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SAMENA TRENDS

FOR SAMENA TELECOMMUNICATIONS COUNCIL'S MEMBERS

BUILDING DIGITAL ECONOMIES



THIS MONTH
**ACCELERATED COLLABORATION AND THE SUSTAINABLE
DIGITAL FUTURE**

SAMENA TRENDS

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CONTENTS

03 EDITORIAL

10 REGIONAL & MEMBERS UPDATES

- Members News
- Regional News

43 SATELLITE UPDATES

- Satellite News

50 WHOLESALE UPDATES

- Wholesale News

52 TECHNOLOGY UPDATES

- Technology News

55 INITIATIVES ON EMPOWERMENT 08

- Health & Climate
- Submarine Cables
- Youth

58 REGULATORY & POLICY UPDATES

- Regulatory News
- A Snapshot of Regulatory Activities in the SAMENA Region
- Regulatory Activities Beyond the SAMENA Region

ARTICLES

35

How Wholesale Telecom Can Drive the Next Wave of Growth for Telecom Operators

SAMENA COUNCIL ADVOCACY

06



During Mobile World Congress 2025, SAMENA Council Facilitates a Critical, Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue at UNDP Roundtable on Digital Inclusion & Transformation for the Arab States



SAMENA Telecommunications Council Steers High-Stake Discussion on Sustainable Network Funding and Digital Infrastructure Development

CONTENTS

Accelerated Collaboration and the Sustainable Digital Future

As digital transformation paces on with technology and changing priorities, economies, industries, and socio-economic dynamics are shifting along. Overall, rapid advancements in 5G technology, artificial intelligence (AI), and next-generation broadband networks, are catalyzing smarter, faster, and more efficient systems that are driving change across the globe. This is bringing about a truly digitally-empowered world.

At the heart of this global digital empowerment lies AI, which is not only enhancing the capabilities of networks but also enabling smarter, more personalized services for end-users; a large portion of whom is young and technology savvy. Whether it's optimizing network traffic, predicting and preventing outages, or delivering personalized customer experiences, AI is becoming the backbone of next-generation communication networks.

Yet, as digital infrastructure advances forward, with more artificial-intelligence added to it, access remains a critical challenge. Across the SA-ME-NA region and neighboring regions, millions still lack reliable internet connectivity. This digital divide is hindering growth and preventing large segments of the population, particularly the youth, from fully participating in the digital realm.

Fortunately, collaboration offers a clear path forward for overcoming the divides and the impeding challenges, but necessitates that Governments, Telcos, TechCos, Technology Vendors, and international organizations come together to ensure digital inclusion becomes a reality for all. Fundamentally, this translates into investing in the expansion

of AI-powered broadband networks that can reach underserved areas; supporting digital education and skills development, so young people are prepared to thrive in a digital economy; implementing policies that foster innovation while ensuring fairness and security in how technologies are deployed; and ensuring affordable, reliable connectivity for communities in a greener, sustainable manner.

Countries in the subregions such as the Arab States, Southeast Asia, and parts of Africa are increasingly recognizing the importance of digital transformation. With a young, tech-savvy population eager to innovate, these regions have the potential to fast-track traditional development models. However, to fully capitalize on this opportunity, they need investment in infrastructure, support for digital literacy, and policies that promote and enable sustainable growth – a significant share of which is directly linked to sustainable access to energy resources required for digital development.

In the Arab States, where digital ambitions are high and young people are rapidly adopting new technologies, the need for inclusive digital services has never been more urgent. The region has made significant strides in improving connectivity, but challenges remain in ensuring that these advancements benefit everyone. By prioritizing digital inclusion, as has been voiced together by the SAMENA Council and the UNDP, these regions can build a foundation for long-term, sustainable development that empowers their youth and supports their economies.

The key to success lies in accelerated collaboration. When Governments, the Private Sector, and international bodies



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

work together toward common goals, conditions for inclusive, equitable digital growth can be created much more easily. Expanding digital infrastructure is one key result of such synergistic involvement, but another key outcome is the creation of new opportunities, reducing inequality, engaging diverse stakeholders across different sectors, and driving innovation across all sectors of society.

The digital future we are aiming to create demands that no one be left behind. By investing in the right infrastructure, supporting the next generation with digital skills, and fostering collaboration across borders, by leveraging the power of artificial intelligence across terrestrial and space networks, we can create a connected, smarter, inclusive, and a transformed world. 🌍

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Space Development, WRC-27, NTN, MSS



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SAMENA Council On Digital Inclusion & Transformation

During Mobile World Congress 2025, SAMENA Council Facilitates a Critical, Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue at UNDP Roundtable on Digital Inclusion & Transformation for the Arab States

The SAMENA Telecommunications Council, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the GSMA, convened a high-level roundtable session at the Mobile World Congress 2025, titled "Empowering the Arab States: Advancing Digital Inclusion for a Connected Future." The event was designed to delineate the need to accelerate digital transformation and attain ICT maturity in the Arab region to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the next five years. A central theme of the roundtable was the need for regional policy harmonization to ensure seamless digital transformation across the Arab States. Experts called for greater alignment in digital policies, particularly in areas such as data governance, e-commerce, and fintech, to create a unified digital ecosystem. Regulatory collaboration across borders was highlighted as a critical enabler of digital inclusion, allowing for more efficient investments and stronger regional cooperation. The roundtable brought together a diverse group of policymakers, international organizations, the private sector, and thought-leaders to explore actionable strategies for overcoming the digital divide and fostering an inclusive digital economy in the Arab region, with positive implications on the neighboring regions. This session marked an important milestone in advancing the Digital for Sustainable Development (D4SD) Initiative, which is central to promoting digital inclusion as a driver of sustainable growth in the Arab States. The opening remarks, delivered by the CEO of SAMENA Council, Bocar BA, set the stage by highlighting the urgency of addressing digital inclusion. With a focus on the Global Digital Compact (GDC) principles – i.e., Digital Inclusion, Human Rights, Digital Cooperation, Cybersecurity, Sustainable

Development, and Ethical Use of Technologies – the session stressed that digital transformation is no longer optional but a critical necessity for socio-economic progress and innovation. BA called for new financing mechanisms and strengthened partnerships between public and private

Experts called for greater alignment in digital policies, particularly in areas such as data governance, e-commerce, and fintech, to create a unified digital ecosystem. Regulatory collaboration across borders was highlighted as a critical enabler of digital inclusion, allowing for more efficient investments and stronger regional cooperation.

sectors to expand digital infrastructure and bridge the digital divide, particularly in underserved communities. Artificial intelligence (AI) and other emerging technologies were highlighted by participants from e& and ITU. Specifically, Dena Al Mansoori, Chief AI and Data Officer at e&, and ITU BDT Director, Dr. Cosmas Zavazava, discussed the transformative potential of AI in sectors such as education, healthcare, and financial services. As AI continues to shape the digital landscape, the roundtable reaffirmed

the importance of responsible governance to prevent exacerbating existing inequalities. Moreover, AI-driven solutions must be designed with inclusivity at their core to ensure accessibility and fairness, particularly for marginalized communities. The discussions aligned with the objectives of the D4SD initiative, which seeks to harness digital technologies to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs. One of the most pressing challenges discussed was the significant financing gap in digital infrastructure, estimated at \$446 billion globally; an issue that SAMENA Council has repeatedly highlighted over the last four years. Experts such as Michael Kende of the Data Sphere Initiative and Philippe Defraigne from Cullen International called for innovative financing models to bridge this gap and ensure that digital transformation is inclusive and equitable. The importance of expanding the pool of financial contributors, beyond traditional telecom operators, to include major technology firms, OTT platforms, and cloud service providers, was stressed as essential to scaling investments. The experience of the UAE, a regional leader in digital transformation, was also shared as a case study of how public-private partnerships can be leveraged to scale digital inclusion and public service delivery. The roundtable also emphasized the importance of addressing the digital gender divide and youth unemployment. With over 60% of the Arab region's population under 30, ensuring that young people are equipped with digital skills for the future of work was seen as essential for sustainable economic growth. Similarly, the gender digital divide remains a significant barrier, with women in many regions still less likely to access digital tools and opportunities. Targeted interventions were called for to empower women



and youth and ensure that they can fully participate in the digital economy. Participating entities in the roundtable included: Cisco, CST KSA, CITRA Kuwait, Cullen International, e&, Minister of Somalia, GSMA-MENA, i2Cat, IFC, ITU, K-Eco, Deputy Minister-MCIT Egypt, Minister of Communications - Lebanon, Minister of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship - Jordan, Minister of Post and Telecommunications - Algeria, Ooredoo Group, Orange Jordan, SAMENA Council, Smart Africa, TRA Bahrain, TRA Oman, UNDP, Universal Postal Union, Women in AI, and the World Bank. Bocar BA, in his concluding remarks as the Chair of the high-level discussion, called for a shift from ideas to concrete actions. "This roundtable has set clear priorities for future collaboration, including scaling invest-

"This roundtable has set clear priorities for future collaboration, including scaling investments in digital public infrastructure, ensuring that AI development is inclusive and accessible, and that we all need to foster regional policy harmonization to create a unified digital economy across the Arab States, and the SA-ME-NA region, overall."

ments in digital public infrastructure, ensuring that AI development is inclusive and accessible, and that we all need to foster regional policy harmonization to create a unified digital economy across the Arab States, and the SA-ME-NA region, overall." SAMENA Council, in partnership with UNDP, is committed to driving forward the D4SD

initiative and ensuring that no one is left behind as the region works toward a more connected and inclusive digital future. This SAMENA Council – UNDP collaboration was in continuation of an MoU that both entities signed in 2024, to help accelerate digital development in the region. 🌍

SAMENA Council On Network Funding

During MWC 2025, SAMENA Telecommunications Council Steers High-Stake Discussion on Sustainable Network Funding and Digital Infrastructure Development

At the Mobile World Congress (MWC) 2025 in Barcelona, SAMENA Telecommunications Council contributed to a critical discussion on the future of network funding; a key subject in which the Council, represented by CEO & Board Member, Bocar Ba, has been active in driving consensus since 2021. At MWC Barcelona 2025, Bocar Ba, who is also Chair of the International Telecommunication Union's (ITU) IAGDI-CRO private-sector representative platform, moderated the panel titled "Is It Time for Big Tech to Pay Their Fair Share? The Case for Backing Telecom Networks." The panel also featured Denis O'Brien (Digicel), Lauren Ballerin Cereza (Member of the European Parliament, Spain), and Shahid Ahmed (NTT). The SAMENA Council-led discussion delved into the rapid growth of digital services, driven by AI, cloud computing, streaming, and the Internet of Things (IoT), and how this creates pressures on traditional investors, i.e., Telecom Operators, and on digital service providers as well as financial institutions to unite forces in building future digital infrastructure. "The discussion made it clear that a new, shared responsibility model for network funding is long overdue," said Bocar Ba. "As policymakers, regulators, and industry leaders, we must work together to create an environment where sustainable financing, regulatory harmonization, and industry consolidation are prioritized. Particularly in Europe, fragmented policies and outdated funding models are stifling innovation and putting the future of connectivity at risk." The discussion, focused on the urgent need for shared responsibility in network funding, a concept SAMENA Council has championed over the years through its leadership in developing consensus on broadband infrastructure development through innovative funding approaches. "Our

discussion today has been a part of a series of deliberations that SAMENA Council has been privileged to lead over the years, including within the UN Broadband Commission. This discussion points strongly to the need for a more equitable, forward-looking approach to funding digital infrastructure. Policymakers, regulators, financial institutions, digital service providers, Telecom Operators, and all those having direct stake in the digital future, must act to build an environment where each stakeholder plays a contributing part in sustaining the infrastructure our digital economies rely on." The panel discussion was deeply informed by insights from Vodafone's recent report, "A Framework for Responsible Use of Networks," which has brought to light several challenges. Chief among them is the unsustainable growth of data consumption driven by AI, streaming, and advertising-based business models, which are pushing current networks to their breaking point. Telecom Operators in many parts of the world, including in the markets of the SA-ME-NA region as well as in Europe, are facing the dual challenge of limited resources and a rapidly growing demand for digital connectivity. As Vodafone's report highlights, Operators' difficulties and network inefficiencies continue to magnify due to multiple factors, including sustainability challenges in infrastructure investments, regulatory frameworks, and an overall lack of flexibility to manage traffic effectively. Operators require other stakeholders to contribute their share of financial resources to help sustain digital communication networks. The panel discussion also explored funding solutions that have worked well in other parts of the world, such as South Korea, Peru, and the U.S. These models, which include negotiated traffic contributions, public-private partnerships, and incentivized investment structures, provide a roadmap for addressing the growing imbalance in network funding. The discussion during MWC25 helped build the case for urgently transitioning from fragmented funding models to a shared financing responsibility model. Moreover, the discussion also highlighted how Europe has the opportunity to redefine the future of its digital infrastructure by implementing new infrastructure models that catalyze new digital growth and innovation in the European digital ecosystems. SAMENA Council is of the view that there is a dire need for a shared, global approach to funding digital infrastructure, particularly in various part of the SA-ME-NA region, including the Arab States. Considering that the majority of the world's digital traffic is being carried by Telecom Operators, while billions of people still remain excluded from the digital economy, it is essential to build a truly inclusive digital future. This necessitates rethinking and implementing new broadband funding approaches around the world. 🌍



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MEMBERS NEWS



stc Group Increases Connectivity Speed in the Two Holy Mosques By Over 120%

stc Group, Saudi Arabia's leading digital enabler, is enabling world-class connectivity for millions of pilgrims and visitors during Ramadan with its expanded 5G network, increasing network infrastructure to accommodate over 120% faster download speeds. stc Group's network analytics indicate that data usage during Ramadan have already increased by 37% while voice services will increase

by more than 18%. To ensure seamless, high-speed connectivity for all, stc Group has expanded its 5G network by more than 30% to ensure strong and stable performance during peak times, allowing visitors to remain connected to their loved ones without interruption. Network speed analysis results from Ookla, a global provider of network data and analytics, has indicated a significant improvement in stc

Group's network performance across the grounds of the two Holy Mosques. The average download speed has increased by 107% inside the Grand Mosque and by 120% inside the Prophet's Mosque, offering pilgrims and visitors continuous world-class connectivity despite the high network traffic at the expansive holy sites. stc Group is investing in cutting-edge digital solutions and innovative technologies in artificial intelligence and data analysis to enhance network efficiency during peak network traffic times. During Ramadan and Hajj, specialized technical teams work around the clock to ensure optimal network performance, enhancing preventive maintenance plans and continuously expanding the digital infrastructure. This includes expanding Wi-Fi access points inside the Holy Mosques, adding mobile stations to support high congestion areas, and increasing the capacity of international call traffic by 100% to meet the needs of all pilgrims around the holy sites. stc Group's efforts are enhancing the quality of services provided to pilgrims, raising the efficiency of the Kingdom's digital infrastructure during the holy month of Ramadan, enabling visitors to enjoy their spiritual journey with ease.

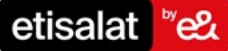


stc Taps Juniper to Upgrade Core and Data Centers for 5G Expansion

Juniper Networks announced that Saudi Arabian telco stc will deploy Juniper 400G routers in its core network and select data centers to support expansion of its 5G network to reach 75 cities and regions. According to Juniper, stc needed extra capacity in its core network and the data centers it uses to support the B/OSS systems for mobile, broadband, residential and B2B services. The objective was to create an energy-efficient elastic fabric able to streamline operations and simplify the network as services grow

and evolve. For the core network, stc deployed Juniper's PTX10008 packet transport routers, which deliver 115.2 Tbps capacity and are 800G-ready to meet future demands. The upgrade resulted in a 1,340% increase in 100G capacity and an 864-port boost in 400G capacity per rack space, with a 43% reduction in watts/gig power consumption, Juniper said. Meanwhile, stc used 400G-ready MX10008 routers to modernize its data center, which Juniper said delivered a 384-port boost in 400G capacity per site, whilst also achieving

a 90% reduction in the physical space requirements per site and an 87% decrease in watts/gig power consumption compared to previous multi-layer designs. Bader Allhieab, VP of infrastructure at stc, said the capacity expansion would enable it to bring 5G to millions more people and businesses in Saudi Arabia. "Stc can continue to attract and retain mobile customers at scale while also reducing our carbon footprint and operational expenditure."



e& UAE Deploys M365 Copilot at Scale to Drive AI-powered Workplace Transformation

e& UAE, the flagship telecommunications arm of e&, is expanding its long-standing partnership with Microsoft through the large-scale deployment of M365 Copilot across its operations. This collaboration is set to accelerate e& UAE's ongoing digital transformation, enhancing workplace productivity, streamlining workflows, and advancing AI-driven innovation. As the UAE continues to execute its vision of becoming a global leader in AI, e& UAE is leveraging M365 Copilot's extensibility to develop Agentic AI solutions. These solutions infuse AI-driven automation and intelligent decision-making across various business functions. By integrating M365 Copilot at scale, e& UAE is empowering its employees to focus on high-value innovation rather than routine tasks. e& UAE is at the forefront of workplace transformation, advancing the adoption of artificial intelligence across various operational domains. The organization has empowered hundreds of its developers to utilize GitHub Copilot for coding, testing, and documentation tasks, thereby streamlining the software development lifecycle significantly. Furthermore, e& UAE is enhancing its internal applications through the integration of Azure OpenAI, which bolsters our AI-driven capabilities and underscores our dedication to leading the development of innovative AI solutions. Masood M. Sharif Mahmood, CEO, e& UAE, said: "AI is at the core of our transformation at e& UAE as we evolve into a leading AI-powered telco. Our partnership with Microsoft is a key driver of this journey. The deployment of M365 Copilot at this scale will help us build an AI-powered workplace operations, empower our workforce with the essential tools necessary to generate significant impact by offering intelligent solutions and delivering customer experiences that not only anticipate client needs but also personalize each interaction, thereby establishing new benchmarks within the industry. M365 Copilot is an enterprise-ready AI tool, designed to enhance productivity, optimise workflows, and enable employees



to focus on strategic initiatives. By automating routine tasks and streamlining complex processes, the solution allows employees to dedicate more time to creativity, problem-solving, and customer-centric innovation. Naim Yazbeck, General Manager of Microsoft UAE, said: "Our partnership with e& UAE marks a significant milestone in our journey towards AI-driven innovation. The deployment of M365 Copilot at scale is a testament to our shared vision of transforming workplace productivity and enhancing customer experiences. By leveraging the advanced capabilities of Copilot, e& UAE is not only streamlining workflows but also empowering their employees to focus on high-value tasks and drive meaningful innovation. This collaboration underscores the immense potential of AI in revolutionizing business operations and setting new industry benchmarks." The deployment of M365 Copilot will support e& UAE's strategic vision of fostering an AI-driven culture, ensuring employees are equipped with cutting-edge AI tools and expertise.

e& UAE and Evision Launch STARZ ON Business to Redefine Digital Entertainment for SMBs and Enterprises

e& UAE and Evision announced the launch of STARZ ON Business, a pioneering over-the-top (OTT) TV service tailored specifically for small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) and enterprise customers. The new service is set to transform the way businesses engage and entertain their customers, offering a unique mix of curated live TV and video on demand (VoD) content designed for various business verticals. Developed by Evision the leading media & entertainment arm of e&, STARZ ON Business provides specialised tech and entertainment solutions tailored to the unique needs of various industries, including restaurants, retail, fitness centres, hospitality and more. The service also includes digital signage, enabling businesses to seamlessly showcase brand messages and create a dynamic visual environment that captivates and engages customers. Esam Mahmoud, Senior Vice President, SMB, e& UAE – Business, said: "With STARZ ON Business, we are

pioneering a new era of digital entertainment for businesses. We are empowering businesses to connect with their audiences in innovative and meaningful ways, by offering curated content and integrated solutions. This launch is a testament to our commitment to driving digital transformation and providing unparalleled value to our business customers. We are excited to embark on a journey that will redefine customer experiences across diverse sectors." Zahra Zayat, Chief Commercial Officer, Evision: "We are thrilled to introduce STARZ ON Business, a first of its kind OTT TV service for SMB and enterprise clients in the region designed to expand our reach and revolutionise customer engagement. This innovative service will provide businesses with powerful tools to entertain and captivate audiences through a curated mix of live TV channels and on-demand content specific to the respective industries while allowing SMBs and enterprise companies to upsell their products.

At eVision, we are committed to delivering cutting edge technology solutions that drive business success and enhance customer experience". Customers can sign up for STARZ ON Business via online and offline channels. The standalone OTT package starts at AED 29; while more comprehensive packages, which includes OTT with digital signage and TV features, starts at AED 159. New subscribers will enjoy a free first month when they sign up for any OTT subscription, whether it's the Basic, Advance, or Premium tier. STARZ ON Business provides numerous benefits for its customers. Firstly, tailored VoD content that resonates with specific industries

like culinary related content for restaurants, fitness-related videos for gyms, and lifestyle segments for retail, ensuring relevant and engaging material for their audience. Moreover, the service also minimises hardware requirements by allowing a single screen to serve dual purposes - accommodating both OTT streaming and digital signage. This reduces costs and simplifies the setup process for businesses. Additionally, businesses can seamlessly integrate brand messages and OTT content using split-screen functionality. This maximises the utility of screen real estate, creating a more engaging customer experience.

Smiles SuperApp Partners with Tencent Cloud to Enable Smarter Digital Commerce in the UAE

Smiles, e& UAE's SuperApp, has partnered with Tencent Cloud, the cloud business of Tencent – the global technology powerhouse behind Weixin/WeChat, the world's largest SuperApp – to enhance digital commerce in the UAE. Announced during the Mobile World Congress (MWC) 2025 in Barcelona, this partnership reinforces Smiles' commitment to driving customer-centric innovation. As part of the agreement, Smiles will leverage Tencent Cloud Super App as a Service (TCSAS) solution to create an open, dynamic digital ecosystem, making it the first in the region to leverage this technology. This integration will allow partner brands to seamlessly onboard as "mini apps" within Smiles, mirroring the highly successful WeChat model. By doing so, businesses can establish a digital presence with ease, whereas consumers can choose from a broader selection of services and rewards, all within a unified SuperApp experience. With 5.5M+ registered users Smiles is the UAE's leading rewards-driven SuperApp, offering a vast range of deals and services across food and grocery delivery, home services, dining, retail, entertainment, travel, and more. By adopting Tencent's proven cloud-based solution, Smiles is set to transform into a fully-fledged "Super-Mall," allowing brands to

quickly and efficiently onboard their services. "Our partnership with Tencent marks a strategic moment in Smiles' evolution from a rewards platform to becoming a full-scale digital commerce enabler in the UAE," said Khaled Elkhouly, Chief Consumer Officer, e& UAE. "We're bringing the expertise behind the world's largest SuperApp, WeChat, to create a more accessible digital ecosystem with Smiles. This means businesses, from global brands to local merchants, can integrate faster and reach customers more effectively without heavy investment or complexity. For consumers, it's about making everyday life simpler—whether it's discovering great deals, completing everyday chores, accessing services, or enjoying rewards—all in one place. Ultimately, this integration is set to reshape digital commerce in the UAE, a market driven by speed and convenience, by seamlessly connecting businesses and consumers in a more frictionless economy." Dan Hu, Vice President of Tencent Cloud International for the Middle East, shared, "We are thrilled to partner with e& UAE to power Smiles as it is evolving into an everyday app for millions, whether it is for accessing essential services, retail, shopping or gaming entertainment. TCSAS is a proven, modular platform designed to be versatile and intuitive, supporting our partners to meet their user expectations for a seamless experience." TCSAS is powered by Tencent Cloud's Mini Program framework, which has been instrumental in the success of Weixin/WeChat, one of the world's largest digital ecosystems with over 1.1 billion monthly active users. Through this partnership, Smiles aims to replicate that success in the UAE, offering partner brands a plug-and-play solution to enhance engagement, boost customer retention, and drive higher returns on investment. For businesses, the integration will allow brands to swiftly onboard their services into the Smiles ecosystem, driving customer engagement and revenue growth without extensive development costs. Whereas Smiles' consumers will have access to an even wider network of businesses – ranging from top global brands to local favorites- offering deals, services, and rewards. Whether it's shopping, dining, entertainment, online food or grocery ordering or booking services, consumers will benefit from a seamless, all-in-one experience within the Smiles SuperApp. With a network of 6,500 participating brands and 15,000 partner outlets, Smiles continues to evolve as the go-to SuperApp, delivering value, convenience, and rewards to millions of users.





Omantel Innovation Labs Showcases Omani Startups at Mobile World Conference

Omantel Innovation Labs proudly announced its participation at 4 Years from Now (4YFN), the startup arm of the prestigious Mobile World Congress (MWC) event in Barcelona, Spain. The globally acclaimed event gathered industry leaders, technology innovators, and visionaries to showcase the latest advancements in mobile technology and digital innovation. This year Omantel Innovation Labs showcased four graduates from its programs, demonstrating local talent in the areas of AI, drones, data analytics, and e-procurement. In addition to having a space within the Omantel Innovation Labs booth, the startups also pitched their solutions on the 4YFN stage where they captivated audiences and sparked interest among global investors and technology leaders, showcasing Oman as a hub for technological excellence and entrepreneurial ambition. Speaking on the participation, Her Highness Ghada Al Said, Senior Manager of Omantel Innovation Labs, said: "It's a pleasure to be back at 4YFN to showcase Omani startups on a global platform. The startups that were selected represent the variety of startups within our portfolio, already have customers beyond Oman and are ready to scale. This event comes as part of our commitment to bridging local innovation with global opportunities to advance Oman's digital transformation journey."

The four participating startups were:

- Bidbid: A B2B fintech and e-procurement platform revolutionizing live bidding processes while providing actionable insights through advanced data analytics.
- iLab Marine: An automated underwater inspection platform for the maritime logistics sector, utilizing underwater drones (ROVs) to create digital twins and applying AI-powered analytics to identify anomalies and predict future scenarios.
- Orki: Empowering individuals and online businesses with AI-driven agent teams, seamlessly managing personal and business tasks, from scheduling to



complex operational workflows.

- Zabonex: An Omantel employee-born startup coming from its Entrepreneurship program, Fikra, Zabonex helps FMCG manufacturers and retailers to recapture the full value of their perishable products, reduce food waste and manage their stock through ML-powered dynamic distribution and sales prediction.

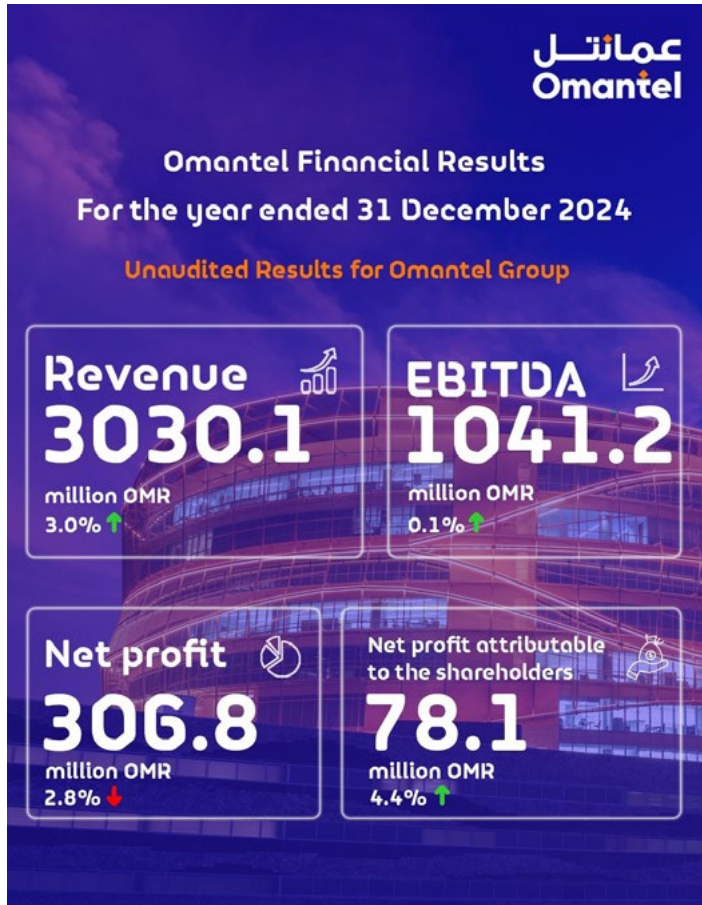
Additionally, Omantel Innovation Labs reaffirmed its strong collaboration with Alaiian, an international alliance of telecom leaders, with whom Omantel partnered last year. This partnership focuses on advancing startup ecosystems through mentorship, funding, and global market exposure. Such collaborations continue to enrich the Lab's capabilities in empowering startups to scale and succeed.

Through its continued participation in prestigious global events like MWC and 4YFN, Omantel Innovation Labs reinforces its standing as a key player in the global tech ecosystem. By showcasing Oman-based startups on such an international platform, the Labs position Oman as a

hub for innovation and entrepreneurship, while demonstrating their ability to bridge local talent with global opportunities. Strategic collaborations, such as Omantel's partnership with Alaiian, further underscore the Labs' commitment to connecting Oman's innovations with world-leading tech ecosystems. Omantel Innovation Labs plays a pivotal role in the growth of its startups by providing access to advanced technologies, mentorship programs, and networking opportunities. From refining business strategies to connecting startups with global investors and partners, the Labs act as a launchpad for scalable success. For the participating startups 4YFN, Omantel offered critical support in honing their pitches, preparing them for global audiences, and ensuring their innovations met the demands of competitive international markets. This successful participation underscores Omantel's role as a leading innovator, supporting a thriving tech ecosystem and paving the way for a brighter digital future.

Omantel Group Records 4.4% Growth in Net Profit Attributable to the Company's Shareholders

Oman Telecommunications Company Group (MSX: OTEL) reported remarkable growth following the announcement of 2024



financial results, with the Group's revenue (including Zain Group's operations) rising by 3% from R.O 2942.7 million at the end of year 2023 to R.O 3,030.1 million in 2024. Despite the marginal decline in the Group's net profit of 2.8% from R.O 315.5 million in 2023 to R.O 306.8 in 2024, Omantel Group's net profit attributable to the shareholders of the Company (after excluding the non-controlling interest) grew by 4.4% to R.O 78.1 million in 2024 compared to RO 74.8 million in 2023.

Omantel's domestic operations performance:

At the level of domestic operations, Omantel's revenues grew by 2.7% to reach R.O 622.6 million, compared to R.O 606.5 million reported in the same period of 2023. This growth was driven by mobile postpaid segment revenue growth, which increased by 6%, and fixed broadband revenues, which increased by 7% YoY. The Net Profit of the domestic operations for 2024 stands at RO 69.4 million compared to RO 68.1 million in the previous period, a growth of 1.9%. This growth was driven by positive impact of the settlement of a financial claim related to services provided by Omantel prior to 2020.

Zain Group Performance:

Zain Group's revenues for the year ended 31st December 2024 reached RO 2,466.9 million compared to RO 2,361.4 million in the corresponding period of the previous year, an increase of 4.47%. EBITDA stands at RO 861.4 Mn, compared to the corresponding period EBITDA of RO 871.2 million. Net profit stands at RO 313.9 million compared to RO 359.7 million of the previous period. Omantel Board of Directors recommended to the Company's Annual General Meeting that will be held on 27th March 2025 to distribute a cash dividend of 55 Baiza per share for the year ended 31st Dec 2024 (subject to shareholders approval), in addition to allocating R.O 750,000 for community service during the year 2025.



Zain Group Introduces Global M2M Offering to Accelerate the Proliferation of Connected Devices Across the Region

Zain Group, a leading provider of innovative ICT and digital lifestyle services operating in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announces the introduction of its groundbreaking Global M2M Offering. This innovative solution is set to empower OEMs from across the globe to seamlessly integrate their devices into multiple regional markets through a single point of integration and contractual relationship. For the first time in the Middle East, this development enables partner OEMs to access all the required connectivity for their devices, eliminating the necessity to establish local presence while ensuring full compliance with local regulations. In partnership with MAVOCO AG, a leading provider of connectivity management platforms, Zain is able to offer its customers state-of-the-art connectivity management and control technologies,



with full self-service and open integration capabilities. Machine-to-Machine (M2M) connectivity links machines, devices, and appliances wirelessly to the internet, transforming them into intelligent devices that exchange real time information and open up a range of possibilities for how businesses are run, how they grow, and how they keep customers happy. Zain already empowers several million devices across its footprint and the launch of the Global M2M offering will further facilitate and enable the proliferation of connected devices across the region. Kamil Hilali, Zain Group Chief Strategy Officer commented, "The introduction of our Global M2M offering is a strategic move that accompanies the recent launch of Zain's new 4WARD strategy, capitalizing on our strategic footprint and superior connectivity to position Zain as the regional partner of choice. This service addresses the significant challenges faced by OEMs operating in or looking to operate in the region, including compliance with local regulations and high integration costs." He added, "By providing a unified solution that ensures compliance and simplifies connectivity across our extensive network,

Zain is empowering the connection of global manufacturers to the Middle East. This will boost the pace of digital transformation of enterprises and governments, driving socio-economic growth across the region." Hilali concluded, "We are confident of the opportunity to capture a first-mover advantage in the provision of comprehensive, universal connectivity services to OEMs and further solidify Zain's position as a leader and partner of choice for digital transformation." Zain's Global M2M Offering also addresses several key challenges faced by OEMs in the region. It ensures full regulatory compliance by adhering to local requirements in markets such as Saudi Arabia and Oman, where permanent roaming restrictions pose significant hurdles. The solution simplifies integration through a single connectivity point, eliminating the complexity and cost of engaging multiple mobile network operators (MNOs) across different countries. Additionally, the global IMSI-based solution provides competitive roaming rates and worldwide coverage, allowing OEMs to avoid establishing local entities and thereby reducing operational costs and legal complexities. The offering

further streamlines processes by presenting a unified contractual relationship, enabling OEMs to leverage their scale without fragmentation by country or operator. Through this launch, Zain is targeting a diverse range of market segments seeking more intelligent coverage, including international car manufacturers, industrial equipment manufacturers, smart meter providers, connected device companies, and enterprises involved in international freight, shipping containers, and cold supply chain management. The dynamic nature of M2M services is set to reshape global business operations. IOT-Analytics, a leading global provider of market insights and strategic business intelligence for IoT, AI, Cloud, Edge, and Industry 4.0, estimates that there are currently around 19 billion internet-connected physical devices, a figure expected to double to 40 billion by 2030. With this innovative offering, Zain is poised to revolutionize the M2M connectivity landscape in the Middle East by providing OEMs with a seamless, cost-effective, and compliant solution for a plethora of connected devices.



AT&T Connected Solutions Unveils Global SIM Advanced

AT&T has unveiled Global SIM Advanced (GSA), a cutting-edge multi-profile eSIM solution complementary to our existing Global SIM product. GSA offers reliable, flexible connectivity to optimize IoT operations globally. GSA uses a version of Eseye's AnyNet eSIM and the award-winning Infinity platform, an advanced Connectivity Management Platform used for eSIM management. The platform provides eSIM orchestration and advanced automation rules for operational efficiency. Powered by the AT&T bootstrap IMSI, GSA can store up to 9 additional network profiles on a single eSIM, allowing devices to switch between different networks without the need for physical SIM card replacements. Additionally, with

multiple network fallback options and the capability to update the eSIM with a localized profile over-the-air, customer devices stay connected by switching to the best available network. This helps with continuous, reliable connectivity and where needed a local customer experience regardless of geographic location. GSA has in region routing capability to support low latency use cases. GSA includes a catalog of value-added services to its customers, like device assessment, and a path to new eSIM standards. These services will help business customers expand their IoT device capabilities to meet the evolving requirements of IoT use cases. "AT&T Global SIM Advanced exemplifies our cutting-edge capabilities in global IoT

connectivity," said Mike Van Horn, associate vice president, AT&T Connected Solutions. "In collaboration with Eseye, we are helping enhance the customer experience with new eSIM capabilities that provide seamless and efficient IoT connectivity. Our advanced solution helps ensure that devices remain consistently connected and productive, no matter where they are located." "We are thrilled to collaborate with AT&T to deliver their Global SIM Advanced solution to market," said Nike Earle, CEO of Eseye. "This relationship is a major milestone for us, demonstrating our leadership in eSIM orchestration and global IoT connectivity. It highlights the robustness of our technology to provide resilient global connectivity for customer devices."

AT&T Breaks Speed Barriers on Long-Distance Fiber Network

AT&T has achieved a significant technology milestone demonstrating its nationwide software-centric network is ready for massive bandwidth demands driven by AI, user generated content, augmented and virtual reality, cloud computing, streaming video and more. Recently, AT&T successfully completed testing a 1.6 terabit-per-second single-carrier wavelength across 296 kilometers of its commercial long-distance network – four times the speed of current 400Gb/s wavelengths. The 1.6Tb/s wavelength carried two IEEE standards-based 800 Gigabit Ethernet1 end-to-end circuits, an industry first. It is a full, uninterrupted data path utilizing a single light frequency across the entire fiber length between two points. This trial demonstrates AT&T's intent to lead the industry in providing next-generation speeds – enabling our customers to fully leverage AI and helping them transform how they do business. “Traffic on AT&T's network continues to increase as consumers are using more connected devices,” said Mike Satterlee, vice president, Network Infrastructure and Services, AT&T. “We anticipate network traffic growth to double by 2028 and the technologies demonstrated in this trial will play a key role in AT&T's continued efforts to keep up with increasing customer demand to send data, watch videos,

and use streaming services.” The trial took place over a 296-km route spanning Newark, New Jersey to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on AT&T's existing long-haul fiber network. The single-carrier 1.6 Tb/s wavelength was transported alongside existing live customer traffic on 100Gb/s and 400Gb/s wavelengths. Open-sourced white box switches acted as network equipment during the trial. The white boxes are designed using the Broadcom Jericho3 packet processor chip and can provide up to 18 x 800G network interface ports all within a 2RU platform. The DriveNets Network Cloud software-based solution is hardware-agnostic and runs open APIs on the white boxes to perform data and control plane functions, including routing at 800G. The use of white boxes and the disaggregation of the hardware and software control costs and facilitate faster innovation. The two 800GbE signals from the white box were multiplexed to 1.6 Tb/s in Ciena's WaveLogic 6 Extreme coherent optical transponder, which is the first coherent optical solution to use a 200Gbaud design and 3nm coherent DSP ASIC and to reach speeds up to 1.6 Tb/s on a single carrier. The WL6e technology reduces the space and power per transmitted bit by 50% compared to current 800G transponders. This trial is the first to demonstrate WL6e at 1.6Tb/s with standards compliant 800GbE clients. In the Newark and Philadelphia offices, 800G DR8 pluggable transceivers from Coherent were installed in the white box router and WL6e transponder to create the cross-office connectivity between the packet and optical technologies. And 800GbE client signals, provided by Keysight's AresOne-M 800GE testset, fed the white box through additional pairs of 800G DR8 pluggable client optics, allowing verification of end-to-end performance of the two 800GbE services from Newark to Philadelphia. “This groundbreaking achievement with AT&T adds to a growing list of Ciena industry-firsts that push the boundaries of optical network speed and capacity,” said Dino DiPerna, senior vice president, Global Research and Development, Ciena. “Ciena's WaveLogic 6 coherent optics will support AT&T's next gen converged optical network and efforts to build a cloud-based and AI-ready network with greater scale, flexibility and efficiency.”



China Mobile Targets 2.8M 5G Sites Despite Capex Cut

China Mobile laid out plans to add 340,000 5G base stations in 2025 despite intending to trim overall capex for the full year, with spending on the generation of infrastructure to decline 15.6 per cent year-on-year. With the additional sites, its 5G base station count will hit 2.8 million by the end of the year. In its annual results statement, the operator forecast capex for 2025 would drop 7.8 per cent. This follows a 7.6 per cent drop in 2024 to CNY164 billion (\$22 billion), lower than its original CNY173 billion forecast. The operator's total mobile user base topped 1 billion at end-2024, up from 991 million a year earlier. Its number of 5G network customers grew 18.7 per cent to 552 million. ARPU slipped 1.6 per cent to CNY49.30, average monthly data usage was steady at 15.9GB. China Mobile

chair Yang Jie noted “amid a complex and stressful external environment marked by various challenges”, the company united as a team to record a favourable operating performance. Net profit in 2024 rose 5 per cent to CNY138.4 billion, with operating revenue up 3.1 per cent to CNY1 trillion. Service revenue increased 3 per cent to CNY889.5 billion, while product sales improved 3.8 per cent to CNY151.3 billion. China Mobile now breaks down revenue into four categories: mobile, home broadband and smart home, enterprise and new businesses. Mobile revenue dipped 1.3 per cent to CNY483.7 billion; broadband grew 8.5 per cent to CNY106.8 billion; enterprise was up 8.8 per cent to CNY209.1 billion; and new market 8.7 per cent to CNY53.6 billion.



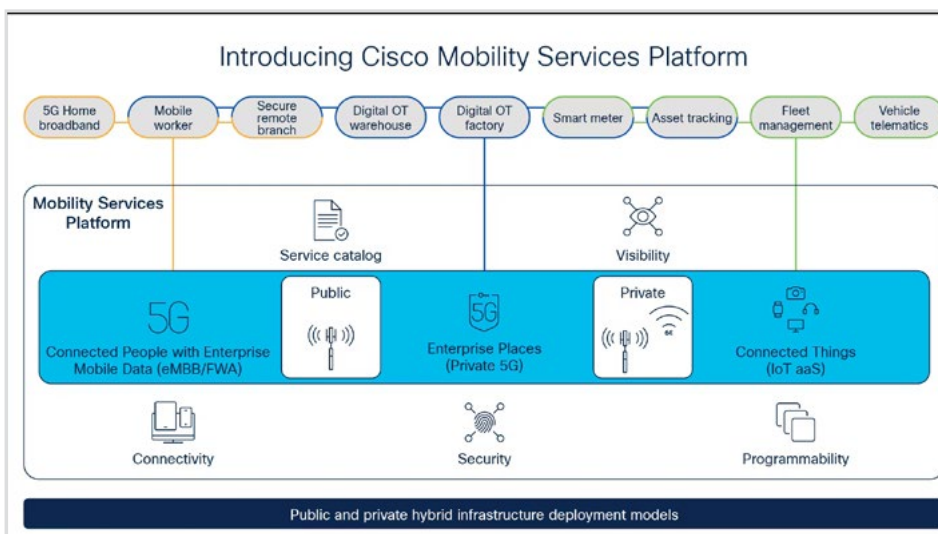
Cisco Expands Partnership with NVIDIA to Accelerate AI Adoption in the Enterprise

Cisco announced plans for an expanded partnership with NVIDIA to provide AI technology solutions to enterprises. Enterprises recognize that AI is essential to growth but remain early in their adoption as they navigate the unique technical complexity and security demands of operating AI-ready data centers. The expanded partnership aims to give organizations flexibility and choice as they look to meet the demand of AI workloads for high-performance, low-latency, highly power-efficient connectivity within – and between – data centers, clouds, and users. “A robust and scalable AI ecosystem is key to driving the transformative power of AI,” said Hans Vestberg, Chairman and CEO of Verizon. “This expanded partnership between Cisco and NVIDIA, just like our Verizon AI Connect strategy and solutions, builds towards accelerating and enabling resource-intensive AI workloads at the Edge of the network.” The NVIDIA Spectrum-X Ethernet networking platform based on Cisco and NVIDIA silicon will form the foundation for many enterprise AI workloads. By enabling interoperability between both companies’ networking architectures, the two companies are prioritizing customers’ needs for simplified, full-stack solutions. The goal of the expanded partnership is to allow customers to optimize their AI infrastructure investments with a common architecture, using their existing management tools and processes, spanning front and back-end networks. “Enterprises are under immense pressure to deploy AI quickly and effectively, and many leaders struggle to justify the investment while balancing the risks,” said Chuck Robbins, Chair and CEO, Cisco. “Together, Cisco and NVIDIA are partnering to remove barriers for customers and ensure they can optimize their infrastructure investments to unlock the power of AI.” “Advancing at lightspeed, AI will revolutionize every industry,” said Jensen Huang, founder and CEO, NVIDIA. “NVIDIA Spectrum-X is

Ethernet enhanced and supercharged for AI. Together with Cisco’s enterprise platforms and global reach, we can help companies worldwide build state-of-the-art NVIDIA infrastructure as they race to transform with AI.” By making it easier to integrate and standardize on both Cisco and NVIDIA technology, customers will benefit from current and future technology advancements in the NVIDIA Spectrum-X platform such as adaptive routing, telemetry, congestion control and low latency, as well as Cisco’s broader networking, security, and digital resilience portfolio, including the Splunk data platform. As businesses develop AI capabilities and train models on their own data, having a comprehensive security strategy becomes crucial. “World Wide Technology’s long-standing partnerships with Cisco and NVIDIA has already resulted in cutting-edge AI solutions that drive innovation and business transformation,” said Jim Kavanaugh, Co-Founder and CEO, World Wide Technology. “By leveraging the strengths of Cisco’s deep expertise in the data center and NVIDIA’s advanced AI technologies, we are poised to deliver unparalleled value to our customers and help them navigate the complexities of AI adoption with confidence.”



Cisco Introduces New Functionalities of Its Mobility Services Platform



Cisco has introduced new functionalities of the Mobility Services Platform. Built and deployed globally, delivered as-a-service, and with an extensive API ecosystem, it’s open to developers, Communication Service Providers, and enterprises to create new, differentiated value from the network, from traditional IoT and voice services to emerging AI-based services for people, spaces, and intelligent machines. This platform has been applied across high-value use cases for people, places, things, and fast-evolving intelligent machines. The value of the platform has been recognized by both Frost & Sullivan and Counterpoint as the industry-leading Connectivity Management Platform (CMP).

Introducing Cisco Programmable Core: Innovation Through Mobile Core-as-a-Service

Now generally available, the Cisco Programmable Core transforms a mobile core network into a source of differentiation, innovation, and growth. Fully orchestrated by Cisco and delivered as-a-Service, the Programmable Core frees up operational assets so Communication Service Providers can quickly target high-growth opportunities, including Network-as-a-Service deployments, Mobile Virtual Network Enablement platforms, Fixed Wireless Access, IoT solutions, complex

enterprise use-cases, and multi-country deployments. The Programmable Core is a fully scoped end-to-end offering that handles voice, messaging and data services for IoT, private networks and public network use-cases which also unleash the innovation of 5G advanced services. It can be deployed as an adjacent growth core alongside existing deployments or as a primary core for Communication Service Providers that want full as-a-service offerings. Zayan Sadek, Managing Director for Service Providers MEA at Cisco, said "The introduction of new functionalities in the Cisco Mobility Services Platform and

the availability of Cisco Programmable Core mark a significant step forward in how Communication Service Providers and enterprises can create, and scale differentiated services. By delivering these solutions as-a-service, we are enabling greater agility, faster innovation, and expanded monetization opportunities—whether through IoT, Fixed Wireless Access, or 5G advanced services. With an open API ecosystem and industry-leading connectivity management, these advancements empower our partners to drive new value from their networks."



Eutelsat and Vestel Announce the Commercial Launch of the First Smart TV to Support Sat.tv Connect with DVB-I and HbbTV at DVB World 2025

Eutelsat and Vestel are pleased to announce the commercial launch of the first Smart TV supporting the enhanced UX features of Sat.tv Connect, at DVB World 2025. Leveraging the DVB-I and HbbTV standards, the new range of innovative Smart TVs from Vestel provides an enhanced user experience, with dynamic installation of channel lists and an advanced Electronic Program Guide (EPG) displaying hundreds of Free-to-Air (FTA) TV channels available on the HOTBIRD 13°East and Eutelsat-Nilesat 7/8° West satellite TV hot spots. Designed for TV markets across Europe, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Vestel's new generation of Smart TVs with integrated satellite tuner eliminates the need for an external decoder (Set-Top-Box) and offers instant access to a wide range of FTA satellite channels in the easiest and most viewer-friendly manner. Sat.tv Connect: a revolution in FTA satellite channel discovery. Developed by Eutelsat, Sat.tv Connect uses the DVB-I standard to deliver a seamless and unified content discovery

experience, with an enhanced EPG that significantly improves user engagement. The standards-based solution redefines the presentation of FTA channels on Eutelsat's satellites, offering:

- Over 30 Sat.tv channel lists, presenting channels sorted by country or language.
- Simplified channel installation via "Instant Tuning" and "LCN Range" functions, which allow direct access to TV and radio channels without the time-consuming pre-scanning of frequencies.
- Enhanced EPG with channel logos, thumbnails and detailed programme information, seamlessly integrated with the native TV interface, zapping banner and TV guide.
- Hybrid approach that combines traditional FTA satellite channels with FAST (Free Ad-Supported Streaming TV) services to expand the content offering.

A Strategic Partnership Between Eutelsat and Vestel

Jean-Luc Deroudilhe, SVP Advanced TV Services at Eutelsat, commented: "This is a fantastic opportunity to bring the Sat.tv service directly into Vestel's Connected TV. With native support for DVB-I and HbbTV, users can enjoy a very large choice of free satellite channels with a truly enhanced experience and without the need for an external set-top box." Atınç Ögüt, Deputy General Manager of Vestel Consumer Electronics Product Management representing Vestel, emphasized: "Our strategic partnership with Eutelsat to integrate Sat.tv into Vestel Smart TVs reinforces our commitment to innovation. By pioneering native support for DVB-I, Vestel is not only enhancing the viewing experience, but also shaping the future of television. We are proud to deliver a seamless, future-proof solution that brings greater accessibility, convenience and enriched content to audiences worldwide." Vestel Smart TV with Sat.tv Connect will be available across Europe and MENA markets starting from Q3/2025 onwards on the brands such as Vestel, Telefunken.





Huawei: Helping Carriers Reshape Business, Infrastructure, and O&M with AI

During MWC Barcelona 2025, Huawei is gathering carriers, industry partners, and opinion leaders from around the world to explore the intersection of 5G networks and AI, and how they can support one another to unlock new growth opportunities. The company is showcasing a sweeping range of solutions:

- AI-to-X – Shorthand for AI-to-Consumers, AI-to-Businesses, and AI-to-Homes, including a series of solutions that can help carriers expand into AI services for new, more targeted domains and achieve business growth
- AI-Centric Network solution – Helping carriers build networks that can meet the challenging demands of new AI applications to ensure a smooth and superior experience
- AI-powered O&M – Using AI to revitalize network O&M, and helping carriers achieve L4 autonomous networks (AN) for fully intelligent O&M

These discussions come at a time when high-quality, open-source AI models are developing fast, powering a new, more diverse wave of innovation in AI applications. Huawei's theme this year is "Accelerating the Intelligent World", and their star-studded booth in Hall 1 is designed to represent countless bits of intelligence lighting up the night's sky. The company is showcasing its innovation in digital infrastructure and service applications for individuals, homes, and enterprises, as well as success stories created together with its customers and partners. By the end of 2024, there were more than 2.1 billion 5G users around the world, and the numbers continue to grow. Huawei has been working with carriers to drive the development of 5G through both business and network innovation, helping them transition from mobile Internet to mobile AI. In 2024, a number of pioneering carriers have already kicked off commercial 5G-Advanced (5G-A), launching 5G-A packages for users in more than 200 cities around the world. For consumers, these packages take advantage of 5G-A's enhanced capabilities



to provide an optimized user experience for scenarios like livestreaming and gaming, as well as metro and business travel. For carriers, these packages are an opportunity to go beyond traditional connectivity and start monetizing a more personalized experience for different users. Carrier progress in these domains has propelled the industry into an era of AI-powered 5G-A connectivity. Huawei is actively working with carriers in China, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia Pacific to explore innovative experience monetization models, define application scenarios, design new offerings, and build their user base. This shift of focus from connectivity to experience has both improved user experience and increased carrier revenue. Huawei launched its AI-Centric Network solution that helps carriers upgrade their ICT network infrastructure to meet new demands on bandwidth, latency, coverage, and O&M brought about by a flood of new AI applications. It's designed to help quickly reshape telecom service and business models to seize new opportunities in the age of AI. With the rapid development of technologies like 5G-A,

cloud, and AI, carriers will need to upgrade from connectivity service providers to digital service providers. To guide this process, Huawei is launching a three-layer technology architecture for carriers looking to transform from Telcos to TechCos, helping them tap into new business domains and open the door to new growth opportunities. At this year's MWC, Huawei's Enterprise Business is demonstrating how different industries can incorporate AI into their unique business scenarios using the company's industrial intelligence reference architecture. During the event, Huawei unveiled 83 different industry showcases with customers, and launched ten 10 major solutions to accelerate intelligent transformation together with its partners. Huawei's consumer business will showcase a lineup of high-end, fashion-forward, and technology-driven flagship products at the event. Through multiple scenario-based experience zones, the company will share its latest innovations in foldable phones, fitness and health, photography, and creativity, focusing on how technology can further enrich people's everyday lives.

Huawei Named a Customers' Choice in 2025 Gartner® Peer Insights™ Voice of the Customer



Huawei was named a Customers' Choice in 2025 Gartner® Peer Insights™ Voice of the Customer for Enterprise Backup and Recovery Software Solutions. According to the Gartner report, as of November 2024, Huawei scored 99% for "Willingness to Recommend" based on 155 reviews of

its OceanProtect Data Protection. Gartner Peer Insights is a free peer review and ratings platform designed for enterprise software and services decision makers. Reviews are organized by products in live markets that align to Gartner research markets, defined as Magic Quadrant™ or

Market Guide–defined markets, or GPI-defined markets that are opened at the discretion of the GPI team and do not require research published to open the space on Peer Insights. Gartner Peer Insights recognizes vendors who meet or exceed both the market average Overall Experience and the market average User Interest and Adoption score through a Customers' Choice distinction. During this peer-recognition, Huawei OceanProtect has received reviews from global customers in various industries, such as finance, manufacturing, energy, media, healthcare, education and telecommunications. Huawei OceanProtect scored an overall rating of 4.9 and a 99% willingness to recommend based on 155 reviews as of November 2024. Commenting on the recognition, Li Yongjian, President of Huawei Data Protection Domain, said: "we will prioritize customer-centricity and provide end-to-end data protection solutions to create a fast, efficient, and resilient line of defense for data resilience in the future."

Huawei Launches AI-Ready Data Storage for Carriers to Transform Data Assets

At MWC Barcelona 2025, Dr. Peter Zhou, President of Huawei Data Storage Product Line, unveiled the company's comprehensive AI-Ready Data Storage solutions designed to accelerate carriers' transformation from Telco to TechCo organizations. The announcement comes as telecommunications providers worldwide seek to capitalize on the growing value of data assets in the AI era. "The AI-powered transformation of various industries is creating a golden era for data," said Dr. Zhou during his keynote speech. "Global carriers are continuously exploring business value by capitalizing on and monetizing application scenarios, such as smart home and digital factories—and that means higher demands on data storage, service capabilities, and business models." To address these evolving challenges, Huawei has introduced an AI-Ready data lake solution that breaks down data silos, making organizational data visible, manageable, and available. This approach enables carriers to transform

disordered data into high-quality assets, unlocking significant business value. The comprehensive storage portfolio addresses the full spectrum of carrier data needs. For mission-critical production workloads, Huawei's New-Gen OceanStor Dorado Converged All-Flash Storage and OceanStor A Series High-Performance AI Storage feature 100 million-level IOPS, financial-grade reliability, and efficient AI training and inference capabilities. These solutions support tens of billions of daily charging services and robust mobile financial applications. Storage provides industry-leading density and low power consumption with exabyte-level scalability, ideal for emerging services like live streams and XR games. Complementing these offerings, the New-Gen OceanProtect All-Flash Backup Storage delivers comprehensive data protection with five times faster data recovery than industry alternatives, supporting critical needs such as emergency drills and AI application development. Recognizing

that carriers face multiple challenges in AI implementation—including weak data engineering, inadequate model development platforms, long data preparation times, and complex application development processes—Huawei has introduced the DCS AI Solution. This offering provides carriers with a one-stop AI toolchain and containerized environment to accelerate fine-tuning and deployment of AI models. The FlashEver business model introduced by Dr. Zhou addresses the investment challenges posed by rapidly evolving services and technologies. This approach protects carrier investments by providing an evolutionary, flexible architecture enabling seamless upgrades for live-network equipment. It also includes platform services with flexible purchase options, SLA assurances for high-quality customer experiences, and diverse storage and data services tailored to carrier requirements.



Nokia has Published Its Nokia in 2024 Annual Report and Filed Its Annual Report on Form 20-F for 2024

Nokia has published its Nokia in 2024 Annual Report, which includes audited financial statements, the annual review by the Board of Directors, including the Sustainability Statement, Nokia's corporate governance statement and the Remuneration Report for the governing bodies for 2024. Additionally, Nokia has filed its Annual Report on Form 20-F for 2024 with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. The Nokia in 2024 Annual Report and the Annual Report on Form 20-F will be available in PDF format at www.nokia.com/financials. The corporate governance statement will be available also at www.nokia.com/about-us/company/leadership-and-governance and the Remuneration Report at <https://www.nokia.com/about-us/company/leadership-and-governance/remuneration/>. The financial statements are also published in XHTML format in accordance with the European Single Electronic Format (ESEF) reporting requirements. In accordance with ESEF requirements, the consolidated financial statements are marked with iXBRL tags. The audit firm Deloitte Oy has provided an independent auditor's report on Nokia's ESEF financial statements based on a reasonable assurance engagement it has performed in accordance with International Standard on Assurance Engagements ISAE 3000. The ESEF financial statements in Finnish are available in the zip file attached to this release and at <https://www.nokia.com/about-us/investors/results-reports/>. Nokia's



Sustainability Statement, published as part of the annual review by the Board of Directors, is prepared in accordance with the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS), the reporting standards referred to in Chapter 7 of the Finnish Accounting Act and Article 8 of the EU Taxonomy Regulation and it has been assured by Deloitte Oy which has provided a limited assurance report in accordance with International Standard on Assurance Engagements ISAE 3000 (revised).

Nokia and Honeywell Aerospace Join Canadian Quantum-Secure Networks Testbed



Nokia and Honeywell Aerospace Technologies are working with Canadian non-profit group Numana to develop quantum-safe networks for enterprises and service providers. A press statement said the work is focused on quantum-safe networks "in Montreal, Canada, and worldwide". Apparently, quantum communication is "poised" to have a "profound impact" on Canada. The arrangement is about innovation and collaboration, they said. It is also to "raise awareness" to accelerate adoption of higher-grade quantum-secure networks. Numana has a quantum networks testbed facility (called Kirq Quantum Communication Testbed) in Montreal, in Quebec in Canada, for validating new quantum-resistant and quantum communication technologies. Honeywell Aerospace Technologies will introduce quantum-secure encryption keys from space to terrestrial data centers, applications, and networks. Nokia said it will provide expertise in "post-quantum networking", incorporating its IP routers, optical transport nodes, and quantum cryptographic technologies, plus "practical experience and proven success in real-world deployments". It said it will use the testbed to "foster collaborative-based innovations" for the "development of solutions within the broader quantum technology ecosystem". A statement said: "The Numana facility will serve as a hub where enterprises, research institutions, and government agencies can explore, evaluate, and validate secure networking technologies in a real-world environment. The arrival of Nokia and Honeywell

Aerospace Technologies... introduces technologies and expertise. This effort will advance the development and deployment of quantum-secure solutions and foster a robust global network.” Jeffrey Maddox, president at Nokia in Canada, said: “As the world increasingly depends on digital infrastructure, the need for advanced cryptographic protection has never been more critical. By partnering with Numana and... Honeywell Aerospace Technologies and others, we can deploy our combined expertise to enable future-proof networks to help organisations, enterprises, and service providers build a secure and resilient digital future.” François Borrelli, president and chief executive at Numana, said: “Numana will oversee the deployment, operation, and ongoing development of the test-

bed and make the equipment and infrastructure available to carry out various projects, based on the needs of the technology innovation ecosystem. Our ambition is to accelerate quantum technology in Quebec and help the industry develop leading-edge products to transform the province into a true global leader in quantum communication.” Lisa Napolitano, Vice President of Space at Honeywell Aerospace Technologies, said: “Honeywell Aerospace Technologies welcomes the opportunity to join forces with Nokia and Numana to advance quantum-safe communications. Our quantum encryption technology will play a critical role in securing satellite networks and improving the integrity of data transmitted from space to earth.”

Nokia and Intuitive Machines Deliver First Cellular Network to the Moon; Achieve Some Key Mission Objectives

Nokia announced it successfully delivered the first cellular network to the Moon as part of the Intuitive Machines IM-2 mission to the lunar south pole region. Nokia successfully validated key aspects of the network's operation, including the transmission of operational data to Intuitive Machines' ground station and Nokia's mission control center on Earth and the activation of multiple communication solution components. The IM-2 mission is part of NASA's Commercial Lunar Payload Services initiative and Nokia's technology demonstration was funded in part by NASA's Tipping Point initiative. Nokia was unable to place the first cellular call on the Moon because of significant power limitations due to the orientation of the Athena lander's solar panels after landing. However, Nokia Bell Labs' Lunar Surface Communications System (LSCS) was engineered for optimized power consumption, and in a 25-minute window in which it was able to receive power, the LSCS successfully completed multiple tests. These achievements serve as key steps toward proving cellular technologies meet the mission-critical communications needs of lunar exploration and beyond. The LSCS's “network in a box” (NIB) installed on Athena successfully powered on and received telecommands from and issued responses to the Nokia mission control center in Sunnyvale, California. Nokia's operations and management software on Athena also started up and connected to Intuitive Machines' ground station. NIB telemetry data confirmed a successful operational “on-air” state, indicating that all its subcomponents – base station, radio and network core – were all functioning properly. The



NIB ran without any service interruption for the entire 25-minute power window. Right after landing, telemetry data showed that the LSCS device module on board Intuitive Machines' Micro Nova Hopper was drawing power consistent with the device module being operational and functioning properly; this is an indication that it was ready to receive a connection. Unfortunately, when the NIB was activated several hours later, the Hopper module's temperature had dropped well below operational range due to power constraints and the extreme conditions in Athena's crater landing site, and a connection between the device module and the NIB could no longer be established. “In space exploration there are big successes and small successes,” said Thierry E. Klein, President of Bell Labs Solutions Research at Nokia. “We delivered and deployed the first cellular network on the Moon and we are incredibly proud of the results that we have achieved despite the very challenging circumstances. If our device modules had been functional when our network in a box was powered up, all indications tell us

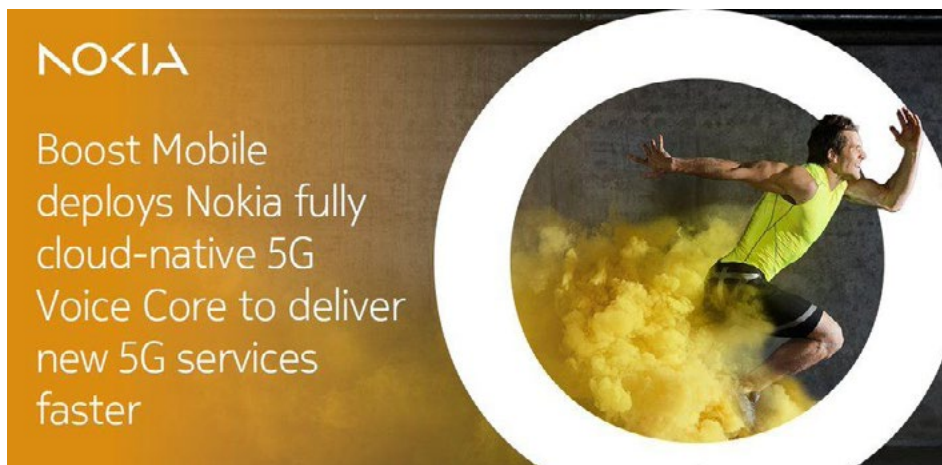
that we would have been able to complete the first-ever cellular call on the Moon. The successes we were able to achieve are still significant. We were able to take commercial off-the-shelf components that connect billions of people on Earth and harden them to operate on the Moon. These initial milestones demonstrate that cellular technologies have a key role to play in space exploration, and we look forward to future missions with NASA, Intuitive Machines, Lunar Outpost and other partners in the space industry.” Nokia and Nokia Bell Labs have always maintained a strong commitment to science, resulting in some of the greatest innovations and discoveries known to humankind. By working with NASA and partnering with innovative companies like Intuitive Machines and Lunar Outpost, Nokia is shaping the way we communicate beyond the confines of Earth. This commitment will continue well beyond IM-2 as Nokia explores the possibilities for communications on the Moon and Mars and helps foster the burgeoning space economy.

Boost Mobile Becomes First Mobile Operator in World to Deploy Nokia Cloud-Native 5G Voice Core on Public Cloud to Accelerate New 5G Services

Boost Mobile, the newest U.S. nationwide carrier, has deployed Nokia's fully cloud-native 5G Voice Core to enable even faster delivery of advanced services, enhanced network automation, and more efficient cloud utilization than its Open RAN cloud-native network could before. The deployment includes the consolidation of several IMS voice 3GPP functionalities into a single cloud-native network function (CNF), called Nokia Cloud Native Communication Suite (CNCS). This migration, from Boost

Mobile's previous distributed IMS voice core by Nokia, provides automated deployment and configuration, reduced infrastructure and carbon footprint, and lower operational costs through streamlined life cycle management. "We anticipate Nokia's 5G Voice Core to help reduce our network infrastructure costs by about 70 percent in addition to delivering new 5G services faster, with significantly streamlined network operations," said Dawood Shahdad, Vice President of Core

Engineering at Boost Mobile. "Boost Mobile continues to push boundaries with our Open RAN 5G network and the successful nationwide deployment of Nokia's cloud-native next-generation voice core marks a pivotal moment in our network evolution, as this new network element advances our vision of end-to-end orchestration and dynamic scaling on our path toward 6G." CNCS improves energy efficiency by about 10 percent to 20 percent, relative to a standard IMS Voice Core, according to Nokia data. "As the sole 5G Voice Core provider for Boost Mobile in the US, Nokia is extremely pleased to support Boost in this modernization project and the close partnering that enabled it. This is another demonstration of Nokia's technology leadership in helping our customers solve problems, address their customer needs, and generate new revenue streams," said Marcelo Madruga, Head of Technology and Platforms, Products & Engineering, Cloud and Network Services at Nokia. Nokia had the most 5G Standalone Core operator customers, with 123 in total, at the end of 2024.



Nokia Unveils Two Mass-Market 25G PON Residential Fiber ONTs, Making Large-Scale Multi-Gig and 10G+ Viable and Affordable

Nokia has announced the launch of two new 25G PON fiber modems designed to deliver mass-market, high-speed residential connectivity. The indoor fiber modems provide speeds up to 20 times faster than existing gigabit solutions. 25G PON works on the same fiber network and equipment that operators already use to deliver GPON and 10G PON services. This allows operators to quickly and cost-effectively increase speeds on their network and get the most out of their Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) investment. Demand for multi-gigabit services is growing, moving beyond the enterprise into the home where end-users seek high-speed connectivity for cloud applications, gaming, remote work, and Wi-Fi 7. With 25G PON, operators can turn multi-Gig and 10G+ into mass-market

services and know they can reliably deliver advertised speeds to all subscribers, all the time. This proven technology is used by 17 operators, including Google Fiber, Frontier, and Hong Kong Broadband. It provides an easy, cost-effective way to address residential demand for faster broadband speeds. The two new residential 25G PON fiber modems complement Nokia's growing 25G PON portfolio, which includes the Lightspan FX, DF and MF fiber access platforms (OLTs), a 25G PON ONT designed for enterprise applications, and the industry's first 25G PON sealed fiber access node for cable operators. "To support next-gen power users, operators must build future-ready broadband networks that scale beyond 10G. As technology advances, higher-capacity solutions like 25G PON are

emerging as a simple, cost-effective way to meet tomorrow's connectivity demands. With growing competition, differentiation, time-to-market, and scalability will remain critical for providers to stay ahead," said Jaimie Lenderman, principal analyst at Omdia. "We are investing in all next generation PON technologies including 10/25/50/100G PON, to give operators the best option to meet their needs and their business goals. 25G PON is a proven technology that can be easily activated on our existing 10G XGS-PON solutions. We have close to 2 million 25G-capable ports in the field already. These new 25G PON fiber modems provide a simple, efficient way to boost capacity and stay ahead of growing demands," said Geert Heynink, General Manager of Broadband Networks at Nokia.

Indosat, Nokia and Nvidia to Develop and Deploy AI-RAN

Indonesian telco Indosat Ooredoo Hutchison said on Wednesday it has signed a MoU with Nokia and Nvidia at Mobile World Congress 2025 to deploy AI-RAN infrastructure in Indosat's network. The deal will see Indosat integrate Nokia's 5G Cloud RAN solution and Nvidia's AI Aerial platform to create a unified accelerated computing infrastructure for hosting both AI and RAN workloads. Under the terms of the MoU, Indosat, Nokia and Nvidia will develop, test and deploy the AI-RAN solution, with an initial focus on bringing AI inferencing workloads on Nvidia AI Aerial, followed by the integration of RAN workloads on the same platform. In addition to delivering gains in network performance, spectral efficiency, and energy consumption, AI-RAN will also lay the groundwork for an eventual software upgrade to 6G, Indosat said. Tommi Uitto, President of Mobile Networks at Nokia, added that AI-RAN will enable Indosat to share infrastructure costs across multiple applications, and maximize its return on investment while unlocking new revenue streams via AI-driven services. "When you combine AI with RAN, you create an engine for future innovation," Uitto, said in a joint statement. "With our 5G Cloud RAN platform, Indosat can transform its network into a multi-purpose computing grid that leverages the synergies of AI-accelerated computing." The three companies will kick off the project by establishing a 5G AI-RAN lab in Surabaya in early 2025 for joint development, testing and validation. Indosat plans to launch a small-scale commercial pilot of AI Inferencing workloads running on NVIDIA AI-RAN infrastructure in the second half of this year, with further

expansion of the solution deployment slated for 2026. Indosat president director and CEO Vikram Sinha said the deal makes it the first operator in Southeast Asia and the third globally to build a commercial AI-RAN network. "By embedding AI into our radio access network, we're not just enhancing connectivity – we're building a nationwide AI-powered ecosystem that will fuel innovation across industries," he said in a statement. As part of the same initiative, Indosat, Nokia, and NVIDIA will also work with Indonesian universities and research institutions to drive AI-RAN development by supporting academic programs to foster AI innovation in telecom applications and accelerate breakthroughs in AI-driven network optimization, spectral efficiency, and energy consumption. The deal marks the latest AI-based collaboration with Indosat and Nvidia, who signed an MoU at last year's MWC to collaborate on establishing Indonesia as a leading player in the AI sector. The MoU included plans for Indosat's ICT arm Lintasarta to launch a GPUaaS offering called GPU Merdeka, which was unveiled in August 2024. It's also one of a number of AI-RAN announcements at MWC25, perhaps a key one being Ericsson and Japanese telco SoftBank – who formed the AI-RAN Alliance at last year's MWC – reporting their progress in developing AI-RAN. Among other things, Ericsson and Softbank said they have demonstrated a prototype of Ericsson Cloud RAN software running on the Grace CPU of Nvidia's GH200 Grace Hopper Superchip, and defined an architecture to enable orchestration of both RAN and AI applications on the same infrastructure.

Nokia Completes 5G Equipment Deliveries to Vodafone Idea



Finnish telecom equipment provider Nokia confirmed it has successfully delivered all necessary 5G gear to Indian operator Vodafone Idea in preparation for its upcoming 5G rollout. Vodafone Idea is set to launch its 5G network in major cities, with Mumbai being the first to go live around mid-March, followed by Delhi, Bengaluru, Chandigarh and Patna by April, the company has confirmed. Vodafone Idea has already commenced 5G trial runs in Mumbai. "As the demand for reliable and high-performing networks continues to grow, our collaboration with Vodafone Idea will help address the emerging requirements of retail consumers and businesses. We achieved very fast delivery and deployment of 5G and 4G sites for Vodafone Idea," said Tarun Chhabra, senior

vice president and country head at Nokia India. Nokia indicated that it is on track to deliver more than 60,000 technology sites – including thousands of new 4G sites – to Vodafone Idea by the end of March. To enhance service quality in densely populated urban areas, Nokia noted it is implementing ultra-lean sites as part of its support for Vodafone Idea's expansion. "Nokia remains our valued long-term partner, consistently delivering exceptional support. The rapid 4G expansion will significantly enhance our coverage and capacity, enabling us to provide an exceptional customer experience as we move toward launching 5G services," said Vodafone Idea CTO Jagbir Singh. Nokia further stated that it is supplying the latest 4G and 5G baseband and radio modules to help the Indian telco strengthen its 4G network through new site deployments, technology advancements and increased spectrum bandwidth at existing locations. To facilitate Vodafone Idea's 5G deployment, Nokia said it is leveraging its AirScale portfolio, which features Multi Radio Access Technology (RAT) baseband units and radio modules powered by the energy-efficient ReefShark System-on-Chip technology. This upcoming 5G deployment follows a two-year delay since Vodafone Idea participated in the 2021 spectrum auctions, where rival operators Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio Infocomm launched their 5G services soon after. Rival operators Reliance Jio Infocomm and Bharti Airtel already offer 5G services nationwide and operate an extensive 4G network.

du Teams with AWS and Nokia to Deploy 5G Cloud RAN

UAE-based telco du announced at Mobile World Congress 2025 it is collaborating with Amazon Web Services (AWS) and Nokia to implement 5G cloud RAN technology in its network. Under the collaboration deal, du will deploy Nokia's Cloud RAN solution using AWS's cloud services to explore and develop key use cases in wireless networks as well as the RAN edge. Du said this will give it maximum flexibility to commercially deploy cloud RAN alongside its purpose-built network under a hybrid RAN architecture while maintaining feature and performance consistency. More specifically, the Nokia Cloud RAN architecture will be deployed using a microservices-based cloud RAN software running on AWS cloud infrastructure with on-premises AWS Outposts. Du will test centralized and distributed workload deployments using on-premises

AWS Outpost servers at RAN sites. Meanwhile, AWS's cloud continuum – spanning regions and outposts – will enable the telco to support diverse architectures and use cases. The AWS cloud continuum will reach the furthest edge of the du 5G network under a common automation, observability and security framework. Du said this will ensure faster time to market for monetizing new 5G use cases. Du also plans to leverage Amazon EKS and AWS Telco Network Builder (TNB) for scalable management and automation across deployment models. "5G cloud RAN will enhance our network's efficiency and flexibility and enable us to explore new opportunities and services that can deliver genuine value to our customers and society at large," said du CTO Saleem AIBlooshi in a statement.



Iraq Signs Fourth Submarine Cable Agreement with Ooredoo

Iraq's Ministry of Communications has signed an agreement with Qatar's Ooredoo Group for the deployment of the country's fourth submarine cable (FIG) at the Al-Faw landing station. Minister Dr. Hayam Al-Yasiri emphasized the strategic importance of the 24-pair fiber-optic cable, which has a capacity of over 700 terabits and connects seven Gulf countries across a 2,000 km route. She also announced that additional approvals have been granted to global telecom companies to lay new submarine cables and develop transit projects. Iraq's existing and planned networks, including the Route of Civilizations and the strategic Development Road transit network, will enhance its role as a key regional communications hub. Dr. Al-Yasiri highlighted Iraq's competitive advantages, including shorter transit routes and simplified maintenance, positioning the country as a secure and attractive corridor for international telecom traffic between Europe and Asia via Al-Faw and Turkey. She noted that Iraq's international bandwidth has surged from 10 Gbps to 1,800 Gbps, reflecting growing investor confidence and increased foreign interest in Iraq's telecom sector.



Ooredoo and Kloudville Launch B2B Digital Marketplace to Empower SMBs Across MENA

Ooredoo Group has entered into a strategic partnership with Kloudville to launch an innovative B2B digital marketplace. This new platform will provide customers with seamless access to a wide array of AI-powered tools, cloud services, cybersecurity solutions, and enterprise software, all integrated with Ooredoo's telecom offerings. The solution, built on Kloudville's "Marketplace 360" platform, is designed to act as a one-stop hub where businesses, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMBs), can easily discover, compare, and subscribe to digital solutions that are transforming how they manage essential services.

This partnership marks a pivotal shift for Ooredoo, positioning the company as a technology hub rather than merely a telecom provider. By curating and bundling essential digital services, Ooredoo is empowering businesses to accelerate their transition to an AI-driven, cloud-first future. Ooredoo's Group Chief Executive Officer, Aziz Aluthman Fakhroo, emphasized the shift, stating, "Telcos are no longer just connectivity providers. We are becoming digital enablers for businesses. This B2B digital marketplace offers cost-effective, scalable solutions that drive efficiency and growth for our business customers. By simplifying access to



Kloudville further strengthens Ooredoo’s digital transformation efforts. Per Borgklint, CEO of Kloudville, commented, “Ooredoo is delivering on its vision for digital transformation in a bold and innovative way. This vision aligns seamlessly with Kloudville’s mission to empower telecom operators to expand beyond connectivity and into digital ecosystems. Our Marketplace 360 platform will enable Ooredoo to curate and deliver AI-driven, cloud-first solutions to businesses across the MENA region in a zero-touch fashion, exposing both internal assets and external partnerships to joint offerings.” This marketplace will first roll out in Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Iraq, Tunisia, and Algeria between 2025 and 2026, with plans for further expansion across the region. The partnership was officially signed at MWC 2025 in Barcelona, marking another major step in Ooredoo’s commitment to driving digital innovation and transforming business services across the MENA region.

essential digital services, we are making it easier than ever for businesses to embrace AI, cloud, and cybersecurity solutions. This

is a natural progression of our strategy to become a leading digital infrastructure player in the region.” The partnership with



stc Bahrain Launches the Fereej Majlises as Part of Its Community Program “stc Fereej” to Promote Community Spirit and Local Culture

As part of its commitment to corporate social responsibility and fostering community engagement, stc Bahrain, a digital enabler, has launched the “Fereej Majlises” initiative under its community program “stc Fereej”. The initiative aims to revive the role of traditional Majlises in reinforcing social ties and preserving Bahrain’s cultural heritage. Majlis gatherings have long been an integral part of Bahraini culture, serving as spaces for individuals to come together, exchange news, and strengthen relationships. Through this initiative, stc Bahrain reaffirms its dedication to preserving this rich tradition, enhancing local neighborhoods, and fostering a sense of belonging within the community. stc Bahrain will renovate Majlises in various governorate areas, offering welcoming spaces for neighbors to gather and socialize in one of the houses that has a Majlis available. The initiative aims to reach

all categories of society, providing a space to come together and keep the traditional and local culture alive. Zeyad Al Khalifa, the Chief Government Affairs Officer at stc Bahrain, said: “At stc Bahrain, we believe that strong communities are the foundation of a thriving society, and we are committed to supporting the government’s vision to create a sustainable and stable local community and to develop neighborhoods’ growth and prosperity. By providing these welcoming spaces, we hope to strengthen the bonds that unite us and contribute to the preservation of Bahraini cultural traditions.” stc Bahrain’s ‘Fereej’ program encompasses a wide range of initiatives designed to support and empower local communities in Bahrain, including providing educational opportunities, healthcare services, and home renovations to underprivileged families. The launch of Fereej Majlises further demonstrates

stc Bahrain’s commitment to creating a positive and lasting impact on the Bahraini society.





HillmanTok University Announces Strategic Partnership with TPT Global Tech to VuMe Live Super App

Cofounder Kierra Owens, HillmanTok University, a pioneering online education platform with over 350,000 registered students worldwide, is proud to announce a strategic partnership with TPT Global Tech, Inc. (OTC: TPTW). Through this collaboration, HillmanTok University will migrate its fast-growing learning platform to the VuMe Live Super App, now available for download on both the Apple Store and Google Play. This transition marks a significant milestone in the evolution of digital education, offering students and educators a secure, interactive, and globally accessible learning experience. HillmanTok University, originally a viral educational initiative on TikTok, was founded by a collective of Black educators, content creators, and subject matter experts. The platform quickly rose to prominence by offering engaging courses across more than 400 diverse subjects, ranging from Forensic Pathology to Sustainable Farming. Despite its success, HillmanTok faced increasing challenges on TikTok, including security risks, account hacking incidents, content restrictions, and concerns about the platform's long-term viability in the U.S. To ensure the sustainability and growth of its educational community, HillmanTok

sought a more robust and innovative solution—leading to its partnership with TPT Global Inc. and its VuMe Live Super App platform. With its move to the VuMe Live Super App, HillmanTok University will now operate within a next-generation digital ecosystem tailored for online education, global collaboration, and corporate training. Unlike TikTok's restrictive short-form video format, VuMe Live offers Live Rooms—an interactive virtual space that fosters real-time engagement between educators and students. This enhanced environment enables long-form lectures, live Q&A sessions, and immersive learning experiences without the limitations of traditional social media platforms. Furthermore, VuMe Live's ad-free and secure framework ensures an uninterrupted learning experience, free from third-party distractions. One of the most exciting aspects of this transition is the new monetization opportunities available to educators. HillmanTok faculty will be able to generate revenue through course subscriptions, pay-per-view masterclasses, premium content offerings, and sponsorships. This new business model establishes a more sustainable foundation for online

education, allowing educators to thrive while expanding their reach. VuMe Live's integrated collaboration tools also position it as a powerful alternative to traditional online meeting platforms for corporate training and professional development. "HillmanTok University's migration to VuMe Live represents a major step forward in the future of digital learning," said Stephen J. Thomas III, CEO of TPT Global Tech. "Our goal with VuMe Live is to revolutionize how people learn, connect, and collaborate. By bringing HillmanTok's thriving educational network onto our platform, we're creating an ecosystem where knowledge is shared without limitations, empowering educators and students alike." As the landscape of digital education and corporate training continues to evolve, HillmanTok University and TPT Global Tech are leading the way by leveraging cutting-edge technology to deliver inclusive, engaging, and innovative learning experiences. With VuMe Live's advanced capabilities, HillmanTok University is set to usher in a new era of online education, ensuring that knowledge remains accessible to learners around the world.

TPT Global Tech's UK Subsidiary GeoKall Ltd Set to Launch eSIM Mobile Voice and Data Services to 180+ Countries

TPT Global Tech, Inc. proudly announces that its UK-based subsidiary, GeoKall Ltd, is now fully operational and set to distribute eSIM (Electronic Digital SIM cards), replacing traditional physical SIM card technology, in 180+ countries. This next-generation technology provides seamless mobile data, voice, and text services to travelers, expatriates, and global business professionals, offering an efficient and flexible way to stay connected worldwide. This expansion not only strengthens GeoKall's position in the global telecom industry but also accelerates the international adoption of TPT Global Tech's VuMe Live

Super App, which offers live TV broadcasting, social media engagement, and digital streaming services. GeoKall's Global eSIM Services include a robust Mobile Virtual Network Enabler (MVNE) platform, providing QR Code-based activation for quick and seamless connectivity. With coverage in over 180+ countries, GeoKall eSIM users will benefit from low-cost data rates in 180+ countries, affordable outgoing voice calls, and free incoming calls when using the co-branded Mobyx (GeoKall Global Softphone) App. Additionally, the service provides crystal-clear voice and text messaging with access to over 12 million Direct

Inward Dialing (DID) phone numbers from major regions, including the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, Spain, and Italy. These numbers allow users to maintain a local presence while traveling internationally, ensuring smooth communication with clients, family, and colleagues. TPT Global Tech will enhance its global eSIM offerings by providing customers with real U.S., U.K., and Canadian phone numbers, integrated with GeoKall's Global eSIM for seamless local and international voice, text, and data services. The platform will feature Global 4G and 5G Data Services, offering high-speed internet connectivity in

180+ countries, Global Crystal-Clear Voice Services supporting eSIM and softphone applications across 180+ countries, and Global SMS/Text Services covering 200+ countries. Users will also have access to P2P SMS (Person-to-Person) messaging on premium DID numbers in regions such as Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Finland, Israel, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, South Africa, Sweden, Thailand, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Additionally, A2P SMS (Application-to-Person) messaging services will be available in select markets, including the U.S., Thailand, Chile, Finland, and Poland, with campaign registration requirements for compliance in certain countries. Beyond traditional mobile connectivity, TPT Global Tech and GeoKall Ltd are introducing an online 5G eSIM rugged smartphone solution, offering customers a standalone premium communication experience. Customers can also opt for the DOOGEE V30 5G eSIM Rugged Smartphone, bundled with GeoKall's Global eSIM, delivering a comprehensive mobile and data solution for international travelers, remote workers, and professionals requiring rugged durability and global connectivity. The GeoKall eSIM Tech-

nology is also expected to be used heavily in the trucking industry for GPS tracking. As part of its strategy to drive adoption, every customer who purchases a GeoKall eSIM will receive a push notification prompting them to download the VuMe Live Super App from the Apple Store or Google Play Store, seamlessly integrating users into TPT Global Tech's digital ecosystem. The VuMe Live Super App is a feature-rich platform that includes live TV broadcasting, social media interaction, live streaming, and e-commerce. It provides access to global news, live sports, and premium entertainment, while also serving as a hub for social networking, influencer engagement, and monetization opportunities. In addition to these services, users will be able to purchase and manage GeoKall eSIMs directly within the app, creating a fully integrated digital experience that combines mobile connectivity with media consumption and social engagement. By merging GeoKall's eSIM technology with the VuMe Live Super App, TPT Global Tech is revolutionizing the intersection of telecommunications and digital media. This strategic integration will enhance user engagement across both platforms, expanding revenue streams

through mobile connectivity, live content streaming, digital advertising, and in-app transactions. The company's ability to provide a seamless global communications network alongside a robust digital media platform positions TPT Global Tech in both industries. "With the expansion of GeoKall's eSIM services to 180+ countries, we are offering users an all-in-one connectivity and entertainment solution," said Stephen J. Thomas III, CEO of TPT Global Tech. "The VuMe Live Super App is not just another social media platform - it's a comprehensive digital hub where users can access live TV, global connectivity, and interactive content, all while staying connected through GeoKall's Global eSIM technology. This innovative business model allows us to drive global adoption while unlocking new monetization opportunities in both the telecom and digital media sectors." GeoKall eSIMs are now available for purchase, offering data, voice, and text services in 180+ countries, while the VuMe Live Super App is available for download on iOS and Android. With this groundbreaking initiative, TPT Global Tech is redefining the way people stay connected and consume digital content worldwide.



Tech Mahindra to Transform Autonomous Network Operations with New Large Telco Model Based on NVIDIA AI Enterprise and AWS Cloud infrastructure

Tech Mahindra (a leading global provider of technology consulting and digital solutions to enterprises across industries, announced a new Multi-Modal Network Operations Large Language Model for Telcos, developed using the NVIDIA AI Enterprise software and AWS Cloud infrastructure. The model is based on Llama 3.1 8b instruct model and is heavily customized for telecom networks, by training on large network datasets and applying the latest generative AI and agentic AI frameworks. It is designed to manage vast structured data (events, alarms, counters), unstructured data (logs, MOPs, SOPs, images, text, marketing), and all relevant network data, allowing proactive issue resolution and enhanced service quality. This model

enables the transformation of traditional telecom networks into fully autonomous networks (L4 and above). While telcos have been implementing AI use cases with a transactional approach, achieving true operational efficiency requires a holistic embedding of AI capabilities within the network. Tech Mahindra, working with NVIDIA and AWS, is facilitating this transition and helping the telecom industry harness the full potential of AI for enhanced performance and operational excellence. This collaboration brings together Tech Mahindra's network automation platform ,netOps.ai, Tech Mahindra Optimized Framework TENO that incorporates NVIDIA AI Enterprise software, including NVIDIA NeMo™ and NIM microservices, along with

AWS's Amazon Elastic Container Registry (Amazon ECR), Amazon Elastic Compute Cloud (Amazon EC2), and Amazon Elastic Kubernetes Service (Amazon EKS). This model empowers telecom operators to transform their networks into intent-based networks, embodying the principles of Self-Driving Networks (Zero x and Self x). Manish Mangal, Chief Technology Officer, Telecom & Global Business Head, Network Services, Tech Mahindra, said, "The shift towards autonomous networks has become imperative within the telecom industry. Our collaboration with NVIDIA and AWS is pioneering a Multi-Modal Network Operations Large Model designed to enhance security, automate network management, and improve operational

efficiency. Through this work, we will empower telcos to reduce operational costs and pave the way for a more agile and resilient network environment.” In the initial phase of the development, the Multi-Modal Network Operations Large Model will prioritize improving operational efficiency through “Intelligent Observability”, introducing two critical AI-driven use cases. First, the Dynamic Network Insights Studio will provide a unified 360-degree

AI-powered network observability solution, offering deep insights into network performance for AI teams, network operations, and C-suite executives. Complementing this, the second use case, Proactive Network Anomaly Resolution Hub, will be an advanced AI-powered auto-resolution system that will autonomously detect and resolve network anomalies such as alarms or events with zero human intervention. Chris Penrose, Vice President

of Telco Business Development, NVIDIA, said, “The introduction of large telco models that understand the network language is a transformational moment for the telecom industry, helping to deliver AI-accelerated operations. Large telco models like Tech Mahindra’s new Multi-Modal Network Operations Large Model – based on NVIDIA AI Enterprise – offer the foundation for creating multiple AI agents that will help enable fully autonomous networks.”

Tech Mahindra and Telefónica España Partner to Enhance and Transform Networks, Service Platforms and TV Operations

Tech Mahindra (a leading global provider of technology consulting and digital solutions to enterprises across industries, announced that it has reached an agreement with Telefónica España, the largest telecommunications provider in Spain to enhance its network operations. Under this strategic collaboration, Tech Mahindra will be responsible for providing Level 1 oper-

ations support across all network domains and service platforms, and TV services. This comprehensive initiative is designed to transform Telefónica España’s network, service platforms and TV operations while unifying ways of working and implementing seamless operations across all domains. Tech Mahindra will bring its expertise in artificial intelligence (AI) and automation

to develop and implement advanced automation solutions integrating innovative technologies and deliver next-generation network & service operations. The collaboration will focus on streamlining operations and improving efficiency year on year, ensuring that Telefónica España delivers unparalleled service to its customers in an increasingly competitive market. Harshul Asnani, President and Head - Europe Business, Tech Mahindra, said, “As the telco industry navigates complex network modernization and evolving consumer demands, the need for innovative, scalable solutions has never been greater. Tech Mahindra, with its proven expertise in delivering digital transformation and network services, is uniquely positioned to address these challenges with precision and agility. Together with Telefónica España, we aim to co-create transformative solutions that enhance operational efficiencies, redefine customer engagement, and set a benchmark for excellence in the telecommunications industry.” Tech Mahindra has a long-standing presence in the European market and extensive experience in delivering transformative digital solutions to global telecommunications enterprises. Its deep expertise in network services, artificial intelligence (AI), and workforce transformation has established Tech Mahindra as a preferred partner for numerous European telcos. This new deal with Telefónica España, will further strengthen Tech Mahindra’s leadership in the region while demonstrating its commitment to delivering innovative solutions that drive meaningful business outcomes.



Tech Mahindra Recognized with a Double 'A' Score by CDP for Transparency on Climate Change and Water Security

Tech Mahindra, a leading global provider of technology consulting and digital solutions to enterprises across industries, announced that it has been recognized in the prestigious 'A List' for both CDP Climate Change and CDP Water Stewardship 2024. This recognition underscores Tech Mahindra's leadership in environmental transparency, climate action, and water stewardship, positioning it among an elite group of global sustainability leaders. CDP maintains the world's largest environmental database and plays a critical role in driving investment and procurement decisions toward a zero-carbon, sustainable, and resilient economy. In 2024, over 24,800 organizations disclosed their environmental impact to CDP, with Tech Mahindra emerging as a leader in sustainability. This reinforces the company's commitment to promoting an earth-positive future and accelerating the transition to a sustainable global economy. Sandeep Chandna, Chief Sustainability Officer, Tech Mahindra, said, "Tech Mahindra's continued recognition on CDP's 'A List' across multiple categories underscores our steadfast commitment to tackling global sustainability challenges. With a strong focus on climate action and water security, we recognize the urgency of these issues amid growing environmental risks. We will continue to drive impactful change through innovation and collaboration, ensuring a sustainable and resilient future for businesses, communities, and the planet." Tech Mahindra has made notable progress in its transition to clean energy, achieving 23% renewable energy usage in 2024, with an ambitious target of reaching 90% by 2030. It has also successfully reduced Scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 31% from its 2016 baseline, aligning with its commitment to achieving Net Zero by 2035. This achievement is driven by the implementation of energy-efficient infrastructure, operational optimization, a sustainable supply chain, green commuting initiatives, and stringent travel policies, underscoring Tech Mahindra's commitment to building a low-carbon, resilient future. Anjana Sharma, Head - Sustainability Services, India, DNV, said, "Tech Mahindra's 'A' rating from CDP for Climate and Water Security reinforces the credibility of its climate strategy and ESG leadership. This recognition reflects the company's steadfast commitment to sustainability, transparency, and responsible business excellence, with technology serving as a key enabler of its sustainability initiatives. At DNV, we are proud to have supported



Tech Mahindra in this journey to drive impactful sustainability initiatives and look forward to future collaborations." In addition to climate action, Tech Mahindra has demonstrated a strong commitment to responsible restrictors and smart sensors to optimize consumption, recycled over 290 million liters of wastewater through sewage treatment plants (STPs), and recharged 36 million liters of groundwater through rainwater harvesting systems. With a goal to become Water Positive by 2030, Tech Mahindra will continue to invest in innovative water conservation technologies and best practices, further strengthening its leadership in environmental stewardship. Tech Mahindra will continue to lead the way in delivering comprehensive ESG solutions, empowering businesses to achieve their sustainability objectives while driving sustainable transformation. The company's offerings, which span expert consulting services and ESG solutions, including ESG platforms and a dedicated ESG talent pool, are designed to help customers meet their sustainable goals. This comprehensive approach demonstrates Tech Mahindra's commitment to enabling a green transformation for customers, integrating technology innovation with sustainable practices to drive meaningful and measurable change.



Zain KSA Completes Major Digital Transformation Program in Collaboration with Netcracker

Zain KSA announced that it has completed a large-scale digital transformation program with Netcracker Technology. The complex BSS/OSS transformation across all lines of business was successfully achieved in less than three years. With the new cloud-based BSS/OSS in place, Zain KSA will further enhance customer

experiences and scale up its business ecosystem and expansion across adjacent markets, including fintech, IoT and cloud computing services. The transformation also supports enhanced operational efficiencies, demonstrated through a 50 percent decrease in product development time and customer line activation

time. Zain KSA partnered with Netcracker on a comprehensive, full-stack, AI-driven IT transformation based on Netcracker Digital Platform, the foundation for a cloud-native digital BSS and OSS, as well as Netcracker's comprehensive suite of managed services.

The project included replacing Zain KSA's existing IT stack and migrating customers to the new cloud-based systems. Executive VP of Information Technology at Zain KSA, Eng. Maha Al Qernas, stated: "Transitioning into a cloud-based BSS/OSS is a new

milestone for Zain KSA's advanced digital ecosystem. This transformation, achieved through our strategic partnership with Netcracker, aligns with Zain KSA's goal to create fully digital journeys for our individual and enterprise customers. We are proud that we have leveraged the market's demand for 5G standalone technology. Our cloud-based systems support a broad range of innovative use cases, enriching our capabilities in 5G, and setting a new benchmark in connectivity and enabling transformative experiences for customers across the Kingdom and beyond to continue to empower a tech-enhanced quality of life in Saudi Arabia." "We are extremely honored to play a role in this significant transformation program with a leader in the 5G space and a disruptor in the market," said Benedetto Spaziani, GM at Netcracker. "Zain KSA has been at the forefront of adopting new technologies and bringing innovative services to customers, and we look forward to being part of its ongoing success." Zain KSA started updating its BSS/OSS systems in late 2021. The initiative aims to enhance customer experiences and improve cybersecurity, aligning with Saudi Vision 2030 and the nationwide digital transformation.



Zain Bahrain Enhances Fiber Internet Speeds

Zain Bahrain, a prominent telecommunications and technology provider, has announced a significant upgrade to its fiber internet offerings, tripling speeds for both new and existing customers. With the new enhancement, Zain Bahrain's fiber plans now start at 300 Mbps and offer speeds of up to 2 Gbps. This upgrade provides customers with faster browsing, smoother streaming, and seamless connectivity, ensuring an unparalleled internet experience for both households and businesses to meet the increasing demands of the digital era. Ammar Al Ketbi, Acting CEO of Zain Bahrain, stated, "This initiative drives Bahrain's digital transformation, supporting the Kingdom's vision of a digitally empowered society and economy. It also reflects our commitment to innovation by providing our customers with an exceptional internet experience, contributing to an enhanced digital lifestyle." All existing Zain Bahrain fiber customers will automatically receive the upgraded speeds, with no action required from them. New customers can easily sign up for the enhanced fiber plans at any Zain Bahrain branch, through the Zain App, or via the Zain eShop.





MiFibra Wins Speedtest Awards™ for Fastest Fixed Network in Peru with ZTE's Home Networking Solutions

ZTE Corporation a global leading provider of integrated information and communication technology solutions, has announced that its home networking solutions have empowered MiFibra to win the Ookla® Speedtest Awards™ for the fastest fixed network in Peru during Q3-Q4 2024. Based on over 2.3 million user tests conducted on Ookla®'s Speedtest™ platform across Peru in the second half of 2024, MiFibra achieved the highest Speed Score® of 414.35 among all operators in the country. As one of Peru's top fixed broadband operators, MiFibra offers internet services up to 5 Gbps in Piura, Lambayeque, La Libertad, and Ancash. The company is committed to

delivering world-class connectivity, driven by the belief that reliable connectivity high-speed internet has the power to transform lives and drive societal progress. ZTE, a global leader in telecommunications, has established a strong partnership with MiFibra in the Peruvian market. By delivering a comprehensive home networking solution, ZTE has enabled MiFibra to gain a competitive edge in both device and cloud capabilities. On the device side, ZTE delivered high-performance, cost-effective Wi-Fi 6 ONTs, including GPON and XGS-PON models, enabling MiFibra to expand its gigabit services across a wide region. On the cloud side, ZTE deployed its

SCP platform, the industry's first integrated home network management solution. Leveraging AI and big data analytics, the SCP platform enables MiFibra to achieve end-to-end home network management and automated optimization, ensuring a superior user experience. Moving forward, ZTE and MiFibra are committed to deepening their collaboration in home networking. In the near future, the partnership will focus on enhancing network connectivity and user experience through the introduction of advanced services, such as Wi-Fi 7, IPC, and IoT, delivering the best possible internet experience for the people of Peru.

ZTE, China Mobile Introduce AI-Driven 5G-A Solutions

ZTE Corporation has partnered with China Mobile to present the latest innovations in 5G-A x AI during an event at Mobile World Congress (MWC) Barcelona 2025. During the event, the partners unveiled two key advancements—'Communication-Sensing-Computing-Intelligence' and 'Ambient IoT'. ZTE explained that the so-called 'Communication-Sensing-Computing-Intelligence' solution, built on 5G-A technology, deeply integrates three key

technologies to drive next-generation digital transformation: -Merging communication and computing to create a strong foundation for digital transformation across industries. -Combining communication with intelligence to optimize network efficiency and improve user experiences by embedding AI capabilities. -Integrating communication and sensing to enable high-precision perception, real-time decision-making and intelligent scheduling,

supporting a wide range of emerging applications. ZTE also noted that this solution focuses on three key markets—business (B2B), consumer (B2C) and sew service (B2N). -Business market: Supporting industrial digital transformation in sectors such as the Industrial Internet, smart cities and intelligent manufacturing by enhancing connectivity and enabling scalable, replicable applications.



ZTE Partners with TAWAL to Deepen Cooperation in Telecom and Digital Energy Fields

ZTE Corporation, a global leading provider of integrated information and communication technology solutions, has signed a strategic agreement with TAWAL, the first TowerCo in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, specializing in designing, building, and managing state-of-the-art telecom towers, to drive innovation and accelerate digital transformation across various

sectors. The partnership aims to promote the adoption of modern technologies and integrate state-of-the-art solutions to support TAWAL's digital transformation strategy. By leveraging ZTE's expertise in advanced technology, the collaboration will enhance TAWAL's position in digital transformation, further consolidating its leadership in the industry. ZTE and

TAWAL have exchanged constructive views on future cooperation in Saudi Arabia and international markets, reaching agreements on several key areas, including tower solutions, energy solutions, indoor coverage. Both parties are committed to enhancing site security, knowledge transfer, and the development of innovative solutions. Mohammed Al Hakbani, CEO of TAWAL, commented: "This partnership with ZTE marks a significant step forward in our mission to facilitate digital transformation. By leveraging advanced technologies, we aim to deliver innovative solutions to empower businesses and communities across the region." Xiao Ming, President of ZTE Overseas, stated: "We are honored to collaborate with TAWAL in this transformative journey. Together, we will leverage our expertise to accelerate digital innovation and create a future-ready ecosystem that supports the evolving needs of the market." The partnership this time highlights the shared vision of ZTE and TAWAL to drive technological advancement and foster a digitally connected future.



ZTE Reports Revenues of \$16.65 Billion in 2024

Chinese vendor ZTE Corporation reported full-year revenue of CNY 121.30 billion (\$16.65 billion) for 2024, the vendor said in a release. During last year, net profit attributable to holders of ordinary shares amounted to CNY 8.42 billion, while net cash flows from operating activities totaled CNY 11.48 billion. ZTE explained that the external environment remained complex and volatile last year, marked by adjustments in industry investment structures. "Meanwhile, the application of technologies such as artificial intelligence, large models, 5G-A and all-optical networks injected fresh momentum into the industry, leading to the emergence of new applications and business models," the vendor said. "In response to the complex environment and changes in the ICT industry structure, ZTE has solidified its position in the network industry while actively embracing the AI wave, focusing on the main track of computing power. In 2024, the company's R&D expenses totaled

RMB 24.03 billion, accounting for approximately 20% of revenue," it added. In 2024, the company's domestic market revenue reached CNY 82.01 billion, accounting for 67.6% of overall revenue, while its international market revenue totaled CNY 39.29 billion, accounting for 32.4%. Revenue from the operator network,

government and enterprise and consumer businesses amounted to CNY 70.33 billion, CNY 18.56 billion and CNY 32.41 billion, respectively. "The revenue structure across the three business segments continued to optimize, with revenue from government and enterprise, and consumer businesses experiencing rapid growth," ZTE said. 📈



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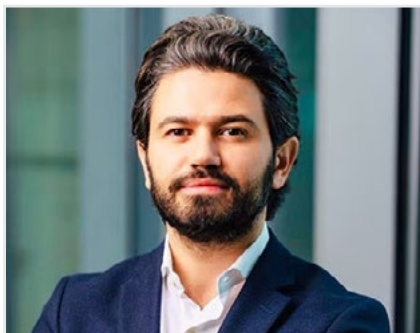


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ARTICLE

How Wholesale Telecom Can Drive the Next Wave of Growth for Telecom Operators



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As GCC telecom operators confront an increasingly challenging environment, they are searching for their next growth engine. Legacy markets are stagnating, competition from Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms is intensifying, and regulations are becoming more stringent. An unexpected candidate has emerged to fill this role: wholesale telecom. Once considered a back-end function, wholesale is now positioned to play a pivotal role in helping telecom operators survive and thrive. To unlock its full potential, however, wholesalers must evolve into the "third generation" of wholesale telecoms.

become vital to the future growth of telecom operators.

To capture these opportunities, wholesalers should consider four key strategic moves. The first two are foundational, maximizing revenue from existing assets and networks. The last two are more forward-looking, creating new pathways for sustainable growth and business diversification.

First, wholesalers should unlock untapped demand by prioritizing innovative commercial models for their current assets

Once considered a back-end function, wholesale is now positioned to play a pivotal role in helping telecom operators survive and thrive. To unlock its full potential, however, wholesalers must evolve into the "third generation" of wholesale telecoms.

In the first generation, wholesale focused on supporting the telecom operator's retail arms. In the second generation, wholesalers shifted from cost centers to revenue generators by leasing out surplus network capacity. Now, a third-generation model is emerging—one that embraces a broader and more dynamic role, from diversifying revenue streams to supporting digital transformation across sectors. Wholesalers that successfully make this shift can create a sustainable competitive advantage and

and customer base. These might include volume deals, take-or-pay contracts (which tie customers to a minimum amount of capacity), and dynamic pricing for excess capacity. Data analytics can play a critical role, enabling wholesalers to assess network utilization, optimize pricing, and identify areas for geographic expansion.

For example, Openreach introduced a five-year deal that offered up to a 40% discount on fiber lines through an innovative rebate

scheme. This initiative aimed to increase fiber adoption among external internet service providers while discouraging churn to alternative networks. Despite intense regulatory scrutiny over commercial offers, Openreach successfully increased fiber uptake by 65% over three years, accelerating the scale-up of its FTTP network and advancing its plans to decommission its copper network.

Second, wholesalers should look to expand network coverage into new geographies to address growing demand for enhanced connectivity and support the region's digital transformation initiatives. The GCC, with its new mega projects and smart cities, offers significant opportunities for expansion. By investing in neutral host networks (infrastructure shared by multiple carriers), implementing demand aggregation, and developing smart deployment capabilities, wholesalers can secure a dominant position in future infrastructure bids.

They also can expand through strategic mergers, acquisitions, or joint ventures. For example, T-Mobile NL partnered with Tampnet to provide affordable mobile service for North Sea wind farms, and Telenor Maritime teamed up with Starlink and OneWeb to deliver satellite connectivity to shipping fleets. These partnerships enable wholesalers to extend their reach into new markets and offer valuable services to nontraditional customer segments.

Third, wholesalers can enhance their relevance and revenue potential by

expanding into adjacent services like the Internet of Things (IoT) and network digital solutions (such as cloud services, AI, and 5G networks). These offerings can help telecom operators capture a larger share of enterprise spending while extending the boundaries of traditional telecom services. Elisa, for example, has pursued acquisitions to build a digital solutions ecosystem that includes advanced analytics for network performance monitoring and automated maintenance, which reduce downtime and operational costs. Wholesalers can better serve existing customers while attracting new ones by broadening their portfolio.

Leveraging advanced technologies—such as blockchain for settlements, AI-powered fraud management, and network analytics for capacity planning—can drive both efficiency and innovation.

Fourth, to tap into new markets, wholesalers should explore emerging technologies and forge strategic partnerships that allow them to deliver innovative services to nontraditional customers. For instance, stc partnered with SKYFive Arabia to introduce in-flight broadband connectivity and signed an agreement with flynas to provide air-to-ground connectivity services. Telstra, meanwhile, collaborated with Viasat to offer ground station as a service (GSaaS),

allowing satellite operators to lease ground stations for communication and control of their satellites.

Such innovation not only opens up new revenue streams but also positions wholesalers as first movers in emerging markets, reinforcing their role as digital enablers across sectors.

These four strategies offer small- to medium-sized opportunities that wholesale telecoms should adopt simultaneously to drive growth. Pursuing these strategies successfully requires a lean, agile operating model focused on efficiency and scalability. Wholesalers must also prioritize customer satisfaction by enhancing the customer experience, optimizing networks, and digitizing core operations. Leveraging advanced technologies—such as blockchain for settlements, AI-powered fraud management, and network analytics for capacity planning—can drive both efficiency and innovation.

As competition intensifies and traditional growth avenues stagnate, GCC telecom operators must act now to embrace the next generation of wholesale telecom or risk reverting to cost centers. By moving with a clear vision and sense of urgency to innovate, diversify, and expand, wholesalers will be well-prepared to drive sustainable growth and lead the region's digital transformation in a rapidly evolving market.



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REGIONAL NEWS

Egypt Aims for AI, Data ICT Skills Bump

Egypt targeted a digital skills boost, outlining plans to launch dedicated training programmes as it seeks to promote itself as a global ICT offshoring hub. The nation detailed a focus on training covering AI, data analytics and embedded systems during a meeting between government ministers and relevant executives 20 March. Officials noted Egypt already possesses significant digital skills and argued its geographic location is an advantage in its global offshoring ICT push. Minister of Communications and Information Technology Amr Talaat emphasised the importance of training young Egyptians as part of its broader digital goals, which include pushing the opportunities throughout the country rather than focusing solely on capital city Cairo. Daily News Egypt reported the government aims to train 5,000 people per year, estimating the cost of this at EGP4 billion (\$79.1 million) per annum. It added schooling would also cover language courses and include placements with Egyptian and global technology companies. Talaat explained Egypt would also explore business incentives, increased backing for exports of digital and ICT services, and broader employment opportunities to grow its offshoring potential. Egypt’s government



is in the latter stages of a five-year digital offshoring plan initiated in 2022 to “boost digital exports”, strengthen its “competitiveness in research and development and value-added services”, and “create sustainable job opportunities”. Talaat said Egypt currently houses more than 180 global and local companies which run in excess of 200 hubs specialised in exporting digital services.

Jordan Ranks 49th Globally in 2024 AI Readiness Index



Jordan secured the fifth position among Arab countries and ranked 49th globally out of 188 countries in the Government AI Readiness Index 2024. This marks an improvement from its 2023 ranking of 55th among 193 countries, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported. According to a statement issued by the Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship, Jordan outperformed Bahrain, Egypt, and Kuwait in the latest report by Oxford Insights. The statement stressed that this progress reflects the government’s efforts, led by the Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship, to enhance the country’s regional and global standing in AI. The report highlighted key initiatives, including the government’s AI-powered electricity load forecasting project, which plays a crucial role in enhancing energy grid efficiency, reducing reliance on conventional energy reserves, and accelerating the transition to renewable energy through AI applications. The 2024 index examines 40 indicators across three pillars: Government, Technology Sector, and Data & Infrastructure. It highlights progress, identifies gaps, and provides actionable insights for policymakers working to integrate AI into public service delivery. At its core, the index asks: How ready are governments to implement AI in the delivery of public services? By answering this question, Oxford Insights aims to offer a practical tool that supports evidence-based decision-making and helps policymakers unlock AI’s potential to better serve citizens worldwide, the website added.

Kuwait's CITRA Sets New Licensing Fees for Internet Providers

The Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) has prepared two draft regulatory decisions regarding the requirements and controls for licensing wireless Internet service providers and Internet service providers, reports Al-Anba daily. According to these draft decisions, the annual license fee for wireless Internet service providers is set at KD 75,000. Applicants are required to submit an unconditional guarantee letter of the same value from the bank in favor of CITRA, which should remain valid throughout the license period. Meanwhile, the annual license fee for Internet service providers is set at KD 98,000, and applicants must provide a guarantee letter of the same value from the bank. The regulations for Internet service providers and wireless Internet service providers include the installation and operation of necessary devices and programs to block access to sites that violate religion, morals, national security, or public order, or those specified by CITRA or reported by the public. Licensees are prohibited from connecting their private networks to any other local or international networks outside Kuwait's borders to provide wired or wireless Internet services without

prior written approval from CITRA. Also, Internet service providers are prohibited from allowing their subscribers to resell the service. The draft regulatory decision regarding the requirements and controls for licensing Internet service providers stipulates that providing Internet service is prohibited without obtaining a license from CITRA. Licensees, such as wired or wireless Internet service providers, must apply CITRA to obtain a license for their activities, following the regulations outlined in this decision. Service providers may offer wireless Internet services only after obtaining the necessary prior approvals and frequency allocations from CITRA. The license application must be submitted to CITRA, signed by the legal representative of the applicant, using the approved forms. The application must include several documents, along with a detailed study of the applicant's administrative, technical, and financial capabilities, which should clarify the necessary resources to provide the service. Additional documents or data may also be requested by CITRA to complete the application review process. According to the decision, CITRA will issue its ruling on the application within 60 working days after verifying that all

requirements have been met. The license will be valid for one calendar year, starting from the date specified in the license. The decision specifies the financial counterpart for the annual license fees at a non-refundable amount of KD 98,000, payable in advance upon receiving CITRA's approval to grant the license. Also, the applicant is required to submit an unconditional bank guarantee letter of KD 98,000 in favor of CITRA, issued by a local bank, which will remain valid throughout the license period. The draft of the second resolution on the foundations and controls for licensing wireless Internet service providers stipulates that mobile telecommunications companies must obtain a license from CITRA before offering wireless Internet services. Companies are required to apply CITRA to obtain a license for providing wireless Internet services, under the conditions and regulations stipulated in the resolution. The license application must be signed by the legal representative of the applicant and submitted on the approved forms. It should be accompanied by relevant documents and a detailed study of the applicant's administrative, technical, and financial capabilities, clarifying the necessary resources to provide the service.

Pakistan's Jazz to Deploy Solar Tech from Huawei at 1,000 Sites

Pakistani telco Jazz – owned by global digital operator Veon – announced at Mobile World Congress 2025, it is collaborating with Huawei to deploy solar power tech at 1,000 of its mobile base station sites across Pakistan. Under the deal, Jazz will deploy Huawei's iSolar technology at the sites. Jazz said the solution will reduce its energy costs as much as 96% at the sites where the tech is installed. Jazz CEO Aamir Ibrahim said the project will facilitate the telco's transition to sustainable telecom network infrastructure with green energy, and support its commitment to be carbon-neutral by 2050. "We are dedicated to delivering an ideal experience for our customers while mitigating our environmental footprint," he said in a statement. The deployment

of iSolar sites takes us further in our sustainability journey, enabling us to provide reliable connectivity powered by renewable energy to our customers. This Beyond the environmental and operational benefits, Jazz also reckons the initial iSolar

deployments can serve as a scalable model for future expansion, offering a replicable framework that can be extended. The initial 1,000-site deployment will be completed within the coming months.



Saudi Arabia Shows High Levels of Container and GenAI adoption

Nutanix, a leader in hybrid multicloud computing, announced the findings of its seventh annual Enterprise Cloud Index (ECI) survey and research report, which measures global enterprise progress with cloud adoption. This year's report sheds light on Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) adoption, investment priorities, and benefits along with key challenges organizations face to meet the demands of these emerging workloads. Key findings from Saudi Arabia include: Application containerization highly prevalent among Saudi Arabia respondents 100% of Saudi Arabia respondents in this year's ECI study say their organization is at least in the process of containerizing their applications. Simply put, 96% of respondents in the Kingdom agree that their organization benefits from adopting cloud-native applications/ containers, and the vast majority are already taking advantage of containerization and related technology (e.g., orchestration platforms). When it comes to workload deployment, databases are cited as the most-containerized application by Saudi Arabia respondents, followed by Generative AI applications and Dev/Test apps Regarding challenges Saudi organizations face when it comes to application containerization and container management, the results indicate challenges associated with IT infrastructure modernization, application development, and skilling. Saudi Arabia shows high levels of implementation of GenAI strategy but has a pessimistic outlook regarding long-term ROI This year's survey results show that 100% of Saudi Arabia organizations already have a GenAI strategy in place, although the level of implementation of that strategy varies: 60% say they are actively in the implementation phase, which is higher than both the global and EMEA averages. Respondents in Saudi Arabia cited increased productivity, innovation, automation, and efficiency



as the top business-related goals and strategies supported by GenAI. Saudi Arabia has a pessimistic long-term outlook when it comes to ROI of GenAI projects. 26% expect to break even or make a loss on GenAI projects over the next year. 35% expect to break even or make a loss on GenAI projects over the next 1-3 years. This will be a key challenge for IT decision-makers in Saudi Arabia to address. Almost 80% of Saudi Arabia respondents believe GenAI adoption will be a challenge for their organization, driven primarily by gaps in skills/ experience Almost all respondents (98%) face challenges when it comes to scaling GenAI workloads from development to production. The #1 challenge organizations in Saudi Arabia face when scaling GenAI workloads from development into production is lack of skills needed to deploy and operate AI. Further complicating this skills gap is the fact that 34% of Saudi Arabia respondents ranked complexity and lack of experience building GenAI environments from scratch as a leading GenAI-related challenge. This lack of GenAI experience and skillsets are likely key contributors to the fact that 78% of respondents in Saudi Arabia believe that GenAI adoption is a challenge for their

organization. Organizations in Saudi Arabia seem aware of this skills gap, and the need to address these challenges, with 62% of respondents reporting their organizations need to invest in IT training to support GenAI applications/workloads over the next 1-3 years Performance & Scalability take a slight edge over data privacy and security when it comes to GenAI implementation In addition to the skills-related challenges that come with GenAI workload implementation, GenAI applications themselves present unique challenges associated with data processing, model development, training, and maintenance. Saudi Arabia ranked privacy and security concerns associated with using LLMs with sensitive company data as their top challenge associated with GenAI workloads. 98% of Saudi Arabia respondents say their organization could be doing more to secure its GenAI models and applications. We should expect this shift towards data security and privacy to continue influencing Saudi Arabia decision-makers over the next several years, with 92% of Saudi Arabia respondents agreeing that GenAI is changing priorities for their organization, with security and privacy becoming higher priorities.

Qatar Well-Positioned for ICT Market Investments

Qatar is well-established and perfectly positioned geographically enabling the country to witness 'heavy investments' in technology and telecommunications. An official told The Peninsula that the country is an ideal hub for entrepreneurs for investments, focusing on growing the digital economy within Qatar itself. Baran Yurdagul, Chief Operating Officer (COO), at Vodafone Qatar, said: "Qatar, in terms of its location, is a very advanced place because we are just in the middle of the Middle East and the GCC." He noted that the telecommunications operator is heavily investing in the enablers and capabilities of the country. "The whole idea is that it's an in-advance investment for us, but we believe it will pay back for us. So, we want to build the digital economy in Qatar and are focused on growing the digital economy within Qatar itself," he said. The official mentioned that the ecosystem and entrepreneurship are significant as Vodafone Qatar helps the startups to be the next unicorn in the region and globally. Vodafone Qatar, one of the core connectivity players in the region, is also diversifying its revenue streams and services in the ICT digital space. "What we believe is Vodafone Qatar is built to change the game of telecommunications in Qatar, and we are actively working with entrepreneurs and our partners to take this scale of Vodafone to the next stage," Yurdagul said. During the recently concluded Web Summit Qatar 2025, Vodafone Qatar showcased its innovations, products, and services. He said: "The Web Summit concept is aligned with Vodafone because as a global player



and connectivity provider, we help startups and entrepreneurs from the ideation stage to their ideas becoming commercial." Additionally, Vodafone Qatar signed several memorandums of understanding with Snoonu, Samsung, and other innovation systems during the four-day Summit. Yurdagul further added, "Our agreements with these companies aim to foster the business owners, tech experts, and startups helping their ideas to be realised, while we continue to enlarge our partnership ecosystem to serve the community and Qatar." Leveraging the combined expertise of all of these organisations, the collaboration seeks to establish a growth

platform, offering new opportunities for startups through initiatives such as training sessions, consultations, collaborative product offerings, and access to Vodafone Qatar's advanced digital solutions. The Chief Operating Officer concluded by stating that the entity is optimistic about driving innovation to the tech sector and boosting the resilience economy of the country. He said that customers in Qatar will witness numerous changes and schemes this year with new portfolio elements, digital services, and initiatives in the pipeline. 🌱

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SATELLITE NEWS

UAE Launches Etihad-SAT: A Milestone in Earth Observation Technology

The United Arab Emirates has marked a significant achievement in its space exploration endeavors with the successful launch of Etihad-SAT, the Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Centre's (MBRSC) inaugural Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) satellite. The launch took place from Vandenberg Space Force Base in California, USA. Confirmation of the satellite's successful deployment was received at the ground station in Dubai, when the first signal from Etihad-SAT was detected. This milestone represents a major advancement in MBRSC's Satellite Development Programme, as Etihad-SAT is the first of its kind equipped with SAR imaging technology. Etihad-SAT's advanced capabilities will significantly enhance the UAE's Earth observation capabilities, providing high-resolution images regardless of weather conditions. This achievement reinforces the UAE's commitment to developing innovative space solutions. The development of Etihad-SAT was made possible through a strategic partnership with South Korea's Satrec Initiative. MBRSC's team played a leading role in the technical specifications, preliminary design, and technical validation phases, ensuring adherence to the highest global standards. In the later stages, MBRSC engineers took the lead in finalizing the design and manufacturing, in line with the center's commitment to enhancing national space capabilities through knowledge transfer and the localization of advanced technologies. "The UAE is steadily advancing towards strengthening its position among the leading nations in space science and technology," stated Talal Humaid Belhoul Al Falasi, Vice President, MBRSC. "Etihad-SAT represents a strategic step in enhancing our Earth observation capabilities and gathering critical data that supports sustainable development." Hamad Obaid AlMansoori, Chairman, MBRSC, added, "The successful launch of Etihad-SAT is a testament to the support and vision of our leadership, reflecting the progress the UAE is making in



the space sector." Ee-Eul Kim, CEO & President, Satrec Initiative, congratulated the UAE on the successful launch, highlighting the importance of international collaboration in advancing space technology. Etihad-SAT's integration of radar imaging technology with existing optical satellite capabilities marks a technological leap for MBRSC's satellite fleet. The satellite offers three imaging modes: spot mode, scan mode, and strip mode, making it a powerful tool for various industries, including oil spill detection, natural disaster management, maritime navigation, smart agriculture, and environmental monitoring. The data collected by Etihad-SAT will be processed using AI technology to enhance accuracy and efficiency. SAR technology's ability to capture high-resolution images regardless of weather conditions, time of day, or atmospheric interference makes it a crucial tool for consistent and uninterrupted data collection. Etihad-SAT will be operated and managed by MBRSC's Mission Control Centre, with specialized teams overseeing operations and analyzing the data transmitted back to Earth.

Vodacom Taps Amazon's Satellites to Boost Mobile Internet in Remote Areas

The race to bring high-speed internet to every corner of the world is heating up, and South Africa's Vodacom is betting on Amazon's Project Kuiper to help bridge the digital divide in Africa. In case you don't know, Vodacom is a telecommunications company based in South Africa that provides mobile and internet services to over 45 million subscribers. Following successful prototype satellite launches in 2023, Vodacom has said it is preparing to deploy Kuiper's network to extend 4G and 5G coverage to underserved regions—without the need for costly fibre infrastructure. Project Kuiper is Amazon's ambitious plan to launch 3,236 low Earth orbit (LEO) satellites, offering fast, low-latency internet worldwide. This puts it in direct competition with SpaceX's Starlink, OneWeb, and Telesat's Lightspeed network. However, while Starlink focuses on direct-to-home satellite internet, Kuiper's partnership with Voda-

com means it will primarily support mobile networks, connecting remote cell towers to Vodacom's core infrastructure. This partnership benefits both companies—it allows Vodacom to expand its reach into rural Africa, possibly increasing its already massive 43.8% market share while also giving Amazon a foothold in South Africa's satellite market, something Starlink has failed to achieve due to regulatory barriers. South Africa mandates 30% black ownership for telecom operators, a requirement that has kept Starlink from launching in the country. However, with Vodacom as a local partner, Kuiper may bypass this hurdle. On a more grand scale though, Starlink still has quite a hold on Africa, operating in 19 out of 54 countries and holding major market share in countries like Nigeria where it recently climbed up to become the second-largest ISP in the country.

First 'Made in Bahrain' Satellite Al Munther Launched

In a landmark moment for the Kingdom of Bahrain, the National Space Science Agency (NSSA) on March 15 successfully launched "Al Munther", the nation's first domestically designed and built satellite onboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket as part of the Transporter-13 mission from Vandenberg Space Force Base in California, US. This historic achievement marks a significant milestone in Bahrain's journey towards becoming a regional leader in space technology and innovation, reported BNA. The launch of "Al Munther" underscores the Kingdom's commitment to advancing its capabilities in space science and technology, while showcasing the expertise of Bahraini engineers and scientists, it stated. "Al Munther" was successfully deployed into its designated orbit at an altitude of 550 km above sea level. The satellite will now undergo a series of orbital tests to ensure its operational readiness before commencing full-scale operations. The NSSA is responsible for advancing Bahrain's space sector and fostering innovation in space science and technology. The agency works to develop national capabilities in space exploration, satellite technology, and space applications, contributing to Bahrain's sustainable development and economic diversification, said the BNA report. NSSA said the satellite was equipped with advanced technological payloads, including a medium-resolution space camera (20 meters/pixel) designed to capture high-quality images of Bahrain and its territorial waters, an artificial intelligence (AI) system capable of real-time image analysis, making "Al Munther" the first nanosatellite in the region to incorporate such advanced AI capabilities, a cybersecurity payload featuring advanced encryption technologies to safeguard the satellite's data from unauthorised access or tampering, and a radio broadcast payload that will transmit the Bahraini national anthem and a special message from His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of Bahrain, to radio enthusiasts worldwide. One of the most distinctive features of "Al Munther" is its ability to broadcast the Bahraini national anthem and a royal message via digital signals. These transmissions can be received by amateur radio operators and space enthusiasts around the globe using simple equipment. This initiative aims to promote Bahrain's space achievements and enhance its international presence in the field of space exploration. NSSA Chief Executive Officer Dr. Mohammed Ibrahim Al Aseeri, hailing the launch as a historic achievement for Bahrain, said the successful launch of 'Al Munther' represents an unprecedented milestone for the country in the field of space science. "This accomplishment is a testament to the visionary leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, and the unwavering support of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and Prime Minister, and guidance of His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, National Security Advisor, Royal Guard Commander, and Secretary General of the Supreme Defence Council. This achievement reflects Bahrain's commitment to advancing its capabilities in space technology and innovation," he stated. The "Al Munther" project has provided a unique opportunity for a team of young Bahraini engineers to gain hands-on experience in developing advanced space systems. From mission concept development and engineering requirements to



system design, software development, and environmental testing, the project has enabled Bahraini talent to contribute to every stage of the satellite's development, noted Al Aseeri. According to him, the 'Al Munther' project represents a forward-looking national vision and a significant step towards localising space technology in Bahrain. "It has not only empowered our young engineers but also laid the groundwork for future space projects led by Bahraini professionals. This achievement is a proud moment for our nation and a testament to the potential of Bahraini talent," he added.

Telesat Lightspeed Network Travels to Europe via Orange's French Teleport

Orange and Telesat have signed a strategic multi-year partnership to enhance satellite connectivity solutions, integrating Telesat Lightspeed's Low Earth Orbit (LEO) services into Orange Wholesale's portfolio. Under this agreement, a Telesat Lightspeed Landing Station will be hosted at Orange's teleport in Bercenay-en-Othe, France, with connectivity to Telesat's point of presence (PoP) in Paris via Orange Wholesale's International Private Line (IPL). The partnership enables Orange to offer new satellite-based connectivity solutions for businesses and telecom operators, strengthening network resilience for mobile backhauling, crisis response, and remote connectivity. Telesat Lightspeed's Carrier Ethernet services will provide enterprise-class, low-latency, and secure connectivity, allowing telecom operators to configure and monitor services in real-time. Orange's



Bercenay-en-Othe WTA Tier-4 certified teleport will play a critical role in this collaboration, further reinforcing Orange's ability to deliver reliable connectivity in underserved regions. With ground stations

in 26 countries and territories, Orange continues to expand its multi-orbit satellite partnerships to support digital inclusion and global infrastructure resilience.

Space42, Viasat to Develop 5G NTN Infrastructure for D2D Services

Satellite operators Space42 and Viasat said they have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to explore ways to develop a 5G non-terrestrial network (NTN) ecosystem for direct-to-device (D2D) satellite services. The first phase of the partnership will kick off with partner-funded technical and commercial studies to develop a multi-tenant, multi-orbit 5G NTN infrastructure. Space42 and Viasat said the infrastructure will be based on a

3GPP-compliant open architecture capable of supporting L-band, S-band and terrestrial spectrum to enable global roaming among regional network operators. Space42 and Viasat will also explore new technologies and sustainable system designs to make satellite networks more efficient and ready for 5G models and ensure compliance with various telecoms regulatory frameworks of countries around the world. The tie-up will also follow industry best practices

and guidelines developed by the Mobile Satellite Services Association (MSSA), the industry body formed by Viasat in February 2024 to develop a direct-to-device (D2D) ecosystem using the L- and S-bands already allocated and licensed for mobile satellite services (MSS). Space42 is also a member of MSSA. Ali Al Hashemi, CEO of Yabsat Space Services at UAE-based Space42, said a key goal of the partnership is to develop a scalable open architecture space system that enables global collaboration across public and private sector partners, and taps into significant global growth opportunities in the global satellite market, particularly D2D communications and NB-IoT, as well as existing and next-generation MSS services. "This partnership accelerates time to market, drives cost efficiency, and ensures seamless integration with existing and future networks," he said in a joint statement. Recent market research from NSR and Analysys Mason forecast the D2D market segment to reach US\$50 billion in 2032, with the traditional enterprise and government MSS market segments also seen as having substantial growth potential.



Botswana Launches Its First Satellite

Botswana is the latest African country to successfully send a satellite into space with the recent launch of BOTSAT-1. The launch took place late last week at the facilities of launch services specialist SpaceX in California in the US. It was attended by President Duma Boko, who explained that BOTSAT-1 will provide real-time data to support national initiatives in environmental monitoring, agriculture, disaster response and urban planning. "Its capabilities position Botswana as a growing player in space technology within Africa," he added. News resource ITWeb Africa says the satellite was developed by engineers from the Botswana International University of Science and Technology. It was launched in California because neither Botswana nor Africa could offer a space pad capable of launching a satellite of BOTSAT-1's size. Botswana has now joined a group of African governments and telecom companies that plan to use satellite technology to help the region achieve its economic goals. Botswana is known in particular for mining, which may



be one of the industries to benefit from the new satellite's data-gathering capabilities. The Minister of Communications and Innovation, David Tshere, told Botswana media that BOTSAT-1 was launched aboard a SpaceX rocket, capable of accommodating a hyper-spectral camera payload at an altitude of approximately 600 kilometres. The satellite will orbit the earth

continuously six times daily, transmitting and collecting data, such as high-resolution images from the earth's surface, for various purposes. A ground station has reportedly been set up to receive and store information from the satellite. The government has apparently announced plans for a second satellite, though its precise purpose and launch dates are not yet known.

Airtel to Offer SpaceX's Starlink Service Pending Govt Approvals

Indian telco Bharti Airtel announced it has signed an agreement with SpaceX to offer its Starlink service in India once the LEO satellite operator gets regulatory clearance to operate in the country. In the meantime, Airtel and SpaceX will explore ways to offer Starlink equipment in Airtel's retail stores and sell Starlink services Airtel's business customers. The two companies also plan to use Starlink to provide connectivity for communities, schools, and health centres, among others, in the most rural parts of India. Airtel and SpaceX will also explore possibilities for interconnecting their networks, such as mobile backhaul for Airtel or Starlink leveraging Airtel's ground network infrastructure. Airtel's MD and vice chairman Gopal Vittal said that adding Starlink to its service portfolio will enable

it to offer "comprehensive and seamless connectivity packages" to enterprises, businesses, and communities and expand its ability to target areas, with limited or no coverage. "Starlink will complement and enhance Airtel's suite of products to ensure reliable and affordable broadband for our Indian customers – wherever they live and work," he said in a statement. Exactly when Starlink services will be available in India remains an open question. ETTelecom reported last month that India's space regulatory agency IN-SPACe is likely to approve Starlink for operations in India "imminently". However, once that hurdle is cleared, Starlink still needs to acquire a GMPCS licence and spectrum from the Department of Telecommunications (DoT). Starlink has operated in India since

2021 via local subsidiary Starlink Satellite Communications, but was forced to stop accepting pre-bookings in November that year because it didn't hold a licence. The company was ordered to refund deposits to customers in 2022. Meanwhile, rival LEO satellite operator Eutelsat OneWeb (in which Airtel's parent company is an investor) received clearance from IN-SPACe to offer commercial services to business customers in November 2023, as well as a GMPCS licence from the DoT. Last October, the DoT allocated satellite spectrum on a provisional basis to Eutelsat OneWeb and Orbit Connect India – Reliance Jio's satellite venture with SES – to allow them to test satellite broadband services.

Starlink Rolls Out New Ground Station in Mozambique for Faster Internet

Expanding in Africa hasn't been easy for Starlink—regulations have thrown plenty of hurdles in its way. But that hasn't stopped the company from making moves. Its latest? A new ground station in Mozambique that could give Southern Africa a much-needed internet boost. At first glance, this might not seem like a game-changer, but for users in the region, it could make a huge difference in internet speed and reliability. Right now, Starlink users in countries like Zambia and Zimbabwe experience higher latency—sometimes between 200ms and 300ms—because their data has to

travel to the closest ground station in Nigeria. While Starlink's inter-satellite laser communication is impressive, having a nearby ground station would make a big difference. We saw this happen when Starlink launched a ground station in Kenya earlier this year proving just how impactful this can be. If Mozambique sees similar results, Southern African users can expect a much smoother experience, whether they're gaming, streaming, or handling business operations. This expansion also comes at a time when Starlink continues to face regulatory roadblocks in South

Africa. While the company doesn't yet have a license to operate there, many users access the service through roaming plans. The Mozambique station indirectly helps these users by improving connectivity and lowering lag. Compared to competitors like OneWeb and Amazon's upcoming Project Kuiper, Starlink remains the leader in satellite internet, particularly in Africa, operating in 19 out of 54 countries. With more ground stations popping up, it's clear that Starlink isn't just expanding—it's solidifying its hold on the continent's internet infrastructure.

Orange Africa and Middle East and Eutelsat Announce a Strategic Partnership to Accelerate the Deployment of Satellite Internet in Africa and the Middle East.

Orange Africa and Middle East (OMEA) and Eutelsat announce a strategic partnership to bridge the digital divide through satellite connectivity in Africa and the Middle East. It aims to connect isolated areas with broadband access, thereby strengthening digital inclusion in the region. As part of this multi-year partnership, Orange will use the EUTELSAT KONNECT satellite, which offers state-of-the-art broadband technology, to provide reliable and accessible Internet access. Initially, deployment will involve Jordan, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and the Democratic Republic of Congo, with the aim of gradually extending to all countries in the region. By combining Orange's expertise in telecommunications and Eutelsat's technological innovation in the satellite sector, this

partnership will make it possible to offer services tailored to both private individuals (B2C) and businesses (B2B), guaranteeing secure, reliable and high-performance connectivity. The complementary nature of the fixed, mobile and satellite technology offers will help to connect isolated territories and meet the growing need for Internet access in the region. The partnership is based on cutting-edge solutions offering speeds of up to 100 Mbps, which, combined with Orange's capabilities, will make it possible to:

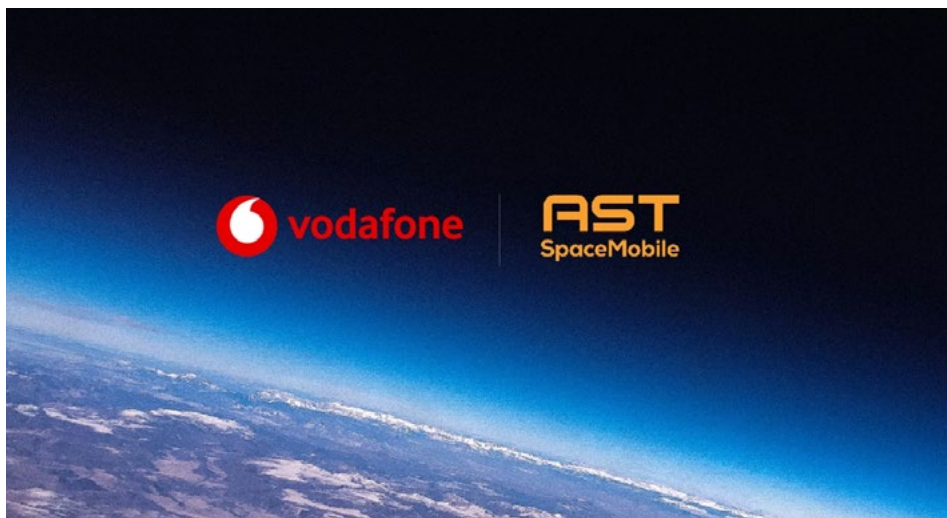
- Cover remote and rural areas,
- Provide services tailored to local conditions and the needs of individuals and businesses,
- Provide reliable and secure connectivity, in compliance with national regulations.

This proactive approach is part of a long-term vision to support digital development in all the areas where Orange is present, using the best technologies available, while respecting national frameworks and enhancing local ecosystems. Jérôme Hénique, Managing Director, Orange Africa and Middle East, comments: "This partnership illustrates our commitment to connecting all territories and bridging the digital divide in Africa and the Middle East. Orange serves more than 160 million customers in the region, and is pursuing its ambition to provide digital access for all. Drawing on our expertise and local roots, we are positioning ourselves as a key player in supporting evolving customer expectations, while guaranteeing sustainable connectivity that respects local legislation." Michael Trabbia, CEO of Orange Wholesale, said: "I am delighted with this strategic partnership between the Orange Group and Eutelsat Group, which is part of a long-term relationship. It is part of our strategy to offer our customers the best satellite connectivity solutions in high and low orbit, complementing our terrestrial networks. Orange Wholesale's satellite factory has all the expertise required to implement this strategy for all Orange Group entities. We also offer satellite operators the terrestrial connectivity solutions they need, such as teleports or long-distance fiber."



Vodafone and AST Spacemobile Launch European Satellite Broadband Company

Vodafone and AST SpaceMobile have announced a new joint venture, SatCo, to bring space-based mobile broadband to Europe. The company said it will aim to provide “100% geographic coverage in every part of Europe” SatCo will act as the exclusive distributor of AST SpaceMobile’s satellite services across Europe, using Vodafone’s network and AST’s low Earth orbit (LEO) technology. The collaboration is set to deliver mobile broadband directly to users without requiring additional hardware or software. “Vodafone’s space-based mobile broadband will mean our customers can stay connected, wherever they are. Our new satellite company will be able to offer this pioneering technology to other European mobile operators through a turnkey service that combines Vodafone’s leading network and engineering with AST SpaceMobile’s ‘antennas in the sky,’” said Vodafone CEO Margherita Della Valle in a press release. The company will be headquartered in Europe and will operate a network of ground stations to ensure



secure and sovereign backhaul services. AST SpaceMobile’s satellites function as remote radio heads, maintaining core network control within MNOs. In January, Vodafone announced that it had successfully conducted the world’s first space-based mobile video call using AST SpaceMobile’s BlueBird satellites.

The demonstration showed that satellite broadband can integrate with Vodafone’s existing mobile networks. With commercial rollout planned for 2025 and 2026, the service will expand coverage to areas where traditional networks struggle, including mountains, rural locations, and open waters.

Viasat, Partners Showcase Satellite-to-Car Connectivity Breakthrough

Viasat, a global leader in satellite communications, announced the first-of-its-kind demonstration of direct-to-device (D2D) connectivity for the automotive sector, opening the door for widescale adoption of satellite connectivity for automotive use cases. In a country-first, the tests saw different vehicles connect directly to Viasat’s highly reliable L-band satellites and Skylo’s network to provide narrowband tracking, monitoring, and messaging capabilities. The trials took place over the last four months between Blumenau and Curitiba in southern Brazil. The tests, conducted by Viasat’s ecosystem partner GuardianSat, used 3GPP standards-based non-terrestrial-network (NTN) service infrastructure through Viasat’s connectivity partner, Acceleronix. In addition, Quectel Wireless Solutions provided advanced CC660D-LS

NTN satellite communication modules, paired with Quectel’s high-performance antennas, that enabled the vehicles to seamlessly switch between satellite and cellular networks, ensuring uninterrupted connectivity based on location. By leveraging 3GPP-enabled D2D technology, car manufacturers and service providers are able to offer a variety of new services to consumers and businesses. Vehicles can stay connected even in rural locations, allowing passengers and cargo to stay safe wherever they are. Narrowband applications for D2D in the automotive space will include the provision of positioning data, predictive maintenance, emergency and breakdown assistance, and real-time supply chain tracking. Satellite and cellular technologies have started on a pathway to convergence after 3GPP’s Release 17 standard, which

outlines an approach for devices like mobile phones, vehicles, and industrial machinery to connect to satellites without a dedicated satellite terminal. This technology, known as direct-to-device, is changing the way that satellite connectivity is delivered. Viasat is currently developing a direct-to-device ecosystem of chipset manufacturers, MNOs, OEMs, and solution providers to augment its existing network MSS network capabilities, which are already utilized for safety services at sea and in the air. The company recently joined the 5G Automotive Association to support connected transport applications, following three high-profile mobile device demonstrations in India, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates last quarter. 📡



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WHOLESALE NEWS

5G Roaming Spend to Overtake 4G by 2028

Juniper Research predicts that 2028 will mark the first year where 5G roaming spend overtakes that of 4G subscribers. 5G subscribers are projected to spend \$10.8 billion on roaming globally by 2028, a significant increase from the \$4.2 billion expected this year. Despite the initial launch of commercial 5G networks back in 2019, Juniper Research believes it will take a full decade for mobile operators to generate more annual revenue from 5G roaming connections compared to their 4G counterparts. Juniper points towards complex 5G network architectures and the need for more comprehensive roaming agreements as factors contributing to the slower-than-anticipated deployment of 5G roaming, consequently limiting the growth of 5G roaming expenditure. One of the key challenges highlighted in the report is the struggle operators face in efficiently identifying and managing roaming connections on their networks.

This inefficiency, according to Juniper Research, leads to “roaming revenue leakage”. Juniper suggests that this leakage – primarily caused by inaccuracies in roaming settlements and fraudulent activities – is expected to be significantly reduced with the implementation of 5G standalone roaming agreements. These next-generation standalone networks utilize advanced technologies, such as SEPP (Security Edge Protection Proxy). Georgia Allen, the author of the research, commented: “Despite the high investment associated with stand-

alone technologies, we believe that the increased roaming revenue achieved from better identification of connections will outweigh this investment. “In turn, we urge operators to implement 5G standalone network cores to maximize roaming revenue as competing technologies – such as travel eSIMs – become more popular with mobile subscribers.” Juniper’s research highlights the growing importance of 5G roaming and the need for operators to adopt advanced network technologies to capitalize on this expanding market.



Zong 4G Partners with Mobily to Launch Unbeatable IDD Roaming Offers

Zong 4G, in a strategic move aimed at enhancing international connectivity, has launched a series of unbeatable International Direct Dial (IDD) roaming offers in partnership with Mobily, a leading telecom company in Saudi Arabia. These new packages are designed to cater to the diverse needs of Zong 4G’s prepaid and

postpaid customers, offering both weekly and monthly options. Recognizing Saudi Arabia as a prime destination for Pakistani tourists and business travelers, Zong 4G has prioritized the need for seamless communication. The company’s focus remains on ensuring that customers can stay connected with their families and

friends back home while travelling abroad. “Saudi Arabia is one of the top tourist and business destinations for millions of Pakistanis. Helping them always stay connected with their loved ones in Pakistan as they travel abroad is Zong 4G’s top priority. The needs of our customers are of utmost importance to us and we will continue enhancing our roaming portfolio through more innovative products and services for our customers,” stated Zong’s official spokesperson. Zong 4G’s commitment to providing reliable international roaming services has consistently enabled Pakistani travelers to maintain strong connections with their networks. Backed by China Mobile, Zong 4G is actively expanding its international dialing and roaming services to a wider range of countries, further enhancing its global reach and customer satisfaction. The partnership with Mobily is a strong step in that direction. 📞

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TECHNOLOGY NEWS

IMDEA Networks Participates in a European Project to Create 6G Networks that Interact Intelligently with Reality

IMDEA Networks is part of MultiX, a European scientific project involving 17 research centers and technology companies from 7 countries coordinated by Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (UC3M), which aims to revolutionize future 6G communication networks by transforming their design and operation. By means of an innovative system that integrates multisensory perception, MultiX aims to make networks capable of intelligently observing the environment and interacting with it in real time. This innovation seeks to transform sectors as relevant as healthcare facilities or the autonomous vehicle industry. "What we want to achieve through the development of this technology is that the networks stop being simple communication providers and become active observers of reality, capable of interacting with it," explains the project coordinator, Antonio de la Oliva, professor in the UC3M Telematics Engineering Department. "To do this, we want to use multiple tools, such as cameras and communication networks acting as sensors simultaneously. In this way we will be able to have a broader vision of what is happening around us and design a new access network in which everything is connected". Within the project, IMDEA Networks is specifically focusing on the MultiX energy-efficient network perception system, with perception enablers that allow for localization and multi-static sensing across different radio technologies. IMDEA Networks is further involved in the development of machine-learning based algorithms to integrate all the different sensing modalities to derive fine-grained information about objects in the environment. "Multi-static, multi-band integrated sensing and communication (ISAC) with coherent integration is key to high-precision perception of the environment," explains Joerg Widmer, Research Director at IMDEA Networks. "Capturing signals from multiple viewpoints improves spatial diversity, enhances micro-Doppler extraction, and provides richer motion signatures, while coherent processing fuses information across bands to improve accuracy, which enables real-time, intelligent interaction with the environment." The promoters of this project have explained that one of the many applications of this new technology is to make networks capable of recognizing if there is a higher concentration of people in a certain area, if an elderly person has suffered a fall at home, or to optimize the distribution of coverage by dynamically adapting to the needs of users. Other potential uses MultiX is working on right now are industrial automation processes and home connected health. On the one hand, we intend that the networks can coordinate the movement of robots in real time, detecting obstacles and enabling more efficient task management," explains Antonio de la Oliva. "On the other hand, the project is working on contactless health monitoring in the domestic environment. That is, through connected home devices, it will be possible to monitor vital signs such as heart rate or respiration. In fact, the network could even



detect emergency situations, such as a heart attack, and potentially alert health services". MultiX also stands out for its commitment to sustainability, a key challenge for 6G technology. Thus, in order to maximize energy efficiency and reduce resource consumption, the project leverages artificial intelligence to implement low-power solutions and thus adapt to the requirements of future networks. The project will validate its progress through two proof-of-concepts designed to demonstrate practical applications of the technologies developed. The first consists of a multilayer digital network twin, aimed at optimizing processes in the field of industrial manufacturing. The second proof will focus on contactless health monitoring in the home environment, with the aim of transforming home healthcare. These technologies combined with AI could optimize diagnosis and treatment in health-related matters even from home, according to the researchers. To support these proof-of-concepts, IMDEA Networks is developing a powerful multi-band integrated sensing and communication platform for 6G. MultiX project has been funded by the European Commission under the Horizon Europe program (GA 101192521) and involves: Apple Technology Engineering BV&CO (Germany), BubbleRAN (France), Siemens AG (Germany), Telefónica S.A. (Spain), Nextworks (Italy), INTEL Deutschland GmbH (Germany), InterDigital Europe Ltd. (United Kingdom), Consorzio Nazionale Interuniversitario per le Telecomunicazioni (Italy), IHP – Leibniz Institute for High Performance Microelectronics (Germany), Fundació Privada i2CAT. Internet i Innovació Digital a Catalunya (Spain), IMDEA Networks Foundation (Spain), Institute of Accelerating Systems and Applications (Greece), NEC Laboratories Europe GmbH (Germany), Hellenic Telecommunications Organization S.A. OTE (Greece), Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium), Universidad de Cantabria and Universidad Carlos III de Madrid (Spain). Within this consortium, Professor Antonio de la Oliva (UC3M) acts as Principal Investigator, Valerio Frascolla (INTEL) as Innovation Director and Xi Li (NEC) as Technical Director. The project has started in January 2025 and is expected to complete its work in June 2027.



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Initiatives on Empowerment

Health & Climate

UNDP and e& Strengthen AI Collaboration For Sustainable Development, Advancing Health and Climate Solutions

UNDP (United Nations Development Program) and GSMA with global technology group e& presented results of their new AI-powered Social and Climate Platform –showcasing how artificial intelligence can generate real-time insights from non-conventional data to inform policy decisions and drive sustainable development in the Arab States and beyond. Developed by UNDP and e& as part of the Digital for Sustainable Development initiative, a multi-stakeholder effort launched in 2023 to use digital technology to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the new platform leverages natural language processing and sentiment analysis to monitor vital topics like climate, natural disasters, and public health in real-time. By analysing trillions of data points, the platform enables policymakers, researchers, and development practitioners to make informed, data-driven decisions

that enhance resilience and sustainability. "Responsible AI has the potential to drive sustainable development by providing real-time, data-informed insights that strengthen decision-making and resilience," said Robert Opp, UNDP's Chief Digital Officer. "We welcome innovative solutions that align with UNDP's commitment to ensuring that AI benefits everyone, everywhere." Last year, during the United Nations General Assembly, UNDP and e& announced their collaboration on AI use cases to assess the impact of the 2023 Türkiye-Syria earthquake. Building on that momentum, the partnership also focuses on developing AI-driven use cases for healthcare, aiming to gain deeper insights into the healthcare system and improve service delivery. All efforts adhere to a Responsible AI Framework co-developed by UNDP and e& which ensures ethical, transparent, and inclusive AI deployment across the Arab

States regions. Dena Almansoori, Group Chief AI & Data Officer, e& said, "Through this collaboration with UNDP, we're proving that AI, when deployed responsibly, is a force multiplier for impact—transforming digital signals into life-changing solutions that drive resilience, equity, and progress throughout the Arab States and beyond." She added, "This is the kind of positive impact e& strives for as we use AI to rewrite the playbook for sustainable development, and equip leaders with the foresight to act decisively, deploying solutions where they are needed most." This initiative supports UNDP's AI for Sustainable Development efforts, ensuring that AI advances across all development sectors. With sustained investments in digital public infrastructure, harmonized regulations, and regional collaboration, the Arab States region is well-positioned to harness AI's full potential.



Initiatives on Empowerment

Submarine Cables

International Summit Outlines Steps to Improve Resilience of Submarine Telecommunications Cables Worldwide

Governments, industry executives and international organizations have expressed support for strengthening the world's vital undersea network of telecommunications cables at the International Submarine Cable Resilience Summit in Abuja, Nigeria. The concluding Summit Declaration, developed by the International Advisory Body on Submarine Cable Resilience, includes a commitment to international efforts to reinforce submarine telecommunications cable resilience, centred on actions ranging from increased cooperation to technical advancements. More than 99 per cent of international data traffic is carried by a network of about 500 submarine telecommunications cables spanning over 1.7 million kilometres worldwide. With an average of 150 to 200 faults reported globally each year, disruptions to communications affect economies, access to information and public services, as well as the daily lives of billions of people. "Submarine telecommunications cables are a fundamental backbone of our interconnected world. Entire economies feel the impact of disruptions to service," said ITU Secretary-General Doreen Bogdan-

Martin. "This summit is galvanizing global efforts to ensure the resilience of this vital telecommunications infrastructure." The two-day event was organized by Nigeria's Ministry of Communications, Innovation, and Digital Economy, in partnership with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the International Cable Protection Committee (ICPC). The Summit Declaration promotes global cooperation on key areas including:

- Strengthening cable protection through risk mitigation;
- Promoting diverse routes and landings to enhance resilience and continuity;
- Facilitating timely deployment and repair.

The declaration also includes a recognition that advancing sustainable approaches, fostering technological innovation, and facilitating capacity building are essential for addressing global challenges and driving inclusive development, with a strong emphasis on preparing for both present and future connectivity needs. "With submarine cables forming the lifelines of the digital age, strengthening their resilience is a shared priority," said H.E. Minister Bosun Tijani, Minister of

Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Co-Chair of the Advisory Body. "This summit and its declaration underscore our commitment to safeguarding the infrastructure that our digital economy is built upon. As a key landing point for submarine cables in Africa, Nigeria is well-placed to contribute to and help shape global efforts to enhance resilience." "This is a key moment for submarine cable resilience as this declaration clears the way for greater international cooperation," said Prof. Sandra Maximiano, Chair of ANACOM and Co-Chair of the Advisory Body. "Given the importance of submarine cables in connecting Portugal, particularly our Autonomous Regions of Madeira and the Azores, and our strategic position for landing transcontinental cables, this declaration represents a major development for us. I believe it is an important achievement for the entire submarine cable ecosystem." The summit featured the first in-person meeting of the International Advisory Body on Submarine Cable Resilience formed by ITU in partnership with the ICPC in late 2024. The Advisory Body aims to help strengthen the operational resilience of submarine cables, supporting reliable connectivity for all. "This summit brought together the global submarine cable industry and governments to focus on the continued protection and resilience of this critical infrastructure," said ICPC Chairman Graham Evans. "This cooperation provides a key opportunity to work together on the practical steps to promote best practices to enhance the resilience of submarine cables across the world." Advisory Body decisions at the summit include the formation of working groups focused on risk identification, monitoring and mitigation, as well as connectivity and geographic diversity of landing points and routes, and timely deployment and repair of cables.



Initiatives on Empowerment

Youth

ITU Global Youth Summit Places Young People at the Heart of Digital Transformation

Young people need better access to technology and skills development to play an active role in defining the world's digital future, according to participants at the ITU Global Youth Summit, which concluded in Varadero, Cuba. The three-day event, organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and hosted by the Ministry of Communications of the Government of Cuba, set out to amplify youth voices on the tech-driven future. Participants from around the world between 18 and 25 years of age identified their priorities to ensure that information and communication technologies are safe, affordable and accessible. Key tech issues for young people discussed at the summit included connectivity, digital inclusion, online safety, ethical development and use of artificial intelligence and emerging technologies, preparing for the future of work, and enabling digital participation by all to foster economic and social

empowerment of youth globally. "Young people must be heard as they seize technology's opportunities and take on its challenges," said ITU Secretary-General Doreen Bogdan-Martin. "Bringing youth from around the world together in the spirit of hope, possibility, and ambition allows them to help shape our shared digital future." According to ITU's latest Facts and Figures report, an estimated 79 per cent of young people are online compared to 66 per cent of the global population. While youth are more active online worldwide, meaningful connectivity for young people remains a challenge in low-income countries, where only 43 per cent of young people are online, and in the world's least developed countries, where only 52 per cent are connected. "We are deeply honoured to have hosted ITU's Global Youth Summit. The discussions and ideas shared here will not only strengthen our national policies and strategies but will also contribute significantly to the global


development of digital technologies," said H.E. Mayra Arevich Marín, Minister of Communications of Cuba. "Cuba reaffirms its commitment to digital inclusion, cybersecurity and technological innovation. Together, we will advance towards a world where everyone has access to the opportunities offered by information and communications technologies." The summit's networking opportunities and intergenerational dialogues allowed young people to learn from technology professionals, experts and policy makers. Discussions highlighted the need for youth to be digitally included and skilled to create opportunities for entrepreneurship and innovation as key drivers of global social and economic development. Summit outcomes underscore the importance of youth involvement in discussions on shaping the future of the digital world and the global technology landscape.



REGULATORY NEWS

Ofcom Plans Rules to Drive UK Full-Fiber Broadband to 96% Coverage

UK telecoms regulator Ofcom has unveiled new rules to support the country's full-fiber broadband rollout. The proposals are aimed at further stimulating competition and investment in the sector and build on regulations introduced in 2021. The regulator believes its latest plans could see full-fiber connections reach 96% of homes and businesses across the nation within the next two years. This target marks a considerable leap forward from the situation just four years ago, when less than a quarter of UK premises had access to full-fiber. Natalie Black, Group Director for Networks and Communications at Ofcom, said: "The rollout of full fiber across the UK is a British infrastructure success story. "Four years ago, less than a quarter of UK homes and offices had access, and it now stands at nearly seven in 10. But we do not take this momentum for granted and today we are setting out how we can work with the sector to finish the job." The progress made since 2021 is undeniable. Ofcom's initial regulatory framework incentivized existing network providers to invest in full-fiber infrastructure while simultaneously lowering the barriers for new entrants by granting them easier and more affordable access to Openreach's ducts and telegraph poles. However, this recent momentum follows a slow start. In response to Ofcom's Connected Nations report entering 2024 that found UK full-fiber broadband coverage had reached 57 percent, industry experts noted the coverage lagged behind many European countries. Alex Tofts, Broadband Expert at Broadband Genie, commented: "Full-fiber coverage of 57 percent means we are lagging behind other European countries such as Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Norway, and France. Further progress is needed to support the nation's current and future digital demands." Ofcom hopes its proposals will help the UK full-fiber broadband rollout catch up with its counterparts and, ideally, even become a European leader. Greg Mesch, CEO of CityFibre, said: "Ofcom's Telecoms Access Review marks yet another major milestone in creating a sustainable



Boosting competition and investment in full-fibre broadband

Industry data shows 96% of UK homes and businesses could get full fibre by 2027 with the right conditions. Our proposals to help boost Britain's broadband.

competitive market. By supporting wholesale network competition, Ofcom is helping to drive better services, greater choice, and lower prices for consumers and businesses, while unlocking economic growth across the country. "We fully support Ofcom's direction and look forward to working together to ensure the UK benefits from a thriving, sustainable digital infrastructure market." Currently, around 69% of UK premises (20.7 million) have access to full fiber—a significant increase from the 40% (11.6 million premises) recorded in 2021. Gigabit-capable network coverage has also surged, reaching 83% of premises last year. This increased infrastructure has translated into greater choice for consumers, with over 70% of premises now able to select from two or more different broadband net-

works. Achieving this near-universal access to high-quality broadband is seen as crucial for powering economic growth, unlocking opportunities in remote communities, boosting productivity, and supporting the increasing digitization of public services. However, Ofcom acknowledges that continued investment is essential to reach the final few percent and solidify the UK's full-fiber future. While competition from newer broadband networks is emerging, it requires time for these entrants to build their customer base and achieve the necessary scale for long-term sustainability. Encouraging customers to switch from older copper networks to the superior full-fiber technology is vital for the success of all providers, and Ofcom notes that adoption rates are steadily rising.

Vodafone Idea Dealt New Blow as DoT Drops AGR Dues Waiver Plan

India's Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has reportedly dropped a plan to waive adjusted gross revenue (AGR) dues of telcos, which is especially bad news for financially struggling telco Vodafone Idea. According to various media reports, the waiver was intended as a relief effort in the wake of a Supreme Court decision in October 2019 that ordered telcos to pay a combined INR1.47 trillion (US\$17 billion) in legacy AGR dues to the government. In September 2021, the government approved a moratorium on AGR dues payments that expires in March-April 2026. The DoT's waiver plan, which surfaced in January this year, would have waived 50% of interest and all penalties and interest on penalties that make up almost 75% of the INR1.47 trillion figure. The waiver would have saved telcos over INR1 billion, more than half of which would have accrued to Vodafone Idea. However, according to a report in the Economic Times citing "a person aware of the details", officials at higher levels of the government have objected to the waiver because they think it's wrong to provide financial relief to private companies – at least some of which are running a profit – on an issue that was decided by the highest court in the country. The

main objection seems to be that Bharti Airtel – which would have seen INR38 billion in AGR dues erased under the plan – is doing well enough financially that it has the ability to pay the dues. Tata Teleservices – which has dropped consumer mobile services to focus on enterprise mobility – would have saved INR14 billion. The waiver doesn't cover Reliance Jio because it doesn't owe any legacy AGR dues. The decision to scrap the waiver is potentially bad news for Vodafone Idea, which held a cash position of INR120.9 billion at the end of 2024 and has to pay INR291 billion in statutory dues in March 2026 when the moratorium expires, the report said. Last September, the Supreme Court rejected Vodafone Idea's plea to recalculate the AGR dues amount, which could have been reduced by 46%. While the government recognizes the need to financial relief for Vodafone Idea, it feels the waiver plan isn't an appropriate solution, the report added. The source told ET that the DoT is working on an alternate plan to provide financial relief for Vodafone Idea that could include taking an additional equity stake in the telco. It currently holds a 22.56% stake.

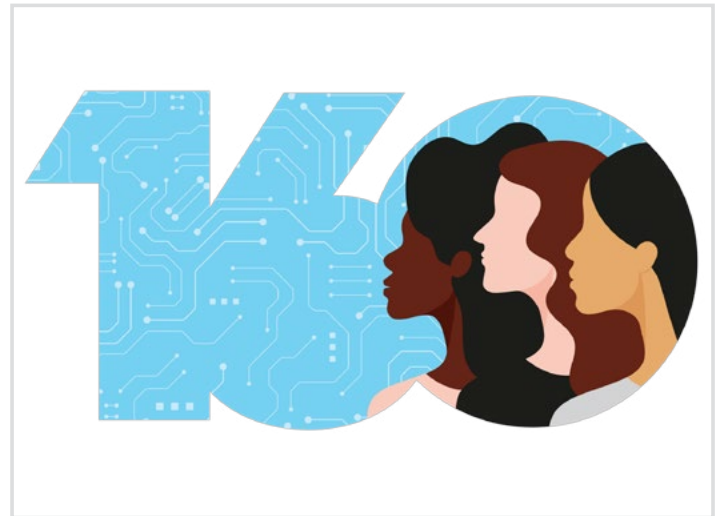
Canada and ITU Champion Young Women in Tech

The Government of Canada will bring young women from developing countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island development states, as well as young indigenous women and young women with disabilities, to key upcoming global technology conferences and activities organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). Nine young women between 18 and 25 years old, who are working to promote sustainable digital development and transformation, will receive support to travel to Geneva, Switzerland, to attend key ITU events between 7 and 11 July.

- The WSIS+20 High-Level Event will consider the way forward for global digital cooperation two decades after the historic 2003 and 2005 World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).
- The AI for Good Global Summit will highlight how artificial intelligence (AI) solutions to accelerate sustainable development.
- ITU160 Anniversary activities.

ITU, founded in 1865 for telegraph coordination, continues facilitating global communications with ever-evolving technologies.

ITU160 Gender Champions Canada, in partnership with ITU, is providing this opportunity through the "ITU160 Gender Champions" initiative, highlighting challenges and opportunities for women and girls in tech as part of ITU's 160th anniversary. The nine selected ITU160 Gender Champions are invited to engage in Geneva with tech leaders and experts, to amplify their own digital development work, and to co-design and facilitate a workshop on gender equality in digital transformation. Despite gradual progress, the tech industry remains male dominated all over the world, with women



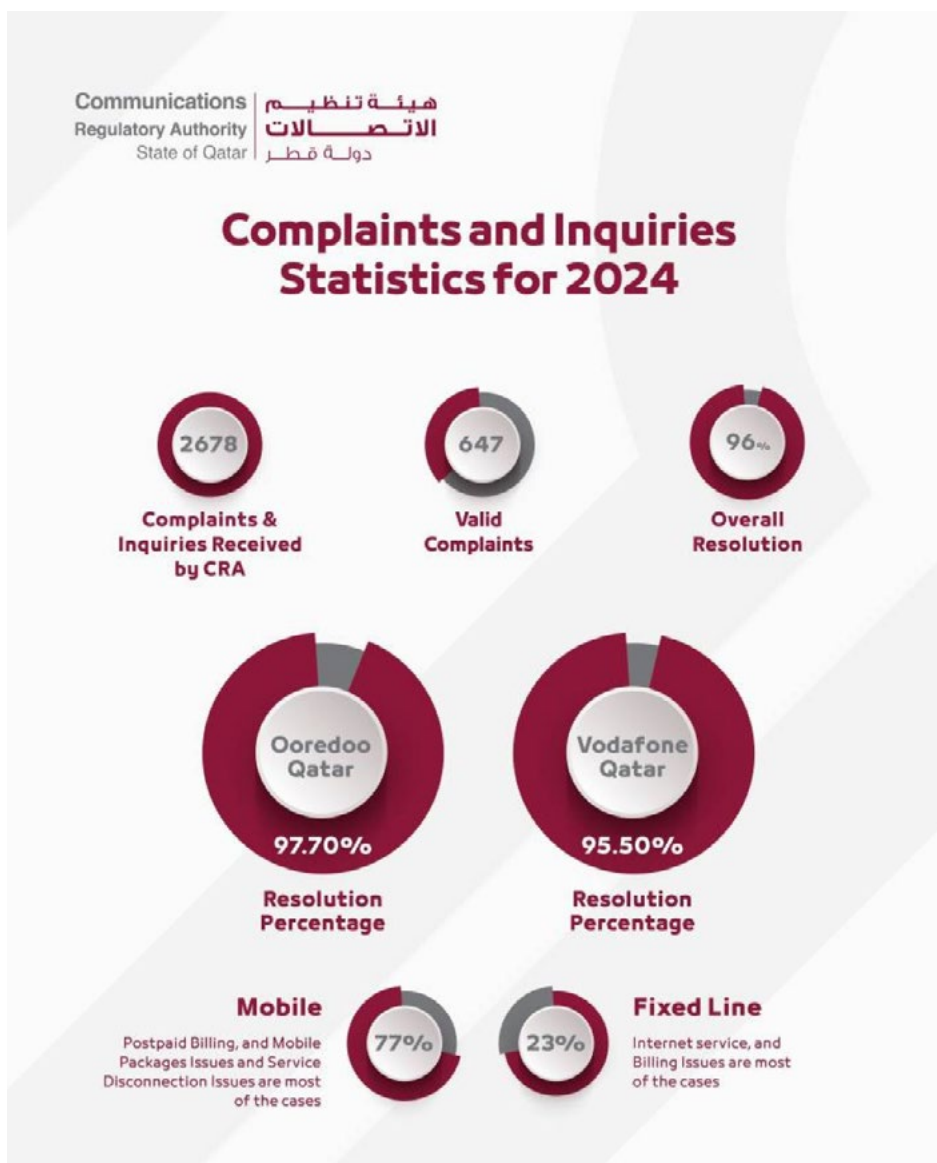
remaining underrepresented even in relatively new fields like AI. ITU – in its modern form as a United Nations specialized agency – has adopted gender equality and mainstreaming resolutions in all sectors of its work, advocating to close the gender digital divide. This year's ITU commemorations coincide with the 30th anniversary of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the groundbreaking agreement outlining principles to ensure equality for men and women and to close gender divides.

CRA Resolves 96% of Telecom Complaints Received in 2024, Reinforcing Commitment to Consumer Rights Protection

To mark World Consumer Rights Day, which occurs every year on March 15, the Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA) published the resolution results of telecom consumers' complaints received in 2024. This reflects CRA's strong commitment to transparency, consumer rights protection, and enhancing telecom service quality in Qatar. In 2024, CRA received 2,678 complaints and inquiries from consumers about telecom services in Qatar. Complaints were evaluated by CRA based on a set of criteria to determine their validity to CRA's complaint process. CRA successfully resolved 96% of valid complaints in coordination with telecom Service Providers, Ooredoo Qatar Q.P.S.C.

and Vodafone Qatar P.Q.S.C. Additionally, CRA remains committed to working closely with both Service Providers to address the remaining cases, reaffirming its dedication to protecting consumers' rights. The statistics indicate that 77% of all complaints received were related to mobile services. The primary issues reported included postpaid billing, mobile packages issues, and service disconnections issues. The remaining 23% were related to fixed-line services, and the most received complaints were related to internet service and billing issues. Ooredoo Qatar and Vodafone Qatar have demonstrated commendable dedication to resolving customers' issues, achieving resolution

rates of 97.7% and 95.5%, respectively. This collaborative approach between CRA and the telecom Service Providers highlights a shared commitment to enhancing the quality of telecom services in the State of Qatar. Commenting on the resolution results, Amel Salem Al-Hanawi, Director of Consumer Affairs Department at CRA, said: "World Consumer Rights Day serves as an important reminder of the fundamental right of consumers to fair, transparent, and high-quality services. At CRA, we work diligently to ensure that all telecom consumers in Qatar have access to reliable services and effective complaint resolution mechanisms. Our recent results in complaint resolution reflect our commitment to empowering consumers and holding Service Providers accountable to the highest standards." She added: "While this achievement underscores the progress made, our work does not stop here. CRA remains committed to enforcing and developing regulations that protect consumers from unfair practices, improving service quality, and enhancing the sustainable competition between the Service Providers to ensure the provision of innovative and high-quality services. This comes in line with the objectives of the Third National Development Strategy 2024-2030, which prioritizes improving residents' quality of life and delivering services that meet global standards. We encourage consumers to engage with us and utilize the available communication channels to share their concerns, as their feedback is crucial in shaping the future of Qatar's telecom sector." As part of its ongoing efforts to enhance consumer protection, CRA issued the Communications Consumer Protection Policy and Regulation in October 2024, which will repeal all previous consumer-related regulatory instruments. This sets a new standard for consumer rights and Service Providers' obligations in the Qatar's telecom sector. The issuance of the policy and regulation reflects CRA's proactive approach to safeguarding consumer rights, maintaining a balanced relationship between consumers and Service Providers, and driving the development of the telecom sector in alignment with the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030.



Australia Greenlights Vocus' Takeover of TPG Telecom's Fibre, Fixed Assets



Macquarie-backed (MQG.AX), opens new tab fibre network Vocus Group is closer to becoming one of Australia's largest owners of underground fibre infrastructure, as the competition regulator approved on Thursday its A\$5.25 billion (about \$3.3 billion) deal with TPG Telecom (TPG.AX), opens new tab. Vocus and TPG, back in October 2024, had agreed to a deal for the former to take over the telecom operator's fibre and fixed network infrastructure assets, enabling Vocus to connect almost 20,000 buildings in Australia. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) said the deal would not likely result in a substantial reduction of competition in any market. It said that Vocus would continue to face major competition from firms – including Telstra (TLS.AX), Singapore Telecommunications-owned (STEL.SI), Optus – and

local players such as Superloop (SLC.AX), and Aussie Broadband (ABB.AX). A spokesperson for Vocus said that the ACCC's decision was a positive step, and TPG's complementary assets will allow Vocus to drive competition into the sector. Analysts at Sandstone Insights called the clearance a major turning point for TPG, which resets its balance sheet. "With lower interest costs, a declining opex profile and lower capex requirements, TPG is poised for substantial free cash flow growth for the next 3-4 years," the analysts said. Shares in TPG gained 5% in Sydney, while those of its biggest rival Telstra were up 0.9%. The deal remains subject to Foreign Investment Review Board approval and U.S. regulatory approvals, TPG said. The Australian watchdog's review focused on how closely Vocus and TPG compete in the supply of data network and connectivity services, including fixed-line internet services, to large enterprise and government customers, it said in a statement. The probe found that Vocus focuses on providing services to large enterprise and government clients while TPG concentrates on the small and medium enterprise segment of the market. A Macquarie-managed infrastructure fund, alongside Aware Super, acquired Vocus in 2021, taking the company private and delisting it.

Ofcom to Launch Improved UK Mobile Coverage Checker Later in 2025

The UK telecoms regulator, Ofcom, informed ISPReview that they've been "working hard to overhaul our mobile coverage checker" in order to better match people's real-world experiences, particularly of modern 4G and 5G (mobile broadband) services, and intend to launch the result of all their work "later this year". Ofcom's existing Mobile Coverage Checker is currently based on coverage predictions from the mobile network operators themselves (EE, Vodafone, Three UK and O2), which are generated using computer programs that simulate the way mobile signals travel from mobile masts and are blocked by any obstructions such as hills, trees, and buildings. The existing coverage predictions are processed into a '100 metre by 100 metre' grid matrix that covers the entire UK land mass, but this is a bit too big to get a good view of individual premises etc. A spokesperson for Ofcom told ISPReview: "Our current coverage data comes from mobile network operators' predictions, which we recognise may not always match people's real-world experience at

a very local level. We are working hard to overhaul our mobile coverage checker, which we expect to relaunch later this year with new and improved data to better reflect what people can expect." The improved checker will use higher signal strength thresholds when presenting local predictions, while also providing clearer explanations of the issues and the specific functions of the web-checker. Ofcom also intends to assess predicted signal strength information at a more granular level (50 or 25 square metres, instead of the current 100 square metres) to determine if it is possible to reduce the local uncertainty to some extent. The regulator is also examining the use of measured data, including crowdsourced data, to build on these coverage predictions. Finally, once the new checker has launched, Ofcom will move to consider undertaking a larger scale performance measurement programme to complement coverage predictions and enhance their mobile reporting.

ITU and ESA Agree on Optimizing Satellite Communications

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the European Space Agency (ESA) have announced a collaborative effort to improve mitigation measures against harmful interference in satellite systems. The joint initiative, reflecting United Nations objectives under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, aims to ensure the sustainable and efficient use of limited space-based communication resources. Both organizations recognize growing complexities in managing finite spectrum and orbital resources. An agreement signed on 4 March in Barcelona, Spain, formalizes their plans for closer cooperation on key issues for global digital communications.

Under the agreement, ITU and ESA will work together on:

- Sustainable and efficient spectrum use: Ensuring that radio frequency spectrum for satellite systems is utilized in a responsible and effective manner.
- Development of space-based monitoring technologies: Exploring and potentially developing advanced technologies for monitoring the use of radio frequencies to identify and geolocate sources of harmful interference.
- Exchange of information and expertise: Facilitating knowledge-sharing between the two organizations to enhance space communication systems and regulatory frameworks.

Space-based communication technologies are increasingly crucial for global connectivity, scientific research, and emergency response systems. At the same time, growing numbers of satellites and increasing risks of signal interference necessitate innovative, increasingly complex, and highly coordinated spectrum management solutions. "Innovation and regulations are key to facilitate and preserve access to spectrum-orbit resources free from harmful interference," said Mario Maniewicz, Director of ITU Radiocommunications Bureau. "This agreement is the first step towards a series of joint ESA-ITU efforts to ensure sustainability of space radiocommunications systems."



Preserving radio waves for all ITU, as the UN specialized agency for information and communication technologies, has long been at the forefront of coordination among countries and regions on radio frequencies and satellite orbits worldwide. ITU Resolution 186 (Rev. Bucharest, 2022) emphasizes the importance of transparency and confidence-building in outer space activities. ESA, an intergovernmental organization established in 1975, supports space research and technology development for peaceful and scientific purposes. Together, ITU and ESA aim to strengthen international efforts in satellite monitoring and interference mitigation, ensuring reliable and sustainable access to satellite communication services worldwide. "Promoting the responsible use of spectrum and preserving it from interferences is key to ensure the viability of our operators and ultimately the service delivered to their customers," said Laurent Jaffart, ESA's Director of Connectivity and Secure Communications. "Together with ITU, we will promote the importance of ensuring the sustainability of this limited and valuable resource and will collaborate

towards establishing good practices for its responsible use for the benefit of society and businesses."

A step towards a sustainable digital future By combining their expertise and resources, ITU and ESA could set a precedent for enhanced cooperation in the field of satellite communications. "The shared commitment to responsible spectrum management and technological innovation marks a significant step toward a sustainable digital future for everyone," said Mr Maniewicz. "This initiative underscores the importance of international collaboration in addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by space technologies." Maniewicz and Jaffart signed for their respective organizations at the Mobile World Congress (MWC2025 Barcelona). As the demand for satellite-based services continues to grow, partnerships like this will help maintain the integrity and accessibility of global communication networks. ITU and ESA have reaffirmed their dedication to a future where space technologies contribute positively to societal progress and sustainable development.

Danes Raise Telecom Security Threat Levels to “High”

In what is technically the first public warning by a European government agency, the Danish Agency for Society Security or Styrelsen for Samfundssikkerhed (SAMSIK) has raised the threat of cyber espionage against the Danish telecoms sector from “medium” to “high” in its latest report. This is due to increased activity from state-sponsored hacker groups against the European telecoms sector. Since the agency’s last cyber threat assessment for the telecoms sector, the threat picture for the telecoms sector has become more serious. As a result, telecoms and ISPs in Denmark must also be aware of attempted cyber attacks from foreign states, according to the agency. In addition, it said the threat was raised for destructive cyber attacks against Denmark to “medium” in June 2024 and for cyber activism to “high” in January 2023. Both threat levels levels also apply to the telecoms sector. The threat from cybercrime to the telecoms sector also remains “very high”, including from ransomware attacks. In the past, cyber espionage has mainly targeted telecoms providers in Asia and the Middle East, but now it is also increasingly targeting



telecoms providers in Europe. The report highlights China, Russia and Iran as foreign states that “continuously use their cyber capabilities to carry out cyber espionage against the telecoms sector worldwide”. This is mainly because through cyber espionage against telecoms and internet service providers, they can gain access to large amounts of data about customers’ use of the provider’s infrastructure, including

call data, internet traffic, customer data and location data. The report says states are interested in this type of data because it can be used to monitor the communication and travel activities of individuals or groups of people. For example, China continuously attempts to monitor the Chinese diaspora in general and dissidents in particular, including minorities such as Uyghurs and Tibetans.

Bangladesh Plans Major Telecoms Policy Overhaul to Embrace Digital

The Bangladesh government is reportedly planning a major overhaul to the country’s telecoms policy to speed up its transition to a digital economy and improve service quality. According to a report in the Daily Star newspaper on Monday, Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb – the newly appointed special assistant to the chief adviser – criticized the current telecoms policy structure, which is designed for voice services, not data, and takes an “obsolete” monopolistic or duopolistic approach to telecoms infrastructure. Speaking at a seminar organized by the Bangladesh Mobile Phone Consumers’ Association at the National Press Club on Sunday, Taiyeb stated that a fundamental structural overhaul was

necessary to improve telecom service quality, the report said. “The government is determined to dismantle policies that have stifled Bangladesh’s data market by allowing certain companies to hold onto the existing fiber infrastructure as if it were a treasure trove,” Taiyeb said. “The more fiber you lay, the more business you create.” Taiyeb also said Bangladesh has failed to position its communications sector for the digital and IoT age, with previous governments implementing digital policies that were “inconsistent, subpar, and globally misaligned”, the report added. Taiyeb didn’t give specifics on what policy changes would be considered or implemented, but promised the reforms

“will be meaningful and policies will undergo a thorough transformation,” the report said. Telecom policy expert Mustafa Mahmud Hussain, who also spoke at the event, said any reforms would need to include introducing fair competition in the broadband sector, and a tiered ISP licensing system to support small providers backed by strict anti-monopoly regulations. He also said Bangladesh must set a goal of achieving 100 Mbps broadband for all households by 2030. The government should also encourage adoption of next-gen technologies like AI-driven networks and IoT, as well as partnerships with global tech giants, to drive digital transformation, the report said.

MTN and Globalstar Boost ITU's Partner2Connect Pledges to US\$73b

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) says that its Partner2Connect (P2C) Digital Coalition has now reached US\$73 billion in pledges for universal connectivity, including fresh commitments this week from South Africa's MTN Group and LEO satellite operator Globalstar. Partner2Connect is the ITU's initiative to mobilize

pledges and resources to reinforce global connectivity efforts, strengthen the world's digital infrastructure and narrow the digital divide. MTN Group – which has deployed on average approximately US\$2 billion per year in capex across its markets over the past five years – said at Mobile World Congress 2025 it will pledge to make similar in-

vestments across Africa over the next five years to expand and strengthen its voice and data networks. Meanwhile, Globalstar also pledged at MWC to invest US\$2 billion to expand its LEO satellite network for direct-to-device (D2D) and IoT solutions into remote regions. "In space, on land and under the sea, expansive digital infrastructure highlights how much humanity values and depends on meaningful connectivity," said ITU Secretary-General Doreen Bogdan-Martin in a statement. "These new pledges bring us even closer to our goal of delivering sustainable digital transformation to everyone, everywhere." According to the ITU, over 1,000 pledges have been made to the Partner2Connect platform from governments, industry, and other stakeholders, covering 147 countries. The ITU has called for US\$100 billion in commitments to Partner2Connect by 2026 for projects driving digital transformation across all countries, with special attention to the hardest-to-connect communities. The latest ITU's Facts & Figures report says that 2.6 billion people around the world remain offline. The organization currently estimates that US\$1.6 trillion is required in hardware costs alone to complete the task of connecting the world, with most of the resources needed in developing countries.



FCC is One Step Closer to Auctioning Unused 5G-Grade Spectrum

New proposed rules approved by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) represent the first step towards bringing a slate of unused 5G-grade spectrum licenses to the market. The proposed rules, approved unanimously by FCC commissioners, will update rules around AWS-3 spectrum licenses, the FCC announced. According to the FCC, the AWS-3 band refers to spectrum between 1695-1710 MHz, 1755-1780 MHz, and 2155-2180 MHz. Around 200 licenses for AWS-3 spectrum were returned to the FCC's inventory following a 2014 auction. "Certain winning bidders defaulted on

their payment obligations," the FCC's press release stated. "As a result, approximately 200 licenses were returned to the FCC's inventory." Additionally, proceeds from a new auction will fund the FCC's rip and replace program, the release explained. The rip and replace program, known formally as the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Reimbursement Program, aims to "remove untrustworthy technology" from communications networks in the United States. FCC Chairman Brendan Carr said the action was "essential to promoting our national security." In a statement on the matter, published on the FCC's website,

Carr said failing to close a funding gap in the FCC's rip and replace program "would have left America's networks needlessly exposed to security risks." Carr's statement also celebrated the vote, saying the time had come for the FCC to auction spectrum once again. "It is time that we free up airwaves for 5G and other next-gen services," Carr's statement read. "Of course, conducting auctions at the FCC has been a bit of a challenge in recent years because the FCC's general spectrum auction authority lapsed back in 2023."

Korean Operators Fined \$79M for Collusion



South Korea's Fair Trade Commission (FTC) penalised the country's three major mobile operators a combined KRW114 billion (\$78.5 million) for illegal handset promotions and colluding to keep sales incentives at similar levels. The commission reportedly fined SKT KRW42.7 billion, LG Uplus KRW38.3 billion and KT KRW33 billion. South Korea's trade regulator determined the companies agreed to work together to stabilise subscriber churn, with an operator reducing incentives when additions rose and raising them when new users declined, the news service stated. The FTC alleged the operators coordinated to monitor net increases and decreases on a daily basis to avoid fluctuations between November 2015 and September 2022. In October 2024, the FTC faced a standoff with the Korea Communications Commission over penalties relating to handset promotions.

US FCC Seeks Faster Copper Removal

US Federal Communications Commission (FCC) chair Brendan Carr outlined initial actions to streamline the process for removing legacy copper lines, a plan he stated would free-up operators' investments in new high-speed networks. The FCC noted while it is pushing for faster retirement of copper lines, it would keep consumer protection plans in place. These include "requiring interoperability and guarding against price hikes by ensuring that consumers transitioning to new networks get access to services at similar or lower price points", it stated. Carr is pushing for wider deregulation across the telecoms sector. He noted current FCC rules force service

providers to pour resources into maintaining aging and expensive copper-based networks instead of investing in more modern infrastructure. "Outdated FCC rules have left Americans sitting in the slow lane for far too long," he stated. Carr explained the initial actions would ultimately free up billions of dollars for new networks. The FCC plans to offer a pass through its Wireline Competition Bureau allowing operators to retire copper networks "not only in cases where replacement voice services are available on a standalone basis, but in cases where those services are available on a bundled basis". It also seeks to adopt an order waiving "unnecessary requirements"

triggered when operators stopped offering a legacy service to new customers along with endeavouring to free operators from notification requirements "in cases where they provide no demonstrable benefit". The FCC processed more than 400 network change disclosure filings over the past two years, during which it did not receive a single comment in opposition to a disclosure. "This initial set of actions gets things moving in the right direction and creates the right incentives for providers to invest and build new networks in communities across the country," Carr said. 📍

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



Algeria

Algeria is setting its sights on artificial intelligence (AI) to contribute 7% to its GDP by 2027, with a strong emphasis on investment in advanced infrastructure. The Minister of Post and Telecommunications Sid Ali Zerrouki officially launched the country's first high-performance computing center dedicated to AI in Oran. This strategic move aims to secure digital sovereignty, providing Algeria with the critical computing power needed for AI advancements. The minister outlined that this initiative is in line with President Abdelmadjid Tebboune's vision of establishing Algeria as a leading force in innovation and digital technology across Africa. The new center will provide valuable access to cutting-edge technological resources for researchers, startups, and academic institutions. Equipped with state-of-the-art graphics processing units (GPUs), the center will support the development of AI applications in sectors like healthcare, industry, cybersecurity,

and smart cities. This move is part of Algeria's broader national AI strategy, which focuses on enhancing infrastructure through data centers and optimized cloud solutions, fostering education and research through collaboration with universities and specialized centers, and promoting industrial applications to assist businesses and startups in creating AI-driven solutions. By reducing dependence on foreign infrastructure, the project ensures Algeria's technological independence, bolstering innovation in key areas such as precision agriculture, energy resource management, and climate modeling. The center will allow local researchers and businesses to access world-class computing resources, paving the way for a competitive AI ecosystem in North Africa. (March 19, 2025) www.meatechwatch.com



Bangladesh

The Bangladesh government is reportedly planning a major overhaul to the country's telecoms policy to speed up its transition to a digital economy and improve service quality. Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb – the newly appointed special assistant to the chief adviser – criticised the current telecoms policy structure, which is designed for voice services, not data, and takes an "obsolete" monopolistic or duopolistic approach to telecoms infrastructure. Speaking at a seminar organised by the Bangladesh Mobile Phone Consumers' Association, Taiyeb stated that a fundamental structural overhaul was necessary to improve telecom service quality, the report said. "The government is determined to dismantle policies that have stifled Bangladesh's data market by allowing certain companies to hold onto the existing fibre infrastructure as if it were a treasure trove," Taiyeb said. "The more fibre you lay, the more business you create." Taiyeb also said Bangladesh has failed to position its communications sector for the digital and IoT age, with previous

governments implementing digital policies that were "inconsistent, subpar, and globally misaligned", the report added. Taiyeb didn't give specifics on what policy changes would be considered or implemented, but promised the reforms "will be meaningful and policies will undergo a thorough transformation," the report said. Telecom policy expert Mustafa Mahmud Hussain, who also spoke at the event, said any reforms would need to include introducing fair competition in the broadband sector, and a tiered ISP licensing system to support small providers backed by strict anti-monopoly regulations. He also said Bangladesh must set a goal of achieving 100 Mbps broadband for all households by 2030. The government should also encourage adoption of next-gen technologies like AI-driven networks and IoT, as well as partnerships with global tech giants, to drive digital transformation, the report said. Brining affordable internet access to rural areas is also essential, he added. (March 10, 2025) www.developingtelecoms.com



Egypt

Egypt has been awarded the title of the fastest fixed internet in Africa for 2024 by Ookla, a global leader in internet speed testing. The award was presented to Amr Talaat, Egypt's Minister of Communications and Information Technology, at the Mobile World Congress (MWC) 2025 in Barcelona, Spain. In his address, Talaat highlighted the importance of reliable telecommunications and internet services as integral components of Egypt's digital strategy and economic growth. He emphasized the country's ongoing efforts to enhance digital infrastructure, aiming to improve internet service quality for citizens. Talaat also announced the rollout of a project to replace copper cables with fiber optic networks in rural Egypt's "Haya Karima" villages. This initiative will provide high-

speed internet access to approximately 60 million people across around 4,500 villages. Talaat shared that Egypt's investments of \$3.5 billion in digital infrastructure have resulted in a remarkable improvement in average fixed internet speeds, rising from 5.4 Mbps in December 2017 to 80.3 Mbps in January 2025. These advancements have secured Egypt's position as a leader in fixed internet speed in Africa for over three consecutive years. The award ceremony also saw the participation of Stephen Bye, President and CEO of Ookla, and other company executives, along with Mohamed Nasr, Managing Director and CEO of Telecom Egypt. (March 10, 2025) www.meatechwatch.com



Iraq

Iraq's Council of Ministers has approved the establishment of the National Mobile Telecommunications Company (NMTC), which will operate Iraq's 5G national license in cooperation with UK's Vodafone Group.

The initiative aims to develop the telecommunications sector, maximize revenues, and implement the government program. The new company will be a private limited entity under the Companies Law No. 21 of 1997 (as amended), with equal ownership by:

- Al-Salam General Company (Ministry of Communications)

- National Board of Pension / State Pension Fund
- Trade Bank of Iraq (TBI)

Each entity will contribute one-third of the capital as a long-term investment. The Council of Ministers will oversee key corporate decisions, including shareholding amendments, public offerings, and strategic planning. The Minister of Communications has been assigned to supervise implementation and provide regular progress reports. (March 11, 2025) www.iraq-businessnews.com



Kuwait

Kuwait's Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) inked a contract awarding Ooredoo group license to put in place the submarine cable Fibre in Gulf (FIG). The gigantic project connects seven Arabian Gulf countries - Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, provides secure route to a new corridor to Europe. With a capacity of 720 terabyte per second and 24 pairs of optical fibers, the FIG is one of the most advanced cables in the world and gives a quantum leap to the digital infrastructure in the Gulf region, according to a statement from CITRA. "The project, which is expected to go operational by Q4-2027, will boost the resilience and credibility of the communication networks in the region and expand the scope of connectivity with the world in the long run," the statement quoted CITRA Acting Chairman Abdullah Al-Ajmi as saying. "It will enhance the competitive edge of the networks amid growing demand for high speed internet, cloud computing and artificial intelligence (AI) services," he noted. Al-Ajmi affirmed that the project will be

a big stride in Kuwait's drive to become a regional hub for digital transformation, business and technology. He added that CITRA's commitment to promoting the national infrastructure, supporting economic growth and sustainable development, and leading digital economy initiatives. On his part, regional CEO of Ooredoo for the Middle East Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Thani said the project represents a big stride in the Group's strategy for promoting the digital infrastructure and linking the national networks of the Gulf region to the outside world. "The FIG has to do with not only the speed of the internet but the long-term investment and the future of telecommunications in the region as well," he pointed out. The project opens new horizons for innovation and more investment in hi-tech, and enables the businesses and internet providers to share data in a fast, secure and effective way, thus improving the performance of the various economic sectors, Sheikh Nasser Al Thani added. (March 11, 2025) www.citra.gov.kw



Morocco

The Moroccan government has announced the establishment of the “YouCode Fès” school in the Fès-Meknès region, aiming to enhance the country’s digital skills and contribute to socioeconomic development. The initiative aligns with Morocco’s Digital Maroc 2030 strategy, which focuses on building a robust talent pool in the digital sector. The “YouCode Fès” school will offer a two-year training program in programming and coding, with each cohort accommodating 80 students. The program is designed to increase employment opportunities in the digital sector, helping young people in the region secure tech-related jobs. The school will be

a key part of Morocco’s strategy to create 270,000 digital jobs by 2030, up from 130,000 in 2022, and boost digital export revenues. This effort reflects Morocco’s broader vision of becoming a leading outsourcing and digital export hub. The country also aims to contribute to Africa’s digital transformation by addressing the growing demand for digital skills across the continent. The launch date for the “YouCode Fès” school is yet to be announced, and there are plans for similar initiatives in other regions.

(March 5, 2025) www.meatechwatch.com



Nepal

The Nepal Telecommunications Authority (NTA) has announced that it will grant 5G permission to telecom companies within a week. NTA Chairman Bhupendra Bhandari said at a program organized by the Society of Economic Journalists-Nepal (SEJON) in Kathmandu that the 5G permission could be granted within a week of the telecom company submitting its application. There have been increasing complaints that telecom companies in Nepal are not prepared for 5G and are not ready to build the necessary

infrastructure. However, the NTA said that 5G permits can be granted immediately. He also said that the necessary 21 MHz frequency could be provided to the telecom company. Currently, Nepal Telecom has only conducted testing and has not yet launched 5G. Ncell, on the other hand, has stated that it has not conducted any 5G testing due to the huge investment required in infrastructure.

(March 13, 2025) www.myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com



Oman

The State Council’s Legal Committee discussed the report on the Telecommunications and Information Technology Regulatory Bill, which was referred by the Council of Ministers. The meeting, chaired by Shaikh Sultan bin Matar al Azizi, focused on reviewing the observations and views of the Technology and Innovation Committee. The draft bill aims to update and regulate the telecommunications and IT sector to adapt to local and global changes. During the meeting, the committee members discussed

the provisions of the law, addressing concerns and suggestions to ensure that it aligns with the evolving needs of the sector. This review marks a significant step in enhancing Oman’s regulatory framework, ensuring that it stays competitive in the rapidly changing technological landscape. The finalization of this bill will likely contribute to the country’s broader goals of advancing its digital transformation and improving its telecommunications infrastructure. (March 19, 2025) www.meatechwatch.com



Pakistan

The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Zonal Office Gilgit, in collaboration with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Cyber Crime Wing, conducted a successful operation against the illegal sale of international SIM cards. The targeted raid took place in Danyore, Gilgit, leading to the recovery of six UK SIM cards and

the arrest of two individuals involved in the illicit trade. The FIA has initiated a thorough investigation to dismantle the broader network facilitating the illegal distribution of foreign SIM cards. This operation is part of PTA’s ongoing commitment to curbing unauthorized SIM sales, which pose significant security risks.

PTA urges the public to report any such illegal activities to help maintain a secure and regulated digital environment. These actions underscore the Authority's dedication to ensuring compliance with telecom regulations and protecting consumers from potential misuse of illegally obtained SIM cards. (March 12, 2025) www.pta.gov.pk

Chairman Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), Major General (R) Hafeez Ur Rehman, met with Her Excellency Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin, on the sidelines of the GSMA Mobile World Congress (MWC) 2025 in Barcelona, Spain. The discussion reaffirmed PTA's commitment to global cooperation and innovation in the telecommunications sector. The meeting focused on PTA's ongoing and future initiatives, regulatory advancements, and Pakistan's digital transformation efforts. Chairman PTA highlighted key regulatory measures aimed at fostering technological growth, enhancing connectivity, and ensuring a robust telecom ecosystem.

He also expressed gratitude for Pakistan's recognition as a G5 Regulator by the ITU, which reflects Pakistan's regulatory excellence and commitment to digital advancement. Chairman PTA invited Her Excellency the ITU Secretary-General to visit Pakistan and explore opportunities for collaborative initiatives, including hosting an international telecom event in Pakistan. He also emphasized that PTA officers are keen to actively contribute to ITU's working groups, with one of PTA's officers currently participating in the Child Online Protection Working Group (CWG-COP) of the ITU Council. The engagement underscored PTA's proactive role in shaping the future of telecommunications, fostering international collaboration, and leveraging global expertise to accelerate digital progress. The discussions concluded with a mutual understanding to enhance cooperation for sustainable and inclusive digital growth, reinforcing Pakistan's position as a key player in the evolving telecom landscape. (March 5, 2025) www.pta.gov.pk



Qatar's Minister of Communications and Information Technology, emphasized that Qatar's hosting of the Mobile World Congress (MWC) 2025 in Barcelona underscores the country's commitment to becoming a global leader in digital innovation. In his remarks to Qatar News Agency, he stated that MWC represents a significant opportunity for Qatar to advance its digital and economic goals, aligning with the nation's broader Vision 2030 objectives. He highlighted that MWC contributes to strengthening Qatar's position as both a regional and global technology hub, attracting industry leaders, executives, experts, and investors from around the world. The event focuses on key technological sectors such as artificial intelligence, IoT, cloud computing, data centers, and 5G technologies, which are essential to Qatar's vision of

fostering a knowledge-based economy and digital transformation. The Minister also noted that MWC serves as a platform for international cooperation and dialogue, which will bolster Qatar's communication and digital transformation sectors. This hosting also supports Qatar National Vision 2030 by enhancing digital skills, diversifying the economy, and encouraging investments in innovative sectors. Al-Mannai further stressed that MWC plays a vital role in showcasing Qatar's technological advancements, including in AI, smart cities, and 5G technologies, while also attracting investments and partnerships to enhance its digital infrastructure. Through such initiatives, Qatar continues to build its reputation as a leading global destination for technology events.

(March 7, 2025) www.meatechwatch.com



H.E. Dr. Mohammad bin Saud Altamimi, the Governor of the Communications, Space and Technology Commission (CST) met with various governmental entities participating in serving visitors of Makkah during Ramadan 2025. During his visit, H.E. held a meeting with officials from the Royal Commission for Makkah City and Holy Sites, The General Authority for the Care of the Grand Mosque and the Prophet's Mosque, the Pilgrims Experience Program (PEP) and Telecom Service Provider Field Commanders, in order to ensure the best experience for worshippers throughout their visit to Makkah and Madinah, and to promote the Kingdom's image in serving the Two Holy Mosques. The visitation stems from the CST's major role as regulator of the ICT sector in the Kingdom,

with the goal of enhancing the user experience through integrated technical services and developed infrastructure specifically provided to serve the visitors of the Grand Mosque in Makkah for Hajj or Umrah. (March 24, 2025) new.cst.gov.sa

Eng. Omar ALRejraje, Regulation and Competition Sector Deputy Governor headed the Communications, Space and Technology Commission (CST) delegation participating in the Mobile World Congress (MWC) which organized by the Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA), which was held from March 3-6, 2025, in Barcelona, Spain. Through its participation CST aims to enhance efforts and key role in accelerating the

Qatar

Saudi Arabia

digital economy of Saudi Arabia, exchange experiences and best practices, discuss trends and innovations in the field, while exploring and keeping pace with the latest technologies. In addition to conducting bilateral meetings and discussions with global companies to promote collaboration in the communications and technology sector. During the conference, the Strategy and Sustainability General Manager Eng. Abdulaziz Altamrah participated in the ministerial program roundtable “Advancing Digital Inclusion Towards a Connected Future”. Meanwhile, as part of a strategic initiative to elevate Saudi products' global presence, the Saudi Export Development collaborated with CST to organize the participation of national companies in international

pavilions at the conference aiming to showcase the Kingdom's high competitiveness and provide new ways to access the global markets. MWC is one of the most important conferences related to the communications and technology sector globally, with an annual attendance of over 80,000 specialists from both the public and private sectors, representing more than 190 countries worldwide. The conference includes participation from heads of communications and technology regulatory bodies from various countries and CEOs of major companies to discuss challenges and opportunities facing the mobile communications sector and to explore the latest technologies in the industry and ways to develop them. (March 6, 2025) new.cst.gov.sa



The Sri Lankan government has committed \$10 million to drive digital transformation across key sectors, including financial services, healthcare, education, and government processes. A major portion of the budget will support the Sri Lanka Unique Identity Project (SL-UDI), aimed at creating a blockchain-based digital ID system. The initiative is part of a broader effort to modernize the country's digital infrastructure, with a particular focus on improving productivity and efficiency. The SL-UDI project is expected to be rolled out in 2025, supported by a \$35 million contribution from India. The government also plans to introduce a

new regulatory framework for digital services, including licensing for service providers and the creation of a Digital Economic Authority. Sri Lanka aims to boost its digital economy, which is expected to contribute \$15 billion annually by the end of the decade. In addition, the country plans to train 200,000 people in artificial intelligence, robotics, and new financial technologies. This renewed commitment aligns with Sri Lanka's goal to lead digitization efforts in Southeast Asia and reduce cash dependency by adopting a central bank digital currency (CBDC).

(March 5, 20225) www.meatechwatch.com

Sri Lanka



Abu Dhabi's Department of Government Enablement has announced an agreement with Microsoft and Core42, a G42 company specialising in sovereign cloud, AI infrastructure and digital services. G42 is an artificial intelligence development company based in Abu Dhabi. The agreement, say the partners, will create a unified, high-performance sovereign cloud computing environment capable of processing more than 11 million daily digital interactions between Abu Dhabi government entities, citizens, residents and businesses. The government's ambition is to enable the world's first fully AI-native government by 2027, one committed to three goals in particular: enhancing government services to be more efficient and accessible for citizens and residents; creating greater transparency and security

for businesses and investors; and fostering a more resilient and innovative environment for the public sector workforce. Abu Dhabi aims to automate 100% of its government processes, supported by US\$3.54 billion investment in digital infrastructure through the Abu Dhabi Government Digital Strategy 2025-2027. This strategy will see over 200 AI-driven solutions deployed to improve public service delivery, boost operational productivity, and contribute to environmental sustainability. In fact the government can already cite innovations such as TAMM 3.0, Abu Dhabi's one-stop government services app, which has reduced the number of offline customer visits by 90% and made more than 73% of transactions instantaneous.

(March 19, 2025) www.developingtelecoms.com

United Arab Emirates



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Angola

Angolan operator Unitel has strengthened its 4G network in multiple locations to enhance voice and data services. In a statement, Unitel announced that it had upgraded its network with 4G technology in the province of Uíge and in Bentiaba, Namibe, improving connectivity for users in these areas. Providing an update on its network coverage, Unitel revealed that its 2G network currently reaches 100% of municipalities and 52.9% of communes. Meanwhile, its 3G network covers 96.3% of municipalities and 45.9% of communes. The company's 4G technology is now available in 80.5% of

municipalities and 35.0% of communes. As for its 5G network, coverage stands at 5.5% of municipalities and 2.2% of communes. Unitel stated that its current network coverage provides a "solid foundation" for growth and innovation in 2025. The company pledged to further expand coverage and services this year but did not disclose specific details about its rollout plan. The Angolan government is currently planning to sell its stake in Unitel as part of broader efforts to privatize the economy.

(March 24, 2025) www.developingtelecoms.com



Australia

Telstra has paid a \$626,000 penalty and offered a comprehensive court-enforceable undertaking after it sent close to 10.5 million text messages that did not comply with Australia's spam laws. The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) investigation found that Telstra sent 10,433,812 texts with unsubscribe arrangements in breach of the law over a 21-month period from 2022 to 2024, including over 10.3 million that required recipients to provide personal information to opt out. Under Australian law, businesses cannot require consumers to log in to accounts or provide personal information to unsubscribe from receiving further commercial messages except where the consumers have agreed to such arrangements. The ACMA investigation also found that a further 43,228 texts were sent between

October 2022 and July 2023 to customers of Telstra's 'Belong' brand who either had not consented or had withdrawn their consent to receive these messages. Telstra self-reported these matters to the ACMA and had implemented fixes to most of the underlying causes before the ACMA commenced its investigation. ACMA member Samantha Yorke said given the age of the matters, the ACMA infringement notice was the maximum able to be applied in this instance. "The spam consent rules have been in force for over 20 years and Telstra, as a mature and established company, has no excuse for this type of non-compliance." "Consumers must be able to unsubscribe without giving businesses more personal information than is required," Ms. Yorke said. (March 6, 2025) www.acma.gov.au



Brazil

Telecom operators Brisanet, Ligga/Sercomtel, iez! Telecom and Unifique were declared the winners of Brazil's second reverse mobile auction. Under the reverse model, the lowest bidder for each location is awarded a contract to deploy and operate mobile services compatible with 4G LTE and ready for 5G. This second auction encompassed 70 locations. Brisanet snapped up most of them at 47, followed by Ligga (18), iez! Telecom (4) and Unifique (1). The process ended with bids totaling 97mn reais (US\$16.8mn), 25% lower than the cap. The process was carried out by Seja Digital, or EAD, a private entity that was created by telcos

to manage resources related to the 2014 4G tender, along with the communications ministry and regulator Anatel. The first reverse auction, carried out last year, saw bids from five operators for 59 locations, with 45 of them receiving more than one offer. Brisanet, Ligga/Sercomtel and TIM were the winners. The processes are part of a broader project that foresees investments of 250mn reais to expand mobile infrastructure in poorly connected areas and is funded from a portion of the amount paid by carriers in the 4G tender. A third and final reverse auction is scheduled to take place by July 2026. (March 24, 2025) www.bnamericas.com



Canada

The government of Canada has announced new measures to make 5G millimetre wave spectrum available for a range of new services. Millimetre wave (mmWave) spectrum is high-frequency spectrum, typically ranging between 24-47 GHz for 5G applications, that can carry large quantities of data over short distances. Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED) Canada is publishing an addendum to the Non-Competitive Local Licensing Framework that will add millimetre wave spectrum in the 27.5–28.35 GHz band. ISED will be consulting from March 06 to June 04, 2025, on millimetre wave spectrum in the 26 GHz and 38 GHz bands for an upcoming spectrum auction. While mmWave spectrum can be cranked up to support massive speeds and throughput, the signals have the disadvantage of only being able to travel short distances and being subject to obstruction by solid objects. However, mmWave spectrum can support highly localised mobile services, new applications such as automation in manufacturing

and transportation, and fixed wireless services for internet in homes typically located in rural or remote areas. The Canadian government says the mmWave spectrum that it is making available will support services such as smart agriculture, industrial automation and private networks. “The emergence of new wireless technologies is supporting the creation and expansion of new spectrum applications across different industries, including manufacturing, health care, public safety and more,” said François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry. “Making new millimetre wave spectrum available will encourage the development of new and disruptive business models, drive ongoing investment in networks, increase competition and improve affordable connectivity options for Canadians across the country.” Gudie Hutchings, Minister of Rural Economic Development, said making additional spectrum available will improve connectivity for Canadians in rural and remote areas. (March 12, 2025) www.itwire.com



China

China’s Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) has reportedly given approval to 13 foreign companies to enter the telecoms sector to offer value added services in Beijing, Shanghai, Hainan and Shenzhen. According to a report from the official Xinhua News Agency issued Friday, the companies are allowed to offer services such as internet access and information services. The approvals were issued under a pilot program launched by MIIT in October 2024 to open up value-added telecom services in designated areas in those four cities. The policy allows foreign investors to operate wholly-owned businesses such as internet data centers, and engage in online data processing and transaction processing within the designated areas. They can also access China’s cloud computing and computing power services. The report only named a few of the 13 companies, including T-Systems P.R. China Ltd., which is affiliated with Deutsche Telekom in China, and Siemens Digital Technology (Shenzhen). The approvals also include Airbus China, which operates a digital platform for analyzing global aircraft performance data. The Xinhua report quotes

Airbus China CEO Xu Gang as saying the new MIIT approvals will enable it to launch more sophisticated digital solutions for fleet management and operational efficiency. According to past reports, Tesla and HSBC Fintech Services (Shanghai) were also planning to apply to participate in the pilot. The MIIT has given the greenlight to over 2,400 foreign-invested telecom enterprises as of the end of February 2025, up 30% year on year, the report said. Apart from touting the benefits of added competition within the Chinese VAS sector, Beijing has also positioned the policy as an inclusive, investor-friendly alternative for overseas players amidst “simmering global trade tensions and a global surge in protectionism”, the Xinhua report said. The Ministry of Commerce and the National Development and Reform Commission unveiled a plan last month to stabilize foreign investment in 2025. Among other things, the plan includes open the telecoms VAS market further, and introduce similar pilots for foreign investors in biotechnology and hospitals, the report said.

(March 4, 2025) www.developingtelecoms.com



Colombia

Spanish multinational telecommunications company Telefonica has agreed to sell its stake in its Colombian unit to Millicom, a provider of fixed and mobile telecommunications services in Latin America, for US \$400 million. Statements released by both companies indicate that the Spanish unit of Luxembourg-headquartered telecom Millicom will buy the 67.5% stake in Telefonica Colombian. This move has been expected for some time. Indeed, at the end of July 2024 we were among many outlets reporting that Telefonica had signed a non-binding agreement with Millicom to explore a possible deal. The move is, according to

Telefonica, part of a strategy to gradually reduce its exposure to Latin America. In fact Telefonica has already divested from many markets in Latin America, where returns were reportedly lower than capital cost, to focus on its businesses in Spain, Brazil, the UK and Germany. Reuters reports that newly appointed Chief Executive Marc Murtra has said the company plans to complete a strategic review before the end of this year. Last month, Telefonica sold its unit in Argentina and earlier this month it was widely reported that the company had started the process to sell its units in Mexico and Peru. (March 14, 2025) www.developingtelecoms.com



Costa Rica

The Racsa telecoms arm of Costa Rica's state-run power utility ICE wants the government to grant it more spectrum, including in 3.5GHz – the prime band for 5G – claiming it is at a disadvantage compared to private operators. The company formally asked ICT minister Paula Bogantes to reallocate spectrum in mid-bands 2.6GHz and 3.5GHz. The reason, according to the company, is that the ICE group was excluded from the multi-band 5G spectrum auction and therefore would now face a competitive disadvantage compared to private sector competitors Liberty Costa Rica and Claro. The company says it holds less than half the frequencies granted to its competitors. Last August, ICE appealed before the comptroller general against its exclusion from the auction, but had its request rejected. In the auction concluded in January this year, both

Liberty and Claro acquired equal amounts of spectrum, securing one block each in the 700MHz band, one in the 2300MHz band, four in the 3500MHz band and one in the 26/28GHz band. Each block in the 3500MHz band has a bandwidth of 25MHz. Each operator paid a total of US\$16.3mn for all the frequencies acquired. These resources will go to universal service fund Fonatel, which finances internet access for over 239,000 low-income families. As of 2024, ICE held a total of 309MHz in spectrum bands below 6GHz, while Racsa held 100MHz. In comparison, Liberty Latin America and Claro each owned approximately 100MHz. With the auction, Liberty and Claro each added 100MHz in the 3.5GHz band, as well as additional spectrum to reinforce their 4G networks.

(March 25, 2025) www.bnamericas.com



France

Arcep published the final results of the spectrum assignment procedures for the 1800 MHz and 2.1 GHz bands in Guadeloupe, in Martinique and in Réunion, and for the 900 MHz, 1800 MHz and 2.1 GHz bands in Guiana, in Saint Barthélemy, in Saint Martin and in

Mayotte on 11 March 2025. On 20 March 2025, Arcep issued operators licenses to use frequencies in these bands. The issuance of these licenses marks the completion of these assignment procedures.

(March 20, 2025) www.en.arcep.fr



India

India's 5G subscriber base has reportedly grown to around 250 million since commercial 5G services were launched almost two and a half years ago, according to the latest figures from the Ministry of Communications. Earlier this month, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India said there were 898.57 million mobile broadband subscribers in India at the end of 2024. TRAI doesn't break out its figures by network generation, but the ministry's figure suggests 5G users now account for around 27.8% of mobile broadband subscribers. According to a report from ETTelecom on Friday, the ministry also said in a statement that telcos have deployed 469,000 5G base stations in all states and union territories across the country of February 28,

2025, with 99.6% availability in all districts. The ministry added that the 5G deployments exceed their minimum rollout obligations. Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel launched commercial 5G services in October 2022, and completed their initial nationwide rollouts in early 2024. Vodafone Idea launched its 5G network in Mumbai last week. The ministry statement was issued a day after Nokia released its latest Mobile Broadband Index (MBIT) 2025 report, which forecasts 5G subscriptions in India to grow to 770 million by 2028, although that projection also assumed 290 million 5G users by the end of 2024, which is 40 million higher than the ministry's numbers.

(March 24, 2025) www.developingtelecoms.com



Indonesia

Tencent Cloud and TrueWatch have announced a partnership to launch what is said to be Indonesia's first multi-cloud SaaS observability platform. The collaboration between Tencent Cloud, the cloud business of global technology company Tencent, and TrueWatch, a Singapore-based unified monitoring platform provider will, the partners say, enable TrueWatch to deploy its innovative observability platform within Tencent Cloud's Indonesia Availability Zone, ensuring low-latency access, robust security, and compliance for Indonesian enterprises. An availability zone is a physical internet data centre (IDC) of Tencent Cloud with independent power supply and network in the same region.

TrueWatch says its platform consolidates monitoring tools into a single pane of glass, simplifying complexity and providing full cost transparency. Through this partnership, TrueWatch will leverage Tencent Cloud's local data centre infrastructure to launch Indonesia's first multi-cloud SaaS observability platform, empowering enterprises with real-time monitoring, analytics and cloud-native observability tools across multiple cloud environments. By deploying on Tencent Cloud's Indonesia Availability Zone, TrueWatch says it has achieved high availability and reliability for its observability platform, ensuring a 99.99% uptime SLA for its enterprise customers. It also says that with Tencent

Cloud's advanced cloud resources, global infrastructure, and availability zones, TrueWatch has cut infrastructure setup and deployment time by 50%. In addition, hosting its observability platform on Tencent Cloud's globally certified infrastructure ensures compliance with local data protection regulations in key markets, including Indonesia, Singapore, Europe, and North America. Mike Loong, Executive Director of TrueWatch, describes

the collaboration as "a game-changer for enterprises struggling with fragmented cloud environments" and says that Tencent Cloud's robust infrastructure "allows us to deliver a unified observability platform that not only simplifies complexity but also aligns with Indonesia's data sovereignty needs".

(March 11, 2025) www.developingtelecoms.com



Thailand

Underlining the continuing effect of the AI boom on Asia, Thailand has reportedly approved an estimated US\$2.7 billion of investments in data centres and cloud services from both local and foreign firms. The announcement, made earlier this week, came from the country's investment board which confirmed a number of specific projects. They include data centres from Chinese digital infrastructure company Beijing Haoyang Cloud&Data Technology, whose plan in Thailand includes a 300 megawatt data centre valued at THB72.7 billion (about US\$2.2 billion). Another company coming on board is Thai company, GSA Data Center 02, which has proposed a THB13.5 billion (US\$402 million) investment for a 35 MW data centre. Singapore-based Emprion Digital, which develops and operates what it calls a new generation of future-ready sustainable data centres, plans to open a facility in Q1 2027. Emprion is planning to invest 4.72 billion baht (US\$140.5 million) in the 12MW data centre located in Bangkok. The facility is expected to span 9,960 square metres and

offer connectivity to all fibre providers in the city. It will be optimised for AI and cloud workloads. As Reuters reports, these companies will join others already on the way, including TikTok, which in January announced plans to set up a data hosting service in Thailand, valued at THB126.8 billion baht (US\$3.8 billion). Google has said it will invest \$1 billion in Thailand. Amazon Web Services has announced a US\$5 billion investment in the country over 15 years. Microsoft has also announced it will open its first regional data centre in Thailand. This is only the latest in some big investments of late. The Data Centre Dynamics website says that, in November 2024, the country's Board of Investment approved close to US\$1.8 billion in data centre projects in Thailand, including a data centre for Google and another by GDS subsidiary DigitalLand Services. GDS is a leading developer and operator of high-performance data centres in China and South East Asia.

(March 19, 2025) www.developingtelecoms.com



Uganda

Ugandan MPs have adopted a proposal for a single SIM card policy, which aims to simplify communication across the country's networks. It also means, in theory, that mobile phone customers will not need to carry multiple SIM cards or handsets. This consumer protection measure, according to MPs, would allow subscribers to retain their phone numbers when switching networks or geographic locations, on the lines, it seems, of mobile number portability. The policy was championed in parliament by MP Joyce Bagala, who has suggested it could improve network accessibility, reduce connectivity costs and, thanks to

greater competition, improve the quality of services. The plan was apparently unanimously approved at a plenary session presided by Deputy Parliamentary Speaker Thomas Tayebwa. According to Ugandan media, it will soon enable consumers to call, text, and transact smoothly across many mobile phone networks. This news comes at the same time as a reminder that demand for mobile communications seems to be growing in Uganda. Operator MTN Uganda has been granted a new number range by the UCC. The 079 range will help it to expand its network capacity.

(March 12, 2025) www.developingtelecoms.com



United Kingdom

The UK government has announced a £23 million investment in telecoms research and development, covering a wide range of topics including 5G, quantum computing, and drone technologies. The new funding will impact seven technology projects led by local governments across the UK. Around £7 million of this funding will support projects that integrate 5G into businesses and public services, with the remaining £15

million going into AI and cloud computing research. Among the organisations set to receive new funding is the Northeast Combined Authority, which has secured an additional £1.9 million for a variety of projects. These include the further development and extraction of smart port solutions into other sectors, as well as improving transport efficiency between Nissan and the Port of Tyne. In the local agriculture sector, the funding will

enable the deployment of wireless sensors for soil and methane monitoring, helping to boost automation and improve sustainability. The projects aim to establish the Northeast as a national hub for 5G innovation and deployment across multiple sectors. Other funding injections include £1.3 million to Belfast City Council to boost the adoption and commercialisation of advanced wireless technologies and £1 million to the

West Midlands Combined Authority for Industry 4.0 technology amongst others. “By 2035 we could see a whole new Britain emerge, harnessing the power of technological development, from engineering biology to AI, semiconductors and cyber security, or quantum and future telecoms for a stronger economy and better lives for all in the UK,” said Peter Kyle in the announcement’s press release. (March 11, 2025) www.totaltele.com



United States

FCC Chairman Brendan Carr announced that he had established a new Council on National Security within the FCC. Chairman Carr is disclosing the first major initiative that this Council has been leading. Specifically, the FCC has launched a sweeping investigation into the ongoing U.S. operations of CCP-aligned businesses whose equipment or services the FCC previously placed on its Covered List based on determinations that those equipment or services pose unacceptable risks to America’s national security. Despite being placed on the FCC’s Covered List, some or all of those entities may still be operating in the U.S.—either because they do not believe the FCC’s Covered List prohibits particular types of operations or otherwise. To assess their current levels of operation, the FCC sent Letters

of Inquiry and at least one subpoena to the entities named on the Covered List. The FCC is now gathering responsive information and will determine any actions that may be necessary to further safeguard America’s networks and promote our national security. “The FCC has taken concrete actions to address the threats posed by Huawei, ZTE, China Telecom, and many other entities that pose an unacceptable risk to America’s national security, including by doing Communist China’s bidding,” Chairman Carr stated. “To safeguard our networks, the FCC has placed those CCP-aligned entities on our Covered List, and we have revoked many of the FCC authorizations that they had been operating under. (March 21, 2025) www.fcc.gov



Vietnam

Vietnam’s Internet infrastructure is showing significant improvement, with the country climbing 15 places in global mobile Internet speed rankings, according to the Speedtest Global Index released by Ookla in January 2025. According to Ookla’s data, Vietnam now ranks 34th in the world for fixed broadband speed, moving up one position compared to 2024. The country’s average fixed broadband download speed is 163.41 Mbps, well above the global average of 97.61 Mbps. For mobile Internet, Vietnam has made even greater strides, ranking 22nd globally, with an average mobile download speed of 134.19 Mbps, exceeding the global average of 91.24 Mbps. This marks a 15-rank jump compared to January 2024, reflecting major improvements in the country’s mobile network performance. Ookla is a global leader in measuring, analyzing, and evaluating Internet connectivity, widely recognized for its Speedtest platform. The company plays a crucial role in promoting transparency and improving telecommunications infrastructure worldwide. Vietnam’s higher ranking on Ookla’s index highlights the significant advancements in the country’s digital infrastructure. The Vietnamese government has emphasized the development of

modern, secure, and efficient digital infrastructure as a national priority. In Decree No. 57, issued at the end of 2024, the Politburo outlined directives for strengthening digital and technological infrastructure while ensuring security and cost-effectiveness. This policy direction has been translated into concrete action. The National Assembly recently approved a resolution introducing special policies and mechanisms to accelerate innovation, technological development, and digital transformation, including state-funded support for nationwide 5G deployment. Additionally, under Directive No. 05/CT-TTg, the Prime Minister has tasked the Ministry of Science and Technology with accelerating the commercialization of 5G, conducting 6G research, expanding telecommunications satellite development, and upgrading Vietnam’s national broadband backbone infrastructure. Expanding high-speed fixed broadband infrastructure is a key strategic goal, viewed as a critical driver of economic growth. Strengthening Vietnam’s digital infrastructure is expected to play a vital role in helping the country achieve its 2025 economic growth target of 8% or higher. (March 5, 2025) www.english.mic.gov.vn

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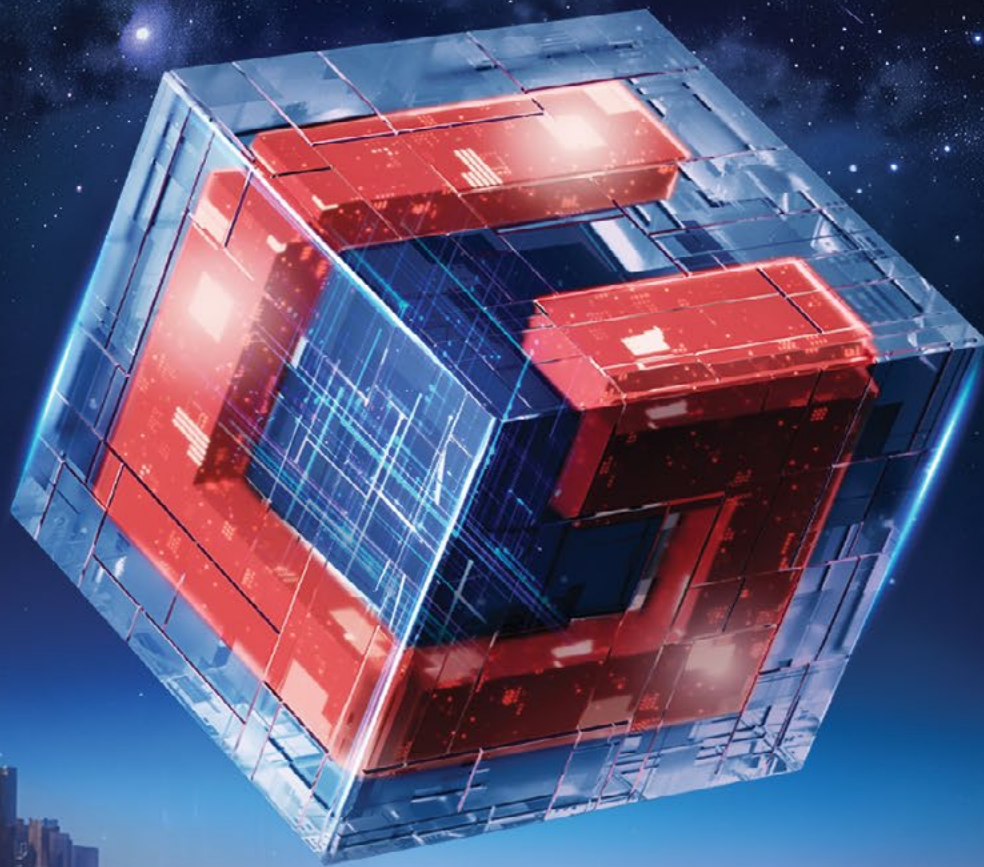


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