Volume 16 | June-July, 2025

A SAMENA Telecommunications Council Publication

www.samenacouncil.org

SAMENA TRENDS

FOR SAMENA TELECOMMUNICATIONS COUNCIL'S MEMBERS

BUILDING DIGITAL ECONOMIES

THIS MONTH

PURPOSEFUL INVESTMENT IN THE DIGITAL FUTURE

TDRA | هيئة تنظيم الاتصالات والحكومة الرقمية
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL GOVERNMENT REGULATORY AUTHORITY

United Arab Emirates

TDRA towards an effective **digital government** that enhances the happiness of society

@TDRAUAE, www.tdra.gov.ae

VOLUME 16 | JUNE-JULY, 2025

SAMENA
TRENDS

Publisher
SAMENA Telecommunications Council

trends@samenacouncil.org
Tel: +971.4.364.2700

Editor-in-Chief
Bocar A. BA

Editorial Director
Izhar Ahmad

Contributing Editors
Ali Tahir
Javaid Akhtar Malik

Knowledge Contributions
Huawei
Omantel
ZTE

Subscriptions
subscriptions@samenacouncil.org

Advertising
ads@samenacouncil.org

CONTENTS

FEATURED

ARTICLES

SAMENA COUNCIL ADVOCACY

CONTENTS

Purposeful Investment in the Digital Future

The conversations taking place across the global digital ecosystem, from Tashkent to Dubai to Geneva, are increasingly aligned on one vital principle: the future of connectivity must be anchored in inclusion, collaboration, and long-term purpose. The mission is no longer simply to build faster or broader networks. It is to build future-proof digital economies where digital transformation delivers meaningful change for all.

At GSMA M360 Eurasia 2025 in Tashkent, the message was clear. Investment must follow purpose. That purpose is equity, resilience, and shared digital prosperity. Digital progress must be judged not solely by the speed of deployment or innovation, but by the depth of its impact on people and communities. It is not infrastructure alone that defines advancement, but how that infrastructure uplifts lives.

Policy and governance are equally critical. During the ITU's TDAG 25 sessions, a strong call was made by the SAMENA Council to strengthen public and private collaboration in shaping future-ready frameworks. Regulatory models must be inclusive, adaptive, and informed by the combined experience of both sectors. The road to meaningful connectivity will not be paved by governments or industry alone, but by collective leadership across borders, sectors, and institutions.

The SAMENA Council Leaders' Summit 2025 reflected strongly on this collective responsibility. A major milestone to this effect was marked with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the SAMENA Council and the World Broadband Association. This partnership brings together regional insight and global influence, establishing a foundation for coordinated action on broadband development. Emphasis was placed on harmonized regulation, sustainable investment, and greener deployment practices. These efforts aim to advance not only infrastructure goals but environmental and social ones as well.

Central to every discussion that the Council organizes or supports, is the belief that digital transformation must reflect shared values. The digital economy must be intelligent, inclusive, and sustainable. Its foundation must be trust earned through long-term commitments, not short-term declarations. Progress must serve the public good, not simply technological ambition. National agendas must align with regional strategies, and emotional intelligence must develop alongside digital capability.

At WSIS 2025, SAMENA Council reinforced the urgent need for inclusive investment and collaborative innovation. Achieving universal connectivity will require a wider circle of investors, alignment of priorities across governments and industry, and people-centered policy design. This message was brought into sharper focus at WSIS Leaders TalkX 2025, where the concept of a dignity gap was introduced. With more than 2.6 billion people still offline, the digital divide is not just a matter of access. It is a barrier to opportunity, voice, and self-determination. Connectivity must be treated as a right, not a reward. The ongoing work of the UN Broadband Commission and models like the Universal Broadband Financing Framework demonstrate that conscience and capital can coexist. Strategic investment must serve both economic goals of countries as well as socio-economic development of all demographics.

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

The time for statements has passed. What is needed now are enduring partnerships, aligned policies, and investments that prioritize human outcomes. Technology alone will not deliver inclusion. It is people, working together with purpose and vision, who will define the digital future.

The responsibility is collective. The opportunity is historic. There is a lot that our Industry can achieve within itself and in collaboration with other industries and sectors. The SAMENA Council is there to assist in all ways possible.

Mobily Connects

Empowering connectivity through
a new digital decade

mobily.com.sa/wholesale

SAMENA Council On
Building Future-Proof Nations

Bocar BA Moderates Strategic Investment Dialogue at GSMA M360 Eurasia 2025 in Tashkent

Bocar BA, CEO of SAMENA Telecommunications Council and Chair of the ITU's IAGDI-CRO, moderated a high-level session at GSMA M360 Eurasia 2025, held at the Intercontinental Tashkent. The session, titled "Igniting Mobile Investment: Strategies for Energizing the Digital Economy," convened regional telecom leaders and regulators to explore investment strategies essential to driving inclusive digital transformation across the CIS region.

In his opening remarks, BA emphasized the urgency of resilient, inclusive infrastructure investment to unlock the region's digital potential. "Digital infrastructure may be technical in nature, but the real outcome we're pursuing is human: inclusion, dignity, and opportunity," he noted.

The session spotlighted Uzbekistan's accelerating digital progress and the broader CIS region's $26 billion mobile investment trajectory through 2025. With mobile data traffic expected to triple by 2030, BA steered a timely discussion on aligning policy, public-private collaboration, and digital skills development to meet rising connectivity demands.

> *"We are not just building faster networks; we are building future-proof nations. Investment must follow purpose, and that purpose is equity, resilience, and shared digital prosperity."*

Featuring senior executives from Kazakhtelecom, Beeline Kazakhstan, Noctelecom, and Georgia's ComCom, the dialogue explored:

- Regulatory frameworks that foster investor confidence and innovation
- The role of national operators in rural and frontier market expansion
- Public-private models advancing infrastructure and digital equity
- Operator-led transformation beyond connectivity into full-stack digital enablement

In his closing remarks, BA reinforced a call to action: "We are not just building faster networks; we are building future-proof nations. Investment must follow purpose, and that purpose is equity, resilience, and shared digital prosperity."

The session echoed GSMA M360 Eurasia's broader mission: fostering collaboration between mobile operators, governments, and innovators to unlock the region's digital future.

SAMENA Council On

Industry Priorities

SAMENA Council CEO Highlights Private Sector Leadership and Public-Private Collaboration at ITU's TDAG-25

Bocar BA, CEO of SAMENA Telecommunications Council and Chair of the Industry Advisory Group for Development Issues and the Private Sector Chief Regulatory Officers (IAGDI-CRO), reinforced the critical importance of public-private dialogue during his engagement at the 25th Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG-25) convened by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

Representing both industry leadership and regional advocacy, Bocar BA commended ITU-D's expanding collaboration with the private sector, noting it as a catalyst for inclusive digital growth. "With rising ITU-D membership and dynamic industry engagement, we are building real momentum toward GSR-25 and WTDC-25," said BA. "This is a defining moment to translate shared vision into impactful action."

In his remarks, BA highlighted the strategic role of private sector voices in shaping ITU-D's development agenda. With the launch of new TECH TALKS, deeper IAGDI-CRO participation, and record engagement levels in 2024, the ITU-D platform is increasingly being co-authored by those innovating on the front lines of connectivity and transformation.

> *"With rising ITU-D membership and dynamic industry engagement, we are building real momentum toward GSR-25 and WTDC-25," said BA. "This is a defining moment to translate shared vision into impactful action."*

Looking ahead, Bocar BA urged stakeholders to actively contribute to the upcoming IAGDI-CRO consultation on 4 June and to attend the in-person session at GSR-25 on 1 September. "Now is the time to ensure our policy frameworks are future-ready, inclusive, and co-designed with the expertise of both public and private actors," he emphasized.

BA's message underscored a growing consensus: meaningful digital development requires collective leadership across sectors, borders, and institutions.

SAMENA Council On

Advancing Broadband Development

During the Leaders' Summit 2025, SAMENA Council and WBBA Sign Memorandum of Understanding to Advance Regional Broadband Development and ICT Collaboration

The SAMENA Telecommunications Council and the World Broadband Association (WBBA) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), marking the beginning of a strategic collaboration aimed at advancing broadband access, supporting innovation, and strengthening policy alignment across the South Asia, Middle East, and North Africa (SA-ME-NA) region, and beyond. The MoU sets forth a framework of mutual cooperation between the two non-profit organizations, both of which play critical roles in shaping the telecommunications and ICT landscape. Through this partnership, the SAMENA Council and WBBA will work together to foster knowledge exchange, support standardization, promote best practices, and amplify policy advocacy efforts to accelerate digital transformation across emerging markets. "The MoU marks a shared commitment between the SAMENA Council and the WEBBA to fostering a digitally inclusive region," said Bocar BA, CEO of SAMENA Council. "By joining forces with the WBBA, we aim to bring our regional expertise and multi-stakeholder engagement to the global broadband conversation—promoting collaborative approaches that advance connectivity, innovation, sustainability in investments for broadband development, greener deployment of broadband technology, and policy alignment, in general." Key areas of cooperation under the MoU between the SAMENA Council and the WBBA include: Expanding broadband access across underserved regions; supporting standardization efforts, particularly in broadband customer premise equipment (CPE); harmonizing efforts to promote broadband-related policies and regulatory frameworks across the SA-ME-NA region; advocating for greater awareness of broadband development issues; and collaborating on global and regional industry events and information sharing. "The WBBA is delighted to formalize this collaboration with the SAMENA Council," said Martin Creaner, Director General, WBBA. "We see tremendous potential in working together to empower regional stakeholders, accelerate innovation, and support digital ecosystem partners in our efforts to materialize globally harmonized broadband development. This partnership is an important step toward unlocking scalable impact across emerging digital economies." The MoU was signed by the WBBA's Chairman of the Board, Dr. Li Zhengmao, and SAMENA Council's CEO & Board Member, Bocar BA, during the SAMENA Council Leaders' Summit 2025. The MoU represents a statement of shared intent, reflecting the Parties' commitment to long-term engagement and coordinated action, while acknowledging its non-binding nature. As part of the agreement, the two organizations will also promote each other's initiatives through mutual visibility in publications, digital platforms, and participation in industry activities. The MoU allows for future expansion of the partnership through supplementary agreements for specific joint projects or events. The MoU signing was followed by both trade associations co-chairing a broadband roundtable during the SAMENA Council Leaders' Summit 2025, titled "Smarter Broadband: Investment. Innovation. Intelligence."

> *"We see tremendous potential in working together to empower regional stakeholders, accelerate innovation, and support digital ecosystem partners in our efforts to materialize globally harmonized broadband development. This partnership is an important step toward unlocking scalable impact across emerging digital economies."*
> **Martin Creaner,** Director General, WBBA

LEADERS' SUMMIT 2025

SAMENA Council Leaders' Summit 2025 Advances the Agenda for Building Intelligent, Inclusive, and Sustainable Digital Economies

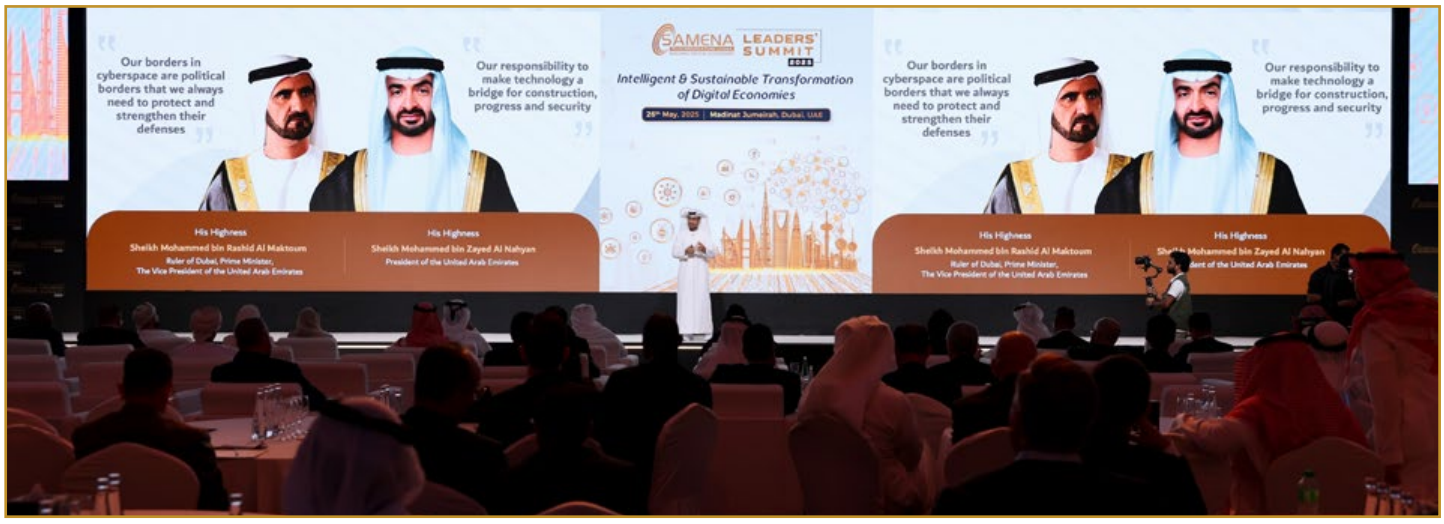
Held with the patronage of the UAE Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA), the SAMENA Council Leaders' Summit 2025 recently convened in Dubai, reaffirming a shared commitment to advancing intelligent, inclusive, and sustainable digital transformation across the South Asia–Middle East–North Africa region.

Hosted by the SAMENA Telecommunications Council at Madinat Jumeirah, the Leaders' Summit brought together a high-level assembly of global policymakers, regional regulators, technology leaders, and digital economy stakeholders to address the evolving needs of next-generation communications networks and to build regional consensus on the future of digital growth.

Organized under the umbrella theme "Intelligent & Sustainable Transformation of Digital Economies," this year's Leaders' Summit marked a turning point in the region's collaborative efforts to scale digital capabilities. As countries embrace advanced 5G networks, AI-powered capabilities and services, and more responsive infrastructure, the Summit provided a practical and forward-looking agenda shaped around infrastructure modernization, policy innovation, investment in resilient networks, and long-term value-creation for digital societies.

The event opened with keynote messages from key international and regional leaders including TDRA, Huawei, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), South Africa's Department of Communications and Digital Technologies (DCDT), the Digital Cooperation Organization (DCO), the World Broadband Association (WBBA), and ZTE. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the WBBA and the SAMENA Council to further cross-

> *"TheSA-ME-NAregionmustrespondwith agility and determination; strengthening local innovation ecosystems, building resilient infrastructure, and forging new partnerships that secure our place in the future digital order."*
> **H.E. Sheikh Nahyan Bin Mubarak Al Nahyan**
> **UAE Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence**



industry collaboration. The Summit was honored by the presence of H.E. Sheikh Nahyan Bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, UAE Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence, who was the Guest of Honor and delivered a powerful keynote reflecting the region's ambition to lead in digital advancement with unity and purpose. The Guest of Honor stated: "The SA-ME-NA region must respond with agility and determination; strengthening local innovation ecosystems, building resilient infrastructure, and forging new partnerships that secure our place in the future digital order."

The Leaders' Summit 2025 served as a high-impact platform to examine immediate challenges and define actionable strategies across several key domains:

- Space and Digital Connectivity: With WRC-27 on the horizon, discussions focused on the role of satellite and non-terrestrial networks in extending connectivity and strengthening digital resilience.
- TDRA-Chaired Multi-TRA Forum: Regional regulators and UAE government bodies came together to explore ways to improve digital service delivery by utilizing 5G and 5G-Advanced infrastructure.
- Techco Transformation & 5G-A Leaders' Forum: Operators and technology leaders explored how intelligent networks and AI-based services are reshaping business models and driving

new monetization opportunities.

- Cybersecurity & Governance: Dedicated roundtables examined the new realities of governing AI systems, strengthening cyber resilience, and making connectivity more inclusive and secure.
- Digital Policy & Ecosystem Enablement: Stakeholders addressed how to balance innovation with affordability, competition, and long-term sustainability in the digital economy.

The SAMENA Council Leaders' Summit also encompassed the 9th Global ICT Energy Efficiency Summit hosted by Huawei where experts addressed the urgent need to align digital infrastructure growth with climate

Key Insights from the Leaders' Summit 2025

Leadership and Policy

The Leaders' Summit opened with a strong reaffirmation that digital transformation must be grounded in values, shaped by inclusive governance, and driven by outcomes that reflect societal priorities. Bocar A. BA emphasized that progress must be measured not by technological sophistication alone, but by its contribution to people, communities, and sustainable growth. He called for public and private collaboration to go beyond statements and move toward long-term commitments that build trust and deliver real change. Other high-level voices reiterated the importance of aligning national and regional agendas, and cautioned against over-dependence on technology without developing digital and emotional intelligence. The UAE's Cybersecurity leadership reinforced the urgency of preparing for a security environment where AI threats move faster than traditional defenses, requiring stronger coordination and regulatory anticipation. Meanwhile, the UAE Minister of Tolerance spoke of digital transformation as a social endeavor, encouraging the industry to treat trust, ethics, and inclusion not as afterthoughts but as design principles from the classroom to the boardroom.

Africa's Digital Priorities and G20 Engagement

South Africa's Deputy Minister offered a clear picture of Africa's priorities under its G20 presidency. The region is focused on creating affordable access, developing public digital infrastructure, nurturing MSME innovation, and shaping data governance that serves both fairness and growth. It was highlighted that G20 outcomes must take into account the voices of non-G20 countries, especially when forming global technology frameworks. This corroborated the rational for the SAMENA Council to facilitate the G20 preparatory meeting during its Leaders' Summit 2025, and these reflections set the tone for the G20 Inter-Ministerial Roundtable, where leaders from across regions discussed how to close the gap between policy ambition and practical execution. Several participants noted that while many strategies exist on paper, actual delivery remains weak. To correct this, governments and industry must coordinate on investment, regulation, and skills, while also reducing friction caused by overlapping rules across sectors such as health, environment, and urban planning. A predictable, open policy environment was highlighted as essential for securing long-term investment.

objectives. Discussions centered around building energy-smart networks, promoting green infrastructure design, and ensuring safe, scalable power solutions for the ICT sector, and promoting AI applications in the digital energy infrastructure industry to drive industrial development.

In a special closed-door session, a preparatory G20-centric roundtable brought together representatives from G20 and non-G20 countries, with a particular focus on regional contributions and policy priorities ahead of South Africa's G20 presidency in November 2025. This special roundtable

Telecom Industry and Technology Evolution

A major focus of the Leaders' Summit was the telecom sector's transformation into a broader digital enabler. Conversations in the Telco to Techco Forum revealed a growing consensus that operators must go beyond connectivity and evolve into service platforms that integrate cloud, AI, and localized partnerships. This shift is being driven by changing user expectations and the need to unlock new value through applications, not just infrastructure. In the business-focused discussions, operators like Mobily and Salam KSA stressed the need for new revenue models that link services to network reinvestment and energy efficiency. Participants discussed how business growth now depends on diversifying digital offerings and becoming part of the services ecosystem. Regulatory flexibility was also emphasized, especially by Cyprus' telecom authority, who shared how the country is phasing out 3G while preserving 2G for essential services.

Policy Implementation and Regional Investment

The Leaders' Summit brought clear acknowledgment that connectivity progress requires much more than technology. It depends on intelligent use of technologies, harnessing network capabilities, harmonized regulation across spectrum, taxation, trade, and cloud services, as well as policies that reflect local contexts. The call for regional alignment on these issues was echoed throughout, especially in the Multi-TRA Roundtable hosted by TDRA. Regulators and industry leaders from across the region shared national approaches to spectrum policy, smart infrastructure, and digital readiness. Bahrain and Turkey presented best practices on enabling infrastructure access and municipal collaboration. Salam KSA made a case for revenue-sharing frameworks that include contributions from digital platforms. Several


HUAWEI


HUAWEI
Techco1.0: Win Together in Intelligent World


موبايلي
Mobily


SAMENA LEADERS' SUMMIT


ZTE
Catalyzing Intelligent Innovation
ZTE


ZTE


World Space Sustainability Association


Netalytix

was planned, organized, and facilitated by the SAMENA Council to help support exchange of insights among G20 and non-G20 member countries and their stakeholders.
Beyond the formal sessions, the Summit enabled strategic networking and knowledge exchange, serving as a meeting ground where national priorities met global perspectives. It highlighted region-led digital achievements while strengthening partnerships across sectors.

In his keynote remarks, Bocar A. BA, CEO of the SAMENA Telecommunications Council, stated: "Infrastructure is no longer just about access. It's about intelligence, energy efficiency, and service relevance. The Leaders' Summit is not just a platform for dialogue; it is a tool for execution, for alignment, and for ensuring that regional cooperation becomes a lived reality. We must act together, with shared priorities and purpose."

The SAMENA Council extended its gratitude to the Summit's key supporters and partners, including:

- Chief Patron: TDRA UAE
- Global Collaboration: ITU
- Chair Sponsor: stc Group
- Host Sponsor: Huawei
- Platinum Sponsor: Mobily
- Gold Sponsor: ZTE
- Industry Development Partner: World Broadband Association (WBBA)
- Strategic Partner: 7Generation

This strategic cooperation and countries flagged the urgency of enabling affordable spectrum and reducing permitting bottlenecks. INFRA X and other technology partners demonstrated how 5G infrastructure is already supporting smart utility services, and discussed how such innovations can scale with forward-looking regulation.

Energy Efficiency and Sustainability

Sustainability was woven into nearly every session, not as an optional feature but as a core design requirement. At the Global ICT Energy Efficiency Summit, speakers called attention to the rising energy demands of digital networks. From spectrum allocation to data centers, energy efficiency must be embedded from the start. Mobily and other industry leaders discussed how linking services to green incentives can drive both innovation and responsible growth. The Summit reinforced that energy management is no longer just about cost—it is about environmental accountability and long-term viability.

industry stakeholders' support reflected strong industry confidence in the Leaders' Summit's mission to foster public-private coordination in building digital ecosystems that are efficient, inclusive, and future-ready. As the event concluded, a clear consensus emerged that the region's digital future depends on decisive execution through collaborative governance, inclusive innovation, and continuous alignment between Regulators, Service Providers, and Ecosystem Enablers. Telecom Operators must evolve into technology companies ("Techcos") by leveraging AI and intelligent infrastructure to deliver new kinds of value, with agility and foresight.

Broadband as a National Asset

Broadband is no longer just a utility but a foundational enabler of national digital policy. The UAE's example, highlighted by TDRA, showed that long-term investment and coordinated strategy have resulted in one of the world's highest fiber penetration rates and fastest average speeds. More than performance alone, broadband has become central to delivering services in education, health, urban planning, and economic resilience. For countries looking to transform their digital economies, fiber has proven to be the decisive first step.

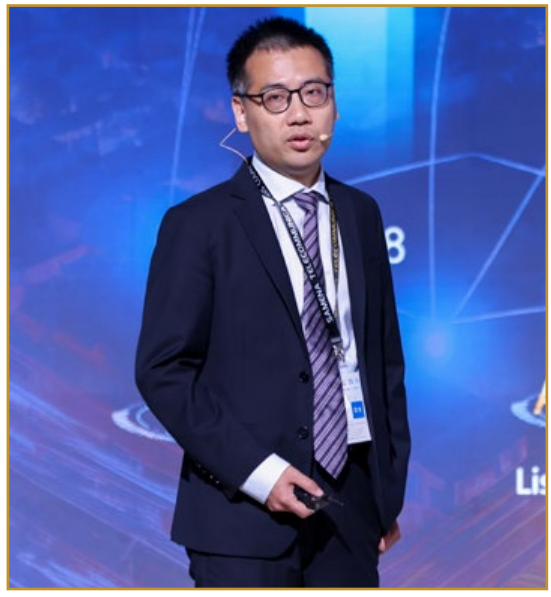

SAMENA
LEADERS' SUMMIT
2025
Intelligent & Sustainable Transformation of Digital Economies
26th May, 2025 | Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai, UAE
Tech & Revenue
Digital Services, Network Revenue Opportunities, Market Growth
Moderator
Mr. Khaled Hegazy
Chief Operations Officer
e& International
UAE
Mr. Stephen Thomas
Chairman & CEO
TPT Global Tech Inc.
USA
Eng. Amjad Arab
Chief Wholesale & Partnerships Officer
Salam
KSA
Mr. Ahmed Aldakhil
GM Core, Services and Virtualization Planning and Design
Mobily
KSA
Mr. Petros Galides
Deputy Commissioner of Communications
Cyprus


SAMENA
LEADERS' SUMMIT
2025


LEADERS' SUMMIT
2025
Telco-to-Techco Transformation Forum
Telco to Techco: Best way forward for telecom operators
Moderator
Mr. Emaad Ahmed
Chief Expert Carrier Business
Huawei ME&CA Region
Mr. Wilson Xavier
Research Director, Telecom & IT Services
Middle East, Turkey and Africa
IDC
Dr. Yousuf Salim Mohamed Al Hinai
General Manager ICT and Digital Solutions, Corporate Strategy
Omantel
Oman
Dr. Ayman Elnashar
VP of Technology Strategy, Architecture, and Innovation
e&
UAE
Mr. Izhar Ahmad
Director - Industry Affairs & Communication
SAMENA Telecommunication Council


SAMENA
LEADERS' SUMMIT 2025
Intelligent & Sustainable Transformation of Digital Economies
26th May, 2025 | Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai, UAE
5G-Advanced Leaders' Forum
AI-Native 5G-A:
Enable intelligent self-evolving networks to achieve a new business paradigm.
Moderator
Dr. Mohamed Madkour
VP, ICT Strategy & Marketing
Huawei
ME & CA
Mr. Saleh Al Maimani
Senior Manager
Residential
Omantel
Oman
Mr. Al Mahdi CHAKIR
Head of Portfolio Development, Mobile Networks
Nokia, MEA
UAE
Mr. Ali Cheema
Head of Government & Industry Relations
Middle East & Africa
Ericsson
UAE
Mr. David Lee
VP of IoT Business
Huawei Consumer Business Group, Middle East & Africa Region


Intelligent & Sustainable Transformation of Digital Economies
26th May, 2025 | Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai, UAE




5G-A


cquire Talents
ompetition
lp transform
ed company (Tech

Leaders' Summit 2025 Impact & Closing Analysis

Across all panels and sessions of the SAMENA Council Leaders' Summit 2025, one message was clear: The future of digital economies depends on cooperation that extends across sectors, borders, and disciplines. There is no substitute for trust built through transparency and sustained partnership. Digital skills remain a critical constraint, especially in countries that have rolled out infrastructure but lack the human capacity to fully use it. Participants called for more investment in training, experimentation, and practical testbeds to ensure new technologies deliver tangible benefits. Municipal collaboration was recognized as vital for the rollout of 5G and future networks, with urban infrastructure often being the key barrier or enabler. Whether in cybersecurity, regulation, or infrastructure investment, the conversations consistently pointed toward a shared recognition: strategy must now turn to execution.

The SAMENA Council CEO's words summed up the Leaders' Summit's impact and the needs of the future: "Our digital future will be shaped by the decisions we take today in how we lead, how we collaborate, and how we invest in building societies that are empowered by technology, not overwhelmed by it. The Leaders' Summit 25 is a reflection of that responsibility, and of our collective ambition to get it right. The future of our digital societies will not be authored by technology alone, but will be defined by how wisely we govern, how inclusively we build, and how responsibly we lead."

From Infrastructure to Intelligence

Speakers, including Huawei and e& UAE, emphasized how AI is now central to the network fabric. Broadband, cloud computing, and AI are merging into a single infrastructure layer. The future lies in intelligent broadband and networks that can adjust in real-time, learn from usage, and adapt capacity based on applications, user needs, or energy considerations. With AI and parallel computing driving new traffic demands, optical networks will need to be treated not just as transport systems but as responsive service environments.

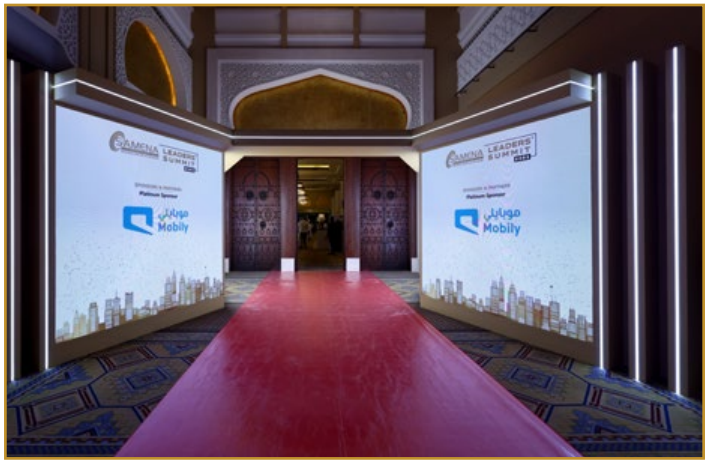
Toward Smarter Networks and User-Centric Growth

Growing the user base and improving broadband quality is not just a matter of coverage. Strategies shared by Zain and Huawei focused on setting bold national targets, ensuring wholesale access to infrastructure, and incentivizing both network expansion and service innovation. AI-powered platforms were seen as crucial to improving user experience, supporting predictive maintenance, and enabling the launch of new digital services that go beyond traditional connectivity.


SAMENA LEADERS' SUMMIT 2025
SPONSORS & PARTNERS
Chief Patron
TDRA
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL GOVERNMENT REGULATORY AUTHORITY

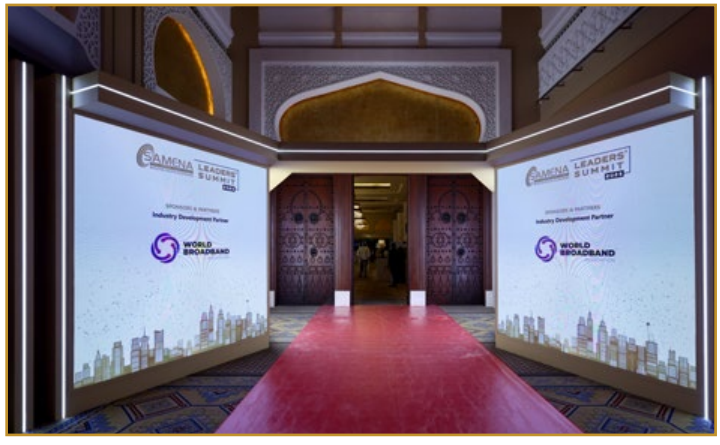

HUAWEI


ITU


Mobily


stc


ZTE


WORLD BROADBAND

From Vision to Value

stc Group's 2024 Sustainability Report Focuses on Creating Legacy Impact

stc Group, a leading digital enabler, published its annual Sustainability Report, showcasing progress across the group's environmental, social, and governance priorities from 2024. The achievements show the group's continued evolution as a future-focused, responsible business delivering on its sustainability goals across its operations, outlined in three distinct pillars: Environmental Performance & Climate; Development of Human Capital Through Digital Innovation; and Strong Governance & Ethical Excellence.

Environmental Performance and Climate

stc Group's 2024 environmental performance and climate initiatives were anchored around actions to reduce emissions, optimize energy use, and scale circularity programs. This included energy efficient technologies, AI-enabled systems, and smarter energy management, which supported operational efficiencies that resulted in;

- A reduction by 3.6% in Scope 1 emissions
- A reduction by 14.6% in Scope 3 emissions
- 9.8 % decrease in energy intensity

A continued priority for stc in 2024 was reducing waste, including e-waste, which accounts for a growing percentage of global waste annually. stc Group's e-waste initiatives saw success in two scaled initiatives this year:

- The end-of-life asset recycling program, which recovers and processes outdated digital devices and network equipment, collected 4,236 tons of waste, with 48% reused and 40% recycled
- The trade-in program, which allows customers to exchange used digital devices for renewed ones, refurbished 52,818 devices at a 97% resale rate

Development of Human Capital through Digital Innovation

stc Group continued to invest in people – within stc and across our communities – as part of its focus on building a future-ready, digitally empowered workforce. stc made significant strides in its human capital investments in 2024, including:

- stc Academy delivered 476,675 hours of training to over 33,000 participants, including stc Group's employees who received an average of 22 hours each
- Continuing a balanced talent model, combining 90% nationalization in the Kingdom with representation from 61 nationalities across the group's broader operations
- Women continue to find opportunities to grow at stc, now comprising 15.8% of the stc workforce, holding 18 % of Board seats, and accounting for 31% of new hires
- stc Group's SmartTruck Initiative, a mobile digital classroom, imparted digital skills to over 9000 elderly citizens in underserved communities, helping narrow the digital divide across the Kingdom
- An expanded fiber network system ensuring world-class connectivity for 3.6 million households in 2024

Strong Governance and Ethical Excellence

stc Group continued to strengthen its governance frameworks, reinforcing a local-first approach alongside robust cybersecurity protocols. This commitment was demonstrated through several measures:

- 100% compliance with mandatory integrity training
- Directing 96% of procurement spending to local suppliers
- Zero data security breaches and zero incidents involving customers' personally identifiable information (PII)

The 2024 Report reinforces how sustainability is embedded in stc Group's digital-first ethos. Beyond reducing environmental impact, the group is focused on building a society that trusts in its world-class connectivity for its reliability, its integrity, and its sustainable growth.

SAMENA Council On
In-Home Connectivity

SAMENA Council Invites Industry Participation in Global FCGA Survey on In-Home Connectivity

The SAMENA Telecommunications Council is pleased to announce the launch of the Global FCGA Survey on In-Home Connectivity, inviting valuable input from industry stakeholders across the digital communications ecosystem. In the spirit of evidence-based collaboration, the SAMENA Council is supporting the development of a comprehensive white paper that will explore and analyze key challenges and opportunities shaping in-home connectivity experiences. This includes insights into home network technologies, cabling configurations, wireless performance, broadband reliability, and the role of value-added services in enhancing user satisfaction. Industry engagement is critical. By contributing to this global survey, operators, vendors, policy-makers, and technology leaders have a unique opportunity to influence the discourse around next-generation connectivity and help define the parameters for optimized broadband delivery within the home environment. The survey can be accessed at: https://tinyurl.com/FiberSurvey2025The survey will be closed for input by July 21, 2025.

The collected data will inform the forthcoming white paper, providing a strategic reference for all stakeholders and promoting shared understanding of current trends, gaps, and best practices in in-home connectivity. The Council encourages all Members and industry partners, especially Operators and Service Providers, to ensure this survey is completed by the relevant experts within their organizations to enable accurate, high-impact analysis and sector-wide benefit. For any support or clarification related to the survey, please contact the SAMENA Council team directly. Together, let's help shape the future of home connectivity.

SAMENA Council is supporting the development of a comprehensive white paper that will explore and analyze key challenges and opportunities shaping in-home connectivity experiences. This includes insights into home network technologies, cabling configurations, wireless performance, broadband reliability, and the role of value-added services in enhancing user satisfaction. Industry engagement is critical.

SAMENA Council On
Inclusive Investment

SAMENA Council Champions Collaborative Innovation and Inclusive Investment at WSIS 2025

Speaking at the WSIS 2025 Partner's Insight Session on Collaborative Innovation Ecosystems, Mr Bocar BA, CEO of SAMENA Telecommunications Council and Broadband Commissioner, issued a strong call to action:

"Everyone who benefits from a network should help finance it."

The session spotlighted the urgent need for shared responsibility in broadband investment and emphasized how collaborative ecosystems can close the connectivity gap, empower MSMEs, and fast-track the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

> *"Partnerships are no longer a 'nice to have'—they are the operating system of inclusive, sustainable digital transformation," concluded Mr BA. "We must widen the circle of investors, harmonize the regulatory environment, and put people at the heart of every digital deployment."*

Key takeaways from SAMENA Council's intervention:

- **Broaden the funding pool**
  The Universal Broadband Financing Framework, championed by the UN Broadband Commission, calls for a multi-stakeholder investment model. Cloud platforms, content providers, and energy players must co-invest alongside telcos and governments to fairly distribute the burden of last-mile costs.
- **Prioritize MSMEs**
  Micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises make up 90% of global businesses, yet face disproportionately high bandwidth costs and weak cloud access. According to the Broadband Commission's Working Group Report, affordable connectivity can boost MSME sales by 85% and reduce costs by 81%.
- **Cross-border collaboration is critical**
  Panelists underscored the importance of open standards, harmonized regulation, and joint R&D to accelerate 5G and FWA roll-outs, especially in land-locked and underserved regions. This collaboration also supports the ITU-GSMA 45% emissions-reduction target.
- **Trust and skills must keep pace**
  With 48% of users exposed to online harassment (OECD), there's a clear mandate for safety-by-design systems and scalable digital skills programs. Innovation without protection will undermine inclusion.

Voices from South Africa, Kenya, the African Telecommunications Union, and ZTE aligned with SAMENA Council's position: collaborative ecosystems must be inclusive, standards-based, and people-first.

"Partnerships are no longer a 'nice to have'—they are the operating system of inclusive, sustainable digital transformation," concluded Mr BA. "We must widen the circle of investors, harmonize the regulatory environment, and put people at the heart of every digital deployment."

SAMENA Council On

Inclusive Digital Transformation

SAMENA Council Reaffirms Commitment to Inclusive Digital Transformation at WSIS Leaders TalkX 2025

At the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum 2025, SAMENA Telecommunications Council's CEO, Mr. Bocar BA, delivered a powerful message during Leaders TalkX: ICT Application to Unlock the Full Potential of Digital – Part I, calling on global stakeholders to ensure that digital transformation becomes a force for equity, not division.

"We have a collective responsibility to ensure that digital transformation becomes the great Equalizer of our age—not its next great Divide," affirmed Mr. BA.

With over 2.6 billion people still offline, Mr. Ba underscored what he called a "dignity gap"—one that delays futures and silences potential. SAMENA Council, a staunch advocate for universal connectivity, reiterated that connectivity is a right, not a reward.

Citing the work of the UN Broadband Commission, Mr. Ba pointed to the Universal Broadband Financing Framework as a model that proves capital and conscience can—and must—coexist. He emphasized that investments in connectivity must be matched by policy foresight and ethical innovation.

"Infrastructure alone isn't enough," he noted. "We must pair fiber with foresight and bandwidth with trust. This includes transparent, fair, and accountable governance of AI systems."
SAMENA Council continues to call for regulatory certainty and harmonized policy frameworks to catalyze investment in priority sectors including health, education, green innovation, and financial inclusion.

As the region's leading voice for digital development, SAMENA Council urges public and private sector actors alike to move beyond mere access—toward inclusive, empowered digital societies.

"Let's not just connect the world—let's elevate it," concluded Mr. BA. "Our legacy will be measured not by network speed, but by lives transformed."

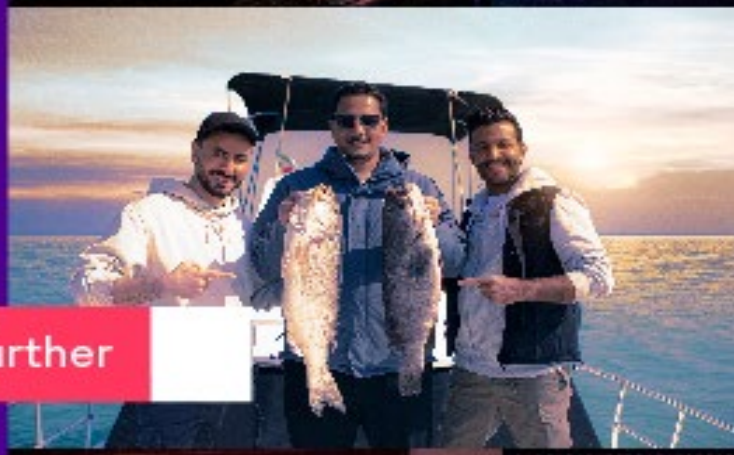
With over 2.6 billion people still offline, Mr. Ba underscored what he called a "dignity gap"—one that delays futures and silences potential. SAMENA Council, a staunch advocate for universal connectivity, reiterated that connectivity is a right, not a reward.

FULL فل
5G

GO FULL 5G

The first and only network to take 5G further

#go_full_5G



stc

MEMBERS NEWS

stc Group Releases the Company's Preliminary Financial Results for the Period Ending on 30 June 2025

stc has announced the company's preliminary financial results for the period ending on 30 June 2025:

- Revenues for the 6 months period of 2025 reached 38,660 million with an increase of 2.09% as compared to the comparable period last year.
- Gross Profit for the 6 months period of 2025 reached 18,658 million with an increase of 6.61% as compared to the comparable period last year.
- Operating Profit for the 6 months period of 2025 reached 7,207 million with an increase of 2.28% as compared to the comparable period last year.
- Earnings before Interest, Taxes, Zakat, Depreciation and Amortization (EBITDA) for the 6 months period of 2025 reached 12,289 million with an increase of 6.10% as compared to the comparable period last year.
- Net Profit for the 6 months period of 2025 reached 7,472 million with an increase of 13.38% as compared to the comparable period last year.
- stc distributes 0.55 per share for the 2nd quarter of 2025, in accordance with the dividends distribution policy approved by General Assembly.

Commenting on the results, Eng. Olayan Alwetaid, CEO of stc Group, stated that the Group continued to deliver excellent performance through its commitment to its strategy and success in capitalizing on available opportunities within the ICT sector. He pointed out that the focus on financial discipline and improving the efficiency of capital management were key factors in supporting business stability, enhancing the Group's readiness to adapt to changes, and expanding into future growth avenues with confidence and sustainability. This was reflected in the Group's financial performance, as stc achieved revenue growth of 2.1% during the first six months of the year, and an increase in gross profit by 6.6%, compared to the same period last year. Additionally, the Cost Efficiency Program contributed effectively to enhancing operational and financial efficiency, which positively impacted the company's performance, resulting in EBITDA growth of 6.1% with an increase in EBITDA margin by 3.9% to reach 31.8%, which in turn led to a notable increase in net profit by 13.4%, reaching 7.5 billion. The GCEO also emphasized that the growing demand for the Group's services is a testament to the community's trust in the efficiency of its digital solutions. This was demonstrated by the number of STC Bank customers surpassing three million within a short period since its launch at the beginning of 2025, reflecting the accelerated growth in the adoption of digital banking services and embodying the Group's growing role in developing the financial services sector. Furthermore, the GCEO praised the tremendous efforts made by the Kingdom to provide a safe and comfortable environment for pilgrims and its continuous dedication to facilitating Hajj rituals and enhancing the quality of services provided to pilgrims. He also affirmed stc Group's dedication to contributing to the success of the Hajj season through the deployment of the latest technologies and digital solutions, including advanced AI solutions, which the Group implemented to boost network efficiency within the holy sites. During the season, the Group provided record internet speeds serving more than 1.6 million pilgrims and provided services to 1.49 million stc network users, which led to exceptional results, as stc's network recorded the highest traffic hour in its history in Muzdalifah, with a 64% increase in data usage and a 129% surge in 5G network traffic compared to the previous year. Meanwhile, the user experience index rose by 25%, underscoring the network's ability to support one of the world's most significant mass crowd movements.

stc Launches Dedicated Mission-Critical LTE Network

Saudi Arabia's stc Group announced it has launched a dedicated nationwide LTE network for the country's mission-critical sectors, including government, healthcare, and oil and gas. Dubbed the "Business-Critical Network", the LTE network is specifically tailored for business-critical operations and engineered to meet the highest benchmarks for security, reliability and agility, stc said. stc said its Business-Critical Network offers features such as encrypted push-to-talk, shock-resistant devices, emergency alerts, and secure group messaging. The network also leverages AI to enable smarter decision-making, predictive maintenance, and heightened situational awareness across complex operations. stc also said the network's scalable architecture paves the way for next-gen innovations, including autonomous operations, real-time situational awareness, and advanced crowd management solutions. "This purpose-built network sets a new benchmark for mission-critical communications, empowering key industries with the speed, security, and intelligence needed to operate in high-pressure environments," said stc Group chief business officer Riyadh Muawad in a statement.

stc Powers Up the Esports World Cup with Cutting-Edge 5G Network

stc Group, a leading digital enabler, has announced its early readiness to support the upcoming 2025 edition of the Esports World Cup (EWC). As an Elite and Founding Partner of EWC, stc is deploying cutting-edge technology and robust infrastructure designed to deliver an exceptional, high-performance, and reliable gaming experience for participants and audiences alike. Following its pivotal role in powering the inaugural EWC in 2024, stc returns this year to support the world's largest gaming event with even more advanced capabilities. Central to this year's network infrastructure are intelligent monitoring systems featuring AI-driven traffic modeling, Self-Optimizing Networks (SON), and closed-loop automation, technologies that provide proactive insights and real-time network adjustments to ensure uninterrupted connectivity throughout the event. As part of its comprehensive preparations, stc has deployed 27 advanced 5G towers across key tournament areas, including three towers dedicated exclusively to the event center. Within the venue buildings, an extensive indoor solutions network supported by more than 1,295 antennas will deliver high-speed 4G and 5G services, with internet speeds exceeding 2 Gbps ensuring smooth, responsive gameplay and seamless digital engagement. Additionally, stc has equipped one of the largest operations centers in the region with ultra-high-resolution 168-megapixel displays, enabling real-time monitoring of network performance and service utilization across all EWC facilities. This state-of-the-art center ensures immediate incident response and optimal service quality for both participants and attendees. To further enhance network efficiency, stc has implemented Software Defined Networking (SDN) technologies, enabling agile, uninterrupted data flow throughout the tournament. The company has also expanded coverage across the venue by over 20% compared to last year, ensuring

stronger and more consistent connectivity. In the 2024 EWC, stc's integrated digital infrastructure played a crucial role in the tournament's success, delivering 99.9% network availability and ultra-low latency. This allowed players to enjoy a world-class gaming experience aligned with the highest international standards. These efforts earned stc the prestigious "Platinum Operator" award from the Communications, Space, and Technology Commission for the eighth consecutive year, as highlighted in the annual GameMode report further solidifying its leadership in digital infrastructure and telecommunications services within the esports sector. With its continued investment and innovation, stc reaffirms its position as a key enabler of digital transformation and a driving force in the growth of esports in the Kingdom. Through strategic infrastructure expansion and smart technologies, stc ensures a secure, fully connected, and globally competitive digital experience at EWC 2025 and beyond.

Arabsat Teams Up with FGC Services for Satellite Data Services

Arabsat is teaming up with First Gulf Company (FGC) to deliver VSAT and satellite data services in Saudi Arabia. This agreement leverages Arabsat's Geostationary Orbit (GEO) Ku-band infrastructure and FGC's operational capabilities to provide high-capacity, fully managed data and IP-based services. The service will target telcos, MNOs, and ISPs. The two companies announced the deal, July 13. The companies said the service will start at 140 Mbps and is expected to grow by more than 70% throughout the terms of the contract. The service is designed to scale with market demand and evolving customer needs and to adopt emerging technologies such as IoT, cloud computing, and AI-driven applications. The two companies aim to lay the foundation for the digital backbone of the industry, supporting resilient, future-ready infrastructure. "This partnership with Arabsat marks a strategic expansion — extending our capabilities to help increase digital connectivity across the Kingdom. Together, we're not just providing a service; we're empowering nationwide access to resilient, high-capacity infrastructure that supports Saudi Arabia's digital future," Joe Chbat, executive vice president, First Gulf Company, said in a statement.

Arabsat and Telesat Partner on Multi-Gigabit LEO Satellite Capacity

Arabsat and Telesat have signed a term sheet to lease multi-gigabit capacity from Telesat's upcoming Lightspeed LEO satellite constellation. This deal, which builds on a prior MoU, allows Arabsat to integrate Telesat's LEO services into its multi-orbit satellite system, aiming to enhance broadband connectivity for enterprise, telecom, government, and mobility sectors. The LEO constellation, comprising 198 satellites, will provide services primarily to the enterprise and government sectors. Telesat plans to begin launching satellites in mid-2024 and aims to complete the constellation by mid-2027. Arabsat's integration of LEO and GEO services will offer flexible, reliable, and cost-effective solutions, enhancing digital transformation efforts in the Kingdom. Alhamedi Alanezi, President and CEO of Arabsat, emphasized that the combination of LEO and GEO services would position Arabsat as a leader in connectivity. Telesat's interoperable orchestration systems will give Arabsat the flexibility to design and manage services, ensuring tailored solutions for each sector.

e& and Dubai Healthcare City Authority Join Forces to Power Hospitals and Clinics

e& has signed a partnership with Dubai Healthcare City Authority (DHCA), the governing body of Dubai Healthcare City (DHCC) free zone, establishing a shared commitment to elevate the delivery of healthcare through advanced telecommunications and digital health solutions. Esam Mahmoud, Senior Vice President – Small & Medium Business of e& UAE, said: "Dubai Healthcare City Authority has long served as a catalyst for healthcare innovation in the region. Through this collaboration, we are proud to offer cutting-edge digital infrastructure and healthcare solutions that empower doctors, improve patient experiences, and support the UAE's broader vision for a tech-enabled healthcare system." Jaffar Bin Jaffar, Director of Partnerships at Dubai Healthcare City Authority, said: "Our partnership with e& reflects our ongoing commitment to driving innovation across the healthcare sector. By providing our ecosystem with cost efficient services, including advanced telecommunications, digital tools, and smart solutions, we are enabling our business partners to enhance operational efficiency and improve patient care. This will contribute to the growth of Dubai's healthcare landscape." This partnership aims to bring e&'s tailored suite of healthcare and connectivity services directly to clinics and medical facilities operating within Dubai Healthcare City. As part of the agreement, e& will provide DHCA's healthcare providers with access to its latest innovations, including Electronic Medical Records (EMR), high-performance connectivity, and industry-specific technology designed to streamline operations and enhance patient care. In addition to delivering tailored telecom and technology offerings, e& will maintain an on-site presence at DHCC, ensuring healthcare professionals have direct access to expert support and service inquiries. DHCA will also coordinate with e& on joint training initiatives, workshops, and educational resources to support effective implementation of the offered solutions. The collaboration reflects both entities shared goal of nurturing a future-ready healthcare ecosystem that contributes to the growth of Dubai's healthcare sector.

e& UAE Pioneers World's First High-Density XGS-PON Technology

e& UAE has announced the successful deployment of the world's first 32-ports high-density XGS-PON (10 Gigabit Symmetrical Passive Optical Network) solution, which offers the highest density in industry, marking a major milestone in the evolution of fiber broadband (FBB) services in the UAE. This cutting-edge technology will enable e& UAE to deliver ultra-high-speed, low-latency connectivity to customers while significantly optimizing space and power efficiency, supporting both the UAE's sustainability agenda and e&'s commitment to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2040. Marwan Bin Shakar, Acting Chief Technology and Information Officer, e& UAE, said: "The introduction of our high density XGS-PON solution marks a transformative step in the UAE's broadband evolution, combining speed with sustainability. This milestone underscores our commitment to network excellence and offering world-class customer experiences, fully aligned with our broader sustainability targets. As we pioneer next-generation connectivity, we do so with a clear focus on responsible innovation and purposeful digital progress." e& UAE's deployment underscores its commitment to environmental responsibility. By leveraging advanced high-density XGS-PON technology, e& UAE minimizes energy use and operational waste, contributing to the UAE's broader vision for a sustainable digital economy. In 2023, e& pledged to achieve net-zero carbon emissions (Scope 1 and 2) across its own operations in all markets by 2040, accelerating efforts to combat climate change through innovation. e& UAE continues to invest in next-generation infrastructure, ensuring the nation remains at the forefront of global connectivity. The high-density XGS-PON rollout is a critical step in building a smarter, greener, and more connected future for all.

e& and 4iG Group Partner to Advance Cross-Regional Digital Infrastructure

e& and 4iG Group, the leading provider of integrated telecommunications services in Hungary and the Western Balkans, have signed a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to explore collaboration across key areas of digital infrastructure. Hatem Dowidar, Group Chief Executive Officer, e&, said: "Our strategic partnership with 4iG is an important step in strengthening cross-regional digital infrastructure that supports economic growth, resilience, and innovation. Rooted in purposeful innovation and a belief in the power of infrastructure to unlock human potential, we see this collaboration as a platform for long-term projects that bridge continents, empower communities, and accelerate inclusive digital transformation across the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe." Gellért Jászai, Chairman, 4iG Group, said: "Partnering with e& opens new avenues for collaboration across fast-growing digital corridors that link Europe with the Middle East and Africa. By combining our regional strength with e&'s global reach, we are building a strategic alliance focused on unlocking long-term value through innovation, infrastructure development, and shared investment opportunities." The MoU sets the framework for future cooperation between e& and 4iG in the planning, development, and operation of advanced connectivity and data infrastructure. This includes potential joint initiatives in subsea and terrestrial networks, large-scale data centers, and other strategic projects that enhance digital interconnection between the Middle East, North Africa, and Europe. The preliminary scope also includes a jointly developed data center in Albania to support subsea data traffic, and the potential development of other digital infrastructure in Hungary via e& PPF Telecom. Furthermore, the partnership will aim to cooperate on planning, implementation and operation of Subsea cable projects connecting primarily Middle East, North Africa and Europe. This will support the digital needs of tens of millions in the region, supporting global trade and economic development. By combining e&'s global expertise in telecom infrastructure and network development with 4iG's regional leadership and decades of experience in transit networks across the Western Balkans, the partnership lays the groundwork for scalable digital infrastructure projects and increased cross-border collaboration. This agreement is part of a broader set of strategic MoUs signed by 4iG Group with leading UAE entities, including EDGE Group and Mubadala Investment Company. Together, these partnerships reflect a shared ambition to deepen economic ties between Hungary and the UAE, while advancing cooperation in priority sectors such as digital infrastructure, defence technologies, and strategic investments. This also sets the path for future trade alliances: flexible, strategic, and built on common pillars of sustainable development, innovation, and economic cooperation.

Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technology Partners with e& to Empower ICV-Certified SMEs

UAE Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technology (MoIAT) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with e& in UAE to strengthen support for ICV-certified small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) under the National In-Country Value (ICV) Program, an initiative launched by MoIAT as part of the UAE's Projects of the 50. Under the agreement, e& UAE will extend a suite of exclusive incentives to more than 7,000 ICV-certified SMEs registered with MoIAT. These tailored packages include preferential rates on internet services, mobile plans, digital payment solutions, and Microsoft productivity tools. The aim is to accelerate digital transformation and enhance operational efficiency among local enterprises. This strategic partnership reflects a shared commitment to supporting local industrial growth, economic resilience, and technological advancement. Her Excellency Salama Al Awadhi, Assistant Undersecretary for the Industrial Development Sector at MoIAT, said: "The ministry continues to work with strategic partners to enhance the growth and competitiveness of the country's industrial sector. The National ICV Program is a pillar of the National Strategy for Industry and Advanced Technology, alongside the Technology Transformation Program and the Make it in the Emirates initiative." She added: "The program has delivered tangible economic benefits, empowering companies and enhancing their competitiveness by channeling procurement spending into the national economy. By the end of 2024, cumulative local expenditure through the National ICV Program reached AED 347 billion. SMEs are central to this growth, and the number of ICV Program strategic partners has now reached 35 federal and local government entities and national companies." Esam Mahmoud, Senior Vice President SMB Sales & Marketing, e& UAE, said: "We are proud to support the Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technology in advancing the National ICV Program. SMEs are the backbone of the UAE economy, and through this collaboration, we aim to empower them with cutting-edge digital solutions that unlock new growth opportunities, enhance competitiveness, and support long-term success. As a key enabler of the program, this partnership will help incentivize companies to obtain certification. It also exemplifies how public-private collaboration can create a meaningful impact by driving industrial development and building local capabilities." This agreement further reinforces e& UAE's role as a digital enabler for businesses across sectors, committed to advancing national priorities through impactful collaborations and future-focused solutions.

e& Taps Ericsson for 5G Radio Upgrade

Ericsson has signed a three-year deal with e& UAE to upgrade the operator's 5G network, marking the first commercial deployment of the vendor's RedCap solution in the Middle East and Africa. In a statement, Ericsson said it would supply RAN equipment to extend e&'s coverage and support the launch of 5G Advanced. The operator will also work to modernize its network to improve energy efficiency. e& is preparing its network for advanced 5G use cases such as AI-driven RAN automation and advanced RAN slicing. The agreement will accelerate the commercial rollout of Ericsson's 5G Advanced features in the region, including RedCap and Critical Internet of Things. Marwan Bin Shakar, Acting Chief Technology and Information Officer at e& UAE, said: "Our agreement with Ericsson reflects a shared vision for digital transformation and reinforces our commitment to maintaining a cutting-edge 5G network that delivers premium services to both consumers and enterprises. By leveraging Ericsson's latest technology, we are ensuring that our network remains future-ready, supports innovative 5G Advanced services, and aligns with our Net Zero pledge through improved energy efficiency." Petra Schirren, President of Ericsson Gulf at Ericsson Europe, Middle East and Africa, added: "Our partnership with e& reflects our shared focus on delivering 5G capabilities across the region. This agreement will support e& UAE in expanding and modernizing its radio access network with the latest Ericsson Radio System products and solutions. By enabling increased capacity, improved energy efficiency, and introducing Ericsson 5G Advanced, we are reinforcing their ability to deliver high-performance connectivity and meet evolving customer demands."

e& UAE and Kleindienst Group Partner to Power Tech-Driven Luxury At "The Heart of Europe"

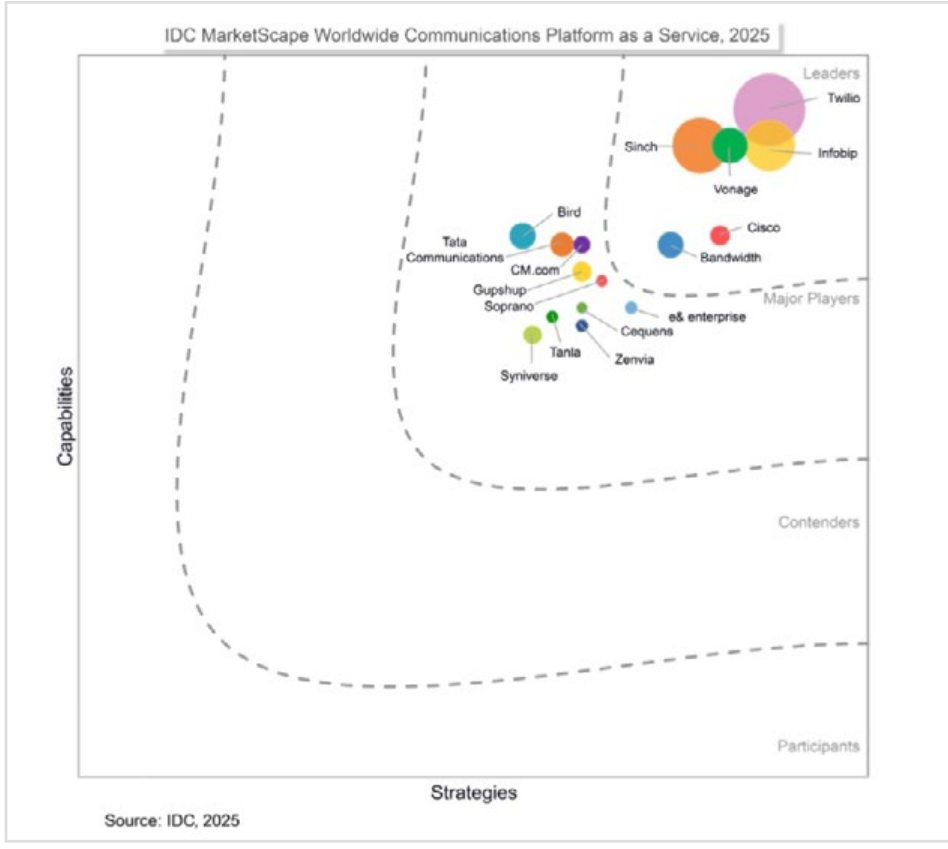
e& UAE has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Kleindienst Group, the developer behind the iconic The Heart of Europe project located on six islands in "The World", an artificial archipelago off the coast of Dubai, to pioneer a new era of digitally powered luxury hospitality in the UAE. The MoU underscores both organisations' commitment to innovation, operational excellence, and sustainability in the region's hospitality sector. The collaboration supports the UAE leadership's vision of integrating smart infrastructure and sustainable practices in world-class developments, setting new standards of luxury living and high-end tourism in the country. Esam Mahmoud, Sr. Vice President, SMB Sales & Marketing, e& UAE, said: "Our partnership with Kleindienst Group marks a significant milestone in our efforts to redefine smart hospitality. By integrating our advanced digital infrastructure with one of the UAE's most ambitious hospitality developments, we are setting new standards for luxury, connectivity, and sustainability in the tourism sector. We are proud to support visionary projects like The Heart of Europe, where European heritage meets UAE innovation. Through this partnership, we are embedding future-ready technologies that will elevate every aspect of the guest journey, from arrival to check-out, bringing the project's bold vision to life." Josef Kleindienst, Founder & Chairman of Kleindienst Group, said: "Innovation is at the core of everything we do at Kleindienst Group. It is not just a principle; it is how we build. Our collaboration with e& UAE is an exciting step forward in our mission to position The Heart of Europe as the global benchmark for tech-driven, sustainable luxury. We are creating more than a destination. We are building an experience that is immersive, intelligent, and environmentally conscious at every level. This partnership strengthens our goal to redefine how people connect, relax, and enjoy life, right here in Dubai." Through this strategic partnership, e& UAE will deliver a suite of cutting-edge digital solutions to enrich the guest experience, including high-speed internet, IPTV, Guest Room Management Systems (GRMS), connected guest experiences, and sustainability-focused technologies across The Heart of Europe properties located on the World Islands. These solutions will dramatically enhance guest experiences and operational agility across the development. The collaboration will see the deployment of innovations such as a Command Control Centre for streamlined property operations, Drone-as-a-Service for enhanced guest services, and Vessels Internet Connectivity to ensure seamless maritime coverage. Sustainability initiatives under 'Sustainability as a Service' will also be introduced to reduce environmental impact and support eco-conscious tourism. Other key features of the partnership include connected worker solutions for enhanced staff productivity and safety, as well as smart marketing synergies that will allow both brands to co-promote their offerings to a broader global audience. The partnership will deliver a range of transformative capabilities across The Heart of Europe, beginning with advanced connectivity through the deployment of robust wireless networks across the island. Sustainability remains a core focus, with eco-friendly infrastructure designed to minimise environmental impact. Guests will benefit from a significantly enhanced experience, with smart room controls, AI-driven services, and immersive virtual reality features tailored for modern luxury travel. Behind the scenes, operational excellence will be achieved through centralised control systems, dynamic digital signage, and AI-powered automation that streamlines property management. Additionally, e& UAE will provide its CarePlus service as a dedicated, streamlined support system tailored to the needs of The Heart of Europe. This initiative ensures that guest and operational issues are resolved swiftly and seamlessly, guaranteeing that Kleindienst Group maintains the highest standards of reliability and responsiveness. This strategic agreement strengthens e& UAE's position as a partner of choice for digitally transforming large-scale developments, while empowering The Heart of Europe to become one of the most technologically advanced and sustainable hospitality destinations in the region.

e& UAE Unleashes Region's First 5G Slicing Technology

e& UAE has launched the region's first commercial 5G network slicing product for business customers over its cutting-edge standalone network. Revolutionizing connectivity, this pioneering solution delivers tailored, ultra-reliable 5G to meet the evolving needs of industries and organizations across the public and private sectors. 5G slicing empowers e& UAE's world-class commercial 5G network by partitioning it into multiple virtual networks (slices), each powered by dedicated network resources. This innovation enables businesses in diverse industries such as manufacturing, public safety and port facilities to optimize performance for their business-critical applications. The introduction of custom slices will meet specific industry demands, ranging from low latency to robust Internet of Things (IoT) solutions for smart infrastructure. These dedicated network resources will also guarantee peak performance for critical operations. Oscar Garcia, Senior Vice President, Business Marketing and Product Innovation, e& UAE, said: "By introducing 5G network slicing, e& UAE is delivering on its commitment to building innovative connectivity products and solutions that drive digital transformation across industries. With 5G network slicing, organizations can leverage on end-to-end reserved capacity to achieve guaranteed performance for critical operations. The solution is set to enable industry-specific use cases with the reliability and flexibility required for essential applications." e& UAE offers businesses flexible options to suit their needs, including 5G slicing bandwidth-based packages, which provides tailored connectivity speeds to match specific use case requirements, and an industrial 5G Customer End Device (CPE), which acts as a dedicated access point, ensuring seamless integration and reliable performance for the subscribed network slice. Even though slices share the same physical network, they are isolated from each other in terms of traffic and data. This isolation ensures that the performance of a slice is not affected by the demands of other users on the shared network, ensuring secure and reliable service for businesses. As the region's first operator to launch a 5G network slicing solution with predefined bandwidths and plans, e& UAE is unlocking the full potential of reliable connectivity across the UAE. This game-changing technology bridges the gap between standard 5G services and complex private network infrastructures, offering an agile, cost-effective solution for today's digital landscape. By enabling businesses to craft multiple virtual networks tailored to specific applications and critical use cases, e& UAE ensures organizations meet their unique requirements with precision and unmatched reliability, paving the way for a smarter, more connected future.

e& Enterprise Named a Major Player in CPaaS by IDC MarketScape

e& enterprise has been named a 'Major Player' in the IDC MarketScape: Worldwide Communications Platform as a Service (CPaaS) 2025 Vendor Assessment (doc #US52039625, February 2025), which assesses the communications platform–as-a-service (CPaaS) market through the IDC MarketScape model. Ahmed A. Omer, Vice President (VP), Customer Experience, e& enterprise, said: "We are honored to be recognized by IDC MarketScape for CPaaS. Businesses today demand intelligent, scalable, and secure customer engagement solutions and we believe this recognition validates our ongoing efforts to enhance AI-powered customer engagement, strengthen omnichannel experiences, and integrate seamlessly with enterprise ecosystems. Our strategic expansion ensures that enterprises across industries can leverage engageX to enhance communication experiences and drive business outcomes." According to Courtney Munroe, Research VP, IDC "e& enterprise's portfolio combining cutting-edge AI capability, scalability, and seamless integration across multiple channels is a competitive solution in the CPaaS segment. This will facilitate the ability to drive the next wave of transformation in communications to deliver real, measurable value for businesses worldwide." With a strong international footprint and over 3,000 enterprise customers, e& enterprise's



CPaaS platform, engageX, continues to empower businesses with seamless, AI-driven customer interactions. According to the report, "engageX has a diverse portfolio of products and services including CPaaS, SaaS, and custom solutions to help businesses with omni-channel engagement strategies, automation, and operational efficiency." These features enable businesses to optimize customer experiences and drive operational efficiencies. EngageX provides a comprehensive suite of communication solutions, including voice, SMS, video, email, number masking, and multi-factor authentication. The platform's seamless integration with CRM, CCaaS, UCaaS, and payment systems enables enterprises to streamline operations and deliver personalized, real-time engagement. Beyond technology, engageX delivers expert CX consulting services, helping businesses design and optimize customer journeys to maximize engagement and satisfaction. This consulting is complemented by dedicated developer advocacy, ensuring smooth implementation and ongoing innovation tailored to the diverse needs of various industries. Flexible pricing models—including pay-as-you-go, subscription, and usage-based options—make engageX accessible to businesses of all sizes, ensuring scalability and adaptability to evolving market needs. As part of its growth strategy, e& enterprise has expanded its CPaaS presence into Türkiye and Saudi Arabia (KSA), reinforcing its commitment to delivering next-generation customer engagement solutions in key global markets.

Mobily Generates Nearly US$426 Million Net Income in H1-25, Unveils Dividends

Etihad Etisalat Company (Mobily) achieved net profits worth SAR 1.59 billion in the first half (H1) of 2025. The net income marked a 22.94% growth from SAR 1.29 billion in H1-24, according to the income statements. The earnings per share (EPS) rose to SAR 2.07 as of 30 June 2025 compared with SAR 1.69 in the same period a year earlier. The Saudi telecom operator generated revenue of SAR 9.60 billion during January-June 2025, which signaled a 6.60% increase from SAR 9.01 billion in the same six months (6M) a year ago. In the second quarter (Q2) of 2025, Mobily also witnessed a net profit growth of 25.56% to SAR 830 million from SAR 661 million in Q2-24. The company posted an 8.12% rise in revenue to SAR 4.82 billion during the April-June 2025 period when compared to SAR 4.46 billion in the same quarter a year ago. On a quarterly basis, Mobily registered an 8.21% increase in Q2-25 net profit from SAR 767 million in Q1-25 and the revenues were 1.06% higher than SAR 4.77 billion. The board members of Mobily decided, in 21 July 2025 meeting, to distribute a total of SAR 924 million as cash dividends for H1-25. The company will pay SAR 1.20 per share, accounting for 12% of the share par value, for 770 million eligible shares. Mobily announced the eligibility and distribution dates for H1-25 dividends as 31 July and 19 August, respectively.

Omantel Moves Forward on Net Zero Path with Emissions Cut and Renewable Energy Impact

As climate action becomes increasingly urgent across industries, Omantel is stepping forward with a clear commitment to sustainability. The company has formally adopted a Net Zero target by 2050 and set an ambitious near-term goal to cut Scope 1 and Scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions by 45 percent by 2030, using 2023 as the baseline year. This commitment reflects Omantel's broader sustainability vision and its role as a national digital enabler supporting Oman's transition toward a low-carbon future. Rather than treating Net Zero as a distant aspiration,

Omantel is taking measurable steps to reshape its environmental impact. "Our responsibility extends beyond digital infrastructure. It includes contributing to a more sustainable future for Oman," said Lujaina Saif Al Kharusi, Vice President Governance, Regulatory Affairs and Compliance at Omantel "This target reflects both our ambition and the action we are taking to achieve it." A major step in this journey was reached in 2024, when Omantel redeemed 40,000 International Renewable Energy Certificates (I-RECs) sourced from the Dhofar Wind IPP through Nama Power and Water Procurement (Nama PWP). This clean electricity, equivalent to 40,000 MWh, led to a 12.38 percent reduction in the company's market-based Scope 2 emissions and prevented more than 88,000 tonnes of CO_2 equivalent from entering the atmosphere. Without intervention, emissions would have risen alongside business growth. Instead, Omantel achieved a 2.77 percent decrease in total emissions for 2024 compared to 2023, avoiding a projected 10.96 percent increase. By 2026, emissions are expected to remain just 5.15 percent above 2023 levels, far below the business-as-usual projection of nearly 31 percent. These results underscore the effectiveness of Omantel's approach. Omantel also stands among the first telecom operators in the region to adopt renewable energy certificates at this scale. This signals both technical capability and a serious commitment to operational sustainability. "Setting goals is important, but following through on them is what defines leadership," said Lujaina Al Kharusi. "Integrating wind power into our energy portfolio is just one example of how we are aligning climate goals with real action." By embedding sustainability into its strategy, Omantel is contributing to Oman's national Net Zero roadmap and helping shape a future where connectivity and climate responsibility move forward together.

Omantel Successfully Trials 5G Advanced Passive IoT Technology

Reinforcing its leadership in 5G technologies, Omantel has successfully completed a lab trial of self-operating Passive Internet of Things (IoT) technology. Unlike conventional IoT devices that rely on batteries, Passive IoT devices operate using ambient energy sources. This trial marks a significant step toward providing low-energy, high-efficiency technology solutions aligned with global trends in adopting sustainable and eco-friendly digital innovations. This achievement builds on Omantel's earlier trial of RedCap technology last year—part of advanced 5G features—designed to enable effective connectivity for low-capability devices, thereby improving internet efficiency and expanding the scope of IoT applications. Commenting on the successful trial, Eng. Saleem bin Ahmed Abdullatiff, Vice President Business Unit at Omantel, said: "This success reaffirms Omantel's commitment to leading digital transformation by adopting the latest global technologies that support the development of a future-ready digital infrastructure. By enabling efficient and reliable solutions such as Passive IoT, we contribute to building a technology-enabled society and strengthening the Sultanate of Oman's position as a regional hub for innovation. We remain dedicated to supporting national objectives and addressing the evolving needs of individuals and businesses across the Sultanate." Passive IoT is considered a promising future application of 5G networks, offering numerous opportunities for sectors such as logistics, healthcare, and smart agriculture. Unlike traditional IoT devices, Passive IoT tags do not require battery power, making them easier to install, minimizing maintenance and replacements, and ensuring longer operational lifespans. The trial demonstrated the effectiveness of Passive IoT over Omantel's 5G network, proving its ability to successfully connect over distances of up to 200 meters. The technology is expected to bring a qualitative shift in business models across various sectors by creating new revenue streams and accelerating their digital transformation agendas. Omantel's future 5G-powered Passive IoT network will be capable of supporting millions of passive sensors across sectors such as retail, logistics, manufacturing, and others. The relationship between RedCap and Passive IoT technologies reflects an integrated approach toward enabling a comprehensive digital environment that supports diverse types of smart devices, whether requiring direct connectivity, like RedCap devices, or operating passively using ambient energy, like Passive IoT. Omantel has succeeded, through the integration of its operations, processes, and extensive expertise in the field of 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 different consumer and business sectors. The company aims to deliver an unparalleled, exceptional experience to its customers and strives to always exceed their expectations. To achieve the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, Omantel invests in emerging technologies and provides cutting-edge ICT solutions, such as cloud solutions, AI, smart solutions, cybersecurity, and much more, in addition to harnessing its technological capabilities to enhance innovation and leadership in new and advanced technologies.

Omantel and FiberHome Launch Joint R&D Center to Pioneer Next-Generation Network Solutions

As part of its broader research and development strategy, Omantel has partnered with FiberHome, a leading Chinese technology provider, to establish a joint research and development center dedicated to advancing intelligent solutions in next-generation fiber networks and telecommunications technologies. This strategic collaboration supports Omantel's vision to bridge industrial expertise with academic research, fostering a dynamic ecosystem for innovation and technology entrepreneurship in Oman. The initiative plays a vital role in driving the nation's digital transformation and enabling a knowledge-based economy. Commenting on the partnership, Talal Al Mamari, CEO of Omantel, said: "Omantel continues to expand its investments in R&D across the technology and digital sectors, recognizing the importance of staying ahead in a fast-changing digital landscape. We are committed to embracing global innovation and developing future-ready solutions that fuel our sustainable growth and meet the evolving needs of our customers. This joint center is a testament to that commitment. It will serve as a high-tech platform to design and test forward-looking solutions for Oman and the wider region. Partnering with a global leader like FiberHome enhances our capabilities to build smarter, more efficient networks and deliver commercially viable technologies. We are confident this initiative will strengthen our position both regionally and globally." Joe Cai, Vice President of FiberHome, said: "We are proud to join forces with Omantel in launching this innovation center, which marks a new milestone in FiberHome's long-term engagement with Oman and the Middle East. The lab will leverage our global R&D strength to develop advanced smart network solutions, including next-generation technologies like 50GPON and AI-powered network management. This partnership also promotes talent development and deeper collaboration between academia and industry, both essential pillars for sustainable digital growth." The center will serve as an integrated platform, bringing together academic insight and real-world expertise. It will link Chinese institutions such as Wuhan University and FiberHome's research hubs with Omantel's operational capabilities and local partners to accelerate the development and deployment of intelligent solutions. As part of the collaboration, the two companies have successfully conducted a live trial of 50GPON technology, achieving speeds of up to 50 gigabits per second—ten times faster than current fiber technologies. The trial highlights the potential for delivering ultra-high-speed connectivity to support edge computing, artificial intelligence, smart cities, and Industry 4.0 applications, cornerstones of the digital economy. The center will focus on developing intelligent solutions for the operation and maintenance of telecom networks, emphasizing the creation of functional prototypes ready for real-world deployment in local and regional markets. This opens new horizons for innovation and customizing technologies to meet the evolving demands of the next digital phase. This partnership marks a significant step in Omantel's innovation roadmap, placing advanced technology at the heart of economic and social development. It reinforces Omantel's leadership in digital transformation and its role in delivering sustainable, forward-thinking solutions that empower industries across the Sultanate.

Omantel and du Switch on Oman Emirates Gateway Subsea Cable

Omentel and UAE-based du announced that they have activated the Oman Emirates Gateway (OEG), a 275-km fiber-optic subsea cable system that will boost connectivity between the UAE and Oman. While the UAE and Oman are already connected via subsea and terrestrial fiber cables, the OEG – the plans for which were first revealed in 2023 – creates an express route between the two countries that adds more resiliency and reliability to those routes. It also connects three international data centers in both countries: datamena DX1 in Dubai, Equinix MC1 in Barka and Equinix SN1 in Salalah Oman. As such, du and Omentel said this will provide faster cloud access and facilitate international business growth in a rapidly evolving digital landscape. Karim Benkirane, chief commercial officer at du, said the OEG boosts the operational efficiency of existing networks and systems while enhancing speed, expanding connectivity, and elevating customer experiences. "This project will be a cornerstone for hyperscalers, content providers, and international carriers, empowering them to enhance their presence in the UAE and Oman, and optimize their operational capability to meet the growing demands of the digital era," he said in a joint statement. Omantel chief technology and digital officer Samy Al Ghassany added that the OEG "goes beyond mere connectivity – it propels the entire region towards innovation, growth, and global competitiveness."

Zain Omantel International Takes Home Four Major Industry Awards - Reinforcing Its Role as the Middle East's Connectivity Powerhouse

Zain Omantel International (ZOI), the joint venture between Zain Group and Omantel, has earned four prestigious international awards – underscoring its position as a connectivity powerhouse in the regional and global wholesale telecom arena. The Carrier Community Global Awards (CCGA) recognized ZOI for its unique model integrating terrestrial and subsea infrastructure across eight markets, awarding:

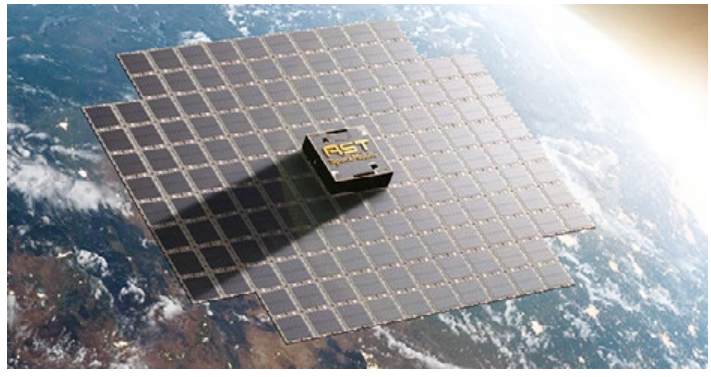
- "Best Data Connectivity Innovative Provider of the Year" – for advancing pan-regional connectivity with integrated subsea-terrestrial networks and high-capacity solutions for hyperscalers and carriers.
- "Best Subsea Cable Operator of the Year" – for its leadership in subsea investments, including strategic participation in G2A, AAE-1, and Oman Australia Cable.
- "Middle East Regional Connectivity Operator of the Year" – for delivering the only fully operator-owned pan-Middle East fibre network, with a continuous footprint linking the Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea, and Red Sea across key markets.

CCGA honors outstanding achievements in the telecom wholesale industry and its ecosystem of partners worldwide. Evaluated by a panel of global telecom experts from more than 100 companies and awarded organizations that demonstrated excellence in innovation, capacity, and connectivity solutions. Furthermore, at the Global Brand Awards 2025, ZOI was named "Best New Telecom Connectivity Brand – Middle East". The Global Brand Awards are presented by Global Brands Magazine, a UK-based publication that receives over 8 million annual views and is recognized for honoring excellence across branding, leadership, and innovation across various sectors worldwide. Launched in May 2023, ZOI unites Zain Group's regional scale and digital leadership with Omantel's global infrastructure, combining over 20 international subsea cable systems with expansive terrestrial reach. Sohail Qadir, CEO of ZOI commented, "These awards reflect ZOI's unique role as a driver for innovation in local and global connectivity. We operate the region's highest-ranked IP network, as measured by CAIDA, and continue to invest in both terrestrial and subsea cable infrastructure shaping how the Middle East connects with the world." Sohail Qadir concluded: "ZOI's success is driven by our unmatched ability to connect key markets and global hubs through resilient international subsea and regional terrestrial infrastructure. We enable connectivity providers to execute seamless, high-performance strategies that drive socio-economic growth. In doing so, we reinforce the Middle East's position as a global digital hub and accelerate how organizations connect, scale and innovate."

PCCW Global, ZOI, Sparkle, and Telecom Egypt to Construct AAE-2 Subsea Cable

A consortium of four subsea cable operators, Zain Omantel International (ZOI), PCCW Global, Sparkle, and Telecom Egypt, have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to collaborate on the construction of the Asia-Africa-Europe-2 (AAE-2) subsea cable system. This project aims to establish a robust next-generation subsea digital link connecting Hong Kong and Singapore to Italy, traversing secure and high-capacity terrestrial corridors across Thailand, the Arabian Peninsula and Egypt. The partners say the plan is to strategically deliver unprecedented capacity and foster seamless, reliable connectivity across the three continents. AAE-2 will also feature as yet unspecified strategic extensions to additional key destinations across its route, further enhancing intercontinental connectivity and supporting the growing demands of cloud services, content delivery and digital transformation initiatives across the regions. This ambitious initiative, say the partners, is designed to revolutionize global connectivity by delivering a geographical diverse, resilient, and high-performance route for international traffic. By integrating both subsea and terrestrial infrastructure, they suggest, AAE-2 will create a future-proof data highway between Asia, Africa and Europe. Building on the legacy of the AAE-1 cable, a 25,000-kilometer submarine cable from South East Asia to Europe across Egypt, launched in June 2017. AAE-2 will incorporate the most advanced technological innovations offering unprecedented bandwidth capacity to serve the tremendous traffic needs and empowering communities and businesses across Asia, Africa and Europe. Frederick Chui, Chief Executive Officer of PCCW Global, says: “Following our instrumental role in the success of the AAE-1 system, we are pleased to bring our expertise to AAE-2, an advanced, high-capacity and geographically diverse subsea cable system connecting Asia and Europe.” Enrico Bagnasco, Chief Executive Officer of Sparkle, says: “The AAE-2 cable system is an innovative project perfectly in line with Sparkle’s long-term strategy to strengthen the Asia-Africa-Europe corridor by enhancing route diversity and ensuring the highest levels of network resilience." Mohamed Nasr, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Telecom Egypt, adds: "AAE-2 will also benefit from accessing and cross-connecting with the other subsea cables using our WeConnect ecosystem."

AT&T and AST SpaceMobile Complete First VoLTE Call and SMS Over Satellite



AT&T and AST SpaceMobile achieved a major milestone in the race to bring satellite connectivity to everyday mobile users. The companies successfully completed the first-ever native voice call (VoLTE) and text message (SMS) over AST’s Block 1 satellites, using a standard, unmodified cell phone operating on AT&T spectrum and passing through AT&T’s core network. Unlike previous demonstrations relying on bespoke hardware or workarounds, this call and text used AT&T’s existing commercial infrastructure and spectrum — marking a critical step forward in expanding mobile coverage to remote and underserved areas via direct-to-device (D2D) satellite service. In May 2024, the companies signed a definitive commercial agreement to offer direct-to-device satellite service through 2030. As part of the deal, AT&T Head of Network Chris Sambar joined AST’s board of directors. The companies called the collaboration “one giant leap towards enhanced connectivity for consumers and businesses across the country.” AST’s first five commercial satellites — dubbed BlueBirds — were launched in September 2024 from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida, which enabled the start of commercial D2D service in the U.S.

AT&T Introduces Advanced Voice Technology for Businesses to Modernize Communications

AT&T has announced the launch of AT&T Business Voice, a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) solution engineered to modernize traditional lines. This all-in-one solution delivers a reliable, secure and scalable platform that consolidates analog voice and utility lines, empowering businesses to seamlessly transition to a robust digital infrastructure. As customers demand faster, more dependable services, we've developed several solutions like AT&T Business Voice to better meet their needs and accelerate the transition from copper-based services. Traditional copper lines no longer deliver the consistent, always-on connectivity that today's businesses require. Recognizing this, AT&T Business Voice offers a future-ready alternative by converting analog signals to Internet Protocol (IP) and has been approved by the FCC as a replacement product for businesses that have used traditional copper-based landlines1. AT&T Business Voice also allows business customers to keep their phone number and same handset equipment. This solution supports essential lines such as fax machines, fire alarm panels, security alarms, elevator phones, and public safety phones remain reliable and secure. Key features of AT&T Business Voice include:

24/7 Monitoring: Remote monitoring and automatic notifications to ensure reliability for business lines.

Built-in Battery: Built-in battery backup for service during power outages.

Wireless Backup: Optional automatic failover to a 4G LTE connection permits uninterrupted service during broadband interruptions.

Robust Security: Integrated Digital Phone Call Protect to block

spam and robocalls.Enhanced Telephony Management: Modern calling features that can be customized for business needs such as 24/7 virtual receptionist, simultaneous ringing across multiple lines, customizable Caller ID, and centralized voicemail management.

"Business Voice is more than just an updated phone system. It's a comprehensive solution that empowers small and medium sized businesses to modernize their operations while maintaining reliability and security," said Melissa Arnoldi, executive vice president & general manager, AT&T Business. "We're excited to help businesses transition to a digital future with a solution that's flexible, scalable, and built for growth."AT&T Business Voice is compatible with all types of transport and allows businesses to choose between shared or dedicated internet connections to meet their specific needs.

AT&T Beats Q2 Estimates on Wireless Strength

AT&T posted second-quarter earnings that beat Wall Street forecasts, fueled by strong wireless subscriber growth and a modest revenue uptick. However, slower-than-expected fiber additions and rising churn tempered investor enthusiasm, sending shares down 3–4% in early trading. The company reported adjusted earnings of $0.54 per share on revenue of $30.8 billion, edging past consensus estimates of $0.53 and $30.5 billion, respectively. Mobility service revenue rose 6.7% to $16.9 billion, reflecting strong demand for devices and bundled wireless offerings. AT&T added 401,000 net postpaid phone subscribers, easily topping analysts' expectations of 296,000 and outshining Verizon, which lost 9,000 subscribers during the same period. Still, postpaid phone churn increased to 0.87%, up 17 basis points year-over-year. The company attributed the uptick to customers coming off device financing contracts —an impact it said was "a little bit more … than anticipated." Even so, the surge in new wireless customers helped offset that pressure. On the broadband side, AT&T reported 243,000 net fiber adds — slightly below the projected 250,600 and down from 261,000 in Q1. The company reaffirmed its aggressive fiber expansion goals, stating it will allocate $3.5 billion to reach 4 million new locations per year. By 2030, AT&T aims to pass 50 million customer locations with in-region fiber and more than 60 million including Lumen's Mass Markets assets. CEO John Stankey pointed to favorable regulatory and tax environments, citing the "Big Beautiful Bill" and comparing current policy tailwinds to those following the Telecommunications Act of 1996. "Investment and policy tailwinds are as strong as I can remember," he said. In addition to fiber investment, AT&T will devote $1.5 billion to pension funding and use the remainder of its projected tax savings for debt reduction, share buybacks, and strategic initiatives. CFO Pascal Desroches said, "Overall, we feel really good about the strength and management of our balance sheet based on current operating trends and our outlook for the business."

AT&T Pushes RedCap Nationwide to 200M PoPs

AT&T achieved nationwide coverage of its 5G reduced capability (RedCap) network, now serving over 200 million Points of Presence (PoPs) across the country. Jason Sikes, VP of device technology at AT&T, stated in a blog RedCap supports a new generation of devices including wearables, XR glasses and IoT products by offering lower battery consumption, reduced costs and streamlined 5G capabilities. He noted RedCap powers a broad range of IoT products for use in healthcare, asset tracking, industrial sensors, fleet management and "other mid-speed computing devices". "They offer reduced manufacturing costs and more compact form factors by featuring fewer antennas, lower processing power, less battery consumption and simplified radio frequency components compared to full 5G devices," Sikes explained. A representative for AT&T told Mobile World Live RedCap is running on the operator's standalone (SA) 5G network. The operator is working with module providers such as Semtech, Telit Cinterion and Rhino Mobility to expand the device ecosystem. Sikes also announced certification of the Franklin Wireless RG350, the first commercially approved 5G RedCap mobile hotspot on its network. The mobile hotspot, powered by the Qualcomm Snapdragon X35 5G Modem-RF System, enables connectivity for remote work and travel. "As we continue expanding the 5G RedCap network and ecosystem, customers can anticipate a growing portfolio of devices," Sikes stated. "This momentum will drive IoT innovation, transforming how businesses and consumers connect, operate and innovate with 5G technology." Sikes cited the operator's first RedCap data call on a live SA 5G network two years ago as a key milestone ahead of the nationwide deployment. Standards body 3GPP introduced RedCap, or NR-Light, in its Release-17 standard to enable a wider range of low power devices including IoT sensors on 5G networks.

AT&T to Accelerate Fiber Network Expansion

AT&T plans to more quickly build fiber infrastructure thanks to pro-investment policies in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act passed by Congress. The One Big Beautiful Bill Act will spur investment, maintain U.S. leadership in innovation, and create economic opportunity nationwide. Thanks to the policies in this legislation, AT&T expects to invest more rapidly in next-generation networks after the bill is signed into law, increasing our investment by an additional 1 million fiber customer locations annually starting in 2026. This bill also creates a pipeline of midband spectrum that will help meet soaring consumer demand and keep the U.S. technologically competitive with other countries. Paired with the tax provisions in the bill, this legislation paves the way for the stated goals laid out by FCC Chairman Brendan Carr: unleashing high-speed infrastructure builds and restoring America's global lead in wireless technology through smart policy. We appreciate Senate Majority Leader John Thune, Senate Commerce Committee Chair Ted Cruz, House Speaker Mike Johnson, and House Energy and Commerce Committee Chair Brett Guthrie for their efforts to establish a spectrum pipeline and renew FCC auction authority. And we thank President Trump for his leadership in making priorities of spectrum availability and tax incentives for capital investment in the reconciliation process. AT&T plans to provide an update on the expected impact of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act on its 2025 and long-term financial outlook and capital allocation plans when it releases its second quarter results, scheduled for release on July 23, 2025.

AT&T Deploys First Third-Party rApp

AT&T and Ericsson reveal that, for the first time, a third-party RAN automation application, an rApp, has successfully performed optimization activity on a Communication Service Provider's (CSP) live production network. Powered by the Ericsson Intelligent Automation Platform (EIAP), the rApp was deployed to optimize AT&T's live network in July after extensive testing. This accomplishment marks a decisive moment in the industry's move from closed, single-vendor Self-Organizing Networks (SON) toward an open, future-proof architecture based on the standards and frameworks set out by the Open RAN Alliance. Rob Soni, VP of RAN Technology at AT&T says: "This milestone represents a significant leap forward in our commitment to openness and collaboration. By embracing third-party innovation on our network and platform, we're signaling that diverse solutions play a key role in the future of commercial networks. We look forward to seeing the new levels of innovation, agility, and efficiency that programmability will unlock."

China Mobile and Huawei Win TM Forum's 2025 Excellence Award for Autonomous Networks

During DTW 2025, Huawei and China Mobile won the Excellence Award for Autonomous Networks for the End-to-End Autonomous Network Operation Center (Dark NOC) solution. This project focuses on high-value Autonomous Networks scenarios, leveraging telecom foundation model and agents, and has achieved significant achievements in end-to-end automation, quality & revenue enhancement, and efficient operations & maintenance, which has effectively accelerated the advancement of the telecom industry towards level 4. To achieve the L4 industry goal of "end-to-end automation of NOC operations in high-value scenarios and self-service site operations", Huawei and China Mobile have jointly created the End-to-End Autonomous Network Operation Center (Dark NOC) solution. Focusing on high-value scenarios such as fault handling and customer complaint resolution, the solution leverages telecom foundation model to build two main types of agents: role-based Copilots and scenario-based Agents. This solution was first deployed in Guangdong and Zhejiang provinces, achieving significant results including a 30% improvement in maintenance efficiency and a 30% reduction in average MTTR. Currently, the solution has been commercially deployed across fault management and complaint handling scenarios in China Mobile Guangdong and Zhejiang, covering mobile bearer, wireless, core, and home broadband networks. It is now being promoted to other provincial subsidiaries, empowering operators to serve tens of millions of users. The successful implementation of the End-to-End Autonomous Network Operations Center (Dark NOC) Solution provides a valuable practical reference for global operators accelerating their journey toward L4. In the future, Huawei and China Mobile will continue to deepen innovation and practical exploration in high-value scenarios, injecting new impetus into the automation and intelligent transformation of the telecoms industry.

China Mobile Completes First Test of Remote Storage and Computing Via HIC-OTN

To meet the high security requirements for user data in foundation model training, China Mobile Research Institute recently proposed a new remote storage and computing architecture based on Hitless Intelligent Computing-OTN (HIC-OTN). Working with China Mobile Hubei Branch and Huawei, CMRI has completed the industry's first technical test of remote storage and computing over 240 km using HIC-OTN in China Mobile's intelligent computing center (Wuhan). This initiative establishes a new standard for secure foundation model training with localized user data. The foundation model, utilizing pipeline parallelism (PP) and with hundreds of billions of parameters, achieved a training efficiency of over 99% of that in a single cluster, on the 240 km intelligent computing interconnection network. This achievement marks a significant milestone in the advancement of intelligent computing center technologies and service applications. The leapfrog development of foundation model technologies is driving a surge in demand for intelligent transformation and upgrades across various industries. The computing power needed for training foundation models is increasing; major tech companies, both in and outside of China, are investing in clusters with 10,000+ or even 100,000+ cards. This involves high construction costs and requires addressing technical challenges to enhance the efficiency of large-scale computing power utilization. Small and medium-sized enterprises face challenges in constructing large intelligent computing centers due to high costs and technical requirements. Renting intelligent computing services can pose security risks when transferring private data to external centers for foundation model training. This creates a significant gap between the pressing need for AI capabilities and the scale of application. China Mobile Research Institute introduced the cutting-edge HIC-OTN-based remote storage and computing technology architecture. "Micro-computing power" is utilized on the user side for data training, with the training process segmented and user data remaining stored locally. Only the intermediate values of model training are sent through HIC-OTN to the service provider's intelligent computing center (pow-

erful computing power) for training, ensuring cost-effectiveness and high security in foundation model training. To ensure reliable remote storage and computing on the transmission network, the HIC-OTN hitless transmission mechanism is utilized. This innovative technology reconstructs the forwarding and storage functions of devices, resulting in improved performance. Traditional OTN protection switching typically causes a 50 ms service interruption with packet losses, but with HIC-OTN, there is a 0 ms service interruption without zero packet loss. In the industry's first technical test of HIC-OTN-based remote storage and computing (240 km), 16 GPUs were deployed on the user side as the entry for training foundation models with hundreds of billions of parameters based on PP, and 48 GPUs were deployed in the carrier's intelligent computing center for centralized and large-scale training. The two ends 240 km apart were interconnected through 800G HIC-OTN featuring high bandwidth and hitless transmission, achieving a collaborative training efficiency of over 99% of that in a single cluster. Duan Xiaodong, Vice President of China Mobile Research Institute, described the original HIC-OTN-based remote storage and computing architecture as a new approach to foundation model training for small- and medium-sized enterprises. This innovation is expected to establish a new standard in inclusive intelligent computing technology and applications. The test leverages the ultra-high bandwidth, ultra-low latency, and ultra-high reliability of the new HIC-OTN technology to achieve a training efficiency of over 99% of that in a single cluster. This enables efficient collaboration between the "micro-computing power" on the user side and the "powerful computing power" on the service provider side.

China Mobile is dedicated to driving AI-powered innovation across various industries, consistently advancing original technology innovation and development. This test successfully demonstrated the feasibility and progress of the HIC-OTN-based remote storage and computing technology architecture. Moving forward, we aim to further enhance collaboration between academia, industry, and research in intelligent computing and optical interconnection technologies to create advanced networks that can facilitate the rapid growth of AI.

Cisco Canada and Peterborough Regional Health Centre Transform Transitional Care

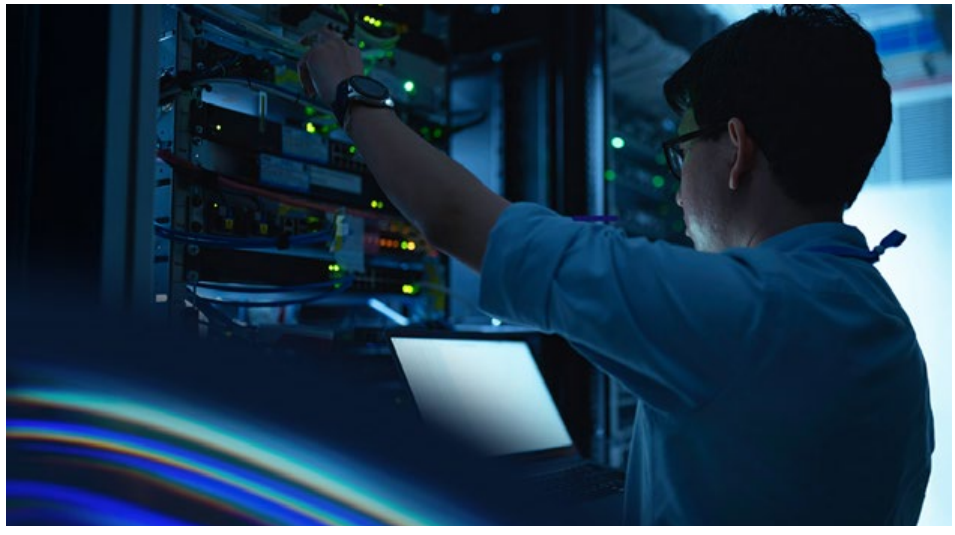
Cisco, the worldwide leader in networking and technology, and Peterborough Regional Health Centre (PRHC) have collaborated on the deployment of a next-generation Reactivation Care Centre: a safe, digitally enabled space designed to support short-term recovery for patients transitioning from hospital to home. “With growing demands on healthcare, innovation is critical to delivering the best in care,” said Wayne Cuervo, Director of Cisco Canada’s Digital Impact Office. “Our partnership with PRHC demonstrates how technology can transform healthcare delivery, improve patient outcomes, and set a new standard for recovery across Canada.” As healthcare systems face rising pressures, including an aging population and limited acute care capacity, this new facility helps alleviate hospital strain and frees up much-needed hospital beds for those in need of urgent medical attention, while enhancing recovery outcomes for a broad range of patients. “The Reactivation Care Centre at PRHC goes beyond providing a setting for patients to recover from their acute illness,” said Dr. Lynn Mikula, President & CEO at PRHC. “Supported by investment and innovation through our partnership with Cisco Canada, each patient has access to specialized and restorative care to prepare them for a successful discharge from the hospital. The targeted care being offered on this unit will help to address the increasing demands of our growing and aging community.” As the primary technology partner, Cisco provides the digital foundation within the Reactivation Care Centre to enhance patient care and enable clinicians to focus on what matters most: patients. The center is equipped with an integrated suite of secure, digital tools to optimize communication, safety, and patient support. This smart technology also securely harnesses data for AI and analytics that can be used to improve care, operations and experiences within the center. Key solutions include:

- Webex Boards & Room Navigators: Real-time collaboration tools connecting care teams, patients, and families.
- Cisco Spaces & Kontakt.io Badges: Location-based services that monitor patient flow, improve safety, and support contact tracing.
- Corsano Cardio Bands: Wearable devices that track mobility and vital signs, offering real-time insights into recovery progress.
- Seamless Data Integration: All technology is securely connected to PRHC’s custom-built data platform, Peregrine, enabling clinicians to make informed, personalized decisions.

The project is made possible by Cisco’s Country Digital Acceleration (CDA) program, which helps organizations accelerate their digital transformation by providing technology, expertise, and partnerships where it can have the most impact. The Reactivation Care Centre at PRHC represents a scalable blueprint for transitional care across the country. By combining clinical expertise with digital innovation, PRHC and Cisco are demonstrating how health systems can evolve to meet the complex and diverse needs of patients leaving acute care. “At PRHC, we’ve set a bold vision for ourselves, including a strategic commitment to transform data, analytics and technology to support people today and into the future,” said Evan Lyons, PRHC’s VP, Digital & Information Services and Chief Information Officer. “As demand continues to grow in our region and across the healthcare system, investments in innovative digital solutions to support the patient journey will be critical as we continue striving to provide the best possible care and support, and to carve out a spot for PRHC amongst some of the best and most forward-thinking hospitals across the country.” Together, Cisco and PRHC are showing that the future of patient-centered recovery lies in forward-thinking partnerships that deliver compassionate, connected, and technology-enabled care.

Cisco Powers AI-Ready Data Centers, from Hyperscale to Enterprise

Cisco unveiled groundbreaking innovations to simplify, secure, and future-proof data centers, empowering organizations to scale their AI ambitions with confidence. Cisco's leadership in hyperscale and AI infrastructure-as-a-service markets demonstrates the foundational role that secure, resilient networking plays in today's data center architecture. In Q3 FY25, Cisco notably surpassed its annual target of $1 billion in AI infrastructure orders from hyperscalers a full quarter ahead of schedule. Building on this momentum, Cisco's latest innovations enable enterprises and service providers to continue to accelerate the transformation of their infrastructure for the AI era. These innovations underscore Cisco's unique position as a trusted partner for hyperscale builders, neocloud providers, enterprises, and service providers, enabling the entire ecosystem to evolve and meet the demands of AI-driven workloads. "The world is moving from chatbots intelligently answering our questions to agents conducting tasks and jobs fully autonomously. This is the agentic era of AI," said Jeetu Patel, President and Chief Product Officer, Cisco. "As billions of AI agents begin working on our behalf, the demand for high-bandwidth, low latency and power efficient networking for data centers will soar. Cisco is at the forefront, delivering advanced, secure networking technology that's foundational to the AI-ready data centers of the future." "The criticality of secure connectivity becomes more apparent as AI use expands across the enterprise," said Matt Kimball, Moor Insights & Strategy. "Cisco's ability to deliver AI-ready infrastructure to its customers, along with its investment in AI-enabled operations differentiates the company. It is this kind of partner and customer-first thinking that leads to AI-powered tools that abstract the complexity associated with deploying and managing AI infrastructure. AI reaching its full potential is dependent on a resilient network on which partners build and deliver solutions and services." Enterprises need to evolve and build out their current infrastructure to support their unique AI workloads, all without adding complexity or sacrificing safety and security. Cisco provides enterprise customers with new solutions to modernize their data centers, including hardware innovation and more powerful, simplified management capabilities. Cisco is also continuing to build on its relationship with NVIDIA to deliver validated infrastructure solutions, and to provide a safe and secure foundation for AI agents built with open models. New innovations include; New Unified Fabric Experience with Nexus: Customers will be able to simplify network operations and enhance operational efficiency across environments, converging ACI and NX-OS VXLAN EVPN fabrics with unified data, control, policy enforcement, and management. The Unified Nexus Dashboard consolidates services across LAN, SAN, IPFM, and AI/ML fabrics into a single pane of glass. These capabilities will be available in the next Nexus Dashboard release in July 2025. Maximize AI Networking Performance: Customers can optimize AI workload operations with Cisco Intelligent Packet Flow. Now, it dynamically steers traffic using real-time telemetry and congestion awareness across AI fabrics. With "end-to-end" visibility across networks, GPUs, and distributed AI jobs, more issues are detected proactively. Additionally, Cisco and NVIDIA showed progress towards a unified architecture; at Cisco Live, the companies showcased the first technical integration of Cisco G200-based switches and NVIDIA NICs, demonstrating NVIDIA Spectrum-X Ethernet networking based on Cisco Silicon One that supports NX-OS, Nexus Hyperfabric AI and SONiC deployments. Expanded AI PODs: New configurable AI PODs enhance flexibility and scalability for diverse AI workloads, including training and fine-tuning. Cisco also continues to align with NVIDIA's innovation timeline; the NVIDIA RTX PRO 6000 Blackwell Server Edition GPU is now available to order with Cisco UCS C845A M8 servers. Together, the companies continue to work towards delivering validated solutions as part of the Cisco Secure AI Factory with NVIDIA Enabling Safe, Secure AI Adoption with NVIDIA: Cisco AI Defense and Cisco Hypershield provide visibility, validation and runtime protection of the end-to-end enterprise AI workflow and are now included in the NVIDIA Enterprise AI Factory validated design. With AI Defense, enterprises can secure AI agents built with leading open models and optimized with NVIDIA NIM and NeMo microservices. Optics for Simple Upgrades: New 400G bidirectional (BiDi) optics enables customers to easily transition to 400G networks while preserving their existing duplex multi-mode fiber infrastructure ensuring cost efficiency, scalability and enhanced data center performance. The new optics will be available in the second half of the calendar year 2025.



Cisco Joins Stargate UAE Initiative

Cisco the global leader in networking and security, announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to join the Stargate UAE consortium as a preferred technology partner. The strategic MoU, signed by Cisco's Chair and Chief Executive Officer Chuck Robbins together with other consortium partners, G42, OpenAI, Oracle, NVIDIA and SoftBank Group, envisions the construction of an AI data center in Abu Dhabi with a target capacity of 1 GW, with an initial 200 MW capacity to be delivered in 2026. As a partner in this initiative, Cisco will provide advanced networking, security and observability solutions to accelerate the deployment of next-generation AI compute clusters. "With the right infrastructure in place, AI can transform data into insights that empower every organization to innovate faster, tackle complex challenges, and deliver tangible outcomes," said Chuck Robbins, Cisco Chair and CEO. "Cisco is proud to join this consortium to harness the power of AI and deliver the infrastructure that will enable tomorrow's breakthroughs." The announcement follows Robbins' recent visit to Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE where Cisco announced a series of strategic initiatives across all phases of the AI transformation in the region. These new initiatives employ Cisco's trusted technology across the region's AI infrastructure buildouts, leveraging the company's deep expertise in networking and security together with longstanding regional partnerships. By fostering the development of secure, AI-powered digital infrastructure and collaborating with key Cisco partners, the company is delivering world-class, trusted technology to the region.

Satellite Operator Eutelsat Announces Raise $1.35 Billion Capital Rise

European satellite operator Eutelsat is set to raise more than $1.5 billion to fuel its Low Earth Orbit (LEO) ambitions, led by the French government. The company announced a €1.35 billion ($1.55bn) contemplated capital raise, anchored by key shareholders, to "secure the execution of [its] long-term strategic vision." "This capital increase would represent a pivotal step in Eutelsat's strategic and financing roadmap, enabling the execution of its strategic vision," Eutelsat said. "Coupled with a dedicated debt refinancing plan, this capital increase will reinforce the Company's financial flexibility by accelerating its deleveraging and support investment in its existing LEO capabilities and the future IRIS² constellation." Investors would include the French State via the Agence des Participations de l'Etat (APE) for €526.4m ($606m), Bharti Space Limited for €31.4m ($36.15m), CMA CGM for €100.4m ($115.6m), and Le Fonds Stratégique de Participations (FSP) for €57.8m ($66.55m). Eutelsat also said APE will acquire the shares in the company currently held by Bpifrance Participations. Following the two transactions, and subject to participation from investors, the French State would hold a stake of 29.99 percent of the capital and voting rights, while Bharti Space Limited, CMA CGM, and FSP would hold 18.70 percent, 7.81 percent, and 5.22 percent of the share capital and voting rights, respectively. Jean-François Fallacher, CEO of Eutelsat Group, said: "Eutelsat enters a new chapter, centered on the deployment of LEO, a major innovative and technological revolution for the Satellite industry. Thanks to its differentiated GEO-LEO positioning and global coverage, Eutelsat is ready to become a central player in the development of the European sovereign space of tomorrow." He continued: "I welcome the contemplated capital increase, which will give Eutelsat the requisite financing to implement its strategic roadmap. I am grateful for the support of the French State and the ongoing commitment of our other anchor shareholders – Bharti, CMA CGM, and FSP and thank them for their confidence." Discussions are also ongoing with other interested parties, the company said, including the UK government via the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, which could join the capital raise in due course. The UK currently owns around 10 percent of Eutelsat via its previous investment in OneWeb. Eric Lombard, French Minister for the Economy, Finance and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty, added: "The French State is proud to contribute to strengthening Eutelsat's capital structure and support the company at [a] pivotal stage of its development. This transaction reflects our strong commitment towards a major player in satellite connectivity — a strategic sector at the heart of Europe's digital sovereignty — while fostering remarkable potential for technological innovation and sustainable economic growth.

Eutelsat to Deliver LEO Connectivity for UK Government Operations Worldwide

Eutelsat Group has signed an agreement with NSSLGlobal, a leading provider in satellite communications systems to the maritime, enterprise, defence and government sectors and the UK's FCDO Services (Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office) to deliver OneWeb low Earth orbit (LEO) connectivity services. This strategic partnership will support a broad range of critical UK government activities worldwide – including diplomatic missions, policing, resilience, defence and other essential operations. Under the agreement, Eutelsat OneWeb's LEO's constellation will provide high-speed, low latency connectivity for British Embassies, High Commissions, and Consulates as well as broader UK government activities globally. Trusted partner NSSLGlobal will deliver fully managed, end-to-end services ensuring seamless support for FCDO missions across all sectors. Eutelsat's OneWeb LEO services and user terminals will be deployed to enhance regional resilience and ensure continuity of operations as part of the FCDO's commitment to hurricane preparedness and response across British Overseas Territories in the Caribbean. Cyril Dujardin, President of the Connectivity Business Unit at Eutelsat Group, commented: "We are proud to support the UK government and its global missions by delivering secure, resilient connectivity worldwide, even in the most remote or challenging environments. This agreement reflects the critical role LEO services play in enhancing operational effectiveness and enabling secure, low-latency communications for government operations." Mike Astell, Chief Executive Officer, FCDO Services said: "This partnership marks an exciting new chapter in FCDO Services' long history of providing secure satellite communications. By joining forces with NSSLGlobal and Eutelsat OneWeb, we're enhancing our ability to deliver rapid, secure connectivity anywhere in the world. This reinforces our commitment to meeting the unique needs of our government customers." Sally-anne Ray, Group CEO, NSSLGlobal added, "We are proud to support FCDO Services in delivering the secure communications that government teams depend on. Eutelsat OneWeb's LEO technology is a valuable addition to the solutions we provide, giving government customers even greater resilience and choice, wherever their work takes them."

Eutelsat Renews Long-Term Partnership with SRG SSR, Switzerland's Public Broadcaster

Eutelsat Group and Swiss broadcasting corporation SSR SRG are pleased to announce the multi-year renewal of their capacity agreement at Eutelsat's leading HOTBIRD video neighborhood, cementing a partnership spanning over 30 years. This new multi-year agreement assures the broadcast continuity of SSR SSG Group's High-Definition television channels and radio stations to audiences across Switzerland who are living beyond the range of quality terrestrial reception. Channels available on HOTBIRD include RTS 1, RTS 2, SRF 1, SRF 2, SRF info, RSI La 1 and RSI La 2. With their unparalleled pan-European coverage, the high-power HOTBIRD satellites at 13° East form one of the largest broadcasting systems across Europe and MENA. In Europe alone, they reach more than 130 million TV homes, with over 90% cable and IPTV penetration, making 13° East the leading DTH, cable, IP, and DTT provider across the region. Satellite technology plays a vital role in Switzerland, by reducing the need for disruptive infrastructure projects—such as tunnelling through mountainous regions to lay fiber cables. Moreover, satellites provide a compelling solution for delivering content to remote and hard-to-reach communities across the country. Aymeric Genty, President of Eutelsat's Video Business Unit commented: "We are honored that SRG SSR, Switzerland's public broadcaster, is continuing to rely on Eutelsat to deliver its leading entertainment offering to millions of homes across Switzerland and further afield. This new agreement enables audiences to continue receiving their favorite channels, no matter how remote their location, and highlights the crucial role satellite continues to play in connecting communities and delivering essential services."

Huawei Showcases 5G-A Development and Value of Scenario-Based AI

During MWC Shanghai 2025, Huawei showcased new developments in 5G Advanced (5G-A) experience monetization and scenario-based services powered by AI agents. The company's exhibition at this year's event was titled "Accelerating the Intelligent World" as it intended to meet with global carriers, industry partners, and opinion leaders to discuss new paths for carrier development that focus on creating value using AI.

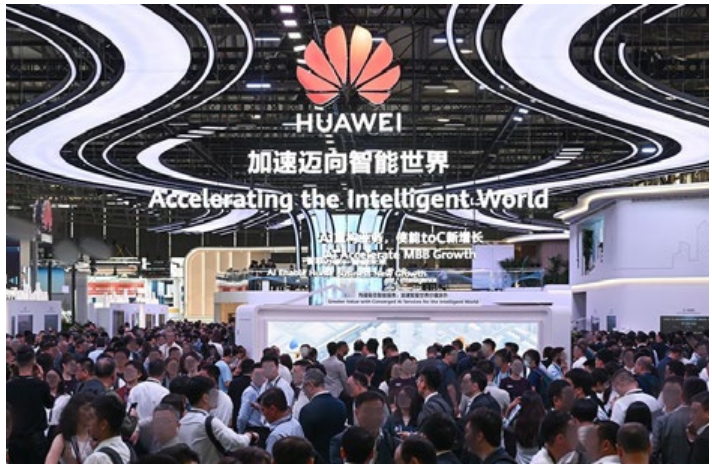
Huawei's showcase focused on their latest innovations in three areas:

Services: Huawei announced the success of a number of 5G-A experience monetization and scenario-based AI application (AI-to-X) projects it has carried out in collaboration with China's three major carriers.

Infrastructure: Huawei hosted presentations by their carrier partners on their recent experience in building AI-centric networks, and discussed how to create AI computing hubs that can enable business success with AI. The company also launched a new comprehensive AI Ultra-Broadband (AI UBB) solution that covers all network layers from home broadband to transport networks. The solution will come with end-to-end built-in computing power and comprehensive performance enhancements aimed at accelerating network evolution towards higher-level autonomy, which will, in turn, improve AI application experience and enable business growth. Operations: Huawei and China's three major carriers jointly shared their latest best practices and achievements in intelligent wireless network operations and intelligent home broadband operations, as well as AI computing services for training and inference. These practices help carriers build, maintain, and utilize computing power. Commercial 5G-A adoption is expected to accelerate in a number of regions in 2025, including the Middle East, China, and Asia-Pacific. Carriers in these regions are actively exploring experience monetization models. Eric Xu, Huawei's Deputy Chairman and Rotating Chairman, gave a keynote on pathways for driving growth in the telecoms industry. Xu began his speech by sharing observations about the current status of the telecoms industry: "After nearly four decades of rapid growth, the industry has entered a period of steady development, while facing some challenges to new growth." He proceeded to expand on four potential pathways to growth:

- Ramping up for changes in user needs and meeting new demands with high growth potential
- Boosting HD video supply and consumption through coordinated efforts across the ecosystem
- Bringing 5G to every car for new growth in intelligent connected vehicles
- Bringing FTTR to micro and small businesses to make the most of opportunities in AI

"Of course, every carrier is different," concluded Xu. "Their markets are different, their business environment is different – and so is their competitive landscape. So the pathways to growth are different too. We're ready and willing to work together, helping carriers explore opportunities unique to them and carve out the right pathways to long-term, sustainable growth." China has emerged as a



global pioneer in 5G-A, with 5G-A already available in over 300 of its cities. Carriers now offer 5G-A mobile plans in more than 30 Chinese provinces and the country currently has over 10 million 5G-A users. Carriers in China, the Middle East, and other regions are also exploring the new value framework for experience monetization by introducing premium upgrade initiatives. 5G-A offers users ultra-fast networks and fuels intelligent transformation in multiple sectors, including smart living, transportation, and manufacturing. The communications industry is facing significant disruption thanks to AI-driven innovation. The success of new experience monetization models also indicates the industry will soon enter a new era of growth. These changes are expected to reshape the way people interact with each other, with organizations, and with society. Carriers are uniquely positioned to embrace this surge in AI and explore new AI applications because of their inherent strengths in cloud, network, intelligence, and computing. They are using AI to transform their services, infrastructure, and operations, which is unlocking new drivers for business growth. Many carriers are rebranding themselves as providers of personalized, integrated, and high-quality AI agents that are accessible to consumers anytime and anywhere. Within the smart home market, they are upgrading existing services by enabling coordination between various smart devices to enhance smart home companionship. Carriers are also moving into the in-vehicle services market by integrating AI agents with vehicle-to-everything (V2X) technologies to create smart, mobile third spaces that deliver new experiences for monetization. For businesses, they are upgrading their capabilities by enhancing computing-network services and model-based services that will deeply empower production and operations. MWC Shanghai 2025 took place from June 18 to June 20 in Shanghai, China. During the event, Huawei showcased its latest products and solutions in Hall N1 of the Shanghai New International Expo Center (SNIEC). The commercial adoption of 5G-Advanced is accelerating in 2025. Huawei collaborates with global carriers, industry experts, and opinion leaders to explore how innovations in AI can be used to reshape telecom services, infrastructure, and operations to generate new revenue sources and accelerate the transition towards an intelligent world.

Huawei Receives "Outstanding Gold Award" at the Hong Kong Privacy-Friendly Awards 2025

Huawei Services (Hong Kong) Co., Limited earned an "Outstanding Gold Award" at the "Privacy-Friendly Awards 2025" Presentation Ceremony organized by the Hong Kong Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data (PCPD). The award recognizes Huawei's performance in the area of personal data privacy protection. It also reflects the company's sustained investment and long-term commitment to privacy governance. It is meant to encourage Huawei and other industry players to continue enhancing their practices in data security and personal data protection. Data security is a cornerstone of Hong Kong's economic development and a pillar in building a smart city. As the dedicated privacy regulator in the Hong Kong SAR, PCPD carries out regulatory enforcement, public education, and cross-border collaboration. In response to the challenges brought by new technologies and cybersecurity risks, as well as increasing public expectations for personal data privacy, PCPD advocates that organizations should embed privacy protection into their corporate policies and culture.

The Privacy-Friendly Awards were launched in 2021 to further this objective. The "Privacy-Friendly Awards 2025", held under the theme "Safeguarding Data Security: Marching towards a New Digital Era", aimed to recognize and commend the commitment and performance of enterprises, public and private organizations, and government departments in protecting personal data privacy. The Awards also aim to raise awareness of data protection, encourage the adoption of sound data governance practices, and strengthen data security. Organizations were assessed against five "Privacy Protection Measures" and were awarded in four levels based on the number of measures implemented: "Outstanding Gold Award", "Gold Award", "Silver Award", and "Bronze Award". Only 12 out of 157 participating organizations received the "Outstanding Gold Award", the highest level of recognition. Huawei was recognized for implementing a comprehensive privacy management system, establishing robust procedures for handling data breaches, conducting regular data breach simulation drills, and delivering a variety of employee training programs to raise privacy awareness. Speaking at the award ceremony, Howard Wu, General Manager of Huawei Services (Hong Kong) Co., Limited said: "Cybersecurity and user privacy protection are Huawei's top priority. For privacy protection, we have implemented a comprehensive Privacy Management System. Through understanding personal data handling activities conducted by businesses, identifying corresponding privacy risks, developing appropriate control measures and raising employee awareness, we successfully integrated privacy protection into every aspect in our daily operation. We are extremely proud to be recognized by the PCPD for our efforts in protecting users' privacy. We will continue to be committed to improving our privacy practices and fostering a culture where privacy is highly valued".

Huawei and TM Forum Jointly Release Two Standard Reports

At the recently held DTW 2025, TM Forum and Huawei officially released two important standard reports, AI for BSS and Software Marketplaces Reference Architecture. Under Huawei's "Application Software AI Commercial Blueprint" and R.A.P.I.D. strategy (aimed at delivering Reliable, Affordable, Productive, Integrated, and Definitive telecom software solutions), Huawei has deeply explored AI innovations across BSS (Business Support System) domains, including CRM, CBS, and AICC, among others. Based on in-depth insights into industry pain points, Huawei collaborated with TM Forum, leading CSPs and vendors to co-develop the AI for BSS report. This report provides a clear and practical roadmap to help CSPs and vendors transform toward AI-centric BSS systems. It not only focuses on ensuring the future competitiveness and sustainability of BSS systems but also empowers CSPs to significantly enhance operational efficiency, optimize customer experience, and ultimately drive business and revenue growth. Based on the ODA-in-a-Box (Open Digital Architecture) concept, the Software Marketplaces Reference Architecture report leverages TM Forum ODA components and TM Forum Open APIs, incorporating practical experience from Huawei's EEM (Enterprise Ecosystem Management) platform implementation. This architecture defines a standardized reference model for online marketplaces targeting SME customers, helping CSPs design BSS systems using ODA components. It also enables extensive collaboration with diverse partners, supporting the expansion of the SME market and driving ToB revenue growth.

Huawei Outlines Opportunities for Driving Growth for Carriers at MWC Shanghai 2025

During MWC Shanghai 2025, Eric Xu, Huawei's Deputy Chairman and Rotating Chairman, outlined four strategic pathways for driving growth in the telecommunications industry as carriers face new challenges in an increasingly mature market. In a keynote address to industry leaders, Xu acknowledged that while the telecoms sector has experienced rapid growth over the past four decades, it now faces a period of stable development, where "basic consumer needs are already met in major markets, and revenue growth is stagnating." Four Pathways to Sustainable Growth

1. Meeting Evolving User Demands with High Growth Potential

Xu highlighted emerging high-value user segments that present significant opportunities for carriers. Professional delivery riders, for example, have grown from 30 million globally in 2020 to 70 million in 2024, with projections reaching 160 million by 2030. "Food delivery riders' minutes of usage is four times that of an average user, and their data usage is twice as high, resulting in ARPU that's 1.6 times higher," Xu noted. Similarly, the livestreaming profession has expanded from 10 million practitioners in 2022 to an estimated 50 million in 2024, with projections reaching 130 million by 2030. These users consume five times more data than the average user, generating four times the average revenue per user (ARPU). He also highlighted that live streamers and esports gamers are a new, fast-growing segment of high-value users for carriers. “If we look at the global market, it's clear that demands promise high growth potential, and carriers who've met these needs are growing fast. Carriers who haven't ramped up for these needs yet might find it more challenging to achieve growth,” added Xu.

2. Boosting HD Video Through Ecosystem Collaboration

Despite video comprising roughly 50% of mobile traffic, Xu identified a significant gap in high-definition video consumption. In tier-1 Chinese cities, 1080p and higher-definition video accounts for only 22% of total mobile video traffic. "A 1080p video generates five times more traffic than its 360p counterpart," Xu explained, emphasizing the revenue potential for carriers who can successfully coordinate with content providers (OTT), device manufacturers, and network equipment vendors to address pricing and technical barriers.

3. Accelerating 5G Vehicle Connectivity

Addressing the slow adoption of 5G-connected vehicles, projected to represent only 30% of cars sold in China by 2025, Xu called for industry-wide collaboration to address cost barriers, particularly those related to intellectual property rights and T-Box pricing. He proposed a dual-connectivity approach, separating connections for vehicle cockpits (using B2C models) and T-Box connectivity (using B2B models) while maintaining that autonomous vehicles must be capable of independent operation without network dependency.

4. Expanding FTTR to Small and Medium Businesses

Building on the success of Fiber to the Room (FTTR) in premium residential markets, Xu outlined opportunities to extend this technology to micro and small businesses. With over 500 million such businesses worldwide, FTTR solutions can address common challenges, including poor Wi-Fi coverage, unreliable connections for critical applications, and limited device connectivity. "With FTTR, carriers can bring fiber broadband to micro and small businesses too," Xu said, noting that China currently has an estimated 75 million FTTR users compared to 500,000 in other countries.

Tailored Approaches for Different Markets

Xu concluded by emphasizing the need for customized growth strategies: "Every carrier is different. Their markets are different, their business environments are different—and so is their competitive landscape. So, the pathways to growth are different too." "Huawei is always ready and willing to work together, helping carriers explore opportunities unique to them and carve out the right pathways to long-term, sustainable growth," he concluded.

Huawei and Zain Announce Antenna Innovation for Saudi Arabia

Technology giant Huawei and Saudi Arabian operator Zain KSA have announced the launch of the Riyadh Antenna Platform, which the partners describe as a groundbreaking innovation tailored to meet the unique needs of the Saudi telecommunications market. The Riyadh Antenna Platform, named after the country’s capital, is said to represent a significant departure from traditional panel antennas. For example, unlike legacy panel antennas that are flat and large, the Riyadh Antenna leverages a cylindrical structure, decreasing the effective projected area (EPA) by 30% to 60%. This design minimizes wind resistance, reducing the physical stress on sites and allowing deployment in areas previously restricted by high wind load concerns. Lower EPA also directly translates to reduced structural reinforcement costs and faster, more flexible deployments. In addition the Riyadh Antenna integrates multiple antenna arrays within a single, sleek design, enhancing network coverage without increasing the antenna footprint, crucial for urban environments where site space is limited, helping operators maximize site utility without compromising performance. Compact and space-efficient deployment reduces site rental costs but also simplifies deployment in space-constrained locations. In addition,

it offers integrated antenna information sensor unit (AISU) and remote azimuth steering (RAS) capabilities, allowing operators to remotely monitor antenna performance and adjust the azimuth in both vertical and horizontal dimensions. This two-dimensional beam adjustment is described as a breakthrough compared to traditional antennas, which typically allow only vertical tilting. Remote calibration reduces the need for on-site visits, lowering opex and improving maintenance efficiency. Zain explains that this innovation comes in the wake of the recent landmark spectrum auction by the Saudi Arabian Communications, Space and Technology Commission (CST), in which Zain KSA secured 30MHz in the 600MHz frequency band. The auction increased total licensed frequencies for mobile networks by 27% to 1,400 MHz and, says Zain, positions Saudi Arabia as the leading G20 country in spectrum allocation below 6GHz. These developments, it adds, have paved the way for Huawei to introduce the Riyadh Antenna.

Huawei and Saudi MCIT Launch Future Skills Center to Boost Digital Talent and Innovation

Huawei and the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) officially inaugurated the Future Skills Center in Riyadh, reinforcing their commitment to empowering Saudi national talent and advancing the kingdom's digital transformation aligned with Vision 2030. The opening ceremony was attended by high-ranking officials including H.E. Haytham AlOhali, Vice Minister of Communications and IT; H.E. Chang Hua, Chinese Ambassador to Saudi Arabia; Eng. Murhaf Al-Madani from the Ministry of Education; Eng. Mansour Al-Qurashi, Deputy Minister of Communications and IT; Safa Al-Rashed, Deputy Minister of Future Jobs and Capabilities; and Huawei Saudi Arabia's Chairman Liam Zhao. The Future Skills Center expands upon the success of Huawei's 2022 Future Space exhibition—one of the largest tech showcases outside China—that attracted over 35,000 visitors and delivered 270+ training sessions to 10,000+ participants. The Center now serves as a dynamic hub for immersive learning in cutting-edge technologies like AI, 5G, and smart applications across industries. H.E. Haytham AlOhali emphasized the Center's role in developing human capital and driving economic growth through advanced digital skills development. Ambassador Chang Hua highlighted the deepening China-Saudi cooperation in innovation, education, and technology, underlining the importance of knowledge exchange for sustainable growth. Liam Zhao noted that the initiative aligns with Huawei's priority of fostering local talent and expanding digital skills access, transforming inspiration from the original Future Space into tangible momentum supporting Saudi's digital future. The Center offers training, certifications, and real-world application opportunities to cultivate competitive capabilities and inspire the next generation of Saudi innovators.

Nokia Boss Seeks to Tap Into AI Supercycle Opportunity

Nokia CEO Justin Hotard hinted at an upcoming strategy shift focused on the critical role connectivity will play in the AI supercycle, as a decline in its Mobile Networks division and currency and tariff headwinds weighed on its Q2 results. The Finnish vendor released its full Q2 earnings a day after issuing preliminary numbers which revealed it had lowered its full year operating profit outlook, blaming the impact of US tariffs and weakness of the US dollar. In a statement, Hotard, who took the role in April to replace Pekka Lundmark, explained he had spent his first quarter as CEO engaging with stakeholders and the standout message was around connectivity for AI, not only for CSPs and hyperscalers but also for new areas like defence and national security. "With our portfolio in mobile and fiber access, data center and transport networks, Nokia is uniquely positioned to be a leader in this market transition," he said. He added that the company had a great opportunity to drive a unified vision, and the company would reveal more on this strategy at its Capital Markets Day on 19 November. On to the numbers, revenue was up 2 per cent year-on-year to just shy of €4.6 billion, with a 25 per cent revenue increase from Network Infrastructure and a 10 per cent uptick in Cloud and Network Services offset by a weak Mobile Networks performance. Revenue from Mobile Networks dipped 13 per cent to €1.7 billion, due to lower activity in India and the fact the unit benefitted from accelerated revenue recognition the year before. Total profit for the period hit €96 million, up from a loss of €142 million

Nokia's New Energy Innovation Venture Enscryb Secures Partner and First Two Customers

Nokia has announced its latest venture, Enscryb, an energy innovation platform, is partnering with NODES, an energy trading company. In addition, Enscryb has also secured and onboarded two customers: Nanuq, a charging infrastructure company, and Smartecon, a renewable energy provider. Enscryb is an innovative digital toolbox that enables real-time distributed energy flexibility orchestration in an era of increasing market volatility, demand and renewable production by simulating electricity systems of any size and complexity. The Enscryb toolset also provides energy flexibility forecasting for battery energy storage systems and solar hybrid assets. By analyzing data from both markets and clients' own infrastructures, Enscryb enables more accurate and bankable financial modeling for renewable energy projects. Enscryb is the latest proof-point that our venture incubator is finding new ways to commercialize Nokia Bell Labs technology. Nokia is very proud of Enscryb and its first partner and customers. We are looking forward to the opportunity to contribute to a sustainable energy future by helping the energy industry transition through digitalization. Chris D. Jones, Vice President for Strategic Partnerships, Nokia said, based on technology from Nokia Bell Labs, Enscryb is the latest Nokia venture to engage external partners and customers. These collaborations stem from Nokia's internal venture incubator dedicated to innovation and new commercialization paths for Nokia Bell Labs technology. By contributing to reducing energy expenses, increasing grid resiliency and transitioning toward Net Zero, Enscryb also emphasizes Nokia's commitment to sustainable businesses. NODES facilitates the trading of flexibility resources and Distributed Energy Resources (DERs) between System Operators and Flexibility Service Providers, aggregators and large Industrial and Commercial assets. This activity supports the sustainability sector and contributes to the development of emerging energy flexibility and congestion markets. This collaboration strengthens

the foundation for a more resilient and dynamic flexibility market. Enscryb's ability to optimize DERs investment decisions and operations by using real-time orchestration and advanced value stack strategies complement NODES' market design. This synergy helps stakeholders unlock greater value from their energy assets. Svein Jørgen Sønning, Head of Technology, NODES said, Nanuq helps its industrial customers transition to electrified fleets. They plan investment and operation of fleets with local generation resources and charge points to ensure maximum efficiency by lowering energy operation expenses. Smartecon is a pan-Baltic EPC company specializing in utility-scale renewable energy projects. It helps developers and asset owners bring solar, battery, and hybrid power plants from concept to grid connection, with a strong focus on grid compliance, technical design, and hands-on project execution. At Smartecon, we don't just build, we help clients make sense of complexity. Enscryb complements our approach by turning market and infrastructure data into actionable insights. With this partnership, we can deliver not only bankable energy systems but also smarter planning and better performance from day one.

Nokia Combines with Saudi Telcos Mobily and Zain to Test Indoor 5G SA Network Sharing

Nokia has worked with local Saudi groups on a pilot deployment of indoor 5G Standalone (5G SA) coverage using shared spectrum in the 4.0–4.1 GHz band. The other parties were Saudi Arabia's Communications, Space & Technology Commission (CST), neutral host provider ACES NH, and telecom operators Mobily and Zain KSA. The Finnish vendor said the trial is the first time that all operators in Saudi Arabia have been able to offer high-speed 5G indoors through a single system – without needing duplicate equipment or relying on legacy 4G infrastructure. The setup uses its Shikra radios and multi-operator core network (MOCN) software to allow different mobile providers to share the same hardware and spectrum. Nokia reckons the arrangement lowers costs by more than 60% and avoids operator-specific installations. The trial system was installed in medium-traffic buildings, offering reliable 5G coverage indoors without the complexity of traditional distributed antenna systems (DAS) – which typically require separate gear and spectrum for each carrier, said Nokia. The new model could be useful in offices, shopping malls, and public venues, it suggested. The pilot also showed potential for shared infrastructure to deliver private 5G services to businesses and factories, alongside public mobile services. Mikko Lavanti, senior vice president for mobile networks at Nokia in the Middle East and Africa (MEA) region, said: "Sharable indoor spectrum gives stakeholders a powerful new tool to boost indoor 5G adoption without complex auctions or spectrum refarming. Our Shikra pico radios and true 5G SA active sharing software prove that one neutral host system can serve every operator with carrier-grade performance, cutting both cost and carbon emissions per gigabyte." The initiative will involve deploying Nokia's 4G and 5G smart nodes alongside several of its other products and services, including IP Security Gateway, Femto Manager and End-to-End Delivery solutions. Nokia said its smart nodes are expected to enhance indoor connectivity for Zain KSA's enterprise clients by ensuring secure and reliable 4G and 5G network availability at diverse business locations.

Nokia Selected for Medusa Submarine Cable System to Bring New Connectivity Across Europe and North Africa

Nokia has announced that it will power the Medusa Submarine Cable System, a project owned by AFR-IX Telecom. The groundbreaking and new subsea fiber-optic network will connect the Atlantic coast, Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea, creating a new high-capacity digital corridor in the region, driving connectivity, innovation, and economic growth across the region. The Medusa subsea cable is a significant step toward closing the digital divide between Europe and North Africa, connecting countries such as Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Algeria, and Egypt with high-capacity fiber-optic links. Designed as an open-access system, Medusa provides telecom providers across the region access to advanced connectivity services, supporting the rollout of 5G, the growth of cloud infrastructure, and the increasing bandwidth demands of AI and future technologies. Leveraging Nokia's 1830 GX Series platform and advanced ICE7 coherent optics, capable of transmitting tens of terabits per second per fiber pair, the Medusa Submarine Cable System is equipped to deliver high-capacity, low-latency connectivity with optimal cost and power efficiency per transmitted bit. Medusa is laying the groundwork for a more connected and inclusive digital future," said Miguel Angel Acero, CTO and Founder of Medusa. "With Nokia's subsea optical solution, we will be able to deliver greater value to our customers by offering faster, more reliable connectivity at a lower cost, with the flexibility to scale as needs evolve. This partnership ensures we meet the demands of today while building a strong, future-ready infrastructure for tomorrow. Miguel Angel Acero, CTO and Founder, Medusa is helping to deliver new, faster and more reliable connectivity to millions of people, opening the door to greater innovation and deeper integration into the global digital economy," said John Harrington, SVP & Head of NI Europe, MEA & APAC Sales at Nokia. "At Nokia, we're proud to support this transformative project, bridging continents and enabling the future of an AI-driven society.

Nokia and stc Successfully Test Network Slicing Over GPON

Nokia announced that Saudi Arabian telco stc Group has successfully completed a proof-of-concept (PoC) for network slicing over a GPON (Gigabit Passive Optical Network) infrastructure using its Altiplano Access Controller. During the PoC, conducted at stc's test lab in Riyadh, stc used the access controller to create and manage multiple network slices within its existing GPON infrastructure, with each slice optimized for specific performance requirements such as bandwidth, latency, and reliability. Stc said the slices were tailored to support services ranging from cloud gaming and enterprise connectivity to mobile backhaul, smart city solutions, and secure government operations. stc said it was able to use the Altiplano controller to dynamically allocate network resources, which accelerated service deployment, improved user experience, and optimized infrastructure efficiency. Once deployed, the solution will help stc deliver advanced digital services faster and at scale, as well as unlock new revenue opportunities across the group's wholesale, B2B and digital infrastructure initiatives, said Bader Allhieb, VP of Network Infrastructure at stc. "This GPON slicing trial marks a significant step in transforming our network capabilities," he said in a statement. "Nokia's solution allows us to deliver tailored services with speed, precision, and scalability." The Altiplano Access Controller is a software solution for automating and controlling broadband access networks that integrates with multi-vendor equipment and supports multiple PON technologies through a single interface, explained Ibrahim Al-Abbas, head of stc Group Sales Unit for Network Infrastructure at Nokia. "Altiplano empowers service providers to automate and optimize network management, resulting in faster service delivery, improved efficiency, and superior user experiences," he said.

Changes in Nokia Corporation's Own Shares

A total of 599 898 Nokia shares (NOKIA) held by the company were transferred without consideration to participants of Nokia's equity-based incentive plans in accordance with the rules of the plans. The transfer is based on the resolution of the Board of Directors to issue shares held by the company to settle its commitments to participants of the plans as announced on 22 November 2024. The number of own shares held by Nokia Corporation following the transfer is 64 696 537.

stc Bahrain Strengthens Its Leadership In 5G Private Network, AI and 5G Advanced by Signing a Partnership Agreement with Huawei

stc Bahrain, a digital enabler and Huawei, a global technology leader, have signed a strategic agreement to jointly innovate and develop cutting-edge 5G-Advanced (5G-A) and AI-powered digital services, enhancing monetization capabilities to ensure business success in the TechCo era. This cooperation aims to build a robust ecosystem for next-generation technologies, empowering enterprises and delivering personalized experiences across the ICT sector. A comprehensive roadmap for collaboration has been outlined, encompassing joint R&D, market exploration, and ecosystem development. This partnership will also facilitate the development of 5G-Advanced (5G-A) services, AI-driven digital solutions, collaborative enterprise 5G Mobile Private Networks (MPNs), and enhanced network operations. Eng. Khalid Al Osaimi, Chief Executive Officer of stc Bahrain stated, "We are delighted to strengthen our strategic partnership with Huawei, a collaboration that takes forward our commitment to leading the digital transformation of Bahrain. By integrating cutting-edge technologies, our aim will be to create personalized, future-proof digital services that exceed the expectations of our customers in an increasingly connected world." Steven Yi, Huawei Senior Vice-President stated: "This partnership with stc reflects our shared commitment to driving innovation through 5G-A and AI. Together, we aim to deliver transformative solutions that empower industries and enrich user experiences". This strategic collaboration will advance next-generation connectivity and Artificial Intelligence. Driven by pioneering advancements in 5G technology, optimized spectrum utilization, and enhanced services, it will elevate everyday tech experiences through innovative AI-powered solutions. The initiative will also empower diverse industries with reliable, fully managed private networks, leveraging the power of cloud and edge computing. Businesses will have access to AI-driven tools that enhance efficiency, while individuals will benefit from comprehensive training programs cultivating expertise in AI and emerging technologies. Ultimately, this partnership aims to optimize network performance and ensure faster service delivery, creating a more connected and intelligent future. The partnership aligns with Huawei's vision of open innovation and stc Bahrain's mission to deliver next-generation connectivity. By combining Huawei's technological expertise with stc's market insights, the partnership will accelerate Bahrain's digital transformation and position it as a regional leader in AI and 5G-A adoption.

stc Bahrain Partners with Singapore Gulf Bank to Enhance Banking Operations Through Advanced IT Solutions

stc Bahrain, a digital enabler, has announced a strategic partnership with Singapore Gulf Bank Bahrain to deliver advanced IT infrastructure and services that will enhance the bank's operational efficiency and customer experience. This collaboration marks an important milestone for stc Bahrain as it continues to empower businesses with innovative technology solutions while supporting Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030, which emphasizes innovation, sustainability, and the development of a strong financial sector. Through this partnership, stc Business will provide Singapore Gulf Bank Bahrain with customized IT solutions designed to streamline operations, optimize processes, and support the bank's efforts to adapt to the evolving demands of the financial sector. By integrating modern technology into its systems, Singapore Gulf Bank aims to improve service delivery and achieve greater operational resilience. Hesham Mustafa, Chief Business Officer at stc Bahrain, commented, "This partnership reflects our commitment to enabling businesses to thrive in today's digital economy. By equipping Singapore Gulf Bank Bahrain with advanced

IT solutions, we are helping them achieve their goals while reinforcing our position as a trusted provider of transformative technology services. Ali Moosa, Executive Vice Chairman of SGB, said, "Partnering with stc Bahrain marks an important step in building a future-ready, resilient digital bank built for the world. By integrating advanced infrastructure and IT services, we are strengthening our ability to deliver seamless and secure financial services, in line with our mission to bridge traditional and digital finance." By supporting businesses in their digital transformation journeys, stc Bahrain continues to demonstrate its role as a key player in advancing technological capabilities across industries and contributing to the Kingdom's long-term economic goals.

stc Bahrain Reveals Winners of the 12th InspireU General Program 2025 as it Returns to Bahrain for the Second Time

stc Bahrain, a digital enabler, is proud to announce Doo and Indi Souq, two innovative Bahraini start-ups, as the winners of inspireU General program which was held for the second consecutive year in Bahrain. This initiative aims to empower Bahrain's entrepreneurial ecosystem by equipping start-ups with the tools and resources needed to succeed in today's competitive market.The winners were coaching sessions led by industry experts Al Harith Al Attawi, CEO of Shafra Technology Labs, and Hisham Al Saati, Co-Founder of Siin, who helped participants refine their business strategies. On the second day, 20 start-ups pitched their business plans to a panel of judges, including Mr. Jawad Mahmood Jawad, CEO of Jahez; Abdulrahman Al Zuhair, Head of inspireU at stc; and other members from stc Bahrain management. The judges evaluated the pitches based on innovation, scalability, and impact. As part of the inspireU program, the winning start-ups will receive financial support, mentorship, and access to stc's extensive network. They will also participate in national and international exhibitions, workshops, and other events designed to accelerate their growth. Launched by stc Group in 2015, the inspireU accelerator program supports entrepreneurs across Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Bahrain. By promoting innovation and connecting start-ups with mentors, investors, and industry leaders, the program helps transform ideas into successful businesses. In Bahrain, inspireU aligns with the Kingdom's vision for economic diversification and reinforces stc Bahrain's commitment to driving digital transformation.

stc Successfully Lands the First Bahraini Submarine Cable System; 2Africa Pearls in Bahrain

Marking a significant milestone in global connectivity, stc has announced that the 2Africa cable system - Pearls, the world's longest submarine cable, has successfully landed in Bahrain. With a US$ 205 million investments in 2Africa Pearls submarine cable system, this massive lift up in international connectivity toward Bahrain will reinforce the Kingdom as a powerful ICT hub, speeding up digital transformation across connected countries, attracting significant international investment opportunities, creating jobs and boosting innovation across sectors. The live landing of 2Africa Pearls submarine cable system next to Seef District on 4th of June was witnessed by H.E. Dr. Shaikh Abdullah bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications and Telecommunications and Eng. Khalid Al Osaimi, Chief Executive Officer, stc

Bahrain. The landing operation, which involved connecting the on-board cable to the ground infrastructure, was completed in record time. On this occasion, H.E. Dr. Shaikh Abdullah bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications, expressed pride in Bahrain's advanced telecommunications infrastructure, noting that this achievement reflects the Kingdom's commitment to strengthening its position as a regional and global digital hub, in line with the goals of Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030. He emphasized the Ministry's dedication to fostering fruitful partnerships with the private sector, especially the strategic collaboration with stc Bahrain, which stands as a successful model of public-private synergy in advancing digital transformation. H.E. added that the landing of the 2Africa Pearls submarine cable in Bahrain represents a qualitative leap that will enhance the Kingdom's global connectivity, support its digital economy, and open new horizons for innovation and investment. Eng. Khalid Al Osaimi, Chief Executive Officer of stc Bahrain said, "We are thrilled to land the 2Africa Pearls submarine cable to Bahrain, this will increase Bahrain's current connectivity capacity by 10x, further scalable to accommodate future growth. This is in line with our commitment to advancing Bahrain's position as a leading communications and digital hub for the region, directly aligning

with Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030, and its goals for the ICT sector to create a diversified, knowledge-based economy." Spanning 45,000 km with a massive 180 terabits per second design capacity, the 2Africa submarine cable will enable faster adoption of new technologies and digital solutions. 2Africa Pearls is the only cable in GCC capable of meeting the growing demands of data-heavy applications, including content streaming, cloud computing, and gaming. With the landing of 2Africa Pearls submarine cable system, the cable's massive capacity and low latency will serve as a catalyst for innovation and growth in emerging technologies like 5G, AI, and IoT, providing the essential infrastructure needed to support data-intensive applications and services. The increased connectivity will empower businesses with improved communication, access to global markets, and enhanced operational efficiency. Moreover, for consumers, this transformative project will provide reliable internet services and richer digital experience.

stc Bahrain Recognized as "Talent Development StrategiMobilyc Partner" at Huawei Bahrain 2024 ICT Talent Achievement Closing Ceremony

stc Bahrain, a digital enabler, was recognized as the "Talent Development Strategic Partner" at the Huawei Bahrain 2024 ICT Talent Achievement Closing Ceremony. Held at the eLearning Center at the University of Bahrain, the event celebrated key contributors to Bahrain's ICT sector and highlighted efforts to develop local talent for the country's growing digital economy. The award reflects stc Bahrain's role in advancing youth empowerment and supporting Bahrain's digital transformation goals in line with the Economic Vision 2030. Through initiatives such as the Jeel ICT Program, stc Bahrain has played a key role in enhancing the academic learning and industry needs. This fully nationalized training program equips young Bahrainis with practical skills to lead the Kingdom's technological advancement. The company has also attracted over USD $130 million in IT investments and is driving growth in the national ICT sector, with a projected 35% increase in IT employment by 2027. Commenting on the recognition, Eng. Khalid Al Osaimi, CEO of stc Bahrain, said: "We are honored to be recognized as the 'Talent Development Strategic Partner' at this important event. At stc Bahrain, we believe that investing in our youth is essential to building a sustainable and innovative future for the Kingdom. Through programs like Jeel ICT, we are preparing young Bahrainis to lead in the digital era and contribute to Bahrain's journey toward becoming a regional ICT hub." The Huawei Bahrain 2024 ICT Talent Achievement Closing Ceremony brought together key stakeholders from the ICT sector, including government officials, industry leaders, and academia representatives, to celebrate achievements in ICT education and highlight strategies for strengthening collaboration. stc Bahrain's recognition highlights its commitment to empowering Bahraini youth and supporting the Kingdom's economic goals through strategic investments in technology and human capital.

Tech Mahindra Unveils TechM Orion: A Next-Gen Agentic AI platform to Drive Responsible Enterprise Transformation at Scale

Tech Mahindra, a leading global provider of technology consulting and digital solutions to enterprises across industries announced the launch of TechM Orion, a next-generation AI agent development and deployment platform powered by NVIDIA accelerated computing. The platform is designed to help enterprises scale AI adoption responsibly and efficiently, with a focus on governance, transparency, and tangible business outcomes. TechM Orion is built on NVIDIA accelerated computing and the NVIDIA AI Enterprise software suite, leveraging NVIDIA NIM, NVIDIANeMo, and NVIDIA RAPIDS for efficient AI inference, model training and customization. It enables cloud, on-premises, and hybrid deployments, allowing seamless integration with clients' systems and third-party tools to maximize existing AI investments and support scalable growth. TechM Orion is architected to drive productivity and accelerate innovation, enabling global enterprises to deploy AI solutions faster, whether in assisted or fully autonomous environments, while maintaining control and transparency throughout the AI lifecycle. It also integrates AI agents from SaaS platforms, simplifying orchestration and boosting scalability with embedded assurance guardrails. Nikhil Malhotra, Chief Innovation Officer, Tech Mahindra, said, "As enterprises race to embed AI into core operations, it is not enough to just democratize AI agent development. Enterprises are currently looking for ROI, assurance and a clear path to transform their business processes. Combined with NVIDIA's unparalleled AI infrastructure and enterprise AI stack, TechM Orion empowers organizations to move from experimentation to transformation." TechM Orion will enable accelerated Agentic AI adoption for enterprises with:

- AI agents that can be built and deployed in under 1 week using the C2A (Chat-to-Agent) interface, compared to traditional timelines of 2–3 weeks.
- Library of 200+ pre-built, production-grade AI agents available across five industries: Banking and Financial Services, Telecom, Healthcare, Manufacturing, and Retail & Consumer Goods.
- Seamless integration with enterprise systems in near real-time using a combination of:
  - Pre-configured connectors
  - Low-code custom adapters built in Python
  - Out-of-the-box agentic frameworks (e.g., Agentic RAG, document readers)
  - Enterprise adapters (e.g., Email, SAP, Salesforce)
- 30+ configurable AI governance checks for each agent to ensure transparency, validation, verification, and alignment with regional compliance standards.

Tech Mahindra Recognized in the FTSE4Good Index Series for the 9th Consecutive Year

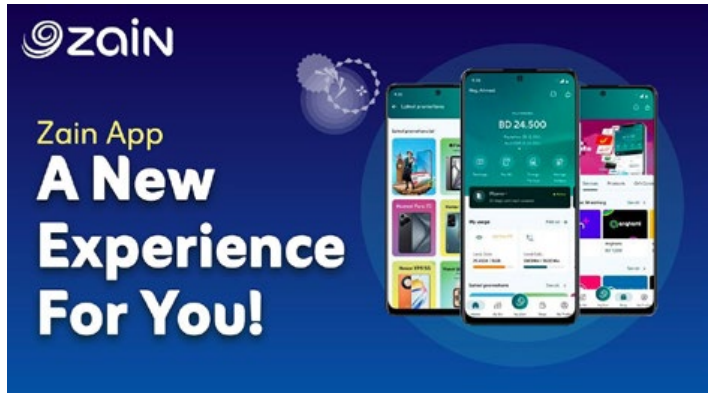
Tech Mahindra, a leading global provider of technology consulting and digital solutions to enterprises across industries, announces it has been included in the FTSE4Good Index Series. Created by the global index and data provider FTSE Russell, the FTSE4Good Index Series is designed to measure the performance of companies demonstrating strong Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices. The FTSE4Good indexes are used by a wide variety of market participants to create and assess responsible investment funds and other financial products. FTSE Russell evaluations are based on performance in areas such as Corporate Governance, Health & Safety, Anti-Corruption and Climate Change. Businesses included in the FTSE4Good Index Series meet a variety of environmental, social and governance criteria. The sustained recognition validates Tech Mahindra's long-standing commitment to ESG excellence and positions the organization as a sustainability-first digital transformation leader. It also reinforces investor and stakeholder confidence in Tech Mahindra's strategy for long-term value creation driven by ethical leadership, social responsibility, and environmental stewardship. Sandeep Chandna, Chief Sustainability Officer, Tech Mahindra, "As ESG considerations move from optional to essential across boardrooms globally, the technology industry is increasingly expected to lead with transparency, resilience, and impact. Tech Mahindra's ninth consecutive inclusion in the FTSE4Good Index showcases our unwavering commitment to responsible business practices and affirms that our efforts in governance, risk management, and climate leadership are globally acknowledged." As ESG performance becomes a defining factor for global investors, customers, and regulators, independent validation from globally respected frameworks like FTSE4Good helps bridge the credibility gap that many organizations face in substantiating their ESG claims. Inclusion in the index enhances Tech Mahindra's global positioning as a responsible and future-ready enterprise, offering confidence to customers, partners, and investors that the company adheres to globally benchmarked sustainability standards. The remarkable nine-year streak reflects the maturity and consistency of Tech Mahindra's ESG strategy amid evolving global expectations. It highlights the company's ability to future-proof its operations by aligning business goals with climate resilience, social equity, and ethical accountability, a vision that continues to define Tech Mahindra's journey toward building a better, more inclusive world.

Tech Mahindra Joins J.P. Morgans Payments System Integrator Program to Accelerate Innovation in Payments System

Tech Mahindra, a leading global provider of technology consulting and digital solutions to enterprises across industries, announced it has joined J.P. Morgan Payments System Integrator Program to empower global enterprises to upgrade their payment infrastructure and deliver smarter, more personalized customer experiences. By joining the program, Tech Mahindra will bring its deep expertise in real-time payments, data reconciliation, and enterprise resource planning (ERP) implementations for global clients. With experience in over 1,800 SAP implementations, Tech Mahindra's strength in enterprise transformation, combined with J.P. Morgan Payments' robust payments infrastructure, will help businesses optimize their financial operations. Together, they will empower enterprises with near real-time tracking, enhance reporting and elevate business dashboard functionality by leveraging SAP's Generative AI and Build Process Automation innovations. Roshan Shetty, Head of BFSI & Public Sector - Americas, Tech Mahindra, said, "Enterprises are increasingly looking to modernize complex payment infrastructures that can deliver on specific client needs. Our collaboration with J.P. Morgan Payments will enable businesses to deploy next-generation payment solutions at scale and help them drive sustainable growth while catering to evolving market needs." As part of the program, Tech Mahindra will also support the global deployment of J.P. Morgan Payments' next-generation solutions by leveraging its strong delivery capabilities, and broad market presence across key industries and geographies. J.P. Morgan Payments combines treasury services, trade & working capital, and card and merchant services capabilities to help pay customers or employees in different currencies around the world. It processes more than $10 trillion payments daily, operating in over 160 countries and over 120 currencies. Sam Yen, Global Head of Enterprise Application Solutions at J.P. Morgan Payments, said, "We're committed to meeting our clients' needs at every stage of their journey with our ERP solutions. This collaboration will allow us to offer clients the stability and resiliency of J.P. Morgan Payments combined with Tech Mahindra's technology expertise to help them build future-ready experiences that accelerate their business growth." The System Integrator Program helps joint customers build comprehensive payment strategies by combining J.P. Morgan Payments solutions with expertise from professional service partners. The program is part of the J.P. Morgan Payments Partner Network, which brings together over 80 third-party relationships to help meet customer business needs for end-to-end payment experiences.

Zain Bahrain Launches Innovative Super App

Zain Bahrain officially unveiled its new Zain Super App in partnership with Keyrus, a global consultancy specializing in data and digital experience. The app, built on the Omniflow AI-powered platform, aims to deliver a unified, seamless, and personalized digital experience to customers.This launch aligns with Zain Bahrain's digital transformation strategy and Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030, addressing increasing customer demand for fast and intuitive digital services. The Omniflow platform's data-driven core enables continuous optimization of customer experience and value management, ensuring every interaction is innovative and engaging. Customers can now use the app to monitor and manage usage in real time, select tailored plans, explore add-ons, access intelligent customer support, shop for products and digital services, connect with local partners, and manage payments and recharges—all through a single platform. Ammar Al Ketbi, Acting CEO of Zain Bahrain, stated, "This next-generation app is a major milestone, reflecting our commitment to placing customer experience at the heart of innovation. Designed with direct customer feedback, it delivers an intuitive and efficient user experience, empowering users to manage multiple services effortlessly." Sara Bouchrara, Omniflow CX Managing Director, said, "Zain Bahrain's vision for a unified digital experience perfectly aligns with our platform capabilities. This partnership showcases how telecom operators can unlock value by combining user experience excellence, agile integration, and data-driven intelligence, reflecting the broader momentum of customer experience transformation in the Middle East."



Zain KSA starts deployment of 5G SA using 600-MHz band

Zain KSA has launched the first phase of its commercial deployment of 5G Standalone (SA) using the 600-MHz band, with initial rollouts in Riyadh and Jeddah scheduled during the fourth quarter of this year. In a statement, Zain KSA said the full-scale commercial rollouts in Riyadh and Jeddah will be followed by a phased expansion across major cities, secondary cities, and the roads connecting them. Zain KSA said its low-band 5G-SA service will not only support wider adoption of advanced digital services such as HD video calls, cloud applications to ultra-responsive mobile gaming and IoT, but also lay the foundation for next-gen services such as Voice over New Radio (VoNR), RedCap and network slicing, each of which represents potential new revenue streams. Zain KSA acquired 30 MHz in the 600-MHz band during the Communication, Space, and Technology Commission (CST) spectrum auction in November 2024. The band enables Zain to provide more wide-area coverage with fewer cell sites, as well as deliver better in-building coverage. "This deployment significantly extends our 5G coverage, ensuring our customers enjoy uninterrupted, high-performance connectivity," said Zain KSA CTO Eng. Mohammad bin Abdulaziz Al Nujaidi.

Zain KSA and Cisco to Collaborate on the Development of Advanced AI Infrastructure

Zain KSA, a leading provider of telecommunications and digital services in Saudi Arabia, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Cisco, the global leader in networking and security, focusing on the development of cutting-edge AI infrastructure and GPU-as-a-Service (GPUaaS). The agreement aims to leverage Cisco's advanced, end-to-end infrastructure solutions for securely building and scaling AI workloads, supporting Zain KSA in delivering high-performance, resilient, and reliable GPU-powered services to the Saudi market. The MOU is part of Zain KSA's strategy to actively align with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 goals by driving digital transformation and positioning the Kingdom as a global digital innovation hub, particularly in the AI space. As part of the collaboration, Zain KSA will leverage its deep market knowledge, cutting-edge digital capabilities, and targeted investments alongside Cisco's global expertise in AI-ready infrastructure development. The initiative aims to create new solutions and commercial models to enable customers across various sectors to confidently and easily adopt AI solutions. The MoU also includes exploring opportunities for training programs to upskill local talent, in line with Zain KSA's commitment to ICT skills development to support long-term national AI capabilities. Zain KSA, VP of B2B Sales, Fahad Sahmi Al Sahmah, said: "At Zain KSA, we are mobilizing all our capabilities and investments to drive nationwide digital innovation, positioning the Kingdom as a global hub, a digital economy powered by future-looking GenAI solutions and applications. These efforts aim to empower all stakeholders, including government entities, businesses, and individuals, to harness the boundless potential of AI in support of national goals. This strategic collaboration with Cisco, positions us well to explore, develop, and innovate use cases, as we continue building a resilient, integrated and agile digital ecosystem that can embrace next-gen technologies and deploy them in the Kingdom." Zayan Sadek, Managing Director for Service Providers at Cisco Middle East, Türkiye and Africa said: "Cisco is excited to collaborate with Zain KSA to pave the way for a transformative AI-powered future in Saudi Arabia. By combining Zain KSA's digital expertise with Cisco's cutting-edge AI infrastructure technologies, we aim to unlock new possibilities to empower businesses to thrive in the AI era and position Saudi Arabia as a global hub for advanced technologies."

Zain KSA Appoints Eng. Saad bin Abdulrahman AlSadhan as Chief Executive Officer

Zain KSA, the leading telecom and digital services provider, announced that its Board of Directors has appointed Acting CEO, Eng. Saad bin Abdulrahman AlSadhan, as the Chief Executive Officer of the Company, effective from July 1, 2025. Eng. AlSadhan has held the position of the Acting CEO of Zain KSA since August 2024. He brings over 22 years of expertise in telecommunications and information technology. Prior to this role, he served as the Chief Business and Wholesale Officer of Zain KSA and led the B2B sector growth across the Company, positioning its portfolio of business solutions and services as a key enabler of the Kingdom's digital business transformation. He also led Zain KSA's strategic partnerships and stakeholder relations while driving the development of cutting-edge digital products and solutions. Additionally, Eng. AlSadhan played a key role in the launch of Zain Cloud, supporting the digital transformation of Saudi Arabia's public and private sectors in line with Saudi Vision 2030's goal of building a fully integrated digital economy. He was also instrumental in developing a comprehensive digital ecosystem that brings together innovative telecom services and cloud solutions, underpinned by advanced 5G technologies. Additionally, he strengthened Zain KSA's business and wholesale operations, enhancing network capabilities through strategic investments aimed at meeting the full range of market demands in these segments. Eng. AlSadhan also played a key role in advancing the enterprise sector by building Zain KSA's integrated business services and solutions ecosystem. His efforts aligned with the Company's strategic objectives to support government entities in achieving their digital goals and to empower companies across various industries to grow, enhance their competitiveness locally and regionally, and stay ahead of the evolving business landscape. Since joining Zain KSA in April 2016, Eng. Al-Sadhan has placed strategic partnerships at the heart of his approach. He contributed to developing a forward-looking strategy for long-term partnerships with government entities and leading global tech companies. This has enabled the swift introduction of cutting-edge technologies into the Kingdom, while also driving knowledge transfer and localization. Before joining Zain KSA, Eng. AlSadhan held various leadership roles at prominent local and international telecom companies. He holds a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from King Fahad University of Petroleum and Minerals, in addition to several professional certifications in leadership and information technology, as well as General Management Program certificate from Institut Européen d'Administration des Affaires (INSEAD).

ZTE and TUIT Partner to Develop ICT Talent for Uzbekistan's Digital Future

ZTE Corporation, a global leading provider of integrated information and communication technology solutions, has deepened its partnership with the Tashkent University of Information Technologies named after Muhammad al-Khwarizmi (TUIT), underscoring its long-term commitment to supporting Uzbekistan's digital transformation. At a high-level meeting held in Tashkent, the two sides discussed expanding joint educational initiatives that aim to cultivate a new generation of specialists in telecommunications, artificial intelligence, and cloud technologies. The event was attended by Oleg Pekos, First Deputy Minister of Digital Technologies of Uzbekistan, who highlighted the strategic importance of this cooperation for the country's digital transformation. Representing TUIT was Bakhtiyor Makhkamov, Rector of the Tashkent University of Information Technologies named after Muhammad al-Khwarizmi. The ZTE delegation was led by Xie Junshi, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, alongside Mei Zhonghua, Senior Vice President and President of Asia-Pacific and CIS, and Xue Bin, Vice President for the CIS region. Discussions centered on enhancing academic cooperation through student internship programs, specialized training, and innovative infrastructure development. A focal point is the Smart Classroom–a high-tech learning space established at TUIT with ZTE's support, designed to bring cutting-edge technology directly into the classroom. The collaboration between ZTE and TUIT has a long history. In 2022, a partnership memorandum was also signed with TUIT's Samarkand branch, and in subsequent years, the company actively contributed to equipping laboratories and organizing specialized courses. ZTE plays a key role in implementing the national "Digital Uzbekistan 2030" strategy by modernizing telecommunications infrastructure, developing 5G networks, and deploying cloud solutions. The company actively collaborates with leading technical universities in the country, ensuring the training of highly qualified professionals for Uzbekistan's digital economy. As Xie Junshi noted, the partnership with TUIT is a significant contribution to building the country's workforce potential. Bakhtiyor Makhkamov emphasized that the joint efforts of the university, global partners like ZTE, and the Ministry of Digital Technologies create new opportunities for students and strengthen Uzbekistan's position as a regional hub for IT innovation. The meeting confirmed that such partnerships remain a key driver of the country's digital transformation.

ZTE's AIDC Prefabricated Container Solution Redefines Data Center Construction Paradigm

ZTE Corporation a global leading provider of integrated information and communication technology solutions, has launched AIDC Prefabricated Container Solution at MWC Shanghai 2025. With the explosive growth of 5G and AI, the construction of data centers needs to be rapidly implemented and stcsupport flexible expansion. Currently, highly prefabricated data centers are gaining popularity, and the modular container solution is evolving from a "general computing power + air cooling" model to an "AI Diverse Computing Power

+ Air-Liquid Hybrid Cooling" AIDC model. Three innovative breakthroughs overcome traditional infrastructure bottlenecks: The unique top-bottom frame structure, with a 5.75-meter floor height, breaks through traditional height limitations. A single module can flexibly deploy either an 8kW air-cooled general computing cabinet or a 40kW liquid-cooled AI computing cabinet. It supports "dual-mode computing in one box" (compatibility between general computing and AI computing, as well as between air cooling and liquid cooling), fulfilling the requirements of mixed scenarios such as AI large model training and edge computing in one go. In addition to achieving prefabrication in infrastructure construction, the solution integrates three technologies to address the challenges of heat dissipation and energy consumption in high-density deployment: chilled water wind wall, cold and hot aisle separation, and cold plate liquid cooling. Combined with natural cooling sources and airflow optimization, the PUE in liquid-cooled scenarios can be as low as 1.15. The overall energy efficiency is 30% higher than traditional solutions. It also supports the integration of renewable energy sources like solar power for auxiliary power supply to data centers. Each sub-module is prefabricated in the factory and can proceed concurrently with civil construction work. Upon arrival at the site, the modules are assembled like LEGO building blocks. Projects can be delivered in as fast as seven months, nearly 40% shorter than traditional solution. The AIDC prefabricated container solution resolves three major construction challenges in the era of explosive computing power growth: the time gap between construction duration and demand, the compatibility challenge of power density leaps, and the dual pressures of energy efficiency and green transformation. With the official launch of the AIDC prefabricated container solution, ZTE has entered the "modular" era of intelligent computing infrastructure – turning data centers into rapidly replicable and elastic "computing power containers", offering global customers a smooth upgrade path from general computing to intelligent computing.

China Telecom and ZTE secure the Best Moonshot Catalyst – Attendees' Choice Award

ZTE Corporation, a global leading provider of integrated information and communication technology solutions, in partnership with China Telecom and other industry players, announced that their jointly developed project, "AI-enabled system for vehicle-road-cloud collaboration", has received the prestigious Best Moonshot Catalyst – Attendees' Choice Award at Digital Transformation World (DTW) 2025, hosted by TM Forum. This recognition highlights the significant contributions of China Telecom and ZTE in driving industrial innovation and accelerating the digital transformation of the global telecom industry. The large-scale deployment of autonomous driving has led to a significant surge in demand for emergency road condition identification and multi-party collaborative decision-making in complex urban traffic. However, single-vehicle intelligence is constrained by sensor and computing power limitations, and there are blind areas in extreme weather conditions. Meanwhile, traditional optimization models, which depend on high-precision maps and massive drive test data, are also encountering challenges such as high hardware costs, difficulty in covering long-tail scenarios, and low multi-vehicle coordination efficiency. ZTE's AIR Net autonomous network solution is instrumental in constructing a "vehicle-road-cloud collaborative autonomous driving" system. By integrating ZTE's 5G-A equipment with China Telecom's cloud infrastructure and smart transport AI capabilities, the collaboration has achieved a 24% reduction in hardware costs. Utilizing 5G URLLC technology, the system has significantly reduced transmission delay. AI lightweight computing units have been deployed at roadside edge nodes, enabling the classification and identification of over 20 transport participants. To date, the system has enhanced the accuracy of complex scenario identification by 40%, and reduced the multi-vehicle coordination response delay to under 100 ms, thereby assisting vehicle enterprises in achieving L4-level self-driving capabilities via progressive pathways. Currently, the vehicle-road-cloud system confronts multiple challenges, including the high cost of roadside equipment, the openness of data capabilities, and difficulties in commercial closed-loop. To address these issues, ZTE plans to achieve dual breakthroughs in both technologies and commercial models based on its AIR Net solution. Technologically, ZTE will focus on developing low-cost hardware and ultra-low-latency architecture to enhance the capability of integrating multi-source data. Commercially, ZTE will establish a scenario-based value model to clarify the profit paths for vehicle manufacturers and operators. Operators can apply the 5G-A network to enterprise service platforms by opening

the vehicle-road cloud APIs and real-time traffic data APIs. This measure is expected to drive an annual increase in API revenue of over 20%. Moving forward, this system will continuously facilitate the collaborative evolution of smart transportation from single-point intelligence to global intelligence, laying a solid foundation for a trillion-scale intelligent travel ecosystem.

ZTE and Jazz Pioneer Large-Scale Rollout of Triple-Band UBR and FDD Massive MIMO Solutions in Pakistan

ZTE Corporation, a global leading provider of integrated information and communication technology solutions, has announced the successful completion of a landmark nationwide deployment in collaboration with Jazz, Pakistan's leading digital operator. This strategic partnership has culminated in the large-scale deployment of ZTE's pioneering triple-band Ultra Broadband Radio (UBR) and next-generation FDD Massive MIMO (FMM) products, marking a significant milestone in the evolution of Jazz's network infrastructure. Building on a successful history since 2021, ZTE has deployed over 4,000 FMM units across Jazz's commercial network, consistently driving substantial improvements in network performance. Notably, the 320W FMM product deployed in 2021 delivered a remarkable 250% total performance gain. The newly introduced 480W FMM units offer a 50% increase in transmit power, coupled with a significant reduction in energy consumption per gigabyte. Furthermore, the latest FMM technology has resulted in an additional 30% performance boost, delivering superior connectivity to users. Simultaneously, ZTE has deployed its unique triple-band UBR product, which has further transformed Jazz's network. The UBR supports 2×80W transmission at 900 MHz and 4×140W at both 1800 MHz and 2100 MHz, facilitating efficient and powerful spectrum utilization. Since its commercial launch in 2025, over 1,100 UBR units have been deployed across Pakistan, helping to expand and strengthen Jazz's network capabilities. The impact of the UBR deployment on network operations has been transformative. By reducing the number of Remote Radio Units (RRUs) per site by an impressive 57%, the UBR solution has significantly saved valuable tower space and lowered rental costs. In terms of performance, UBR has driven a 70% improvement in overall network traffic and user throughput, relieving site congestion and enhancing the overall user experience. This large-scale deployment underscores the shared commitment of ZTE and Jazz to innovation, network optimization, and advancing digital inclusion in Pakistan. By introducing cutting-edge technologies such as FMM and UBR, the collaboration is laying the foundation for a more efficient, high-performance, and user-centric mobile network across the country.

ARTICLE

Harmonizing MSS Spectrum in the GCC: Strategic Imperatives Ahead of WRC-27

As digital transformation accelerates across emerging markets, the convergence of terrestrial and non-terrestrial networks has brought the strategic importance of Mobile Satellite Services (MSS) spectrum into sharp focus. In an increasingly interconnected world, where emergency response systems, remote IoT ecosystems, and resilient broadband networks are not luxuries but necessities, spectrum allocation becomes a policy-defining issue. Specifically, the MSS bands—1980–2010 MHz (uplink) and 2170–2200 MHz (downlink)—represent one of the most critical spectrum assets in this evolution.

Within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), these bands offer more than operational utility; they serve as a foundational platform for regional digital cohesion, economic transformation, and sovereign technological capability.

> *Across the region, recent national policy directions demonstrate strong recognition of MSS as a central component of broader Non-Terrestrial Network (NTN) strategies. Spectrum planning initiatives increasingly highlight MSS under strategic pillars such as unlocking satellite spectrum for commercial and innovative use.*

Across the region, recent national policy directions demonstrate strong recognition of MSS as a central component of broader Non-Terrestrial Network (NTN) strategies. Spectrum planning initiatives increasingly highlight MSS under strategic pillars such as unlocking satellite spectrum for commercial and innovative use. In some jurisdictions, regulators have already allocated spectrum, for instance, in the 2.1 GHz band, for MSS and Air-to-Ground (ATG) services, underscoring a concrete regulatory commitment to fostering next-generation satellite-terrestrial convergence.

As the next World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-27) approaches, the opportunity and the obligation to act in concert on spectrum harmonization has never been more urgent.

> *The evolution toward 5G-NTN brings MSS spectrum to the center of hybrid connectivity strategies. Unlike traditional terrestrial 5G, NTN seeks to extend coverage using space-based infrastructure, such as Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellites, Medium Earth Orbit (MEO) systems, or High-Altitude Platforms (HAPs), and AI-enabled network orchestration.*

Dr. Mustafa AYKUT
Director, Programs & Public Policy
SAMENA Telecommunications Council

Dr. Sherif R. Sherif
Senior Strategist
Omantel

The Strategic Value of MSS Spectrum (2100 MHz)

The 2100 MHz MSS bands are globally allocated for satellite communication and complementary ground components (CGC). Their propagation characteristics make them ideal for enabling hybrid architectures that combine the coverage benefits of geostationary (GEO) and non-geostationary orbit (NGSO) systems with terrestrial augmentation. These bands are also emerging as a backbone for 5G Non-Terrestrial Networks (NTN) integration and Direct-to-Device (D2D) capabilities, key areas of innovation that will dominate the next decade.

The Role of MSS Spectrum in 5G-NTN Architectures

The evolution toward 5G-NTN brings MSS spectrum to the center of hybrid connectivity strategies. Unlike traditional terrestrial 5G, NTN seeks to extend coverage using space-based infrastructure, such as Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellites, Medium Earth Orbit (MEO) systems, or High-Altitude Platforms (HAPs), and AI-enabled network orchestration. MSS spectrum, particularly in the 2 GHz range, offers a harmonized, ITU-recognized mid-band resource that can support both wide-area reach and high data throughput, essential for NTN use-cases like D2D broadband, autonomous logistics, emergency communication, and maritime and aviation coverage. This same spectrum range is also leveraged for ATG services, which provide in-flight passenger connectivity. The ability to reuse MSS spectrum for ATG applications underscores its versatility and commercial value, especially in aviation corridors where satellite and terrestrial coverage must seamlessly integrate.

> *MSS should also be integrated into broader economic strategies, including rural broadband, critical communications infrastructure, and digital industrial policy. Governments can incentivize local industry participation and foster innovation through targeted regulation and public-private partnerships.*

In this evolving ecosystem, MSS sits at the heart of a continuum of NTN capabilities and co-existence strategies that aim to In such cases, MSS serves as a critical tool for digital resilience, emergency communications, aeronautical linkages, and public service continuity.

In this context, MSS acts as a licensed, globally coordinated anchor layer within 5G-NTN architectures, complementing unlicensed narrowband systems and augmented resilience improving national coverage, support service innovation, and enable seamless connectivity diversity, particularly in scenarios where terrestrial networks are unavailable or constrained. MSS spectrum's technical flexibility and regulatory certainty make it a key enabler for commercially viable and secure NTN deployments across the GCC and beyond.

Current Fragmentation in the GCC and Associated Risks

Despite the international consensus around the utility of the MSS bands, the GCC region remains fragmented in terms of spectrum licensing, usage rights, and deployment models. Regulatory asymmetries between member states have led to underutilization of valuable spectrum assets. Moreover, a portion of the MSS spectrum is already operational in over 40 countries to support ATG services, delivering in-flight passenger connectivity. This widespread adoption underscores the spectrum's commercial maturity and highlights the strategic opportunity the GCC risks forfeiting by not advancing a harmonized regional framework. Operators, manufacturers, ATG Solutions providers, and satellite service providers often face legal and technical uncertainty, which in turn discourages long-term investment and stifles innovation.

From a policy and regulatory standpoint, several administrations are moving toward harmonized frameworks that include licensing for essential components such as Earth Stations in Motion (ESIMs), MSS below 1 GHz, and space station registration. These developments signal a proactive approach to aligning with global best practices and WRC outcomes, while simultaneously creating pathways for local market stimulation and innovation.

> *Despite the international consensus around the utility of the MSS bands, the GCC region remains fragmented in terms of spectrum licensing, usage rights, and deployment models. Regulatory asymmetries between member states have led to underutilization of valuable spectrum assets.*

The lack of a regional roadmap also inhibits cross-border service deployment, roaming capability, and regional-scale manufacturing of compatible terminals and systems . Without harmonization, each national spectrum regime acts in isolation, compounding the risk of spectrum inefficiencies, harmful interference, and reduced readiness for international coordination during forums like WRC-27.

Learning from Global Precedents

Other regions have moved decisively in harmonizing MSS spectrum use. The European CEPT framework, through ECC Decision (06)09 and ECC Report 197, has outlined a practical model for coordinated use of the 2 GHz bands. These documents address key issues such as technology neutrality, interference coordination, and CGC integration, enabling manufacturers to design interoperable systems and operators to pursue multinational deployment strategies.

The United States, through its Federal Communications Commission (FCC), has explored auction-based MSS licensing models that incentivize commercial deployment while ensuring public interest obligations. Countries in the Asia-Pacific region, such as Japan and South Korea, have adopted MSS frameworks tied to national broadband plans and smart city strategies.

Strategic Priorities for MSS Harmonization in the GCC

The GCC can translate global models into a regionally tailored harmonization effort. Regulatory convergence based on ITU-R studies and WRC-27 preparatory work is essential. National authorities should jointly adopt a GCC MSS band plan aligned with global norms but adapted to regional priorities.

Technical harmonization requires coordinated studies on coexistence with adjacent IMT systems, including simulation of time-division duplexing (TDD) or geographic zoning.

One potential point for consideration is the possibility of adopting dynamic coordination frameworks. MSS bands often face coexistence challenges between terrestrial 4G/5G, ATG, and satellite-based D2D/IoT services. A cloud-based Spectrum Access System (SAS)-like mechanism could dynamically allocate spectrum based on real-time usage and interference risk. This could serve as a long-term target to be endorsed by regulators and would support a harmonized search for such a solution across the region. MSS should also be integrated into broader economic strategies, including rural broadband, critical communications infrastructure, and digital industrial policy. Governments can incentivize local industry participation and foster innovation through targeted regulation and public-private partnerships. Finally, a governance structure, such as a GCC MSS Whitepaper Taskforce facilitated by SAMENA, oversees timelines, engagement, and implementation.

Enabling Mechanisms: The Roles of SAMENA and Omantel

WRC-27, guided by ITU-R Resolution 253, will finalize global rules governing MSS bands. These decisions will shape licensing rights, service compatibility, and equipment standardization for the next decade. As regional stakeholders prepare for WRC-27, the importance of collaboration around MSS, both as a policy challenge and an opportunity is growing. The GCC must arrive at WRC-27 with a harmonized, technically sound, and politically endorsed position to ensure its spectrum needs are secured.

As regional stakeholders prepare for WRC-27, the importance of collaboration around MSS, both as a policy challenge and an opportunity is growing. The GCC must arrive at WRC-27 with a harmonized, technically sound, and politically endorsed position to ensure its spectrum needs are secured.

SAMENA Telecommunications Council, as a regional policy and industry platform, is uniquely positioned to convene and coordinate harmonization efforts. Its credibility and experience in multi-stakeholder engagement enable it to align regulatory bodies, industry players, and technology developers toward a shared vision for spectrum utilization.

Omantel, with its operational MSS experience and regional footprint, offers technical leadership and institutional momentum. Together, they are developing a whitepaper to catalyze stakeholder alignment, a model inspired by successful initiatives in Europe and North America.

Omantel, with its operational MSS experience and regional footprint, offers technical leadership and institutional momentum. Together, they are developing a whitepaper to catalyze stakeholder alignment, a model inspired by successful initiatives in Europe and North America.

This initiative will convene regulators, operators, satellite providers, and technology partners to examine regulatory approaches, investment incentives, and ecosystem-building strategies that can accelerate the integration of MSS into national broadband agendas.

As this effort progresses, it is essential that all relevant stakeholders actively contribute to shaping the regional agenda. These include (but are not limited to) mobile network operators, satellite service providers, spectrum regulators, defense and space agencies, NGOs, civil aviation and public safety authorities, terminal and chipset manufacturers, standardization bodies, consultants, academic researchers, and regional development organizations. Each actor brings critical insights and capabilities that can enrich the process and ensure realistic, implementable outcomes. Ultimately, MSS is no longer just a technical solution, it is a policy lever, an innovation catalyst, and a critical component of digital sovereignty strategies across the region.

We therefore extend an open invitation to these stakeholders to participate in consultations, contribute to technical and regulatory discussions, and co-create a unified regional voice for MSS ahead of WRC-27. Now is the time to align, to act, and to speak as one region with one vision.

Conclusion

The harmonization of MSS spectrum across the GCC is an essential strategic undertaking. It enables economic resilience, digital inclusion, and technological leadership. With WRC-27 fast approaching, there is a clear mandate for coordination and action. With leadership from regional stakeholders, and support from various institutions, the GCC can assert itself as a unified and forward-looking voice in global spectrum policy.

NEW AND ENHANCED CONNECTIVITY **FOR THE ENERGY SECTOR**

Eutelsat OneWeb enables fixed and mobile connectivity for oil, gas, and offshore operations. Our GEO and LEO satellite capabilities combine network density and high throughput with high speed and low latency. Our service level agreements and committed information rates support complex production, processing, and distribution technologies as well as crew safety, efficiency, and wellbeing. Connectivity for remote locations everywhere, including offshore platforms, rigs, turbines, and vessels.

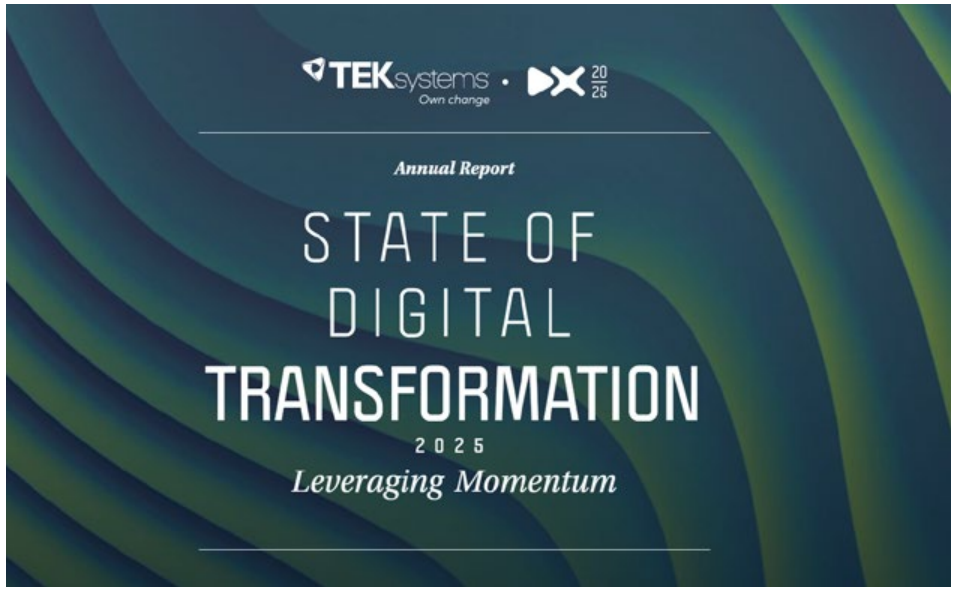
- Higher capacity and throughput than other legacy network solutions
- Low latency for new applications and future-ready technology
- Flexible plans that streamline offshore operations with shore-based control centers

Scan to find out more
https://oneweb.net/solutions/customer-solutions

eutelsat ONEWEB
eutelsat GROUP

REGIONAL NEWS

UAE Achieves Top Global Rankings in Digital Transformation and Infrastructure



The United Arab Emirates has cemented its position as a global leader in digital transformation, achieving top international rankings in several key indices related to digital infrastructure and governance. These achievements are detailed in the second edition of the "State of Digital Transformation Report," released by the UAE's Higher Committee for Government Digital Transformation. The report showcases the UAE government's extensive digital accomplishments across 12 vital sectors, demonstrating a comprehensive approach to modernizing public services and enhancing quality of life through technology. Ohood bint Khalfan Al Roumi, Minister of State for Government Development and the Future and Chair of the Committee, emphasized that digital readiness and transformation are core to the UAE leadership's vision. She noted that the report serves as a testament to the nation's leadership in global competitiveness indices, aiming to further motivate efforts toward national digital goals. The UAE secured the first global position in the UN indices for telecommunications infrastructure, digital government framework, digital content, and digital knowledge. Additionally, it topped Oxford Insights' "Government AI Readiness Index 2024," ranked third in government service delivery, and fourth in the World Bank's GovTech Maturity Index. The country also placed 11th in both the IMD's Digital Competitiveness Index and the UN E-Government Development Index. Digital government initiatives have yielded remarkable efficiency gains, including AED 368 billion saved for users and AED 20 billion in government cost reductions. This transformation also saved 530 million labor hours and cut carbon emissions by 55.8 million tonnes. In 2024 alone, federal government entities processed an impressive 173.7 million digital transactions. Federal websites garnered 131.5 million visits, and government applications were downloaded 26.3 million times. The UAE now offers 1,419 digital services, with 195 classified as priority services, achieving a high satisfaction rate of 91 percent among over 57 million users. Currently, 460 active digital transformation projects are underway across federal agencies.

Sector-specific digital achievements include:

- Digital Government: 10.8 million individuals used UAE Pass, connecting to 15,000 services and supporting 2.6 billion integrated digital transactions.
- Economic Sector: 5.2 million digital tax transactions, 316,800 certificates of origin, and 64,100 trademark registrations/renewals were completed.
- Finance Sector: 8,300 vendor registrations, 2,500 financial market employee accreditations, and 1,000 foreign investment fund renewals were processed.
- Human Resources: 13.2 million work permit applications, 8 million employment contract transactions, and 1.2 million training hours delivered via the "Jahiz" digital learning platform.
- Health: 2 million prescriptions filled by robotic pharmacies, 1 million AI-conducted chest X-rays, and 437,900 remote medical consultations.
- Education: 1.4 million individuals engaged in digital learning, and 445,700 university course registrations were processed digitally.
- Community Services: 115,600 digital inquiries, 243,800 zakat/donation transactions, and 125,700 digital fatwa/zakat calculations.
- Justice and Security: 4.2 million traffic fine payments, 1.5 million vehicle registrations, and 417,800 criminal record certificate applications processed digitally.
- Identity and Residency: 4.7 million Emirates ID renewals, 1.6 million private sector residency permit renewals, and 596,200 digital document attestations.
- Infrastructure and Logistics: 5,900 housing assistance requests, 68,500 national transport permits, and 3,000 nuclear activity licenses.
- Environmental Sector: 76,600 plant health certificates, 39,600 veterinary export certificates, and 59,900 agricultural product clearance transactions.
- Culture Sector: 2,400 library memberships, 368 cultural artifacts registered, and 162 event space rental requests fulfilled digitally.

These comprehensive digital advancements underscore the UAE's strategic vision to leverage technology for sustainable development and an enhanced quality of life for its population.

Saudi Arabia Leads Global Cybersecurity Rankings

Saudi Arabia has retained its position as the highest-ranked country in global cybersecurity, according to the latest International Institute for Management Development (IMD) World Competitiveness Yearbook. Officials attribute this continued success to the strong support from the nation's leadership, including King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. The country's national digital transformation strategy has been pivotal in positioning Saudi Arabia at the forefront of international cybersecurity standards. Officials emphasized that the Kingdom's achievements arise from a comprehensive and long-term approach balancing national security priorities with economic and technological development goals. Further affirming its status, Saudi Arabia was designated a Tier 1 "role-modeling" nation in the Global Cybersecurity Index 2024, published by the United Nations' International Telecommunication Union (ITU). This recognition highlights the Kingdom's leadership and international standing in the cybersecurity domain. At the core of Saudi Arabia's cybersecurity framework is the National Cybersecurity Authority (NCA), the primary agency responsible for overseeing national cybersecurity efforts, and the Saudi Information Technology Company, which acts as its strategic and technical partner. Together, these institutions have bolstered national cyber defenses, promoted localization of critical technologies, and fostered expanded domestic and international collaboration. The NCA serves as the national reference point for all cybersecurity-related matters, tasked with enhancing digital resilience by protecting critical infrastructure, vital sectors, and government services. It also establishes policies, frameworks, and standards, while encouraging innovation, investment, and growth within the Kingdom's cybersecurity industry. These initiatives are part of Saudi Arabia's broader vision to create a secure, trusted digital environment that fuels economic growth and strengthens global cooperation

Oman's Telecom Sector Booms Amid Ambitious Digital Transformation Goals

Oman's telecom sector expanded by 15.2 percent by May 2025, driven by surging mobile subscriptions reaching 8.13 million and a remarkable 118.7 percent increase in Internet of Things (IoT) connections to 1.55 million, according to the National Center for Statistics and Information. This growth underscores the rising demand for smart connectivity in sectors like logistics, utilities, and manufacturing. Central to Oman's Vision 2040, the country's digital infrastructure development focuses on innovation, economic diversification, and enhancing public services. Fiber optic and fixed 5G subscriptions have grown steadily, marking a shift toward advanced high-speed connectivity. Mordor Intelligence attributes this momentum to significant public investments, including a $441.5 million digital transformation initiative launched in 2022 aimed at modernizing public services and delivering seamless smart government offerings. The Digital Economy Program projects the digital sector's GDP contribution to rise from 3 percent in 2025 to 10 percent by 2040. Oman's Government Digital Transformation Program, Tahawul, has achieved 73 percent overall performance as of November 2024, up from 53 percent the previous year, digitizing thousands of public services. Four key agencies, including the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, have reached advanced digital excellence. Telecom subscription data shows postpaid mobile connections increased 5.6 percent to 1.23 million, prepaid rose 3.1 percent to over 5.33 million, and mobile broadband subscriptions hit 5.41 million. Fixed broadband subscriptions grew 2.6 percent to 588,015, with fiber optic services up 11.4 percent to 339,279 and fixed 5G connections increasing by 2.1 percent to 215,850. However, legacy technologies like fixed 4G and satellite Internet saw declines. Major infrastructure projects such as the unified e-government portal and the National Digital Integration Platform—which has processed over 1.4 billion data transactions—are accelerating Oman's smart services. Digital government transactions surged to nearly 27 million in 2024, with the government targeting 80 percent of essential services to be fully online by 2025.

Saudi Arabia and Palestine Strengthen Cooperation with Three New MOUs

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan met Palestinian Prime Minister Dr. Mohammad Mustafa at a high-level international conference focused on the peaceful resolution of the Palestinian issue and advancing the two-state solution. The meeting emphasized bilateral relations, regional developments, and coordinated international support for Palestinian rights.

Following their discussions, Saudi Arabia and Palestine signed three memoranda of understanding (MoUs) reinforcing Saudi support for Palestinian reform and development across key sectors. The first MoU, targeting human capital development, was signed between Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development and Palestine's General Personnel Council. Saudi representative Eng. Ibrahim Bahamam and Palestinian Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Dr. Estephan Anton Salameh formalized the agreement. The second MoU focused on educational curriculum development, leveraging Saudi Arabia's experience in reform. It was signed between the Saudi Ministry of Education, represented by Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Ruwaili, and Palestine's Ministry of Education and Higher Education, represented by Dr. Salameh. The third MoU addressed digital transformation and ICT collaboration, signed by Saudi Deputy Minister Mansour Al-Qurashi and Dr. Salameh for Palestine's Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy. Together, these agreements demonstrate Saudi Arabia's commitment to empowering Palestinian society, particularly its youth, by enhancing education, human resource capacity, and digital infrastructure. They also reflect the strong fraternal bonds between the Saudi and Palestinian peoples and leadership.

Bahrain Participates in High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development at the UN

Dana Imad Hamzah, Assistant Undersecretary for Sustainable Development at Bahrain's Ministry of Sustainable Development, took part in the opening session of the ministerial segment of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF 2025) held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from July 21 to 24, 2025. Ambassador Jamal Fares Al Ruwaiei, Bahrain's Permanent Representative to the UN, also attended. The forum, convened under the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), serves as a global platform where governments, international organizations, and civil society exchange best practices for implementing the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This year's theme focused on "Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions" to ensure no one is left behind. Keynote addresses by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, UN General Assembly President Philémon Yang, and ECOSOC President Bob Rae emphasized strengthening international partnerships and harnessing digital innovation, science, and data to build a prosperous and resilient future. During the General Debate themed "The UN at 80: Catalysing Change for Sustainable Development," Hamzah delivered Bahrain's national statement highlighting the Kingdom's firm commitment to the 2030 Agenda. She outlined Bahrain's economic achievements fueled by strategic national plans, diversified economy, and advanced digital infrastructure. Hamzah also emphasized Bahrain's leadership in inclusive financial systems and fintech innovation driven by digital transformation and AI adoption. She noted progress in healthcare modernization supported by scientific and data-driven technologies. Concluding her remarks, Hamzah underscored Bahrain's belief in international partnerships as vital to achieving sustainable development and peace, highlighting Bahrain's active global engagement, including its upcoming term as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2026–2027.

Saudi Arabia Leads MENA Startup Funding

Saudi Arabia emerged as the top-funded startup market in the MENA region during the first half of 2025, securing US$1.34 billion in investments—a remarkable 342% increase compared to H1 2024, according to a report by Wamda and Digital Digest. The Kingdom captured 64% of the region's total startup funding, with fintech companies spearheading this surge. Fintech startups raised US$969 million through 20 deals, reinforcing Saudi Arabia's status as the MENA region's premier destination for startup investment.

Bahrain: Satellite Frequency Request Submitted

Registration of satellite frequencies was discussed during a key meeting between the Bahrain Space Agency (BSA) and the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA). The two sides reviewed areas for partnership and commended the successful preparation and submission of the Al Munther satellite frequency file to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). "This achievement, which followed the highest international standards, reflects the technical expertise of both the BSA and the TRA," said a statement. Talks between the two sides covered key topics, including the allocation of national frequencies for space activities in line with international regulations and keeping pace with the rapid development of Bahrain's space sector. Also explored were opportunities for co-operation in representing Bahrain at regional and international events relating to space frequency allocation. "The collaboration between the two organisations is a key foundation for enhancing Bahrain's position in the regional and international space sector," said BSA adviser Dr Mohammed Al Othman. He emphasised that allocating space frequencies according to global standards will support national projects, promote technological innovation and benefit both the organisations. On his part, TRA spectrum director Hassan Mohammed noted that the meeting demonstrated the authority's commitment to advancing Bahrain's space sector and improving the management of frequencies in line with the best international practices.

Mobile Subscriptions in Oman Cross 8.1 million

Mobile service subscriptions in Oman have risen to 8,130,355, exceeding the country's population of 5,315,155. On average, each person in Oman now has 1.53 mobile subscriptions, according to the latest figures from National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). The data indicates robust growth in the telecommunications sector, supported by expanding digital services and increased adoption of smart technologies. Active postpaid mobile subscriptions rose 5.6% year-on-year to 1,239,509 by the end of May 2025. Prepaid mobile subscriptions also grew, increasing 3.1% to 5,335,847. Subscriptions in the Internet of Things (IoT) category recorded the highest growth – 118.7% – to 1,554,999. Overall, mobile service subscriptions increased 15.2% compared to the same period in 2024. Active mobile broadband subscriptions totalled 5,414,124 by the end of May 2025. Fixed broadband services saw a 2.6% rise to 588,015 subscriptions. Fibre optic connections grew 11.4% to 339,279, while fixed 5G subscriptions rose 2.1% to 215,850. In contrast, fixed 4G subscriptions dropped 38.1% to 19,654. Digital subscriber line (DSL) subscriptions declined sharply – 50.8% – to 11,806. Satellite Internet subscriptions decreased 2.1% to 653. Other types of Internet services – including those delivered via power lines, Ethernet and leased lines – fell 12% to 773 subscriptions.

Oman's Ecommerce Sector Booms with Over 10,500 Licensed Businesses Amid Rising Digital Trade

Oman's e-commerce sector has experienced explosive growth, with more than 10,500 businesses licensed to operate online as of mid-July 2025, according to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion. The sector has grown at a compound annual rate of 191% between 2020 and 2025, largely driven by increased activity on social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp. This surge reflects a growing preference for digital interaction, particularly among small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that now rely heavily on social media to market and sell products. The expansion aligns with global consumer behaviour trends and is supported by Oman's first e-commerce regulatory framework, introduced in September 2023 under Ministerial Decision No 499/2023. The regulations cover online businesses operating through websites and social media, with popular categories including perfumes, cosmetics, and ready-made garments. Despite its promising outlook, the sector faces challenges such as payment fraud, fake receipts, last-minute order cancellations, and concerns over return policies, product quality, and data protection. Dr. Nasser bin Hamid al Musalhi, a digital security expert at Mazoon College, stressed the need for stronger cybersecurity measures, cautioning consumers against unverified platforms and unsafe payment practices. Online entrepreneur Malik bin Ishaq al Qarni attributed his success to social media, which allows broad reach, instant product showcasing, direct customer engagement, and brand building at low cost. However, he acknowledged hurdles including customer hesitancy to prepay due to scam fears and order cancellations that cause financial setbacks. Oman's National E-Commerce Plan (2022–2027) aims to establish the country as a regional hub by fostering a robust digital trade ecosystem. The government is enhancing regulatory oversight and promoting safer online transaction practices to support both sellers and consumers in this rapidly evolving market.

Orange Jordan Renews COPC Certification for Sixth Consecutive Year

Orange Jordan has renewed its COPC certification for 2025, marking six consecutive years of recognition for excellence in customer service. This prestigious certification affirms Orange Jordan's ongoing commitment to delivering world-class customer experiences and cements its position among global leaders in customer operations. The COPC certification, a rigorous global standard for customer experience performance, highlights Orange Jordan's dedication to maintaining and enhancing service quality across all customer touchpoints. Orange Jordan CEO, Eng. Philippe Mansour, expressed pride in the renewal, emphasizing that customer satisfaction remains central to the company's success and strategy to lead future innovation. Achieving this certification consistently demonstrates Orange Jordan's focus on continuous improvement, investment in people, technology, and services to provide seamless, reliable, and superior customer experiences. As a responsible digital pioneer, Orange Jordan continues to apply industry best practices in customer care, supporting Jordan's national digital transformation vision. The company serves around 4.6 million customers with a comprehensive portfolio including fixed and mobile lines, internet, data, and Smart Life Solutions, supported by nearly 1,800 employees across almost 300 locations. Orange Jordan is a subsidiary of Orange Global Group, which operates in 26 countries worldwide. The group reported revenues of €40.3 billion in 2024 and serves 291 million customers globally. The company also offers tailored business solutions through its Orange Business sub-brand.

Pakistan's IT Exports Hit US$3.8 billion in FY 2024-25

Pakistan's IT exports reached an all-time high of $3.8 billion in the financial year 2024-25, marking an 18% increase from $3.2 billion the previous year, according to data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The IT and IT-enabled services sector is now the third-largest foreign exchange earner after textiles and rice, accounting for 45% of total services exports. Industry leaders praised the sector's strong performance, noting its contribution to stabilizing the current account amid global challenges. Muhammad Umair Nizam of P@SHA highlighted ongoing collaboration between the government and industry to further boost IT exports despite hurdles like delayed policy implementations. Government initiatives supporting exporters include allowing IT firms to retain 50% of earnings in forex accounts, introducing cash rewards for top performers, and addressing tax reporting challenges, which have encouraged greater investment and innovation. Experts see substantial growth potential, with Mehwish Salman Ali emphasizing the adoption of AI, cybersecurity, and the need for skilled talent and global partnerships. Khushnood Aftab of FPCCI urged diversification into hardware exports such as laptops and devices. The government has set ambitious goals under the Uraan Pakistan vision, aiming to reach $5 billion in IT exports by FY26 and $10 billion by FY29, reflecting growing confidence in the sector's role in Pakistan's economic development.

PTCL, Ufone 4G Enter Landmark Partnership with TPL Corp

Pakistan's largest telecommunication and digital services provider, PTCL Group (PTCL & Ufone 4G), has entered a landmark partnership with TPL Corp, a tech conglomerate with investments across diversified industries. This collaboration covers the deployment of Machine-to-Machine (M2M) devices, secure Data Center hosting, and managed network connectivity across TPL Corp and its operating companies. The agreement was signed by Asif Ahmed, Group Chief Business Solutions Officer (GCBSO), PTCL & Ufone 4G, and Ali Jameel, CEO, TPL Corp, during a ceremony held at TPL Corp's headquarters in Karachi. Senior leadership from both sides attended the event. Through this alliance, PTCL Group will deliver integrated technology solutions that support TPL Corp's operational scalability, strengthen its digital infrastructure, and enable smarter business operations nationwide. Speaking at the signing, Asif Ahmed, Group Chief Business Solutions Officer, PTCL & Ufone 4G, said, "PTCL Group is committed to empowering Pakistani enterprises with future-ready ICT services. By leveraging our extensive network, enterprise-grade Data Centers, and managed services, we aim to accelerate TPL Corp's journey toward greater efficiency and innovation. We are proud to serve as their trusted technology partner." Ali Jameel, CEO, TPL Corp, shared, "At TPL, we continuously seek innovation and efficiency in everything we do. Partnering with PTCL Group allows us to unlock new levels of operational capability through reliable, secure, and smart digital infrastructure. This alliance aligns with our strategic objective to lead the market with technology-first solutions, and we look forward to a long and impact full journey together." The partnership reflects both organizations shared ambition to advance Pakistan's digital future by delivering smart, secure, and scalable solutions that help transform industries and elevate national competitiveness.

Morocco Commits US$8 Billion to Expand 5G Network

Morocco is accelerating its digital transformation with a bold $8 billion investment plan aimed at achieving 85% 5G network coverage across the kingdom by 2030. This ambitious commitment reflects the country's strong resolve to harness next-generation connectivity for national development. The plan focuses on rapidly expanding Morocco's digital infrastructure to deliver high-speed 5G access to the majority of its population within five years. The initiative is expected to spur innovation, boost economic growth, and improve key sectors such as education, healthcare, industry, and smart cities. By dedicating substantial resources to 5G rollout, Morocco is positioning itself as a regional leader in digital adoption, leveraging advanced telecommunications to enhance quality of life and drive sustainable development.

Bangladesh Hosts First BEAR Summit, Semiconductor Symposium to Boost Deep-Tech Ambitions

Bangladesh has taken a major leap toward establishing itself as a hub for deep-tech innovation by hosting its inaugural Biotech, Electronics, AI, and Robotics (BEAR) Summit alongside the Bangladesh National Semiconductor Symposium 2025. The two-day event, held at the National Science and Technology Complex in Agargaon, Dhaka, is jointly organised by the ICT Division and the Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC) under the EDGE Project. Chief Adviser's Special Assistant Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb inaugurated the event. Speaking at the programme, Taiyeb said, "We are building a Digital Public Infrastructure and formulating a National AI Policy. We're also developing a natural intelligence-based AI model in Bangla. Our goal is to empower the youth and support entrepreneurs entering the semiconductor industry." The summit brought together stakeholders from academia, industry, and the global tech community, reflecting Bangladesh's aspirations to transform into a knowledge-based economy driven by frontier technologies. Professor Md Saidur Rahman, member of the University Grants Commission (UGC), highlighted the importance of higher education in enabling this transition. "Two key projects are underway, the Higher Education Acceleration and Transformation (HEAT) Project and ICSETEP initiative, aimed at reforming tertiary education and enhancing CSE/IT capabilities to meet 4IR demands," he said. Leading institutions involved in ICSETEP include the University of Dhaka, BUET, and Jashore University of Science and Technology (JUST). BUET Vice-Chancellor Dr ABM Badruzzaman and ICT Secretary Shish Haider Chowdhury also addressed the inaugural session. During a panel discussion, Tanveer Ali, chairman of Constellation Asset Management, told The Business Standard, "The BEAR Summit is a unique platform to explore both challenges and opportunities in AI. "Young entrepreneurs can leverage today's accessible technologies to build startups and SMEs – particularly in fields like digital content creation and marketing – without needing massive capital. This is a game-changer for youth-led innovation." The day-long conference featured several technical sessions and panel discussions. Companies such as Neural Semiconductor Limited, Ulkasemi, and THiNK Global Limited showcased their innovations at the event. The event will continue till today, with expert sessions, workshops, and exhibitions showcasing cutting-edge research, innovation, and business models. According to organisers, over 2,500 participants attended, with 60% being students and 40% professionals. Around 30% joined virtually from abroad. Representatives from 30 universities and all local semiconductor companies participated, and more than 300 posters and demos were submitted. Recently, the government's 13-member Semiconductor Taskforce, formed on 1 January, has submitted a formal report to the chief adviser, outlining a strategic roadmap prioritising skills development, a business-friendly environment, and policy support, alongside stronger global partnerships. The roadmap proposes short, medium, and long-term measures to support the sector. It identifies three main areas of the semiconductor value chain – chip design, manufacturing, and testing and packaging. While Bangladesh has near-term potential to enter chip design and testing/packaging, full-scale chip manufacturing would require substantial investment and a highly skilled workforce and is therefore recommended as a long-term goal.

Pakistan's Telecom Sector Sees 38% Surge in Data Usage

According to the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), data usage in Pakistan's telecom sector rose by 37.84% over three years, climbing from 20,235 petabytes (PB) in 2022-23 to 27,897 PB in 2024-25. Year-on-year growth was 10.96% compared to 25,141 PB recorded in 2023-24. This sharp increase is driven by higher consumption on streaming platforms, online education, e-commerce, and mobile apps. Broadband subscribers expanded from 127.6 million in 2022-23 to 150 million in 2024-25, marking a 17.55% rise over three years and an 8.47% increase from 138.3 million in 2023-24. Broadband penetration grew from 53.6% to 60.8%, showing significant progress in internet accessibility nationwide. Total telecom subscribers reached 200 million in 2024-25, growing modestly by 3.36% from 193.5 million in 2022-23. Teledensity remained stable around 81%, indicating a mature market with limited subscriber growth potential. Infrastructure development continued with cell sites increasing by 8.03% over three years to 57,888 in 2024-25, supporting rising demand in urban and rural areas. Despite these gains, telecom sector revenues declined 15.91% year-on-year to Rs. 803 billion in 2024-25 from Rs. 955 billion in 2023-24, and dipped slightly by 1.71% compared to Rs. 817 billion in 2022-23. Contributions to the national exchequer rose to Rs. 271 billion in 2024-25, recovering from Rs. 195.1 billion in 2023-24 but still below Rs. 341 billion in 2022-23.Overall, Pakistan's telecom sector continues to show robust user growth and network expansion despite revenue fluctuations.

Saudi Arabia Launches Global Initiatives to Address Computing and AI Challenges

At the 160th anniversary of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in Geneva, Saudi Arabia's Minister of Communications and Information Technology, Abdullah Alswaha, highlighted the Kingdom's launch of initiatives to tackle global challenges in computing, data, and algorithms. Supported by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, these efforts aim to bridge gaps in artificial intelligence and promote digital inclusivity worldwide. Alswaha emphasized the urgency of collective action amid rapid AI advancements to prevent widening societal divides and foster equitable development through technology. During his Geneva visit, he held high-level meetings with ITU Secretary General Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Algerian Minister Sid Ali Zerrouki, Somali Minister Mohamed Adam Moalim Ali, WIPO Director General Daren Tang, and UNCTAD Secretary General Rebeca Grynspan. Discussions centered on strengthening global partnerships in digital governance, AI, infrastructure, intellectual property protection, sustainable innovation, and digital economy growth. Saudi Arabia's

long-standing ITU partnership and leadership in Sustainable Development Goals initiatives reinforce its commitment to a technology-driven, inclusive global future.

Kuwait Accelerates Tech and Telecom Growth to Build a Sustainable, Diversified Economy

Kuwait is rapidly enhancing its technology and communication infrastructure to support its ambition for a sustainable, diversified economy. Key government leaders recently met with Google Cloud executives to integrate AI and data analytics into public services, driving efficiency in infrastructure, healthcare, energy, and education under the National AI Strategy (2025–2028). This strategy focuses on governance, privacy, security, and workforce skill development aligned with Kuwait's Vision 2035. Telecom giant Ooredoo Kuwait is spearheading 5G network advancements, upgrading infrastructure with massive antennas and collaborating with Ericsson to enhance network capabilities including slicing and edge computing. These innovations aim to boost sectors like ports, oil, education, and healthcare, while a partnership with Nvidia targets the launch of an AI Centre of Excellence for real-time, intelligent network services. Kuwait's digital transformation includes expanding Google Cloud offices and partnering with Microsoft to modernize government financial and administrative systems using AI and cloud solutions. Cybersecurity efforts are led by the Central Agency for Information Technology's Zero Trust initiative with Microsoft, safeguarding data, applications, and infrastructure from modern cyber threats. The Ministry of Information's agreement with the National Cybersecurity Centre aims to strengthen national media operations. Despite advanced digital infrastructure and cybersecurity, Kuwait remains cautious about entering the lucrative online gambling market. While neighboring countries embrace regulated iGaming to boost economies, Kuwait maintains a conservative stance. Experts suggest the country could harness tech innovations to regulate the sector responsibly while preserving societal values. Supporting digital growth, Kuwait invests heavily in mega infrastructure projects. Mubarak Al Kabeer Port on Bubiyan Island, part of China's Belt and Road Initiative, will enhance regional trade logistics. The massive Al-Mutlaa City housing project, alongside planned new cities Saad Al-Abdullah and Sabah Al-Ahmad, will incorporate smart city technologies offering schools, health centers, and amenities to over 400,000 residents, improving quality of life and cementing Kuwait's position as a tech-forward hub in the Middle East.

Oman's Freelance Digital Economy Grows with Government Support and Youth Empowerment

Oman's freelance digital work sector is rapidly expanding, driven by shifts in the global labor market and the country's growing digital economy initiatives. The government's efforts to empower youth and provide steady income opportunities through online channels are fueling this rise. Azza bint Ibrahim Al-Kindi, Director of Commercial Affairs and E-Commerce at Oman's Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion, highlighted e-commerce as a leading freelance sector. A key initiative is the "Freelance License Record," which allows Omanis to legally conduct online business with low costs and clear regulations. Compared to physical stores, the lower startup costs and broader market reach of digital platforms enable Omani freelancers to connect with local and international customers. Over 200 activities are now eligible for freelancing licenses, and the "Ma'roof Oman" platform helps build consumer trust by validating authorized online retailers. This sector promotes employment in marketing, design, software development, and more, fostering innovation, technical skills, and economic diversification. Oman's National E-Commerce Plan (2022–2027) includes training programs to help entrepreneurs access global platforms like Amazon and Noon. Additional efforts focus on enhancing IT skills through the "Makeen" program and supporting SME integration into global supply chains. Freelancing offers young Omanis a low-risk environment to explore business ideas, encouraging entrepreneurial spirit and preparing them to launch their own enterprises.

UAE-IX Powered by DE-CIX becomes 'First in Middle East' to Offer 400 GE Access

The UAE-IX powered by DE-CIX has taken a major leap forward in internet infrastructure with the introduction of 400 Gigabit Ethernet (GE) access, becoming the 'first and only' Internet Exchange (IX) in the Middle East to offer this capacity. The announcement was made by DE-CIX in partnership with datamena, du's carrier-neutral data center and connectivity platform. This significant upgrade strengthens UAE-IX's position as the largest IX in the region, not just in terms of connected networks, but also in peak traffic and capacity. Over the past year, the exchange has seen connected customer capacity surge by 30%, adding two terabits to reach a total of more than 6 terabits. Established in 2012 and operated by DE-CIX on behalf of datamena, the UAE-IX now connects nearly 110 networks, including internet service providers, global enterprises, cloud providers, carriers, and content platforms. In addition to peering services, the exchange offers a comprehensive suite of enterprise-grade interconnection services such as Cloud Exchange, cloud routing, and application-layer connectivity including Microsoft Azure Peering Service (MAPS). "The UAE-IX stands as a global Internet hub, bringing together the network operators, content, applications, and cloud services to serve the entire GCC region with resilient and low latency connectivity," said Ivo Ivanov, CEO of DE-CIX. "This upgrade further reinforces the importance of the UAE-IX, now ready to serve the rising demand for everything digital." Karim Benkirane, chief commercial officer at du added: "We are proud to partner with DE-CIX in leading digital growth in the Middle East with the upgrade of the UAE-IX powered by DE-CIX to 400 GE access. This milestone aligns with our commitment to maintaining the UAE-IX as a pioneer in interconnection and marks a transformative leap for regional digital ecosystems." DE-CIX now operates Internet Exchanges in Iraq, Jordan, Qatar, Turkiye, and the UAE, offering its DE-CIX as a Service (DaaS) model to support regional digital transformation.

CST: SAR180 Billion is the Size of the Communications and Technology Market in 2024

With the attendance of the Acting Governor of Communications and Technology Commission, CST revealed the size of the communications and technology market reaching (180B) riyals during 2024, with annual compound growth rate of 7.5% over the past five years. This announcement came during the 11th edition of the ICT Indicators Forum 2025, held in Riyadh, which was attended by elite experts and sector leaders, and featured five main presentations and a panel discussion reviewing the financial performance of the Kingdom's communications and technology sector. The forum began with a presentation on performance indicators for the telecommunications and technology sector delivered by Eng. Thamer AlKhwaiter, General Manager of Regulations in CST. He revealed that the median mobile internet speed has reached 129 Mbps, placing the Kingdom 4th among G20 countries for 2024. Mobile telecommunications subscriptions have reached 68.2 million, with an annual growth rate of 7%. The presentation also disclosed that the Space market size in 2024 has reached approximately 7.1 B SAR. It also featured a presentation by Mr. Ranjit Rajan, VP of Research for META at IDC, titled "Tech Transformation in Saudi Arabia in the AI Era" where he unveiled the most notable figures related to the communications and technology market in the Kingdom, as well as the transformations occurred in Cloud Computing, artificial intelligence (AI) and other aspects. During the forum's third presentation, Al Jazira Capital's Research Head, Mr. Jassim AlJubran delivered a comprehensive financial analysis of the sector. His presentation "ICT Sector Financial Performance in Arqaam " disclosed that the total assets of ICT listed companies in the Kingdom have reached 255B SAR, while their total revenues amounted to 128B SAR, and their market cap has reached 427B SAR. The forum included a panel discussion examining the financial performance of the sector in Arqaam, with participation from Mr. Jassim AlJubran, Head of Research Al Jazira Capital, Mr. Mohammed Aljbali, VP of Investor Relations at Mobily, and Mr. Yazan bin Ibrahim Al-Turki, Vice President of Budgeting and Financial Planning at Etihad Atheeb Telecom Company (GO). In a presentation titled "Mobile Communications: Realistic Indicators and Future Development Insights" Mr. Amr Hashem, Policy Director of MENA at GSMA, revealed Saudi Arabia's leadership in mobile connectivity, and the significant progress made in accelerating 5G deployment. The forum's final

presentation, delivered by Eng. Musaab Alammar, Director - Internet Techs Development Dept. at CST, unveiled the 4th edition of the "Saudi Internet Report 2024," which addresses internet usage in the Kingdom and its growth, as well as indicators and information related to user patterns, behaviors, and preferences. The report also reviews the most used and downloaded applications, in addition to data consumption rates per individual.

Qatar's CRA and Brazil's ANATEL Sign MoU to Boost Cooperation in Radio Spectrum Management

The Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA) of Qatar and Brazil's National Telecommunications Agency (ANATEL) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance bilateral cooperation in radio spectrum management. The agreement was signed at the opening of the ITU Council 2025 meetings in Geneva by CRA President Engineer Ahmad Abdulla AlMuslemani and ANATEL President Carlos Manuel Baigorri. The MoU emphasizes the two nations' commitment to advancing radiocommunication services through joint efforts in spectrum monitoring, including satellite-based systems, and collaborative program management for special events. The agreement also promotes mutual support in international telecommunications conferences and aims to facilitate knowledge exchange, training, and human capital development in radio spectrum oversight. This strategic partnership underscores a broader ambition to strengthen ICT collaboration between Qatar and Brazil, aligning with global efforts to adapt to emerging technologies and ensure efficient spectrum utilization.

Qatar's CRA Launches Capacity-Building Initiative to Boost Digital Literacy and Awareness

The Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA) of Qatar has launched a joint capacity-building initiative in partnership with the Réseaux IP Européens Network Coordination Centre (RIPE NCC), Cisco via Qatar Digital Academy, and Huawei. This collaborative effort aims to enhance public understanding and digital literacy across critical technology areas such as IoT, cybersecurity, IPv6, routing security, 5G, artificial intelligence, Internet governance, and digital infrastructure. Through the CRA platform, the initiative will deliver online training sessions and webinars led by specialized experts, targeting students, professionals, and technology enthusiasts to broaden access to knowledge and promote digital inclusion. Ali Al-Suwaidi, Director of Technical Affairs at CRA, emphasized the initiative's alignment with Qatar National Vision 2030's human development pillar and its role in building a diversified, innovation-driven economy. CRA also encourages other technology sector stakeholders to contribute quality content to further enrich this educational series, reinforcing Qatar's ambition to become a regional hub for digital knowledge and expertise.

Digital Transformation to Boost Saudi Industrial Productivity by Up to 25%, Says Aramco CEO

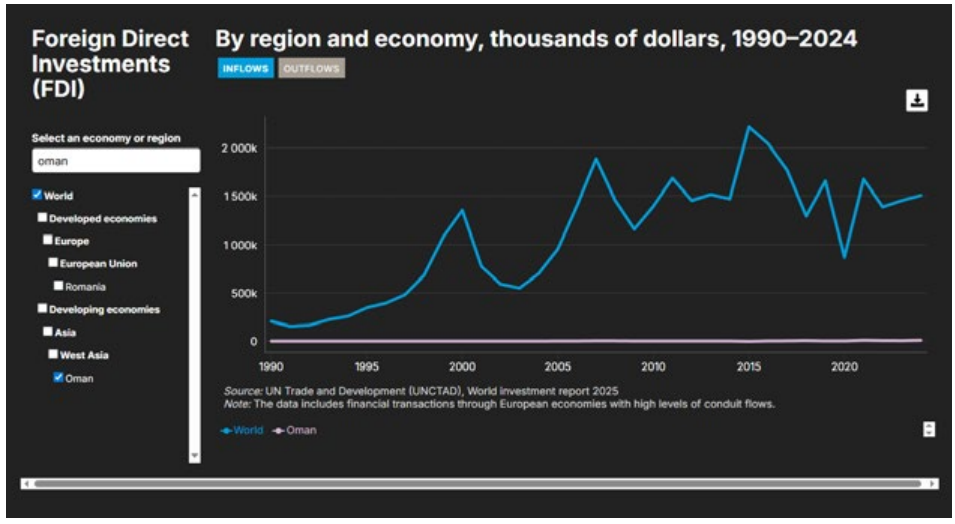
Integrating digital technologies is set to increase Saudi Arabia's industrial productivity by 15 to 25 percent, according to Aramco President and CEO Amin Nasser. Speaking during the Saudi Industry Forum in Dhahran, Nasser stated that the Kingdom's shift into a new industrial era calls for an increased focus on digital transformation and the need to align it with proactive cybersecurity strategies. This comes as Saudi Arabia works to solidify its position as a regional and global digital powerhouse, backed by major advances in artificial intelligence, data centers, e-government, and human capital development. The Kingdom has emerged as the Middle East and North Africa's largest digital economy, with a market value exceeding SR495 billion ($131.9 billion) in 2024 — equivalent to 15 percent of its gross domestic product, according to figures from the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology. In his remarks, Nasser said: "Preliminary estimates suggest that effective integration of digital technologies could increase Saudi Arabia's industrial productivity by 15 percent to 25 percent." He added: "Thanks to successive technological developments, industries will emerge over the next 10 years dominated by advanced technologies to a degree we have never seen before." Nasser noted that the world is undergoing profound geopolitical shifts and intensifying competition across technological, industrial, and economic domains — trends that are accelerating the transformation of Saudi Arabia's industrial landscape. He emphasized the need to prepare for this future, particularly as the Kingdom continues to invest in artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, robotics, and automation. These technologies, he explained, are aimed at more than just optimizing factory operations; they are vital for enhancing industrial productivity and ensuring operational reliability. "At Aramco, we are working to establish a digital infrastructure that becomes an integral part of empowering the industrial sector," Nasser said, adding: "This includes the launch of Aramco Digtal Company, as well as a 450 MHz private wireless network dedicated to industrial use by the private sector." He continued: "Aramco Digital has also introduced an edge artificial intelligence service — AI on the Edge — designed for critical industrial facilities and complex applications, such as crowd management during Hajj." In the cybersecurity sphere, Aramco established Cyberani in 2021, a company focused on delivering industrial-grade solutions and software protection technologies. "Aramco is working on projects to develop artificial intelligence platforms, data centers, and smart industrial complexes," Nasser said. He warned of the risks accompanying digital advancement, stating: "A technical malfunction or external interference through digital systems or control platforms could impact operations and disrupt the performance of industrial and economic facilities — especially those that do not invest sufficiently in digital protection." Highlighting the human element in digital security, he stated: "The most critical aspect of proactive protection systems is the development of human capabilities and deep expertise." Nasser concluded by stressing the importance of localizing digital supply chains and enhancing technological resilience. "Building future Saudi industries supported by flexible supply chains, competitive costs, and excellence in artificial intelligence is essential and highly important — but it is not enough unless it is accompanied by proactive investment in digital protection," he said. The Saudi Industry Forum 2025, held from June 23–25 at the Dhahran International Exhibition Center, is sponsored by Eastern Province Governor Prince Saud bin Naif bin Abdulaziz. The event aims to elevate the Kingdom's industrial sector in alignment with Saudi Vision 2030, which seeks to diversify income sources and increase the sector's contribution to the gross domestic product.

Starlink Internet Service Now Operational in Qatar

Starlink, the satellite internet service engineered by SpaceX, is now operational throughout Qatar, marking a significant milestone for connectivity in the region. The announcement came directly from Elon Musk, who took to his social media platform X, declaring the start of the service in Qatar. Starlink's arrival is expected to benefit both consumers and businesses, offering reliable internet even in areas previously underserved by traditional providers. Previously, Qatar Airways has begun equipping its fleet with Starlink, providing passengers with complimentary, ultra-fast Wi-Fi on select flights, further cementing the country's reputation for technological leadership in aviation. With the arrival of this service, Qatar becomes one of the first countries in the Middle East to offer Starlink's advanced satellite internet, positioning itself as a regional leader in digital infrastructure.

Oman Ranks Fourth Globally Among Developing Economies in Attracting Digital Infrastructure Investment

Oman has been ranked fourth globally among developing economies for attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) in greenfield projects related to information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure between 2020 and 2024, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's (UNCTAD) World Investment Report 2025. The report highlights Oman's emergence as a regional hub for digital infrastructure, innovation, and advanced technologies. The country's impressive ranking underscores its success in drawing significant digital-related investments, surpassing many advanced economies. The Government Communication Centre revealed that Oman attracted approximately US$1.7 billion in foreign investment for digital infrastructure projects during this period. The volume of new investments in the digital economy nearly tripled, propelled by the National Digital Economy Programme and broader efforts to transform Oman into a knowledge-based economy. Mexico leads the list with US$5.2 billion in ICT infrastructure investment, followed by Nigeria (US$4.3 billion), Malaysia (US$2.2 billion), Oman (US$1.7 billion), and Brazil (US$1.6 billion). This achievement reflects Oman's strategic vision under Oman Vision 2040, aimed at economic diversification and enhancing the country's appeal as a destination for technology-driven investment. It also demonstrates the effectiveness of national policies focused on boosting digital readiness and fostering an innovation-led competitive environment. In 2024, Oman launched the National Programme for Artificial Intelligence and Advanced Digital Technologies, scheduled to run through 2026. The programme seeks to elevate the ICT sector's contribution to the economy and align Oman's capabilities with global advancements in artificial intelligence (AI). Key elements of the initiative include integrating AI and data analysis into school curricula to develop essential digital skills among youth, and creating a national open data platform to support entrepreneurs, investors, and policymakers. Additionally, Oman plans to establish a national research centre dedicated to AI to advance academic and scientific research, along with an AI studio offering sector-specific solutions to professionals and institutions. The programme aims to improve Oman's ranking in the global Government Readiness Index for AI and increase the digital economy's GDP contribution from 2% in 2021 to 10% by 2040, showcasing Oman's commitment to building a resilient, technology-driven economy.



Banglalink Partners with ICC Communication to Deliver Advanced Digital Solutions for Enterprises

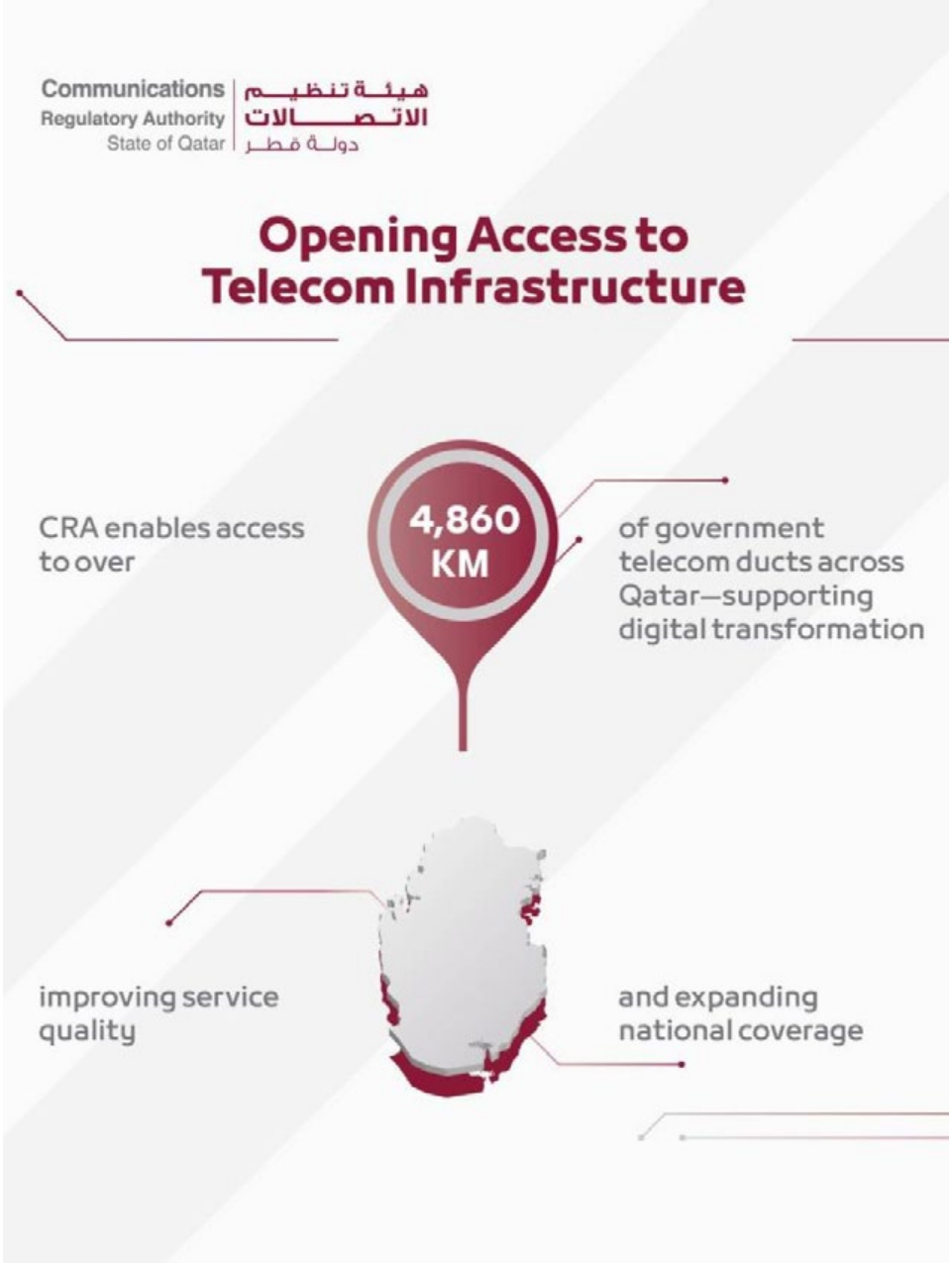
Bangladesh's leading digital operator, Banglalink, has signed a strategic agreement with nationwide Internet Service Provider ICC Communication Limited to strengthen enterprise digital empowerment across the country. Under the partnership, Banglalink will provide ICC with a suite of corporate services including enhanced connectivity, vehicle tracking systems, and other tailored business solutions aimed at boosting operational efficiency, expanding customer reach, and unlocking new growth opportunities. The signing ceremony took place at Banglalink's Tiger's Den headquarters in Gulshan, Dhaka. Key representatives included Rubaiyat A Tanzeen, Enterprise Business Director at Banglalink, and Saiful Islam Siddique, Managing Director of ICC Communication, alongside senior officials from both organizations. Rubaiyat A Tanzeen emphasized Banglalink's commitment to delivering innovative and scalable digital solutions that drive operational excellence and digital transformation for enterprises. Saiful Islam Siddique highlighted the partnership as a milestone in enhancing collaboration between digital operators and ISPs to offer seamless digital experiences to customers.

GCC eGovernment Executive Committee Advances Regional Digital Transformation

Mohammed Ali Al Qaed, Chief Executive of Bahrain's Information and eGovernment Authority (iGA), attended the 27th meeting of the GCC eGovernment Executive Committee held in Kuwait, alongside Dr. Khalid Ahmed Almutawa, iGA Deputy Chief Executive for Operations and Governance, and senior eGovernment officials from GCC states. The committee reviewed progress reports from the GCC General Secretariat on eGovernment strategic initiatives and discussed Kuwait's preparations to host the 2025 GCC Digital Government Award, encouraging active participation from member states. In a move reflecting evolving digital priorities, the committee approved renaming itself the "Digital Government Executive Committee" and upgrading its working groups into specialised technical committees to better align with future digital transformation needs. Key agenda items included reviewing the Joint eServices Team's network performance report, approving regular reporting to enhance operational efficiency, and evaluating recommendations from the Unified Software and Hardware Procurement Team. The committee also considered Bahrain's report on technology company licensing models, endorsing negotiations to optimize licence costs for greater economic benefit. Focusing on emerging technologies, the committee endorsed the development of a unified GCC AI strategic guide, with Bahrain leading its implementation under the broader eGovernment framework. It further reviewed plans from the Digital Trust Services Team on adopting digital certificates to secure government digital transactions. Several AI initiatives were discussed, including Oman's proposals for an AI applications framework in public services and an AI-driven climate forecasting and disaster management system. These were recommended for ministerial committee approval. The meeting reaffirmed ongoing institutional efforts and technical collaboration across various digital transformation areas. It also prepared for the ninth GCC Digital Transformation Ministerial Committee meeting by reviewing prior minutes and decisions. Bahrain's active participation highlights its commitment to fostering Gulf regional integration in digital transformation, promoting knowledge exchange, and elevating government eServices quality across GCC countries.

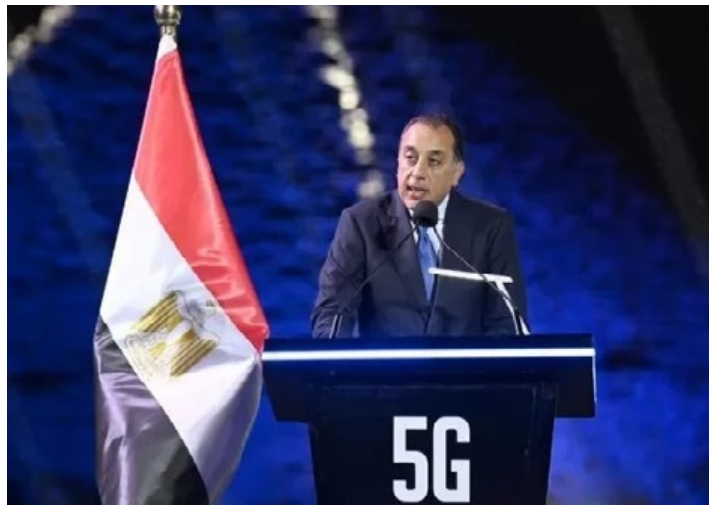
CRA Opens Access to Over 4,860 Km of Government Telecom Infrastructure Across Qatar

The Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA) has opened access to more than 4,860 kilometers of government telecom duct infrastructure across Qatar. This milestone forms part of CRA's broader regulatory mandate to optimize the use of national telecom assets, enable licensed service providers to scale their networks more efficiently, and support the delivery of high-quality digital services to homes and businesses. The initiative reflects CRA's strategic objective to promote fair and open access to essential telecom infrastructure—reducing duplicate deployments, improving investment efficiency, and accelerating the rollout of next-generation technologies such as fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) and 5G. It directly supports Qatar's ambitions for a robust digital economy and future-ready connectivity ecosystem. Mr. Ali Al-Suwaidi, Director of the Technical Affairs Department at CRA stated: "Ensuring equitable access to national telecom infrastructure is a core part of our regulatory mandate. It enables licensed service providers to scale efficiently and deliver reliable services that meet users' expectations. This initiative reflects our commitment to advancing Qatar's digital ecosystem, supporting innovation, and contributing to economic diversification. We also commend the strong collaboration with Ashghal in realizing this strategic milestone." Delivered in collaboration with the Public Works Authority (Ashghal), the infrastructure spans 60 projects and covers over 40,000 residential, commercial, and government premises nationwide. The rollout was governed by a 2014 Memorandum of Understanding between CRA and Ashghal, which formalized planning, construction, and transfer protocols. To date, more than 15,500 premises have been connected via the CRA-managed government telecom duct infrastructure. Ooredoo has utilized 468 kilometers of ducts to serve 2,010 consumers premises, while Vodafone Qatar has deployed 251 kilometers to connect 1,150 of its consumers. These figures underscore growing industry reliance on a shared national duct network as a foundation for reliable and scalable connectivity. CRA oversees access to the network through its Duct Management System (DMS), a GIS-based digital platform that facilitates real-time capacity visibility, application processing, and coordination for network extensions. This ensures transparency, efficiency, and alignment with national infrastructure policy. This access model enhances the quality of digital services for users, enabling high-performance connectivity that supports remote work, e-learning, and digital government services. It also fosters competition by making it easier for consumers to switch between service providers and improves the overall digital user experience. CRA, as the designated regulatory authority, continues to oversee the construction handover and regulated availability of government telecom ducts in coordination with relevant entities. These efforts are aligned with Qatar National Vision 2030 and aim to ensure sustainable infrastructure development and a thriving digital economy.



e& Egypt Officially Launches 5G Services, Accelerating National Digital Transformation

e& Egypt has officially launched its 5G services, marking a pivotal milestone in its journey since entering the Egyptian market. This advancement strengthens the company's role as a key driver of digital transformation and a contributor to Egypt's economic growth. Supported by a $170 million investment in acquiring a 5G operating license, e& Egypt has bolstered its network infrastructure to deliver high-quality, reliable 5G connectivity. CEO Hazem Metwally emphasized that the 5G rollout is not just about faster speeds but about enabling a fully integrated digital future with enhanced connectivity capacity and low latency. The new 5G network promises superior performance across sectors, including fintech, digital banking, and e-commerce, while enhancing everyday digital experiences such as live streaming and real-time applications. Metwally concluded by reaffirming e& Egypt's commitment to fostering a connected, innovative, and sustainable future, leveraging advanced technology to empower individuals, businesses, and society as a whole.



Pakistan and Saudi Arabia Strengthen Tech Collaboration

Federal IT Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja and Saudi Minister for Communications and IT Eng. Abdullah Al-Swaha reaffirmed their commitment to advancing Pakistan-Saudi technological cooperation during a high-level meeting. The two nations discussed launching the Pakistan Digital Corridor to enhance global connectivity with China and Central Asia. A key highlight was Pakistan's endorsement of a Rs 4.8 billion Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) to train over 7,000 youth in semiconductor technologies, supporting the growth of Pakistan's tech workforce. Minister Khawaja emphasized Pakistan's full backing for Saudi Arabia's National Semiconductor Hub and the importance of joint ventures in AI and computing. The meeting also explored collaboration under Saudi Arabia's National Technology Development Program to promote private-sector partnerships. Pakistan's recent cybersecurity successes and the strategic role of its armed forces were acknowledged, underscoring a shared vision for regional leadership in innovation and digital infrastructure. Minister Khawaja further highlighted Pakistan's economic turnaround under Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, noting significant improvements: interest rates halved from 23% to 11%, and inflation dropped from nearly 40% to below 5%, marking a path toward sustainable growth and digital transformation.

Pakistan Launches Smart City Initiative with Focus on Digital Infrastructure and Education Reform

The federal government has initiated a comprehensive plan to transform Islamabad into a pilot smart city, with Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja leading the efforts as directed by the Prime Minister. Following a Senate Standing Committee meeting on Information Technology, the ministry announced funding to provide fiber connectivity to all public schools, Basic Health Units (BHUs), hospitals, police stations, and other health facilities in Islamabad. Full fiberization of these institutions is expected within six to eight months, alongside free public Wi-Fi at identified public areas and metro bus stations through public-private partnerships. The initiative also aims to expand educational access via EdTech solutions, integrating emerging technologies and artificial intelligence into curricula from kindergarten through grade six to ensure early digital literacy and equal learning opportunities. In collaboration with the Ministry of Health, the government is advancing the "One Patient, One ID" system to enhance healthcare delivery by enabling telemedicine and remote consultations at all BHUs. Educational reforms include plans to incorporate IT education into the national curriculum, supported by a committee established for this purpose. The government has set an ambitious target to train 500,000 youth in advanced IT skills through partnerships with global tech giants: 200,000 with Google, 300,000 with Huawei, and 200,000 with Microsoft. These programs aim to elevate Pakistan's IT workforce to global standards and boost youth participation in the digital economy.

Qatar's Technology-Driven Transformation Accelerates with AI and Innovation Leadership

Qatar has emerged as a resilient, diversified, and future-focused economy, driven by rapid technological advancement, writes PwC executive Bassam Hajhamad. The nation climbed 21 places to rank 49th in the Global Innovation Index 2024 and jumped from 78th to 53rd in the UN E-Government Development Index 2024, reflecting its growing global stature. Central to this progress is the accelerated adoption of artificial intelligence (AI). Qatar launched its National AI Strategy in 2019 and aligned it with the National Digital Agenda 2030 (NDA 2030), which emphasizes innovation, digital infrastructure, and skills development in emerging technologies such as AI, quantum computing, and nanotechnology. Generative AI (GenAI) has become pivotal in Qatar's industries. PwC's recent CEO Study revealed that 90% of Qatari CEOs adopted GenAI last year—surpassing the global average—and nearly all plan to integrate it further into technology platforms, business processes, and product development within three years. A strong 90% intend to embed GenAI in workforce strategies, reflecting a proactive drive to leverage emerging tech for competitive advantage. Qatari businesses are already deploying AI in customer service chatbots, real-time analytics, AI-powered CRM, supply chain optimisation, and financial forecasting. This reflects a mindset keen on evolving business practices in response to global megatrends. Government investments in digital infrastructure are soaring, with projected spending reaching $5.7 billion by 2026, up from $1.65 billion in 2022. The Qatar Investment Authority is a key player in scaling AI initiatives. Research hubs like the Qatar Center for Quantum Computing at Hamad Bin Khalifa University are advancing next-generation tech, impacting sectors such as smart grids, finance, and renewable energy. Industry convergence powered by AI is unlocking new value through cross-sector partnerships, notably in finance, healthcare, energy, and technology. PwC's survey showed 63% of CEOs collaborating with other organisations, 57% accessing new customer bases, and 47% pursuing innovative market routes. Businesses are also investing heavily in AI skills development and employee training to maintain adaptability amid rapid automation and intelligence adoption. Qatar's forward-looking policies and investments are setting the stage for sustained economic resilience and global competitiveness, positioning the country to thrive in a rapidly evolving technological landscape.

Oman Launches Space Accelerator Program to Boost Innovation

In a significant move in furtherance of Oman Vision 2040, the Sultanate of Oman has launched the Oman Space Accelerators Program—an innovative programme to foster in-country capabilities in the global space sector and establish a knowledge-based economy. Commissioned by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MoTCIT), the accelerator is Oman's first and is being established in partnership with Ankaa Space & Technologies and UK space innovation business Exotopic. Dr Ali bin Amer al Shidhani, Under-Secretary for Communications and Information Technology, explained: "It is the first-of-its-kind accelerator program in Oman that is initiated to serve technology companies that want to venture into the growing space industry. The program will provide technical guidance, awareness training, and official networking with investors, global corporations, and world space industry legends." He continued, "The long-term vision of the accelerator is to equip 10 Omani companies with the necessary tools and expertise to be path-breaking drivers of the space economy, contributing directly to Oman Vision 2040's innovation and human capital targets." The 15-week program, extending from late August through early December, will support ten Omani startups, small and medium-sized enterprises, entrepreneurs, and academics with a fast-track sequence of training workshops and business development exercises. Dr Saoud bin Humaid al Shoaili, Head of the National Space Program, linked the program to broader national interests: "As part of an effort to realize the ambitious goals of the National Space Program and Oman Vision 2040, we launched a comprehensive strategy aimed at developing strong national capabilities in the sector." Dr Al Shoaili also explained that the project fosters a competitive culture that encourages creative solutions, and the first three entities are awarded to encourage sustainable activities corresponding to strategic goals of the industry. The program will focus on key space industry domains such as communications, earth observation, geospatial analytics, navigation, drones, AI and machine learning, advanced computing, data storage, IoT, spacecraft simulations, startup acceleration, and technology innovation. He outlined the three strategic pillars of the program: institutional capacity, individual skills development, and entrepreneurial and commercial capability. "Since January 2023, we've implemented a number of targeted initiatives to strengthen

Omani expertise and readiness in the space domain, in line with national aspirations," he said. Ghaida al Jabri, Project Manager at Ankaa Space & Technologies, highlighted the inclusive and collaborative nature of the project. "Oman has worked on this program in partnership with MoTCIT, Al Ankaa, and Exotopic in the National Space Program. It is a demonstration of direct contribution to the innovation and private sector development pillars of Oman Vision 2040." She added, "The program aims to fast-track the growth of domestic entities and put them in a position to be at the forefront of Oman's new space economy." Speaking to the Observer, Dan Veal, Principal Investigator at Exotopic, emphasised the strategic timing of Oman's entry into the space race. "Oman is entering the international space sector at a critical time when neighboring nations are heavily investing in space technologies. The project represents a significant opportunity for young Omanis and small and medium enterprises to take up a forward-thinking and fast-growing global industry." He noted, "Given the data-driven nature of the space economy, it's quite open for new entrants to make a significant impact quite soon. Oman has a good chance of competing at the regional and global level.

Pakistan Marks 200 Million Telecom Subscribers: PTA

Pakistan has crossed 200 million telecom subscribers, the country's telecom regulator said, marking a major benchmark in its digital expansion and triggering a nationwide celebration. In a public statement, the PTA highlighted that the country has also crossed 150 million broadband subscribers and two million fibre-to-the-home (FTTH) users, underscoring significant progress in expanding nationwide digital access. To mark the occasion, the PTA announced a series of celebratory initiatives. On June 20, all mobile users across the country will receive free 2GB of data and 200 on-net minutes, valid for 24 hours, by dialling *2200#. In addition, 200 locally assembled smartphones will be distributed through a computerised ballot among female SIM owners across Pakistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan. The PTA will announce winners on its social media accounts. The PTA also revealed plans to deploy free Wi-Fi hotspots for six months at select Higher Education Commission (HEC)-recognised universities, including women's universities, aimed at boosting digital empowerment among students. Details and updates for these initiatives will

be shared via the PTA's social media platforms. The regulator acknowledged the collective contributions of key industry stakeholders including mobile operators Jazz, Zong, Ufone, Telenor, and fixed-line and broadband providers such as PTCL, Cybernet, Wateen, Transworld, and Nayatel. Reacting to the announcement, Jazz, the country's largest digital operator, congratulated the PTA and celebrated its own role in driving digital inclusion. With over 73 million mobile phone users, including 53 million 4G subscribers, and a total digital footprint of more than 100 million users, Jazz said it remains committed to expanding connectivity and capability across Pakistan. "Crossing 200 million subscribers is more than just a number -- it is a powerful symbol of Pakistan's digital evolution," said CEO of Jazz Aamir Ibrahim. "We thank the PTA for its support in building a future-ready ecosystem and reaffirm our mission to push the frontier of digital inclusion."

China Mobile | International

Together we evolve

The complete suite of high-quality iConnect products and services, ranging from global Voice, SMS, Data, Mobile to IoT and professional services, is built on one of the world's largest and most technologically sophisticated networks. iConnect is your connect-all carrier solutions that empower you to strive for even greater success in the journey of global connectivity.

To realize the potential of 5G, cloud, AI and IoT, CMI evolves with you to drive digital transformation and seize every opportunity.

BEST MOBILE/5G SERVICE INNOVATION
Global Carrier Awards 2021

BEST CLOUD INNOVATION
Global Carrier Awards 2021

BEST IoT SOLUTION PROVIDER
CC-Global Awards 2021

180+ POPs **SMS** **70+** Cable Resources

CUSTOMER **VOICE** CARING **IOT** INNOVATION

iCONNECT

DATA Your Connect-All Carrier Solutions INSIGHT INTEGRATION

PRO COLLABORATION **MOBILE**

100T International Transmission Bandwidth

Website LinkedIn

cmiiconnect@cmi.chinamobile.com

HUAWEI

Building a Fully Connected, Intelligent World

2025 Gartner® Magic Quadrant for Container Management

Huawei Joins the Leaders Quadrant

Market Recognition

A global customer recognition score of 4.7

Open Source Leadership

The only CNCF TOC vice-chair position globally
Ranked second in CNCF project contributions

Comprehensive Intelligence

CloudMatrix 384 supernodes for a robust cloud-native foundation AI-driven experience innovation

Data source: 2025 Gartner® Magic Quadrant for Container Management

ARTICLE

Where 5G-A Meets AI: A New Era for Telecoms Smarter Networks, Smarter Services: The 5G-A & AI Synergy

Abhinav Purohit
Chief Expert, Middle East & Central Asia Region, Business & Strategy Consulting
HUAWEI

Introduction: The Convergence That's Changing Telecom

As telecom operators transition from basic connectivity providers to digital experience enablers, two powerful forces are reshaping their journey: 5G-Advanced (5G-A) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) . While 5G-A delivers the next evolution in network performance – with higher speeds, improved uplink, slicing, integrated sensing and many other new advanced capabilities – AI provides the intelligent cognitive layer that enables intelligent automation, prediction, personalization & new business models across every telecom function.

> *The convergence of 5G-A and AI is more than just a technology upgrade – it's a strategic enabler that delivers measurable benefits across the telco value chain. From reducing operating costs to unlocking new revenue streams, early adopters are already realizing the returns of building intelligent, AI-native 5G-A networks*

Separately, both technologies are transformational. But together, they create a compounding effect: networks that not only move faster – but think faster, respond smarter, and monetize better . Telcos across the globe – from South Korea to Kuwait – are beginning to embed AI into the very fabric of 5G-A infrastructure, unlocking new business models, operational savings, and radically improved user experiences.

This write-up tried to explore what 5G-A and AI mean in the telecom context, how their relationship is shaping the next wave of telecom innovation, and what telcos are doing today to ride this intelligent revolution.

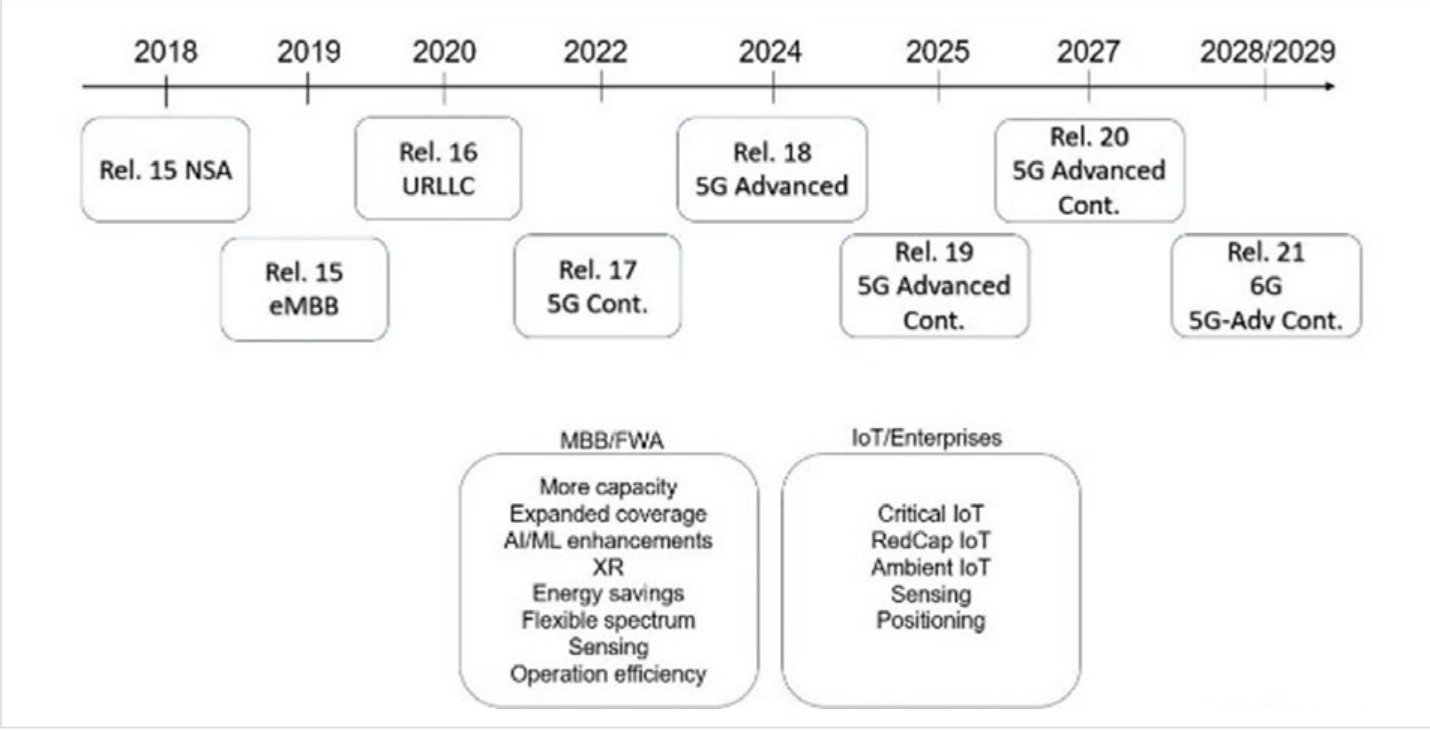
What is 5G-A and What is AI (in the Telco Context)?

Understanding 5G-Advanced

5G-A (Release 18 and beyond in 3GPP terminology) represents the next significant evolution in 5G networks. While early 5G deployments focused on enhanced mobile broadband and foundational connectivity, 5G-A is where the real power of 5G begins to materialize – through enhanced performance, intelligence, and adaptability.

Thus, in a sense, 5G-A moves 5G closer to 6G.

5G-Advanced – What is it?

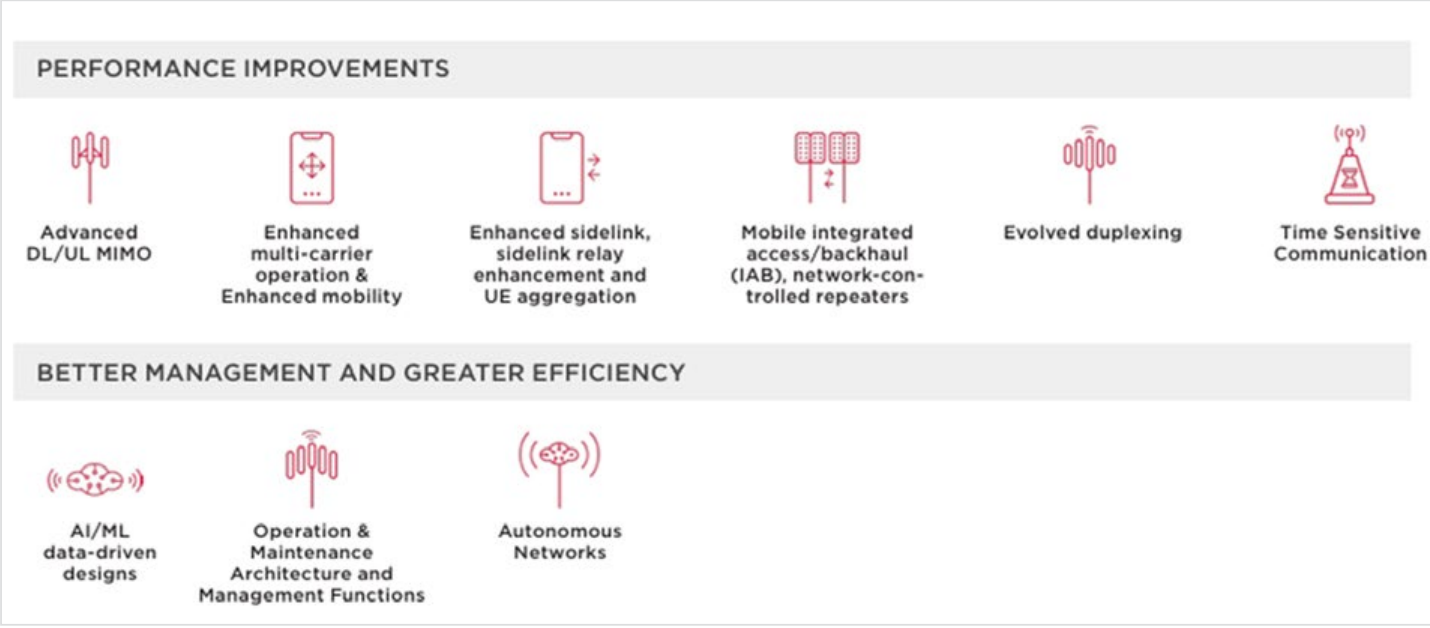


Source: 5G Technology World

A Few Key Capabilities of 5G-A (Include, but not Limited to):

- **Uplink Boost:** Enhanced uplink throughput – essential for video-rich services like XR, user-generated streaming, and real-time sensors.
- **RedCap (Reduced Capability):** Enables cost-effective, low-power connectivity for wearables, industrial sensors, and lightweight IoT devices.
- **Integrated Sensing:** Turns the network into a sensor grid that can detect movement, position, and environment – paving the path for adding further intelligence in use cases such as smart cities, traffic monitoring, and public safety etc.
- **AI-Native Architecture:** For the first time, AI is embedded directly into network operations – from RAN to core – enabling real-time learning, decision-making, and optimization.

5G-Advanced Combines Performance Improvements with Greater Efficiency



Source: GSMA - 5G-Advanced: Shaping the future of operator services

In summary, 5G-A is not just "better / faster 5G" – it's a smarter, more responsive network layer, designed to handle the complex needs of both human and machine users in real time.

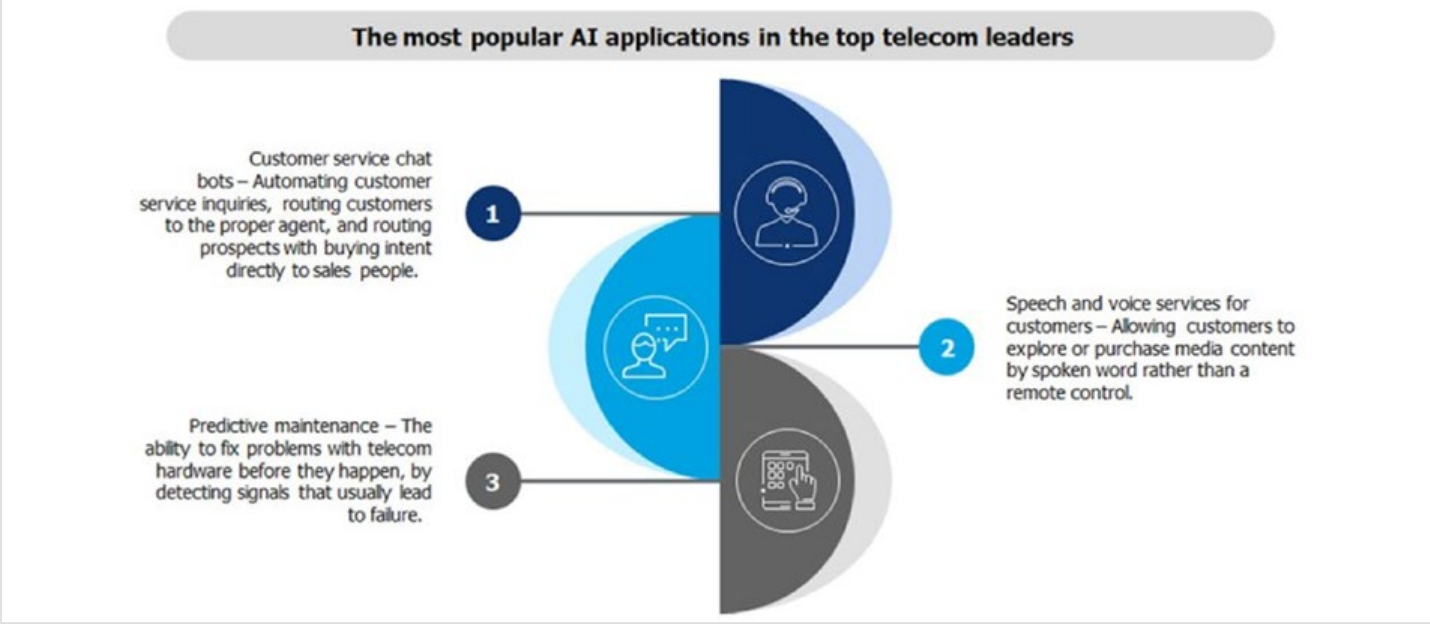
Understanding AI in Telcos

AI in the telecom industry refers to a **broad set of technologies – machine learning (ML), deep learning, & generative AI –** that are applied to automate, optimize, and personalize various aspects of network and business operations.

Key AI Applications Deployed in in Telecoms:

- **Network Optimization with AI**
  - AI helps with intelligent traffic management, dynamic spectrum allocation, energy optimization, and predictive maintenance in radio access and transport layers.
  - Reinforcement learning is used to self-optimize network performance based on real-time data.
- **Customer Service Enhancement with AI**
  - Natural language processing (NLP) powers AI-driven chatbots and virtual assistants.
  - Generative AI (GenAI) is now enabling intent prediction, personalized service suggestions, and real-time ticket resolution.
- **Customer Experience Enhancement with AI**
  - Development new services or business models (such as New Calling, Real Time Translation, SLA-based services at the app level etc.)
  -

Top 3 AI Applications in Telcos



Source: Futurism Technologies

The growing maturity of AI means telecom operators are not just using AI as a tool, but are beginning to architect their networks and services around AI. This shift is most powerful when paired with a 5G-A networks, capable of hosting and supporting real-time, distributed AI functions.

The Relationship Between 5G-A and AI

The relationship between 5G-A and AI is not simply complementary – it's deeply interdependent . These technologies reinforce each other's value, forming a feedback loop where intelligent infrastructure enables advanced services, and AI empowers the network to evolve in real-time. Together, they form the intelligent engine of future telecom innovation.

AI Makes the 5G-A Networks More Potent

Unlike previous network generations, 5G-A is designed with AI built into its core. AI algorithms are increasingly responsible for managing the complexity of modern networks, where thousands of parameters (user behavior, location, service type, service experiences etc.) change in milliseconds .

How AI Boost 5G-A

- **RAN Optimization:** AI models improve beamforming, scheduling, and interference management in massive MIMO networks, dynamically adapting to traffic loads and user mobility patterns.
- **Self-Healing Networks:** Predictive maintenance tools use AI to detect anomalies before outages occur, reducing downtime and improving service quality.
- **Energy Efficiency:** AI enables base stations to enter low-power modes during low usage periods or reroute traffic to optimize energy use – critical for sustainability and cost control in dense 5G-A deployments.
- **Network Slicing Automation:** AI determines when and how to create, scale, or remove network slices based on real-time demand, QoS needs, and user profiles – especially in enterprise and industrial settings.

5G-A Enables Real Time AI

While AI empowers the network, 5G-A also empowers AI-based services and applications. Its high throughput, low latency, and edge computing capabilities allow real-time interaction and decision making .

How 5G-A Supports AI

- **Edge AI Inference:** 5G-A's distributed architecture allows AI models to be deployed at the network edge – closer to the user or device – reducing latency for applications like video analytics, industrial robotics, or autonomous vehicles .
- **Support for Massive AI Workloads:** AI-driven applications, such as computer

vision in smart cities or voice synthesis in virtual assistants, rely on high uplink speeds and stable latency, both of which are enhanced in 5G-A.

- **Integrated Sensing for AI Contextual Awareness:** With 5G-A's ability to sense location, movement, and environmental parameters, AI models gain richer context to drive decisions – e.g., adjusting traffic lights based on congestion or rerouting delivery drones around weather conditions.

Summary: The Advent of the AI-Native Networks as the "Networks of Tomorrow"

5G-A marks the shift from **"AI-supported"** to **"AI-native"** networks . This means:

- The network doesn't just host AI applications – it runs on AI
- AI becomes a **foundational design principle,** not an add-on
- Every layer – from spectrum management to customer engagement, can evolve based on data-driven intelligence.

In practice, this results **in networks that think, adapt, and improve continuously,** creating not only better performance but also new business models. For example, telcos can offer AI-as-a-Service bundled with private 5G-A and edge compute, enabling hospitals to run diagnostics in real time, or manufacturers to deploy autonomous quality checks on assembly lines.

Learnings from Five Global Telco: Use Cases & Real Deployments Where 5G-A and AI Converge

Around the globe, leading telecom operators are no longer talking about 5G-A and AI as future aspirations – they're actively deploying them in tandem to drive smarter networks, immersive services, and enterprise transformation.

Within this domain, there are a few standout examples of where telcos are operationalizing the convergence of 5G-Advanced and AI today.

1. SK Telecom (South Korea): AI-First Strategy on a 5G-A Foundation

SK Telcom (SKT) sets forth '**AI Pyramid Strategy'** to accelerate innovation centered around three key areas: AI Infrastructure, AI Transformation (AIX) and AI Service .

- AI Infrastructure, which consists of data center, AI semiconductor, and multi LLM, will serve as a technology platform that forms the basis of SKT as an AI company.
- AI Transformation (AIX) of SKT's core business areas such as mobile, broadband and enterprise, as well as new business areas like mobility and healthcare will be pursued to reach a new level of productivity and customer experience.
- AI Service, SKT announces the official launch of 'A.' and plans to build a globally competitive personal AI assistant service by leveraging its telco and AI assets.
  - "A." (pronounced "A dot") is an artificial intelligence chatbot which has a character that speaks to people. SKT has integrated its various service from music streaming to e-commerce into A.
  - 'A.' users can create and customize an AI character that reflects their personalities; and communicate with the character through conversations or text messages, and ask for diverse information.
  - A. is currently only available in Korean. And company is in the early stages of exploring an international launch for the service.

SKT will strengthen its own AI capabilities and collaborate with diverse global players to expand its presence in the global AI market. By 2028, SKT will triple the proportion of its AI-related investments and become a global AI company with revenue of KRW 25 trillion

SK Telecom's 'AI Pyramid Strategy' to Become a Global AI Company

Source: SK Telecom

2. China Mobile (China): Intelligent Network Operations at Massive Scale

China Mobile is applying AI to run one of the world's largest mobile networks more efficiently – and is already testing 5G-A capabilities such as integrated sensing and intelligent slicing. China Mobile is unleashing its "AI+NETWORK" innovation program to promote high-quality and sustainable development where remarkable progress has already been made in three areas .

- **Leading Information Infrastructure:** China Mobile has the world's largest 5G and fiber broadband networks and also fully cloud-based 4G/5G converged core networks, in addition to rapidly growing computing power. Here, leading information infrastructure underpins digital-intelligent transformation across industries.
- **Innovation-enabled Information Service Systems:** The company has 90,000 5G-Advanced 3CC CA cells and 450,000 RedCap sites, and is also the first operator to bring Network Data Analytics Function (NWDAF) to 5G-Advanced for experience assurance. Its wireless AI applications are making a huge difference across its networks to enhance user experience.
- **Digital-intelligent Transformation of Network O&M through Autonomous Networks:** The company is working on building an end-to-end fully automated digital-intelligent operations pipeline – where automation is the foundation and AI technology is the innovation engine.

China Mobile has been making great efforts to promote the AI technology and network development of 5G-Advanced. The combination of 5G-A's real-time responsiveness with AI's decision-making allows China Mobile to scale services like smart manufacturing and reduce operating overhead in a sprawling, complex network.

China Mobile "AI+NETWORK" Achievements Ceremony

Source: Mobile World Live

3. e& (UAE): 5G-A & AI for Smart Cities and Enterprise Services

e& is in the process of deploying 5G-Advanced, which is set to revolutionize connectivity with its enhanced capabilities, offering a wide range of new service opportunities across various sectors, including consumer, IoT, and enterprise. To add to this, e& UAE has a clear blueprint for AI strategic application in telco sector and beyond.

- e& has integrated more than 400 AI use cases and 160 machine learning (ML) models across its operations. The company has also created a dedicated Robotic Process Automation (RPA) team and establishing a Robotics Centre of Excellence (CoE).
- Whether launching the first AI-powered telecom store in the world or deploying AI-driven recommendations, e& UAE ensures every customer enjoys a seamless and personalized experience. e& UAE is leveraging advanced GenAI technologies, to deliver real-time personalized recommendations, customized news feeds, and tailored product suggestions that enhance customer engagement and satisfaction .

e&'s application of AI and ML extends far beyond its telco vertical, permeating all business pillars, including its enterprise arm, which offers AI-as-a-Service solutions.

e& UAE Unveils Blueprint for AI Application

Source: e& UAE

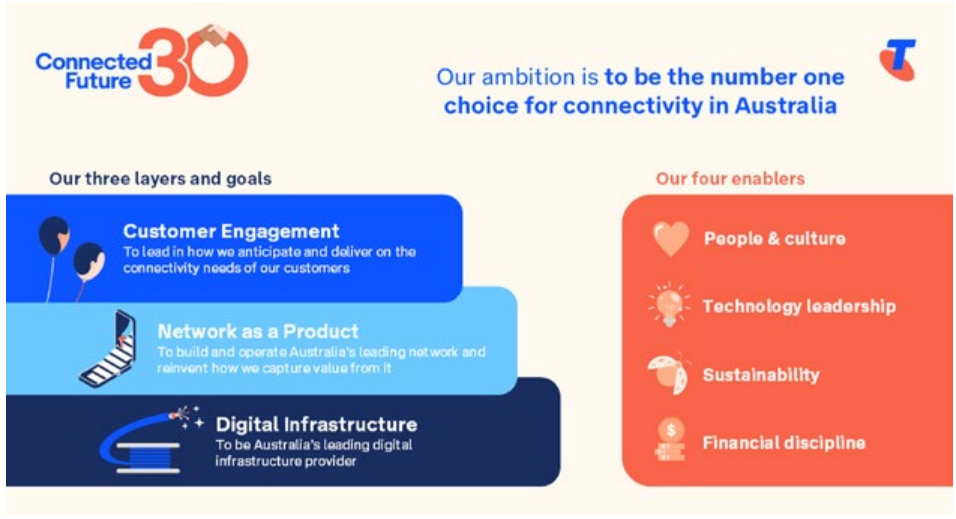
4. Telstra (Australia): Connected Future 30 Strategy Focusing on AI and Network

Telstra's "Connected Future 30" strategy , unveiled in May 2025, is a five-year roadmap (2025-30) focused on leveraging AI and network advancements to maintain its competitive edge and drive digital transformation in Australia. Under this strategy, Telstra is building an autonomous network with self-optimizing AI capabilities across cloud and network layers, alongside internal AI tools for efficiency.

Telstra is essentially rethinking its core business by transforming its network into a smart, AI-driven platform. The telco is already working on deploying it programmable 5G Advanced network.

This strategy will help Telstra to develop and monetize a network-as-a-service (NaaS) platform, empowering enterprises and developers via network APIs and customized SLA-based connectivity. This platform allows businesses to select and pay for pre-integrated cloud and networking services as needed . Here, for Telstra, the AI-enabled network is itself the product.

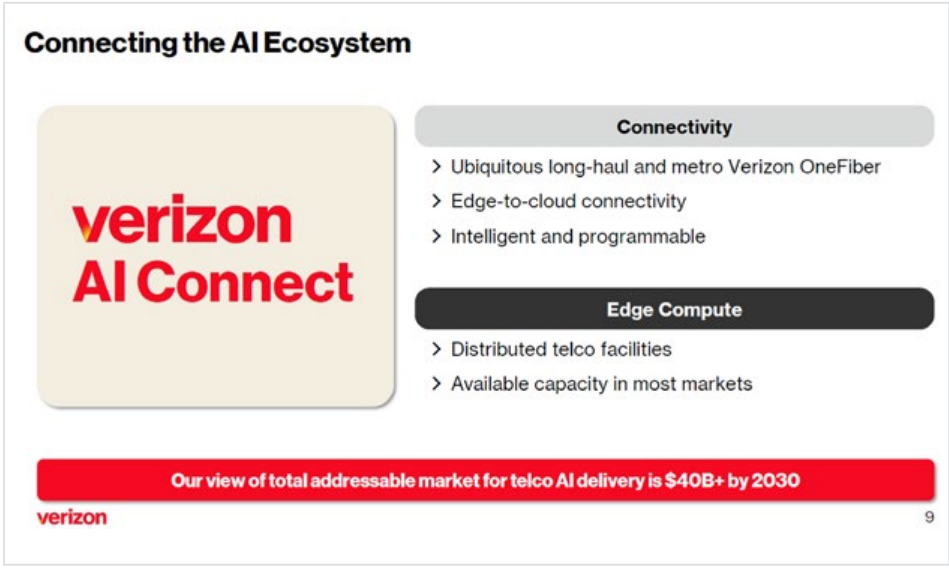
Telstra: Building on its Core Connectivity Advantage with AI in the 5G-A Era



Source: Telstra

5. Verizon (USA): Accelerating 5G-A with Enterprise AI at the Edge

Verizon launches AI Connect, courts AI inferencing workloads



Source: Constellationr

Verizon is evolving its 5G-Advanced strategy by building AI-native private networks and Mobile Edge Compute (MEC) solutions to serve enterprise clients, with live deployments and partnerships.

For example, the telco has launch a 5G Private Network + Enterprise AI platform. This combines Verizon's private MEC with NVIDIA's AI software stack, enabling real-time inferencing for robotics, AR/VR/XR, computer vision, generative AI, and industrial automation – delivered securely and at ultra-low latency . This initiative is designed to empower enterprises by delivering real-time AI applications directly at the edge, demonstrating the transformative potential of this technology across various industries.

Further, the telco has also launched Verizon AI Connect integrating edge-to-cloud network intelligence, aimed at hosting large-scale AI workloads directly on their programmable 5G-A infrastructure.

In summary, Verizon is leveraging 5G-Advanced and AI to deliver programmable, low-latency networks that power next-gen enterprise and consumer experiences – from real-time industrial AI to network slicing for video and beyond.

Benefits for Telcos from this Convergence of 5G-A & AI: Operational Efficiency & Revenue Growth

The convergence of 5G-A and AI is more than just a technology upgrade – it's a strategic enabler that delivers measurable benefits across the telco value chain. From reducing operating costs to unlocking new revenue streams, early adopters are already realizing the returns of building intelligent, AI-native 5G-A networks .

Operational Benefits: Smarter, Leaner, Faster Networks

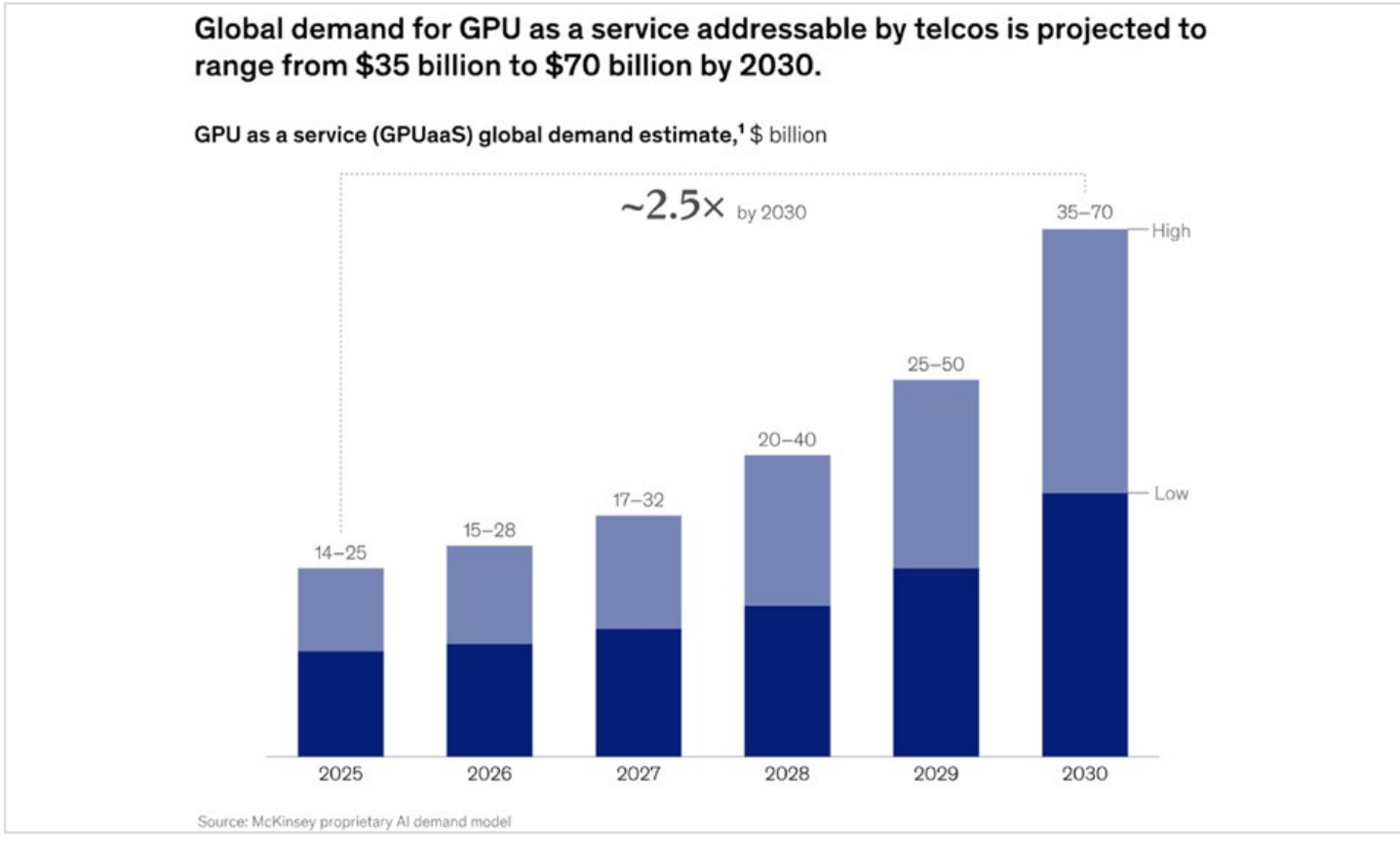
- **Automation & OPEX Reduction:** AI-driven automation in 5G-A networks reduces the need for manual intervention in operations, fault management, and optimization. Vodafone's deployment of AI-based performance management (called the United Performance Management (UPM)) led to a 70% reduction in major incidents, directly impacting operational stability and cost savings .
- **Energy Efficiency & Sustainability:** AI models optimize energy usage by dynamically switching off unused base stations or adjusting power output in real time – critical in massive MIMO environments. For instance, Orange has deployed an AI-powered energy management system across its European networks, achieving up to energy savings during off-peak hours by intelligently powering down network resources without impacting user experience .
- **Self-Optimizing Networks (SON):** AI allows 5G-A networks to adjust coverage, handovers, and capacity allocation autonomously – delivering better user experience while minimizing human error. For instance, Telefónica has deployed AI-powered SON capabilities in its network, thus, helping create a network that can adapt to provide better quality of service or reduce response times .
- **Smarter Customer Service:** GenAI enables telecom operators to automate routine support queries, improve response accuracy, and reduce pressure on contact centers – ultimately enhancing customer satisfaction and lowering operational costs. For example, T-Mobile US has implemented its OpenAI-powered IntentCX platform, which handles routine customer inquiries autonomously, freeing up agents to focus on more complex interactions and shortening resolution times .

Revenue Benefits: From Connectivity to Intelligence

- **AI-as-a-Service (AIaaS):** With 5G-A's low latency and integrated edge compute, telcos can package AI capabilities (such as analytics) as a service to enterprise clients. Orange Business, for example has launched a new multi-LLM solution called 'Live Intelligence', that enables businesses to leverage the power of GenAI to improve operational efficiency and customer experience without compromising the security of their data.

GPU-as-a-service and AI-as-a-service are closely related, with GPUaaS being a key component that enables many AIaaS offerings. GPUaaS provides access to

Addressable GPUaaS Market Addressed by Telcos



Source: McKinsey

powerful Graphics Processing Units (GPUs) via the cloud, which are essential for the computationally intensive tasks involved in training and running AI models. AIaaS then is a broader service that provides access to AI capabilities and tools, often leveraging GPUaaS for its underlying infrastructure . The growth forecast of GPUaaS from telcos is a great proxy of telcos providing AIaaS.

- **New Vertical Revenues via Edge + AI:** Smart manufacturing, precision agriculture, logistics, and healthcare are increasingly demanding real-time AI execution at the edge. 5G-A provides the pipe, while AI delivers the intelligence -together creating platform-based monetization models. For example, Deutsche Telekom partnered with Volkswagen Group Logistics on the "AutoLog", where using 5G and edge compute, they implemented AI-controlled digital twins and automated vehicle marshalling systems – dramatically improving operational safety and throughput while opening the door to new logistics service revenues .
- **Enhanced ARPU Through Personalization:** Machine learning helps telcos offer the right bundle, content, or device to the right customer at the right time – driving upsells and reducing churn. For instance, Vodafone implemented a Customer Data Platform (CDP) to deliver personalized portal experiences, resulting in a 10–30% uplift in conversions, along with higher data usage .
- **Monetizing SLA-based Experiences and Slicing**: AI enables dynamic SLA-based slicing in 5G-A, allowing operators to charge premium rates for latency-sensitive or high-throughput services. For example, AIS Thailand has launched its "Living Network", delivering real time, AI-driven 5G-A experiences. AIS also uses AI to promote 5G acceleration packages tailored to users' needs, offering relevant services, improving customer acquisition, and increasing 5G adoption. The network identifies high-value users and adjusts bandwidth allocation dynamically to ensure seamless service, even during peak times .

The message is clear: 5G-A gives the telco network more speed and reach, but AI gives it brains. Operators that build this synergy into their strategy will not only optimize operations – but also become pivotal players in powering the AI economy.

Conclusion: Smarter Networks for a Smarter Future

As the telecom industry moves into a new era of intelligent infrastructure, the fusion of **5G-A and AI** stands out as the most consequential transformation in decades. No longer are telcos defined solely by towers and spectrum – they are becoming **enablers of intelligent, responsive, and value-rich digital ecosystems.**

5G-A provides the technological scaffolding: ultra-reliable low-latency communication, intelligent slicing, enhanced uplink, and distributed compute. AI brings the intelligence layer: automating decisions, optimizing resources, enabling personalization, and powering next-gen enterprise solutions. Together, operators that adopt an AI-native approach to 5G-A will gain far more than network efficiency . They'll unlock:

- **Smarter customer interactions** powered by generative AI
- **Profitable enterprise services** built around edge AI and slicing
- **Sustainable operations** through predictive, self-healing, energy-efficient networks
- And most importantly, a new role in the **AI economy** – as platform providers, not just connectivity players

The telecom winners of tomorrow are already laying the groundwork today. Their networks don't just move data faster – they think, adapt, and create value in real time. With 5G-A and AI working together, the smart network has finally arrived.

SATELLITE NEWS

Rogers Launches Satellite-to-Mobile Service in Canada

Rogers launched Rogers Satellite, a new satellite-to-mobile text messaging service to all Canadians. With Rogers Satellite, Rogers now covers over 5.4 million square kilometers - that's over 2.5 times more than any other Canadian wireless service provider. "We're proud to introduce this ground-breaking technology to help Canadians stay safe and connected in more places," said Tony Staffieri, President and CEO, Rogers. "Earlier this month Rogers celebrated the 40th anniversary of the first wireless call in Canada, and this new technology represents the next big leap in wireless connectivity. We're proud to continue our legacy of innovative firsts and to connect Canadians in more places." All Canadians can now sign up to use Rogers Satellite beta trial at no cost. Rogers Satellite will initially support text messaging and text-to-911 and will expand to support apps, data and voice services, including 911 voice services. Once the beta trial ends in October, Rogers Satellite will be included at no additional cost to customers on the Rogers Ultimate Plan and will also be available for all Canadians for $15/month. Canadians participating in the beta trial will receive a $5/month discount for the first 12 months. For more information about the beta trial, visit rogers.com/satellite. "We continually invest to bring Canadians the best networks and the most coverage," said Mark Kennedy, Chief Technology Officer. "Now, with Rogers mobile spectrum paired with satellite technology, Canadians can turn their smartphone into a satellite phone to stay connected and access text-to-911 in some of the most remote parts of Canada." Only 18 per cent of the country is covered by traditional wireless networks. With this new technology, Rogers now covers over 5.4 million square kilometres within Canada, over 2.5 times more than any other wireless carrier. When connected to Rogers Satellite, customers can send a text to friends in the Rocky Mountains, text 911 if stranded on a remote highway or connect with friends and family on the southern shores of Hudson Bay or the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Rogers Satellite uses low-earth orbit (LEO) satellites and Rogers national wireless spectrum. Wireless spectrum ensures this technology works on most modern smartphones. The company will continue to test and optimize Rogers Satellite services throughout the beta trial. Rogers has invested $45 billion to deliver a series of wireless firsts for Canadians over the past 40 years. 1G introduced voice calls, 2G added texting, and 3G offered email and the Internet. 4G brought the smartphone and with it, the on-demand economy, and 5G has unlocked even faster speeds, lower latency and a new era of innovation. Rogers is ranked as Canada's most reliable 5G+ network. Rogers Satellite is available outside, including on bodies of water, where you can see the sky. For coverage areas, see coverage map.

SES-Intelsat Deal Clears Foreign Review

Federal law enforcement officials have cleared SES's $3.1 billion purchase of Intelsat, provided regulators impose certain conditions on the deal. Back in September the Federal Communications Commission, which will need to approve the satellite merger, referred the transaction to a White House committee that advises the agency on foreign ownership issues. Both companies are based in Luxembourg, but Intelsat's administrative headquarters are in McLean, Va. The committee, known as Team Telecom, is composed of officials from the Departments of Defense, Justice, and Homeland Security, plus other agencies.

Amazon's Kuiper Satellites to Get Boost from Rival Spacex

Amazon's decision to rely on SpaceX, despite being a direct competitor, shows the urgency behind Project Kuiper. Amazon had already signed contracts with several launch providers like ULA, Arianespace, and Blue Origin (which is also owned by Amazon founder Jeff Bezos). But most of these rockets are either delayed or flying rarely. Blue Origin's New Glenn rocket hasn't flown yet. Arianespace's Ariane 6 just completed its first mission in July 2025, and ULA's Vulcan Centaur has limited flights. In this situation, SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket was the only option that could provide fast and reliable access to orbit. Falcon 9 has completed hundreds of successful launches and is currently the most reliable rocket system in the world, according to SpaceX. This move also signals a change in Amazon's execution strategy. Project Kuiper is no longer moving slowly. Amazon now needs to move quickly to meet important rules and stay competitive with SpaceX's Starlink. Starlink already has over 7,855 working satellites in space, according to Jonathan McDowell's satellite tracker. Compared to that, Kuiper is just getting started. But Amazon has bigger plans. It wants to use the Kuiper satellite network as a base to expand Amazon Web Services (AWS) and improve cloud access across the globe. The company says that small-scale testing of Kuiper internet service will begin in early 2026, and full operations are expected soon after. The total cost of the project is over $10 billion (Amazon's most ambitious move into space). So, by choosing SpaceX, Amazon has taken a serious step to make Kuiper real. It's not just an idea anymore. The system is launching, growing, and aiming to compete. This one mission won't close the gap with Starlink, but it shows that Amazon is now playing to win. The question is not just whether Kuiper will succeed, but how fast Amazon can build, scale, and deliver. The pressure is on and Falcon 9 is just the beginning. Amazon will soon launch the next group of its Project Kuiper satellites using a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket. This is unusual because Amazon and SpaceX are major competitors in the satellite internet market. The mission, named KF-01, is scheduled for July 16, 2025, from Cape Canaveral, Florida. It will carry 24 Kuiper satellites into

space. This will help Amazon get closer to meeting its requirement for building a working global satellite internet network. Project Kuiper is Amazon's plan to spend billions of dollars to provide fast internet to people in remote areas. It will do this using a group of low Earth orbit (LEO) satellites. Even though Amazon and SpaceX are direct competitors, Amazon still chose to use SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) license says that at least half of Kuiper's planned 3,236 satellites must be in orbit by July 2026. That means that Amazon has to launch 1,618 satellites in one year. Until now, Amazon had only launched two test satellites in 2023 using a ULA Atlas V rocket. After the Falcon 9 mission, the number will rise to 78, according to TechCrunch.

T-Mobile US, SES deals given FCC green light

US Federal Communications Commission (FCC) approved a trio of separate transactions, with T-Mobile US' pending Metronet and UScellular deals given the nod alongside the transfer of licenses held by satellite player Intelsat to SES. In a statement, the regulator positioned the three individual deals as contributing to wider US goals to attract more investment into the communications segment and increase network capacity. The FCC's nod for T-Mobile's agreement to buy most of UScellular's wireless assets came a day after the deal was cleared by the US Department of Justice. On giving its blessing, the communications regulator noted the move would provide substantial benefits for customers of the two operators involved. In further positive news for T-Mobile, the regulator gave the green light for the transfer of control of five of Metronet's subsidiaries to the mobile player, which forms part of an agreement for it to buy the fiber company alongside investment company KKR. The two T-Mobile deal approvals came shortly after it ditched its diversity, equity and inclusion policies, a move praised by FCC chair Brendan Carr but denounced by the agency's democrat commissioner Anna Gomez as a "cynical bid" to win regulatory approval for its deals. The third approval announced by the FCC was for the transfer of licenses as part of satellite player SES' deal to buy rival Intelsat. "Approval of the SES Intelsat transaction builds on the Commission's efforts to promote the provision of robust and competitive satellite services to the public," the regulator noted, adding the move would "create a more vigorous multi-orbit competitor in the satellite communications marketplace".

Starlink Launches Satellite Internet Service in Chad to Boost Connectivity

Starlink has begun operations in Chad after completing the licensing process and updating its availability map to include the Central African nation. The company announced the launch on X. The post read: "Starlink's high-speed internet is now available in Chad, marking the 24th country, territory or market in Africa where Starlink is available." Chad granted Starlink an operating license in November 2023, paving the way for the rollout of its low-Earth orbit satellite service in a country where internet connectivity remains extremely limited. Starlink's expansion into Chad is part of a broader effort to address low internet penetration across Africa, where only 40% of the continent's 1.3bn residents are online—the lowest rate in the world. The service has already launched in multiple countries, including Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi, Madagascar, Benin, South Sudan, Eswatini and Sierra Leone. In 2025, Starlink secured operating licenses in Somalia and Lesotho and went live in Liberia and Niger. Despite this rapid growth, Starlink continues to encounter regulatory hurdles in some markets. In South Africa, the continent's most developed economy, the service remains unavailable due to outstanding licensing and compliance challenges.

Starlink Becomes the Third Satellite Communications Operator with Full Regulatory Clearance to Operate in the Indian Market

Starlink, the satellite internet service operated by Elon Musk's SpaceX, has received final approval from the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACe), to begin offering broadband services in the country, according to local press reports. With this approval, Starlink becomes the third satellite communications operator, after Eutelsat OneWeb and the Reliance Jio–SES joint venture, to obtain all required regulatory clearances to operate in the Indian market. Last month, Starlink had secured a global mobile personal communication by satellite (GMPCS) license, a key step toward launching services. The report noted that the company's Gen 1 low-Earth orbit (LEO) constellation includes 4,408 satellites with a total capacity of 600 Gbps across India. Despite the approval, Starlink cannot immediately begin full commercial operations as it still needs to acquire trial spectrum and meet national security compliance conditions set by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT). These steps are mandatory before any commercial service can begin. Eutelsat OneWeb and Jio-SES had obtained trial spectrum in 2024 and were granted six-month extensions as they await final security clearances. Starlink is also expected to receive trial spectrum shortly, according to the report. The DoT is working on spectrum pricing and allocation guidelines based on recommendations from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). TRAI has suggested a model based on administrative allocation with a 4% fee on adjusted gross revenue (AGR) for five years. Eutelsat OneWeb received its GMPCS license in August 2021, while Jio Satellite secured its authorization in March 2022. However, both companies waited nearly two years before receiving the final permit from India's space regulator, which finally approved their operations in November 2023 and June 2024, respectively. India has implemented stringent operational requirements for satellite communications, including legal interception capabilities. Service providers are also barred from linking customer data or services to infrastructure located outside the country and are prohibited from processing user data beyond national borders.

Kyivstar and Starlink to Launch Direct-to-Cell Satellite Messaging in Ukraine

Thanks to the strategic partnership between the national operator Kyivstar and Starlink, Ukraine will become one of the first countries in Europe to launch Direct to Cell satellite communication. Kyivstar plans to launch a messaging system in a test mode first, and then mobile satellite broadband access. This was stated by Kyivstar CEO Oleksandr Komarov in an interview with Reuters in Rome during the IV Ukraine Reconstruction Conference (URC2025). Currently, within the framework of the agreement with Starlink, operational tests of the technology have already taken place, which will allow for the launch of direct mobile communication services in Ukraine in a test mode via satellites, which will function as base stations, transmitting telephone signals from space directly to smartphones. The CEO of Kyivstar stated that the company's main goal at the conference is to support the Ukrainian government and establish new business ties, in particular with Italian companies that wish to expand their operations in Ukraine. Kyivstar, owned by international digital operator VEON, is also working on a listing on the NASDAQ stock exchange in the United States. Komarov said the project is moving forward, and he hopes to complete it in the third quarter of 2025. Oleksandr Komarov, CEO, Kyivstar said in the first stage, which we will implement by the end of this year, messaging via SMS, WhatsApp, Signal and other messengers will be available, and in the second quarter of 2026, we will be able to offer mobile broadband satellite communication for data and voice transmission.

Boeing and SES Successfully Launch 9th and 10th O3b mPOWER Satellites

Boeing engineers have confirmed the 9th and 10th O3b mPOWER satellites, built for leading space solutions company SES, have successfully launched and are transmitting signals from space after lifting off aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket at 5:12 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time. Approximately two hours after liftoff, the satellites separated from the launch vehicle, initiating a series of comprehensive health checks by Boeing team members in El Segundo, Calif., home to Boeing's mission control facility and the world's largest satellite factory. Leveraging highly efficient xenon thrusters to maneuver in space, the satellites will continue their 130-day journey to MEO, approximately 8,000 kilometers from the Earth's surface. They will join the first eight satellites currently providing high-performance connectivity services to SES users worldwide. The O3b mPOWER constellation entered commercial service in April 2024, providing high-throughput, low latency connectivity that mimics the speed and reliability of traditional internet connections, but with virtually unlimited geographic flexibility. From MEO, the satellites provide coverage to nearly 95% of the world's population. The satellites leverage digitally formed beams to dynamically address evolving communication needs across geographies and customer bases. Boeing hardened this technology for military use on the Wideband Global SATCOM (WGS)-11 and WGS-12 and Evolved Strategic SATCOM (ESS) nuclear command and control satellites the company is building for the U.S. Space Force. This software-defined technology allows for more secure and reliable connectivity resistant to attempts of jamming, interruption or interception. A leading global aerospace company and top U.S. exporter, Boeing develops, manufactures and services commercial airplanes, defense products and space systems for customers in more than 150 countries. Our U.S. and global workforce and supplier base drive innovation, economic opportunity, sustainability and community impact. Boeing is committed to fostering a culture based on our core values of safety, quality and integrity. Michelle Parker, Vice President, Boeing Space Mission Systems said, we designed O3b mPOWER so each additional satellite beyond the first six boosts capacity, performance, and resilience. This capability stems from our investments in cutting-edge technology and the enhanced production techniques we've refined over the course of the program. Adel Al-Saleh, CEO of SES said that I'm proud of our SES team and partners for continuously pushing the boundaries of what's possible in space to bring critical connectivity where it matters most. Over the past year, our O3b mPOWER services have been transforming industries and empowering our key customers including telco operators, cruise lines, airlines, NATO, the Government of Luxembourg, the Government of United States and many other allied governments. With this launch we continue adding incremental capacity to our initial O3b mPOWER constellation, strengthening our MEO network and delivering high throughput and predictable low latency services at scale.

Starlink and Paratus Bring Satellite Internet to Remote Schools in Africa

Pan-African telecom group Paratus, an official reseller of Starlink, has launched a satellite-based internet solution aimed at improving connectivity in remote schools across Africa. The service is now active in seven countries: Botswana, Eswatini, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, and Zambia. The offering includes a full Starlink kit, professional installation, local support, and 2 terabytes of priority monthly data. A buffer feature ensures continued access to educational content even after the data limit is exceeded. This solution is reserved for government-recognized schools, with a focus on rural areas excluded from traditional digital infrastructure. "Paratus EduLINK is not just about connectivity; it is about creating equal access to education," said Barney Harmse, Executive Chairman of Paratus Group. The initiative allows students and teachers to access online learning resources, attend remote classes, and take digital exams, helping to enable hybrid teaching models. In isolated regions where young people often lack basic digital skills needed in the job market, this solution could be a game-changer. According to GSMA, only 27% of the population in sub-Saharan Africa used mobile internet in 2023, despite widespread coverage. Starlink's satellite technology aims to bypass the need for ground infrastructure, offering an alternative path to digital access. In Namibia, a similar project by Paratus called Eduvision has already improved school performance for more than 12,000 students. The future success of this model will depend on its financial sustainability, teacher training, and how well it integrates into national education policies. Other similar initiatives are emerging, such as Avanti's "iMlango" program, which has connected 99,190 girls in rural Kenyan schools to digital learning tools via satellite. While projects like these offer hope for narrowing education gaps, technology alone is not enough. Long-term impact requires targeted teacher training, strong partnerships with ministries of education, and reliable funding models. If governments can fully integrate these tools into national strategies and strengthen digital literacy, connectivity could become a powerful driver of education transformation in Africa.

Starlink-Powered 'T-Satellite' Service is Now Live on T-Mobile

T-Mobile's satellite service is now available to people across the US — and not just T-Mobile customers. T-Mobile CEO Mike Sievert announced that the Starlink-powered service is officially out of beta, though it only supports text messaging and location-sharing for now. The new satellite coverage option is called "T-Satellite," and it's currently available as a standalone subscription. It's being offered at $10 per month for a "limited time," before increasing to $15 per month. It also comes included for customers on the carrier's $100 per month Experience Beyond or older Go5G plans. The device will automatically connect to T-Satellite if you're in an area with no cellular coverage. As long as there isn't a heavy amount of cloud coverage or trees blocking your view of the sky, you should be able to send and receive text messages, including to 911, as well as share a link that temporarily tracks your location. T-Mobile's support page says the ability to send pictures is available on "most" Android phones, and the company plans on adding support for more devices soon. T-Mobile is also aiming to enable voice messages and will eventually allow devices to connect to "satellite-optimized" apps, which it previously said could include AllTrails, Accuweather, and WhatsApp. The more than 650 Starlink satellites used by T-Mobile cover the continental US, Hawaii, parts of southern Alaska, and Puerto Rico. The carrier says it's working on offering satellite connectivity while abroad and in international waters as well. Apple currently offers the ability to send texts and emergency messages from the iPhone 14 and later for free, but it plans to eventually charge for it (there still aren't any details on price). Google also added a satellite SOS feature to the Pixel 9 that's free to use for two years after activation.

Second Successful Launch for Amazon's Project Kuiper

Amazon's Project Kuiper satellite initiative has been making headway both in terms of launches and regulatory approvals in recent weeks. Launch services specialist United Launch Alliance (ULA) reports that a ULA Atlas V rocket carrying the Kuiper 2 mission for Amazon's Project Kuiper lifted off from Space Launch Complex-41 at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in the US. This mission delivers the second batch of operational broadband satellites for Amazon's Project Kuiper constellation, marking the next step in what ULA calls an initiative to provide fast, reliable internet to customers around the world, including those in unserved and underserved communities. There are six remaining Kuiper missions on the Atlas V rocket, building up to 38 high-cadence, rapid fire launches on the next-generation Vulcan rocket. ULA will deliver more than half of the Project Kuiper constellation's 3,200 satellites, through the world's largest commercial launch agreement. This hasn't been the only good news for Amazon recently. Brazilian regulator Anatel has earlier published a series of satellite-related decisions including the extension of the deadline for the start of operation of Amazon's Kuiper system, and authorisations for Amazon to carry out temporary tests in the country in two towns: Cosmopolis in the southeast and Gloria de Dourados in the midwest. Rival service Starlink is, of course, already up and running in a number of countries. Lesotho recently become the latest African nation (the number now exceeds 20) to welcome the satellite internet service, following the approval

of a 10-year operating license by the Lesotho Communications Authority (LCA). In the past few days, meanwhile, Ukrainian mobile operator Kyivstar has reportedly secured regulatory approval to begin testing Starlink's direct-to-cell (D2C) services.

SES, Intelsat $3.1B Deal to Win Unconditional EU Approval

Satellite company SES reportedly stands to gain unconditional European Union (EU) antitrust approval for its $3.1 billion deal to buy rival Intelsat, a move that would create a large rival for Elon Musk-owned Starlink. Citing unnamed sources, Reuters reported the merger will win the EU's approval, but noted its regulatory agency, the European Commission, is scheduled to publish a ruling by 10 June. The deal announced last year won unconditional clearance from the UKs Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) on 29 May but is still being reviewed by the US Federal Communications Commission and the US Department of Justice, according to the news agency. After a phase one review, the CMA found that the deal does not raise substantial competition concerns in the UK market, which ruled out a need for a more in-depth phase two investigation. Reuters stated the EU is ramping up its drive for strategic autonomy in the satellite sector to reduce reliance on Starlink's broadband service. SES is among a consortium of satellite companies to strike a deal last year with the European Commission and European Space Agency to develop the IRIS2 constellation under a 12-year contract. The merger of Intelsat and SES will give the combined company a fleet of more than 100 Geostationary Earth Orbit (GEO) and 26 Medium Earth Orbit (MEO) satellites compared to Starlink's 5,800 birds, according to Reuters. Bloomberg reported rival Eutelsat is speaking with investors to raise €1.5 billion to expand its low Earth orbit (LEO) satellite constellation. The French government and UK government are among the potential investors.

Starlink Begins Services in Sri Lanka

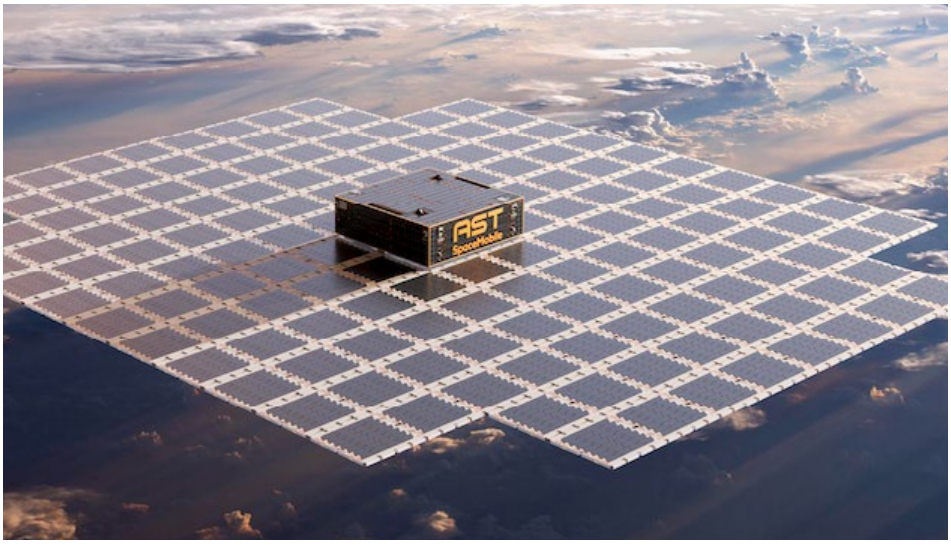
Starlink has launched its internet service in Sri Lanka, the company chief Elon Musk confirmed. "Starlink now available in Sri Lanka!," Musk said on X. Sri Lanka has become the second nation in South Asia to get Starlink service. Earlier, the company launched its services in Bangladesh last month. In March this year, Pakistan also granted a temporary No Objection Certificate (NOC) to Starlink to operate in Pakistan. Earlier this year, two Indian telecom giants, Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio, also signed pacts with SpaceX to bring Starlink internet services to the country. Starlink, a division of US billionaire Elon Musk's company SpaceX, has rapidly expanded its global presence, now operating in more than 125 countries and territories. The company provides internet connectivity in remote or underserved areas using a constellation of low-Earth orbit satellites.

Dominican Republic and Spain to Bring Satcoms to Rural Areas

Regulator the Dominican Telecommunications Institute (Indotel), the government of Spain and Spanish company Hispasat have signed a collaboration agreement to explore the participation of the Dominican Republic in the development of a joint project to share space-based telecommunications infrastructures. The objective, the partners say, is to provide the Dominican Republic with a sovereign digital infrastructure that allows it to improve connectivity in regions that are difficult to access. It's not entirely clear yet how the project will enable the deployment and use of satellite infrastructure, but Indotel says this agreement lays the foundations for the creation of a sort of two-nation round table that will identify the current and future needs for satellite connectivity in the Dominican Republic, especially in rural areas. The aim is that, through this cooperative initiative, concrete projects that integrate space technology into the strengthening of essential public services will be evaluated. Guido Gómez Mazara, president of the Board of Directors of Indotel, explains: "Allowing the most vulnerable to have access to the internet is a decision that seeks to generate equal opportunities; the satellite component will also be crucial in border areas." The project has the technical and financial support of the Spanish government. It also incorporates the experience of Hispasat as a leading operator in satellite solutions in Latin America. With the signing of this agreement, six Latin American countries have already joined the preliminary studies to implement this project: Colombia, Brazil, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Paraguay, the Dominican Republic, along with the twenty-one countries – fifteen member states and six associate members – of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

US FCC Licences Next-Gen AST Satellite Test

The US Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued an experimental license for AST SpaceMobile to launch its first Block2 Bluebird low Earth orbit (LEO) satellite, which has ten-times the capacity of its current first-generation birds. CEO Abel Avellan stated on AST SpaceMobile's Q2 earnings call in May the company planned to launch its first Block2 Bluebird known as FM1 this month, but the plans fell through. In a filing to the FCC on 1 July FCC, AST SpaceMobile sought permission to transport the satellite to India for a launch in August. The experimental license granted by the FCC on 11 July strictly prohibits AST SpaceMobile from "conducting any commercial operations" from FM1. AST SpaceMobile's second-generation birds are key to its plan to deliver ubiquitous voice, video and data services to smartphones in dead zones through partnerships with mobile operators including AT&T and Verizon. The Block2 Bluebirds feature up to 2,400 square foot communications arrays with beams designed to support a capacity of 40MHz, enabling peak data transmission rates of 120Mb/s. AST SpaceMobile plans to build 40 second-generation satellites this year with a long-term goal of 90 to enable global service. On its Q1 earnings call, an AST SpaceMobile executive stated it estimated average capital costs including direct materials and launch expenditure for the constellation would fall in the range of $21 million to $23 million per satellite. It previously estimated the cost would be $19 million to $21 million. AST SpaceMobile is seeking to raise $500 million over the next three years to broaden its constellation.



Australia Gets First Telesat Lightspeed LEO Landing Station by Vocus

Vocus and Telesat announced that Vocus will build Australia's first Telesat Lightspeed Low Earth Orbit (LEO) Landing Station. Vocus will construct and operate the new Landing Station in New South Wales, Australia and provide fibre connectivity to Telesat's point of presence (PoP), connecting Telesat's advanced LEO satellite constellation, called Telesat Lightspeed, to terrestrial networks, providing secure, low-latency satellite services across the region. As a leading provider of Landing Stations and fibre network solutions, Vocus is an ideal partner to deliver the resilient, scalable terrestrial infrastructure that not only serves as a key interconnect point for customer data, but also further strengthens Australia's digital infrastructure resilience. Telesat will begin launching its LEO satellites in late 2026 and this new Landing Station will play a key role in satellite testing and customer field trials before global service delivery. The long-term agreement also includes Telesat Lightspeed services when the network becomes operational. These services, backed by committed information rates (CIR) and comprehensive service level agreements, will ensure resilient, low-latency connectivity for Vocus' enterprise and government customers, complementing its already substantial LEO satellite services customer base. Glenn Katz, Chief Commercial Officer, Telesat said, we're honoured that Vocus will be integrating our MEF 3.0 compliant Telesat Lightspeed Carrier Ethernet services into its portfolio to meet the secure, mission-critical requirements of their customers in Australia, as well as their distributed networks across the globe. Ashley Neale, Head, Space and Wireless Operations, Vocus said this will enable, for example, a naval vessel to communicate via the Telesat Lightspeed satellites directly with ground deployed soldiers via the optical laser-linked space network, completely bypassing land-based infrastructure or the public internet.

UK Pumps €163M Into Starlink Rival Eutelsat

Eutelsat notched a capital injection deal worth €163.3 million through an investment by the UK government, as the satellite company looks to become a European rival to Elon Musk's Starlink. The fresh funding is in addition to a France-led round last month of €1.35 billion and will contribute to a plan to expand its low Earth orbit (LEO) constellation. Eutelsat noted it has now raised a total of €1.5 billion. The UK government is an existing investor and previously led a consortium to bail out OneWeb in 2020 before it merged with Eutelsat. "As our adversaries increasingly use space technologies to harm us, resilient satellite connectivity has become essential to our continent's national security," UK secretary of state for science, innovation and technology Peter Kyle said in a statement. Following the two transactions the French state will hold a stake of 29.6 per cent, while Bharti Space Limited and the UK government will hold 17.8 per cent and 10.8 per cent, respectively in Eutelsat. The satellite company still faces a €2 billion bill to help develop European Union space program IRIS2. In June, Eutelsat struck a deal worth up to €1 billion to supply France's military with connectivity services.

Starlink Cuts Latency by Over 80% in Kenya

"In Kenya itself, our customers have seen average latency drop from 120 ms down to 26 ms" These were the words of Jimmy Grewal, managing director at Elcome and an authorized reseller of Starlink dishes to commercial ships, immediately after Starlink activated a Point of Presence (PoP) in Nairobi, Kenya. The Starlink ground station in Nairobi, the company's second in Africa after Nigeria, came online at the end of January 2025. Its main objective was to mitigate latency challenges that the satellite-based internet service provider often faces. After the Nairobi PoP went live, latency for many users has dropped significantly: from 120-150 milliseconds to as low as 30 milliseconds. PoPs act as internet gateways. They relay user data from satellites to major internet exchange points (IXPs) and are located near high-speed fiber networks to minimize data travel time. Starlink currently operates 37 similar ground stations worldwide. A report confirms that the activation of Starlink's Nairobi PoP significantly improved the user experience across East Africa. Deployment led to an enhancement in both upload speeds and reduced latency for countries in the region. For example, Kenya's upload speeds more than doubled from Q4 2024 to Q1 2025, hitting 14.85 Mbps. Rwanda, Malawi, and Zambia also saw considerable gains, with their upload speeds increasing by over 60%. According to the report, in terms of latency, "During Q1 2025, Kenya, Nigeria, and Rwanda led the continent in median multi-server latency at 53ms, 60ms, and 67ms, respectively." Kenya and Rwanda experienced drops of 81% and 70%, respectively, in multi-server latency. However, despite notable improvements in Q1 2025, Starlink latency in the region remains higher than that of terrestrial networks. To be particular, a few countries like Madagascar and Sierra Leone are still experiencing very high latency. The PoP launch in Nairobi was important to enhance capacity. In late 2024, the Elon Musk-owned company paused new account registrations in Nairobi and its surrounding areas due to network capacity issues. After a seven-month freeze, new subscriptions resumed in June. While Starlink struggles in terms of latency against terrestrial networks, its overall user experience is better. Ookla's report shows that Starlink's satellite internet services are two to four times faster than other ISPs in Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Kenya, Malawi, and Zambia. The speed difference is less than double in a few spots, like Ghana, Rwanda, and Madagascar.

Sateliot Announces New Satellites and Imminent Launch in Brazil

Satellite operator Sateliot, which says it is the first company to operate a constellation of 5G NB-IoT satellites in low Earth orbit (LEO), has announced a boost to its satellite deployment plans, along with preparations to launch its commercial service in Brazil. Sateliot says it is entrusting the manufacture of its next five satellites to the Spanish firm Alén Space. These satellites, which will become part of its LEO network, support its roadmap to deploy a constellation of over 100 satellites, fully developed in Barcelona and validated by standards group 3GPP, with the goal of delivering secure and interoperable global coverage. The new satellites include significant enhancements compared to the models already in orbit, enabling improved performance and greater payload capacity. This architecture, says Sateliot is capable of supporting advanced communication services in civilian contexts, critical security operations, territorial protection, or emergency response scenarios. Sateliot says it already holds contracted commitments worth approximately EUR270 million (US$318 million) with over 400 clients across 50 countries. It is also preparing to launch its commercial service in Brazil after recently a spectrum license granted by regulator Anatel in late June. Sateliot, together with the Brazilian Association of the Internet of Things (ABINC) plans to promote a hybrid connectivity model to help close the digital gap in sectors such as agriculture, mining, and logistics. Sateliot has been engaged in Brazil for nearly two years as a member of ABINC, one of the country's leading entities in the IoT ecosystem. This affiliation has enabled Sateliot to explore technical and commercial collaboration with companies, institutions, and local operators, with which it is already working and holding advanced discussions. Current partnerships with major mobile operators allow end users to continue using standard, unmodified cellular IoT devices that connect seamlessly to both terrestrial networks and Sateliot's non-terrestrial network (NTN) – while retaining their existing SIM cards from local operators.

Starlink Officially Launches in Bangladesh

In a major development for the internet sector, SpaceX's satellite internet service, Starlink, officially began its operations in Bangladesh on May 20. The announcement was made via Starlink's official X (formerly Twitter) page, confirming the launch of Starlink's services in the country. "We have been informed of the launch, and now it's official. Starlink will initially offer two packages for residential users: Starlink Residence, priced at Tk6,000 per month, and Residence Lite, priced at Tk4,200 per month. A one-time setup cost of Tk47,000 is required for installation," said Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb, special assistant to the chief adviser. The two packages promise unlimited data usage with speeds reaching up to 300 Mbps, catering to users looking for high-speed internet in areas where traditional broadband options have yet to reach. Starlink's entry into Bangladesh comes as a solution to ensure uninterrupted, high-speed internet across the nation, particularly benefiting businesses, NGOs, freelancers, and entrepreneurs. "This service creates a sustainable alternative for premium customers to access high-quality internet services. Additionally, it will empower businesses to expand into areas lacking high-speed connectivity," Taiyeb added. The interim government has approved Starlink's entry as a non-geostationary orbit satellite internet provider. This move aims to ensure internet connectivity remains intact during times of political unrest, following disruptions last year when the government temporarily suspended internet access during protests. Starlink's operations in Bangladesh may mark a new chapter in ensuring internet resilience, opening doors for users who demand uninterrupted, high-speed connectivity, even in politically volatile times.

AST SpaceMobile scores extra $100M financing

AST SpaceMobile secured $100 million in non-dilutive equipment financing from business development company Trinity Capital to support its manufacturing and network deployment plans for 2025 and 2026. Non-dilutive financing pumps additional funding into AST SpaceMobile without a requirement to sell new shares or a stake in the business. CFO Andrew Johnson stated it is "the first such type of financing agreement for the company and reflects our stage of rapid growth and transition from research and development to full-scale manufacturing and network deployment". The satellite service provider issued a stock prospectus in May as it seeks to raise $500 million over the next three years to broaden its constellation of low Earth orbit (LEO) satellites. Johnson previously said AST SpaceMobile estimated average capital costs including direct materials and launch outlay for its constellation of more than 90 Block 2 BlueBird satellites would fall in the range of $21 million to $23 million per satellite. Plans to conduct five launches over a period of up to nine months announced in May appear to have hit a snag. AST SpaceMobile used SpaceX to launch its first five birds in 2024 but later inked a multi-year agreement with Blue Origin to use its New Glenn rocket for some of its satellites. Ars Technica reported earlier Blue Origin's plan to launch its New Glenn rocket next month was pushed back to September or October and may not be available to carry AST SpaceMobile's satellites until sometime in 2026. TMF Associates president Tim Farrar told Mobile World Live AST SpaceMobile's cost for launching satellites would increase because it would now have to buy more room on SpaceX Falcon 9 (F9) rockets. "They are planning to launch only three satellites on each F9", he said, adding "every little bit helps" regarding the latest funding. He noted non-dilutive financing "is likely cheaper and more flexible" than the Export-Import Bank of the United States loan AST SpaceMobile originally sought to help pay for the New Glenn launches.

China Expands Satellite Networks For Smart Connectivity

With the recent launch of four additional satellites, China is rapidly expanding its presence in low-Earth orbit to support growing demands for smart device connectivity through the Tianqi constellation. Following in the footsteps of SpaceX's Starlink, several Chinese aerospace companies are investing in satellite networks aimed at building critical digital infrastructure for the Internet of Things (IoT). The Tianqi satellite constellation, developed and operated by Beijing-based GuoDianGaoKe Technology, now comprises 37 satellites. This global network supports smart cities, maritime monitoring, emergency communications, and environmental monitoring. The latest additions have reduced the constellation's revisit time to five minutes, representing a 37.5 percent improvement in operational efficiency. This is vital for ensuring real-time data transmission. "Tianqi has filled a technological gap in China's low-orbit IoT satellite field. Its technical systems, performance and terminal indicators have reached internationally leading levels," said Lyu Qiang, chairman of GuoDianGaoKe Technology. The company plans to expand its reach into consumer markets, including smartphones, smart vehicles, and wearable devices. The second phase of Tianqi will involve launching more satellites to enhance services for these applications.

In parallel, Geespace, a commercial space subsidiary of Chinese automaker Geely, is deploying its Future Mobility Constellation to provide intelligent connectivity for vehicles. The constellation currently has 30 satellites across three orbital planes, with 90 percent global coverage. Wang Yang, CEO of Geespace, explained that the constellation will eventually consist of 72 satellites for global real-time data communication, 264 satellites for direct smartphone connectivity, and 5,676 satellites for global broadband services. The constellation now enables Geely's Zeekr and Galaxy electric vehicles to maintain connectivity even in areas without traditional ground networks, allowing users to send and receive messages via satellite. Geespace launched commercial operations in the Middle East in June last year and aims to extend coverage to North Africa by 2025, marking a major milestone for Chinese space ventures on the international stage.

Industry experts say that satellite-based connectivity is essential for autonomous driving technologies, offering reliable communication in areas with limited network coverage. According to Grand View Research, the global autonomous driving market is projected to reach $557 billion by 2030. Geespace's new facility in Taizhou uses modular design and intelligent manufacturing to reduce production costs by 45 percent, with an output of up to 500 satellites per year. Meanwhile, the growth of China's low-altitude economy has driven the need for low-altitude intelligent networking infrastructure. This sector includes drone-based services and technologies integrating 5G, Beidou navigation, and satellite internet. "Low-altitude intelligent networking, as the digital foundation for the low-altitude economy, can ensure the safe operation of low-altitude aircraft," said Lu Feng, a researcher from a Beijing technology research institute.

China Launches New Communication Technology Test Satellite

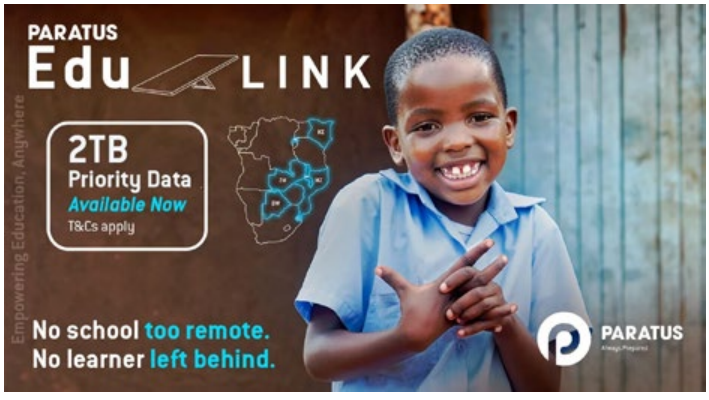
China sent a new communication technology test satellite into space, state-run media reported. The satellite was launched from the Xichang Satellite Launch Center in the southwestern province of Sichuan, according to Xinhua News Agency. It has entered its planned orbit successfully, according to the launch center. The satellite will be used mainly to carry out multi-band and high-speed communication technology validation tests. The launch was the 575th mission of the Long March carrier rocket series.

Boeing Expands SES O3b mPOWER Fleet with Latest Satellite Delivery

Boeing has delivered the ninth and tenth O3b mPOWER satellites to SES, bolstering the satellite operator's growing medium Earth orbit (MEO) constellation. The two newly completed spacecraft are equipped with Boeing's fully software-defined payloads, enabling dynamic power allocation to meet real-time user demands. Both satellites are en route to Kennedy Space Center in Florida for a scheduled summer launch. "These O3b mPOWER spacecraft are the most capable and flexible commercial satellites to ever operate in space," said Michelle Parker, vice president of Boeing Space Mission Systems. "Many of us have tried to connect from an airplane or cruise ship and found the connection unreliable. Our software-defined payload technology allows SES to deliver high-speed, reliable connectivity, adapting in real-time to user demand. It's a game changer, and the first eight satellites are showing users just how incredible this technology is." The O3b mPOWER system represents SES's second-generation MEO constellation, positioned approximately 8,000 kilometers above Earth. Designed to support high-throughput applications, the system delivers terabit-level capacity, low latency, and superior service continuity. With the addition of these two satellites, SES further expands its ability to provide global broadband solutions across land, sea, and air. Boeing continues to work closely with SES to ready the latest satellites for deployment, while additional units remain under production to support future launches. This evolving platform is also influencing national defense initiatives. "The strong performance of this pioneering technology in orbit enables us to continue evolving it for

other customers and missions," Parker added.Boeing is adapting its software-defined payloads for military-grade use aboard the WGS-11 and WGS-12 satellites, developed for the United States Space Force. This adaptation supports secure and resilient communications in contested environments. A cornerstone of the global aerospace sector, Boeing designs and manufactures commercial and defense aerospace systems for customers in more than 150 countries. The company remains committed to innovation, sustainability, and its foundational values of safety, quality, and integrity.

Paratus Launches EduLINK for African Schools Using Starlink Connectivity



Paratus, Africa's leading pan-African telecommunications provider and authorised Starlink reseller, announced the launch of Paratus EduLINK: a transformative connectivity solution designed to empower schools in underserved and remote regions with fast, reliable internet. With the campaign message, "Empowering Education, Anywhere," Paratus EduLINK leverages Starlink's Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite technology to ensure no school is too remote and no learner is left behind. The EduLINK package delivers high-speed internet to qualifying schools in Botswana, Eswatini, Kenya, Mozambique, Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia—offering 2TB of Priority Data per month, followed by a generous data buffer, to support seamless online learning and digital resource access. Paratus EduLINK is available exclusively to schools with a recognised Education Certificate. The Standard Starlink Kit, sold separately, is professionally installed and backed by Paratus' in-country expertise, localised support, flexible in country payment options and ongoing customer care. Paratus has been active in the education sector for almost seven years through its long-standing partnership with Eduvision in Namibia. By providing GEO satellite infrastructure and technical support, Paratus has helped empower more than 12,000 learners and 471 teachers with real-time, interactive digital learning across the country. The positive impact on the results measured over time has been remarkable, significantly enhancing learner engagement, comprehension and academic performance, and demonstrating the transformative power of consistent digital access in education. Starlink's advanced satellite constellation enables true broadband performance, delivering high bandwidth, low latency and resilience even in areas lacking traditional infrastructure. With Paratus EduLINK, schools can unlock online learning, teacher development, digital exams and collaborative projects, fostering educational progress and inclusion. Barney Harmse, Executive Chairman of Paratus Groupsaid said Paratus EduLINK is not just about connectivity, it's about creating equal access to education.

ZTE

ZTE Business Portfolio: Driving Innovation & Growth

Government & Enterprise

Empowering Thousands of Industries

- Database
- Automotive Electronic
- Private Network
- Data Center
- Servers and Storage Products

Consumer

Creating Smart Life

- Smart Home
- Electronic Peripheral
- Smartphone
- Mobile Internet

Carrier

Building Superb Network

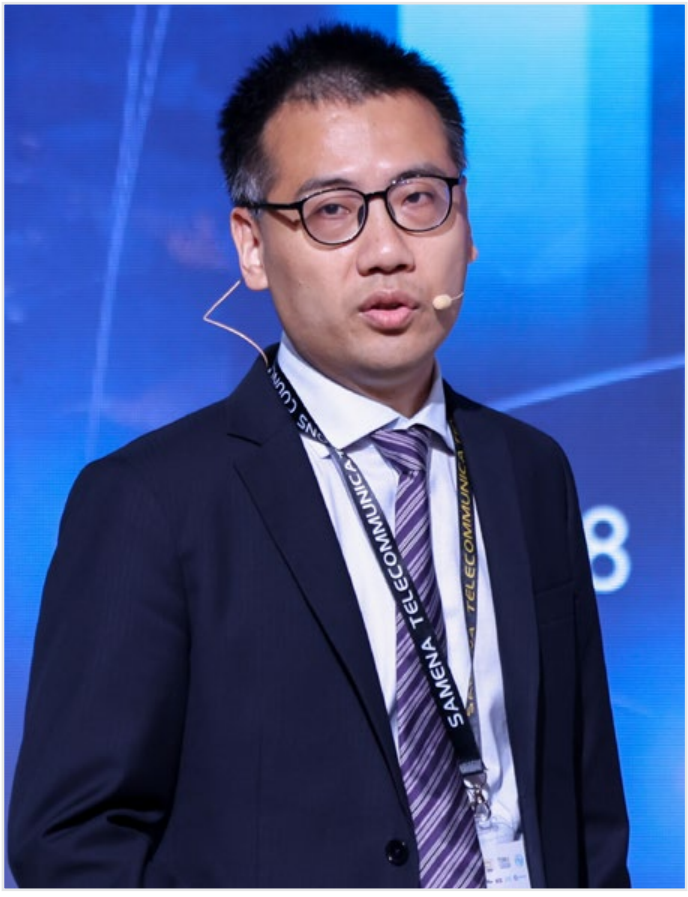
- Wireless Access
- Digital Energy
- Computing Infrastructure
- Fixed Access

Realizing Sustainable Development

- Servers and Storage Products
- Terminals
- Digital Energy
- 5G Industry Applications
- Automotive Electronics

ARTICLE

ZTE's MEA CTO Outlines Path to a Resilient Digital Ecosystem at the SAMENA Council Leaders' Summit 2025



Chen Qiong
CTO of the MEA Region
ZTE

A Path to a Resilient Digital Ecosystem

There is an urgent need for a sustainable and inclusive digital ecosystem in the Middle East and Africa. During his keynote address at the 2025 SAMENA Council Leaders' Summit, Chen Qiong, CTO for the MEA region at ZTE, highlighted this crucial point. He stressed that the region is at a pivotal juncture, where collaboration will be key to fostering future growth and development. Chen's message was clear: the region stands at a crossroads, and collaboration is the key to moving forward.

> *With the right partnerships, technologies, and policy support, the MEA region can move from infrastructure build-out to ecosystem empowerment—and ZTE is positioning itself as a key enabler in that journey.*

A Regional Vision Backed by Global Experience

Chen opened his address by highlighting a transformative initiative: ZTE's intelligent 5G factory in Nanjing, China. With an investment of RMB 20 billion and an annual output exceeding RMB 50 billion, the factory demonstrates how 5G-driven connectivity can revolutionize industrial ecosystems. This model has been successfully replicated in 18 sectors, including steel, mining, and logistics.

Chen believes such digital industrial clusters offer MEA countries a replicable and scalable model to strengthen their own digital economies—fostering resilience, sustainability, and cross-sector collaboration.

MEA's Growth: Ambition Meets Efficiency Challenges

While praising the MEA region's rapid progress—particularly in 5G penetration, fixed broadband, and data center infrastructure—Chen also emphasized that, despite the region's rapid infrastructure development, key efficiency challenges remain. Network utilization shows room for further optimization, and the average power usage effectiveness (PUE) in data centers currently ranges between 1.3 and 1.5. Achieving the sub-1.2 benchmark, often associated with next-generation AI-optimized facilities, will require targeted improvements. Addressing these gaps will be crucial to maximizing return on investment and unlocking the full potential of MEA's digital infrastructure.

> *While praising the MEA region's rapid progress—particularly in 5G penetration, fixed broadband, and data center infrastructure—Chen also emphasized that, despite the region's rapid infrastructure development, key efficiency challenges remain. Network utilization shows room for further optimization, and the average power usage effectiveness (PUE) in data centers currently ranges between 1.3 and 1.5.*

He cited Saudi Arabia as a case in point: while the digital economy contributes over 11% to GDP, it still trails the national target of 16%. Chen warned that such gaps could hinder ROI on digital infrastructure unless addressed through innovation, operational upgrades, and AI integration.

AI: The Soul of Future Networks

"Some people say AI is 6G," Chen remarked—not as a prediction, but as a aspirational vision. If AI is to become the soul of future networks, then the foundation—the "muscle and bone"—must be laid now.

ZTE, he said, has already begun preparing for this future with its self-developed chipsets and its AI platform, Nebula. These technologies are designed to support the convergence of connectivity and intelligent computing in the MEA region.

From Connectivity to a Digital Society

ZTE's regional strategy, Chen noted, is not limited to infrastructure deployment. The company advocates for a holistic expansion—from digital industry to digital life and society. This includes broadening service coverage from the ground to low and high altitudes, even into space, and extending digital services beyond humans to machines, vehicles, and embedded systems.

In areas such as e-government, smart cities, logistics, and digital finance, Chen cited China's progress—driven by companies like ZTE—as evidence of what's possible in the pre-6G era. These solutions, he suggested, can be localized to meet MEA's specific needs.

Africa: Tackling the Digital Divide

Chen devoted a significant portion of his speech to Africa, where connectivity gaps remain severe. Internet penetration stands at just 38%, and data center capacity is under 5%, with two-thirds located in South Africa. Additionally, nearly half the population lacks electricity.

To address these gaps, ZTE is focusing on affordable and sustainable connectivity solutions. These include low-cost 4G smartphones, MiFi devices, education tablets, and cloud PCs. ZTE has also introduced rural site solutions powered by solar energy, with capital expenditure under $10,000 and zero operating cost—making them ideal for underserved communities.

By partnering with China's clean energy providers and global cloud platforms, ZTE is aiming to accelerate Africa's digital transformation in a cost-effective and sustainable manner.

Enabling, Not Just Delivering

Chen emphasized that ZTE's goal in MEA goes beyond supplying equipment—it aims to become a regional integrator and enabler. With a strategic focus on "leading in network connectivity and intelligent computing," ZTE aims to support telecom operators and governments in their digital transformation journeys.

> *In areas such as e-government, smart cities, logistics, and digital finance, Chen cited China's progress—driven by companies like ZTE—as evidence of what's possible in the pre-6G era.*

By embedding itself in local ecosystems, ZTE seeks to co-create value and contribute to the development of a vibrant MEA digital society.

Final Thought

Chen Qiong's address was both a reflection of ZTE's growing maturity in the MEA region and a strategic call to action. As regional governments and operators pursue ambitious digital agendas, ZTE is committed to building a resilient digital future requires collaboration, innovation, and long-term vision.

With the right partnerships, technologies, and policy support, the MEA region can move from infrastructure build-out to ecosystem empowerment—and ZTE is positioning itself as a key enabler in that journey.

To Enable Communication and Trust Everywhere

ZTE

5G in MEA

Unleashing a smarter, faster future for all

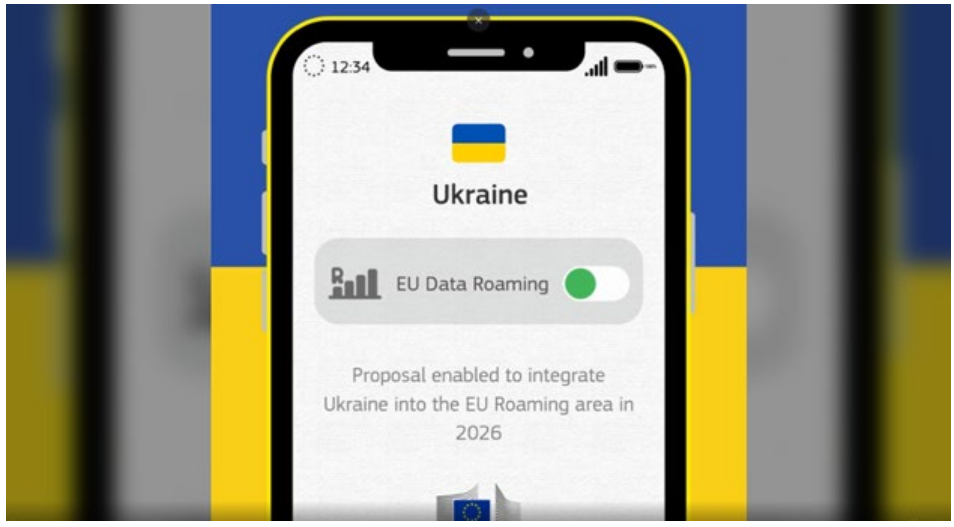
www.nokia.com

NOKIA

WHOLESALE NEWS

EU Plans to Include Ukraine in Free Roaming Area by 2026

In a significant step towards closer integration between the European Union and Ukraine, the European Commission on 17 June unveiled a proposal to formally integrate Kyiv into the EU's 'Roam Like at Home' area from 1 January 2026. The initiative would allow Ukrainian citizens to use their mobile phones across the EU—making calls, sending texts, and using data—without incurring additional charges. The same benefits would apply to EU citizens travelling in Ukraine. "We want Ukrainian citizens to stay connected to their loved ones across the EU, as well as in their home country," said Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. If unanimously approved by the Council—including Hungary—this would mark the first instance of the EU extending internal market treatment to Ukraine. The proposal follows Ukraine's formal notification to the Commission that it had aligned its national roaming legislation with EU standards, in accordance with the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement—a key precondition for accessing the EU roaming area. Following its assessment, the Commission concluded that Kyiv meets all necessary requirements to implement the EU roaming rules. Since 2017, the Roam like at Home rules have enabled EU consumers to use mobile services—calls, texts, and data—across member states at the same cost as in their home country.



These rules ensure not only fair pricing, but also consistent quality: users must have access to the same network speed and service standards wherever they are in the EU. Access to emergency services remains free of charge, as is customary throughout the Union. Beyond the EU's borders, plans are underway to expand the EU roaming area to include the Western Balkans. At the EU–Western Balkans Summit held in Tirana in December 2022; leaders signed a declaration committing to the gradual reduction of data roaming charges between the two blocs. This commitment took effect on 1 October 2023, following an agreement among 38 European and Balkan telecommunications operators, with the goal of fully eliminating additional roaming fees by 2028. Regarding Ukraine, the Commission's proposal also responds to a formal request from Kyiv, which expressed its interest in joining the EU's roaming regime in June 2022. Furthermore, in April 2022, European and Ukrainian operators agreed to voluntary measures providing affordable mobile connectivity to over four million refugees who had sought shelter in the EU after fleeing the Russian invasion. This agreement has now been extended until the end of 2025, in preparation for Ukraine's potential integration into the EU roaming area from next year.

Italy Proposes New Cut to Wholesale Telecom Fees

Italian regulator AGCOM has proposed a new wholesale telecom fee, an official said, a move that may erode earnings at Telecom Italia which owns the bulk of Italy's phone network. The plan is to cut monthly prices Telecom Italia charges its rivals to access each line on its network to 8.66 euros for2010, 8.91 euros for 2011 and 9.06 euros for 2012, from 9.28euros, according to AGCOM commissioner Antonio Preto. Speaking on the sidelines of a conference, Preto said AGCOM was forced it the decision by Italy's top administrative court which asked it to review prices for maintenance services following a legal complaint by three Telecom Italia rivals. Separately Telecom Italia CEO Marco Patuano said his group would appeal against the proposed new cut, which is subject to a30 day long consultation period. A previous decision to cut by around 6 percent access fees for 2013 reduced Telecom Italia's income by 110 million euros ($150 million) and sparked criticism by the European Commission which said the cut discouraged investment in faster networks.

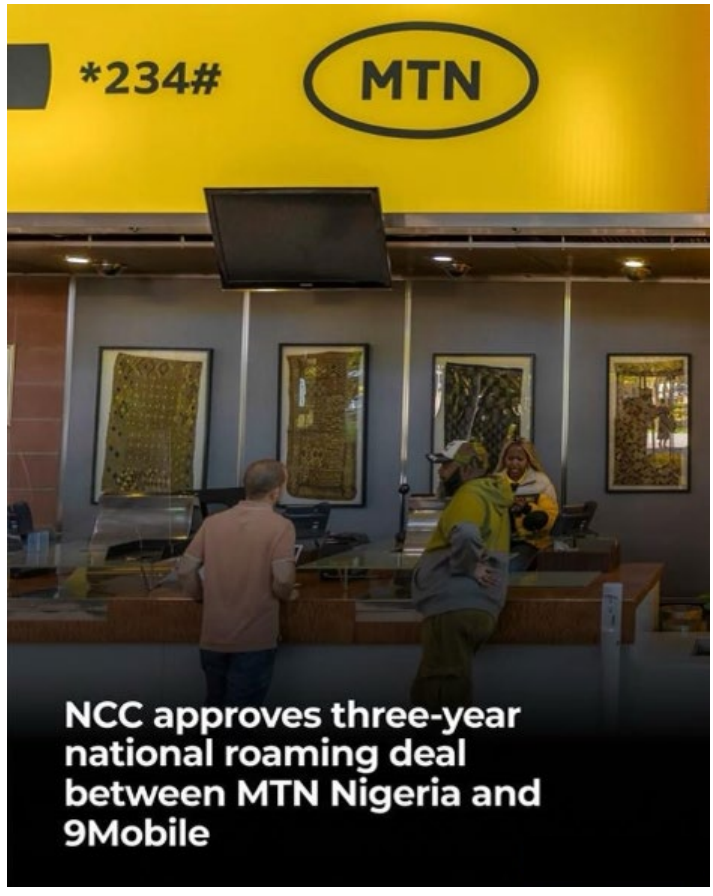
Moldova to Enter EU Roaming Area in January 2026

The Moldova citizens of as of 1 January 2026 will be able to use mobile phone services in the European Union without paying additional roaming charges.

The European Commission has made statements to this effect, which proposes the integration of Moldova into the EU roaming zone. Thus, Moldovans will be able to make calls, send SMS messages and access mobile internet in the member states of the European Union at the same rates as at home. "Moldovans, get ready to say hello in the EU without extra charges! It's another step that brings us closer, and it's worth being celebrated! In the EU, it's like being at home!" reads a message posted on the official page of the European Commission. The Commission's decision will facilitate travel, business relations and contact with the Diaspora.

Nigeria's Telecom Regulator Greenlights MTN and 9Mobile's Three-Year Roaming Deal

The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has authorised a three-year national roaming deal that lets 9Mobile customers roam on MTN's network across Nigeria. Roughly 2.8 million 9Mobile users—just 1.7 % of the market—stand to gain instant coverage in rural and peri-urban "no-service" zones. MTN says sharing its 90 million-line footprint will cut industry costs and advance the regulator's infrastructure-sharing agenda. The pact supports 9Mobile's $3 billion turnaround plan and could slow years of subscriber losses. Under the arrangement, 9Mobile subscribers can automatically connect to MTN towers wherever their network is unavailable, paying home-network rates while enjoying MTN's wider 2G-to-4G footprint. For millions of 9Mobile customers, particularly in underserved northern and south-south corridors, the deal should translate into fewer dropped calls, faster data speeds and the ability to keep a single SIM active while travelling. MTN controls more than half of Nigeria's 172 million active mobile lines, covering settlements many operators still view as commercially marginal. By piggy-backing on that reach, 9Mobile can promise seamless service in a short time—something spectrum swaps or costly tower builds would take years to deliver. Once a fast-growing challenger, 9Mobile's subscriber base has collapsed from over 13 million to about 3.4 million—now a mere 2.15% market share—due to debt, ownership issues, and inconsistent service quality that drove customers away. Chief executive Obafemi Banigbe's $3 billion recovery blueprint banks on "build where we must, share where we can". National roaming ticks that second box, lowering capital outlay, just as high interest rates make new borrowing painful. For MTN, renting excess capacity is an easy new revenue stream that does not cannibalise its core business; the company has long argued that "network-as-a-service" is smarter than outright acquisitions. Regulators view roaming as a means to promote universal access to telecommunications without instigating price-cutting wars that could jeopardise profit margins.



In 2020, the commission initiated a roaming test between MTN and 9Mobile in Ondo State and has since encouraged competitors to adopt tower and fibre-sharing models.

CRTC Says Its Wholesale Internet Rules Balance Need for Competition and Investment

Canada's telecommunications regulator has once again determined the country's largest internet companies should be able to provide service to customers using fibre networks built by their rivals — as long as they are doing so outside their core regions. It marks the CRTC's final decision on the contentious matter — which has pitted Telus Corp. against BCE Inc. and Rogers Communications Inc., along with many smaller providers — after a lengthy process filled with several interim rulings and reconsiderations. Bell has argued against the policy, saying it discourages the major providers from investing in their own infrastructure, while some independent carriers have raised concerns that it could make it more difficult for them to compete against larger players. Meanwhile, Telus has defended it as a way to boost competition in regions where it doesn't have its own network infrastructure, which then improves affordability for customers. The CRTC said in its latest decision that its rules effectively balance the need for both competition and investment, while only having a "modest" near-term effect on the market share of regional carriers. It said it plans to continue evaluating the effect on the industry, noting there have been "early indicators of improved competitive intensity" but that the extent to which the new rules "will ultimately be successful is still unknown." "As the framework continues to be implemented, the commission will closely monitor the relevant markets and make any adjustments necessary," it said. The framework initially kicked in May 2024 on a limited basis, when the regulator began requiring Bell and Telus to give competitors — including both big and small companies — access to their fibre-to-the-home networks, in exchange for a fee. While those rules initially applied only in Ontario and Quebec, the CRTC then announced last August they would be extended to networks owned by telephone companies countrywide. But the federal government then asked the commission to reconsider whether the Big Three providers should be able to act as wholesalers under the rules, citing concern about the viability of smaller internet providers to act as alternatives. The CRTC opened a consultation into the matter and issued a temporary decision this past February that upheld the rules, while delaying a final determination until the summer. Bell responded to the February decision by cutting $500 million in investment plans this year and slowing its fibre network build by 1.5 million locations it had intended to connect.

Roaming Agreement Between Free Mobile and Orange France

Free Mobile has been relying on nationwide roaming on Orange's 2G and 3G networks since 2011, with maximum connection speeds that were reduced incrementally starting on 1 January 2017. This agreement between the two operators includes the supply of roaming services up to 31 December 2025 (a recap of previous contractual amendments and their examination by Arcep can be found in the annex to this press release). On 5 May 2025, Arcep received a new contract entitled, "Roaming agreement on Orange France networks coming to the end of their life" that defines the conditions under which Free Mobile is able to roam on Orange 2G/3G networks from 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2028. This contract comes on the heels of announcements from Orange that it will be shutting down its 2G networks at the end of 2026 (with a first shutdown starting on 9 March 2026 in a pilot area covering departments in southwest France, and starting in September 2026 in the rest of Metropolitan France), followed by its 3G networks starting in late 2028, combined with Free Mobile's desire to be able to continue to access a roaming solution that allows it to shut down its own 3G network, and use the spectrum resources that will become available as a result to continue to deploy its 4G and 5G networks. The agreement therefore provides that Free Mobile will continue to have access to a roaming solution on Orange 2G and 3G networks in Metropolitan France, outside 2G white areas and 3G RAN sharing areas, from 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2028, including in those areas covered by Free Mobile's network and where Free will choose to shut down 3G technology on its own network. The following contractual conditions, established in the previous contract, are maintained.

Edge-to-Edge Intelligence

helps businesses generate near real-time insights by connecting IoT & cloud & software-defined networking & security & what's next.

Learn more about Edge-to-Edge Intelligence℠ at
att.com/globalbusiness

AT&T Business

TECHNOLOGY NEWS

Saudi Data and Artificial Intelligence Authority, Shareek Sign Deal to Accelerate AI, Cloud Innovation

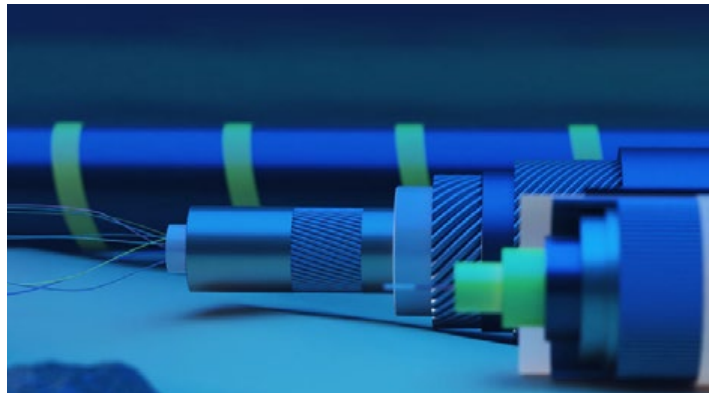
Saudi Arabia's private sector is set to gain a boost in AI-driven innovation and data capabilities through a new agreement aimed at accelerating digital transformation across key industries. The new deal, signed between the Saudi Data and Artificial Intelligence Authority and the Private Sector Partnership Reinforcement Program, known as Shareek, aims to conduct comprehensive market studies and coordinate with relevant authorities, according to an official statement. The memorandum of understanding also includes a mandate to develop AI-aligned business models and provide technical consultation services to private sector entities participating in the Shareek program. This comes as the Gulf's largest economy positions itself as a global AI hub under its Vision 2030 strategy, which targets $135.2 billion in economic value from the technology by the end of the decade. The same roadmap aims to raise the private sector's contribution to gross domestic product to 65 percent by 2030, signaling a shift toward tech-led diversification away from oil dependency. In a post on X, SDAIA stated that the MoU also seeks to "develop investment opportunities in cooperation with relevant authorities" and to "develop business models for both parties, in accordance with established procedures." It added that the agreement will also focus on "identifying and prioritizing investment opportunities and providing specialized technical consultations," as well as "sharing investment opportunities with the sector and relevant authorities to join the Private Sector Partnership Reinforcement Program – Shareek." Launched in 2021, Shareek is a flagship public-private partnership program aiming to unlock SR5 trillion ($1.33 trillion) in investments by 2030. It supports large Saudi companies in accelerating growth and driving economic development. Its collaboration with SDAIA highlights its role in advancing large-scale digital transformation. The development comes as the Kingdom expands its global tech alliances, with SDAIA signing an MoU with Advanced Micro Devices, or AMD, on the sidelines of the Saudi-US Investment Forum in Riyadh in May to strengthen the AI ecosystem. The agreement aims to develop specialized AI data centers powered by AMD technologies, supporting the Kingdom's efforts to build a robust digital infrastructure. These developments come as Saudi Arabia's global AI standing continues to rise, with the Kingdom ranking third worldwide in the OECD AI Policy Observatory in December, behind only the US and the UK.

Australia, Papua New Guinea Discuss New Subsea Cables to Boost Connectivity

The governments of Australia and Papua New Guinea (PNG) have held talks on the potential construction of three new subsea cables, aiming to meet the Pacific Island nation's growing demand for digital connectivity. In a statement, PNG's Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) said it had sent a delegation to Canberra to engage with Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific (AIFFP) to seek potential support for the project. DICT stated that if the subsea cables were built, they would significantly enhance PNG's internet capacity, network redundancy, and regional digital integration—key priorities under the country's digital transformation strategy. Minister for Information and Communications Technology, Timothy Masiu, who led the delegation, said: "These cables are not just physical infrastructure - they are bridges for digital inclusion and economic opportunity. We are pursuing this initiative with urgency and shared strategic intent." The delegation also held discussions with major technology providers including Amazon Web Services, Oracle, and Australian telecoms and data centre firm Vocus, exploring the use of cloud and AI technologies to modernise government services.

First New Subsea Cable Launched in the North Sea for in 25 Years

After a series of strategic partnerships and network expansions throughout 2024, EXA Infrastructure has announced a significant advancement in Europe's digital backbone with the deployment of a new high-capacity fiber route. This 1,200 km network connects key financial and data hubs in London, Frankfurt, Amsterdam, and Brussels. It represents the first new subsea cable along the North Sea corridor in 25 years, an infrastructure milestone that aims to bolster the resilience and scalability of Europe's connectivity options. The route integrates 1,085 km of low-loss G.652D terrestrial fiber and a 115 km subsea segment running from Margate in the UK to Ostend in Belgium, featuring ultra-low-loss G.654C cable. Two new cable landing stations—EXA's 21st and 22nd globally—have been established for this route, along with important upgrades to existing in-line amplifier facilities across the UK, Belgium, and the Netherlands. EXA Infrastructure is uniquely positioned as the sole telecom consortium member for the submarine portion of the cable, handling Landing Party and backhaul services, underscoring its role as an essential provider in the deployment. This expansion forms part of EXA's broader vision to modernize and optimize fiber paths between the prominent FLAP hubs (Frankfurt, London, Amsterdam, Paris), complementing earlier investments in related infrastructure such as the Channel Tunnel. According to EXA's Chief Operating Officer, Ciaran Delaney, the project faced "complex and challenging" regulatory and environmental conditions, particularly concerning the subsea installation over difficult seabed terrain. Nevertheless, the company leveraged its extensive regional expertise and advanced technical capabilities to overcome these hurdles and deliver next-generation connectivity. The new fiber route offers ultra-low latency, with estimated 6.2 ms latency to Amsterdam and 9.4 ms to Frankfurt, supporting bandwidth capacities exceeding 5 Petabits per second. This capacity and speed are critical for sectors requiring rapid data transmission, including financial services, gaming, and broadcasting. EXA's network footprint extends over 155,000 km across 37 countries and includes six transatlantic cables, boasting the lowest latency transatlantic connection known as EXA Express. In addition to this route, EXA has been active on several fronts in 2024 to strengthen Europe's critical infrastructure. The company signed a strategic partnership with SOCAR Fiber in July to develop terrestrial fiber routes offering diversity to traditional submarine corridors such as the Red Sea route. Another partnership later that year with Macarne, an advanced network solutions provider, expanded onward connectivity through more than 500 optical Points of Presence linking major European hubs. EXA's prominence in the region was further heightened when it was selected by IOEMA as the landing partner for a new 1,600 km submarine cable network launched in May 2024, connecting additional North Sea countries including Denmark and Norway. This collaboration enhances backhaul connectivity to major data centers like London Telehouse and Equinix, addressing rising demands for low-latency, high-capacity digital infrastructure in Northern Europe.



Zayo Europe Partners with Ciena for German Network Boost

Leading network infrastructure provider Zayo Europe has deployed Ciena's optical technology to launch a new German network covering 3,000km of fiber across 8 core domestic metros including Frankfurt, Munich, Hamburg, Dusseldorf and Berlin. The network also extends to a 14th key hub across the border in Strasbourg, France. With Ciena's Reconfigurable Line System (RLS) and WaveLogic 6 Extreme (WL6e) solutions, Zayo Europe can now offer universal 400G wave services across key German markets, with the scope to scale to 800G and 1.6Tb/s in the future as required. This will enable Zayo Europe's customers to meet the rising data demands driven by increased AI adoption and cloud usage. "Germany is a key strategic market for Zayo Europe, and with the EU pushing to advance AI capabilities across the continent, there's a pressing need for networks within Germany that can support these new workloads. Our approach to service delivery, utilizing the latest generation optical networking technology powered by Ciena, enables us to provide our customers with ultra-low latency connectivity and unparalleled support for AI and cloud services." said Colman Deegan, CEO, Zayo Europe. "There's a growing need for high-capacity networks across Germany to meet the demands of an increasingly digital economy. As a Carrier Managed Services partner leveraging Ciena optical technology, Zayo Europe can offer differentiated wavelength services across its entire European footprint, including key long haul routes across Germany." said Virginie Hollebecque is Vice President and Leader of EMEA at Ciena. Ciena's WL6e is the industry's first high-bandwidth coherent transceiver using state-of-the-art 3nm silicon to drive significant economic benefits for operators, including a 50% reduction in space and power per bit. Ciena's 6500 RLS is a compact, simple-to-deploy, photonic layer solution that improves scalability, reduces footprint, and offers more flexibility and programmability.

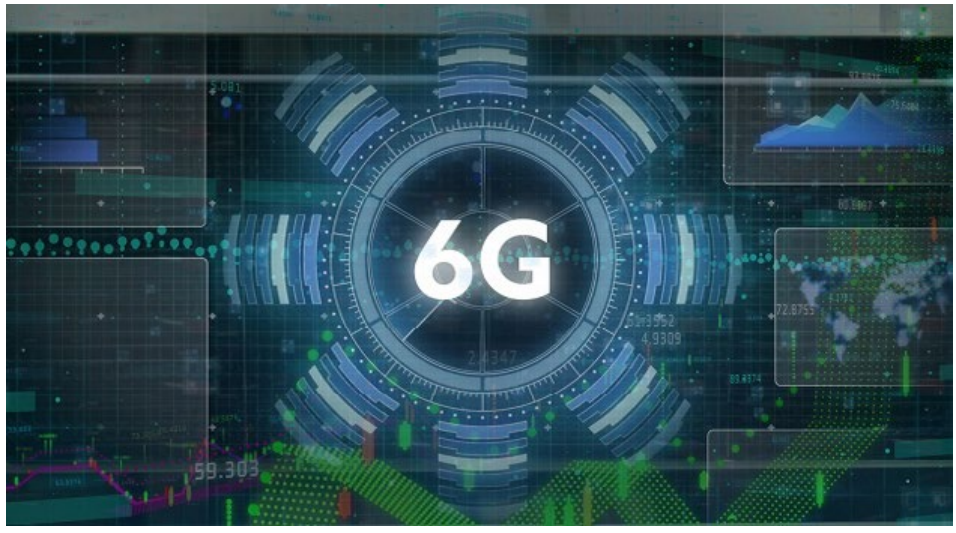
Sri Lanka Explores AI Collaboration with Singapore at Asia Tech x 2025

Deputy Minister of Digital Economy Eranga Weeraratne led a Sri Lankan delegation to the Asia Tech x Singapore 2025 Summit, held from May 27–29 at the Singapore EXPO, where they held key discussions with representatives of AI Singapore. The delegation was received by Laurence Liew, Director of AI Innovation, who presented AI Singapore's work in research, technology, innovation, governance, and products. A notable highlight was the demonstration of "SeaLion v3", a flagship AI product, which drew strong interest from the Sri Lankan side. The two parties also discussed a proposed MoU to strengthen bilateral collaboration, coordinated through the Sri Lanka High Commission in Singapore. AI solutions in development for Sri Lanka, including a gemstone color grading tool and Sinhala speech recognition system, were also reviewed. Joining the Deputy Minister were High Commissioner Senarath Dissanayake, Head of Chancery Ahamed Razee, Digital Economy Advisor Sumudu Rathnayaka, and ICTA Director Harsha Purasinghe. Officials noted the engagement as a step forward in enhancing international cooperation in AI, aligned with Sri Lanka's digital transformation goals.

Saudi Fund to fuel AI Ambitions with Humain

Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) took the wraps off a new company focused on AI development, as part of the nation's push to become a global competitive hub in the field. PIF stated the entity, called Humain, will invest across the AI value chain. It will provide a range of services, products and tools, including next-generation data centres, infrastructure, cloud capabilities and advanced AI models. It will also offer one of the world's "most powerful" multimodal Arabic large language models. Launched by PIF chairman and the country's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Humain builds on his long-standing goal for Saudi Arabia to become a global centre for data and AI, as well as contributing to a wider push around the technology sector. PIF explained its companies are actively investing in building an AI ecosystem and fostering international partnerships, allowing partners to "benefit from Saudi Arabia's value proposition including its strategic location at the nexus of three continents". The investment fund argued this enables large volumes of data to be processed, while it further pointed to a tech-savvy population which supports AI research and innovation. Serving as a global and regional hub, Humain added it will look to incorporate and develop AI across a number of strategic sectors, including energy, healthcare, manufacturing and financial services.

SoftBank Makes 6G Inroads with 7GHz Trial



SoftBank Corp teamed up with Nokia to complete an outdoor trial using 7GHz spectrum, a centimeter-wave frequency under consideration for 6G technology, in a move it claimed was a first for a telecoms operator in Japan. The outdoor trial was conducted in June 2025, with SoftBank installing three 7GHz compatible pre-commercial base stations in central Tokyo and deployed Massive MIMO technology to evaluate how 6G area coverage comparable to 5G can be deployed in urban areas. SoftBank explained centimeter waves are radio waves with wavelengths between 1cm and 10cm with frequencies of 3GHz to 30GHz. Within this range, the 7GHz band to 24GHz band is "emerging as a candidate for next-generation mobile networks". It added the specific band used for its trial is due to be discussed at the ITU-R's World Radiocommunication Conference in 2027 as a potential 5G frequency and is "therefore gaining global attention". The 7GHz band apparently offers significantly broader bandwidth than 5G's sub-6 bands, making it well suited for high-speed communication and reliable area coverage. "The 7GH band is viewed as a promising 6G solution that balances both capacity and coverage" in areas that are subject to high mobile data traffic and dense urban environments facing increasing challenges in signal penetration due to building congestion, added SoftBank.

UK Operators Beat Rural Network Goals

UK mobile operators hit a target to cover 95 per cent of the landmass with 4G a year ahead of schedule as part of a rural connectivity scheme, with attention now shifting to areas marked total not spots (TNS), the government revealed. Along with the landmass targets, companies involved in the Shared Rural Network (SRN) completed projects involving roads and premises which were scheduled for January 2027. The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) stated it is now working to address areas completely without coverage based on consultation with relevant communities and interest groups. The TNS plan is mostly focused on Scotland, with priority now being given to popular tourist areas, walking routes and Munros. In a related statement, the SRN organization explained state aid would be available to operators only when tackling areas "with no 4G coverage" from any player, with a view to connecting the public, devices, emergency services, and "rural activities and operations". As it stands on 30 June, the TNS plan proposes constructing 44 new shared masts across northerly and north-westerly areas of the Scottish mainland and islands. Although hailing the SRN progress and refreshed TNS targets, the DSIT conceded the latest plan involves building fewer masts in Scotland than originally envisaged, though emphasized the current strategy focuses on popular tourist destinations. The DSIT emphasized any new masts would still "go through the proper planning processes" and be "considerate to areas of natural beauty", local history and ecology.

Let's advance together digital transformation for all!
Let's Partner2Connect!

www.itu.int/Partner2Connect #Partner2Connect

ITU | Partner2Connect

REGULATORY NEWS

US Universal Service Funding Program Restored in Supreme Court Ruling

The Supreme Court has upheld the constitutionality of the Universal Service Fund (USF) and the FCC's authority to administer it. This decision, in a 6-3 vote, ensures the continued operation of programs like E-rate, which provides funding for internet access in schools and libraries, and preserves funding for underserved communities. The case, Federal Communications Commission v. Consumers' Research, centered on whether the FCC's authority to collect contributions from telecommunications companies to fund the USF was constitutional. The court's majority opinion, delivered by Justice Kagan, stated that Congress's delegation of this power to the FCC was permissible under the Constitution. This ruling is a victory for proponents of universal service, including organizations like the Consortium for School Networking (CoSN), who have emphasized the critical role of the USF in ensuring access to affordable broadband for schools, libraries, and underserved communities. The decision also provides certainty for schools and libraries that rely on E-rate funding for their internet infrastructure. The USF has been a cornerstone of U.S. telecommunications policy for decades, with the goal of making communication services accessible and affordable for all Americans. This Supreme Court decision reinforces the importance of this program in the digital age, where internet access is increasingly essential for education, healthcare, and economic opportunity.

CITRA Launches Draft Regulation to Govern Telecom Service Distributors in Kuwait

The Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) has introduced a draft regulation titled "Regulations for Mobile and Virtual Telecommunications Services Distributors," marking a significant step toward regulating telecom service distributors in Kuwait. These distributors are vital intermediaries delivering mobile and virtual communication services on behalf of licensed providers The draft regulation is now open for public consultation, reflecting CITRA's commitment to transparency, stakeholder engagement, and enhancing service standards amid Kuwait's ongoing digital transformation. CITRA emphasized that no final decisions will be made without input from telecom operators, technical and legal experts, distributors, and other relevant parties.

Key licensing requirements for authorized distributors include:

Holding a valid commercial license (LLC or joint-stock company)

Having preliminary agreements with licensed telecom operators

Maintaining at least ten operational branches across Kuwait

Submitting comprehensive business and technical proposals

Compliance with national workforce quotas

Payment of a non-refundable annual license fee of KWD 5,000 plus a matching unconditional bank guarantee

One-year renewable license validity

Applications will be processed within 21 business days, with no response interpreted as rejection. Approved applicants must finalize license contracts before commencing operations. Under the draft, telecom providers must work exclusively with CITRA-licensed distributors, integrate distributor systems into their platforms, conduct regular reporting, and ensure distributors meet technical and training standards. Distributors must avoid subcontracting, notify CITRA prior to agreement changes, maintain employee identification and surveillance systems, implement cybersecurity measures, and comply with labor regulations. General provisions include shared accountability for regulatory compliance, mandatory integration with CITRA monitoring systems, authority oversight on contracts, and adherence to regulated pricing. CITRA aims to foster a competitive, high-quality, and investor-friendly telecom sector through this regulatory framework. The Authority encourages industry and public feedback during the consultation period before finalizing the rules.

Oman's Telecommunications Regulatory Authority Urges Adoption of Quality Internal Wiring Standards for Buildings

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) of Oman has highlighted the critical role of high-quality internal building connections in ensuring reliable telecommunications services in residential and commercial properties. Poor internal wiring has been identified as a leading source of complaints from subscribers across Oman's governorates. To address this, the TRA launched a media awareness campaign urging building owners and developers to adopt the Authority's technical guidelines for internal wiring. These standards vary according to building type, including single-storey residences, multi-storey apartments, commercial buildings, and integrated residential complexes. The TRA emphasized that adherence to these guidelines ensures robust internal network infrastructure, facilitating Oman's digital transformation and enabling modern buildings to support evolving communication services and smart home technologies. Non-compliance can result in poor service coverage and degraded user experience. For single-storey residential buildings, the TRA recommends using Category 6 (CAT-6) or higher copper cables extending from the main distribution box to all communication sockets, with dedicated cables for each Wi-Fi access point to optimize coverage. Additional RJ45 cables are advised for televisions, security cameras, and external access points to enable full smart home integration. In multi-storey residential buildings, a main distribution box should be installed on the ground floor, linked to distribution boxes on each floor via ascending channels. Larger buildings are encouraged to have dedicated communications rooms and distribution boxes for each unit, connected through cable channels. Commercial buildings must provide dedicated communications rooms to accommodate higher service demands, replacing traditional distribution boxes. Residential complexes require a central communications room connected by ducts to all units, using fibre optic cables to ensure efficient, high-quality data transmission. The TRA underscored that quality internal connections are vital for fast, reliable in-building networks, supporting future electronic services, and meeting rising demand driven by digital transformation. For smart homes, such infrastructure is essential for integrating lighting, security, entertainment, and other smart systems into a cohesive environment.

ITU Journal Explores Sustainable AI at the Network Edge

The latest issue of the ITU Journal on Future and Evolving Technologies explores innovations for energy efficiency as computing shifts to the network edge, with artificial intelligence (AI) going into action closer to mobile and Internet of Things devices. The new issue looks at diverse approaches to energy efficiency, spanning hardware-software co-design, energy-aware decision-making, and sustainable AI applications and benchmarking methodologies. It explores such approaches across four key themes:

- Architectural innovations for energy-efficient edge computing
- Energy-aware decision and scheduling for edge robotics and distributed AI
- Benchmarking and edge-cloud optimization for sustainability
- Edge AI for intelligent and secure autonomous vehicle systems

The online ITU Journal – free of charge to both readers and contributors – offers comprehensive coverage of communications and networking. It welcomes research submissions all year long, on all topics relevant to the work of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). Published in open access format since 2020, the ITU Journal is indexed in the Directory of Open Access Journals. Upcoming issues of the ITU Journal are set to address:

- Privacy and security challenges of generative AI
- AI and machine learning solutions for 5G and future networks

Along with research articles, the journal includes recorded webinar discussions with researchers and industry leaders. Catch up on talks in 2025 and stay tuned for the next series starting in September.

African ICT Ministers Unite to Safeguard AFRINIC and Africa's Digital Sovereignty

Ministers responsible for Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and the Digital Economy from African countries convened virtually in Nairobi for an extraordinary high-level consultative meeting to address the ongoing legal challenges facing AFRINIC, Africa's Regional Internet Registry (RIR). Organized by the African Telecommunications Union (ATU) under the leadership of Sid Ali Zerrouki, Chair of the ATU Conference of Plenipotentiaries and Algeria's Minister of Post and Telecommunications, the meeting concluded with the adoption of a Ministerial Declaration on Sustaining AFRINIC's Operations and Africa's Internet Stability. Since its accreditation in 2005, AFRINIC has been pivotal in allocating Internet Protocol (IP) resources—including IPv4, IPv6, and Autonomous System Numbers—to ISPs, governments, academia, and infrastructure providers across Africa. The ongoing legal paralysis threatens the continent's digital ecosystem and operational backbone. In their declaration, the Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to preserving AFRINIC's stability and continuity, underscoring its vital role in Africa's digital transformation and regional internet governance autonomy. They pledged support for an inclusive, constructive resolution to AFRINIC's governance challenges, while respecting the independence of the Mauritian judiciary. The Ministers emphasized that AFRINIC's future decisions must prioritize Africa's collective interests through broad-based multistakeholder dialogue.

Ofcom Publishes Proposal on Protecting Phone Users from Scam International Calls

Ofcom has launched a proposal to strengthen its guidance on how telecoms companies should protect people in the UK from international calls that imitate UK mobile numbers. One way that criminal gangs prey on victims is by imitating - or spoofing - phone numbers and callers that potential victims might trust, such as UK mobile numbers, so their calls are more likely to be answered. Fraudsters based abroad often spoof UK numbers, knowing people are more likely to pick up these calls than if an unknown international number is displayed. Ofcom research reveals that, in February 2025, two in five phone users (42 per cent) said that they received a suspicious call in the last three months. The regulator also found that people are more trusting of calls coming from UK mobile numbers (+447) than they are of calls from withheld or international numbers. One quarter (26 per cent) also said that they were likely or very likely to pick up a call from an unrecognised UK mobile number, compared to just one in 10 (9 per cent) who would answer a call showing an international number with an unrecognised country code. Last year, Ofcom strengthened its industry guidance in this area, telling phone companies to identify and block calls from abroad that falsely display a UK landline number as the caller ID, except in a limited number of legitimate use cases. Currently, there is an exemption from blocking calls from abroad that display a UK mobile caller ID. This is to allow people who are roaming abroad to display their number to family and friends when they call them. Today, Ofcom is proposing telecoms companies should withhold the caller ID of calls that appear to come from a UK mobile roaming abroad unless they can verify its validity. This follows engagement with industry on how providers could best protect people from calls spoofing UK mobile numbers without hindering customers calling home from abroad. Marina Gibbs, Ofcom's policy director for networks and communications, said: "Customers endure a barrage of scam calls, and when people get caught out, the consequences can be devastating. It can happen to anyone, with criminal gangs in other countries trying to exploit people when their guard is down. "The work we've collectively already done has led to a million calls a day being blocked, but there's no silver bullet, and we're always looking for new ways to shore up our defences in the fight against fraud. These new measures would provide further protection for people in the UK."

Ofcom Fines Gigaclear £122,500

Ofcom fined broadband network provider Gigaclear £122,500 for failing to provide accurate and reliable caller location information to emergency services. Under Ofcom's rules (called the General Conditions), when someone calls 112 or 999, their telecoms provider must – to the extent it is technically feasible –make accurate and reliable information about the caller's location available to the emergency organisation handling the call, at the time it is answered. Caller location information is vital, as it may be needed to ensure an emergency response is dispatched to the right place. Gigaclear notified Ofcom of various issues with its caller location information for Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) calls between January 2022 and March 2024. During this period, when any Gigaclear VoIP customer called 999 or 112, inaccurate information about the caller's location was made available to the emergency services. This affected a total of 948 calls. We found that Gigaclear failed to ensure its third-party supplier had correctly configured the systems that provide caller location information to emergency organisations. Gigaclear also failed to carry out effective testing of caller location information, which would have likely alerted it to the issues prior to launching the service, and while the service was live. Additionally, Gigaclear missed an earlier opportunity to identify the issue by failing to appropriately investigate a customer complaint relating to the issue, and closed the case without fixing the problem. While no members of the public reportedly experienced significant harm, we take compliance with these requirements extremely seriously. We have concluded that Gigaclear has breached our rules, and we have fined the company £122,500. Gigaclear has reconfigured its systems and taken remedial action to prevent future errors. George Lusty, Ofcom's Enforcement Director, said: "Providing the emergency services with accurate location data can mean the difference between life and death. So it's vital that telecoms companies set up their systems correctly and test them thoroughly to make sure this happens. "We won't hesitate to hold companies to account, and Gigaclear fell short on a number of basic levels, putting its customers at unacceptable risk for a prolonged period of time."

Data Breach Costs SKT Dearly

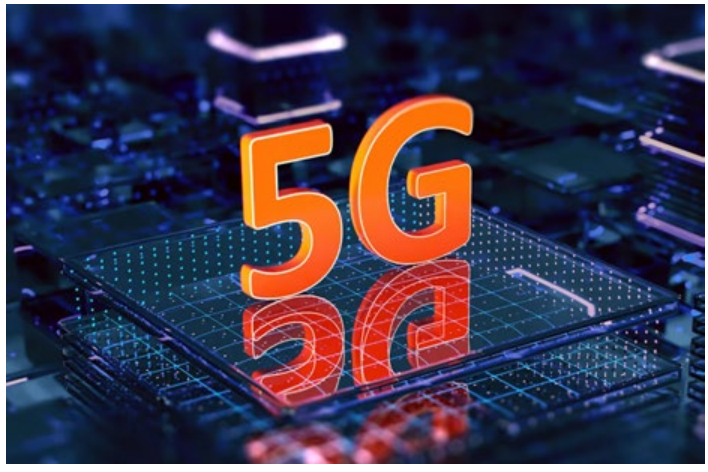
SK Telecom (SKT) detailed a KRW700 billion ($513.7 million) overhaul of its security systems on the same day Korean authorities fined it KRW30 million for negligence in a large-scale data breach in April. The Ministry of Science and ICT penalized SKT following a joint public-private investigation and ordered the operator to conduct quarterly audits, boost internal security resources and assign direct oversight of data governance to the CEO. SKT was found to have failed to "fulfil its duty of care" and "comply with relevant regulations". The operator separately acknowledged the investigation's findings and expressed "deep regret" over the breach. It outlined a four-pronged recovery initiative in response. As part its Accountability and Commitment Program, SKT pledged the major investment over the next five years to build an information protection system, double its security team and reorganize governance so the CISO reports directly to the CEO. A further KRW10 billion fund was established to support local cybersecurity start-ups and talent development programs across the country. It also announced a KRW500 billion customer compensation package, which includes a cancellation fee waiver for users affected by the breach. SKT is offering a 50 per cent discount on bills in August and 50GB of bonus data from then until end-December to its own and MVNO customers. Enhanced membership rewards and service restoration for returning customers are also included. SKT detailed a plan to offer free access to Zimperium's military-grade mobile device security software to all users for one year and upped the limit on a cybersecurity compensation fund from KRW1 billion to KRW100 billion. The package builds on SKT's earlier efforts to implement additional security measure. Reports indicate SKT lost more than 500,000 customers following the incident: as of late last month, it stated it completed 9 million SIM card replacements and resets.

India's DoT Outlines New Policy to Boost Telecoms Coverage

India's Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has set up ambitious targets to achieve 100% population coverage with 4G and 90% coverage with 5G, according to a draft of the country's National Telecom Policy 2025, now being circulated for public consultation. Comments, suggestions, and feedback from stakeholders and the general public are being requested within 21 days from 23 July. According to the Indian Express news service, the policy outlines ten strategic objectives to be achieved by 2030, including a plan to double the export of telecom products and services and to double the number of telecommunications startups in the country. The policy strongly emphasises rural connectivity including increasing the fiberisation of telecom towers from the current 46% to 80%, ensuring 100% fiberisation of all Gram Panchayats – local self government bodies at village level – under BharatNet, a project aimed at providing broadband connectivity to Gram Panchayats, with uptime exceeding 98%. The aim is also to enable fibre connectivity to all government institutions at the village level and beyond. Schemes are being proposed to expand mobile networks in underserved rural, remote and urban areas, as are incentive programmes aiming to boost the adoption of fixed-line broadband. Another aim is to integrate telecom infrastructure into the disaster recovery protocols of the country's National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). Quality of service (QoS) standards are to be harmonised with international benchmarks for both indoor and outdoor environments; there will also be greater transparency regarding telecom coverage and signal strength. The most ambitious part of the policy, perhaps, may be a vision to establish India as one of the top ten global hubs for innovation and research in emerging technologies, targeting a 10% global share in 6G-related intellectual property rights, massive boosts to both domestic telecom manufacturing output and import substitution of telecom products, and the establishment of a dedicated Telecom Manufacturing Zone (TMZ) in the country.

5G Auction Delay in Pakistan Tied to PTCL–Telenor Deal Stalemate

Pakistan's long-awaited 5G spectrum auction is facing delays due to Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL), which is allegedly withholding key documents related to its proposed acquisition of Telenor Pakistan, according to the country's Minister for IT and Telecommunications.A report by local newapaper Dawn stated that PTCL has yet to submit critical paperwork to the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP), stalling the regulatory process needed to move forward with the auction. Sources speaking to the publication accused PTCL of sowing confusion and dragging its feet, preventing the CCP from conducting its evaluation of the deal. Telenor, which announced plans to sell its Pakistani operations and exit the market by mid-2025, has not yet received the regulatory green light, missing its own projected timeline. Minister of IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja confirmed that the primary cause of the 5G auction delay is the ongoing uncertainty surrounding the future of both Ufone (a PTCL subsidiary) and Telenor Pakistan. "The CCP is an independent body, and we are awaiting its decision on the proposed merger. Neither the IT Ministry nor the government can influence the Commission in the performance of its regulatory functions," Khawaja told Dawn.



TRA, Oman Advances Rural Telecom Services with Fiber Optic Rollout

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) has successfully completed the first phase of a nationwide initiative to enhance telecom services in underserved areas. The joint initiative, involving the government, TRA, and licensed operators, aims to improve service quality in regions with infrastructure challenges by shifting from satellite to fibre optic technology. The project utilises cost savings from a deferred royalty rate increase to upgrade connections for several telecom towers, improving stability and performance. Omar bin Abdullah al Qatabi, Vice President of the Telecommunications Regulatory Sector at TRA, stated that the initiative aligns with the Authority's mission to expand access to cutting-edge telecommunications across Oman. This move supports the goals of Oman Vision 2040, which targets a digitally advanced and sustainable economy. The shift to fiber optics in rural areas is expected to significantly improve network reliability, opening up new opportunities for social and economic development. It also empowers SMEs by enabling them to offer services in network maintenance, connectivity, and project management, while creating both direct and indirect job opportunities. The initiative is part of a broader national effort to develop an inclusive digital infrastructure, paving the way for emerging technologies such as AI, cloud computing, digital government services, e-commerce, and e-learning to benefit all sectors of society.

Vocus Wins Final Approval to Acquire TPG Telecom's Fiber and Fixed Assets

Vocus Group has secured the final regulatory approval from Australia's Foreign Investment Review Board (FIRB) to complete its A$5.25 billion (US$3.42 billion) acquisition of TPG Telecom's enterprise, government and wholesale fixed line and fiber infrastructure, first agreed in October 2024. The deal, cleared by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission in March, positions Vocus as one of the country's largest owners of underground fiber, enabling it to connect nearly 20,000 buildings nationwide. Completion of this transaction now appears imminent. When finalized, Vocus will operate more than 50,000 km of fiber, comprising metropolitan, inter capital and international subsea cables, including TPG's PPC 1 system from Sydney to Guam, alongside over 14,700 km of offshore links. It also gains a large enterprise, government and wholesale (EGW) business segment. TPG retains its consumer facing operations: its mobile network (Vodafone Australia), consumer broadband and SME fixed line services. Under the agreement, Vocus will provide TPG with transmission and wholesale fiber access via a long term strategic partnership. From TPG's perspective, the sale brings net proceeds

of approximately A$4.65–4.75 billion after separation costs, allowing it to simplify its business, reduce debt, and focus on mobile and consumer broadband.

US FCC Regains Spectrum Auction Authority

US Federal Communications Commission (FCC) chair Brendan Carr praised the passing of a bill restoring the agency's authority to conduct wireless spectrum auctions, which he said could unlock airwaves for several years, and boost the nation's economy and security. President Donald Trump's so-called One Big Beautiful Bill was passed by a Republican majority on 3 July in the House of Representatives after the Senate's version was finalized 1 July. The president is expected to sign the bill into law 4 July. Carr stated the bill establishes "a robust pipeline of [800 MHz] spectrum for years to come". "I want to extend my congratulations to President Trump and congressional Republicans on securing this big win for the country." "Restoring US leadership in wireless is key to the nation's economic and national security interests." "This will create jobs, encourage innovation and expand high-speed connections to more Americans." In a statement issued by the Competitive Carriers Association (CCA), its president and CEO Tim Donovan also thanked congress for the move and for "establishing blueprints for future spectrum auctions". "This long overdue action will help meet consumer demand, remove obstacles to US global leadership and is essential to closing the digital divide for rural America." FCC commissioners will vote on auctioning off spectrum licenses for advanced wireless services in their next monthly meeting, scheduled to take place on 24 July. Carr will also ask the FCC to vote on accelerating a transition from copper lines to high-speed networks and revise the agency's pole attachment rules.

Ofcom: Use Comms Regulation to Drive Innovation

The UK should have the best mobile and broadband connectivity in the world, and Ofcom will be playing its part to help unlock opportunities, encourage investment and open doors for innovation, according to the regulator's group director for communications, Natalie Black. Speaking at the Parliament & Internet Conference, organised by Ispa UK – the trade association for the organisations building and delivering the UK's internet and telecoms services – and attended by MPs, broadband providers and other technology industry trade groups and advocates, Black noted that to assist the UK in achieving its ambitions in connectivity and hence deliver a platform for prosperity for general society and business, there were three key areas for the regulator to prioritise: broadband, mobile, and growth and spectrum in space-based communications.As regards broadband, Black stressed that while the UK wasn't one of the first movers in the widespread roll-out of fibre communications, over the past six years, the country has been catching up fast, now having the fastest full-fibre roll-out rate in Europe. She noted that in 2019, only 7% of British homes and offices could access ultrafast full-fibre broadband, but fast-forwarding to today, it's now 75%.

Ofcom attributed this growth to co-operation and shared ambition among the UK's broadband ecosystem. "Together, we have made that happen," she said. "Ofcom opened the door, and the industry stepped up to the challenge."We were the first country in Europe to review, in its own right, the market covering the underground tunnels and telegraph poles that carry the fibre cables," said Black. "That significantly improved access to [broadband market leader] Openreach's ducts and poles for rivals, laying their own lines, hanging capital costs for some new entrants. And then, after years of traditional cost-based regulation and falling prices, we transformed our approach to incentivising investment. "We gave Openreach a margin that gave its competitors margin," she added. "And then they didn't need much help finding their way through the open door. Competing networks started building like fury to try to gain a coveted first-mover advantage, and that in turn spurred the newly independent Openreach into action – and the rest, as they say, is history. Now that competition is driving innovation." Among the innovations noted by Black included new techniques for sliced fibre, new data linking standards and monitoring systems that potentially mean faults can be fixed before customers even see them. Moreover, she suggested that faster, more reliable connections could unlock benefits for consumers and businesses that they haven't considered before. Full-fibre was key to gaining digital benefits. Black highlighted that the average UK household uses more than 500GB of broadband data every month, but among households with full-fibre, that average usage figure goes up 50% to more than 750Gb. Black predicted that if all the planned broadband network deployments were realised, nearly 96% of UK properties could have full-fibre by 2027, but she stressed that Ofcom recognised long-term investments such as those made by the suppliers needed regulatory certainty and security. "We'll continue to balance the scales by protecting customers during this period of transition and transformation," she said. "This is not growth at all costs. Yes, people want faster networks, but they also want secure, affordable networks … This is a hard line in the sand for us, and we won't accept growth leading to consumer harm." As regards mobile, Black said it was now a market where users were getting more for

less, with Ofcom data showing that average prices were 5% lower in real terms in 2024 than in 2023, and 23% lower than in 2019, despite average data use trebling over this period. She pointed to a period of consumer policy interventions by Ofcom in that time and the support it gave to the UK's Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) in getting the merger of Vodafone and Three UK over the line as examples of how regulation was driving the market. Black accepted there was more Ofcom needed to do to drive more gains, and she welcomed the government's new infrastructure strategy – particularly the support for improved mobile connectivity on trains. "Ultimately, this requires a team effort, and we are absolutely committed at Ofcom to play our part," she said. The third priority regarding spectrum and space was seen as "the final frontier" of growth, and Black emphasised how supporting innovation was central to spectrum management. "We consciously look to allocate spectrum to new use cases, even when the commercial case is not yet there," she said. "In recent years, Ofcom has run several [projects] to support mobile broadcast, and has supported industries such as maritime, aviation and emergency services ahead of Europe. "The new private mobile network supports the digital transformation of sectors such as logistics and transport," said Black. "We're opening up new opportunities of high-capacity solutions for private networks by making available high-frequency [services]. We'll continue to support the mobile industry in the deployment of advanced 5G and 6G. Just over the past few months, we've consulted on auctioning more spectrum for 4G and 5G mobile use, and announced we're releasing more technology and improved for satellite licenses." She pointed out that the space industry has never seen growth like it is at present, with record numbers of satellites in low orbit above the UK changing how we can connect. Black stated this was one of its busiest areas of work, offering huge potential for innovation and growth across the economy. She added that over the course of the next few years, Ofcom would be "rapidly" expanding its spectrum allocations to space and satellite technology to increase the capacity for broadband services to both homes and businesses, particularly in remote areas, and that it would be developing spectrum licenses to support UK space launch capability. "The last 30 years have seen connectivity change like never before, a lifetime's progress in a generation that has come with its opportunities and its challenges," said Black. "But there's one thing that Ofcom takes away from our small – but, we hope, significant – role in this story: this is a team sport. Ultimately, it only works if industry, regulators and government come together."

South Africa Proposes Equity Equivalent Model to Ease B-BBEE Requirements for ICT Sector

The South African Communications and Digital Technologies Minister Solly Malatsi unveiled a draft policy direction in the Government Gazette proposing an alternative to the stringent Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) ownership requirements for the ICT sector. The new model would allow companies to meet empowerment obligations through equity equivalent programs (EEPs) rather than direct ownership transfers. This move could facilitate the entry of global players like Starlink into South Africa's telecommunications market while still advancing economic transformation. Under Section 9(2)(b) of the Electronic Communications Act (ECA), 2005, individual telecom licensees must allocate at least 30% equity ownership to Historically Disadvantaged Groups (HDGs), 'or' such other conditions or higher percentage as may be prescribed by the government. This mandate aligns with South Africa's broader B-BBEE framework, which seeks to redress apartheid-era economic imbalances. The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) has further reinforced these requirements through the HDG Equity Ownership Regulations (2021), which apply the ICT Sector Code to ensure compliance. However, the use of the word "or" in the ECA allows for alternative empowerment mechanisms, as prescribed under Section 4(3)(k) of the ICASA Act. The draft policy introduces an equity equivalent model, enabling companies to fulfil B-BBEE obligations through alternative investments, such as:

Funding black-owned small businesses

Supporting local ICT suppliers

Investing in skills development and job creation

This approach mirrors exemptions previously granted to multinational corporations like Microsoft, Hewlett-Packard, and Samsung, as well as the automotive industry (2019), where direct ownership transfers were deemed impractical. The ministry argues that the policy shift will:

Attract foreign investment by reducing regulatory barriers

Encourage market participation from global tech firms (e.g., Starlink)

Maintain empowerment goals through alternative economic contributions

Minister Malatsi stated: "The policy seeks to provide the much-needed policy certainty to attract investment into the ICT sector." The move is also seen as part of President Cyril Ramaphosa's broader strategy to stabilise US trade relations, which have deteriorated under the Trump administration. Recent US actions, such as cutting aid, expelling South Africa's ambassador, and threatening tariffs, have heightened economic pressures, making investment-friendly reforms more urgent.

Oman's TRA Cracks Down on Unauthorized Wireless Networks to Protect Telecom Infrastructure

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) of Oman has intensified field inspections in collaboration with relevant authorities targeting unauthorised wireless networks that redistribute internet services without proper licenses. This initiative is part of ongoing efforts to safeguard the security and stability of the sultanate's telecommunications infrastructure and maintain high-quality service for users. According to a TRA statement, these inspections followed the detection of several violations that jeopardize information security and the integrity of communication networks. Illegal networks have been found to cause technical interference, degrade service quality and speed in adjacent areas, and expose users' personal data to risks including misuse and hacking. The authority confirmed that it is enforcing strict measures, including the removal of unauthorised equipment and initiating legal proceedings against offenders in cooperation with other agencies. TRA called on individuals and institutions to adhere to telecom regulations and avoid setting up or using unlicensed communication networks. The regulator reaffirmed its commitment to ongoing inspection campaigns to ensure a safe, secure, and reliable telecommunications environment throughout Oman.

Strategic Partnership with Engro Corp: Jazz Secures All Regulatory Approvals

Jazz has announced that it has secured all regulatory approvals for its strategic partnership with Engro Corporation Limited for the pooling and management of telecommunications infrastructure assets in Pakistan. The partnership, initially announced on December 5, 2024, is expected to enhance the efficiency of infrastructure and digital investments in the country, in line with Pakistan's digital ambitions. Under the agreement, Jazz's infrastructure assets, managed through its wholly owned subsidiary Deodar (Private) Limited ("Deodar"), will vest into Engro Connect through a court-sanctioned scheme of arrangement. Regulatory approvals have been obtained from the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP), the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), and the Islamabad High Court. Completion of the transaction is expected in June 2025. Aamir Ibrahim, CEO of Jazz, commented: "I am pleased to note that we are now progressing to closing our pioneering infrastructure partnership with Engro Corp. This marks a significant milestone in our Service Co transformation. We will continue delivering world-class digital solutions empowering millions of Pakistanis in an asset-light model, while collaborating with Engro Corp, a trusted leader, for the infrastructure layer." Abdul Samad Dawood, CEO of Engro Holdings, added: "Prosperity and progress increasingly rely on technology and connectivity – and with this milestone, Engro strengthens its role as an enabler of Pakistan's progress. This investment reinforces telecom infrastructure as a key vertical for us and we are keen on expanding access, empowering communities, and future-proofing the infrastructure that will drive growth for generations to come. This is a special moment for all of us at Engro, as this is what we have always stood for: Enabling Growth." As this strategic partnership nears completion, Jazz will continue to lease Deodar's infrastructure under a long-term agreement, ensuring uninterrupted nationwide connectivity and service for its users. This milestone enables Jazz to fully focus on its ServiceCo vision—scaling digital platforms like JazzCash, Tamasha, SIMOSA, FikrFree, Garaj, and GameNow that serve over 100 million Pakistanis.

Trump Pushes for 600MHz Spectrum Auctions in Legislation

US President Donald Trump took to his social media site to strongly advocate for pending legislation to auction off 600MHz of spectrum, which signaled a key element of his telecommunications policy. "We must maintain our status as the worldwide leader in Wi-Fi, 5G and 6G, connecting every American to the World's BEST Networks, while also keeping everyone safe", President Trump wrote yesterday (20 May) on his Truth Social media platform. "We can do both at the same time. Bottom line, I am going to free up plenty of SPECTRUM for auction, so Congress must put 600MHz in "THE ONE, BIG, BEAUTIFUL BILL." If the bill passes congress and is signed by President Trump, the spectrum auctions will require the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to identify 600MHz of spectrum for auction over two years. The telecommunications industry has been clamoring for more spectrum ever since the FCC lost its authority to conduct auctions in 2023. Operators and industry heavyweights are advocating for the auction of more full-licensed spectrum, arguing the US is falling behind other countries. Senator Marsha Blackburn posted on Facebook the spectrum auctions could raise $200 billion, but Roger Entner, founder and analyst at Recon Analytics, told Mobile World Live the amount remains to be seen. Entner stated President Trump is also personally making sure the Department of Defence is finding a way to vacate lightly used spectrum within the next two years. "When the President sets the agenda and tells people what to do then things happen," he explained. "The spectrum pipeline is happening, and auction authority is being restored and for the benefit of all Americans." Industry association CTIA president and CEO Ajit Pai urged congress to swiftly pass the bill. "The critical spectrum and tax provisions in this legislation will allow the wireless industry to invest, create jobs, propel economic growth, and secure America's edge in innovation," stated Pai, who is the former chair of the FCC during Trump's first administration. The 1,116-page bill is currently awaiting a final vote in the US House of Representatives before moving to the Senate, but members of President Trump's own political party are opposed to some of the provisions.

FCC Makes Move to Free Up Satellite Spectrum

Federal Communications Commission (FCC) commissioners voted in favor of opening a rulemaking process that could free up more than 20,000MHz of satellite broadband spectrum, which chair Brendan Carr stated is more than the total sum currently available for satellite systems. The FCC is seeking public comment on expanding satellite connectivity across spectrum bands: 12.7GHz-13.25GHz, 42.0-42.5GHz, 51.4-52.4GHz, and the so-called "W-band" at 92.0-94.0GHz, 94.1-100GHz, 102.0-109.5GHz, and 111.8-114.25GHz. "To be clear, abundant spectrum for satellite operations is not just nice to have," stated Carr. "It is necessary for American leadership. Every megahertz matters." He noted while 12GHz is in the Ku-band that is being used for low earth orbit (LEO) satellite systems, it is underutilized due to restrictions. The FCC did consider using the 12GHz band for mobile services several years ago, but Carr noted there was "no consensus on the best path forward". "In this rulemaking, we're sending a clear signal: America is committed to space leadership through a policy of satellite spectrum abundance," Carr stated. "Abundance positions us to lead international discussions, not follow frameworks established by others." The decision to explore the release of more spectrum came after the FCC recently stated it is investigating whether to reclaim unused satellite spectrum from EchoStar. The FCC is determining whether EchoStar plans to employ its mobile satellite services (MSS) operations in the 2GHz band after SpaceX questioned its use.

New Data Highlights Digital Challenges and Opportunities for LLDCs

Internet use in the world's landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) has more than doubled over the past decade, according to the latest statistics collected by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). While an estimated 86 per cent of people in LLDCs were covered by a mobile broadband signal in 2024, only 39 per cent of the population used the Internet, up from 15 per cent in 2014 when the second International Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC2) took place. Although this is substantially lower than the global average of 68 per cent, encouragingly, uptake has been increasing at an annual rate of 11 per cent since 2014, significantly outpacing the global rate of 7 per cent. The disparity between coverage and actual use is largely due to low affordability, limited digital skills, and the lack of relevant content, among other factors. The new Facts and Figures: Focus on Landlocked Developing Countries, published on 22 July, highlights the digital trends in LLDCs, the challenges they face, and the opportunities offered by digital development. LLDCs face unique constraints that set their development paths apart from coastal nations, including higher transport costs, trade barriers, and remoteness and isolation from world markets. Digital connectivity holds considerable potential to mitigate some of these challenges. Insufficient international connectivity infrastructure and affordability remain key connectivity barriers in LLDCs. The affordability of broadband services has improved faster in other countries, while prices in most LLDCs remain higher than world medians – for example, the fixed broadband basket costs more than twice as much in LLDCs, compared to the global median. The new report serves as a powerful advocacy tool to help stakeholders identify connectivity gaps. Concrete data can help put digital development at the top of the agenda for LLDC policymakers and ensure that LLDC digital needs remain a priority among the global development community. LLDCs vary widely in terms of income levels, urbanization rates, and size, necessitating a flexible approach in addressing their challenges, the report shows. Each country's underlying conditions must be fully understood to develop truly impactful policies. The digital gender divide persists, with an estimated 43 per cent of men using the Internet in LLDCs, compared to 36 per cent of women. Youth are online more than the average LLDC population, with an estimated 51 per cent of 15- to 24-year-olds in LLDCs using the Internet, but this is lower than the global average of 79 per cent. The urban-rural connectivity gap is wide, with an estimated 28 per cent of people living in LLDC rural areas being online, versus 63 per cent in LLDC urban areas. An estimated 13 out of 20 people in LLDCs own a mobile phone, compared to nearly four out of five globally. Mobile-broadband and fixed-broadband penetration lag behind world averages: LLDCs have an estimated 59 mobile-broadband subscriptions per 100 people, compared with 95 subscriptions per 100 people globally, and only five fixed-broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, compared with a global average of 20. Affordability remains out of reach: Despite falling prices for mobile broadband, the price gap between mobile and fixed broadband services remains wider in LLDCs than elsewhere in the world.

Ofcom Cuts UK Mobile License Fees for 900MHz and 1800MHz

The UK telecoms regulator has reduced the total amount paid by the primary mobile network operators – EE, O2 and Vodafone / Three UK – to use the 900MHz, 1800MHz and 2100MHz radio spectrum bands by around £60m per year. The bands support the use of 2G and 4G mobile (mobile broadband) services. The cost of Annual License Fees (ALF) remains a highly divisive subject for the mobile operators, which often complain that hikes in this area can mean price rises for consumers and less investment going toward their networks. The cost of such fees can, however, be influenced by various different factors, such as the ongoing removal of 3G services and the desire to make modern 5G services available via the same bands etc. Not to mention any changes in the supply and demand conditions since the fees were set. In case anybody has forgotten, Ofcom, which was prompted by evidence submitted via BT, has been investigating a "material misalignment between our fees and the underlying market value of the relevant spectrum" since early 2024. Back in December 2024 this resulted in a proposal to reduce the ALFs for the 900MHz and 1800MHz bands by 21%, while fees for the 2100MHz band would increase by 12%. The mobile operators were clearly unhappy with Ofcom's approach, and several complained of errors in their calculations, as evidenced through feedback published in April 2025. But the good news is that the regulator's final decision has updated the calculation and indicated that operators will now save an estimated combined total of £60m a year (up from the prior proposal of £40m).

CRA, Qatar Launches National Initiative to Celebrate 160 Years of the International Telecommunication Union

In celebration of the 160th anniversary of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA) has launched a national initiative featuring a variety of community-focused programs. The program kicked off on World Telecommunication and Information Society Day and reflects Qatar's longstanding collaboration with the ITU and its commitment to inclusive digital advancement in line with the CRA Strategy and the Qatar National Vision 2030. The national initiative, running under the unifying slogan "Everyone Connected, Everyone Engaged", affirms Qatar's commitment to supporting global efforts in digital transformation. It focuses on achieving tangible benefits within the country by promoting the use of telecommunications and information technology, contributing to the ITU's vision of connecting the world through modern and sustainable digital means. Commenting on program, Engineer Ahmad Abdulla Al-Muslemani, President of CRA and Chair-Designate of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2026, said: "As we join the global community in marking the ITU's 160th anniversary, Qatar reaffirms its dedication to a digitally empowered and inclusive future. This program is a testament to our enduring relationship with the Union and our shared mission to effectively regulate telecommunications and information technology, improve quality of life and transform digital

opportunities into tangible achievements for all members of society. " The initiative features a diverse sequence of programs developed in collaboration with local organizations and international partners. It begins an awareness workshop aimed at enhancing digital safety for the elderly, in cooperation with Ehsan – Center for Empowerment and Care of the Elderly, to provide them with the knowledge and skills necessary to safely and independently engage with the digital world. Manal Ahmed AlMannai, CEO of Ehsan, emphasized the value of digital inclusion, stating: "Our partnership with the Communications Regulatory Authority enables us to extend our long-standing mission into the digital world, and empower the elderly to use technology safely and confidently, ensuring that all generations benefit from Qatar's digital transformation " The initiative also includes a range of diverse programs developed in collaboration with several local organizations, aimed at engaging all segments of society, empowering people with disabilities, supporting the elderly, and inspiring youth pursuing careers in ICT. These efforts reflect Qatar's steadfast dedication to achieving digital inclusion and enhancing its active presence both regionally and internationally in the journey toward a knowledge-based digital economy that ensures equal opportunities for access and progress for all.

Ofcom Opens 3 Spectrum Consultations

UK comms regulator Ofcom has opened three separate consultations on its spectrum work, which relate to: changing satellite gateway fees; a proposed new non-geostationary orbit (NGSO) gateway licence for Amazon Kuiper; and introducing short notice, short duration licences in the lower 2.3 GHz band to support demand from the Shared Access and PMSE (programme making and special events) communities for quick spectrum access to deliver innovative new services.

Satellite Gateway fees

In recent years there has been a significant growth in demand for spectrum from the satellite sector as it provides connectivity to an increasing number of households and businesses. Ofcom has facilitated this this growth by making more spectrum available, including for satellite 'gateways' – components in satellite networks that connect the data beamed via satellites to the internet). However, increasing demand means that NGSO gateways can contribute to spectrum scarcity (for other satellite users and fixed services). Ofcom is therefore proposing to use Administered Incentive Pricing (AIP) rather than flat fees for NGSO satellite gateway licences, which will encourage users to think carefully about their spectrum needs, incentivise the highest value uses, and in turn promote economic efficiency and growth. Ofcom already uses this approach for satellite gateway licences for geostationary systems (GSO), and it is proposing to update our AIP fee formula to promote efficient use of spectrum. Ofcom is also currently considering making Q/V and E spectrum bands available for satellite gateways, and the consultation proposes how it would calculate fees in these bands. It welcomes responses to the consultation by September 9th 2025.

Proposed NGSO gateway licence for Amazon Kuiper

Separately, Ofcom is proposing to grant an NGSO earth station licence to Amazon Kuiper UK Limited for a gateway site in Bude, Cornwall. This licence would authorise Amazon Kuiper to operate an NGSO gateway earth station which connects to its planned NGSO satellite system, which is also known as 'Kuiper'. The gateway will help Kuiper provide high- speed, low- latency broadband services to households, businesses and other customers in the UK, as well as backhaul connectivity to telecommunications carriers. Ofcom is inviting comments on Kuiper's application, and its proposal to grant this licence, by July 29th 2025.

Short notice, short duration licences in the lower 2.3 GHz band

Ofcom has also opened a consultation on introducing short notice, short duration licences for outdoor and indoor use in the 2320-2340 MHz band. Under these proposals, the Programme Making and Special Events and Shared Access communities (and other users wishing to deploy a short duration network in spectrum supported by mobile technology) would be able rapidly to secure a licence to use this spectrum on a short-term basis. This provides further support for innovative new spectrum users, and could open up opportunities to use mobile technologies (e.g., 4G and 5G) for news gathering and broadcast of major events. Ofcom welcomes feedback on these proposals by September 2nd.

VMO2 Buys £343m of Spectrum from Vodafone

Virgin Media O2 has today announced the details of its spectrum transfer agreement with Vodafone UK that will see Virgin Media O2 acquire 78.8 MHz of spectrum for an investment of £343 million, materially enhancing the company's network position and helping to improve the connectivity experience of consumers and businesses across the country. The deal, which follows the completion of the merger between Vodafone UK and Three UK, and is subject to Ofcom approval, will bring Virgin Media O2's total mobile spectrum share to approximately 30%, ensuring the UK has three scaled mobile network operators with a greater balance in terms of spectrum holdings. The acquired spectrum comprises:

- 20 MHz of 1400 MHz Supplemental Downlink
- 18.8 MHz of 2100 MHz Frequency Division Duplex
- 20 MHz of 2600 MHz Time Division Duplex
- 20 MHz of 3400 MHz Time Division Duplex

The transfer is part of a wider deal struck between Virgin Media O2 and Vodafone UK in July 2024 where the parties agreed to extend and enhance their existing mobile network sharing arrangement for more than a decade, and, following the completion of their merger VodafoneThree will now participate in that network sharing agreement. Virgin Media O2's spectrum acquisition, incremental to its existing investment of more than £2 billion in its networks and services, will bolster the quality of its mobile coverage across the country and will deliver improved services for its customers.

Businesses will also benefit, including the MVNOs who make use of Virgin Media O2's mobile network via wholesale partnerships to deliver their own mobile services to millions of people across the country. The transfer of spectrum reduces the previous imbalances in spectrum between mobile network operators in the UK, enhancing competition and allowing Virgin Media O2 to provide increased capacity, speeds and greater coverage for its customers. The spectrum will be partially funded by the minority stake sale in Cornerstone in 2024, with spectrum payments extending beyond 2025 and deployment occurring over the medium term, starting this year.

GSMA Calls for Governments to Cut Spectrum Prices

The GSMA has urged governments worldwide to reduce spectrum prices, warning that high fees are choking the telecoms industry and threatening long-term economic development. In a new report, the industry body revealed that spectrum prices have not fallen in line with

operator revenues over the past decade, limiting the ability of mobile network operators to invest in critical infrastructure. While consumer prices have declined, the overall financial burden on operators has sharply increased. According to the GSMA, cumulative global spectrum costs now account for 7% of operator revenues - a 63% rise over the last ten years. At the same time, average revenue per megahertz has dropped by up to 75% in some bands since 2014. To meet rising demand for bandwidth, operators have expanded their spectrum holdings by 80% over the same period, further driving up total costs. Consumers, meanwhile, have benefited from a significant drop in data prices. The GSMA noted that the cost of a gigabyte (GB) of data has plummeted by 96% between 2014 and 2024. GSMA Director General Vivek Badrinath said: "The mobile industry sits at the heart of the digital economy, enabling services and opportunities that transform lives. But a dollar can only be spent once, and high spectrum costs can choke investment at a time when the need for affordable, reliable connectivity has never been greater. "Governments and regulators must prioritise spectrum pricing that reflects market realities and fosters long-term digital growth. By ensuring spectrum is affordable, they can unlock faster network expansion, better service quality, and greater digital inclusion for all of their citizens."

T-Mobile, UScellular Deal Cleared After DEI Pullback

The US Department of Justice's antitrust division cleared T-Mobile US' $4.4 billion acquisition of UScellular, a decision coming a day after the purchaser ended its diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) practices. Antitrust enforcers stated that after a thorough investigation it had decided to close its investigation into the deal, first agreed in May 2024, for T-Mobile to acquire most of UScellular's wireless assets including customers, stores and 30 per cent of its spectrum. Head of the division and assistant attorney general, Gail Slater, explained its probe did raise concerns about competition in the relevant markets for mobile services and the availability of spectrum but concluded that the potential harm and offsetting benefits "do not warrant an enforcement action". She added that it became clear consumers would benefit from a stronger T-Mobile. "UScellular simply could not keep up with the escalating cost of capital investments in technology required to compete vigorously in the relevant market." More broadly, Slater said the investigation made

it clear "that we stand at a pivotal moment for the wireless industry", with the nation's big three operators accounting for more than 90 per cent of the roughly 335 million mobile subscriptions. The greenlight comes after T-Mobile announced it had ended its DEI practices, a move to better align with President Donald Trump's policies. The company is also seeking to win approval to buy a 50 per cent stake in fibre provider Metronet through a joint venture with KKR. Rival Verizon also ended its DEI programmes in May and secured approval for a $20 billion deal to buy Frontier Communications shortly after.

EU Indicates Strong Interest in AI Gigafactory Push

The European Commission (EC) revealed it received 76 expressions of interest to develop AI gigafactories across 16 European Union (EU) member states, a response which significantly surpassed its own expectations. While the regulator did not name interested companies due to confidentiality, it confirmed responses from a range of stakeholders including European and international tech companies, data center operators, telecoms providers, energy suppliers and financial investors. The respondents also outlined plans to acquire a total of at least 3 million latest-generation GPUs as part of the push. According to Reuters, EU tech chief Henna Virkkunen told a press conference that the level of interest received "exceeds far beyond our expectations", adding that it "showcases Europe's growing momentum and enthusiasm for innovating in AI in Europe". The response comes after the EC issued a call for expressions of interest, which closed on 20 June, to identify potential consortia and gather early input for the next phase of the continent's AI push. The call, which outlined plans to build across 60 proposed sites, came after the regulator earmarked €20 billion to support the construction of four AI gigafactories earlier this year. These high-capacity compute and storage facilities will support advanced AI model training and are set to play a key role in strengthening the EU's digital infrastructure. Although the consultation did not involve funding or formal commitments, it is set to shape the official call for proposals expected by the end of this year. In addition, the initiative forms part of the EU's AI Continent Action Plan and will serve as a pilot project for the regulator's competitiveness coordination tool, which aims to align policies and implementation across member states.

Telenor: No plan B for Pakistan, Exit Now

Telenor's planned exit from Pakistan is currently being held up by the country's competition authority – a delay the Nordic group argues is stagnating digital development in the South Asian nation. Speaking to Developing Telecoms, Telenor Asia head Jon Omund Revhaug said the operator no longer has the capital, nor can it foresee the scale required to fund the large capex needed to push Pakistan into the 5G era and beyond. The group is instead focusing on Asian markets where it can hold leading positions. Headquartered in Singapore, Revhaug oversees Telenor's interests in Bangladesh, Malaysia, Thailand and, for now, Pakistan. At its peak, the group's Asian footprint extended to India and Myanmar – the former exited due to similar structural challenges to those in Pakistan, and the latter abandoned following a military coup which made operations untenable, with demands from the junta to install spyware on the network. Now, Telenor is focused on further withdrawing from South Asia. Taking charge of this latest divestment is Revhaug, a 25-year Telenor veteran who has worked across its global footprint, particularly in Asia. He played a key role in major recent mergers, including the creation of CelcomDigi in Malaysia and True Corporation in Thailand. Telenor also maintains its original foray into Asia with Grameenphone in Bangladesh. West of Bangladesh, Revhaug is leading the execution of Telenor's modernisation and efficiency strategy. In 2023, the group announced its intention to sell its Pakistani unit to Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL), which operates the Ufone brand. "We were quite early in understanding that this growth was going to flatten, and we needed to think differently to manage this portfolio of assets," said Revhaug. "We established a phase of modernisation to drive efficiency across our operations." He explained that the group anticipated slowing growth as far back as 2017, when market trends began shifting from voice to data – a change that required "significant investments in infrastructure over time" to stay competitive. Telenor, he said, will only remain in markets where it sees a clear path to becoming a top-two operator. Pakistan, after extensive evaluation, was deemed too challenging. While a merger – as had been pursued in Malaysia and Thailand – was considered, Revhaug conceded: "We did not find a solution that would lead us to a number one position [in Pakistan]." According to the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, Jazz led the market in May with around 74 million monthly mobile subscribers, followed by China Mobile-owned Zong with 52 million. Telenor ranked third with 44 million, while PTCL's Ufone had 27 million. A merger between Telenor and Ufone would create a stronger rival to Jazz and introduce much-needed competition, with the scale and capital to invest in future infrastructure, argued Revhaug.

Somalia's National Communications Authority Signs MOUs with Malaysian Communications and CyberSecurity Malaysia

The National Communications Authority (NCA) of Somalia has signed two separate Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) and CyberSecurity Malaysia, aiming to enhance collaboration in digital regulation, technical cooperation, and cybersecurity. The first MOU, signed with MCMC, focuses on cooperation in areas such as 5G technical frameworks, policy exchange, and experience sharing to improve institutional capacity. This agreement lays the foundation for broader engagement on regulatory best practices and digital sector development. The second MOU, signed with CyberSecurity Malaysia, outlines joint efforts to address shared cybersecurity challenges. The cooperation covers preventing and responding to cyber incidents, exchanging threat intelligence, building capacity through certification programs, collaborating on cyber diplomacy, and engaging in the Global ACE country chapter. During the signing ceremony with MCMC, YBhg. Tan Sri Mohamad Salim bin Fateh Din highlighted the importance of international partnerships in advancing regulatory excellence. He welcomed the MOU as a platform for continuous technical exchange and mutual learning. Mr. Mustafa Yaasin Sheik, Director General of NCA, emphasized the agreement's timeliness and practicality, stating that it will enhance Somalia's digital transformation. At the CyberSecurity Malaysia ceremony, Dato' Ts. Dr. Haji Amirudin Bin Abdul Wahab celebrated the partnership, describing it as an important step toward building resilience against emerging cyber threats. Mr. Mustafa Yaasin Sheik expressed gratitude for CyberSecurity Malaysia's expertise and collaborative spirit, noting that such cooperation is essential for Somalia's cyber readiness.

The MOUs were signed by Mr. Mustafa Yaasin Sheik, Director General of NCA, along with YBhg. Tan Sri Mohamad Salim bin Fateh Din, Chairman of MCMC, for the digital cooperation agreement, and Dato' Ts. Dr. Haji Amirudin Bin Abdul Wahab, Chief Executive Officer of CyberSecurity Malaysia, for the cybersecurity agreement. These partnerships reflect NCA's commitment to strengthening Somalia's digital and regulatory landscape through collaboration with global peers and the adoption of international best practices.

Take a Lean Approach to Telco Business Growth

IT solutions approved by CTOs, trusted by leaders

- **Business Support System**
- **5G Monetization**
- **IoT**
- **Wholesale & Partner Management**
- **Software Development & Data Processing Tools**

100%

successful track record in telecom transformation projects

220+

million end-customers touched by our solutions

nexign

nexign.com

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

Algeria

Ooredoo Algeria has secured a license to establish and operate a public 5G mobile network, marking a major milestone in the company's commitment to innovation and the modernization of Algeria's telecommunications sector. The announcement was made in Algiers by the Competitive Tender Commission of the Regulatory Authority for Post and Electronic Communications (ARPCE) during a public session held under Article 15 of Executive Decree No. 01-124 dated May 9, 2001. Following a rigorous evaluation process based on technical and financial criteria, Ooredoo Algeria—operating under the name Wataniya Telecom Algeria—ranked second among bidders and was awarded the license to launch the fifth-generation network and related services. This achievement positions Ooredoo to introduce transformative 5G technology into Algeria's digital ecosystem, offering ultra-fast speeds, low latency, and intelligent connectivity. The new network is expected to revolutionize connectivity for citizens, businesses, and institutions while acting as a catalyst for economic growth and digital development across vital sectors such as healthcare, education, Industry 4.0, transportation, and smart cities.

(July 7, 2025) www.meatechwatch.com

Bahrain

Dr. Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications of Bahrain, announced the Kingdom's endorsement of Adel Darwish's candidacy for Deputy Secretary General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The Minister highlighted that this nomination underscores Bahrain's dedication to enhancing its role in international forums and supporting national leaders in global organizations. He expressed confidence in Bahrain's national expertise and their capacity to contribute meaningfully to global digital transformation and guide the ITU's strategic mission to connect the world via secure, sustainable, and inclusive technologies. Adel Darwish brings extensive experience in digital policy and telecommunications regulation, currently serving as Director of the ITU's Regional Office for the Arab States. Backed by the Gulf Cooperation Council and other Arab nations, his candidacy focuses on helping the ITU navigate the digital era and foster inclusive, sustainable digital economies through enhanced international collaboration.

(July 11, 2025) www.meatechwatch.com

General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Minister of Interior and Chairman of the Ministerial Committee for Information and Communication Technology (MCICT), chaired a high-level committee meeting attended by ministers and key government officials from various sectors including Foreign Affairs, Transportation and Telecommunications, Cabinet Affairs, Education, Industry and Commerce, Legal Affairs, and Labour. The Interior Minister highlighted Bahrain's significant progress in digital transformation, attributing advancements to the directives of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to leverage modern technology for community service and sustainable digital development. He praised the ongoing support from His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, whose initiatives have enhanced government service efficiency and positioned Bahrain as a global leader in the United Nations e-Government Index. The committee reviewed key agenda topics including a briefing on ICT projects within the diplomatic sector, an executive plan focused on protecting consumers from electronic fraud and fraudulent transactions to boost e-commerce confidence, and draft legislation related to the MCICT scheduled for 2025 government legislative plans. A presentation was also made on a unified template guide for government websites to standardize digital service delivery.

(July 4, 2025) www.meatechwatch.com

Bangladesh

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) has allowed mobile operators to import and sell SIM card-based warless routers and modems in the local market, potentially creating the scope for money laundering. The telecom regulator, however, said the approval has been given to the mobile operators to improve access to internet services in remote areas and help roll out 5G services across the country. Posts and Telecommunications Minister Mustafa Jabbar expressed his discontent with the decision as it is not the job of the mobile companies to import and sell modems and internet routers. Internet Service Providers Association of Bangladesh (ISPAB) also strongly opposed the decision, as it might create the scope for money laundering in addition to harming their business. The BTRC gave the approval after the telecom operators sought permission to import USB modems and routers for selling in the local market. BTRC Director General Brigadier General Mohammad Moniruzzaman Jewel told the Daily Sun that they have given the approval in line with the government's policy to roll out 5G services across the country. "I hope this will not create any scope for money laundering," he added. The telecom operators are selling SIM card-based modems for long from third parties. But they are not permitted to import modems and routers. ISPAB general secretary Nazmul Karim Bhuiyan told the Daily Sun that they have already submitted a written statement to the BTRC, requesting the regulator to refrain from giving such approval to mobile operations as it will harm their business and create a scope for money laundering.

"This is not a realistic decision. It will pave the way for mobile operators to launder money abroad. We will officially protest against it after getting the letter from the BTRC," he said. ISPAB director Jakir Hossain said, "The mobile operators are foreign companies and the BTRC has failed to realise long due payments from those companies. Now BTRC is giving them a scope to launder money abroad." Mobile operators have informed BTRC that their routers will not be connected with wires as broadband routers do. The SIM-based routers will connect to the mobile network through access frequency that has been allocated for the mobile operators. ISPAB said that such devices are fixed in nature and in direct competition with their products and services.

(July 312, 2025) www.daily-sun.com

Egypt

The National Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (NTRA) confirmed the suspension of approximately 60,000 mobile devices suspected of violating rules related to phones brought into the country by travelers. The devices were flagged through NTRA's electronic monitoring system, launched on 1 January 2025, which has so far exempted 650,000 mobile phones under the policy allowing each traveler to bring one device duty-free via official customs channels. A recent review revealed that 13,000 devices obtained exemptions illegally, violating customs and regulatory procedures; these remain suspended. Meanwhile, 47,000 devices were verified as eligible and have been reactivated. Under current regulations from NTRA and the Egyptian Customs Authority, travelers may bring one mobile phone for personal use without taxation if declared upon arrival. The mobile phone governance system aims to regulate device registration and taxation, as well as curb smuggling of unregistered phones into Egypt.

(July 31, 2025) www.meatechwatch.com

The Egyptian Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), led by Minister Amr Talaat, has unveiled the Second Edition of Egypt's National Artificial Intelligence Strategy (2025–2030), marking a major step in the country's digital transformation. The strategy aims to position Egypt as a strategic AI innovation hub connecting Africa, the Arab world, and global technology ecosystems. The updated national roadmap is structured around six pillars: Governance, Technology, Data, Infrastructure, Ecosystem, and Talent. It targets raising ICT's GDP contribution to 7.7%, establishing over 250 AI-driven startups, and training more than 30,000 AI specialists by 2030. The government is also focused on developing regulatory standards and data governance frameworks to ensure AI's secure and inclusive deployment. In parallel, Egypt is strengthening global partnerships and investments. Capgemini is opening an AI Center of Excellence in Cairo to scale generative AI solutions globally, aiming to double its Egyptian workforce to over 1,200 by end-2025. Microsoft has pledged to train and certify 100,000 people in AI technologies, supporting national talent development initiatives. These efforts signal Egypt's evolution from an AI participant to a regional leader, emphasizing infrastructure, education, and regulation to drive digital transformation across the MENA region and beyond. Minister Talaat highlighted the strategy as a practical blueprint to accelerate Egypt's AI-driven growth and regional influence.

(July 16, 2025) www.meatechwatch.com

Iraq

Iraq's Ministry of Communications announced a major leap in internet usage over the last five years. The ministry said that, based on official data from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the penetration reached a record 82.9% of the population by the end of 2024, up from just 44.3% in 2019. It affirmed a commitment to launching additional development initiatives and infrastructure projects in partnership with both public and private sectors, aimed at advancing Iraq's digital transformation and building a modern, integrated telecommunications network.

(July 14,2025) www.shafaq.com

Jordan

Prince Hussein marked a proud milestone in modernizing Jordan's healthcare system. The Crown Prince of Jordan took to his official Instagram account to share a joyful update, revealing that he has inaugurated the country's first-ever digital health center. He noted that the center will help bridge the gaps in rare medical fields while reducing the burden on patients. Proudly announcing the major launch, Prince Hussein captioned, "Proud to inaugurate the Jordan Digital Health Center, a milestone in modernizing healthcare services." He continued, "By providing telemedicine and smart resource management systems, the center helps bridge gaps in rare medical specialties while saving patients time and effort." During his visit, the Jordanian Prince looked handsome in a blue suit with a matching tie as he explored the center and learnt about the innovative systems and services. The future King's latest initiative earner him immense praise and appreciation from fans, who shared their support through comments. "May Allah protect and take care of you, His Highness the Prince," wished one. Another admired, "A quality achievement befits Your Highness's vision for the future of Jordan, where technology meets human service. The Digital Health Center is a pioneering step that reflects your concern for the development of the medical sector and making the lives of citizens easier. We are proud of you and all that you do for the country." Prince Hussein is the eldest child of King Abdullah II and Queen Rania, and the first in the line to the Jordanian throne.

(July 30, 2025) www.jang.com.pk

Kuwait

The Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) of Kuwait announced the launch of 5G Advanced technology, marking a significant upgrade to the country's digital infrastructure and a foundational step toward future 6G deployment. Acting Chairman Sheikh Athbi Jaber Al-Sabah stated that 5G Advanced delivers speeds up to 3 Gbps with low latency, representing a major leap forward for Kuwait's telecom sector. CITRA is collaborating with telecom providers to establish a supportive regulatory framework, enabling public and private sectors to capitalize on investment opportunities in digital infrastructure. Kuwait is among the first countries worldwide to adopt 5G Advanced, reinforcing its leadership in cutting-edge technologies and its status as a regional digital hub.

(July 1, 2025) www.meatechwatch.com

The Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) has unveiled draft regulations aimed at governing mobile and virtual telecommunications service distributors, crucial intermediaries delivering services on behalf of licensed telecom operators. This initiative seeks to enhance transparency, governance, and service quality in Kuwait's rapidly evolving telecom sector. The draft, titled "Regulations for Mobile and Virtual Telecommunications Services Distributors," is currently open for public consultation, emphasizing CITRA's participatory approach. Stakeholders—including telecom operators, legal experts, and distributors—are invited to provide feedback to ensure balanced regulation that encourages investment while facilitating ease of doing business. Key licensing requirements for authorized distributors include having a valid commercial license, operational presence with at least ten branches, formal agreements with telecom operators, workforce quota compliance, submission of detailed business and technical plans, and payment of a KWD 5,000 non-refundable fee plus a bank guarantee. Licenses will be valid for one year and processed within 21 business days. The draft outlines obligations for telecom providers, mandating exclusive collaboration with CITRA-licensed distributors, system integration,

regular reporting, service activation controls, and transparency in commission structures. Authorized distributors must comply with strict operational standards including prohibitions on subcontracting, employee identification, cybersecurity measures, and surveillance at points of sale. General provisions stipulate shared accountability for regulatory compliance, mandatory integration with CITRA's monitoring systems, and Authority oversight over contractual changes. CITRA positions itself as the sole authority approving service allocations and regulating pricing, underscoring its commitment to fostering fair competition and an investor-friendly telecom environment. The consultation period allows industry and public input before finalizing the regulation, marking a significant step in modernizing Kuwait's telecom distribution framework. (June 11, 2025) www.meatechwatch.com

The Acting Chairman of the Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority, Sheikh Athbi Jaber Al-Sabah, met with the Secretary-General of the Digital Cooperation Organization (DCO), Deemah Al Yahya, to discuss ways to enhance joint cooperation in related fields. CITRA stated in a press release that the meeting addressed issues related to digital transformation and ways to strengthen the partnership between the State of Kuwait and the member states of the organization, within the framework of supporting regional and international cooperation in the field of the digital economy. The statement added that the meeting included discussions about Kuwait's upcoming presidency of the organization's council in 2025, and coordination efforts to provide technical and technological support to relevant entities to ensure a successful term and continued collaboration. It was noted that Kuwait, one of the founding members of the Digital Cooperation Organization and represented by the Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority, will chair the next General Assembly meeting at the beginning of 2026. In February, Kuwait assumed the presidency of the fifth session of the DCO General Assembly for the year 2025, taking over from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, which chaired the fourth session in 2024.

(May 12, 2025) www. citra.gov.kw

Morocco

Following a public tender launched by the National Telecommunications Regulatory Agency (ANRT), Morocco's three leading telecom operators—Maroc Telecom (Itissalat Al-Maghrib), Orange (Médi Telecom), and Wana Corporate (INWI)—have been granted 5G licenses, the agency announced. The decision received final approval from Morocco's Head of Government, Aziz Akhannouch, after a thorough review by the ANRT Board of Directors and evaluation of operator applications. Each operator committed to accelerating 5G rollout nationwide through significant investments, network expansion, and improved service quality, with total projected investment and operational costs expected to reach nearly MAD 80 billion by 2035. In the evaluation, both Maroc Telecom and Wana Corporate scored 87 points, while Médi Telecom scored 85. Maroc Telecom will pay MAD 900 million (including tax) for 120 MHz of spectrum, whereas Médi Telecom and Wana Corporate will each pay MAD 600 million for 70 MHz. The operators pledged to cover 45% of Morocco's population with 5G services by 2026 and 85% by 2030, coinciding with Morocco's co-hosting of the 2030 FIFA World Cup alongside Portugal and Spain. The six World Cup host cities are targeted for full 5G coverage. 5G technology offers download speeds up to 100 times faster than 4G and latency as low as 1 millisecond. Morocco currently boasts one of Africa's highest internet penetration rates at 90.7%.

(July 29, 2025) www.meatechwatch.com

Amal El Fallah Seghrouchni, Deputy Minister in charge of Digital Transition and Administrative Reform, highlighted the critical importance of integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into national strategies to safeguard sovereignty during the opening of Morocco's first National AI Conference. She emphasized that AI is no longer a distant future concept but a present reality already reshaping vital sectors. Seghrouchni explained that AI is transforming social protection, education, health, finance, and urban planning—challenging traditional principles of equity, efficiency, reliability, and sovereignty. She urged that AI be recognized not merely as a technical tool but as a core institutional responsibility requiring a fundamental rethink of public sector operations and the rebuilding of trust between citizens and the state. Addressing the rapid evolution of AI, the minister stressed a dual responsibility: avoiding outdated administrative models while maintaining agility to realign national strategies such as the Digital Morocco 2030 plan toward full AI integration. She also highlighted AI's paradoxical nature, with the power either to reinforce inequalities or to promote social justice and equitable access to opportunities and resources. Drawing on Morocco's strategic position within Africa, Seghrouchni framed AI as both a global technological race and a matter of symbolic and material sovereignty, where global power balances are being redefined. She concluded by calling for a sovereign, nation-level approach to AI governance driven by a genuine will for reform and courageous leadership, enabling artificial intelligence to serve as a true catalyst for Morocco's sustainable development.

(July 3, 2025) www.meatechwatch.com

Oman

Oman's Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) has announced the successful completion of network readiness preparations in Dhofar Governorate ahead of the Khareef Dhofar Season 2025. This upgrade ensures enhanced telecommunications quality and uninterrupted connectivity during one of the country's peak tourist seasons. The Khareef season attracts large numbers of visitors to the region, placing increased demand on communication networks. TRA's proactive measures aim to provide reliable service for residents and tourists alike, supporting the digital experience throughout this busy period. (July 23, 2025) www.meatechwatch.com

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) of Oman has launched a media campaign to raise awareness about the critical role of proper internal wiring in ensuring high-quality telecommunications services within residential and commercial buildings. Poor internal wiring is a leading cause of complaints from subscribers across Oman's governorates. The TRA emphasizes adherence to its technical guidelines, which vary by building type—single-storey residences, multi-storey buildings, commercial properties, and residential complexes—to guarantee reliable internal network infrastructure. The guidelines recommend the use of Category 6 (CAT-6) or higher copper cables, dedicated wiring for Wi-Fi access points, and RJ45 connections for smart home devices in single-storey buildings. For multi-storey and large buildings, the TRA advises installing main and floor distribution boxes or communication rooms to support extensive connectivity needs. Commercial and residential complexes must incorporate dedicated communication rooms connected via fibre optic cables to ensure fast, efficient data transmission. Proper internal wiring supports Oman's digital transformation by enabling robust communications infrastructure, essential for smart home integration and the growing demand for advanced telecommunications and digital services. Failure to comply with these standards risks poor service coverage and diminished user experience. (July 17, 2025) www.meatechwatch.com

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) of Oman has carried out a series of coordinated field inspections targeting unauthorized wireless networks that redistribute internet services without official licenses. These actions form part of ongoing efforts to protect the security and stability of Oman's telecommunications infrastructure and to preserve service quality for users. According to a TRA statement, the inspections were prompted by the detection of multiple violations that threaten information security and compromise the integrity of communication networks. Unauthorized networks reportedly cause technical interference, degrade service speed and quality in nearby areas, and expose users' personal data to risks such as misuse and hacking. The authority emphasized that it is taking strict measures against violators, including the removal of unauthorized equipment and the initiation of legal proceedings in partnership with other relevant agencies. TRA also urged individuals and institutions to adhere to telecommunications regulations and avoid setting up or using unlicensed communication networks. The authority reaffirmed its commitment to ongoing inspection campaigns to ensure a safe, secure, and reliable telecommunications environment throughout the sultanate. (July 9, 2025) www.meatechwatch.com

Pakistan

The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) is intensifying efforts to improve the country's telecommunications landscape by implementing key policies focused on service quality and regulatory oversight. A major component of this initiative is a partnership with Opensignal, a global network analytics firm, which will supply real-time, crowdsourced data on critical network performance indicators such as 4G/5G speeds, latency, coverage gaps, and user experience. This approach aligns with International Telecommunication Union (ITU) standards and global best practices to ensure reliable, high-speed connectivity for Pakistani consumers. In addition, PTA has introduced updated Satellite Communications Regulations developed by the Pakistan Space Activities Regulatory Board (PSARB). These new rules require all foreign satellite internet providers to submit formal applications and obtain operational licenses from PTA before launching services. The regulations also include enhanced security provisions prompted by recent regional tensions. The collaboration with Opensignal will support continuous monitoring and improvements of telecom Quality of Service (QoS) and Quality of Experience (QoE) nationwide. The licensing framework has caused delays in the deployment of satellite internet services like Starlink but is expected to facilitate the entry of multiple providers by year-end, advancing Pakistan's digital connectivity within a secure, well-regulated environment. (July 17, 2025) www.meatechwatch.com

Pakistan's Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, met with a high-level delegation from Meta led by Sarim Aziz, Director of South and Central Asia Public Policy, to explore opportunities for advancing digitalisation and artificial intelligence (AI) in the public sector. The discussions focused on promoting AI-driven governance, service delivery, and capacity building aligned with the government's Digital Pakistan vision.

Minister Khawaja emphasized Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's commitment to a cashless economy and building a digitally empowered society where emerging technologies are key drivers of economic transformation. Meta briefed the minister on its latest AI developments, including LLaMA open-source models, generative AI applications for public services, and local language AI models such as Urdu. (July 11, 2025) www.meatechwatch.com

The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) delegation, led by Chairman PTA, Major General (R) Hafeez Ur Rehman, representing the Pakistan, held a high-level bilateral meeting with the Global Digital Inclusion Partnership (GDIP) on the sidelines of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) 2025. The meeting, held in light of the signed Letter of Cooperation between the two organizations, was attended by GDIP Executive Director Ms. Onica N. Makwakwa. During the session, both parties reaffirmed their shared commitment to advancing inclusive digital ecosystems, with a strong emphasis on gender-responsive policies and equitable access. The PTA provided comprehensive updates on its ongoing initiatives, including the progress of the Gender Digital Divide program and the successful execution plan for the upcoming Subsea Cables Workshop. The discussions also explored enhanced collaboration under the Gender Inclusion Strategy and identified new avenues for joint efforts to drive meaningful connectivity and digital empowerment. PTA remains dedicated to fostering inclusive, sustainable digital transformation through impactful global partnerships.

(June 24, 2025) www.pta.gov.pk

Qatar

The Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA) has opened a public consultation to seek feedback on the updated Retail Tariff Instruction (RTI) 2025. This consultation is part of CRA's ongoing efforts to develop regulatory frameworks and adapt to changes in the telecommunications sector. The updated version builds on the original Decision of the President of the CRA No. (3) of 2018, issuing the Retail Tariff Instruction which laid the foundation for Qatar's retail tariff regulatory framework and has been in force since January 1, 2019. The RTI applies to all licensed service providers who offer telecom services to the public in Qatar. It sets out rules, procedures, and requirements for retail offers for telecommunications services. The 2025 revision introduces several important updates, drawing on the experience accumulated by the CRA in the process of retail tariff regulation since the RTI came into force, and aligning with international best practice. These include enhanced tariff classification, stricter provisions on service periods and exit penalties, clearer guidance for promotional and bespoke tariffs, and expanded reporting requirements for loyalty programs. And expanding the flexibility in providing a variety of services, enhancing consumer value while ensuring regulatory compliance. By allowing the CRA to review each service provider's retail offers before they are introduced into the market, and instructing service providers on the extent and type of information that must be published for each offer, the RTI ensures consumers are equipped with the information they need to make informed purchasing decisions. In 2024 alone, CRA reviewed over 350 tariff submissions, covering pricing, service durations, promotional terms, and exit conditions.

(July 13, 2025) www.cra.gov.qa

Saudi Arabia

The Communications, Space and Technology Commission (CST) has announced the organization of a comprehensive accompanying event on the sidelines of the Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR25), set to take place at the King Abdulaziz Conference Center in Riyadh from August 31 to September 3, 2025. In this regard, Mr. Saeed Al-Ghamdi, Assistant Deputy Governor for Corporate Communications and Marketing, stated, "This side event is a key expression of global engagement, offering a dynamic platform to showcase regulatory innovation and share insights on the future of digital regulation and emerging technologies. It reflects CST's commitment to expanding international collaboration and reinforcing the Kingdom's position as a leading advocate for sustainable digital regulation." The side event kicks off on August 31 with the launch of the 10th edition of Media Oasis, developed in partnership with the Ministry of Media. This interactive space will feature pavilions highlighting major national initiatives, cutting-edge regulatory technologies (RegTech), and innovations from leading local and international companies in the ICT and Space sectors. It will also showcase success stories from Saudi startups in artificial intelligence and host Sync Digital Wellbeing Summit by Ithra. TEDxRiyadh will follow on September 2 as part of the broader event program. This globally recognized platform will spotlight powerful ideas and transformative stories across fields such as technology and artificial intelligence, with a focus on placing people at the heart of regulatory design. Discussions will explore the human dimension of innovation and its wider societal impact. As a whole, the event extends CST's efforts to position the Kingdom as a global hub for innovation and digital regulation. It contributes to the goals of the digital economy, promotes long-term digital sustainability, strengthens next-generation infrastructure, and empowers technologies that connect humanity.

(July 24, 2025) www.cst.gov.sa

Saudi Arabia wins an award and 3 certificates of excellence at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum, organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) partnering with a number of UN regulators, which is being held in Geneva, Switzerland. The Kingdom's innovative projects were recognized for their excellence after competing with over (194) countries. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, represented by the Ministry of Education, has won the grand prize in the field of e-learning for its national platform "Madrasati." The platform, a comprehensive digital learning management system for general education, is designed to enable all forms of digital education, enhance educational quality, and enrich learning experiences. Serving more than 6 million students and approximately 500,000 teachers across the Kingdom, "Madrasati" stands as a key pillar in Saudi Arabia's efforts to advance digital transformation in education. Saudi Arabia also earned three certificates of excellence for the following projects: - The Technical Enablement program for non-profit organizations, submitted by STC which aims to digitally empower the third sector through advanced free solutions, enabling organizations to focus on delivering impact rather than operational challenges, and helping them scale services to achieve sustainable change. – the International AI Olympiad, submitted by SDAIA, this global competition was organized in collaboration with international centers and under the auspices of UNESCO in Slovenia. It featured 90 students from 25 countries, with 36 students winning medals. – The AI Platform for Animal Health, submitted by the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture, this platform uses AI to analyze veterinary disease data across the Kingdom, helping forecast future outbreaks and enabling clinics and the ministry to take preventive action while also raising awareness among farmers. These achievements reflect the advancement of Saudi Arabia's digital infrastructure in the communications and technology sector, the enablement of national talent, and the Kingdom's ability to keep pace with rapid global developments across key sectors including government services, healthcare, education, and entertainment, all with the unlimited support of the Kingdom's leadership.

(July 7, 2025) www.cst.gov.sa

Sri Lanka

Ookla Research published a study of in-flight Wi-Fi. It found that Hawaiian Airlines and Qatar Airways far outperformed other air carriers in their in-flight download and upload speeds. It is by no coincidence, Ookla says, that both Hawaiian and Qatar use SpaceX Starlink as their flight connectivity service provider. The report also found that Starlink far outperforms other providers with speeds roughly double those of its next-fastest competitors.

(July 1, 2025) www.fierce-network.com

Dialog Axiata PLC, Sri Lanka's leading connectivity provider, has been honored as the Most Loved Service Brand and the Most Loved Telecommunication Brand in Sri Lanka for 2025 by LMD magazine. This marks the second consecutive year Dialog has earned both titles, reaffirming its commitment to exceptional customer experiences and innovation. The recognition is based on an independent study by PepperCube Consultants commissioned by LMD, where 400 readers from diverse provinces across Sri Lanka voted on brands that inspire trust, loyalty, and emotional connection. Lasantha Theverapperuma, Group Chief Marketing Officer at Dialog Axiata, expressed pride in the achievement, highlighting the company's dedication to inclusive, future-ready connectivity and digital services that enrich millions of lives nationwide. Dialog thanked its customers and LMD readers for their ongoing support and pledged to continue leading Sri Lanka's digital transformation with excellence and innovation.

(June 24, 2025) www.meatechwatch.com

Turkey

Turkey is set to release the long-anticipated tender for 5G network services in August as part of its efforts to modernize digital infrastructure. Transport and Infrastructure Minister Abdulkadir Uraloğlu announced that 5G services are expected to become operational by 2026. The initial rollout will prioritize densely populated provinces, following a similar phased approach used during the 4.5G network expansion. The government has engaged extensively with telecom operators and public institutions to coordinate the transition, conducting both individual and group discussions with operators. The tender's launch was delayed from earlier planned dates in 2023 and 2024 due to unfavorable market conditions. Turkey's mobile subscriber base currently stands at 94.3 million, with a penetration rate exceeding 110%, according to the national telecom regulator. (July 3, 2025) www.meatechwatch.com

The Transport and Infrastructure Minister said that the country was hoping to hold a tender for 5G network services in August 2025 adding that the mobile communication service was expected to start next year. I think we will hold this tender in August if there are no issues," Minister Abdulkadir Uraloglu told reporters in Istanbul during a briefing. Instead of covering the entire country in the first stage, I think we will cover the densely populated provinces (first) and roll out this process gradually within the framework of the program, this was the case in 4.5G as well," he added.

(June 22, 2025) www.indiatimes.com

SUBEX

READY TO OPTIMIZE YOUR CAPEX SPENDINGS?

Explore the 5 strategies of
Fixed Asset Registry (FAR) reconciliation
and boost your asset ROI

Download the Guide Now!

REGULATORY ACTIVITIES BEYOND THE SA-ME-NA REGION

Argentina

The Argentinian government has again raised concerns over operator Telecom Argentina's plan to acquire rival Telefónica Móviles Argentina and the possibility of a two-player market. Following a review by the National Commission for the Defence of Competition (CNDC), the country's Secretariat of Industry and Commerce (SIyC) has issued an official objection to the merger, warning that the deal, which would give Telecom Argentina full control of Telefónica's operations in Argentina, could seriously harm competition in the telecom sector. Telefonica provides mobile and fixed telephony, fixed broadband and pay TV services nationwide under the Movistar and Tuenti brands. Telecom operates in the fixed and mobile telephony, high-speed internet access and cable television segments. One of CNDC's worries is that the merger will result in the elimination of one of the country's three main mobile phone operators, leaving only two players: Telecom would have about 58% of the market. AMX (Claro), would have 42%. The merger would also put Telecom Argentina over the legal spectrum cap of 140 MHz in all areas. In addition, however, in 114 areas the telecom giant could control over 40% of the internet market. In 143, it could dominate fixed phone services. However, some parts of the country could see near-monopolies. In corporate telecommunications services, meanwhile, the combined market share, at over 50%, could be detrimental to competition in a strategic segment, according to CNDC. Bundled services could also be hit, with Telecom, potentially, the only player able offer nationwide quad-play packages that include mobile telephony, internet, pay TV, and fixed telephony. Of course, these concerns have been expressed before. In March the US$1.245 billion, deal, agreed in February, was put on hold, apparently by order of Argentina's government. As for the next move, it seems a special hearing to analyze possible measures to mitigate the potential negative effects of the merger on competition has been proposed. According to one news source, Telecom has been given fifteen days to present ways to mitigate the risks CNDC has highlighted and present them at the hearing.

(June 23, 2025) www.developingtelecoms.com

Australia

Betfair Pty Limited has paid a $871,660 penalty after sending commercial messages that did not comply with Australia's spam laws to its VIP customers. An Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) investigation found Betfair sent 148 emails and text messages between March and December 2024 to customers who had not consented or had withdrawn their consent to receive such messages. The investigation also found that Betfair sent six text messages and emails over the same period that did not contain an option for customers to unsubscribe. The messages were sent to members of a Betfair VIP program, offering inducements such as account deposits and free tickets to events. Authority Member Samantha Yorke said the ACMA has no tolerance for non-compliance with the Spam Act in the gambling sector, including were messages target VIP customers. "VIP programs are generally designed to attract and retain customers with high betting activity; however, this doesn't mean VIP customers are well off or can afford losses," Ms. Yorke said. "Sending promotional gambling messages to these customers without consent or with no option to opt-out is incredibly irresponsible in addition to being non-compliant." "The spam laws have been in place for over twenty years, and it is simply unacceptable for businesses not to respect the rights of their customers."

(July 30, 2025) www.acma.gov.au

Bolivia

The National Telecommunications Company (Entel) has begun a 5G test phase in "experience zones" around the country in preparation for the expected official rollout in the second half of 2025. The experimentation spaces are located in strategic locations in each capital of Bolivia's nine departments such as airports, business areas, markets, and other high-traffic spaces. The tests are being conducted in the 3.5 GHz band after the Telecommunications and Transport Regulation and Taxation Authority (ATT) allocated 100 MHz of spectrum for the experience zones. In December 2024, ATT established the country's first 5G laboratory to experiment and develop projects related to this technology and facilitate its implementation. "We have a journey from GSM to 3G and 4G technology, which has really seen a directly proportional change," ATT director Néstor Ríos said last September, according to Bolivian financial media outlet Economy. "These advances give us grounds to already think about preparing for the adoption of 5G technology for the 2025 management,

with a reasonable spectrum cost." During this test phase, Entel's technical team will evaluate the operation of the 5G network with the objective of determining the conditions for a future technical-commercial offer that responds to the real needs of users. The state-owned company's initiative follows the digital transformation policies promoted by the national government to promote technological inclusion and equitable access to networks, according to Entel. Currently, 5G is not yet offered commercially in Bolivia, and the population relies on 4G and 3G networks, where infrastructure is limited outside urban centers. Last year, Entel reached 6.6 million mobile telephony and Internet access users in Bolivia, representing more than half of the country's total population.

(July 30, 2025) www.datacenterdynamics.com

Canada

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission held firm on its previous decision that Telus, Bell and Rogers are allowed to expand into each others' fiber networks where they don't already have their own infrastructure. Canada's telecom regulator has upheld its decision allowing large telecoms to resell internet services through rivals' fibre networks, siding with arguments made by Telus Corp. T-T +0.55%increase in a long-running policy debate over competition in the sector. The verdict prompted strong reactions from other companies and industry groups opposed to the decision, with some calling for Ottawa to intervene. Given the steep cost of building infrastructure, the fibre wholesale framework was designed to improve internet affordability and competition by giving new market entrants an opportunity to piggyback on existing networks. The government previously required three carriers – BCE Inc.'s Bell Canada, Telus and SaskTel – to give competitors access to their fibre networks at regulator-set rates. The latest question under review was whether, in addition to smaller regional companies, the country's three largest carriers would be allowed to take advantage of the mandated rates as well. The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission reaffirmed its 2024 decision that Telus, Bell and Rogers could expand into each others' fibre networks where they don't already have their own infrastructure. This means that Telus, whose network is primarily in the West, can expand over Bell's networks in the East, and vice versa. Rogers has cable infrastructure spanning the country, so it is excluded from accessing the mandated rates near-nationally. The company has some fibre, but it is not yet being required to grant competitors access to it. The CRTC said several thousand Canadian households have already purchased new internet plans offered by dozens of providers using the access enabled by the framework. "Changing course now would reverse the benefits of this increased competition and would prevent more Canadians from having new choices of ISPs in the future," the CRTC said. The policy debate created a rare industry split that saw nearly every one of the country's largest telecoms in agreement and only one major carrier, Telus, split from the rest. The country's biggest telecoms have been facing pressure because of high debt loads and the mature market's overall slowdown. In CRTC proceedings, Telus had argued it should be allowed to resell on SaskTel's and Bell's networks, saying that where an incumbent operates outside of its network area, it is acting as a new competitor to the potential benefit of consumers. The Eastern Canadian market that Telus will now have increased access to is about three times larger than its own Western Canadian footprint, Royal Bank of Canada analyst Drew McReynolds said in an investor note. In a statement, Telus said the decision reinforces the independence of expert regulators. The Competition Bureau also supported incumbents accessing their competitors' networks, saying the benefits outweighed the risks.

(June 23, 2025) www.theglobeandmail.com

China

China launched a new group of low-Earth orbit satellites for its satellite internet project from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in north China's Shanxi Province, CGTN reports. The satellites were sent into space aboard a Long March-6A carrier rocket and entered their designated orbit, marking a complete success for the mission. This launch marked the 585th flight of the Long March rocket series. As reported previously, the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) unveiled the ScienceOne model at the 2025 World Artificial Intelligence Conference, marking a significant advance in AI-driven research innovation.

(July 29, 2025) www.qazinform.com

Chinese mobile operators added 235,000 5G base stations in the first five months of 2025, taking their combined total to nearly 4.5 million, data from the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology showed. The total 5G deployments accounted for 35.3 per cent of all base stations in the country. Operators ended 2024 with more than 6 million LTE base stations. China Mobile, the world's largest mobile player by subscribers, plans to add 340,000 5G base stations this year, increasing its count to 2.8 million. The country closed March with nearly 1.1 billion 5G network subscribers, with China Mobile alone adding 90 million year-on-year in Q1 for a total of 578 million. The global 5G base station count is

estimated at about 10 million. India had about 470,000 5G base stations at end-February, the Ministry of Communications reported. The country's 5G subscribers totaled 290 million at end-2024. Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel started rolling out 5G services in October 2022. Chinese operators launched 5G services in late 2019. (June 26, 2025) www.mobileworldlive.com

Colombia

Colombia has launched a new digital security strategy as part of efforts to create a more resilient digital environment. While presenting the strategy, ICT minister Julián Molina said that Colombia was subject to 36bn cyberattacks last year, making it the second most attacked country in Latin America. "We must be an effective and efficient shield to prevent the success of these attacks," Molina said, adding that 32bn attacks were blocked. According to Molina, 76% of attacks targeted the institutional system. The strategy was developed by the national digital security committee with support from the Organization of American States' cybersecurity group. The absence of an entity to coordinate digital security has resulted in the fragmentation of initiatives and a dispersion of resources, according to the document laying out the strategy. Molina expects congress to approve the plan and concentrate cybersecurity in a "focused national security agency." The document also highlights that Colombia lacks mechanisms for exchanging information on cyber threats between public and private entities, which limits the ability to anticipate and respond to incidents. Insufficient international cooperation on digital security is mentioned as another problem. The lack of a cyber incident response system, especially when it comes to public entities, exacerbates this situation, allowing attacks to spread and cause significant damage before being contained. Colombia also identified regulatory obsolescence and lack of periodic update mechanisms to review digital security regulations. (June 25, 2025) www.bnamericas.com

Cyprus

Deputy Commissioner of Communications of Cyprus Mr. Petros Galides, in his capacity as Chairman of the European and Mediterranean Regulators Group (EMERG) and Member of the Board of the ITU Digital Regulation Network (DRN), participated in the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS Forum), held by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in Geneva from 7 to 11 July 2025. Mr. Galides was a speaker in the session titled "Digital Ecosystem Builders in Action: Redefining the Role of ICT Regulators", where he presented both EMERG initiatives and the innovative actions of the Office of the Commissioner of Communications in Cyprus. In his statement, Mr. Galides said: "Transformative technologies enable Regulators to be even more proactive and evidence based. The impact of regulatory measures can be tested in safe environments before implementation and can be continuously monitored and optimised in near real time. Cross sectoral and global collaboration is the answer to most effectively address the increasingly complex challenges of the digital age, like digital security and ensuring the use of AI for good, with collaborative platforms like EMERG and the ITU proving invaluable. Trust, interoperability, and shared objectives have been, and will be, critical success factors. Technology enables smarter regulation, but it's the human and institutional collaboration that ensures it is used wisely."
(July 28, 2025) ITU Press Release

France

French telecom services regulator Arcep has extended the window for 5G trials in the 3.8–4.0 GHz band to the 4.0–4.2 GHz band. In a release, Arcep said that the move was implemented to satisfy demand from manufacturers and stakeholders wanting to assess their local mobile network projects for business use cases across the entire 3.8–4.2 GHz band. In March 2022, the regulator initially opened a trial window in 3.8–4.0 GHz band for manufacturers and businesses wanting to trial new 5G use cases. The regulator noted that the goal was to satisfy the mobile connectivity needs of verticals such as manufacturing, logistics, energy, health and smart cities that may want to use private 4G/5G networks to deliver new services or improve their operational performance. Arcep said it has issued a total of 175 frequency licenses since 2022, as part of its window for trials in the 3.8–4.0 GHz band. The regulator also said that 90 of these trials were still ongoing at the end of June 2025. "Arcep has a positive assessment of this window, and notes the diversity of the stakeholders involved, covering a wide range of economic sectors and this in multiple regions across metropolitan France," the regulator said. Following requests from businesses wanting to trial private mobile network projects and thereby evaluate 5G use cases in the 4.0–4.2 GHz band, Arcep is now expanding its trial window to the entire 3.8–4.2 GHz band. At the same time, Arcep continues to work on establishing a regulatory framework with a view to opening a long-term assignment window for 3.8–4.2 GHz band frequencies," the regulator added.

In June 2025, Arcep confirmed plans to establish a local assignment framework for the 3.8–4.2 GHz band for the deployment of local mobile networks for business purposes and, to this end, launched a public consultation on a draft procedure for assigning 3.8–4.2 GHz band frequencies in metropolitan France, along with a draft decision setting forth the technical conditions governing use of that frequencies.

(July 16, 2025) www.rcrwireless.com

Ghana

The Ghanaian government has mandated MultiChoice Ghana to lower its DSTV subscription fees by 30% in response to the recent appreciation of the local currency and growing public discontent with the current pricing structure. This directive arrives as MultiChoice, which operates in multiple African countries, is experiencing a decline in both revenue and subscriber numbers. During a meeting with a DSTV delegation led by Dr. Keabetswe Modimoeng, the group executive for regulatory and corporate affairs, Communications Minister Samuel Nartey George emphasised the government's duty to address the concerns raised by Ghanaians regarding high DSTV prices and outdated content offerings. Minister George highlighted that despite a 30% rise in the value of the cedi over the past five months, DSTV's subscription rates have not adjusted to align with this positive economic shift. Consequently, he is urging a 30% price reduction to reflect the strengthened cedi and provide financial relief to consumers. The minister notes that while MultiChoice has introduced promotional offers, customers overwhelmingly prefer a direct price cut rather than temporary discounts. Feedback from public consultations indicates widespread dissatisfaction with DSTV's content, which many users find outdated, except for Premier League football, leading them to feel that current pricing is unwarranted. To address these issues, George has given MultiChoice Ghana until July 21 to respond formally to the government's request, anticipating a substantial proposal that will facilitate further discussions by the end of July.

(July 8, 2025) news.broadcastmediaafrica.com

Ghana is on the verge of a major policy reform that could reshape its digital future. Mounting pressure from telecom operators and digital-rights advocates has prompted the government to review the heavy tax burden stifling the telecommunications sector, a sector vital to the nation's wider economic and social development. At a recent public forum, Ghana's Minister of Communications and Digitalization, Ursula Owusu-Ekuful, admitted that the current system of 39 separate taxes imposed on telecom operations is unsustainable. These levies include regulatory fees and site-licensing fees, infrastructure charges and import duties. Together, these have driven up operational costs for operators as well as consumers. According to the minister, negotiations are underway with the finance ministry to streamline easing and potentially reduce these financial burdens. The goal is to create a more enabling environment for telecom companies to expand, innovate, and offer affordable services, especially to underserved rural consumers.

(June 23, 2025) www.primeprogressng.com

Hong Kong

Hong Kong's Office of the Communications Authority (OFCA) has launched a tender to auction 50 MHz of spectrum in the 2.5/2.6 GHz band. It has invited applications from interested parties. In line with the government's 2024 Policy Address, it wants a timely release of suitable spectrum to support ongoing development, including future 6G systems. A spokesperson said the 2.5/2.6 GHz spectrum is well-suited for balancing network coverage with capacity and is key to enabling 5G and 6G broadband services. The auction will be held on October 20 and the frequencies will be awarded under unified carrier licenses with a new assignment term lasting approximately 10 years and 10 months. This aligns the expiry date of all 140 megahertz in the 2.5/2.6 GHz band to March 30, 2039, allowing Hong Kong's Communications Authority (CA) greater flexibility in future planning for next-generation mobile technologies. Applications for participation in the auction must be submitted to OFCA between September 4 and 5. The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (SCED) has set a reserve price of HKD4 million ($509,000) per megahertz, though final prices will be determined through competitive bidding. In December of 2024, OFCA announced the completion of the 6/7 GHz band spectrum auction. A total of 300 megahertz was awarded to local carriers China Mobile Hong Kong, SmartTone, and Hong Kong Telecommunications (HKT). Each carrier acquired a block of 100 megahertz with a spectrum utilization fee (SUF) of HKD 210 million. These licenses are valid 15 years.

(July 10, 2025) www.rcrwireless.com

India

India's telecom sector continued to soar in May 2025, recording notable growth across broadband, mobile, and wireline markets, according to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), reported PTI. Broadband users surged to nearly 975 million, driven by a 60 per cent jump in fixed wireless (5G FWA) adoption. While the wireline segment grew steadily, wireless users touched 1.168 billion, despite a slight dip in metro areas. Tele-density remained robust, especially in urban zones. Mobile number portability also hit a record 14 million requests, and M2M connections for IoT crossed 73 million. Total broadband subscribers reached 974.87 million in May, which included a month-on-month growth of 31.78 million, representing an increase of 3.37 per cent from 943.09 million in April. Fixed wired broadband growth was up 6.46 per cent, expanding from 41.41 million in the previous month to 44.09 million users. Additionally, fixed wireless broadband growth exploded with a 60.06 per cent increase, growing from 4.87 million to 7.79 million in May, as subscribers rapidly adopted the 5G FWA (Fixed Wireless Access) service. Mobile broadband also grew 2.92 per cent, with subscriber numbers reaching 922.99 million.

(June 28, 2025) www.etvbharat.com

Indonesia

Indonesia's Attorney General Office has signed an agreement with four telecommunications Operators to install wiretapping devices, an official from the Office said, raising questions among analysts about the potential impact on privacy and surveillance. The agreement would allow prosecutors to access telecommunication recording and enable data exchange for law enforcement purposes, the Attorney General Office spokesperson told Reuters. The pacts, which would include mobile phones, are in accordance with a law passed in 2021 giving wiretapping authority to the Attorney General Office. Indonesian police and anti-graft agency are already able to use wiretapping, Wahyudi Djafar an analyst focused on digital governance and public policy told Reuters.

(June 27, 2025) www. telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com

Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan now leads Central Asia and the broader CIS region in mobile internet speed, marking a significant step in the country's digital transformation. According to the latest Speedtest Global Index by Ookla, Kazakhstan ranked 47th globally in June 2025, moving up three positions compared to the previous month. The country's average mobile internet speed reached 87.27 Mbps, outpacing all other CIS nations.

Azerbaijan recorded 72.52 Mbps, while Armenia and Uzbekistan followed with 59.03 Mbps and 55.78 Mbps, respectively. Moldova and Kyrgyzstan also trailed behind, with average speeds of just over 54 Mbps. Meanwhile, Russia and Belarus lagged significantly, with Belarus posting only 17.97 Mbps, placing it among the lowest in the world. Kazakhstan's mobile internet speeds are not only leading the CIS, but are also ahead of countries such as Germany, Japan, Spain, and the United Kingdom. This momentum reflects a broader trend of steady improvement, with the country's average mobile speeds rising by 6.7% since January. A key driver behind this growth has been the expansion of 5G networks across Kazakhstan. Analysts from Ookla have highlighted that the deployment of 5G technology, which offers speeds up to ten times faster than 4G, has directly contributed to Kazakhstan's rising position in global rankings. 5G promises faster data transfer rates, lower latency, and enhanced connectivity for a wide range of devices. While countries like the United States, Japan, South Korea, and China have led global 5G rollouts, Kazakhstan is rapidly establishing its place in this landscape. This progress is also visible within the country's major cities. Astana and Almaty now rank as the fastest among CIS cities, recording mobile internet speeds of 152.95 Mbps and 131.96 Mbps, respectively. These figures place Astana 43rd and Almaty 63rd among global cities, well ahead of Tokyo, which sits at 94th with 72.5 Mbps. Further strengthening its digital push, Kazakhstan is advancing a pilot project to launch its first 10G broadband network in Astana. The country is also enhancing connectivity in remote and underserved regions through a new partnership with Starlink, the satellite internet service operated by SpaceX.

(July 29, 2025) www.caspiannews.com

Nigeria

The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has introduced a formal licensing framework for international application-to-person (A2P) messaging aggregator services to enhance regulatory control, boost service security, and improve the quality of international A2P messaging traffic entering Nigeria. This strategic move aligns with the provisions of the Nigerian Communications Act 2003, the Licensing Regulations 2019, and related legislation that empower the NCC to foster a secure, competitive, and well-regulated telecom landscape. The new license establishes a clear and standardized approach for managing international messaging traffic via NCC-approved platforms, promoting transparency, accountability, and consistent

service delivery in Nigeria's expanding A2P messaging space. This initiative underscores NCC's commitment to safeguarding Nigeria's digital infrastructure, while supporting the sustainable growth of international messaging services. (July 15, 2025) www.telecomreviewafrica.com

The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has released a new regulatory framework for Application-to-Person (A2P) messaging services, marking a significant move to sanitize the country's fast-growing automated messaging space and plug revenue leakages in the telecoms sector. The framework introduces a mandatory licensing regime for all businesses, telecom operators, and aggregators that deliver bulk messages from applications directly to consumers, such as bank alerts, promotional SMS, and other automated notifications. Under the new rules, any entity that wants to operate in Nigeria's A2P messaging space must now secure a five-year licence from the NCC at a cost of N10 million. The framework also mandates centralized routing for international A2P SMS, meaning such messages must pass through NCC-approved channels to ensure compliance, prevent fraud, and guarantee quality of service. A2P messaging is a critical tool for banks, fintechs, airlines, hospitals, and even political campaigners, as it allows them to send timely and automated information to users. However, the lack of formal regulation has led to a proliferation of spam messages, security vulnerabilities, and lost government revenue due to untracked international traffic. "It has been observed that the excessive use of the Short Message Service has led to fraud, spam and illegal activities. The problem is likely to worsen as mobile connectivity and digital services continue to grow exponentially," the NCC stated. By introducing this licensing regime, the NCC said it aims to protect consumers from unsolicited messages, improve transparency in message delivery, and ensure that players in the value chain—especially local telecom operators—earn their fair share from international traffic. The Commission added that it will have better control over the International A2P SMS traffic, ensuring compliance with regulations and improving market oversight through the creation of a Single Platform.

(July 9, 2025) www.nairametrics.com

Paraguay

Paraguay has officially published the tender documents for granting licenses to provide mobile cellular telephony services, internet access and data transmission in the 3,500MHz frequency band. A preliminary version of the documents was released in December 2024. The bidding schedule includes a consultation period on the tender specifications, which runs through July 20. Applications will be accepted on August 4, with the envelopes to be opened on the same day. The country will offer eight spectrum blocks of 50MHz each in the 3,300-3,700MHz band. The maximum spectrum that any provider may acquire in this process is capped at 200MHz. Regulator Conatel has set the base price for each 50MHz sub-band at US$500,000. Licenses will be granted for a five-year term, with the possibility of renewal upon expiration. Winning operators will be required to deploy 5G NR release 15 or higher, according to standards set by international body 3GPP. The tender includes obligations to share passive infrastructure at radio base station sites used to provide telecommunications services, as well as measures to mitigate interference. Paraguay's national frequency allocation plan designates the 3,700-4,200MHz band primarily for fixed satellite services. The country currently has three leading mobile operators: Tigo, Claro and Personal. (July 1, 2025) www.bnamericas.com

Peru

Five companies have expressed interest in acquiring spectrum concessions to provide 5G services in Peru. Four mobile players, Integratel Perú (formerly Telefónica del Perú), Claro, Entel and Viettel, plus fixed operator Americatel, requested spectrum, the transport and communications ministry (MTC) said in a press release. These expressions of interest are part of the first call for proposals under the special mechanism for spectrum allocation in the 3.5GHz band, which involves granting concessions in return for investment commitments. Over 120,000 people in 1,220 rural areas will be able to access 4G for the first time because of the coverage commitments related to this process, according to the release. In addition, operators must deploy mobile infrastructure to cover 1,700km of national highways. The ministry must issue resolutions approving the companies' participation by July 10.

(July 24, 2025) www.bnamericas.co

Philippines

A new law aimed at transforming the telecommunications landscape in the Philippines has ignited widespread debate, bringing President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to the spotlight as he prepares to weigh its implications before signing. The Konektadong Pinoy Act, also known as the Open Access in Data Transmission Act, seeks to enhance internet accessibility, reduce costs, and elevate service quality, particularly in underserved regions. Proponents assert that the legislation is a game-changer, designed to welcome new market entrants by dismantling regulatory barriers, such as the need for a legislative franchise. Nonetheless, the Philippine Chamber of Telecommunications Operators (PCTO), an organization representing major telecom firms like PLDT and Globe Telecom, has voiced significant concerns. The group is urging a closer examination of the law, warning that it could lead to weakened regulatory oversight, potential national security threats, and industry destabilization. "We support increased connectivity for all Filipinos, but the bill lowers accountability standards and exposes the nation to risks from unregulated infrastructure and foreign influence," remarked Atty. Froilan Castelo, PCTO President and Globe's General Counsel. The controversial bill eliminates the requirement for new data transmission firms to secure a legislative franchise or a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN). Castelo cautioned that this action removes critical safeguards meant to evaluate financial, legal, and technical capabilities, creating an unbalanced landscape where established players adhere to stricter regulations while newcomers operate with leniency. (June 27, 2025) www.retailnews.asia

Slovakia

Slovakia's three largest mobile operators have stretched their network resource advantage in the latest auction by Úrad pre reguláciu elektronických komunikácií a poštových služieb (Regulatory Authority for Electronic Communications and Postal Services/úrad), although concerns have emerged overspend levels. The auction saw úrad allocate frequencies in the 800MHz, 900MHz, 1500MHz, 2.1GHz, and 2.6GHz bands, including Frequency Division Duplex (FDD) and Time Division Duplex (TDD) variants in the latter band. In doing so, it raised €506m, which operators will settle in tranches through to 2028. Most of the frequency rights cover the period from 1 January 2029 to 31 December 2048, although access to the 1500MHz band has been made available to operators immediately, and the 2.1GHz airwaves will open from September 8, 2026. The auction is Slovakia's third in five years: the nation completed a 3.6GHz spectrum auction in 2022 and opened up 700MHz spectrum and additional frequencies in the 900MHz and 1800MHz bands in 2020. Slovakia's four MNOs all secured airwaves, with Deutsche Telekom-owned Slovak Telekom proving the biggest spender, laying out about €165m to secure rights across all six categories, including the sole TDD block on offer at 2.6GHz. Orange Slovakia invested around €145m in 13 blocks across the five bands while O2 Slovakia spent about €150m on a similar haul, and Swan (4ka) trailed in fourth place in the spending rankings. Ivan Marták, Chairman of the regulatory authority, noted that the auction had brought in around €140m more than expected because of the "intense competition" between the four operators. Although he conceded that this would be a welcome addition to the state budget, he pointed out that the price paid is "too high by European standards" and "may slow down the operators' investment plans for the development of digital services". (July 10, 2025) www.telcotitans.com

South Africa

President Cyril Ramaphosa has endorsed a proposal to reform South Africa's telecommunications sector, backing Communications Minister Solly Malatsi's push for Equity Equivalent Investment Programmes (EEIPs) as an alternative to the country's stringent Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) ownership requirements. This move is aimed at enabling global players like Elon Musk's Starlink to operate in South Africa, sparking both optimism and fierce political debate. The current regulations require network infrastructure operators and communications service providers to allocate 30% ownership to historically disadvantaged groups (HDGs) to secure national operating licences. This policy is rooted in the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act of 2003, which aims to address apartheid-era inequalities. Malatsi's draft policy directive, gazetted on May 23, 2025, proposes EEIPs as a workaround, allowing multinationals to meet empowerment obligations through investments in infrastructure, skills development, or digital inclusion initiatives rather than direct equity sales. Ramaphosa, speaking at the National Council of Provinces, described the proposal as "innovative" and legally sound, emphasizing that it aligns with existing laws and is not tailored to favour any single company, including Starlink. He noted that public hearings will precede any changes. The proposal follows a high-profile meeting between Ramaphosa and U.S. President Donald Trump on May 21, 2025, where South Africa's BEE policies and Starlink's potential entry were reportedly discussed, though Ramaphosa later clarified that Starlink was not the focus. The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (Icasa) has yet to receive a formal licence application from Starlink, and its regulations currently do not fully reflect the ICT Sector Code's provisions for EEIPs. (June 26, 2025) www.ainvest.com

South Korea

An investigation is underway into illegal acts, such as false and misleading advertisements that used the SK Telecom cyber breach. A fact-finding investigation into KT has been launched following a report that claimed the mobile carrier had attracted customers with false and misleading advertisements related to SK Telecom's recent data breach. The Korea Communications Commission (KCC, Chairperson Lee Jinsook) began a fact-finding investigation into KT on July 16, following a report filed on July 7 claiming that KT ran false and misleading ads using SK Telecom's data breach in violation of the Telecommunications Business Act. It has been found through the KCC's on-site inspection on the 10th that KT's headquarters-including its regional and sales division-may have exaggerated or misleadingly explained important contract terms and service information, potentially violating the Act concerning discriminatory practices against users. The KCC decided to proceed with an investigation as KT appears to have potentially violated the Telecommunications Business Act, stating that it will take strict measures against KT if any violations are confirmed. An advisory was issued by the KCC on the 11th to prevent consumer harm from false and misleading advertisements by distributors?including authorized dealers and retailers?particularly in light of the release of Samsung Electronics' Galaxy Z Fold 7 series (July 25) and the repeal of the Mobile Device Distribution Improvement Act (July 22). The KCC plans to continue to protect consumers by strictly regulating illegal and deceptive practices that may harm users.

(July 21, 2025) www.kcc.go.kr

Thailand

Thailand's National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) has approved eight stringent new measures aimed at combating technology-related crimes, a move that will place greater legal responsibility on telecom operators. The decision, made at the NBTC board meeting, mandates strict compliance under the Emergency Decree on Measures for the Prevention and Suppression of Technology Crime B.E. 2566. Any operator negligence leading to damages could result in joint legal liability. Pol Gen Nathathorn Prousoontorn, an NBTC commissioner, stated that these new regulations are designed to vigorously prevent and suppress cybercrime, compelling network and other telecom service providers to take on a share of the responsibility. The eight key measures greenlit by the NBTC are: Screening Suspicious Users: Service providers must monitor unusual user behaviour, such as excessive call volumes, multiple calling locations, or the use of illicit devices like SIM boxes. They are empowered to immediately suspend services upon detecting such irregularities. Swift Service Suspension: Upon receiving notification from the NBTC regarding a suspicious number, mobile service providers must suspend the service within 24 hours. For other telecommunication services, this suspension must occur within three days. Enhanced Subscriber Data Verification: New mobile subscriber information must be fully verified within seven days. Existing numbers, both pre-2024 and post-2024 registrations, are to be expedited for verification within 90 days and one year, respectively. Tighter SMS Link Controls: Service providers are now required to verify the authenticity of all links attached to SMS messages. Senders of Application-to-Person (A2P) messages must also register a unique 'Sender Name' before dispatching any message. Limits on Foreign SIM Registrations: Foreign nationals will be restricted to registering a maximum of three mobile numbers per operator. Passport verification will be mandatory for all SIM registrations by non-Thais. Tourist SIM Validity Cap: Tourist SIM cards will now be limited to a 60-day validity period. Tourists wishing to extend usage beyond this period must undergo re-verification of their identity, with top-ups no longer extending the validity automatically. Blocking Illegal SIM Boxes and Gateways: Any SIM box devices or gateways capable of supporting four or more SIMs that are not registered with the NBTC will be barred from connecting to service providers' networks.

(July 2, 2025) www.nationthailand.com

Thailand generated THB41.3 billion ($1.3 billion) from the sale of spectrum in the 1500MHz, 2100MHz and 2300MHz bands to True Corp and AIS, the only operators to participate in the auction. True Corp won 70MHz of 2300MHz spectrum for THB21.8 billion and four blocks of 5MHz in the 1500MHz band for THB4.7 billion. AIS secured two blocks of 15MHz in the 2100MHz band for THB14.9 billion. The winning bids were 10 per cent to 18 per cent higher than the reserve prices across the three bands. No bids were submitted for the 850MHz band, with two 5MHz blocks available, with seven 5MHz blocks of 1500MHz spectrum also not sold. True Corp noted in a stock market filing it is awaiting official notification of the auction results from the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission, while AIS stated it will disclose details of the asset acquisition after it is officially notified. The auction closed on 29 June. Thailand became a duopoly of private companies in 2023 when True Corp merged with Telenor's mobile unit dtac. State-owned National Telecom had 3.2 million mobile connections at end-March, data from GSMA Intelligence showed. The operator owns 5MHz of 700MHz spectrum. True Corp ended Q1 with 48.5 million mobile connections compared with 45.7million at AIS.

(June 30, 2025) www.mobileworldlive.com

United Kingdom

BT has been required to refund or credit £18 million to customers, following enforcement action by Ofcom. Last year, Ofcom fined BT £2.8 million after it failed to provide customers with clear and simple contract information before signing up to a new deal. The company broke our consumer protection rules designed to ensure telecoms customers get clear, comparable information about the services they are considering buying. Following engagement with Ofcom, BT contacted the majority of affected customers, explaining that it had not provided them with the information to which they were entitled, and giving them the opportunity to request the information and/or cancel their contract without charge. However, before these communications were sent, some customers affected by the breach left BT before the end of their contract and may have been charged an early exit fee. Our rules are clear that if the required contract summary and contract information is not given, the contract is not binding on customers. As a result, an early exit fee should not have been payable by these customers. As well as fining BT, we also required it to amend its sales process and refund any affected customers who may have been charged for leaving before the end of their contract period. We told the company that if it was unable to refund any money, it must donate it to charity. As a result of this enforcement action, BT has now refunded or credited £18 million back to customers and donated £440,000 across 17 charities where refunds or credits were not possible. (July 29, 2025) www.ofcom.org.uk

Ofcom has unveiled a revision of its General Procedures for investigating breaches of broadcast licences.
The approach was last updated in April 2017, subsequently there have been developments in the type of broadcasters regulated, changes in approach to regulation, and an increase in caseload. NigeriaFollowing a consultation Ofcom plans to publish a detailed administrative priorities framework; clarify its position on sharing information about complaints with broadcasters; and set a 20-working-day time limit for making complaints. However, the regulator will not go ahead with a proposal to not respond to complainants with the outcome of its assessments. It means complainants will continue to be directly informed of its decisions. (June 24, 2025) www.broadbandtvnews.com

United States

The Federal Communications Commission launched a rulemaking to accelerate the transition from aging copper line networks to the modern, high-speed ones that Americans want and deserve. This proceeding aims to free up billions of dollars for new networks, instead of forcing providers to keep investing in old ones. The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking adopted today looks to encourage the swift transition to IP-based networks and advanced communications services for consumers. It proposes and seeks comment on revisions to the Commission's network change disclosure rules and section 214(a) discontinuance processes to eliminate regulatory barriers and costs. The Commission will consider deregulatory options through this proceeding in order to encourage providers to build, maintain, and upgrade their networks so all consumers and businesses can benefit from technological strides in the communications marketplace. The Commission supports the transition to modern, all-IP networks which can deliver a plethora of advanced communications services to consumers. This proceeding will also diligently safeguard consumers' access to critical emergency services and protect public safety. This item builds on recent actions taken by the FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau to help accelerate the transition from aging copper lines to modern network infrastructure in communities across the country. For example, the agency enabled providers to use streamlined procedures more often when they apply to discontinue outdated services over copper lines, offered greater flexibility in determining appropriate replacement services, waived unnecessary "grandfathering" requirements when a provider stopped offering it to new customers, and waived costly and excessive notice requirements which have not received any opposition comments in years. (July 24, 2025) www.fcc.gov

The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities announced the launch of a $40 million effort to extend high-speed internet service to remote and underserved areas of the state. The program, entitled New Jersey's Broadband Infrastructure Deployment Equity, will prioritize fiber-optic infrastructure offering at least 100 Megabits per second (Mbps) speeds and will provide at least one low-cost option for each community. "This has been years in the making," said Taryn Boland, the BPU's chief of staff, speaking at an event in Salem County on June 25 to officially mark the beginning of this major effort towards closing the digital divide in New Jersey. "Broadband access is critical and the impact it has on our communities is immense."

(July 6, 2025) www.broadbandbreakfast.com

The Federal Communications Commission today proposed updating the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) standards to be more consistent with current usage of TTY-based relay services. TRS services ensure functionally equivalent communication for Americans with hearing and speech disabilities. In this proceeding, the FCC is looking to delete the requirement that TRS providers support the ASCII format of text telephony (TTY) technology on

analog telephone networks. ASCII calls account for approximately 0.01% of TTY-based communications, resulting in manufacturers no longer including support for the ASCII format in TTY devices. Therefore, continuing to apply the ASCII rule causes TTY-based TRS providers to incur unnecessary costs to keep their hardware and software systems compatible. This deletion, which follows a 2022 petition to eliminate the ASCII requirement, will reduce costs by eliminating an outdated regulatory requirement established in 1991. Today's action continues the FCC's work to unleash a new wave of economic opportunity by ending unnecessary, outdated, and burdensome regulations. In keeping with this "Delete, Delete, Delete" initiative, today's proposal would help companies invest more resources in modernization efforts to ensure continued U.S. leadership in telecommunications.

(June 26, 2025) www.fcc.gov

Vietnam

The Ministry of Science and Technology has approved a new auction plan for the rights to use two key radio frequency blocks: 703-713 MHz and 758-768 MHz (block B1-B1'), and 723-733 MHz and 778-788 MHz (block B3-B3'). Both spectrum blocks, classified as "diamond bands," have a starting bid of over VND 1.955 trillion (approximately USD 76.8 million), and are designated for mobile communications systems following IMT-Advanced (4G) and future standards. Licenses will be valid for 15 years. Companies that previously won the B2-B2' block (713-723 MHz and 768-778 MHz) are excluded from this auction. Participating enterprises must place a deposit of VND 100 billion (approx. USD 3.93 million) and submit their eligibility documents within 30 days. The auction will be conducted via direct ballot, with a minimum bid increment of VND 20 billion. Previously used for analog TV broadcasts, these low-frequency bands have since been reallocated to support mobile communications post-2020. Compared to the 1800 MHz band, the B1-B1' and B3-B3' blocks offer a 1.8 times larger coverage radius, enabling operators to reduce infrastructure costs while improving network performance. Telecom providers with a mobile service license must commit to deploying at least 2,000 new mobile base stations within two years of receiving the frequency license. Of these, no fewer than 650 must serve Vietnam's maritime and island areas. Operators must also launch services using the B1-B1' and B3-B3' blocks within 12 months of receiving the license. By that time, at least 30% of the committed base stations must be operational. Full coverage across all national highways built before 2030 is also mandatory. Le Van Tuan, Director General of the Authority of Radio Frequency Management, emphasized: "Auctioning and activating the 700MHz spectrum is a critical step in implementing the national digital infrastructure strategy outlined in Resolution No. 57-NQ/TW." He added that the Ministry of Science and Technology will continue optimizing spectrum resources to support Vietnam's telecom and digital transformation goals.

(July 23, 2025) www.vietnamnet.vn

Zimbabwe

In the just-released Q1 2025 Sector Performance Report, the Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (POTRAZ) paints a picture of a telecom industry navigating turbulent economic waters with calculated resilience. The report reveals that Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) saw a ZWG 270 million revenue decline, slipping from ZWG 6.42 billion in Q4 2024 to ZWG 6.15 billion in Q1 2025, marking a 4.20% drop in total revenue. However, this decline is counterbalanced by a dramatic 33.46% reduction in operating costs, as network providers restructured operations to survive Zimbabwe's volatile economic climate. Operating costs fell from ZWG 5.53 billion to ZWG 3.68 billion, signaling what POTRAZ calls "aggressive efficiency strategies." "What's remarkable is not the revenue dip, which reflects broader macroeconomic pressures, but the industry's adaptability through smart cost management," said Dr. G. K. Machengete, POTRAZ Director General. "These efforts lay a strong foundation for recovery and growth." The sector also reported a 50% drop in capital expenditure, sliding from ZWG 842.20 million to ZWG 423.81 million. This decline may reflect cautious investment in infrastructure amidst currency instability and a shifting digital landscape that includes preparations for 5G, AI integration, and satellite broadband adoption. (June 26, 2025) www.technomag.co.zw

oman BROADBAND
العمانية للنطاق العريض

@omanbroadband
www.omanbroadband.om

Oman Broadband Company is unlocking the potential for Oman to become an increasingly connected nation, supporting the growth of the online economy, allowing new ways of doing business & boosting the rapidly growing SME sectors.

Oman Broadband is focused upon the deployment of a broadband infrastructure, providing equal & open access to telecommunication service providers on a wholesale basis, enabling end users to efficiently leverage high speed fiber connectivity.

HUAWEI

Huawei Cloud GaussDB
A Better Way to Database

AI-Native Distributed Database

2x performance | 0 data loss | AI-Native

HUAWEI CLOUD
EVERYTHING AS A SERVICE