned satellites and millions of pieces of space debris. In LEO, satellites travel at more than 7 kilometers per second! At these speeds, even small debris fragments can pose operational hazards; a collision with a paint fleck or a stray bolt carries the kinetic energy of a bomb.

But the danger of a crash goes far beyond the loss of a single multi-million-dollar asset. A major impact risks triggering the "Kessler Syndrome," a catastrophic, runaway chain reaction where the debris from one collision destroys other satellites, spawning thousands of new high-speed fragments that hit even more targets. If we cross this tipping point, this cascading effect could render entire bands of low Earth orbit completely unusable for generations, crippling the space-based infrastructure our modern world relies on.

Because of this unprecedented density, conjunction events, defined as close approaches between objects in space, have become more frequent as density increases. To put this into perspective: our Satcat platform monitors an average of more than 150,000 conjunction events over a three-day period.

The "Who Moves?" Dilemma

When a piece of debris is hurtling toward an active satellite, the solution is relatively straightforward: satellite operators must routinely evaluate conjunction alerts and, when necessary, conduct collision-avoidance maneuvers.

But what happens when two active satellites, owned by two different operators, are on a collision course? Unlike commercial aviation, which relies on centralized air traffic control and strict right-of-way rules, space operates without a global traffic cop. When two active satellites are on a collision path, both operators receive a warning, and often from separate sources. This creates a highly dangerous "Who moves?" dilemma.

If both operators decide to move without talking to one another, they might inadvertently maneuver their satellites into the exact same new trajectory. By blindly trying to avoid a collision, they could actually cause one. In high-density orbital shells, coordination efficiency becomes as important as tracking capability. Clear coordination mechanisms remove the guesswork from maneuver planning. They also stop operators from making unnecessary or mirrored moves that inadvertently increase the risk of collisions.

The Geopolitical Divide: East vs. West in Orbit

It is difficult enough to coordinate avoidance maneuvers between two cooperative commercial companies operating in different time zones and using different software systems. But the reality of space today is far more complicated. What happens when a high-risk conjunction involves a Western commercial satellite and an asset operated by China or Russia?

Currently, communication channels between these geopolitical blocs are practically non-existent. Global approaches to orbital coordination remain heterogeneous. National regulatory frameworks differ in debris mitigation standards, post-mission disposal requirements, maneuver transparency expectations, and data-sharing practices.

> *Orbital congestion is directly threatening the bottom line of the space economy. The economic implications of orbital congestion are increasingly visible across both commercial and sovereign space programs. As constellation density increases, operators must account for more frequent collision-avoidance maneuvers, more service disruptions, greater fuel allocation for risk mitigation, and more complex constellation modeling.*

When an American satellite and a Chinese or Russian satellite are hurtling toward each other at a combined relative speed of 14 kilometers per second, operators do not have time to navigate diplomatic red tape. If they maneuver blindly due to mutual distrust, the results could be catastrophic.

This lack of communication isn't just an operational headache; it is a global security threat. A collision under these circumstances wouldn't just create a dangerous cloud of debris. In today's tense geopolitical climate, an accidental collision involving a state-backed satellite could easily be misinterpreted as a deliberate anti-satellite (ASAT) attack, sparking a rapid escalation of terrestrial conflicts.

The Economic Imperative for Investors and Executives

Satellite systems support an expanding range of digital services critical to economic development across the SAME-NA region, including rural and remote broadband connectivity, maritime and aviation navigation, energy-sector timing synchronization, climate monitoring and

environmental analytics, disaster-response coordination, smart-infrastructure monitoring, and secure governmental communications.

Orbital congestion is directly threatening the bottom line of the space economy. The economic implications of orbital congestion are increasingly visible across both commercial and sovereign space programs. As constellation density increases, operators must account for more frequent collision-avoidance maneuvers, more service disruptions, greater fuel allocation for risk mitigation, and more complex constellation modeling. In heavily used orbital shells, such as Sun-synchronous orbits, maneuver activity directly affects mission economics.

> *In today's highly dense operating environment, tracking alone does not sufficiently mitigate risk. Knowing that two objects are hurtling toward each other is useless if operators lack automated tools to prevent the crash collaboratively.*

Every time a satellite is forced to move, it burns precious fuel and halts its vital activities to protect the satellite. Increased avoidance activity can also shorten operational lifetimes and accelerate satellite replenishment cycles. These dynamics influence capital expenditure planning, constellation scaling strategies, and long-term infrastructure design. Furthermore, for commercially insured operators, rising collision exposure may influence underwriting assessments and premium structures.

Put simply: without a functional global space traffic coordination system, the unit economics of space-based services will begin to break down.

The Solution: Automated, Neutral Coordination

Historically, the space industry has relied on Space Situational Awareness (SSA), which tracks and catalogs orbital objects using global networks of ground and space-based radars, telescopes, and other sensors. While this observational capability remains a foundational tool for understanding where satellites and debris are traveling at any given moment, it functions much like a radar screen without an air traffic controller. In today's highly dense operating environment, tracking alone does not sufficiently mitigate risk. Knowing that two objects are hurtling toward each other is useless if operators lack automated tools to prevent the crash collaboratively.

We must urgently move from passive observation of SSA to true Space Traffic Coordination (STC). To prevent space from becoming an unnavigable minefield, we must implement three structural shifts:

- Machine-to-Machine Coordination: Human operators sending emails across the globe cannot keep up with orbital speeds. We need interoperable data standards and communication practices that allow satellite systems to coordinate maneuvers autonomously.
- Embracing AI and Automation: As space gets more crowded, automation is critical to managing the load. AI is now helping operators sift through massive volumes of
- close-approach warnings by instantly prioritizing risks and predicting traffic patterns. Platforms like Kayhan Space's Satcat are already doing this, using AI to detect maneuvers and deliver real-time alerts and clear action plans directly to the operators flying the satellites.
- Establishing Neutral "Rules of the Road": Geopolitical rivals may not agree on terrestrial politics, but neither side wants their multimillion-dollar assets destroyed, orbital shells rendered unusable, or their national reputations tarnished. We need neutral forums, a sort of "Switzerland of space data," to establish baseline rules for maneuver intent and transparency. Cross-regional dialogue platforms and regulatory-level technical working groups support intergovernmental coordination without requiring political convergence.

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What to Take Forward

Low Earth orbit, much like high-value spectrum allocations or critical subsea cable corridors, must increasingly be regarded as a finite strategic resource. Its long-term utility depends not only on technological capability, but also on disciplined stewardship.

As direct-to-device satellite connectivity and non-terrestrial networks become embedded in national connectivity architectures, decisions made in orbit will dictate telecommunications resilience and ground infrastructure security.

We must apply the same disciplined approach used in spectrum management and terrestrial infrastructure governance to our orbital environments. By advancing transparent maneuver coordination frameworks that reduce operational friction, we can ensure that space remains stable, predictable, and economically productive. In doing so, space will continue to function not merely as an enabling domain, but as a sustainably governed foundation of the expanding digital economy.

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SATELLITE NEWS

Es'hailSat Announces Strategic Partnership with Telesat to Bring Next Generation LEO Connectivity

Es'hailSat, the Qatar Satellite Company, yesterday announced that it has entered into a strategic partnership framework with Telesat, a leading global satellite operator based in Canada, to cooperate on the future delivery of low earth orbit (LEO) satellite connectivity services in Qatar and across key international markets. The partnership reflects Es'hailSat's ongoing commitment to diversify and enhance its satellite communications portfolio, ensuring customers benefit from high performance, resilient, and scalable connectivity solutions. Through this collaboration, Es'hailSat and Telesat aim to explore joint opportunities across multiple sectors, supporting government missions, enterprise transformation initiatives, and mobility applications. Speaking on the announcement, Ali Ahmed Al Kuwari, President and Chief Executive Officer of Es'hailSat, said, "Es'hailSat continues to advance Qatar's position as a regional leader in satellite communications. Our strategic engagement with Telesat supports our mission to bring innovative, high performance connectivity solutions to our customers while expanding our international partnerships. We look forward to working together to evaluate and demonstrate next generation LEO services that complement our existing satellite and teleport infrastructure." Telesat's LEO network, currently in production, is designed to deliver high throughput, low latency connectivity to a broad range of markets. Through this strategic alignment, the two companies will collaborate on service validation activities, market development initiatives, and the exploration of local infrastructure integration in Qatar to support future service delivery. "We are honored that Es'hailSat has selected the advanced Telesat Lightspeed network to complement and expand their connectivity offerings," stated Dan Goldberg, Telesat's President and CEO. "Es'hailSat is a leading regional satellite operator and we look forward to our continued collaboration in the fast-growing market for high throughput, secure and resilient broadband connectivity." This agreement underscores the significant role of Es'hailSat in remaining committed to Qatar's future satellite, space and telecommunications industry development, investing in global partnerships and strengthening national capabilities to enhance Qatar's long-term resilience across various communications technologies.

Starlink Launches Satellite Internet Service in Tajikistan

Satellite internet provider Starlink, operated by SpaceX, has officially launched operations in Tajikistan, as it was announced on Feb. 5 on the company's X page. The expansion represents another step in the company's growing footprint across Central Asia and the broader CIS region. Starlink is already operational in Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Moldova, and several other countries, providing broadband access to remote and underserved areas. Globally, Starlink now serves more than 100 countries, including North and South America, most of Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and parts of Africa and Asia, reflecting the rapid growth of satellite-based connectivity worldwide.

Almadar Mobile Launches Libya's First 5G Service in Tripoli

Libya's second-largest state-owned mobile operator, Almadar Aljadid, has officially launched the country's first 5G service, becoming the first national telecom operator to introduce fifth-generation mobile technology in Libya. The announcement was made on January 27, marking a significant milestone in the country's telecommunications sector. Almadar said the new 5G service will deliver ultra-fast internet speeds, low latency, and enhanced responsiveness, offering users a significantly improved digital experience. The initial phase of the rollout is focused on Tripoli, with plans to extend coverage across the rest of the country in the near future. The company described the launch as a qualitative leap for Libya's digital infrastructure, noting that its 5G packages are competitively priced in line with neighboring markets. Almadar emphasized that the service is designed to meet rising user expectations and support advanced digital applications. According to the operator, 5G will play a critical role in Libya's digital transformation, enabling telemedicine in healthcare, smart solutions in education, and broader economic growth through innovation and entrepreneurship. Almadar said the rollout reflects its commitment to modernizing national digital infrastructure and aligning Libya's telecom sector with global developments. However, initial reports indicate that 5G availability in Tripoli is currently limited to select central areas, with wider access expected as the rollout progresses.

NCC Signals Universal Service Fund to Back Satellite Broadband For 23m Offline Nigerians

Nigeria's telecoms regulator has signaled plans to deploy part its Universal Service Provision Fund (USPF) to support satellite broadband operators in connecting an estimated 23 million Nigerians who remain offline, as the country intensifies efforts to close persistent gaps in rural and hard-to-reach areas. The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) disclosed the strategy during the Nigerian Communications Commission's virtual presentation session for the Q4 2025 Industry Performance Reports, noting that satellite technologies, including Low Earth Orbit (LEO) systems are increasingly central to achieving nationwide connectivity where traditional mobile networks face economic, geographic and security constraints. Senior NCC officials told BusinessDay that the Commission will use part of the fund to subsidize access in locations considered commercially unviable, ensuring that satellite services remain affordable for rural and underserved communities rather than concentrated in urban markets. "We encourage satellite operators to focus on areas where market forces alone cannot deliver affordable services," the commission said, noting that incentives from the USPF would be tied to coverage in unserved and underserved locations. The intervention comes as Nigeria grapples with the limitations of terrestrial broadband expansion. While 4G and 5G deployments continue to grow, officials said the physics of spectrum, particularly mid-band frequencies used for 5G, means coverage footprints remain smaller and rollout costs higher outside dense urban centers. Satellite broadband, especially LEO systems, offers a complementary solution by enabling coverage across remote communities, highways and difficult terrain without the need for extensive ground infrastructure. The NCC recently issued a landing permit to Amazon's Project Kuiper and confirmed ongoing engagements with other satellite providers, including consultations on Direct-to-Device (D2D) services that could allow mobile phones to connect directly to satellites in areas without terrestrial coverage. According to the regulator, consultations are focused on ensuring efficient spectrum use, preventing market distortion, and determining whether certain satellite services should prioritize rural or nationwide deployment. The USPF is a federal government initiative established under the Nigerian Communications Act (NCA) No. 19 of 2003 and administered by the NCC to promote universal access to information and communication technologies.

Oman to Get Dedicated MicroGEO Satellite by 2027

Oman's MB Group has signed a strategic agreement with US satellite company Astranis to deliver the Sultanate of Oman's first dedicated MicroGEO communications satellite, contracted under Astranis' Block 3 launch with SpaceX later this year, with services expected to commence by early 2027. The deal is part of a wider $200 million MB Group investment package aligned with Oman Vision 2040 that includes ground stations and supporting infrastructure to provide what the partners describe as sovereign, secure connectivity for government, enterprises and communities. The agreement was announced on January 26 in statements issued from San Francisco and Muscat, framing the project as an expansion of satellite broadband capacity across key Middle East markets, with Oman positioned as the anchor for a dedicated national asset rather than shared regional capacity. At the signing ceremony, Mahfouz Al Shaikh, Executive Vice-President, said the agreement between MBCTLC, a subsidiary of the Mohammed Al Barwani Group, and Astranis marked "a strategic step" in building Oman's satellite communications ecosystem and strengthening national digital infrastructure. The event was held under the auspices of Dr. Ali bin Amer al Shaithani, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology for Communications and Information Technology. Al Shaikh said the initiative is designed with "sovereign safeguards" and would provide secure, dedicated satellite coverage, with services expected to begin by early 2027. He added that the project is intended to enhance reliability through an integrated in-country ground station and distributed backup teleport stations and linked it to wider goals including digital-economy growth, investment attraction and quality job creation. Usama al Barwani, Vice Chairperson of MB LLC, positioned the agreement as part of a diversification drive into advanced technology. MB Group, he said, had been looking for an entry point into communications and AI-linked opportunities, building on its industrial base in oil and gas and mining. He described Astranis as a disruptive player in the space economy and said the group sees strategic value in moving into next-generation connectivity solutions. Astranis co-founder and CEO John Gedmark said the partnership would expand sovereign connectivity in the region, "starting in Oman" and described the agreement as building a digital backbone that can power the economy, connect communities and enable innovation aligned with Oman Vision 2040 objectives. In remarks delivered at the ceremony, Gedmark argued that sovereign, secure communications are increasingly being treated as strategic infrastructure. In a more uncertain global environment, he said, countries are placing greater emphasis on secure connectivity with strong control and resilience, comparable in importance to critical energy and transportation systems. Astranis said it builds small geostationary communications satellites for high-orbit networks and provides dedicated, secure connectivity for enterprise and sovereign customers. MB Group said it operates across more than 20 countries, with businesses spanning energy, mining, marine engineering, aviation, manufacturing, real estate and strategic investments.

Satellite IoT Revenue to top $6B

Research and Markets predicted growing demand for satellite IoT from various industries and design improvements would spur a $4 billion hike in revenue over the next five years. The company pointed to increased demand for services from the logistics, transport, agriculture and environmental monitoring sectors as anticipated drivers of the overall market. Research and Markets also predicted the deployment of smaller satellites to play a part in a hike of total revenue from an expected $2.4 billion in 2025 to $6.4 billion by 2030. It pointed to nano and cube-type satellites as examples, noting these are increasingly being used to boost IoT coverage. Other elements it identified include the rise of AI and related analytics, along with "burgeoning" satellite IoT use by maritime and aviation sectors.

Research and Markets predicted revenue to book a CAGR of 22.3 per cent across its forecast period: the sum this year is tipped to hit $2.8 billion. The details feature in its Satellite IoT Market Global Report 2026, which covers key players including Satelot Iridium Communications, Ligado Networks and Airbus. Service providers are tipped for a growing market opportunity as low-power, long-range IoT communication devices spur demand: Research and Markets singled smart city applications out as a particular area of focus for such units.

Amazon's LEO Unit Deploys Largest Payload Yet, Lifts Satellite Count to 200

Amazon's satellite connectivity arm Leo has launched its largest payload to date, expanding its low-Earth orbit (LEO) constellation to 200 satellites as it ramps up competition with SpaceX's Starlink. In a statement, Amazon said Leo - formerly known as Project Kuiper - completed its first heavy-lift mission, defined as payloads exceeding 20,000kg, aboard Arianespace's Ariane 5 rocket on February 12. The launch took place at Europe's Spaceport in French Guiana. Satellite deployment began around 90 minutes into the mission, with them being released sequentially over a 25-minute window. Arianespace CEO David Cavaillolès said the mission marks the start of a planned series of 18 launches to strengthen Leo's constellation. The first mission has been designated Leo Europe 01 (LE-01). Rajeev Badyal, Vice President of Amazon Leo, described the launch as the company's first of 2026 and its inaugural mission with Arianespace under an 18-launch agreement. He added that the use of heavy-lift vehicles will allow more satellites to be deployed per mission, accelerating the rollout of services to customers.

FCC Clears Amazon Leo to Launch 4,500 More Satellites

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has given Amazon Leo the green light to launch a second tranche of low Earth orbit (LEO) communications satellites. The approval will allow the company to launch 4,504 additional satellites, bringing the burgeoning constellation's full complement to 7,727 devices. Of the newly approved satellites, 3,212 are the more advanced Gen 2 satellites, while 1,292 are Gen 1 satellites aimed at expanding coverage to polar regions, including the northernmost parts of North America and Europe. Under the approval, Amazon Leo must launch half of the approved satellites by February 10, 2032, and the remaining half by February 10, 2035. Amazon Leo (previously known as Amazon's Project Kuiper) has been in development since 2019, aiming to challenge meteoric rise of SpaceX's Starlink. Starlink already has around 9,000 satellites in orbit, and recently secured approval to increase this number to 15,000. As such, Amazon Leo has a lot of catching up to do – a fact made more daunting by its slow deployment rate since it began launching satellites in April last year. Amazon's initial FCC clearance required the company to launch half of its 3,232 Gen 1 satellites by July 30, 2026; however, last month the company filed a request for an extension, citing launch vehicle limitations. Amazon is asking that the deadline be extended to July 2028 or even waived entirely. Amazon Leo has currently launched just 180 of the 1,616 satellites required. Despite this, the company still reportedly aims to begin providing commercial services later this year. In related news, maritime connectivity reseller MTN has announced it will be the first to offer the sector access to Amazon Leo. According to MTN's website, the company's existing partnership with Starlink is 'the core of [the company's] strategy', but it also notes other satellite partners including OneWeb an GEO (geostationary) satellite operators. "But Starlink is only part of the solution. MTN combines LEO networks like Starlink and OneWeb with GEO satellites, wireless, and near-shore RF to deliver a hybrid model that consistently outperforms legacy connectivity."

MTN Agrees to Offer Amazon Leo Satellite Internet for Maritime Connectivity

MTN, a network operator and pioneer in low Earth orbit (LEO) satellite technology adoption, has finalized an agreement to offer Amazon Leo, Amazon's satellite internet, as an authorized reseller for maritime deployment. MTN will initially provide this service across key maritime industries, including commercial shipping, yachting, offshore, and cruise & ferry, among others. Powered by a constellation of thousands of satellites in low Earth orbit, the system will provide lower latency and higher transmission capacity than traditional geostationary satellite solutions, enabling real-time applications, telemetry, remote operations, and hybrid network architectures. In the maritime sector, it will help enable fast onboard Wi-Fi, enhanced crew communications, and efficient vessel operations across global waters, from the North Atlantic to the South Pacific.

Open Cosmos Launches First Satellites for New LEO Constellation

Open Cosmos, the company building satellites to understand and connect the world, has launched the first satellites in its new proprietary low-Earth-orbit (LEO) telecom constellation, just one week after securing high-priority Ka-band spectrum. The two satellites, launched by Rocket Lab from Mahia Peninsula, New Zealand on its Electron rocket for the mission named 'The Cosmos Will See You Now', represent the first activation phase of Open Cosmos' future-ready satellite network – a program designed to deliver scalable, resilient and coordinated space-based services for Europe and the world. Beyond the technical achievement, the launch serves as a powerful proof point for Open Cosmos' constellation readiness. It confirms that the system design, manufacturing processes and operational model are flight-ready – laying the groundwork for the phased roll-out of the wider network in the months ahead. Commenting on the launch, Rafel Jordà Siquier, Founder and CEO of Open Cosmos, said: "This launch is a major milestone for Open Cosmos and a critical step in our mission to provide secure, sovereign connectivity for Europe and the world. Moving from spectrum to satellites in-orbit demonstrates not only the maturity of our system, but our ability to turn strategic ambition into operational capability extremely fast. "These first satellites lay the groundwork for a resilient network designed to support governments, institutions and commercial partners with dependable space infrastructure when it matters most." The first two satellites are the result of a truly pan-European effort, with teams across the UK, Spain, Portugal and Greece contributing to the program. Together, they showcase Open Cosmos' vertically integrated approach – from mission design and satellite production to operations. The satellites will operate under Spain's regulatory framework for satellite registration and operational licensing. Rocket Lab Founder and CEO, Sir Peter Beck, said: "What a great way to start off the year, by welcoming a new customer and launching a mission tailored just for them. We're proud to deliver their payload to orbit and with Rocket Lab's proven track record of consistent quality and 100% mission success in recent years, I'm confident to say they made the right choice. Partnering with Open Cosmos is an exciting opportunity, and we look forward to supporting our European partners in achieving their launch goals."

Algeria Successfully Launches Alsat-3A Satellite, Boosting High-Resolution Geospatial Capabilities

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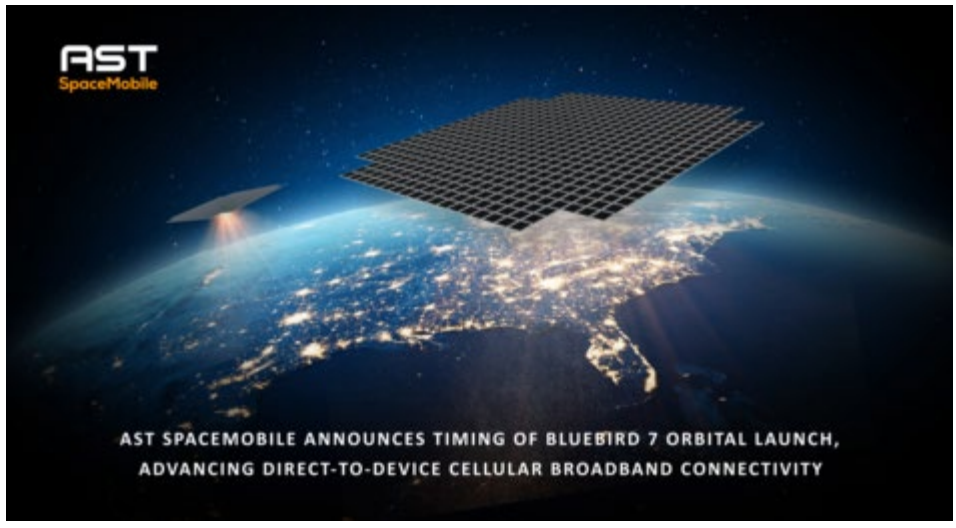
AST Sets BlueBird 7 Launch Schedule

AST SpaceMobile outlined aims to launch between 45 and 60 of its latest generation satellites during 2026, the next step towards a commercial launch of a planned direct-to-device (D2D) connectivity play. The satellite service provider lined up capacity for its BlueBird 7 on Blue Origin's New Glenn-3 launched with the first of several missions set to commence late next month from Launch Complex 36 at the Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in the US. It stated the latest satellite is identical to its BlueBird 6. The key difference is the New Glenn vehicle, which AST SpaceMobile explained holds the potential to deliver up to eight birds per flight in future launches. The target is to average launches every one to two months throughout this year. AST SpaceMobile president Scott Wisniewski said the latest satellites bring the company "closer to delivering a new layer of cellular broadband connectivity". BlueBird 7 sports a near



2,400 square foot array and can provide data rates of up to 120Mb/s. The company highlighted the equipment employs more than 3,800 patented and patent-pending technologies. The company explained its latest birds are compatible "with all major launch vehicles". It has used SpaceX and Indian Space Research Organization rockets in the past.

Beeline Kazakhstan Completes First Satellite Voice Call Via Starlink Direct to Cell in Central Asia

VEON announced that Beeline Kazakhstan, its digital operator in Kazakhstan, has completed a field test and delivered the first-ever voice call through an app, as well as text messages, via Starlink Direct to Cell in Central Asia, successfully merging satellite and terrestrial mobile connectivity for another VEON market. During the test, Beeline Kazakhstan CEO Evgeniy Nastradin and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan Zhaslan Madiyev successfully made a WhatsApp audio call to VEON Group CEO Kaan Terzioglu using a standard smartphone with a Beeline Kazakhstan SIM card that connected via Starlink Direct to Cell satellites. Additionally, they successfully exchanged SMS and WhatsApp messages. Conducted in the Akmolinskaya region of Kazakhstan, the field test confirmed the practical interoperability between Starlink's Direct to Cell satellites and Beeline Kazakhstan's terrestrial mobile network. Using standard 4G smartphones and Beeline Kazakhstan SIM cards, the test team successfully demonstrated that everyday devices can stay connected even where traditional coverage ends. This is a major technological milestone, not only for Kazakhstan, the world's ninth-largest country by land area, but for VEON's broader mission of delivering ubiquitous, resilient, and inclusive connectivity through seamless integration of space-based and ground-based networks. Satellite-enabled mobile connectivity offers a complementary layer of coverage, designed to close remaining gaps in remote and sparsely populated areas while strengthening the resilience of national communications networks. Following this successful test, Beeline Kazakhstan plans to introduce Starlink Direct to Cell connectivity for customers beginning with SMS services in 2026, subject to regulatory approval. Zhaslan Madiyev, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan Today for the first time in Central Asia messages were successfully transmitted via Starlink Direct to Cell satellites using standard 4G smartphones with Beeline Kazakhstan SIM cards. Starlink's Direct to Cell satellites make it possible to stay connected in places where traditional infrastructure is unavailable: in the mountains, the steppe, forests, and across long distances. For our country, given its geography, this is more than just a convenience – it is an important safety measure. As technologies like this are implemented in Kazakhstan, we are creating a more resilient digital environment and ensuring that people can stay connected in any part of the country. This is an example of how international trchnology partnerships directly improve the quality of life of our citizens Evgeniy Nastradin, CEO of Beeline Kazakhstan Beeline Kazakhstan is moving quickly to implement Starlink Direct to Cell satellite connectivity in Kazakhstan to bring this cutting-edge technology to our customers. This is not just an extension of coverage; it is a transformation of what coverage means. By integrating satellite and terrestrial networks, we will enable customers to stay connected anywhere in Kazakhstan using the smartphones they already own.

Orange Côte d'Ivoire Launches Satellite Broadband for Unserved Areas

Orange Côte d'Ivoire has launched "Orange Sat", a new satellite broadband internet service in partnership with Eutelsat that promises to bring data connectivity to rural "white zones" in the country unserved by 4G and fiber. The Orange Sat service, which Orange Côte d'Ivoire unveiled via a LinkedIn post, is available either as an alternative fiber offering for agro-industrial enterprise customers in white zones (as well as "sensitive customers in urban areas"), or as an alternative prepaid 4G home broadband solution for rural low-income customers. The alternative fiber option promises unlimited data at speeds up to 50 Mbps for FCFA25,000 (US$44.50) per month. The alternative prepaid 4G offering (billed as "Wi-Fi village") offers prepaid connectivity passes with data caps – 220MB for one day, 750MB for three days, or 1.5GB for seven days, priced at FCFA200, FCFA500 and FCFA1,000, respectively. Orange Sat is powered by the EUTELSAT KONNECT broadband satellite via a partnership deal signed by Eutelsat and Orange Africa and Middle East in March 2025. Orange Côte d'Ivoire said the new service is part of its digital inclusion initiative to enable access to reliable and high-performance Internet access "to meet the geographical and economic realities of Côte d'Ivoire".

Morocco Renews Satellite Communication Licenses for Nine Operators

Morocco's Government Council has approved nine decree projects renewing satellite communication service licenses for telecom operators, reinforcing satellite connectivity as a pillar of national infrastructure. The renewals were presented by Minister Delegate for Digital Transition and Administrative Reform Amal El Fallah Seghrouchni during the weekly council meeting in Rabat. Government spokesperson Mustapha Baitas confirmed the decisions at a post-session briefing. The approvals cover a broad mix of satellite services and operators. Maroc Telecom and Wana Corporate received renewed licenses for VSAT satellite communication services. Green Development and Planning Company secured dual renewals for both VSAT services and 3RP frequency-sharing radiocommunication networks. Cires Telecom SA renewed its license for 3RP frequency-sharing technology operations. Three companies—Orbcomm Maghreb, Thuraya Maghreb SA, and Al Hourria Telecom—obtained renewals for GMPCS public satellite communication networks. Gulfsat Maghreb was approved to continue operating its VSAT public satellite communication network. All applications received favorable recommendations from the National Telecommunications Regulatory Agency (ANRT) in line with current sector regulations. According to a September 2025 report by the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Morocco ranks among Africa's leading space actors, reflecting steady investment in satellite assets and regulatory frameworks within a rapidly expanding continental space sector. Morocco has launched five satellites, placing it alongside Egypt, South Africa, Nigeria, Algeria, and Angola among Africa's most active space-faring states. These satellites support Earth observation, communications, and scientific missions developed through sustained international cooperation. The Mohammed VI-B satellite, launched in 2018, strengthened national capabilities in environmental monitoring, land management, and strategic planning. Across Africa, governments allocate an estimated $500 million annually to space-related activities. More than 21 African countries now operate space programs, with 18 having launched at least one satellite. The continent has deployed 65 satellites, with projections reaching 120 by 2030. Institutional coordination has expanded through the African Space Agency in Cairo, while the Africa-EU Space Partnership Program, launched in 2025 with €100 million in funding, focuses on climate observation, agriculture, and disaster management. Satellite services now underpin broadcasting, navigation, and rural connectivity across Africa. Morocco's license renewals align with this continental shift, enabling uninterrupted service provision across multiple satellite platforms and embedding space infrastructure into national economic and security frameworks.

Amazon Plans Satellite Internet Launch in South Africa

Amazon is preparing to launch its low-Earth orbit (LEO) satellite service in South Africa later this year, through local licensed partners. This is according to Helen Kyeyune, regulatory and licensing affairs lead for Sub-Saharan Africa at Amazon Leo, who shared some details on the local launch of Amazon's LEO satellite constellation network. Kyeyune was among the stakeholders that presented submissions as part of ICASA's consultation process on the Second Draft National Radio Frequency Plan 2025. The regulator hosted the two-day public hearings. Amazon Leo, formerly known as Project Kuiper, began deploying the first batch of its broadband internet satellite networks last April, taking on SpaceX's Starlink LEO constellation. The company's next mission is set for 12 February, with plans to send another 32 satellites to low-Earth orbit, bringing the total number of Amazon Leo spacecraft launched to date to 212 satellites. In South Africa, said Kyeyune, Amazon Leo is looking to "support ubiquitous connectivity by providing backhaul-type services to internet service providers". She further elaborated that there is an appetite from local companies that are already operational and licensed to partner with Amazon to deliver services. "As a result, we are partnering with local partners to provide the network and service. The local partners will own the customer and will be responsible for that, in a regulatory manner. "However, we do take charge of working with the regulator to ensure things like spectrum and other resources can be negotiated and agreed in a manner that supports the delivery of services by the local partners. "We look forward to launching [Amazon Leo] services later this year in South Africa and we are working hand-in-hand with our local partners to achieve that." Much like rival Starlink, Amazon Leo is deploying a global constellation of low-Earth orbit satellites to deliver broadband connectivity to communities worldwide. Amazon Leo aims to increase global broadband access through a constellation of more than 3 000 satellites in LEO. Its mission is to bring fast, affordable broadband to unserved and underserved communities around the world. SpaceX's Starlink LEO satellite network has nearly 10 000 satellites currently in orbit. The Elon Musk-owned company first launched its satellites in 2019. Amazon Leo began launching its constellations of satellites in low-Earth orbit in April 2025 and has since "made strides" toward further deployment, revealed Kyeyune. Resultantly, the company has continued expansion of its terrestrial infrastructure, which includes gateways and the unveiling of "innovative" customer terminals, she noted. "Our goal is to deliver service to select customers as part of a commercial Beta and to roll out more widely as we launch more satellites and add coverage and capacity to the system." In SA, Amazon Leo has a partnership with Vodacom to extend the reach of 4G/5G services in Europe and Africa. Last year, Amazon Leo received approval from the UK communications regulator, Ofcom, to deliver internet service to customers across the country. Similarly, in Nigeria, the company has now reportedly been granted a seven-year landing permit, allowing Amazon Leo to roll out internet services from its LEO satellite constellation over the West African nation for a seven-year period.

Airtel Africa to Launch Starlink's D2C Service in 14 Markets Next Year

Airtel Africa announced that it has signed a deal with SpaceX to launch Starlink's Direct to Cell (D2C) LEO satellite service across all of its 14 markets across the continent sometime next year. In a statement, Airtel Africa said the service will initially support SMS and select text-messaging apps. The group also noted that launches in each market will be subject to local regulatory approval. Under an earlier agreement with SpaceX in May, Airtel Africa currently offers Starlink's internet services in nine of its 14 markets where Starlink has regulatory clearance to operate: Nigeria, Kenya, Zambia, Malawi, Rwanda, Niger, Chad, Madagascar and the Democratic Republic of Congo. That deal also covers Airtel's other five African markets (Tanzania, Uganda, Gabon, the Republic of the Congo and the Seychelles) where Starlink has applied for licenses. Airtel Africa MD and CEO Sunil Taldar said in a statement that the D2C offering will establish a new standard for service availability across all its markets. "Starlink's Direct-to-Cell technology complements the terrestrial infrastructure and even reaches areas where deploying terrestrial network solutions are challenging," he said. The deal also marks another win for Starlink, who has launched its D2C service in a handful of markets this year, including the US, New Zealand and – as of last month – Ukraine via a deal with Veon-owned telco Kyivstar. Veon's Beeline Kazakhstan confirmed it has completed its D2C field test ahead of a planned commercial service launch in the country next year.

To Enable Communication and Trust Everywhere

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ARTICLE

The New Logic of Digital Security

Alibek Kapsalanov
Product Architect
7Generation

When Risks Become Systemic

The convergence of telecommunications, financial services, public digital platforms, and cloud infrastructure has fundamentally reshaped the security landscape. For telecom operators, networks are no longer merely channels for data transmission. They have become the foundational layer of digital ecosystems, carrying payments, digital identity, government services, and mission-critical business processes.

> *Telecom networks are increasingly used as the initial access layer for financial fraud, identity manipulation, and automated social engineering campaigns.*

At the same time, security architectures in many markets continue to evolve in a fragmented manner - organized around individual industries, services, or technical domains. As a result, risk itself has become converged: systemic, cross-sectoral, and increasingly difficult to contain within a single perimeter.

Industry estimates indicate that more than 70% of major digital fraud incidents today stem from the abuse of legitimate communication channels rather than from technical vulnerabilities. Telecom networks are increasingly used as the initial access layer for financial fraud, identity manipulation, and automated social engineering campaigns. This dynamic is particularly acute in markets with high mobile penetration and rapidly expanding digital services, where the mobile number has effectively become a universal digital identifier.

The Response: Digital Integrity, DPI, and Anti-Fraud as a System

Traditional cybersecurity models, focused on protecting discrete IT perimeters or individual services, are poorly suited to this environment. They are effective at responding to incidents, but far less capable of addressing the behavior of digital systems as an integrated whole.

In converged networks, the core challenge shifts toward ensuring the lawful, predictable, and resilient operation of digital processes across networks, data flows, and transactions - not merely the protection of isolated components. This shift has driven demand for a new class of technologies: Digital Integrity & Safety Tech (DI&ST). Within this domain, software developers such as 7Generation focus on building intellectual and analytical mechanisms that enable systemic control over the integrity of digital ecosystems.
DI&ST does not replace cybersecurity; it represents its logical

Industry benchmarks show that architectures combining DPI with behavioral analytics detect fraudulent or malicious activity 30–50% earlier than solutions relying exclusively on service-level controls. In automated fraud scenarios, such time advantages directly determine the scale of financial and reputational damage.

evolution in mature digital environments - where failures, abuse, and fraud no longer result in isolated technical issues, but in economic, regulatory, and reputational consequences.

The Role of DPI in Converged Network Security

For telecom operators, network observability has become a critical capability. Deep Packet Inspection (DPI) remains one of the few technologies able to provide real-time, large-scale visibility into network behavior.

In converged environments, DPI should not be viewed as network hardware, but as an analytical layer that captures anomalous and illegitimate usage patterns within telecom infrastructure. DPI enables the detection of protocol abuse, signaling anomalies, automated activity, and coordinated fraud scenarios that cannot be reliably identified at the application layer or through post-transactional analysis alone.
Industry benchmarks show that architectures combining DPI with behavioral analytics detect fraudulent or malicious activity 30–50% earlier than solutions relying exclusively on service-level controls. In automated fraud scenarios, such time advantages directly determine the scale of financial and reputational damage.

Critically, DPI creates value not as a standalone product, but as part of a broader software-driven analytical architecture. When combined with telecom metadata, AI-based anomaly detection, and policy enforcement mechanisms, DPI becomes a tool for digital integrity assurance, rather than point-in-time incident response.

SIM Fraud and Social Engineering as Infrastructure-Level Risks

SIM-based fraud illustrates why telecom fraud can no longer be treated as a narrow operational issue. According to GSMA and operator-level research, SIM-swap and related identity manipulation schemes have increased by more than 60% globally over the past three years. This growth is closely linked to the expanding role of mobile numbers as primary access credentials for financial and public digital services.

Social engineering further amplifies this exposure. Estimates suggest that 80–90% of successful digital fraud cases include a social engineering component, most often initiated via voice or messaging channels. These attacks exploit trust in communication infrastructure rather than technical weaknesses, making them relatively resistant to traditional cybersecurity controls.

Anti-Fraud as an Ecosystem of Control Points

In converged networks, anti-fraud can no longer be approached as a single system or isolated function. Effective protection requires an ecosystem of distributed, intelligent control points spanning network access, signaling, service platforms, and transaction layers.

Empirical evidence shows that multi-layer anti-fraud architectures reduce aggregate fraud losses by 25–40% compared to siloed approaches, particularly in environments where telecom networks serve as gateways to financial and government digital services.

Telecom operators themselves are entering a new phase of business model evolution. As the cost of transmitting a gigabyte of traffic continues to decline and competition intensifies, operators increasingly face the risk of becoming undifferentiated "pipes." Yet the fact that all user traffic passes through operator networks creates a unique opportunity to deliver embedded security and anti-fraud protection at the network level, without adding complexity for end users.

Collaboration with providers of specialized software and analytical solutions, such as 7Generation, enables operators to integrate protection and fraud-prevention mechanisms directly into network processes - without owning additional infrastructure. These solutions function as an intellectual layer for risk management and digital integrity, deployed within the operator's existing environment.

As digital threats grow, baseline cybersecurity at the operator network level is gradually becoming a new norm - effectively a commodity layer of service. At the same time, the monetization potential of trusted and protected traffic increasingly exceeds that of traditional tariff-based models. While the value of an "unprotected" gigabyte continues to decline, the value of secure, trusted traffic for consumers, enterprises, and digital ecosystems continues to rise.

Looking Ahead: From Security to Trust

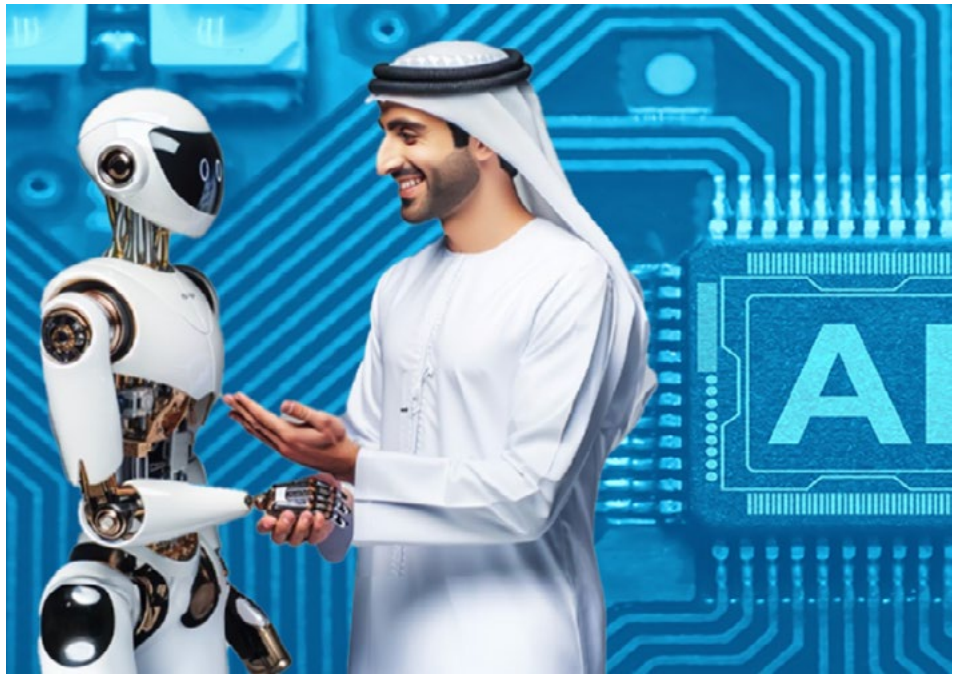
As digital markets mature, integrity and trust evolve from regulatory add-ons into core infrastructure requirements. For telecom operators, security in converged networks increasingly means ensuring that digital ecosystems function as intended - even under conditions of scale, abuse, and deliberate attack.

Digital Integrity & Safety Tech captures this transition: from protecting individual systems to governing the correct behavior of digital ecosystems as a whole. For regulators, operators, and enterprises alike, the implication is clear. The future of security in converged networks will be shaped not by isolated defensive measures, but by integrated, data-driven software models capable of sustaining trust and resilience across interconnected digital environments.

AI GOVERNANCE & SOVEREIGN AI DEVELOPMENT

UAE Emerges as Model for Responsible AI Development Amid Global Tech Race

As nations worldwide accelerate their artificial intelligence capabilities, the United Arab Emirates is distinguishing itself through a governance framework that prioritizes ethical considerations alongside technological advancement. The Gulf nation's approach represents a shift in how countries are thinking about AI development, moving beyond a singular focus on speed and capability toward a model that emphasizes accountability, transparency, and public trust.



Ethics as Competitive Advantage

The UAE has established comprehensive AI governance structures, including the Artificial Intelligence and Advanced Technology Council (AIATC), and integrated its AI initiatives with broader national goals such as the Net Zero 2050 strategy. This integration reflects a belief that sustainable technological progress requires ethical foundations. Industry observers note that the country's regulatory philosophy treats ethics not as a constraint on innovation but as an enabler of it. By building trust into AI systems from the outset, the UAE aims to accelerate adoption while maintaining public confidence. "The next chapter of global leadership will be written by the wisest," according to analysis of the UAE's AI strategy. "Progress without principles is fragile, and speed without ethics is unsustainable."

Trust as Infrastructure

Central to the UAE's approach is what experts describe as engineering trust directly into AI systems rather than treating ethical considerations as an afterthought. This methodology, sometimes referred to as "AI Delivered Right," encompasses three key principles. First, transparent design ensures that AI decisions are explainable and auditable, with clear data provenance. Second, human-centric integration positions AI as augmenting rather than replacing human judgment, particularly in sensitive sectors like healthcare, education, and governance. Third, governance-by-design embeds fairness, accountability, and security measures throughout the development lifecycle. The framework requires that regulatory safeguards span data protection, sustainability considerations, and digital governance, demonstrating that technological progress and ethical integrity can advance together.

Regulatory Agility

The UAE's regulatory environment has been designed for flexibility, allowing frameworks to evolve alongside rapidly changing technology while maintaining core ethical standards. This agility contrasts with approaches in some jurisdictions where regulatory uncertainty has slowed AI deployment. Policymakers in the Emirates have worked to create conditions where well-crafted regulation accelerates rather than impedes innovation. The country's governance philosophy, characterized by foresight and inclusion, aims to establish transparency and human dignity as foundational elements of AI development.

Global Implications

As artificial intelligence reshapes economies and governance structures worldwide, questions of accountability are becoming increasingly central to policy discussions. The shift from focusing solely on what AI can do to considering what AI should do reflects growing recognition that technological capability must be balanced with ethical responsibility. The UAE's evolving ecosystem offers one model for how nations might navigate this balance. By treating credibility as equally important as capability, and by aligning digital advancement with ethical responsibility, the country is positioning itself as a potential benchmark for responsible AI adoption. In the coming decade, experts suggest that demonstrable ethical consistency will become a competitive advantage, with citizens, investors, and regulators demanding greater visibility into AI decision-making processes. Nations and organizations able to provide this transparency may gain significant influence in shaping global AI standards. The UAE's approach suggests that combining technological ambition with ethical governance represents a viable path forward as the world grapples with the transformative potential of artificial intelligence.

MeetKai and GSMA Partner to Build AI for the World's 7,000 Languages

Of the nearly 7,000 languages spoken worldwide, fewer than 20 are considered "high-resource" for artificial intelligence — leaving billions of people effectively locked out of the AI revolution. Now a new partnership between MeetKai and the GSMA aims to change that by developing AI models for low-resource languages that can be deployed at scale through telecommunications infrastructure. MeetKai, a company building what it calls "Sovereign AI" stacks for nations, announced the collaboration with the GSMA, the global industry organization representing mobile network operators. The initiative will focus on creating efficient, culturally aligned language models that telecom networks can actually operate and deliver to communities at scale. The disparity in AI language support isn't just a technical limitation — it's a growing source of digital inequality. When AI systems can only understand and generate content in a handful of dominant languages, entire communities get excluded from essential services, economic opportunities, and participation in the digital economy. That gap also perpetuates bias. AI models trained predominantly on English, Mandarin, and a few other high-resource languages encode the worldviews, cultural assumptions, and knowledge bases of those linguistic communities while systematically underrepresenting or misrepresenting others. "We believe every country and every community should have the ability to shape its AI future," said James Kaplan, CEO of MeetKai. "Collaborating with GSMA connects our model and evaluation capabilities with the world's most powerful distribution layer: telecommunications networks. Together, we aim to deliver practical, culturally aligned AI that can serve people at scale." The partnership's emphasis on telecommunications infrastructure is strategic. In many parts of the world, mobile networks represent the primary — and sometimes only — way people access digital services. By developing AI models optimized for deployment through telecom infrastructure, the initiative aims to reach communities that might never access cloud-based AI services through traditional internet connections. "Mobile networks are particularly well-positioned to help ensure AI is inclusive, locally relevant, and accessible," said Louis Powell, Director of AI Technologies at GSMA. "This collaboration with MeetKai strengthens the GSMA's ability to close the AI Language gap by catalyzing work on language models, evaluation frameworks, and responsible data approaches." The initiative will also develop evaluation benchmarks and data-audit methodologies — critical infrastructure for assessing whether AI models actually work well for specific languages and cultural contexts rather than just technically functioning. As AI becomes embedded in everything from healthcare diagnostics to financial services to government administration, language support determines who can participate. Communities speaking low-resource languages risk being permanently marginalized in an AI-driven economy unless deliberate efforts address the gap. The challenge is partly technical — training high-quality AI models requires substantial datasets, and low-resource languages by definition lack the digital corpora that high-resource languages have accumulated. But it's also economic: there's limited commercial incentive for tech giants to invest in languages with relatively small speaker populations, even if those populations number in the millions. Partnerships like this one attempt to solve both problems by pooling resources and leveraging existing infrastructure. Whether the initiative can deliver at the scale it promises remains to be seen, but it represents one of the more concrete efforts yet to ensure AI development doesn't leave most of the world's linguistic diversity behind. For MeetKai, which positions itself around building national AI infrastructure, the collaboration extends its "Sovereign AI" pitch — the idea that countries and communities should control their own AI capabilities rather than depending entirely on models built by American or Chinese tech giants. Adding linguistic and cultural alignment to that sovereignty argument could resonate with governments and telecom operators looking for alternatives to dominant AI platforms.

MCIT Supports SMEs in Digital Transformation, AI

Qatar's Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), through the Qatar Digital Academy and the SMEs Go Digital Program, has organized a series of awareness workshops in collaboration with Google Cloud to support small and medium enterprises in adopting digital technologies and artificial intelligence. The workshops were held at the Google Cloud Center of Excellence in Qatar Free Zones and featured interactive presentations and hands-on sessions led by Google Cloud experts. The sessions focused on practical AI applications and digital solutions that SMEs can use to enhance products and services, improve productivity, strengthen data management and automate operational processes. Participants were introduced to digital tools and platforms designed to support business expansion and enable data-driven decision-making. The initiative aims to help SMEs improve operational efficiency and competitiveness while preparing them to adopt emerging technologies in an increasingly digital business environment. The workshops form part of a broader series of specialized sessions under the SMEs Go Digital Program, which targets key sectors across Qatar to accelerate digital adoption among national enterprises. The initiative aligns with the objectives of Qatar's Digital Agenda 2030, supporting the development of an innovation-led business ecosystem and strengthening SME readiness for future technological shifts.

ETSI Releases World-Leading Standard for Securing AI

ETSI released its first globally applicable European Standard (EN) for AI cybersecurity, a move addressing the unique protection challenges posed by the technology by establishing baseline specifications. The standards organization stated EN 304 223 covers AI models and systems. It builds on principles established in a prior specification through a set of 13 doctrines and requirements covering secure design, development, deployment, maintenance and end of life phases. Scott Cadzow, chair of ETSI's technical committee for securing AI, said EN 304 223 is "an important step forward in establishing a common, rigorous foundation for securing AI systems". He noted a hike in the use of AI in "critical services and infrastructure" necessitates "clear, practical guidance" on security. ETSI explained EN 304 223 received approval from various National Standards Organizations, giving it a global scope. It identified data poisoning, model obfuscation, indirect prompt injection, and vulnerabilities resulting from complex data management and operational practices as key AI cybersecurity risks. ETSI explained the five phases covered are in sync with globally recognized "AI lifecycle models, ensuring consistency and interoperability with existing standards and guidance". It expects EN 304 223 to "be instrumental for stakeholders throughout the AI supply chain". The specification's scope covers deep neural networks and generative AI: ETSI plans to bolster the standard with a domain-specific arrangement for the latter element with a focus on deep fakes, mis or disinformation, confidentiality risks, copyright and IPR matters.

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WHOLESALE NEWS

Uniti Wholesale Adds 1,100 Miles to its South-Central U.S. Fiber Network to Meet AI Demand

Uniti Wholesale announced a landmark expansion initiative of its dark fiber network across the South-Central United States, anchored by a 20-year customer contract with a total contract value of over $500 million. The deployment adds 1,100 route miles of ultra high capacity fiber and upgrades space and power at over 20 colocation sites to link Tier 1 markets with fast growing AI hubs, creating a robust backbone for the next wave of artificial intelligence and hyperscale data center growth. As AI applications rapidly move from lab environments to large-scale, real-world deployment, the need for low-latency, massively scalable infrastructure has never been more critical. Uniti's investment addresses this head on—interconnecting key AI deployments in Amarillo and Haskell, Texas, plus a previously announced approximately 480-mile fiber route with locations in Muskogee, Okla.; Little Rock, Ark., and Memphis, Tenn. The initiative underscores Uniti's role as a trusted infrastructure partner—delivering scale, resiliency, diversity, and speed for hyperscalers and AI innovators. "We are building the backbone for the future of AI—right here at home," said Kenny Gunderman, Uniti president and CEO. "This expansion gives our customers the resilient, high-capacity infrastructure to scale mission-critical workloads with confidence—today and tomorrow. Anchored by a leading hyperscaler, this initiative is proof that our network is ready for AI at scale." Phase One is scheduled for delivery in January 2026, with a 337 mile fiber build from Tulsa to Little Rock and a 145 mile route connecting Little Rock to Memphis laying the first segments of a broader AI ready network across the region. Subsequent phases of this AI infrastructure will be delivered throughout 2026 and 2027. The build-out is focused on the industry growth—engineered to deliver massive scalable capacity and resilient performance for hyperscalers and AI innovators:

- Massive Capacity Infusion: The addition of 1,100 route miles of high-count fiber to support multi-terabit growth and future-proof network expansion.
- AI Backbone Buildout: New routes will connect Dallas to fast-growing AI data center markets including Memphis, Little Rock, Muskogee, Haskell, and Amarillo.
- Amarillo-Claude Metro Expansion: More than 106 route miles of new, high-count, diverse fiber delivering multiple fiber paths connecting Amarillo to AI campuses in Claude, Texas.
- Expanded Colocation Scale-Up: Space and power upgrades across more than 20 in-line amplification (ILA) colocation sites to accelerate turn-ups and enable rapid capacity augments.

"This is a game-changer for our customers," said Greg Ortyl, Uniti Wholesale executive vice president and president of sales. "We are focused on delivering innovative, reliable, and scalable solutions to meet the dynamic needs of our customers—and we are investing in our infrastructure to scale with the accelerating AI-driven demand reshaping the fiber industry."

Portugal: Telecom Regulator Suggests National 'Roaming' to Overcome Storm Damage

The National Communications Authority (Anacom) recommends that operators implement temporary national roaming, allowing users to use other operators' networks while there are service failures due to bad weather. Anacom announced a series of recommended measures for telecommunications operators, following storms Kristin and Leonardo, also recommending that telecommunications companies communicate the status of networks and services during the disaster via local radio stations, "providing information on the prospect of restoration, indicating, as far as possible, the locations where restoration has already taken place". The entity also encourages the creation of mechanisms to identify and deal with "particular speed difficulties in accessing services by users with special needs" and in situations of particular social vulnerability. "It is recommended that entities owning infrastructure suitable for the installation of electronic communications networks in the affected areas speed up response times and simplify the procedures associated with requests for the installation of cables in ducts and poles under their respective access offers, in order to facilitate the rapid restoration of electronic communications services," reads a statement. Anacom proposes to the government that users of telecommunications services should have the legal right to be compensated when a service interruption lasts more than 24 hours and to cancel their contract at no cost if the interruption lasts more than 15 days. To this end, the authority has submitted a legislative proposal to the government to approve measures in response to the effects of Storm Kristin in these locations, stipulating that, for three months, operators shall not suspend service to end users for non-payment of bills, among other measures.

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TECHNOLOGY NEWS

NGMN Proposes New Framework for Simplifying 5G Networks

The Next Generation Mobile Networks Alliance (NGMN) announced new guidance designed to help Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) simplify 5G network operations, to reduce total cost of ownership, cut operational complexity, and achieve sustainability goals, ultimately enabling more reliable, efficient and innovative services for the benefit of customers. In its latest publication, 'Framework for Network Simplification – An Operator View', NGMN outlines a high level framework that can be used as a reference by MNOs in their journey towards 5G network simplification. The scope ranges from advanced-stage operators that have already deployed a cloud native 5G core with extensive 5G roll out in the RAN, to early-stage operators with networks that are primarily LTE based and looking to roll out 5G NSA. "As mobile networks evolve, MNOs face both growing complexity and new opportunities. To minimize operational costs, enhance efficiency, and unlock new services over 5G, network simplification must be a core pillar of network evolution strategies — across both architecture and operations", stated Laurent Leboucher, Chairman of the NGMN Alliance Board and Orange Group CTO and EVP Networks, and added, "NGMN's latest guidance provides operators with a clear framework to understand where and how simplification can be achieved, and to assess its targeted benefits against domain-specific goals and constraints, enabling informed deployment choices aligned with individual business and regulatory environments." The publication proposes a three-step approach, while examining the key technological and non-technological focus areas relevant for MNOs to evolve towards a simpler, more efficient network, and the challenges they face in realizing these benefits. The first step identifies the key trends in technology evolution that MNOs must harness to introduce simplification in their networks. It identifies Cloud Native, Agentic and Generative AI, the exposure of federated network services and evolution in optical fiber technology as key technological trends driving network simplification. It further identifies the adoption of agile ways of working as a key non-technology enabler that will help MNOs deliver new services at pace. The next step is for MNOs to get insight into the challenges they will face in adopting identified enablers for network simplification. The publication identifies the challenges that NGMN MNOs are facing in radio, core and transport domains. As a third step, NGMN advises that MNOs should prioritize adoption of technology enablers and the domains where they will be applied depending on their context and state of network evolution. The publication identifies three common MNO archetypes based on their 5G-network deployment maturity and presents how each may evaluate the technological enablers and identify the ones which deliver the most benefit via prioritization.

China's 5G Base Stations Top 4.83 Million by End of 2025

China's telecommunications sector maintained steady growth in 2025, with the country surpassing its development goals for 5G and gigabit optical network infrastructure set out in the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-2025), official data showed recently. By the end of 2025, the number of 5G base stations in China reached 4.838 million, according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology. This translates to 34.4 5G base stations per 10,000 people, exceeding the national planning target by 8.4 units. The sector's total business volume, calculated at the previous year's prices, rose 9.1 percent year on year. Telecom business revenue totaled 1.75 trillion yuan (about 250.8 billion U.S. dollars), up 0.7 percent. Notably, emerging businesses such as cloud computing, big data, the Internet of Things (IoT), and data centers accounted for 25.7 percent of the total revenue. In the realm of technological innovation, China's declarations of 5G standard-essential patents accounted for 42 percent of the global total. The country also achieved significant progress in verifying 6G system architecture and other key technologies. In terms of infrastructure, China has achieved gigabit optical network access in every county, as well as 5G coverage in all towns and more than 95 percent of administrative villages. By the end of 2025, 5G-A (5G-Advanced) service coverage extended to more than 330 cities. The total length of the national optical fiber cable network reached 74.99 million km, while the number of data center racks provided by the three major telecom operators

reached 938,000. The user base continued to expand, with mobile phone subscriptions reaching 1.827 billion by the end of 2025, including 1.204 billion 5G subscriptions. Mobile IoT terminal users increased by 8.7 percent to 2.888 billion, with particularly strong growth in the Internet of Vehicles and public service sectors. The ministry also highlighted the deepening integration of digital technology with the real economy. 5G and gigabit optical networks have been applied across 91 major categories of the national economy. The industrial internet now covers all 41 industrial categories.

U.S Fiber Broadband Hits Record 11.8 Million Homes Passed in 2025

The Fiber Broadband Association (FBA) announced its annual Fiber Deployment Survey, performed by RVA Market Research & Consulting (RVA), revealed that 2025 set an all-time record for fiber broadband growth. Fiber broadband deployments reached 11.8 million U.S. homes passed in 2025 alone, totaling 98.3 million FTTH passing when including homes with more than one passing. Canada hit a total of 14.5 million fiber passing – nearly 75% of Canadian households. According to the survey results, the U.S. is well on its way to fiber availability goals, with fiber broadband now passing over 60% of U.S. households and on track to overtake cable and all other technologies as the dominant U.S. delivery platform as early as 2028. Even after this massive progress, 60 million potential first-time fiber passings remain, and 84% of potential second and third passings remain untapped, creating opportunity for overbuilding and competitive fiber deployments. Beyond actual passings, the survey data indicates that average take rates climbed to 46.5% for primary passings, and when a secondary provider enters a fiber market, total FTTH take rate jumps to about 61%, demonstrating that fiber-to-fiber competition actually grows adoption. Beyond consumer broadband, emerging markets will continue to keep fiber demand strong for years. These emerging segments, including data centers, tower and small cells, grid and energy infrastructure, inside-home fiber, quantum, AI, and fiber sensing, are early in market maturity and offer long-term growth potential beyond traditional FTTH. Consequently, investment in fiber broadband continues. Despite challenges with RDOF and BEAD, government investment is still significantly boosting FTTH passings and construction. Additionally, a change in federal tax law will restore 100% bonus depreciation in 2026, likely fueling a 5-15% FTTH Capex increase.

Mike Render, Founder and CEO at RVA

We're at a major inflection point in the U.S. broadband market. Competition among fiber providers has intensified, and the data shows that customer experience is now a top defining factor separating market leaders from the rest. Consumers consistently rate fiber highest across every performance category and that preference is accelerating adoption. Fiber speed, latency, and jitter advantages are also seen in speed tests taken during surveys. As more providers enter the market and expand their networks, we expect this momentum to continue and further solidify fiber as the premier broadband technology in the United States. Deborah Kish, Vice President of Research and Workforce Development at FBA. This year's survey reinforces what we're seeing across the industry: fiber has become the clear technology of choice for both network operators and consumers. Deployment is accelerating, investment remains strong, and fiber now reaches more U.S. households than ever before. At the same time, new markets are expanding the role fiber plays in our digital economy. These trends point to sustained long-term growth and underscore the importance of continued fiber deployment to meet future demand.

Pakistan Tech Sector Races Ahead of Global Emerging Tech Hubs

Pakistan is emerging as one of the most promising "new frontier" tech ecosystems globally, with recent growth second only to the Bay Area, according to a new report by startup intelligence platform Dealroom and global mobility company inDrive. The report, The Rapid Rise of Pakistan Tech, shows that Pakistan's startup enterprise value has grown more than 3.6x since 2020, putting it ahead of the likes of India, New York and London. The report is the first in a new research series examining high-potential tech ecosystems outside traditional global hubs. Pakistan was selected as the inaugural market due

to its strong underlying fundamentals, accelerating digital adoption and growing relevance within inDrive's core operation footprint. It shows that Pakistan has built a strong foundation of more than 170 VC-backed startups with a combined enterprise value exceeding $4 billion, which, despite being smaller overall, is catching the Bay Area and has grown at a faster rate than India and other leading tech hubs since 2020. In fact, among Pakistan's younger startup cohorts the momentum is even stronger – VC-backed companies back since 2015 have grown 11.3x since 2020, which outpaces all major tech hubs, including the Bay Area. This includes two scaleups (over $100m in funding), grocery platform Bazaar and Telenor Microfinance Bank, the latter of which received more than $185 million in investment from Ant Group in 2025. In addition, Pakistan is now home to 13 Colts – companies with revenues between $25m and $100 million. Among its startup landscape, fintech, transportation, marketing and food are the biggest sectors. In 2025, fintech Haball secured a $52 million funding round, while healthtech company MedIQ secured a $6 million round. Pakistani founders are raising money from beyond local sources too, with the United States ($797m) and the UAE ($545m) identified as substantial sources of investor capital. Pakistan's growth is also being driven by several favourable demographics, which include:

- A young population: 59% are aged 15-64, working age in the country
- Growing smartphone adoption: 68% owned a smartphone in 2023-24

Rising digital adoption: 190 million active mobile SIM connections were recorded in early 2025, 75% of the population. However, with internet users estimated at just under 46% of the population, this suggests multiple SIM ownership and uneven internet adoption, leaving further room for growth. More generally, the country's GDP growth rose to 3% in FY2024-25, up from 2.6% the previous year, highlighting a gradual macroeconomic recovery. However, the ecosystem remains significantly underfunded at every stage of growth and has yet to produce a unicorn or $100m-revenue technology company. New Frontier ecosystems are fast-growing, high-potential tech markets outside traditional global hubs, and now attract 11% of global venture capital investment, up from less than 4% fifteen years ago. Pakistan sits firmly within this group as an emerging tech ecosystem with strong fundamentals but still early in its maturity. While the country contributes a small share of total new frontier enterprise value, the report shows rapid growth and clear momentum. Capital scarcity, rather than talent, is the main constraint — creating an opportunity for early, engaged entrants to play a disproportionately large role as the ecosystem develops. As an emerging ecosystem, Pakistan's startup market is at a stage where operators with scale, local presence and market knowledge can have an outsized impact on long-term outcomes.

Malaysia Prepares for a Dual 5G Network as the 5G Market Evolves

Malaysia's early decision to roll out 5G through a shared national network set it apart from most regional markets. Under the Multi-Operator Core Network (MOCN) model, several mobile operators deliver 5G services on a single network run by Digital Nasional Berhad (DNB). The approach helped the country move quickly, delivering wide coverage and strong early speeds. New analysis from Ookla looks at how that model is performing today, as Malaysia prepares to shift toward a Dual Network (DN) structure. The report examines changes in network performance, device adoption, and real-world usage as 5G moves from early rollout to broader use. Malaysia's 5G performance slipped between Q4 2023 and Q3 2025, diverging from trends seen in several neighboring countries. The drop follows a period of strong early results. In Q3 2023, Malaysia ranked third globally for median 5G download speed. By Q4 2023, median 5G download speed stood at 451.79 Mbps. By Q3 2025, that figure had fallen to 242.92 Mbps. Upload speeds declined over the same period, dropping from 49.87 Mbps to 29.52 Mbps. Until early 2025, Malaysia relied on DNB's single wholesale 5G network to serve all operators. The model helped speed up nationwide deployment and reduced duplicate infrastructure. The more recent slowdown appears linked to how the network is evolving. Early rollout focused on dense urban areas, where fewer users shared available capacity. As coverage expanded and more users joined the network, traffic increased across the system. Growing use of data-heavy services, including video streaming and connected devices, has added further strain. With all operators sharing the same radio network, sudden rises in demand affect the entire system at once. Without additional spectrum, this can limit speeds and consistency as usage grows. Markets that operate separate 5G networks may be better placed to manage traffic spikes through divided spectrum and independent capacity planning. South Korea, which has run multiple 5G networks for years, continued to report median download speeds above 528 Mbps, reaching 564.14 Mbps in Q3 2025. Singapore showed steadier performance, with speeds at 349.19 Mbps. Vietnam and Brunei recorded notable gains. Vietnam reached a median 5G download speed of 350.28 Mbps in Q3 2025, while Brunei also trended upward despite some variation. Both remain relatively new 5G markets, where lower subscriber density can support stronger early performance. Even with the decline, Malaysia's 5G speeds remain competitive in the region. In Q3 2025, the country outperformed the Philippines (120.16 Mbps), Japan (124.11 Mbps), and Thailand (169.35 Mbps). Thailand's reliance on lower-band spectrum limits peak speeds compared with markets using more mid-band capacity. Device data points to rapid growth in 5G readiness. GSMA Intelligence estimates that 5G now accounts for close to 40% of consumer mobile connections in Malaysia, with 4G making up most of the rest. Speedtest data shows a clear rise in the share of tests conducted on 5G-capable devices between Q4 2023 and Q3 2025. In Q3 2025, 79.5% of all tests were run on devices that support 5G. Of those, 55.0% were connected to a 5G network, while 24.5% were using non-5G connections.

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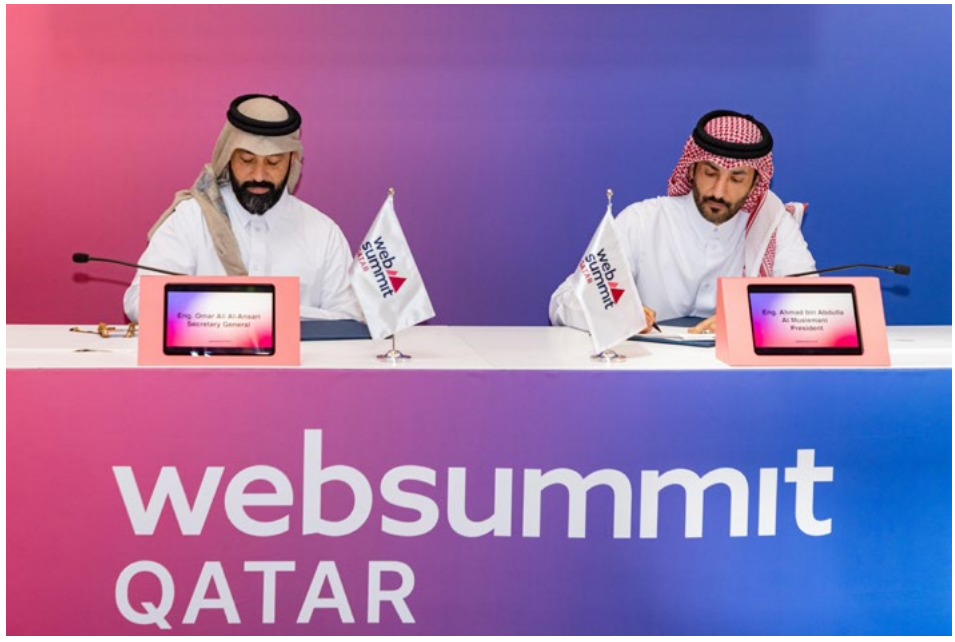
REGULATORY NEWS

CRA and QRDI Council Sign Cooperation Agreement to Advance Digital Innovation



The Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA) and Qatar Research, Development, and Innovation (QRDI) Council signed a cooperation agreement aimed at strengthening collaboration in digital innovation and supporting the adoption of emerging technologies within regulatory and public service environments. The signing ceremony of the agreement took place on the sidelines of Web Summit Qatar 2026, and the agreement was signed by Engineer Ahmad bin Abdulla AlMuslemani, President of the Communications Regulatory Authority, and Engineer Omar Ali Al Ansari, Secretary General of the Qatar Research, Development, and Innovation Council. As part of the cooperation agreement, the two entities announced the launch of a pilot project to deploy a generative artificial intelligence–powered chatbot aimed at enhancing multi-channel consumer engagement and improving the efficiency of regulatory services. The cooperation agreement supports the joint work between the two parties in relation to collaboration on innovation-driven initiatives, including pilot projects and the testing of advanced digital solutions within a regulated environment. The pilot project is being implemented under QRDI Council's Open Innovation framework and focuses on leveraging advanced generative AI technologies to support CRA's consumer-facing services through secure, responsible, and citizen-centric digital solutions. The chatbot will be integrated with CRA's centralized customer relationship management systems to enable unified, real-time engagement across multiple channels, including digital platforms in both Arabic and English. Commenting on the announcement, Engineer Ahmad bin Abdulla AlMuslemani, President of the Communications Regulatory Authority, said: "This cooperation agreement reflects CRA's commitment to advancing digital transformation across its regulatory services, making them more efficient, easier to access, and more responsive to consumers' needs, while ensuring the responsible and secure use of emerging technologies. Through this initiative, CRA is leveraging generative artificial intelligence within a framework that supports service excellence while ensuring compliance with regulatory frameworks, in line with its strategy to build an enabling and trusted regulatory environment that supports the digital economy." "We highly value our cooperation with QRDI Council, whose Open Innovation framework enables the translation of advanced research and innovation into practical solutions that contribute to Qatar National Vision 2030 and the development of a diversified, knowledge-based digital economy," he added. In this context, Engineer Omar Ali Al Ansari, Secretary General of QRDI Council, stated: "This cooperation agreement reflects QRDI Council's commitment to enabling responsible, impact-driven innovation across Qatar's public sector. By working closely with CRA, we are demonstrating how emerging technologies such as generative artificial intelligence can be piloted, tested, and scaled within secure and well-governed environments. Our Open Innovation framework, continues to bridge research, regulation, and real-world application, accelerating digital transformation while ensuring solutions remain citizen-centric, trusted, and aligned with our national vision 2030." The pilot project is expected to have a positive impact on consumers, institutions, and stakeholders across the digital ecosystem. Consumers will benefit from improved access to regulatory services through digital and automated channels, enabling faster, more consistent interactions and responses. At the organizational level, the pilot will support CRA's efforts to enhance operational efficiency, strengthen case management processes, and optimize service delivery. The pilot provides CRA with a valuable opportunity to test and validate generative AI solutions within a regulated and secure environment, supporting responsible innovation and informed scalability. The initiative reflects the importance of institutional collaboration in supporting Qatar's digital transformation agenda and fostering the adoption of innovative, scalable technologies within public sector environments, which contributes to enhancing public trust, improving government performance, and positioning the State of Qatar as a leader in responsible digital government.

Oman: Environment Authority Achieves 100% Digital Transformation

Oman's Environment Authority (EA) has completed a full digital transformation by moving its operations to cloud hosting, marking a major step toward a smart, secure, and sustainable government framework. The shift, carried out under the Government Digital Transformation Program 2021–2025, has improved service efficiency, strengthened cybersecurity readiness, and reduced reliance on traditional data centers, lowering energy consumption and supporting environmental sustainability. As part of the transformation, EA signed contracts to build a core digital services system, a national platform to track radioactive sources and nuclear materials, and an internal system to manage assets and processes. It also launched the National Air Quality Index Platform (Naqi) and upgraded its e-services to improve accessibility and environmental monitoring.

ATU Launches Satellite Internet Training for African Regulators Amid Sector Expansion

The African Telecommunications Union (ATU), in collaboration with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), and Amazon, has launched an online capacity-building program on low Earth orbit satellite internet services for policymakers, regulators, and technical experts across its Member States. The initiative arrives at a critical juncture as low Earth orbit satellite constellations evolve from niche services into mainstream connectivity solutions, carrying significant implications for broadband expansion, emergency communications, and network resilience, especially in regions where traditional infrastructure deployment remains challenging or commercially unviable. This transformation brings heightened governance responsibilities, demanding greater regulatory clarity, effective spectrum coordination, robust interference management, and responsible stewardship of orbital resources. The training program opened with an emphasis on confident policy-making and rigorous implementation. ATU Secretary General John Omo warned that as satellite internet services expand rapidly, regulatory inaction poses genuine risks to market stability and consumer protection. "The opportunity is substantial, and that is precisely why the duty of governance becomes heavier, not lighter," he stated, emphasizing that national frameworks must protect consumers, ensure equitable spectrum access, and establish stable conditions for investment. The program aims to enhance Member States' capability to oversee satellite internet services by bolstering decision-making processes and building deeper technical expertise in coordination and interference management. It also situates these discussions within the context of emerging space safety and sustainability considerations, acknowledging that regulatory legitimacy and service quality will increasingly depend on how effectively networks operate alongside one another and how responsibly orbital assets are managed. During the program's opening, partners underscored that the regulatory dialogue has evolved from questioning the relevance of satellite internet to determining how it should be governed. "The timing and focus of this workshop are especially pertinent. As you all know, non-geostationary constellations are reshaping the global connectivity landscape, offering new possibilities to serve underserved communities," noted Mario Manievicz, Director of the ITU Radiocommunication Bureau. Speakers also highlighted that the magnitude of these constellations introduces fresh obligations. Aarti Holla Maini, Director of UNOOSA, observed that "large constellations change how we share space. The questions raised by them are confronting regulators as they decide how and under which conditions these systems should operate in outer space." From a practical standpoint, Gonzalo de Dios, Head of Global Licensing and Regulatory Affairs at Amazon, identified spectrum management, licensing frameworks, and regional cooperation through continental mechanisms as key areas where coordination facilitates efficient service delivery, aligns technical standards, and supports national security objectives. To anchor discussions in current realities and market trajectories, participants are drawing on ATU's report on Developments in Satellite Communications,

which documents that the satellite communications sector is experiencing exceptional innovation, propelled by multi-orbit architectures, direct-to-device connectivity, and the integration of artificial intelligence. The report highlights that direct-to-device capability, advancing through the evolving 3GPP non-terrestrial network framework, is broadening the scope for satellite connectivity that supplements mobile coverage and addresses persistent gaps in underserved regions. It also positions this development against the sobering reality that approximately 2.6 billion people worldwide remain without internet access, underscoring the developmental significance of new connectivity approaches that extend beyond conventional infrastructure boundaries. ATU intends to leverage the program's outcomes to assist Member States in strengthening their national regulatory frameworks and fostering regional alignment on satellite internet governance, particularly in domains where unified positions enhance Africa's voice in global technical and regulatory forums.

CRC-CRT Alliance Deepens Mexico-Colombia Telecom Cooperation

Mexico and Colombia are moving to formalize deeper regulatory coordination in telecommunications, linking a new bilateral cooperation agenda with Mexico's ongoing push to redesign spectrum policy for industrial connectivity and 5G deployment. According to a recent press release from Colombia's Communications Regulation Commission (CRC), Colombia and Mexico signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to strengthen cooperation in communications regulation. CRC says the agreement activates a technical cooperation agenda built around knowledge-sharing and innovation between the two regulators. The agreement comes as Mexico's Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (CRT) has been publicly advancing consultations on how to allocate spectrum for industrial connectivity, fixed wireless/microwave services), and 5G under its 2026 licensing strategy. In a Jan. 21, 2026 government press release, the CRT said it was using a second dialogue table with industry to review international access models for spectrum used in industrial connectivity. While the full text of the MoU was not accessible at the time of writing, public summaries indicate the CRC-CRT partnership is positioned as a regulatory cooperation mechanism, not just a ceremonial agreement. CRC's public communication describes it as a way to consolidate collaboration and strengthen communications governance through a high-level technical agenda. Social-media snippets and search previews linked to the announcement also suggest the cooperation scope includes priority topics such as 5G, AI, cybersecurity and user/consumer protection, areas that increasingly overlap as telecom regulators move beyond legacy voice-and-data oversight into digital ecosystem governance. Mexico's CRT has been conducting sector dialogues ahead of its 2026 spectrum plan, aiming to gather input from operators, industry users, and other stakeholders on how spectrum assignments can better support productive use cases, including industrial networks. The CRT's Jan. 2026 communications frame this effort as part of a broader attempt to spur interest in spectrum use for industrial connectivity and support the design of future auctions. The CRT's 2026 spectrum agenda indicates the regulator is contemplating multiple licensing tracks this year, including industrial networks, microwave services, and mobile broadband/5G. Coverage in Mexican media also highlights a stronger emphasis on economic productivity and flexible access models, particularly for industrial use cases that may not fit traditional nationwide mobile auction structures. As Mexico weighs technical and operational conditions for spectrum access in industrial environments, cross-country exchanges can provide benchmarks on band use, licensing formats, interference management, deployment rules and business-case viability for private or dedicated networks. The CRT says its January dialogue drew on international examples from the European Union, Latin America, and the United States to analyze optimal technical and operational conditions and support international harmonization in this spectrum use.

The collaboration with Colombia's CRC could support comparative learning in at least three areas:

- 5G policy design and deployment oversight, including regulatory frameworks that balance investment incentives with competition and service quality
- Digital risk governance, where telecom regulation increasingly intersects with cybersecurity and AI-related issues
- Consumer and user protections, especially as connectivity services become more integrated with digital platforms, enterprise systems, and critical operations

Pakistan's 5G Auction Gathers Pace as US$30 Million Deposits Signal Strong Competition

Pakistan's much-anticipated 5G spectrum auction is gathering momentum, with deposits totaling $30 million submitted ahead of the February 27 deadline for earnest money payments. Under the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority's (PTA) Information Memorandum, each prospective bidder must deposit $15 million as earnest money to qualify for the auction. The amount will be adjustable against the final license fee for successful bidders. With three days remaining before the deadline, industry sources indicate that Jazz is expected to deposit its required amount shortly, making it unlikely that the country's largest mobile operator would miss what is being viewed as a defining spectrum sale. The government is targeting proceeds exceeding $634 million from the auction, depending on competition levels and final price discovery during bidding. A total of 597 MHz of spectrum is being offered, and the PTA has stated that the auction will be considered successful if at least 50 percent of the available spectrum — roughly 300 MHz — is sold. Officials suggest that participation by three operators would effectively ensure the sale of around 300 MHz, automatically meeting the minimum success threshold. PTA representatives believe that involvement from at least three cellular mobile operators will foster competitive bidding and reinforce investor confidence in Pakistan's digital transformation agenda. The auction, scheduled for March 10, is being closely monitored by policymakers, investors, and industry stakeholders. It is expected to underpin the rollout of next-generation mobile services, including ultra-high-speed broadband, low-latency applications, and advanced enterprise solutions. With Ufone and Zong already confirmed participants and Jazz likely to join, the competitive landscape of Pakistan's 5G rollout is rapidly taking shape, positioning the auction as a pivotal moment for the country's telecom sector and broader digital economy.

Pakistan Approves Bill to Fast-Track Internet and Mobile Network Expansion

The National Assembly Standing Committee on Information Technology has approved the Pakistan Telecommunication (Re-organization) Amendment Bill, aimed at accelerating internet expansion and improving mobile network deployment across the country by reducing regulatory and procedural barriers. The amendments seek to streamline telecom regulations, enabling operators to deploy fiber optic infrastructure and mobile towers more efficiently. A key provision focuses on simplifying Right of Way (RoW) rules, providing licensed telecom operators with clearer legal access to public and commercial land for the installation, operation and maintenance of telecom infrastructure. The bill also introduces governance reforms within the sector. The National Telecommunication Corporation (NTC) will be brought under the State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) framework, aligning its governance structure with enhanced oversight, financial accountability and compliance standards. In addition, the federal government will be empowered to determine the remuneration of the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) chairman and its members. PTA's financial operations will also fall under the Public Finance Management Act, 2019, a move intended to strengthen transparency, accountability and fiscal discipline within the regulatory framework. During the session, the committee deferred consideration of the Electronic Transactions Amendment Bill 2026 pending further consultation. Review of the Ministry of Information Technology's Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) projects was also postponed due to the ongoing National Assembly proceedings, with discussions expected to resume at the committee's next meeting.

FCC Issues Cybersecurity Best Practices for Defending Against Ransomware Attacks

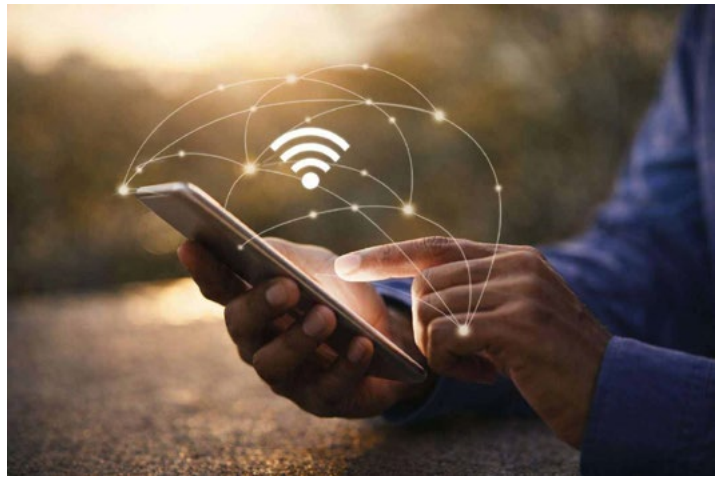
The Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau (Bureau) recently released a public notice (Notice) emphasizing the threat of ransomware to communications networks and urging providers to adopt various cybersecurity best practices. The Notice, dated January 29, 2026, is geared toward small-to-medium sized providers, but its recommendations are relevant to larger providers as well. The Bureau's guidance underscores that providers of all sizes, including those with potentially more limited technical and financial resources, have been targeted by ransomware actors and have faced significant operational disruption, data loss, and public safety impacts as a result. The Notice describes various common ways that attackers may gain a foothold in victims' networks to launch ransomware attacks, including phishing and other types of social engineering, exploitation of unpatched software vulnerabilities, and insecure remote access tools and credentials. Ransomware attacks frequently involve deployment of ransomware—i.e., malicious software that encrypts files on a victims' systems—as well as theft of sensitive data. Attackers then demand that the victim company pay a ransom for decrypting its files and deleting or returning its stolen data. Attackers often publish stolen data on dark web sites if a ransom is not paid. The Notice provides best practices for preventing and mitigating ransomware attacks, as well as for responding to such attacks once they are detected. Many of these best practices are drawn from the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency's (CISA) #StopRansomware Guide. Prevention and mitigation recommendations include:

- Developing a risk management plan that identifies responsibilities for cybersecurity and incident response.
- Regularly patching software and disabling unused features.
- Enabling multifactor authentication
- Regularly backing up sensitive data.
- Providing cybersecurity awareness to employees.
- Implementing network segmentation.
- Deploying industry standard tools such as endpoint detection and response (EDR) software and intrusion detection and prevention (IDS/IPS) systems to detect and respond to intrusions.
- Conducting regular scans to identify and fix software and other security vulnerabilities.
- Overseeing vendors' cybersecurity practices.
- Recommended practices for responding to ransomware attacks include:
- Following the company's incident response plan.
- Quickly identifying and isolating infected systems to contain the spread of ransomware and minimize the impact of any intrusion.
- Preserving key evidence (including by capturing the memory of infected machines, which often contains crucial forensic evidence that is lost when a machine is shut down).
- Patching systems, changing passwords, and introducing new security controls.
- Restoring affected data.
- Reporting the attack to the FCC and federal law enforcement.

The Notice reminds providers of their obligations to report breaches of customer proprietary network information (CPNI) to the United States Secret Service (USSS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and to report certain facility and system outages to the FCC.

FCC Opens 6 GHz Band to Higher-Power, Outdoor Devices

The Federal Communications Commission opened the 6 GigaHertz (GHz) band of radio frequency spectrum up a new class of unlicensed devices. Agency Chairman Brenden Carr noted the adopted order will allow geofenced variable powered devices increased access to the 6 GHz band in response to a predicted growth of emerging technologies like high powered Wi-Fi, augmented and virtual reality, short range hotspots, automation, indoor navigation and artificial intelligence wearable goods that are already coming to market. "This next generation of Wi-Fi will offer blazing fast speeds, massive capacity and better power efficiency, this is a big deal," said Carr. "We keep the 6 GHz band moving forward as a platform for America's wireless leadership and technological dynamism. Our consumers, our economy, and our innovators will be better off for it."



TDRA Launches Five New Digital Trade License Documents Via UAE PASS

The Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA) announced the launch of five new digital trade license documents through the UAE PASS digital wallet. The initiative was implemented in collaboration with four leading government entities: Abu Dhabi Registration Authority, Jebel Ali Free Zone Authority (Jafza), Fujairah Municipality, and the Department of Economic Development in Umm Al Quwain. The UAE PASS digital wallet provides a secure and unified platform for storing official documents, enabling citizens and residents to eliminate the need for carrying paper copies. It also allows users to share verified documents easily when accessing a wide range of private sector services, thereby streamlining official processes and enhancing efficiency. H.E. Eng. Majed Sultan Al Mesmar, Director General of TDRA, stated: "The launch of these five commercial documents through the digital wallet marks a significant milestone in empowering businesses in the UAE and strengthening public trust in government digital solutions. We aim to offer a secure and seamless digital experience for entrepreneurs and residents, simplifying access to essential trade documents and fostering stronger collaboration between government and the private sector." Sheikh Ahmed bin Ibrahim Ahmed Al Mu'alla, Director General of the Department of Economic Development in Umm Al Quwain, affirmed that the service represents a qualitative leap in the delivery of government services, saying: "The launch of the service comes as part of the Department's efforts to provide an integrated digital experience that enables customers to complete their transactions quickly and securely, without the need for paper documents or visiting service centers." The Department of Economic Development called on all customers to benefit from the new service through the UAE PASS application, emphasizing its continued commitment to developing innovative digital solutions that support the business environment and enhance economic growth in the emirate. H.E. Mohamed Munaif Al Mansouri, Director General of the Abu Dhabi Registration and Licensing Authority (ADRA), said: "Our efforts focus on providing a safe and seamless experience that meets investors' requirements through the continuous enhancement of a business ecosystem that supports and stimulates growth and prosperity. In this context, our collaboration with the Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA) aims to leverage the latest technologies to simplify the procedures for establishing, operating, and developing businesses. This, in turn, enhances the attractiveness of Abu Dhabi's business sector for both local and international investors, while contributing to supporting digital transformation and achieving the UAE's sustainable development goals." H.E. Abdulla Bin Damithan, CEO & Managing Director of DP World GCC, expressed his remarks on the launch, saying: "Digital transformation is essential to making trade simpler and faster. Through Jafza's participation in this initiative, we are enabling businesses to focus on growth rather than paperwork. This is how the UAE continues to set global standards in ease of doing business." H.E. Eng. Mohamed Saif Al Afkham, Director General of Fujairah Municipality, stated: "The inclusion of commercial license documents in the digital wallet represents a qualitative step that contributes to supporting the UAE's efforts to develop a more flexible and efficient digital business environment, enabling users to manage their official documents easily and securely. This step also enhances the integration of services between government entities and the private sector, and contributes to improving the quality of services provided, in line with the vision of the wise leadership to facilitate the customer experience and achieve comprehensive digital transformation." The newly launched digital documents include trade licenses issued by the four entities, such as the Commercial Registration Certificate from the Abu Dhabi Registration Authority, providing a trusted and direct reference for all business-related transactions. These verified documents can be securely shared with accredited service providers, including banks and other institutions that require authenticated trade license information. This contributes to faster registration processes and minimizes the need for submitting paper copies. This initiative reflects the UAE's ongoing efforts to advance digital transformation in the business sector, offering users a safe, efficient, and integrated experience in accessing government digital services.

Regulatory Reforms, Investment Push Oman Into Top 20 for Mobile Speeds

Oman has made significant gains in mobile and broadband performance, climbing five places to 18th in the Speedtest Global Index in 2025, according to Ookla's Speedtest Intelligence data. The country's all-technology median download speed more than doubled to 121.84 Mbps between the fourth quarter of 2022 and the same period in 2025. Over the same period, median 5G download speeds increased from 191.03 Mbps to 259.94 Mbps, reflecting steady network upgrades and wider coverage. The 2025 global rankings continue to be dominated by Gulf countries, with the UAE leading the index, followed by Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain. Bulgaria, Brazil, South Korea, Brunei, Saudi Arabia and Singapore complete the top ten, underlining the strong presence of both GCC and Asian markets in high-speed connectivity. Oman's improvement has been driven by regulatory measures and rising competition. Policies introduced by the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA), including infrastructure sharing and a phased 3G network sunset, supported the entry of Vodafone as a third mobile operator in 2022. Combined with mid- and low-band spectrum allocation, these measures accelerated 5G deployment, pushing population coverage to 91% by 2024. 'A cornerstone of TRA's strategy to improve network performance and spectral efficiency was the mandated retirement of legacy 3G infrastructure. By decommissioning 3G, the TRA allows operators to refarm valuable low-band spectrum (typically 900 MHz and 2100 MHz) for 4G and 5G use, which provides far greater data capacity per MHz of spectrum,' the Ookla report stated. Investment by operators between 2021 and 2025 expanded the national 5G site count to 6,671 by mid-2025. Omantel and Ooredoo continue to lead the market in 5G download performance, supported by larger mid-

band spectrum holdings and ongoing network investment. Ookla data shows Omantel and Ooredoo median 5G download speeds reached 323.41 Mbps and 321.67 Mbps, respectively, in the fourth quarter of 2025. Oman's international connectivity strategy also strengthened network resilience. During the Red Sea cable cuts in September 2025, traffic was rerouted through more than 20 subsea cables and terrestrial links, limiting disruption to online services. The approach helped Oman avoid the wider service impact seen in some neighboring markets. The combined impact of regulation, competition and infrastructure investment has reshaped Oman's mobile market, lifting network performance and strengthening the country's standing in global connectivity rankings.

Pakistan Approves MVNO Policy Framework to Allow Virtual Mobile Operators Nationwide

The Pakistan Telecommunications Authority (PTA) has notified the Mobile Virtual Network Operators (MVNO) Policy Framework, enabling virtual operators to offer nationwide mobile services without owning spectrum. The framework, approved by the federal cabinet, allows MVNOs to provide mobile communication and next-generation services by leveraging the infrastructure of existing licensed mobile network operators (MNOs). Under the policy, the initial fee for a nationwide MVNO license has been set at $140,000, or its equivalent in Pakistani rupees, payable upfront. The applicable dollar rate will be calculated at the interbank selling rate on the day preceding payment. MVNOs are defined as operators that do not hold frequency spectrum assignments but provide services to customers through commercial agreements with licensed MNOs after obtaining PTA approval. The framework permits MVNOs to offer services nationwide and to enter into commercial arrangements with one or more MNOs. Similarly, MNOs may partner with multiple MVNOs. Virtual operators will be allowed to operate under their own brand names, pursue independent marketing strategies, and offer customized services beyond those of the host network. They may deploy their own customer care, billing, and service platforms, while using numbering resources and spectrum assigned to the parent MNO. However, the policy makes clear that MVNOs will not be eligible for direct spectrum allocation, with spectrum ownership remaining exclusively with licensed MNOs. The move is expected to boost competition, encourage service innovation, expand consumer choice, and enable existing operators to monetize excess network capacity through wholesale arrangements. MVNOs will be required to comply with PTA safeguards, including the Device Identification, Registration and Blocking System (DIRBS), as well as regulations related to lost or stolen devices. They will also be required to use only the parent MNO's roaming and interconnection agreements, contribute to the Universal Service Fund (USF) and research and development funds, and adhere to PTA quality-of-service and security standards, similar to licensed telecom operators.

EU Supports Digital Connectivity with Simpler and Harmonized Rules in Digital Networks Act

The European Commission proposed the Digital Networks Act (DNA) to modernize, simplify and harmonize EU rules on connectivity networks. The current rules must be updated to create the conditions for operators to invest into rolling out advanced fiber and mobile networks. High-capacity networks enable innovative tech, like Artificial Intelligence and Cloud. The widespread availability of advanced connectivity for people and businesses across the EU is the foundation of Europe's competitiveness. The proposal aims at creating an effective EU single market by harmonizing rules and facilitating cross-border business to incentivize operators to scale up, grow and innovate. To enable this, the Digital Networks Act proposal aims to: facilitate companies to provide services across the EU while having to register in only one Member State; incentivize the creation of pan-European satellite communication services by establishing an EU-level, as opposed to national level, spectrum authorization framework; increase regulatory consistency in national spectrum authorization, by giving operators longer spectrum licenses and by making licenses renewable by default to increase predictability; ensure that all available spectrum is being used by making spectrum sharing among operators more common ('use it or share it'); and introduce a voluntary cooperation mechanism between connectivity providers and other players, such as content application and cloud providers. Transition to advanced connectivity networks Legacy copper networks do not fit the ambition of making innovative technologies widely available across the EU. The DNA introduces mandatory national transition plans to ensure the phase out of copper networks and the transition to advanced networks between 2030 and 2035. Member States must present their national plans in 2029. The process is accompanied by safeguards to protect all consumers, such as providing clear and timely information about switch-offs and ensuring service continuity. The Digital Networks Act modernizes the regulatory framework, reducing administrative burden and reporting obligations, so companies can focus their resources on investment and innovation. The DNA also allows more flexibility for business-to-business relations, while keeping a high level of consumer protection. The DNA enhances network security and resilience by limiting dependencies in the connectivity ecosystem and promoting EU-level cooperation. The proposal introduces an EU-level Preparedness plan to tackle the rising risks of crises including natural disasters and foreign interference in networks. In addition, the common mechanism for selecting pan-EU satellite communications will incorporate criteria focused on security and resilience. The DNA fully keeps the principles of net neutrality. It introduces a mechanism to clarify Open Internet rules for innovative services to increase legal certainty and a voluntary ecosystem cooperation mechanism on IP interconnection, traffic efficiency, and other emerging areas.

SK Telecom to Fight Regulator Over Record Data Breach Fine

The South Korean operator revealed last year, it had suffered an enormous data breach in 2022, affecting 26.9 million customers. The Personal Information Protection Commission (PIPC) subsequently fined the company 134.8 billion won (around $91 million) for failing to protect customer data. Now, SKT has said it will appeal the fine, with reports suggesting that the operator deems the fine to be unjustified and disproportionate. The fine is the largest ever delivered by the PIPC, far exceeding the previous record: a 100 billion won ($68 million) fine imposed jointly on Google and Meta in 2022 for collecting user data for personalized ads without clear consent. "We are seeking a detailed judicial review of whether the PIPC's penalty is appropriate," said SKT in a statement. The penalty from the PIPC was calculated based on SKT's mobile revenue, a fact which SKT says differs from previous PIPC rulings. In a 2023 case against SKT's rival LG Uplus, for example, the resulting fine based on purely on the revenue generated from the specific system that was hacked, resulting in a much smaller penalty (6.8 billion won, or $4.6 million). The operator also notes that there has been no reported direct or indirect damage to customers as a result of the breach. This claim, however, has been challenged by the Korea Consumer Agency (KCA), which was approached by 58 of the affected customers seeking dispute mediation last year. "Considering the joint investigation conducted by the government and the private sector in July and the ruling by the PIPC, it was recognized that the hacking incident caused damage to consumers," the agency said. "SK Telecom holds responsibility for compensating individual consumers for the damage," it added. In December, the KCA ordered SKT to offer affected customers 100,000 won ($67) in compensation in the form of 50,000 won ($33.5) reduction in monthly subscription fees and 50,000 won in credits usable as cash equivalents. If the ruling stands and every customer makes use of the offer, SKT's total estimated payout would be around 2.3 trillion won ($1.5 billion) – greater than the company's 1.43 trillion won ($970 million) net profit in 2024. The operator is reviewing the ruling and may yet contest it. SKT has so far pledged to invest 1.2 trillion won ($783 million) in improving its cybersecurity measures and compensating customers affected by the breach.

FCC Approves Starlink Use in Moving Vehicles

SpaceX's satellite internet service Starlink can now be used in a vehicle in motion after it received FCC approval, which is great news for thousands of people who want ongoing connectivity on the road. The Portability feature, unveiled in May, allows people to take their Starlink internet with them anywhere. Using it in a moving vehicle, however, would have voided the warranty prior to announcement. FCC approval was granted for both SpaceX and Canadian satellite company Kepler Communications. "We agree with SpaceX and Kepler that the public interest would benefit by granting with conditions their applications," the grant reads. "Authorizing a new class of terminals for SpaceX's satellite system will expand the range of broadband capabilities to meet the growing user demands that now require connectivity while on the move, whether driving an RV across the country, moving a freighter from Europe to a U.S. port, or while on a domestic or international flight." Through its Earth Stations in Motion (ESIM) terminals (that's the company's internet kits attached to cars, boats, trucks, RVS etc.), Starlink's Portability feature "enables users to temporarily move their Starlink to new locations in order to receive service anywhere within the same continent Starlink provides active coverage." You can see these active coverage areas through the Starlink Availability Map. Starlink can only be used within the same continent as the "service address" you signed up with — so you'll have to move your registered address if you want to take it with you on a boat or to another continent. Notably, Starlink's FAQ page says the service is "provided on a best effort basis," with speeds not guaranteed, and warns moving users "can expect lower service levels" than those staying put. "When you bring your Starlink to a new location, this prioritization may result in degraded service, particularly at times of peak usage or network congestion," Starlink says. But considering Elon Musk's Starlink satellite internet showed big speed jump in Q1 of this year — the median download speed in the U.S. increased by 38 percent, from 65Mbps (Megabits per second) to 90Mbps — it's at least looking up.

UK Govt Earmarks £210m to Fortify Its Cyber Defences

The UK government has unveiled a new cybersecurity plan, introducing new measures aimed at making government departments and public services more secure. The Government Cyber Action Plan, created by the Government Cyber Unit (GCU) and backed by £210 million, aims to achieve clearer visibility of cybersecurity risks across government units, more centralized and coordinated decision-making to meet those risks, and a faster response to emerging threats. It will also increase and define new cyber resilience standards for commercial companies providing support for critical services such as health, energy or utilities. "Cyber-attacks can take vital public services offline in minutes – disrupting our digital services and our very way of life. This plan sets a new bar to bolster the defences of our public sector, putting cyber-criminals on warning that we are going further and faster to protect the UK's businesses and public services alike," said Digital Government Minister Ian Murray. "This is how we keep people safe, services running, and build a government the public can trust in the digital age." The GCU itself was formally formed under the Labor government in July 2024, based out of the Government Cyber Coordination Centre that itself was formed two years earlier. It forms a central pillar of the Government Cyber Security Strategy 2022–2030, which emphasizes the need for more a more unified cybersecurity approach (i.e., 'Defend as One') across government departments. Initially operated by the Cabinet Office, operation of the GCU was transferred to the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) in June 2025. In tandem with this new plan, the government is also introducing a new Software Security Ambassador Scheme, which aims to promote cybersecurity best practices across the software market. This is one by the championing of the Software Security Code of Practice, a voluntary set of cybersecurity measures developed in collaboration by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) and industry experts. Cisco, Palo Alto Networks, Sage, Santander, and NCC Group are among those joining the scheme as ambassadors. The announcement notably coincides with the second reading of the Cyber Security and Resilience Bill in Parliament, legislation that would replace the aging NIS Regulations and give the government greater powers to regulate organization in its digital supply chain.

NVSSoft's Tarasol Receives Accreditation by Saudi Arabia's Digital Government Authority as Government Correspondence Platform

NVSSoft has received official accreditation from the Saudi Digital Government Authority (DGA) for its Tarasol platform, a comprehensive solution for managing government correspondence and collaboration. The announcement was made during an official ceremony hosted by the DGA to recognize accredited products. Tarasol was among only nine platforms selected nationwide following a structured initiative to assess correspondence systems used across Saudi government entities. The evaluation process measured platforms against 66 technical and functional criteria, including system reliability, integration readiness, user experience, regulatory compliance, and long-term enhancement capability. It involved document reviews, product demonstrations, and validation sessions. Tarasol has been deployed across major Saudi government entities for more than a decade. NVSSoft continues to evolve the platform, introducing new capabilities, including artificial intelligence-driven features, to meet changing governance and operational requirements. Abdullah Al Obailan, Regional Director at NVSSoft, said the accreditation reflects Tarasol's proven role in government operations. He added that the recognition confirms the platform's readiness to meet national standards while ongoing investment in innovation and AI ensures alignment with future government needs. The accreditation reinforces Saudi Arabia's digital government framework by validating enterprise-grade platforms that meet national interoperability, compliance, and performance standards.

A SNAPSHOT OF REGULATORY ACTIVITIES IN THE SA-ME-NA REGION

Algeria

Algeria has launched a national data governance framework aimed at accelerating state modernization and digital transformation, establishing a structured legal, institutional, and technical model for managing public data across government entities. Announced by Prime Minister Sifi Ghrieb, the initiative positions data as a strategic national asset and introduces a sovereign approach focused on data control, organization, and protection. The framework is designed to transition public administration toward data-driven governance, enabling more informed decision-making through reliable and integrated information systems. The framework sets out standards for the collection, storage, sharing, and use of public data while strengthening cybersecurity, interoperability between public institutions, and the creation of a unified national database of data sources. By enabling secure and standardized information exchange, authorities aim to reduce data silos, improve the accuracy of public statistics, and support the development of digital public services based on regularly updated datasets. The initiative aligns with Algeria's "Digital Algeria 2030" strategy, which focuses on administrative modernization and digital economy development. It builds on recent investments in digital infrastructure, including the deployment of five regional data centers dedicated to hosting and securing public information. Formally anchored under Presidential Decree No. 25-350 issued on December 30, 2025, the framework is expected to improve coordination between public administrations, provide greater regulatory clarity for economic operators, and strengthen the role of data in supporting national digital transformation and economic competitiveness. (February 11, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com

Prime Minister Sifi Ghrieb chaired a government meeting focused on advancing Algeria's social map, accelerating sector-wide digitization, and reviewing progress on the national digital services portal, Dzair Digital Services. According to a statement from the Prime Minister's Office, the session assessed ongoing efforts to modernize public administration, improve service delivery, and strengthen data-driven governance. The discussions formed part of the government's broader push to enhance transparency, efficiency, and citizen access to digital public services across sectors. (January 8, 2025) www.meatechwatch.com

Bahrain

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority held the nineteenth meeting of the Spectrum Strategy and Coordination Committee, as part of its ongoing efforts to enhance the future readiness of the telecommunications sector and support national coordination, in line with the goals of Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030, and to keep pace with regional and international developments in this vital sector. The meeting discussed several agenda items, most notably updates on preparations for the 2027 World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-17), a key international platform that sets the future direction for radiocommunication use globally and its direct implications for the development of mobile and satellite communications services, as well as various vital sectors. The committee emphasized the importance of early and coordinated preparation for the conference, given its strategic significance in safeguarding national interests and ensuring the Kingdom of Bahrain's readiness to capitalize on the opportunities offered by modern technologies and support digital transformation and long-term economic growth. The meeting also addressed updates on regional coordination efforts with neighboring countries in the areas of radio broadcasting and mobile communications, aiming to enhance cooperation, reduce harmful interference, and improve the quality and continuity of services in accordance with approved international standards. Furthermore, the committee reviewed the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority's (TRA) efforts during 2025 at the national, regional, and international levels, including participation in specialized forums and various coordination initiatives. This reflects the TRA's commitment to strengthening Bahrain's leading role in the telecommunications sector and its development in a way that serves national interests. During the meeting, Eng. Mariam Ahmed Jumaan, Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) and Chairperson of the Spectrum Strategy and Coordination Committee, stated: "The World Radiocommunication Conference 2027 represents a highly significant strategic milestone, as its outcomes will contribute to shaping the future of communications globally. Through early preparation and enhanced regional and international coordination, the Kingdom of Bahrain is committed to ensuring its readiness to support digital transformation and achieve economic growth." The TRA affirmed that the Spectrum Strategy and Coordination Committee will continue its pivotal role

in monitoring global developments, strengthening coordination with relevant stakeholders, and supporting the efficient and sustainable use of resources to serve national priorities and contribute to achieving comprehensive development.

(January 6, 2026) www.tra.org.bh

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(January 5, 2026) www.tra.org.bh

Bangladesh

Bangladesh's telecom sector is constrained by high taxes, low ARPU, and rigid regulation. It must shift from a revenue source to a strategic digital growth engine to unlock its full economic potential. This is not due to a lack of demand or technology adoption but the result of structural, fiscal, and regulatory constraints that have steadily weakened the industry's ability to invest, innovate, and contribute significantly to national growth. The telecom sector contributes less than 1% to Bangladesh's GDP, compared to 2.8-3% in India and over 2% in Thailand. Despite serving more than 190 million mobile subscriptions and carrying over 95% of the country's internet traffic, telecom's economic footprint remains disproportionately small. These highlights are a structural monetization problem. One major factor is excessive taxation. Bangladesh imposes one of the highest telecom-specific tax burdens in South Asia. Depending on the service, over 50% to 55% of operator revenue is absorbed through VAT, supplementary duty, SIM tax, spectrum charges, revenue sharing, and corporate tax. In contrast, India reduced its effective telecom tax burden below 25% after 2019, alongside payment moratoriums and spectrum fee rationalization. As a result, Indian operators stabilized financially and resumed aggressive investment in 4G expansion and 5G rollout. The impact of taxation is visible in investment trends. Capital expenditure in the Bangladesh telecom sector has declined steadily over the past five years. While Indian operators invest USD 10 to 12 billion annually, Bangladesh's total sector-wide investment remains below USD 1.5 billion, making it insufficient for 5G readiness, fiber deepening, or advanced enterprise services. This gap directly affects network quality, innovation, and global competitiveness. A second challenge faced by telecoms is low ARPU. Bangladesh's average monthly revenue per user remains around USD $2.5 to $3, among the lowest globally. Even Pakistan, with similar income levels, reports slightly higher ARPU. Meanwhile, smartphone penetration in Bangladesh exceeds 65%, and average monthly data usage per user has crossed 6 GB, growing at over 20% annually. The disconnect between usage growth and revenue growth signals pricing rigidity and limited service diversification.

(February 22, 2026) www.tbsnews.net

Corporate rivalry in Bangladesh's telecom sector is nothing new. Operators have long competed fiercely on price, network quality, and subscriber acquisition. But 2025 saw that rivalry erupt not through marketing campaigns, but through formal complaints, regulatory challenges, and court petitions. Such open legal confrontation of this kind is rare in the industry, comprising one of the largest subscriber bases in South Asia. The disputes drew in three separate institutions – the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), the Bangladesh Competition Commission (BCC), and the High Court. They touched on issues ranging from predatory pricing and brand misuse to the validity of a regulatory framework designed to check the dominance of the market's largest player. None of the cases reached a definitive conclusion by year-end. But together, they raised questions about competitive fairness, regulatory capacity, and the direction of an industry navigating a more difficult operating environment.

(February 19, 2026) www.thedailystar.net

Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited (BTCL) has recently announced a reduction in the registration and renewal fees for two categories of .bd domain names. According to a press statement issued in Dhaka on January 11, 2026, the price cut applies to .bd third-level domains and .bd second-level domains, both with names longer than two characters. The company said fees for these categories have been reduced by 36 percent. The revised prices, charged per domain per year, are as follows: bd Third-Level Domain (for example, abc.com.bd): Registration fee reduced from BDT 1,100 to BDT 700. Renewal fee reduced from BDT 1,600 to BDT 1,020. bd Second-Level Domain (for example, abc.bd): Registration fee reduced from BDT 2,000 to BDT 1,280. Renewal fee reduced from BDT 2,500 to BDT 1,600. Value-added tax (VAT) will apply at the prescribed rate, and that registrations will be governed by existing regulations set by the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), along with tariff decisions approved by BTCL authorities, states the press release. (January 14, 2026) www.thedailystar.net

Egypt

Egypt has launched its telecom spectrum strategy for 2026–2030, supported by a $3.5 billion spectrum allocation agreement signed with the country's four licensed mobile operators. The deal marks the largest frequency allocation in Egypt's telecom sector since the introduction of mobile services and is aimed at expanding network capacity and supporting long-term digital growth. Under the agreement, a total of 410 MHz of new frequency bands will be allocated, effectively matching the total spectrum assigned to mobile operators in Egypt over the past three decades combined. The move is expected to significantly increase available capacity, enabling operators to improve service quality and meet rising demand for data-driven services and digital applications. The National Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (NTRA) said the strategy represents a major step toward more efficient spectrum management and improved utilization of national frequency resources. The expanded spectrum is expected to strengthen fifth-generation (5G) readiness, enhance market competitiveness, and support the sustainability of telecommunications infrastructure as Egypt advances its digital transformation agenda. The strategy also reflects ongoing regulatory efforts to modernize the telecom sector in line with international standards and recommendations from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), ensuring network efficiency and improved service delivery for consumers and enterprises. (February 17, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com

Egyptian authorities have allocated an additional 410 MHz of frequency spectrum to the country's four mobile network operators. Worth an estimated $3.5 billion, the allocation is intended to support the expansion of telecommunications services, with a focus on 5G. The allocation was finalized on under an agreement signed between the government and telecommunications operators. During the event, authorities also launched the National Spectrum Roadmap 2026-2030, aimed at guiding the management and optimization of spectrum over the medium term. According to the Minister of Communications, Amr Talaat, maximizing spectral capacity is one of the two main drivers of mobile service development, alongside network infrastructure deployment. Before 2019, total spectrum available to mobile operators in Egypt stood at 272 MHz, allocated over more than 20 years. Between 2019 and 2022, the state assigned an additional 140 MHz, bringing total capacity to 412 MHz. The new allocation follows the commercial launch of 5G in June 2025, which authorities have described as a key driver of the country's digital transformation. According to the GSMA, full-power licensed spectrum has played a central role in the global rollout of 5G to date, enabling wider coverage, supporting high-quality services, and encouraging network investment.

(February 9, 2026) www.ecofinagency.com

Iraq

China has been revealed to be a major player in Iraq's telecoms and digital infrastructure market, according to a new Atlantic Council report on Beijing's growing influence in the country. "China has established an expansive and multisectoral presence in Iraq, spanning energy, telecommunications, consumer markets, and education," the report revealed, adding that Beijing aims to "deepen Iraq's economic reliance on China across vital sectors, thereby embedding Beijing's influence within Iraq's long-term development trajectory." China's involvement in Iraq's telecom sector began in the late 1990's when Zhongxing Telecom Co first entered the country in 1999, when the country remained under international sanctions. Additionally, the report added: "Huawei began clandestinely building a fiber-optic network for Iraq's military, which was later bombed during a 2001 US-UK air raid." After 2003, Huawei returned through Asiacell, Iraq's largest mobile operator. By 2011, US officials were already raising concerns. Robert C. Fonow, a US State Department advisor, said Huawei effectively "owned" Iraq's telecom sector, claiming it had received "more than six hundred contracts worth billions of dollars- some indirectly financed by US reconstruction funds." Additionally, the report revealed Chinese firms remain central to Iraq's digital growth. In June 2025, Asiacell and China Mobile International (CMI) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to expand enterprise-level digital services, billed as accelerating Iraq's digital transformation through CMI's global expertise.

(January 27, 2026) www.capacityglobal.com

Jordan

The Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC) of Jordan, in partnership with the RIPE Network Coordination Centre (RIPE NCC), has successfully concluded a three-day regional training program on Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6) in Amman.

The initiative aimed to strengthen network readiness and support the modernization of digital infrastructure in Jordan and Syria. The program brought together telecommunications operators and Internet service providers from both countries, alongside regional and international partners including the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), GSMA and Arab Regulators Network of Telecommunications and ICT (ARISPA). The training forms part of ongoing joint capacity-building efforts under a Memorandum of Understanding between the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission and the RIPE NCC. The collaboration reflects a shared commitment to building a secure, resilient and future-ready Internet infrastructure aligned with regional digital priorities and Arab cooperation frameworks. Her Excellency Ms. Lara Al-Khatib, Chairperson of the TRC Board of Commissioners, stated that hosting the program demonstrates Jordan's commitment to advancing national and regional network preparedness. She noted that IPv6 adoption has become a practical necessity to sustain Internet growth, enhance cybersecurity and ensure infrastructure can support expanding digital services and the broader digital economy. Dr. Chafic Chaya, Regional Manager for Public Policy and Government Affairs at the RIPE NCC, said the training aligns with the organization's strategy to provide technical expertise and capacity building to members across the region, enabling a smooth and secure transition to IPv6. The workshop delivered structured sessions over three days. The first day focused on core IPv6 concepts, its strategic importance and deployment planning methodologies. The second and third days provided advanced technical training covering configuration, routing, deployment strategies and network security. Participants engaged in hands-on exercises designed to prepare technical teams for upcoming deployment phases and support an organized migration from IPv4 to IPv6 environments.

(February 24, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com

Based on reports from 2025, the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC) of Jordan achieved several significant milestones in digital infrastructure and regulatory leadership: 5G Technology Launch: The TRC successfully oversaw the introduction of 5G technology and IoT devices into the Jordanian market. IPv6 National Day: In collaboration with the RIPE NCC, the TRC declared Jordan an "IPv6-enabled country," positioning it as a regional leader in internet protocol connectivity. International Strategic Partnerships: The TRC signed multiple Memoranda of Understanding (MoU), including one with the RIPE NCC to enhance internet stability, and another with Romania's national authority to advance digital infrastructure. Excellence Awards: The commission was recognized for its performance, winning two prizes from the King Abdullah II Awards for Excellence in government performance. International Representation: The TRC led Jordan's delegation at the 2025 World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum in Geneva. Regulatory & Postal Services: The TRC improved digital services, including enabling the Jordan Post Company to offer all Jordan Medical Council services through its network. Additionally, the TRC has been involved in planning for a unified regulatory body for the ICT, broadcasting, and postal sectors. (January 26, 2026) AI

Kuwait

Beyon Group has been selection by the Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP) as the winning investor for the Fixed Telecommunications Network Development Project in Kuwait. The announcement marks the next phase in preparations to establish a project company under a 50-year public private partnership (PPP) agreement whereby Beyon will design, finance, build, operate and maintain Kuwait's nationwide, high-speed fiber broadband network with a total investment exceeding US$2.8 billion over the lifetime of the agreement. KAPP, a governmental institution responsible for the country's PPP program, will hold a 60% stake in the project company to be established for the project while Beyon will retain a 40% stake. Once the project is fully operational, KAPP will IPO a portion of the shares to be subscribed by Kuwaiti citizens. The project is described as a significant national infrastructure program through which the partnership aims to deliver a nationwide high-speed fiber network reaching 90% of Kuwait's available plots. The network will support 10Gbps symmetrical connectivity in accordance with the PPP requirements, ensuring resilient, future-ready digital capacity for households, enterprises, and government entities. This initiative will form the backbone of Kuwait's digital transformation strategy and will contribute to a key pillar of Kuwait Vision 2035, which aims to transform Kuwait into a regional financial and trade hub.

(February 25, 2026) www.developingtelecoms.com

Morocco

Morocco's mobile subscriber base surpassed 66.1 million by the end of September 2025, driving the penetration rate to a record 166%, according to the Directorate of Studies and Financial Forecasts (DEPF). The report noted that penetration increased from 161.2% during the same period in 2024. Mobile telecom growth reached 1.5% in the first nine months of 2025, compared to a stronger 5.1% rise a year earlier. Internet subscriptions also crossed 43.4 million users, marking a 3.1% increase over the same

period, following 6.5% growth in 2024. Internet penetration climbed to 117.9% in 2025, up from 112.7% at the end of 2024. (February 3, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com

The Moroccan Government Council has approved the renewal of satellite communication service licenses for nine telecommunications operators, reinforcing Morocco's position among Africa's most advanced players in the space and satellite sector. Minister Delegate for Digital Transition and Administrative Reform, Amal El Fallah Seghrouchni, presented the renewals during the weekly council meeting in Rabat, with government spokesperson Mustapha Baitas confirming the decisions at a press briefing. The renewed licenses include major providers such as Maroc Telecom and Wana Corporate for VSAT services. Green Development and Planning Company received dual approvals covering both VSAT operations and 3RP frequency-sharing networks, while Cires Telecom SA secured a renewal for its 3RP network. GMPCS public satellite network renewals were granted to Orbcomm Maghreb, Thuraya Maghreb SA, and Al Hourria Telecom. Gulfsat Maghreb also retained its VSAT network operations. All applications were endorsed by the National Telecommunications Regulatory Agency (ANRT) in line with existing regulations. Morocco, which has launched five satellites to date, continues to strengthen its standing among Africa's leading space-faring nations alongside Egypt, South Africa, Nigeria, Algeria, and Angola. These satellites support Earth observation, communications, and scientific research, reflecting Morocco's sustained investment and regional collaboration in space technology.

(January 20, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com

Nepal

Communication Minister Jagdish Kharel has shared that work is underway to develop Nepal as a digital highway. He said that the current interim government is developing a roadmap for digital Nepal. "We are trying to move the country forward by creating a roadmap for Digital Nepal. Its future lies in the individuals and organizations that are creating and contributing to the latest innovations in the field of information technology," the minister said. For the unaware, the phrase digital highway is used figuratively, of course. It refers to a broad use of digital infrastructures such as telecom, fiber, AI, and other digital technologies that help data flow electronically and deliver faster and more efficient services. In more layman's terms, it stresses the extensive dominance of technologies in daily life and vital services. To eliminate confusion, digital highway and information highway refer to the same concept. It's just that the former is a rather modern term. In essence, it's about laying a wide-scale communication infrastructure that delivers services and connectivity across a large area for a huge number of people. During his meet-up with the ICT aspirants, Minister Kharel pointed out that the government has passed the National AI Policy. He also said that policy-level arrangements are underway for Digital Nepal. ICT is a growing sector in Nepal, and the government has also been promoting the industry with more flexibility. Let's recall that in 2022, Nepali IT professionals exported services worth Rs 67 billion. In the 2024 budget speech, the government announced a plan to export services worth Rs 3 trillion in the next decade. Such is the ambition of the government, owing to the huge potential of the growing industry in recent years. Communication Minister Kharel assured that the Ministry of Communications would play a proactive role to act as a bridge to connect with the concerned ministries for the development of the information technology sector.

(January 6, 2025) www.nepalitelecom.com

Oman

Oman's telecommunications sector recorded strong growth between 2021 and 2025, driven by accelerated digital infrastructure expansion, rising connectivity demand, and increased adoption of emerging technologies, according to data released by the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA). Sector revenues reached approximately OMR961 million in 2025, marking a 25 percent increase over the five-year period. The postal services segment also demonstrated significant growth, with revenues from 87 licensed companies rising by 81 percent to OMR29.5 million, reflecting broader digital and logistics sector momentum across the Sultanate. Mobile telecommunications subscriptions grew by 7 percent to reach 6.42 million, while Internet of Things (IoT) connections recorded the fastest expansion, increasing by 358 percent to 1.632 million subscriptions. Fixed broadband subscriptions rose by 14 percent, supported by substantial network modernization efforts, including a 189 percent increase in 5G base station deployments nationwide. By the end of 2025, high-speed fixed broadband coverage extended to 67 percent of residential units, while all government schools achieved internet connectivity, with 97 percent connected through high-speed fixed broadband infrastructure. The regulator also confirmed that 50 government schools have been connected via Starlink satellite services, enhancing digital access in previously underserved areas. Workforce localization remained a key focus, with Omanization rates reaching 94 percent in telecommunications and 73 percent in postal services. Through the "Nafath" initiative, 843

projects valued at OMR29.2 million were implemented, including procurement opportunities allocated to small and medium enterprises to support local economic participation. Looking ahead, the TRA indicated that its upcoming strategy will prioritize investment attraction, service quality improvement, job creation, and infrastructure readiness for artificial intelligence technologies. The authority is also preparing new regulations aimed at protecting users from intrusive and fraudulent communications while strengthening privacy safeguards for official data.

(February 19, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com

Oman's telecommunications sector maintained strong growth momentum in 2025, with total mobile service subscriptions rising 9.6 percent year-on-year to 8,009,723 by the end of November, reflecting sustained demand for digital connectivity across the sultanate. Data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information showed prepaid subscriptions continuing to dominate the market, reaching 5,152,342 connections, up 2 percent compared to the same period last year. Postpaid subscriptions also recorded growth, increasing 1.8 percent to 1,268,345. The fastest expansion was recorded in Internet of Things (IoT) and machine-to-machine (M2M) connections, which surged 57.5 percent to 1,589,036 subscriptions. The sharp increase highlights growing adoption of connected technologies across sectors such as logistics, utilities, and smart infrastructure. Fixed communications also showed steady progress. Fixed broadband subscriptions rose 3 percent to 597,114, driven largely by continued fiber network expansion. Fiber-to-the-home connections climbed 10.8 percent to 354,014, while fixed 5G subscriptions recorded a modest 1 percent increase. In contrast, fixed 4G subscriptions declined sharply by 54.5 percent, and ADSL connections fell 36.1 percent, underscoring a market shift toward high-speed fiber-based services. Fixed telephone subscriptions edged up 1 percent to 411,065. Meanwhile, internet capacity expanded 14.8 percent to 4,102,219 megabits per second by the end of November, reinforcing Oman's continued investment in digital infrastructure and network capacity.

(January 6, 2025) www.meatechwatch.com

Pakistan

The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) wishes to address recent concerns published on social media regarding mobile tariffs, service quality, and unauthorized deductions, and to reassure the public of its unwavering commitment to consumer protection. To create a structured and fair tariff framework, PTA has notified the Mobile Tariff Regulations, 2025. Under these regulations, operators with Significant Market Power (SMP) are strictly required to obtain prior approval from PTA for any introduction or revision of tariffs. Other operators may determine their tariffs based on business considerations, but remain subject to PTA's right to intervene if tariffs are found to be detrimental to consumer interests. While PTA acts as a guardian of consumer interests, it also recognizes that sustainable market conditions are necessary. It is important to note that Pakistan continues to have one of the lowest Average Revenue Per User (ARPU) and most affordable mobile data prices in the region. PTA is proactively working to enhance service quality. A key step in this direction is the upcoming spectrum auction planned for March 2025. This auction will require substantial investment from mobile operators to acquire new spectrum and deploy advanced network infrastructure. This will directly lead to measurable improvements in network quality, coverage, and data speeds for consumers across the country. All mobile operators have been strictly directed to obtain explicit, prior consent from subscribers before activating any Value-Added Services. Consumers are encouraged to regularly check and manage their active subscriptions through their respective mobile operator's official application. PTA remains dedicated to fostering a transparent and fair regulatory environment that balances consumer protection with the sustainable investment required for the long-term development of Pakistan's telecom sector. (February 22, 2026) www.pta.gov.pk

Pakistan has retained its status as a Fifth-Generation (G5) regulator under the International Telecommunication Union Regulatory Benchmarking Framework, achieving an overall score of 75.77 in the ITU G5 Benchmark 2025. Pakistan first entered the G5 category in 2021 with a score of 58.64, which improved to 68.36 in 2023. The 2025 score of 75.77 reflects continued progress in regulatory reforms, spectrum management, competition framework, and digital policy alignment. With this steady upward trend, Pakistan remains within the "Advanced" regulatory maturity range (60–80) and is moving towards the "Leading" tier (80–100). The achievement reinforces Pakistan's credibility in international telecommunications forums and strengthens its standing in global regulatory processes. (February 17, 2026) www.pta.gov.pk

Pakistan's government plans to release around 600 MHz of additional telecom spectrum—more than 200% of the current 274 MHz allocation—to address rising demand for high-speed mobile internet and reduce network congestion nationwide. The upcoming auction will span multiple bands including 700, 1800, 2100, 2300, 2600, and 3500 MHz, following completion of regulatory procedures. The move aims to improve mobile broadband capacity, backhaul efficiency, and user experience, particularly in high-demand and underserved areas. The IT minister noted that current service issues stem from congestion, limited fiberization, power outages, and geographic constraints. Alongside the auction, PTA is advancing measures such as VoWiFi, VoLTE, infrastructure sharing, national roaming, and Fiber-to-the-Site expansion to strengthen digital infrastructure and prepare for 5G.

(February 4, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com

The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), following approval of the Federal Cabinet, has notified the Policy Framework for Mobile Virtual Network Operator (MVNO) Services in Pakistan to promote competition, innovation, and enhanced consumer choice in the telecommunications sector. The framework enables MVNOs to offer nationwide mobile and next-generation mobile services under their own brand identities through commercial agreements with licensed Mobile Network Operators, without holding spectrum. MVNO licenses will be issued for an initial period of fifteen (15) years, subject to fulfillment of applicable regulatory requirements. The policy framework is designed to encourage innovative service models, improve quality of service, and expand affordable and diversified mobile offerings for consumers across Pakistan. It is expected to attract investment, create employment opportunities, and accelerate progress towards the national "Digital Pakistan" vision by making mobile services more accessible and inclusive. PTA will shortly initiate the licensing process for MVNOs in Pakistan. In this regard, the MVNO license template will be developed and issued in accordance with the approved Policy Framework, outlining detailed licensing terms, conditions, and regulatory obligations for prospective licensees.
(January 7, 2026) www.pta.gov.pk

The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has commenced the grant of Class Licenses for the Provision of Internet Services at the District Level as part of its continued efforts to encourage local entrepreneurship and enhance broadband penetration across Pakistan. The Class License shall be issued for a period of ten (10) years. Applicants will be required to pay a one-time Initial License Fee of PKR 300,000 (three hundred thousand). An Annual License Fee (ALF) of PKR 100,000 (one hundred thousand) for the first year shall be payable along with the initial fee before the license becomes effective. The ALF for subsequent years shall be payable in advance and will be subject to an annual increase of 10%.
(January 1, 2026) www.pta.gov.pk

Qatar

Qatar is accelerating the adoption of sovereign cloud infrastructure as part of a broader strategy to strengthen digital trust, protect data sovereignty, and support long-term digital transformation. The initiative reflects a growing national focus on ensuring that sensitive data, including government, economic, and personal information, remains governed under Qatari legal frameworks while enabling access to advanced cloud and artificial intelligence capabilities. Industry experts note that sovereign cloud adoption in Qatar goes beyond regulatory compliance, representing a strategic move toward digital autonomy in an increasingly data-driven global economy. The approach ensures that critical data is hosted locally and subject to national legislation, particularly under Qatar's Personal Data Privacy Protection Law, reinforcing confidence among citizens, businesses, and investors using digital services. A key component of this strategy is Deloitte's Cloud Centre of Excellence in Lusail, which supports public and private sector organizations in designing secure, sovereign, and AI-ready cloud environments. The center focuses on accelerating application modernization, enabling compliant cloud migration, and developing local technical capabilities to manage and optimize cloud platforms independently. The sovereign cloud framework is also expected to drive broader adoption of digital services, including e-government platforms, digital banking, and smart infrastructure initiatives, by strengthening user trust and ensuring privacy protections. Analysts suggest that regulatory clarity and consistent policy direction have positioned Qatar as a trusted regional hub for secure digital innovation. Aligned with Qatar National Vision 2030, the strategy also emphasizes talent development and knowledge transfer, with a focus on building local expertise in cloud and AI technologies to sustain future innovation. As global debates around data sovereignty intensify, Qatar's model highlights a balanced approach that leverages global technology ecosystems while anchoring governance and capability within national borders. (February 18, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com

The Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA) announced the issuance of an updated version of the Qatar National Frequency Allocation Plan (QNFAP), which includes updates that keep pace with the rapid developments in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector, particularly in the field of radiocommunication services. This update is based on the results of the World Radiocommunication Conference 2023 and the outcomes of the public consultation conducted by CRA with the participation of various stakeholders and concerned entities at the local, regional, and international levels, which enriched the plan's content and ensured its alignment with best practices and relevant standards. QNFAP is the approved regulatory document for managing the use of the radio spectrum in the State of Qatar, as a limited national resource owned by the State. It defines the general framework for regulating the radio spectrum and ensuring its efficient use. The Plan includes the National Frequency Allocation Table (NFAT), which outlines the frequency bands allocated to various radiocommunication services, enabling relevant sectors such as ICT, air and maritime navigation, security, energy, and other government entities to utilize the allocated frequency bands for services that align with the nature of their activities, in a manner consistent with relevant international standards and agreements.
(February 9, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com

The Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA) has launched a public consultation on the proposed update of fees for the use of radio spectrum in the State of Qatar. The consultation comes as part of the periodic review conducted by CRA of the national spectrum fee framework implemented under Ministerial Decision No. (15) of 2015 following the approval of the Cabinet in the same year. This review reflects ongoing advancements in wireless services, the

release of new bands following recent World Radiocommunication Conferences (WRC-19 and WRC-23), and the increasing demand for radio frequencies. CRA has assessed both current and future uses of the spectrum to ensure that spectrum fees remain transparent, equitable, and consistent with international regulatory practices. The proposed framework maintains CRA's existing formula-based methodology, which ties fees to key parameters such as bandwidth, frequency band, coverage area, and duration of use, while incorporating targeted improvements. These improvements include updated fee tables for terrestrial radio services, refined structures for satellite services that account for differences across system types, and the introduction of a new dedicated category for emerging direct-to-device satellite services. The framework also introduces a simplified fee table for Wi-Fi, wireless cameras, and temporary event-related uses, along with clearer administrative fees for spectrum-related services. Together, these refinements aim to promote efficient spectrum use, support innovation, and ensure that valuable frequency resources are managed sustainably. (January 9, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com

Saudi Arabia

The Kingdom, represented by the Communications, Space and Technology Authority, participated in the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Digital Regulation Network of the International Telecommunication Union, which was hosted by the Georgian Telecommunications Authority in the capital, Tbilisi. In the presence of the Deputy Governor of the Communications, Space and Technology Authority for the Regulation and Competition Sector, Engineer Omar Al-Rajraji, a member of the Network Board of Directors, the meeting was chaired by the Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) at the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Dr. Cosmas Zavazava. The Board members discussed the preparations and directions for the 2026 Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR), focusing on formulating the global regulatory agenda and identifying priority topics for the upcoming symposium this year. The Board highlighted the initiatives that will be discussed within the regional regulatory associations and called on their members to implement them in order to ensure the acceleration of sustainable digital transformation. The Deputy Governor of the Authority also participated in a dialogue session on "Shaping the Digital Horizon: Pillars of the World Summit on the Future (WSIS) and the Participatory Approach to the Future," highlighting the Kingdom's role in promoting international cooperation in the field of regulating and sustaining the communications, space and technology sector through the Authority's initiatives and its cooperative projects with the International Telecommunication Union, clarifying ways to accelerate sustainable digital transformation for all, and continuing coordination efforts between sectors and regions, in addition to the importance of directing the efforts of multiple stakeholders towards raising the quality of the regulatory environment and enhancing joint international cooperation. (February 12, 2026) www.cst.gov.sa

The Communications, Space and Technology Commission (CST) organized a session to foster activities within Space sector, held on the sidelines of the Space Debris Conference (SDC2026) in Riyadh, with the participation of a number of relevant entities in the Space sector. The session is part of CST's continuous efforts to enhance communication with stakeholders and gather their feedback on the "Space Sector Regulations and Guidelines" document, which remains open for public consultation until 24 March 2026, contributing to the development of a regulatory framework that supports the growth and sustainability of the Space sector in Saudi Arabia, while fostering an attractive investment environment and encouraging research and innovation in Space. The session featured notable regulations for Space activities, highlighted CST's key role in regulating and supervising the space sector, and presented its action plan for developing the space sector regulations and guidelines, along with providing an overview of the public consultation document. CST serves as a strategic partner in SDC, which is part of national efforts to enhance the Kingdom's role in leading global initiatives focused on space sustainability and reinforce its position as a key hub for international collaboration in addressing space debris challenges. (January 30, 2026) www.cst.gov.sa

The Communications, Space & Technology Commission (CST) held the session on Digital Enablement for the Future of Emerging Technologies, aimed at strengthening engagement with technology companies, raising awareness of relevant enablers and regulations, and enriching dialogue on the future of technologies and their impact on the business sector. The session was organized in partnership with the Innovation Center at the Small and Medium Enterprises General Authority (Monsha'at), with the participation of representatives from service providers and technology companies, business incubators and accelerators, entrepreneurs, and investors. During the session, CST presented an overview of the regulatory landscape for technologies and the role of enabling entities in supporting the growth of service providers and technology companies, alongside a comprehensive outlook on the technology market in the Kingdom and its future trends. The discussion also highlighted opportunities available to technology companies, the future of technologies and their business impact, reaffirming CST's role in enabling and regulating the technology sector through the development of regulations, encouraging technology adoption, and creating a supportive environment that enhances companies' growth and competitiveness locally and globally. The session featured exchanges of perspectives and discussions on opportunities and challenges, showcased CST's ongoing efforts to support the technology market, and emphasized raising awareness of regulations and enablers, as well as strengthening partnerships with relevant stakeholders—contributing to the growth and sustainability of the sector.

www.cst.gov.sa

Saudi Arabia's Communications, Space and Technology Commission (CST) has concluded a series of specialized investment awareness sessions aimed at strengthening investor engagement and unlocking opportunities in the Kingdom's rapidly growing space sector. Organized in partnership with the Venture Capital and Private Equity Association (VCPEA), the initiative sought to connect investors with high-potential space companies while building deeper understanding of the sector's commercial potential. The program included targeted awareness events for investors and emerging space firms, alongside educational workshops designed to enhance sector-specific investment knowledge. These activities focused on narrowing the gap between innovation and capital by fostering stronger relationships across the space ecosystem. The final session featured a presentation on key emerging space technologies and their investment prospects, followed by a panel discussion moderated by VCPEA Chief Executive Officer Qusai Al-Saif. Investors active in the space industry discussed recent sector developments, rising entrepreneurial activity, and increasing investor interest. Panelists also explored the role of enabling technologies such as artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things, highlighting their growing impact across sectors including food security, urban development, and defence. The discussion underscored the rising volume of investment flowing into space-related technologies and their expanding real-world applications. The awareness series forms part of CST's broader strategy to position the space sector as a driver of economic diversification, startup growth, and national talent development, in line with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 goals. (December 29, 2025) www.meatechwatch.com

Sri Lanka

The Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka (TRCSL) is accelerating the expansion of 4G broadband services under its national 'Communication to the Village' initiative, aimed at improving connectivity in underserved and rural areas across the country. The project, launched in 2021 under the Finance Act No. 11 of 2004, focuses on extending mobile communication infrastructure to regions with limited or no access to reliable telecom services. According to government officials, the initiative operates through a cost-sharing model between mobile network operators and the regulator, enabling the construction of communication towers in commercially less viable locations. To date, 83 towers have been completed, bringing mobile connectivity to previously unserved communities and supporting broader digital inclusion objectives. Progress on the project had slowed due to rising operational costs and limited revenue generation from certain rural tower locations, particularly amid Sri Lanka's ongoing economic challenges. In response, TRCSL has introduced revised reimbursement guidelines to accelerate deployment. Under the updated framework, the regulator will cover up to Rs. 35 million or 75 percent of the actual construction cost per tower and related equipment, whichever is lower. The enhanced financial support was presented to the Cabinet by the President, who also serves as Minister of Digital Economy, and has received approval as part of broader efforts to strengthen national digital infrastructure and improve access to communication services outside major urban centers. The initiative reflects a growing regional focus on expanding last-mile connectivity, as governments and regulators increasingly prioritize rural broadband access to support economic participation, digital services adoption, and inclusive growth. By improving network reach through shared infrastructure investment, Sri Lanka aims to reduce connectivity gaps while supporting long-term digital transformation goals. (February 19, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com

The Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka (TRCSL) awarded licenses for 100 MHz of spectrum in the 3.5 GHz band to both Dialog Axiata and SLT Mobitel and a license for 200 MHz of spectrum in the 27 GHz band to mobile market leader Dialog Axiata. The country's third main telco, Hutch Sri Lanka, did not participate in the auction. The regulator reportedly raised about 10bn Sri Lankan rupees ($32.3m) from the auction. Dialog Axiata, the leading service provider in a market of 29 million mobile connections, announced it has more than 220 active 5G sites already delivering 'Dialog 5G Ultra' services to more than 1.5 million customers. "By leveraging both 3500 MHz spectrum for wide-area mobile coverage and 27 GHz spectrum for high-capacity, gigabit-speed use cases, Dialog is uniquely positioned to support future-ready consumer and enterprise applications," the operator noted. Group CEO Supun Weerasinghe stated: "The launch of Dialog 5G Ultra represents a defining step in strengthening Sri Lanka's digital infrastructure for the future. Beyond faster connectivity, 5G is a critical enabler of innovation, productivity, and inclusion across the digital economy. As Sri Lanka's largest 5G network, we are committed to investing $100m over the next two years to expand 5G connectivity across the country and ensure that individuals, businesses, and industries can fully participate in a digital Sri Lanka." (December 22, 2025) www.telecomtv.com

Turkey

Turkey and Somalia formalized communications cooperation, signing an agreement that could open doors for Turkish firms in one of Africa's most dynamic telecom markets. Somalia's National Communications Authority (NCA) Director General

Mustafa Yasin Sheikh and Turkey's Information Technologies and Communications Authority (BTK) Chairman Ömer Abdullah Karagözoğlu signed the Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of the two countries. The agreement covers satellite communications regulation, cybersecurity, spectrum management, broadband infrastructure, network security, and internet governance. Somalia's telecommunications sector emerged from decades without central government oversight to become one of Africa's most competitive markets. Private operators including Hormuud Telecom, Somtel, Golis Telecom and Telesom deliver some of the continent's cheapest call rates and most advanced mobile money systems. The MoU signals Turkey's growing interest in Somalia's digital economy. Turkish companies have been exploring opportunities in fiber networks, data centers, and satellite infrastructure, building on Ankara's broader investments in Somali ports, roads, hospitals, and its largest overseas military base in Mogadishu. (February 10, 2026) www.dawan.africa

Minister of Transport and Infrastructure Abdulkadir Uraloğlu stated that they will bring the quality of mobile communication services in line with the requirements of the age by implementing 5G technology in Türkiye. Minister said, "We will introduce 5G signal to our country on April 1, 2026, and we will have widespread use of it in our country within two years." Minister made a statement about 5G in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey during the discussion of the 2026 Budget Law Proposal and the 2024 Final Accounts Law Proposal of the Ministry and its affiliated and related organizations. "We are bringing together speed, capacity, and service quality in mobile communication with the demands of the modern age." Minister stated that another strategic step strengthening the integrated service concept in the field is the 5G process, which reinforces Türkiye's communication infrastructure with next-generation technologies, and added, "Turkey is entering another phase in its digitalization journey. By deploying 5G technology in our country, we are bringing speed, capacity, and service quality in mobile communication together with the requirements of the age." Minister stated that with this transition, communication speed would increase approximately tenfold; citizens would have access to faster, more reliable, and more uninterrupted communication. (December 11, 2025) www.uab.gov.tr

United Arab Emirates

The UAE's Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA) has clarified that a customs clearance permit is mandatory for importing telecommunications devices into the country. TDRA emphasized that the requirement ensures telecom equipment enters the UAE legally and safely, preventing the entry of devices that may pose technical or security risks. The authority said it offers services to issue the necessary permits and provides detailed guidance on approval types and procedures through its official website. Importers, businesses, and individuals are urged to review the full import requirements online or contact TDRA's unified helpline at 80012 for support.

(February 3, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com

The TRA has convened the nineteenth meeting of the Spectrum Strategy and Coordination Committee as part of efforts to prepare Bahrain's telecommunications sector for future global developments. The virtual meeting focused on Bahrain's readiness for the World Radiocommunication Conference 2027 (WRC-27), organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), which sets global frameworks for the use of radio frequencies supporting mobile, satellite, and other critical communication services. Committee members stressed the importance of early preparation for WRC-27, noting that its decisions will shape global communications systems and enable the deployment of new technologies. Active participation, they said, is essential to safeguarding national interests, supporting innovation, and ensuring the delivery of reliable and advanced communication services. The meeting also reviewed regional coordination with neighboring countries to strengthen cooperation in broadcasting and mobile communications, reduce cross-border interference, improve service quality, and ensure seamless connectivity. In addition, discussions covered TRA's national, regional, and international engagements during 2025, reflecting Bahrain's commitment to aligning with global best practices and reinforcing its role in the telecommunications sector. Mariam Ahmed Jumaan, Chairperson of the TRA Board and the Committee, said WRC-27 represents a critical global milestone whose outcomes will influence the future of communications and the adoption of emerging technologies. She emphasized that early preparation and collaboration with regional and international partners are key to supporting Bahrain's digital growth and evolving sectoral needs. TRA reaffirmed that the Committee will continue monitoring global developments, strengthening stakeholder coordination, and promoting the efficient and sustainable use of spectrum resources in line with national priorities.

(December 16, 2025) www.meatechwatch.com

SUBEX

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REGULATORY ACTIVITIES BEYOND THE SA-ME-NA REGION

Australia

The ACMA has amended rules for telcos checking customer identities when activating prepaid mobile services. The new rules will allow telcos to conduct ID checks using Digital ID verification services. The amendment to the Telecommunications (Service Provider – Identity Checks for Prepaid Mobile Carriage Services) Determination 2017 will support faster service activations and a smoother overall customer experience. The change to the rules follows an ACMA investigation, also released today, which found between November 2024 and February 2025, Telstra Limited (Telstra) failed to adhere to customer identity check rules when activating more than 18,000 prepaid mobile services. While Telstra did conduct customer checks using an accredited third-party identity verification service, this method would have required special dispensation from the ACMA under industry rules for prepaid mobiles. As this method was not permitted at the time, Telstra has been issued with a formal warning. The non-compliance did not result in any consumer harm and Telstra has not been subject to prior compliance or enforcement action in relation to these rules. Telstra has since sought and received the dispensation required which applied until the commencement of these new rules. Following the investigation, the ACMA proposed a change to the rules and undertook a public consultation. Stakeholders were broadly supportive of the change. The ACMA notes that during the consultation process a number of additional important issues with the Prepaid Determination were raised, including suggestions for improved consumer protections. The ACMA will progress a holistic review and update of the Prepaid Determination as a priority in 2026.

(December 23, 2025) www.acma.gov.au

Bolivia

Boliviaissued a decree that will allow global satellite internet companies such as Starlink or Kuiper to provide internet access across the Andean nation as it tries to upgrade its technology and speed up its notoriously slow connectivity rates. Bolivia's centrist President Rodrigo Paz signed the decree, which waives the restrictions placed on international satellite companies by the socialist administration of his predecessor, Luis Arce. Last year, Arce's government refused to grant a license to SpaceX, which owns Starlink, to operate in Bolivia, citing data protection and national sovereignty concerns. For years, Bolivia has tried to improve internet access in remote areas with a satellite purchased from China during the government of left-wing leader Evo Morales. When the satellite was acquired in 2013, Morales promised it would "enlighten the people, after years of living in obscurity." However, the Chinese satellite, known as the Tupac Katari, failed to significantly speed up internet connections on mobile phones or in homes, because it relies on geostationary technology and orbits Earth at a distance of about 35,000 kilometers (about 21,800 miles) from the surface.

(December 24, 2025) www.telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com

Brazil

The National Telecommunications Agency (Anatel), launched the bidding notice for mobile telephony in the 700 MHz band, a part of the spectrum that will be used to expand mobile phone and internet signals in Brazil. The auction is scheduled to take place in April this year and involves an investment of 2 billion reais. The rules were published in an extra edition of the Official Gazette of the Union (DOU). This band is considered strategic because it allows the signal to reach farther and work better inside homes, schools, hospitals, and buildings. With it, it is possible to serve larger areas with fewer towers, which facilitates the expansion of coverage in rural areas, highways, and regions farther away from major centers. “The new 5G auction, which we are going to hold together with the Ministry of Communications, will bring connectivity to the highways, to the cities that are farthest from major centers, so that we can ensure that all Brazilians have access to the internet, access to a quality signal during their trips, for truck drivers and for everyone who travels on our roads,” said Anatel’s president, Carlos Baigorri. With the auction, at least 800 thousand people from 864 small localities will benefit. According to the minister of Communications, Frederico de Siqueira Filho, the measure will help reduce inequalities in access to connectivity. “This auction is essential to bring cell phone and internet signal to places that still suffer from coverage gaps.

(February 16, 2026) www.bnamericas.com

Cambodia

Cambodian mobile users now have access to 5G services after the country's three main operators, Cellcard, Metfone and Smart, launched their respective networks at the start of the new year. The Ministry of Post and Telecommunications said the rollout will be carried out in phases, beginning with coverage in the capital Phnom Penh and selected areas across provinces including Siem Reap, Kandal, Svay Rieng, Kampong Speu, Takeo, Kampong Cham, Kampong Thom, Prey Veng, Kratie, Kampong Chhnang, Pursat, Preah Sihanouk, Stung Treng and Kampot. The Ministry said further phases will extend 5G services to additional provinces, though it did not provide a timeline or details on which areas will be covered next. According to the Ministry, the introduction of 5G is expected to support Cambodia's wider digital transformation efforts by enabling new services and economic opportunities. Cambodia currently has around 19.6 million internet subscribers and 20.6 million mobile users, based on official figures. (January 5, 2025) www.developingtelecoms.com

Canada

Canada's telecommunications regulator is launching another consultation aimed at empowering cellphone and internet customers, with the aim of improving how information about mobile network coverage is reported. The CRTC says it wants to develop a standardized method for cellphone coverage reporting, noting public opinion research shows that many customers still find there are significant gaps in coverage where cellphone service is unavailable. The commission says this will help service providers, governments, public safety organizations and Canadians better identify where coverage is strong and where improvements are needed. It is accepting public feedback until March 16, with Canadians able to submit comments online, by letter or fax.

(January 16, 2026) www.biv.com

China

China firmly opposes the European Union (EU)'s move to list some Chinese enterprises as so-called "high-risk suppliers," the Ministry of Commerce said. Ministry spokesperson He Yongqian told a regular press conference that the EU recently issued documents requiring member states to exclude "high-risk suppliers" from 18 key sectors, including energy, transportation and ICT service management. He added that China has voiced serious concerns over this move. Chinese companies have long operated in Europe in strict compliance with local laws and regulations, delivering high-quality products and services and contributing to Europe's telecom and digital industries, yet the EU has, without any factual basis, listed some Chinese firms as "high-risk suppliers" and restricted their involvement in 5G development, said the spokesperson. China resolutely opposes the EU's discriminatory practices and wrong approach of politicizing economic and trade issues and overextending the concept of security, according to the spokesperson. (January 22, 2026) www.english.news.cn

Colombia

Colombia is preparing a process to allocate radioelectric spectrum to local players, with the aim of expanding fixed residential internet connectivity in rural and remote areas of the country. The initiative contemplates granting local use permits for the 900MHz band, considered optimal for rural environments due to its propagation characteristics, with the goal of expanding internet access in these areas. The ICT ministry is considering granting spectrum to connectivity communities and to telecommunications network and service providers that, as of June 30, 2025, have fewer than 30,000 accesses. Connectivity communities are non-profit social organizations that build, manage, and operate their own network infrastructure to provide fixed community Internet access. The spectrum would be granted for its exploitation in a local area and for a period of 5 years. The draft resolutions are under public consultation until February 16, 2026. In August, the ICT ministry indicated that during the current administration 19,057 rural schools have been connected, which represents almost half of all rural educational institutions in the country. In addition, 2,600km of fiber optic cable were extended and 134,860 households were connected in rural areas of La Guajira, Chocó and Catatumbo, among other regions.

(January 28, 2026) www.bnamericas.com

Ghana

The National Communications Authority (NCA) has held a stakeholder engagement with Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to provide clarity on the reclassification of the ISP licensing regime and the revised Schedule of Fees and Charges. The engagement took place at the NCA Tower on 17th December, 2025. Delivering the keynote address, the Acting Deputy Director-General in charge of Technical Operations at the NCA, Mr. Suleman Salifu, explained that the ISP landscape has evolved significantly over the years, driven by new business models, expanding network footprints, and increased demand for bandwidth, cloud services, and content delivery. He noted that the existing three-tier categorization of ISPs which is Nationwide, Rural, and Hotspot had become inadequate to reflect current operational realities. To address this, the Authority has introduced additional categories, including Regional ISP, Internet Reseller, and Internet Network Provider (IP Transit), to ensure better alignment between licensing obligations and the scale of operations. Mr. Salifu further highlighted the introduction of a 0.5 per cent Net Revenue Regulatory Fee, which replaces the previous flat fee structure. According to him, the new approach aligns with international best practice and promotes fairness by linking regulatory fees more closely to operators' commercial activities.

(December 18, 2025) www.nca.org.gh

India

India has surpassed 400 million 5G users, making it the world's second-largest 5G market after China and one of the fastest adopters globally since launching commercial services in late 2022. In a social media post announcing the milestone, Jyotiraditya Scindia, the country's union minister for communications and development of the North Eastern Region, said the country is "setting new global benchmarks in scale, speed and digital transformation." According to figures cited by the minister, the country's 5G subscriber base now exceeds that of other major markets, including the United States with around 350 million users, the European Union with 200 million, and Japan with 190 million. China remains the global leader, with more than one billion 5G connections. India's commercial 5G rollout began in October 2022, with operators initially launching services in selected cities before rapidly expanding coverage nationwide. Local carriers Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio Infocomm were the first to introduce 5G services and each reported reaching 50 million users within their first year of operation. Vodafone Idea followed later, launching 5G in select cities during 2025. Meanwhile, state-run telco BSNL is expected to launch 5G services this year. Government officials previously said that the upgrade to 5G technology by BSNL will rely entirely on India's homegrown telecom stack, developed by C-DOT, Tejas Networks, and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS). Government data shows that India had 518,854 5G base stations in operation by the end of 2025, up from approximately 464,990 at the beginning of the year. Local operators deployed 4,112 new 5G base transceiver stations (BTS) in December 2025, taking the nationwide total to 518,854, according to data from the Department of Telecommunications (DoT).

(January 21, 2026) www.etvbharat.com

Kazakhstan

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Development of Kazakhstan, Zhaslan Madiyev, chaired a meeting on the development of telecommunications infrastructure and the implementation of the Affordable Internet national project, as per to a statement from the ministry's press service reported by Qazinform. The meeting focused on ensuring stable and high-quality internet access across Kazakhstan, including rural and remote areas. A key priority discussed was expanding internet connectivity in rural regions. In cooperation with Kazakhtelecom, more than 3,000 rural settlements are planned to be connected to high-speed internet. The meeting also highlighted a "last mile" internet connectivity subsidy project supported by the World Bank, which will cover up to 50% of capital costs for small and medium-sized operators. Mobile internet development was another priority, with plans for a gradual transition from 3G to 4G by 2027 and expansion of 4G coverage to settlements with populations of 250 or more. Discussions also included the rollout of 5G networks and the reduction of areas without internet coverage. In 2025, more than 300 rural settlements were connected to the internet via satellite. In 2026, new operators are expected to enter the market, introducing Direct-to-Cell technology that will allow smartphones to connect directly to satellites.

(February 3, 2026) wwwdaryo.uz

Kazakhstan is implementing mandatory biometric identification for all new mobile phone subscribers as part of broader efforts to combat telephone and internet fraud, the Ministry of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Development has announced. The ministry noted that the country already enforces several measures to address SIM card misuse, including efforts to prevent fraud, illegal SIM registration, and the use of devices for mass calls and bulk messaging. From the start of 2026, these safeguards will be tightened further. Under the new regulations, SIM cards will only be issued after biometric identification is completed. Communication services will not be activated until the subscriber's identity is verified through facial scanning. The policy applies to both individuals and legal entities.

(January 5, 2026) www.timesca.com

Liberia

A 'digital Liberia — leaving no one behind' is the promise of a recently launched new five-year roadmap aimed at accelerating the country's digital transformation and strengthening national control over critical technology systems. The Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (MoPT) Strategic Plan for 2025–2029, is called Digital Liberia: Equity, Sovereignty and Innovation for a Connected Future. Sovereignty is evidently a key word here: the plan is said to outline a coordinated push to build local digital capacity and reduce reliance on external infrastructure and platforms. There are eight priority focus areas. Alongside strengthening cybersecurity and data sovereignty they include expanding universal connectivity, promoting digital inclusion, introducing a national digital addressing system alongside postal reform, advancing e-governance, and supporting ICT-driven innovation. The plan also supports broader national priorities such as economic growth, job creation and improved public service delivery. The strategy aligns with the ARREST (Agriculture, Roads, Rule of Law, Education, Sanitation and Tourism) Agenda, Liberia's fourth post-conflict National Development Plan (2025–2029). While these aims are admirable are they measurable? The announcement insists that focus areas are grouped under four broader strategic pillars designed to drive measurable progress while ensuring that digital development benefits communities across the country. At the moment, however, the new document does not yet appear to be available on the MoPT website, although a Whole of Government National Digital Strategy (2025 – 2029), posted in September last year, can be found there. (February 5, 2025) www.developingtelecoms.com

Mozambique

The update responds to the fast-evolving digital landscape and the growing threat of telecom-enabled crime, including cyberattacks and AI-driven fraud, with the aim of strengthening national security, protecting public and financial services, and safeguarding state sovereignty. The regulation expands the powers of the National Communications Institute of Mozambique (INCM), allowing it to deploy traffic-monitoring systems within operators' networks. Licensed operators must provide detailed communications data, such as Call Detail Records (CDR) and Internet Protocol Detail Records (IPDR), for security monitoring and revenue assurance to ensure accurate billing and taxation. Operators are also required to identify and act against fraudulent traffic, conduct annual network audits, and report or suspend verified suspicious activity within two hours. While INCM may order service interruptions for security reasons, any suspension exceeding 48 hours must receive judicial approval. Operators will contribute to regulatory costs, capped at 1% of annual gross revenue. Non-compliance carries fines of 500 to 3,500 minimum public-sector salaries, with penalties doubled if negligence leads to state revenue losses.

(December 24, 2025) www.telecomreviewafrica.com

Nigeria

Nigeria's Internet market just got a little more crowded, and that's not a bad thing. The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has licensed seven new Internet Service Providers (ISPs), pushing the total number of authorized ISPs in the country from 224 in December 2025 to 231. Each of the new operators has been granted a five-year license, running from January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2030, according to updated data from the regulator. Most of the new entrants are clustered where business activity is highest. Five are based in Lagos, while Abuja and Imo State picked up one each. The newly licensed companies include Amazon Kuiper Nigeria Limited, Boost ISP, Dasol Solutions Services, Fiber Sonic, Intellivision Technologies, Wetom Technologies, and Granet Technologies — another reminder of how Lagos and the FCT continue to dominate Nigeria's broadband landscape. What this means, at least on paper, is more competition at a time when telecom operators are battling hard for users. Nigeria had 144.7 million Internet subscribers as of November 2025, with data consumption hitting a record 1.236 million terabytes in that month alone. As more ISPs enter the scene, expectations around service quality, pricing, and reliability are likely to rise. Nigeria's four mobile network operators — MTN, Airtel, Globacom, and 9mobile — still account for 99.5% of all Internet subscribers. Even so, the NCC's continued licensing push, including recent approvals for satellite providers like Amazon's Project Kuiper, signals a long-term bet on diversifying how Nigerians get online, especially as demand for faster and more reliable connectivity keeps growing.

(January 23, 2026) www.extensia.tech

Peru

Entel Peru is accelerating the expansion of its 5G network by significantly increasing the amount of mid-band spectrum it is using in the 3.5 GHz band, following spectrum awards completed late last year. The Peruvian operator said it has expanded its active 5G bandwidth from 20 megahertz to between 80 and 100 megahertz of contiguous spectrum, depending on the location. The move is designed to boost network capacity, improve speeds, and reduce latency as demand for data-intensive services in the South American nation continues to rise. The 3.5 GHz band is widely viewed as the core frequency for 5G deployments because it balances coverage and

capacity. By aggregating a larger block of continuous spectrum, Entel noted it expects to deliver more consistent performance, particularly in dense urban areas and high-traffic locations. The spectrum upgrade is part of Entel's broader investment strategy in Peru. The operator plans to invest more than $200 million in its mobile network, with spending directed toward both 4G modernization and 5G expansion nationwide. Last year, rival operator Claro Perú had conducted trials of 5G-Advanced (5G-A) technology, reaching peak download speeds of 10 Gbps — up to ten times faster than conventional 5G. Four of the country's mobile operators – Bitel, Claro, Entel and Integratel – have obtained spectrum for 5G deployment in September last year. By the end of 2025, the country had more than 4.3 million connected 5G devices, according to data from the telecommunications regulator.

(January 30, 20026) www.rcrwireless.com

Russia

A Russian court has fined Alphabet's Google over 22 million roubles ($288,000) for distributing VPN (virtual private network) services on the Google Play app store, state news agency TASS reported. VPNs provide a means for Russians to access foreign tech platforms and content that Russia has banned or restricted.

(February 25, 2026) www.reuters.com

South Africa

The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa has published the second Draft Signal Distribution Services Regulations. The second draft Regulations were released in Government Gazette No 53966 on 16 January 2026 and are aimed at promoting fair competition, transparency and efficiency in the wholesale signal distribution market. The publication follows the written and oral representations on the first draft Regulations (Government Gazette No 52622). After due consideration of stakeholder responses to that first draft, the Authority determined that further public consultation was necessary before the publication of final Regulations. "The Authority encourages active participation in this consultative process to ensure that the final regulations support a competitive, sustainable and transparent broadcasting environment in the public interest", said Cllr Nompucuko Nontombana, Chairperson of the Signal Distribution Council Committee. ICASA invites all interested stakeholders to submit written representations on the draft regulations within thirty (30) working days from the date of publication. Council Committee.

(January 21, 2026) www.icasa.org.za

Thailand

Nordic operator group Telenor has agreed to sell its stake in Thailand's True Corporation for NOK39 billion (US$3.9 billion), drawing a line under 25 years in the Southeast Asian market as it continues to pull back from Asia to refocus on its Nordic core. Under the deal, Telenor will sell its 24.95% stake in True to Arise Digital Technology Company for NOK32.3 billion. Arise is owned by Thai businessman Khun Suphachai Chearavanont. The parties have also agreed an option for Arise to acquire Telenor's remaining 5.35% stake within the next two years for a further NOK6.9 billion. The Thailand exit follows Telenor's recent agreement to sell its Pakistani operation to Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited for more than US$500 million, underscoring the group's accelerating retreat from Asian markets. Its remaining Asian units are Grameenphone in Bangladesh and CelcomDigi, in Malysia. Previously, Telenor's footprint stretched to India and Myanmar.

(January 22, 2026) www.developingtelecoms.com

United States

The FCC adopted new rules to expand access to spectrum for utilities, critical infrastructure, and enterprise businesses deploying private 900 MHz broadband networks yesterday. The Report and Order (R&O) will enable broadband deployment on all 10 MHz of the 900 MHz band (896–901 and 935–940 MHz), providing enhanced spectrum capacity to meet a wider range of broadband needs. The new rules introduce a county-level, negotiation-based process to enable broadband deployment where private agreements are reached. The new R&O builds on an R&O from 2020, that established 3/3 MHz paired broadband channels in the 900 MHz band. The new rules also respond to a February 2024 Petition for Rulemaking requesting the Commission to provide an option for 5/5 MHz broadband networks in the 900 MHz band through a voluntary transition process. During the vote, FCC Commissioner Anna Gomez called private wireless networks set up to serve enterprise, utilities and critical infrastructure a "growth area" for wireless connectivity. "Now, as the

FCC assesses spectrum and considers ways on how to best utilize this finite resource, we stay tuned into the opportunities to respond to demand. That's exactly what we do in today's order." FCC Chairman Brendan Carr said the agency has been active over the last year "in facilitating secondary market transactions that allow competitors to put spectrum to higher and more productive uses. As a result, we are already seeing previously fallow spectrum loaded up with traffic," he said, with increasing speeds and coverage while driving down prices. (February 19, 2026) www.insidetowers.com

The Federal Communications Commission voted on proposals that would explore how to successfully phase-out the intercarrier compensation regime for voice telecommunications providers. This is the latest FCC effort to move America's networks to Internet Protocol technology and address the outdated rules that keep Americans on legacy Time-Division Multiplexing technology. The FCC is working to thoughtfully create the right incentives for providers to upgrade to modern, high-speed networks. As part of that effort, the agency seeks to eliminate intercarrier compensation regulations that may encourage providers to continue using TDM networks. The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking will begin a thorough review of the intercarrier compensation rules, proposing to sunset any outdated regulations while being mindful of the complex issues, transition timelines, and paramount connectivity goals. (February 18, 2026) www.benton.org

Vietnam

Vietnam has granted permission for SpaceX to launch its Starlink satellite internet service in the country, after approving a trial last year. According to state media reports, the Ministry of Science and Technology has recently granted Starlink's local unit, Starlink Services Vietnam, telecommunications licenses covering fixed and mobile satellite networks. The company "has also received authorization from the ministry's Radio Frequency Department to use radio frequencies and operate related equipment," one report stated. The approvals allow Starlink to build transmission and reception infrastructure in Vietnam on a permanent basis. In the initial phase of the rollout, the system will be permitted to deploy four ground gateway stations and provide satellite internet access to up to 600,000 user terminals, the reports stated. According to Starlink, Vietnam is set to become the sixth Southeast Asian nation in which its services are currently available, after the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Timor-Leste, and Singapore. The company's availability map lists the remaining nations of Southeast Asia as "coming soon." Vietnamese officials say the service is expected to complement the country's ground-based internet service provision, and extend internet access to remote and mountainous parts of the country.

(February 17, 2026) www.thediplomat.com

United Kingdom

The UK regulator Ofcom has launched two probes investigating mobile operators EE (BT) and Three over their summer network outages. Both networks suffered outages resulting disruptions this past summer across the country. "BT has notified Ofcom of a software issue that resulted in a UK-wide disruption to mobile call services interconnecting to and from the EE network on 24 and 25 July 2025." said Ofcom. "This resulted in BT and EE customers being unable to make or receive mobile calls to other networks and emergency services." While BT has identified a software issue it is not clear yet whether the Three outages were related. Reports at the time alluded to Three customers potentially facing problems if they were unable to contact EE customers, and Ofcom said the Three outage which took place on 25 June 2025 included contacting emergency services.

(December 19, 2025) www.uktin.net

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