Volume 17 | March, 2026

A SAMENA Telecommunications Council Publication

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SAMENA TRENDS

FOR SAMENA TELECOMMUNICATIONS COUNCIL'S MEMBERS

BUILDING DIGITAL ECONOMIES

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THIS MONTH

MANAGING A CONNECTED SYSTEM

VOLUME 17 | MARCH, 2026

SAMENA TRENDS

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Managing a Connected System

The digital system is no longer developing in separate parts. Networks, data centers, platforms, and satellite systems are increasingly connected and operating together. As this continues, the focus is shifting from building infrastructure to managing how it works in practice.

Recent policy and regulatory updates reflect this. Governments are treating digital platforms, including education systems, as part of basic infrastructure that needs to function reliably. Data centers are also receiving more attention, not only because of investment, but due to their impact on energy use and data management.

Security and accountability are also being addressed more directly. In some markets, SIM registration systems are being updated to improve identification and reduce misuse. In others, regulators are reviewing network equipment and supply chains due to security concerns. These steps are aimed at maintaining basic trust in how systems operate.

At the same time, infrastructure investment continues. Spectrum policies are being updated, 5G is expanding, and planning for future technologies is underway. In Africa, for example, 5G growth is expected to continue, supported by device availability and operator investment. In markets such as Nigeria, earlier policy decisions have already led to steady investment in the sector.

Other parts of the system are also developing. Submarine cables are being treated as critical infrastructure and are receiving more attention in terms of protection and monitoring. Satellite systems are expanding coverage, particularly in areas where traditional networks are limited. These developments are contributing to broader connectivity efforts across different regions.

As these developments continue, the system is becoming more complex. Data flows across borders, technologies are used together, and infrastructure is more distributed. This increases the need for coordination between different parts of the system.

This direction has also been planned for discussions at the SAMENA Council Leaders' Summit 2026, where ongoing developments across networks, policy, and infrastructure will be considered in the context of how systems are functioning together, and how intelligent networks are playing their role in defining sovereign and sustainable futures of economies.

At the same time, there are practical challenges. Regulators are working to increase oversight while maintaining conditions for investment. Security measures need to be applied without disrupting existing systems. Infrastructure expansion needs to be managed without creating inefficiencies.

The purpose of the system remains straightforward. Connectivity supports services, enterprise growth across industries, economic activity, and everyday use. However, access gaps still exist, especially in less connected areas. Expanding infrastructure alone is not enough. Systems need to work together in a consistent way.

The shift underway is gradual. The industry is moving from building networks to managing a connected system, intelligently.

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

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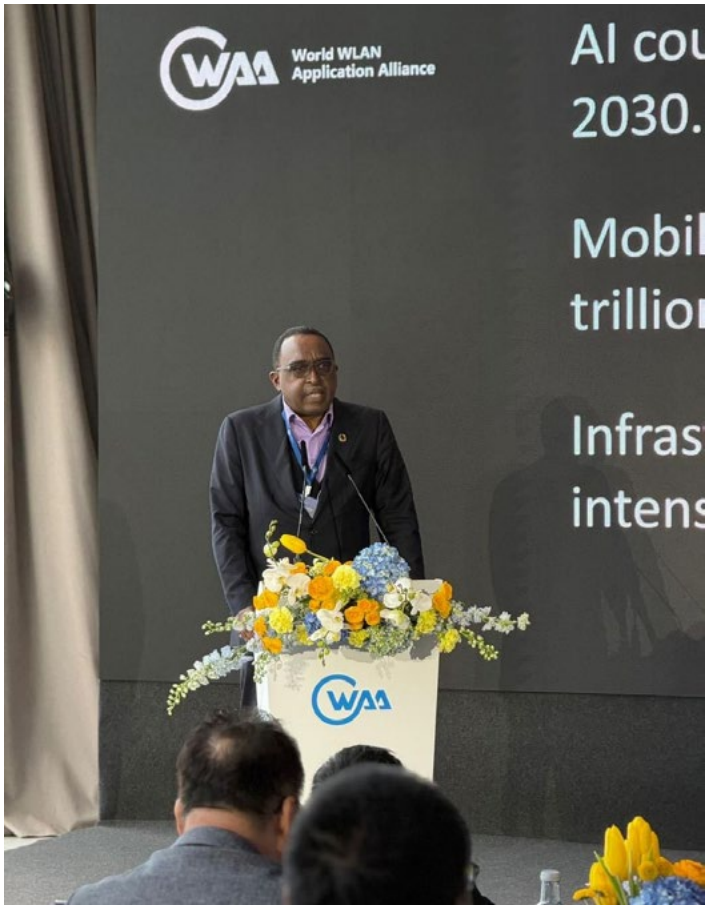
Intelligent Networks for Sovereign & Sustainable Futures

SAMENA Council Engages in WLAN and AI Policy Dialogues at MWC 2026



The SAMENA Council participated in the World WLAN Application Alliance (WAA) Forum on WLAN during Mobile World Congress 2026 (MWC) in Barcelona, presenting its work on AI-WLAN integration, industrial cooperation, and regional digital development. The WAA is the world's first international industry and standards organization dedicated to WLAN application experience, providing a platform for collaboration on deployment, standards, and operational practices. At the forum, the Council described how WLAN has moved beyond basic access to become a core infrastructure layer supporting AI applications in hospitals, manufacturing hubs, logistics centers, smart cities, airports, and hospitality complexes. It described how WLAN performance now affects enterprise productivity, service reliability, and operational continuity, making it integral to regional economic activity. The SAMENA Telecommunications Council CEO, Bocar A. BA, emphasized that building an industrial ecosystem for AI and WLAN integration is critical and that the deep integration of AI and intelligent wireless networks is now a foundational pillar of cross-industrial digital transformation. BA stated: "WLAN has evolved from a complementary technology into strategic infrastructure underpinning economic development. It is now a key operational interface between AI capabilities and real-world use-cases across all sectors and industries. We need to do more together to align our priorities on WLAN innovations, and for this harmonized effort in WLAN standardization and cooperation across all regions are fundamental to sustaining digital progress and digital resilience." The Council outlined that cooperation and standards are critical for industrial scale-up. Structured engagement among operators, regulators, technology providers, and standards organizations ensures that AI-WLAN systems are interoperable, cost-effective, and capable of supporting regional deployment. Feedback from deployed networks can guide regional implementation and refine technical and regulatory frameworks. In addition to the WLAN Forum, the SAMENA Council joined a UNDP high-level roundtable on AI deployment in the Arab economies, which examined regional priorities, opportunities, and challenges for AI. The discussion emphasized multi-stakeholder participation, the role of mobile networks as AI delivery platforms, and the need for policy frameworks that are inclusive, agile, and aligned with digital and social development goals. Through its participation in both events, the SAMENA Council advanced two complementary priorities. At the WAA Forum, the Council translated the global imperative of accelerating AI-WLAN standardization into coordinated, harmonized action, and reiterated the necessity for multi-stakeholder collaboration among operators, regulators, and technology providers to support experience-led inclusive deployments that strengthen enterprise, government, and industrial networks. At the UNDP AI roundtable, the Council contributed to discussions on inclusive AI deployment, multi-stakeholder governance, and mobile platforms as the primary interface for AI services across the Arab region, and the wider SA-ME-NA region. Together, these engagements during MWC 2026 reinforce the Council's focus on contributing to a foundation for sustainable economic and social development, linking technical standards, industrial ecosystems, and policy frameworks in a unified agenda.

> *The Council outlined that cooperation and standards are critical for industrial scale-up. Structured engagement among operators, regulators, technology providers, and standards organizations ensures that AI-WLAN systems are interoperable, cost-effective, and capable of supporting regional deployment.*

TDRA On

From Connectivity to Capability: Rethinking Digital Development Through Global Collaboration

The Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA) enters 2026 with a clear vision: connectivity alone is no longer a sufficient measure of digital progress. What matters is how digital systems translate into real national capability, improving how people live and how the nation competes.

> *As AI, data regulation, and cybersecurity risks grow more complex, the need for coherence across international mechanisms grows with them. Infrastructure development, policy dialogue, and guiding principles must function as a coordinated system. Without that coordination, countries duplicate effort and lose time.*

That vision is rooted in lessons drawn from domestic implementation and international engagement, guided by the directives of the UAE's leadership. At the United Nations General Assembly in December 2025, the UAE articulated a perspective that has since become central to TDRA's work. The global challenge has moved beyond connectivity gaps. The real divide is in how countries turn digital tools into development outcomes. The disparities in digital integration directly influence how nations grow, compete, and deliver for their societies.

The operating context in 2026 is different from even two years ago. Artificial intelligence now runs through both public and private services. Data governance has grown more demanding, with governments paying closer attention to security and sovereignty. Cyber threats are more frequent and more sophisticated.

These shifts demand a different kind of regulation. Fixed frameworks cannot keep up. TDRA is updating its regulatory models to support innovation without losing system integrity, improving how it monitors the sector, coordinating across government, and responding at the right pace.

H.E. Eng. Majed Sultan Al Mesmar
Director General
TDRA
هيئة تنظيم الاتصالات والحكومة الرقمية
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL GOVERNMENT REGULATORY AUTHORITY

> *TDRA's role is to maintain that coherence through regulatory oversight, planning, and coordination across public and private sectors. It must also stay ahead of how new technologies will change the rules.*

Technology adoption cycles are accelerating, driven by market dynamics and rising customer expectations. This reinforces the need for regulatory agility. Frameworks must keep pace with technological change, while safeguards remain firmly in place to protect customers and ensure stability.

Despite significant advances in global connectivity, structural gaps persist. Billions remain unconnected, while many who are connected operate within fragmented or underperforming digital environments. For TDRA, the challenge is clear. Infrastructure expansion must be measured by outcomes. Digital systems must enable real access to services, participation in economic life, and public trust in how digital systems work.

TDRA's mandate has evolved accordingly. Telecommunications, digital government, and regulatory policy are not treated as separate domains, but as interdependent components of a unified national system. The result is coordinated planning, faster execution, and more consistent outcomes across sectors. This follows the whole-of-government model that the UAE has built over the past decade.

At the national level, this system is structured across three core layers. The first is telecommunications infrastructure, designed to ensure reliability, coverage, and performance. The second is government transformation, where services are delivered digitally by default. The third is digital public infrastructure: shared platforms that enable secure data exchange, digital identity, and smooth service integration.

Each layer serves a distinct purpose: infrastructure provides capacity. Government transformation determines how that capacity is used. Digital public infrastructure ensures that this use is secure and able to grow. When these layers work together, the system can deliver services before citizens need to ask for them.

TDRA's role is to maintain that coherence through regulatory oversight, planning, and coordination across public and private sectors. It must also stay ahead of how new technologies will change the rules.

> *Beyond multilateral forums, TDRA works bilaterally and through industry bodies such as the SAMENA Telecommunications Council. These partnerships are operational, not ceremonial. They focus on sharing implementation experience, comparing regulatory approaches, and identifying where systems can be improved.*

The same thinking guides TDRA's international work. Through the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), the ITU, and the UN Global Digital Compact, the UAE has focused on practical implementation, showing how integrated digital systems can be built and sustained. These frameworks are valuable, but their effectiveness depends on how well they connect. Where coordination between them breaks down, national implementation suffers.

As AI, data regulation, and cybersecurity risks grow more complex, the need for coherence across international mechanisms grows with them. Infrastructure development, policy dialogue, and guiding principles must function as a coordinated system. Without that coordination, countries duplicate effort and lose time.

Beyond multilateral forums, TDRA works bilaterally and through industry bodies such as the SAMENA Telecommunications Council. These partnerships are operational, not ceremonial. They focus on sharing implementation experience, comparing regulatory approaches, and identifying where systems can be improved. Digital transformation requires continuous refinement, informed by what the UAE has learned at home and what works elsewhere. As digital infrastructure becomes more interconnected globally, TDRA's engagement with partners has deepened accordingly, building shared responses to data governance and cybersecurity threats.

TDRA measures progress by what digital infrastructure delivers, not by what it promises. By aligning telecommunications, government services, and international engagement under a single framework, the UAE has built a system designed to keep pace with what comes next. That work continues under the "We the UAE 2031" vision, with a clear test: whether digital systems produce measurable gains for the people and the economy they are meant to serve.

SAMENA Council On

Guiding the Convergence of Digital and Space Innovation

As the digital ecosystem gathers in Dubai for the SAMENA Council Leaders' Summit 2026, the focus on connectivity, governance, cybersecurity, and emerging technologies carries particular weight. At a time of regional discord and global uncertainty, the continuation of industry dialogue reflects a clear understanding: technology systems do not pause, and neither can the cooperation that sustains them.

> *Innovation now cuts across multiple sectors at once, including telecommunications, cloud, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity. When these domains are addressed separately, progress becomes fragmented. More structured collaboration is needed, where policy and industry development are shaped together rather than in parallel.*

For the SAMENA Telecommunications Council, this moment reinforces the importance of facilitating dialogue and keeping stakeholders engaged. When conditions become uncertain, the need for coordination across policymakers, regulators, operators, and technology providers becomes even more urgent. Dubai's role as a stable meeting point allows these discussions to continue when they matter most.

At the center of this conversation is what Bocar BA, CEO of the SAMENA Council, describes as a growing convergence between digital and space technologies. These are no longer separate domains. Satellite systems now support communications, environmental monitoring, navigation, and disaster response, while digital platforms process and apply the data they generate. This convergence is opening new paths for innovation and economic development, but it also raises a basic question: how to ensure that these advances benefit societies broadly rather than deepen existing gaps.

Bocar A. BA
CEO & Board Member
SAMENA Telecommunications Council

> *Cybersecurity is no longer a technical layer that can be addressed in isolation. It is directly tied to economic stability and confidence. Systems that are secure and resilient enable investment and growth, while weak systems create hesitation. Building trust therefore requires coordination across institutions, industries, and borders.*

Connectivity is now part of the infrastructure of daily life, supporting access to services, economic participation, and institutional functioning. Yet a significant portion of the global population still lacks meaningful access. Addressing this gap remains essential, but the next phase goes further. Networks must become more intelligent, secure, and resilient, capable of turning data into outcomes that support real economic and social value.

At the same time, the pace of technological change is placing pressure on governance. Innovation cycles are measured in months, while institutions were designed to move much more slowly. This gap requires a shift in how governance is approached. Rather than reacting to developments after the fact, regulatory systems need to become more adaptive, with tools and frameworks that can evolve alongside the technologies they oversee.

This also reinforces the need for closer alignment between governments and industry. Innovation now cuts across multiple sectors at once, including telecommunications, cloud, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity. When these domains are addressed separately, progress becomes fragmented. More structured collaboration is needed, where policy and industry development are shaped together rather than in parallel.

Trust sits at the core of this system. Cybersecurity is no longer a technical layer that can be addressed in isolation. It is directly tied to economic stability and confidence. Systems that are secure and resilient enable investment and growth, while weak systems create hesitation. Building trust therefore requires coordination across institutions, industries, and borders.

The role of space technologies is also expanding within this broader system. Satellite infrastructure is becoming integral to connectivity and data systems, particularly in regions where terrestrial networks remain limited. At the same time, space applications are contributing to areas such as agriculture, climate monitoring, and disaster management. For many emerging markets, this creates a path toward greater inclusion. However, it also requires maintaining cooperation in how space is used and managed. These are critical areas to look at, and are being championed by entities such as the World Space Sustainability Association.

As artificial intelligence and automation become more embedded across networks and industries, the question of how technology is applied becomes more important. Systems must be designed in a way that supports human capability rather than replacing it. This places emphasis on skills, education, and the development of inclusive innovation ecosystems.

> *Satellite infrastructure is becoming integral to connectivity and data systems, particularly in regions where terrestrial networks remain limited. At the same time, space applications are contributing to areas such as agriculture, climate monitoring, and disaster management. For many emerging markets, this creates a path toward greater inclusion. However, it also requires maintaining cooperation in how space is used and managed.*

Looking ahead, the outcome of this period of convergence will not be defined by technical progress alone. It will depend on whether these technologies, terrestrial and space, translate into tangible improvements in how people live, work, and participate in the economy, and how we create new opportunities amidst challenging times.

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Huawei On

U6GHz: The Golden Key to Unlocking the Middle East's Digital Future

The 2026 Mobile World Congress (MWC26) concluded successfully, spotlighting U6GHz as the core driver reshaping the global mobile industry and fueling unprecedented digital transformation—especially across the Middle East.

AI's explosive growth demands higher network capacity and user experience: Global daily AI token usage has surged nearly 300 times in two years. Smart devices and AI apps are now deeply integrated into daily life, while more than 30 million AI agents boost efficiency in manufacturing and finance.

This shift requires robust infrastructure. U6GHz, globally recognized as "golden spectrum," bridges today and tomorrow. Its 700 MHz of contiguous bandwidth balances coverage and capacity, meeting 5G-A's mobile AI needs while laying the foundation for 6G (targeting 2029 standardization).

Global Momentum & Middle East Leadership: UAE Leads the Way

The U6GHz ecosystem is accelerating toward mass commercialization. At MWC26, the GSMA joined Huawei, Qualcomm, and others to declare ecosystem readiness. Tozed launched the first U6GHz CPE; MediaTek's M90 completed smartphone tests with VDF, e&, Du. Operators like Vodafone, China Mobile, TIM, e&, and du finalized field trials—cementing 2026 as U6GHz's commercial launch year.

The UAE spearheads this global trend. After WRC-23 designated U6GHz for IMT in 2023: 2024: UAE's TDRA allocated U6GHz for IMT.2025: Huawei and partners achieved 10Gbps user experiences for Dubai's "10Gbps-connected city." Now: The U6GHz commercial launch marks the UAE's entry into the 5G-A era, setting a regional benchmark.

U6GHz: Shaping the Middle East's Digital Economy

Huawei prioritizes U6GHz strategically, deploying full-scenario solutions for rapid scale-up. Its wireless expertise ensures smooth 5G-A-to-6G evolution, maximizing long-term ROI for operators.

U6GHz will drive the Middle East's digital economy: Extending ultra-high-speed networks to UAE cities and economic zones. Accelerating smart cities, digital health, and tourism applications. Covering >80% of UAE's population by 2028, paving the way for 6G.

As the region hits a digital inflection point, Huawei commits to open collaboration with regulators, operators, and partners. Together, we'll accelerate U6GHz innovation and deployment—powering the Middle East's "10Gbps intelligent nation" and setting a global standard.

Alex Xu
President of Carrier Business
Huawei Middle East and Central Asia

HUAWEI

SAMENA Macro-View

From Spectrum Allocation to Capital Reallocation: Realigning Pakistan's Telecom Resources

Pakistan's latest spectrum allocation expands the country's assigned mobile spectrum base significantly, delivered through releases across 700 MHz, 2.3 GHz, 2.6 GHz, and 3.5 GHz. That scale of expansion changes the technical baseline of the market. It begins to remove a constraint that has shaped operator behavior for years.

> *The combination of low-band and mid-band spectrum allows operators to rebalance their networks more effectively. Coverage layers can be strengthened without compromising capacity, while mid-band holdings provide the bandwidth required for sustained data growth.*

For most of the past decade, network planning in Pakistan has been defined less by optimization and more by limitation. Operators have had to stretch finite spectrum resources across growing data demand, dense urban usage, and uneven coverage requirements. Capacity shortfalls have affected quality of service and constrained how aggressively new services could be introduced.

This allocation begins to address that condition.

The combination of low-band and mid-band spectrum allows operators to rebalance their networks more effectively. Coverage layers can be strengthened without compromising capacity, while mid-band holdings provide the bandwidth required for sustained data growth. The addition of 3.5 GHz introduces a technical foundation for 5G, but its significance should be understood in context.

The design of the allocation provides further clarity on what this is intended to achieve.

Pricing structures increasingly denominated in local currency reduce exposure to exchange-rate volatility, which has been a persistent concern in capital-intensive sectors. Reserve prices appear calibrated to avoid the overextension seen in other markets where spectrum costs have constrained subsequent investment. Engagement with industry participants suggests that the allocation process has been shaped with deployment realities in mind rather than purely fiscal objectives. Taken together, these elements indicate a regulatory approach that is attempting to stabilize the investment environment rather than extract maximum short-term value.

> *Regulators such as the Communications, Space & Technology Commission, Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority, and Communications Regulatory Authority have, over time, moderated reserve prices, structured allocations to encourage deployment, and aligned spectrum release with broader digital strategy objectives. Pakistan's latest allocation reflects movement in this direction, where long-term network investment is given greater weight.*

By reducing upfront financial burden at the point of allocation, Pakistan has shifted spectrum from an upfront cost to usable capacity. This improves the likelihood that assigned frequencies are translated into network upgrades rather than deferred investments. The contrast with high-cost auction models is clear: when capital is preserved, deployment becomes more feasible; when it is absorbed early, rollout is delayed.

In this context, the role of the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority and the Ministry of IT & Telecom warrants recognition. Pakistan has now moved closer to regulatory approaches seen across parts of the region, where spectrum policy increasingly supports sector sustainability rather than short-term fiscal extraction. Regulators such as the Communications, Space & Technology Commission, Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority, and Communications Regulatory Authority have, over time, moderated reserve prices, structured allocations to encourage deployment, and aligned spectrum release with broader digital strategy objectives. Pakistan's latest allocation reflects movement in this direction, where long-term network investment is given greater weight.

The allocation supports near-term rollout plans while enabling more disciplined capital deployment across coverage expansion, capacity upgrades, and targeted 5G use cases. With additional spectrum in place, operators are less constrained by immediate capacity pressures. They

can extend and improve 4G performance, where revenue streams are established and predictable, while approaching 5G with greater selectivity. In practice, this points to incremental performance gains in the near term and targeted deployment scenarios, including fixed wireless access and enterprise connectivity.

> *Lower upfront spectrum costs, enabled by calibrated allocation design, shift capital allocation from acquisition toward deployment and optimization. For operators, this creates room to prioritize network performance and phased 5G investment rather than recover sunk costs*

The presence of 3.5 GHz spectrum enables 5G from a technical standpoint. It does not, on its own, justify rapid deployment. Commercial conditions remain a limiting factor. Average revenue per user remains low relative to the investment required for wide-scale 5G rollout. The installed base of 5G-capable devices is still developing. Backhaul infrastructure, particularly fiberization, is uneven, and power reliability continues to affect network economics. These constraints shape the pace at which 5G can move from capability to service.

As these conditions come into focus, the nature of the sector's constraint changes. Pakistan is no longer primarily constrained by access to spectrum. It is increasingly constrained by execution: how efficiently operators deploy capital, how effectively networks are upgraded beyond the radio layer, and how realistically new services can be monetized within existing market conditions. This shift is more complex than the one it replaces. Spectrum scarcity is a technical limitation. Execution is a multi-variable challenge involving financial discipline, infrastructure readiness, and demand-side development.

There is also a broader implication for how spectrum policy is approached in comparable markets. Lower upfront spectrum costs, enabled by calibrated allocation design, shift capital allocation from acquisition toward deployment and optimization. For operators, this creates room to prioritize network performance and phased 5G investment rather than recover sunk costs. For vendors, it supports a more predictable, deployment-led demand cycle. For regulators, it presents an alternative to revenue-maximizing auctions, with a clearer connection between policy design and infrastructure outcomes.

The implication is not faster 5G rollout by default. It is a higher likelihood that investment, once committed, results in measurable improvements in network performance and service delivery. The effectiveness of this approach will not be judged by allocation efficiency, but by execution outcomes. Improvements in network quality, consistency of coverage, and the pace at which capacity is absorbed into actual usage will determine whether the policy shift delivers.

For now, the allocation should be understood as a correction rather than a catalyst. It brings the market closer to a functional baseline. It does not, by itself, determine the trajectory of growth. The next phase will depend on how operators convert expanded capacity into tangible outcomes, and how consistently the policy environment supports that transition. This market reset in Pakistan should give way to broader digital ecosystem development, not just short-term capacity relief.

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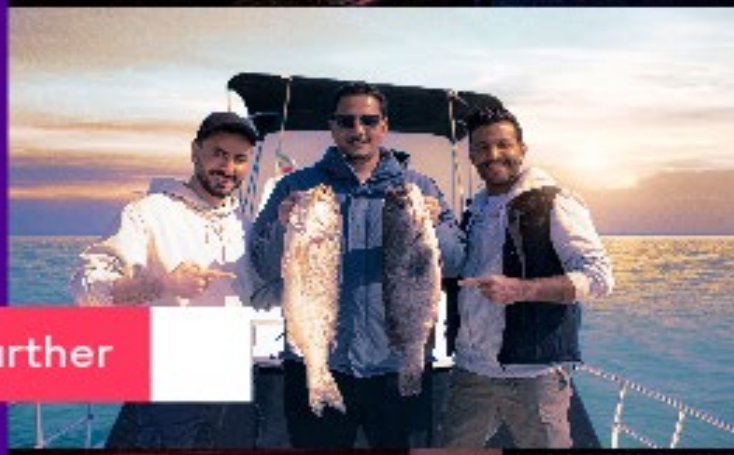


stc

MEMBERS NEWS

stc Group Sets Two Guinness World Records During Saudi Founding Day Celebrations

stc group has set two Guinness World Records through an innovative drone light show staged across the skies of Riyadh in celebration of Saudi Founding Day. The first record was set for the Largest QR Code formed by drones, while the second recognized the Largest animated aerial image created using drones. The fully integrated visual display reflected the group's advanced technical capabilities and creative execution at scale. The spectacular show formed part of stc group's participation in Founding Day celebrations, as drones illuminated the skies of the capital with dynamic digital formations and an interactive QR code. The experience blended innovation, technology, and national pride in a unified visual display. stc group's Founding Day celebrations extended over a full week ahead of the official occasion, featuring internal activations at the headquarters and the distribution of hundreds of prizes to employees and customers, sharing the joy of this important national milestone.

Arabsat Joins Seraphim's SpaceTech Fund to Accelerate Next Generation Space Innovation

Arabsat, the leading satellite operator in the Arab world, announced a strategic investment of USD 5 million into Seraphim's newest early-stage SpaceTech fund, alongside participation from Aljazira Capital. This investment reflects a shared commitment to strengthening regional participation in the rapidly evolving global space economy, while enabling early engagement with emerging technologies shaping the future of satellite communications, data intelligence, and space infrastructure. Seraphim, a global leader in SpaceTech investment, provides access to a global pipeline of high-growth companies developing advanced capabilities across intelligent on-orbit processing, next-generation payload architectures, AI-enabled satellite analytics, quantum-resilient communications, and advanced Earth observation solutions, serving markets in global defence and security, climate, life sciences, and next-generation space infrastructure. Through this collaboration, Arabsat will gain strategic visibility into emerging innovation trends and opportunities to evaluate technologies that enhance operational resilience, service capabilities, and long-term competitiveness.

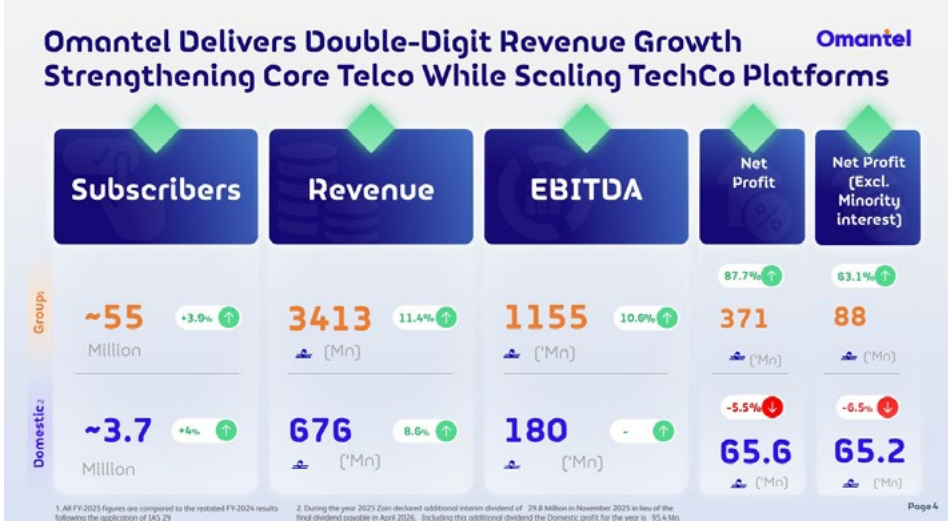
This engagement strengthens Arabsat's transformation journey as the organization evolves beyond traditional satellite operations into a future-focused, innovation-driven space leader. By tapping into Seraphim's global pipeline of high-growth SpaceTech companies, Arabsat aims to accelerate its long-term vision: building a more connected, secure, and data-intelligent space ecosystem that supports the region's economic diversification and positions Arabsat as a strategic enabler of global SpaceTech advancements. The investment forms part of Arabsat's broader innovation strategy, designed to support emerging SpaceTech ventures, deepen regional sovereignty in advanced technologies, and build strategic partnerships that enable future-ready space infrastructure for the Arab world and beyond—extending the region's technological footprint globally.

Commenting on the investment, Dr. Badr Al Suwaidan, CEO of Arabsat, said: "Our participation in Seraphim's fund reflects Arabsat's commitment to advancing the region's technological capabilities and ensuring that the Arab world plays a central role in the global SpaceTech landscape. We are equally pleased to have worked and aligned with Aljazira Capital during the due diligence phase of this investment, and we appreciate their support in advancing a shared vision for a stronger, more competitive, and innovation driven space ecosystem, locally and regionally."

Mobily and Ooredoo Pledge US$2.2b for ITU Partner2Connect Projects

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) announced at Mobile World Congress 2026 that Saudi telco Mobily and Qatar-based Ooredoo Group have made fresh pledges for its Partner2Connect Digital Coalition to bridge the digital divide, bringing total commitments to the coalition to over US$82 billion. During a keynote address, ITU Secretary-General Doreen Bogdan-Martin said that Mobily has committed to invest US$1.715 billion in data centers, subsea cables, and 5G and next-generation network infrastructure under the Partner2Connect program. Mobily aims to scale Saudi Arabia's AI and cloud computing capabilities, enabling "competitive, resilient, and future-ready national development and meaningful global collaboration", which also aligns with Saudi Vision 2030 aspirations towards becoming a hub connecting east and west. Meanwhile, Ooredoo Group will invest US$500 million in subsea and terrestrial optical fiber infrastructure, aiming to expand high-capacity connectivity across the MENA region, strengthening regional and international digital links and supporting inclusive economic growth through resilient, future-ready network infrastructure. Bogdan-Martin said the commitments directly support the ITU's goal of achieving universal, meaningful connectivity – ensuring everyone has access to affordable, reliable Internet and the skills to use it safely and effectively. "Today's milestone shows what's possible when we pool our collective resources towards making connectivity universal and meaningful," she said. "Reaching US$82 billion in pledges through Partner2Connect means unlocking life-changing opportunities for hundreds of millions of people that are still offline." The ITU launched Partner2Connect in 2021 as a mobilization platform to rally commitments from governments, the private sector, and civil society for projects and investments that support connectivity and digital inclusion – particularly in the world's most remote communities. Since its launch, Partner2Connect has secured over 1,000 pledges from 149 countries, featuring investments in digital infrastructure, policy modernization, capacity-building initiatives, and innovative technologies designed to connect the hardest-to-reach populations. The ITU estimates that achieving universal, meaningful connectivity by 2030 could require between US$2.6 trillion to US$2.8 trillion. Bogdan-Martin called on the public and private sectors to scale up their commitments through Partner2Connect.

Omantel Delivers Double-Digit Revenue Growth in FY 2025

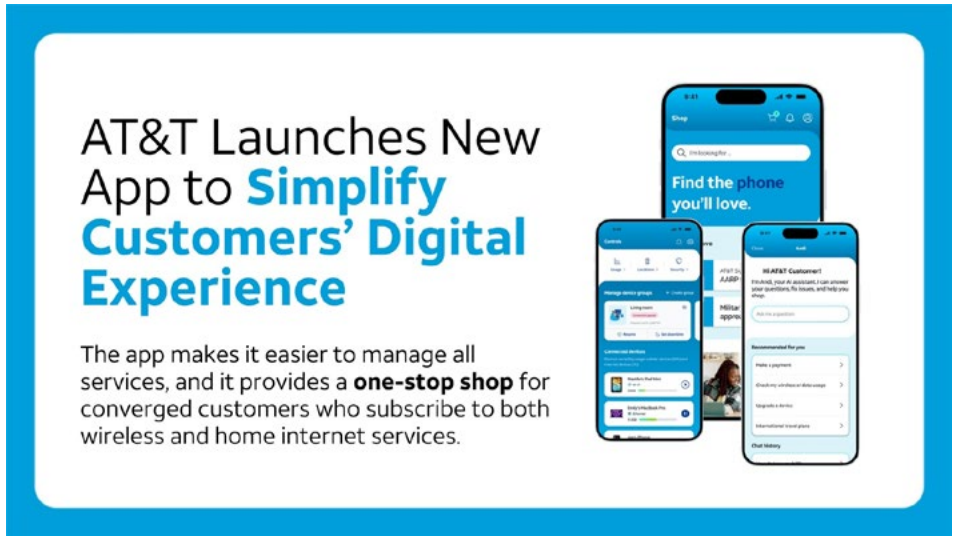


Oman Telecommunications Company, the leading telecom provider in Oman, announced its financial and operating results for the year ended 31 December 2025, delivering solid growth in revenue, EBITDA and net income. Performance was driven by broad-based growth across its domestic operations and increased contributions from Zain Group.The Chairman, Mr. Mulham Al Jarf quotes; that "Omantel continues to deliver strong performance for 2025, with broad-based growth across our domestic operations and Zain Group. These results reflect the success of our diversified portfolio, the resilience of our core business, and the disciplined execution of our strategic priorities. Our domestic growth was fueled by sustained demand for our services, increased adoption of digital solutions, and ongoing expansion in ICT and wholesale capacity, while Zain Group continued to deliver impressive double-digit revenue and profit growth across key markets." "As the Sultanate's leading provider of integrated telecom and technology services, we remain committed to advancing Oman's digital infrastructure and supporting the country's Vision 2040 ambitions. We are investing in next-generation network capabilities, expanding 5G coverage, innovating in tech, and forging strategic partnerships to unlock new customer experiences and enterprise solutions. Looking ahead, our focus will remain on driving innovation,

operational efficiency, and sustainable growth, ensuring that Omantel continues to create long-term value for our shareholders, customers, and the communities we serve." The Chief Executive Officer of Omental quotes that, "Omantel's performance in 2025 reflects the resilience of our domestic operations and the strength of our regional scale through Zain Group. We delivered solid growth in Fixed and continued to expand and unify our ICT portfolio to strengthen execution across cloud, cybersecurity, and national digital infrastructure." "Zain Group's sustained double-digit growth across key markets, together with the continued momentum of our ZOI joint venture, reinforces the value of our diversified portfolio and our disciplined approach to performance and investment. "As Oman's trusted digital partner, we are accelerating investments in 5G, fiber, and emerging technologies to expand connectivity and enable new digital experiences for consumers, enterprises, and government. With rapid global advancements in artificial intelligence, cloud computing, cybersecurity, and the Internet of Things, Omantel is well positioned to deliver innovative, secure, and scalable solutions that support Oman's digital sovereignty and strengthen its standing in the global digital economy." "Looking ahead to 2026, we will build on this momentum with the launch of Otech, our unified technology platform bringing together Oman Data Park and Tadoom to consolidate our ICT capabilities."

AT&T Launches New App to Simplify Customers' Digital Experience

AT&T is starting to roll out the new AT&T app, a simpler way to experience all of AT&T in one convenient place. The app makes it easier to manage all services, and it provides a one-stop shop for converged customers who subscribe to both wireless and home internet services. The app also features new usage insights, precision device controls, a modern shopping experience, and faster answers through a new AI-powered assistant – all designed to make everyday tasks quicker and easier. Why it Matters: Customers tell us they want seamless connectivity and a seamless experience to match. With the new AT&T app, we're bringing more of our services together, making it easier to get the visibility, control, resources, help, and expertise customers are looking for. "Millions of customers already rely on our apps every month to manage their AT&T experience," said Kellyn Smith Kenny, chief marketing and growth officer, AT&T. "That scale created an opportunity for us to think bigger: to build a single flagship app that brings services together in one place. The new AT&T app is designed around our customers' lives, not just their bills, making it faster and easier to manage services, shop, get support when needed, and stay connected to what matters most." "We built our new app around what customers told us they wanted most: simplicity, speed, and control," said Jenifer Robertson, AT&T's EVP and GM for Mass Markets. "This launch is an important step in enhancing seamless experiences, making every interaction easier and more intuitive so customers can get what they need, when they need it."



AT&T Taps AI to Manage Internet, Mobile Services on App

AT&T started rolling out a redesigned all in one app which lets customers shop for and manage all their mobile and home internet services from a single place, powered by AI. The updated app uses a generative AI-powered assistant to deliver faster, more tailored support, alongside a streamlined design and new controls intended to simplify everyday tasks for subscribers. The app features usage insights, precision device controls and quicker answers through the AI assistant. For the first time, new customers can shop and trial AT&T services directly from the app. It also allows users to manage devices which are grouped together by a purpose or theme and pause or restore services as needed. AT&T is an early proponent of using AI and generative AI (GenAI) inside of its network and for improving customer support. The operator did not reveal the

large language models (LLMs) or small language models (SMLs) involved in the app, but a representative told Mobile World Live it evaluates and uses different models for different purposes within AT&T's agentic infrastructure because the AI space is moving so quickly. "Decoupling the LLMs from our codebase gives us the flexibility to use different models for different requests and intents rather than relying on one solution," according to the representative. AT&T is using Google's Gemini and OpenAI's ChatGPT and has previously deployed Falcon AI and Meta Platforms' open-source Llama, "but what customers see is the AT&T experience end-to-end, designed and managed by AT&T with the right guardrails," according to the representative. AT&T stated the app will continue to expand throughout the year with additional features as the company builds toward "a fully AI driven customer experience".

AT&T to Invest $250bn to Expand and Enhance Networks

AT&T announced an investment and spend of more than $250 billion in the future of U.S. advanced connectivity, building the high-speed networks and resilience required for the next era of innovation and economic growth. Building on the legacy of founder Alexander Graham Bell's first phone call 150 years ago, AT&T is reaffirming its leadership as the company driving America's connected economy so every community, family, and business can participate in the promise of American progress. "Today, we're committing more than $250 billion to increase U.S. connectivity competitiveness and expand access to AT&T's leading fiber and wireless networks – the best way to get on the internet," said John Stankey, Chairman and CEO of AT&T. "Current Federal telecommunications policy is as strong as I've seen in my career, making our commitment to invest possible. We look forward to serving American communities and businesses for the next 150 years." What began with a single copper wire has evolved into the nation's largest converged network of fiber internet and 5G wireless services, connecting people at home, at work, and on the go. This next chapter of investment and long-term operating commitment builds on that foundation through three strategic areas: deploying always-on connectivity, investing in people and communities, and innovating to secure America's connected economy. The current tax and regulatory environment are the most conducive to such investment in decades.

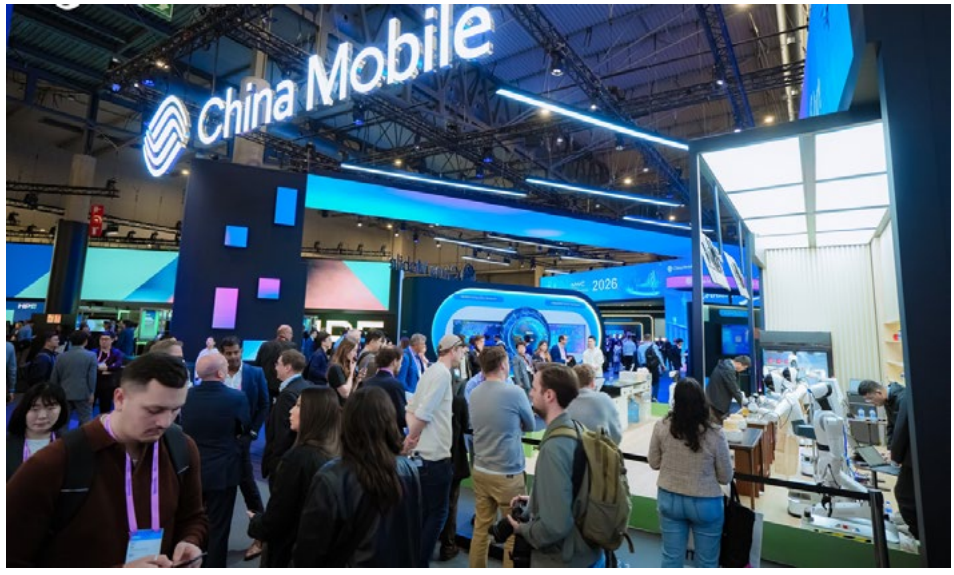
Deploying Always-On Connectivity

Ubiquitous networks that provide reliable, always-on connectivity are the critical conduits that make Artificial Intelligence, autonomous technologies, cloud computing, and data-heavy digital services possible. AT&T's investment will expand future-ready fiber and wireless services, modernize critical infrastructure, and strengthen network resilience and security to support communities and the economy for decades to come, including:

- Accelerating the deployment of fiber, 5G home internet, wireless and satellite across urban, suburban, and rural America
- AT&T's satellite collaboration with AST SpaceMobile will extend coverage into remote areas.
- Strengthening FirstNet, Built by AT&T – the nation's first and only network built with and for first responders – and modernizing vital infrastructure for public safety and resilience
- With AT&T Dynamic Defense, we deliver the only network connectivity with comprehensive built-in security controls.
- Laying the groundwork for the next wave of American technological leadership through smart infrastructure and network optimization
- AT&T's Wi-Fi Personalization provides a tailored home experience that matches our customers' daily habits, and AT&T Turbo Live allows customers to boost their data experience at live events to get the reliable connection they want, even in crowded venues.

China Mobile International Participated in MWC Barcelona, Co-Creating the AI+ Era

From 2 to 5 March 2026, MWC Barcelona, themed "The IQ Era" was held in Barcelona, Spain. Under the theme "Carbon-Silicon Symbiosis, Co-creating the AI+ Future," China Mobile showcased its latest achievements across various cutting-edge technology fields. In the communication services section, CMI showcased an interactive 5G-A smart park demonstration, highlighting six major features: seamless access, 3D security monitoring, energy consumption management, IoT smart warehouses, energy efficient intelligent lighting applications, and asset management. In the computility services section, CMI showcased the layout of its global computility network, providing a comprehensive overview of its global terrestrial and submarine cable resources, PoPs, data centers and cloud computing resources. Additionally, CMI presented solutions designed to empower international carriers. Leveraging China Mobile's extensive full scenario operational experience, CMI integrates partner capabilities, promotes China Mobile's go-global products and services, empowering international carriers to enhance operational efficiency and better serve both public and enterprise customers. In the AI services section, CMI showcased its "1+8" AI-empowered smart industry solutions, presenting benchmarking cases from eight sectors: transportation and logistics, technology and internet, manufacturing, energy, finance, engineering and construction, commerce retail, and IoV. These case studies demonstrated CMI's capability to jointly serve a wide range of industries alongside its partners. CMI also featured an interactive smart port demonstration, showcasing unmanned horizontal logistics, a remote-control system for port equipment, and site inspection, which attracted visitors to experience on site. Furthermore, CMI presented the international version of the JegoTrip app, focusing on two major scenarios: "overseas residency" and "travel to China" for individual overseas users. Powered by China Mobile's global communication capabilities and JegoTrip's travel resources as dual cores, the app integrates key features such as cross-border payment and an AI travel assistant to provide users with a one-stop cross-border service experience. During the conference, CMI welcomed guests from nearly 400 companies. More than 90 meetings and VIP tours were organized to explore the collaboration and showcase China Mobile's latest technologies and capabilities. In addition, five signing ceremonies were held with international carriers, including IOH, to further strengthen multi level and multi field cooperation and jointly pursue new opportunities for global development. MWC Barcelona 2026 concluded successfully. CMI achieved significant accomplishments and gained strong recognition thanks to its global vision and innovative capabilities. Looking ahead, CMI will continue to enhance its global presence and collaborate with partners worldwide to build a new digital ecosystem, fostering a shared future of mutually beneficial development.



Cisco Reimagines Security for the Agentic Workforce

Cisco (NASDAQ: CSCO) has announced significant security innovations designed for the agentic AI ecosystem, where software no longer just answers questions—it acts. At RSA Conference 2026, Cisco is introducing solutions to address AI security issues and remove a top barrier to agent adoption. By establishing trusted identities, enforcing strict Zero Trust Access controls, hardening agents before deployment, enforcing guardrails at runtime, and giving security operations center (SOC) teams the tools to stop threats at machine speed, Cisco is building security into the foundation of the emerging AI economy. "AI agents aren't just making existing work faster; they're a new workforce of co-workers that dramatically expand what organizations can

accomplish," said Jeetu Patel, President and Chief Product Officer at Cisco. "Projects shelved for lack of resources are now within reach. The only limit is imagination, and security teams are the key to unlocking this opportunity by making the agentic workforce safe enough to trust." In a recent Cisco survey of major enterprise customers, 85% reported experimenting with AI agents, but just 5% had moved agentic technology into production. To unleash the vast potential of AI agents, Cisco is addressing three key pillars to securing the agentic workforce. First: Protecting the world from agents, ensuring they can only act as intended. Second: Protecting agents from the world, ensuring they can't be manipulated or corrupted. Third: Detecting and responding to AI incidents at machine speed and scale. Like new employees, AI agents need onboarding to establish their identity, understand their function, and map them to an accountable human manager. Yet today, most enterprises are unaware of which agents are running, let alone who is responsible if something goes wrong. Existing SSE tools weren't built to enforce time-bound access for agentic workload identities, nor can they understand context behind agent requests. According to the 2025 Cisco Talos Year in Review, attackers overwhelmingly targeted a subset of components that directly authenticate users, enforce access decisions, or broker trust between systems. Adversaries' focus on identity will only accelerate with the rise of agentic workloads. To address these challenges, Cisco is extending Zero Trust Access to AI agents, holding them accountable to a human employee and securing agentic actions. New Duo IAM capabilities integrate with novel MCP policy enforcement and intent-aware monitoring in Cisco Secure Access to enforce strict access control, uniquely helping organizations gain full visibility and governance over their agentic workforce.

Cisco to Power TPG Telecom's Next Generation Security and Service Operations Across Australia with Splunk

Cisco, the worldwide leader in networking and security, announced that Splunk will help TPG Telecom accelerate its transition to an AIOps-driven Service Operations Centre — boosting service reliability, strengthening security, and improving operational efficiency for millions of Australians across its nationwide mobile and fixed networks. TPG Telecom serves customers through some of Australia's most recognized brands, including Vodafone, TPG, iiNet, Lebara and felix. To meet these needs, TPG Telecom deployed a suite of Splunk solutions to unify its network operations and security into a single, modern platform. By correlating real-time network data and IT incidents, applying machine learning to predict and resolve service issues before they impact customers, and centralizing security threat detection and response, TPG Telecom is driving faster fault resolution, stronger security, and a better experience for customers across its nationwide network. "We work with organizations to build digital resilience across their operations," said Marc Caltabiano, Group Vice President for Australia and New Zealand at Splunk, a Cisco company. "Our work with TPG Telecom is a testament to how real-time data and intelligent automation can help power more secure and reliable networks for millions of Australians." "Our mission to be Australia's best telco requires more than just cutting-edge technology – it requires a strategic approach combining real-time insights and best-in-class security capabilities with a resilient IT and network infrastructure," said Giovanni Chiarelli, Chief Technology Officer at TPG Telecom. "Splunk is an important technology enabler to help bring this to life, ensuring our confidence to deliver reliable connectivity and services to customers across the country," added Chiarelli. As one of Australia's largest telecoms, TPG Telecom deployed a broad set of Splunk's industry-leading solutions, including Splunk Enterprise, Splunk IT Service Intelligence (ITSI), Splunk SOAR and Splunk Enterprise Security, to strengthen service assurance, security and performance for its customers nationwide. Splunk Enterprise enhances service reliability capabilities by providing real-time network monitoring and correlates IT incidents to specific faults — forming the backbone of TPG Telecom's AIOps-driven Service Operations Centre. Splunk IT Service Intelligence (ITSI) uses machine learning and predictive analytics to monitor and project service health and resolve issues before they impact customers. Splunk Enterprise Security draws from Splunk Enterprise to centralize threat detection and response, empowering security teams with a single, unified view to identify and act on threats faster.

By consolidating tools and streamlining analyst workflows across its critical business services, TPG Telecom modernizes its technology and security operations to strengthen digital resilience and future-proof the business. "In today's complex digital age, it is essential for brands to have a technology partner that not only provides scalable enterprise solutions but also enables them to adapt swiftly while ensuring seamless operations," added Caltabiano. "We are proud to work alongside TPG Telecom to transform and modernize their operating environment into a robust, unified and resilient operation- empowering them to make strategic business decisions that support their ongoing growth and expansion plans."

Eutelsat Announces the Completion of Its Comprehensive Re-Financing Plan, with Closing of €1.5 Billion Bond Offering

Eutelsat announces the closing of its €1.5 billion senior notes offering on 5 March 2026. This transaction represents the final milestone in the Group's comprehensive c. €5 billion equity and debt financing strategy, supported by its main shareholders. It aims to support the Group's long-term strategic vision through the deployment of its Low Earth Orbit ("LEO") satellite activities while strengthening its financial flexibility by accelerating its debt reduction. In late 2025, Eutelsat completed a €1.5 billion two-part equity raise through: Reserved Capital Increases for a gross amount of €828 million at a price per share of €4.00, subscribed by the French Republic via the Agence des Participations de l'Etat Bharti Space Ltd, His Majesty's Government, via The Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology of the United Kingdom CMA CGM Participations and the Fonds Stratégique de Participations. A Rights Issue of approximately €670 million, in which the above-mentioned shareholders exercised their rights. The successful execution of this capital raise led to rating upgrades and Fitch to Ba3 (+2 notches) and BB (+3 notches) respectively enhancing Eutelsat's ability to tap Debt Capital Markets and raise Export Credit Financing to complete the financing needs of its medium-term plan. In parallel with the capital increases, Eutelsat designed a global debt financing plan including bond financing, export credit financings and an extension of bank debt maturities aimed at enabling the Group to finance its medium-term plan and cover investments of approximately €4 billion over the period 2026-2029.A key objective of the debt financing plan was to simplify the Group's capital structure by (i) removing structural subordination as most of the existing debt of the Group previously sat at the level of Eutelsat SA subsidiary, and (ii) waiving cash circulation constraints from existing debt agreements.

Eutelsat and Intellian Introduce First LEO Manpack Terminal for Government and Defence Connectivity

Eutelsat announced the launch of the first military-grade manpack terminal, Intellian's OW7MP, for the OneWeb network. Developed in partnership with Intellian Technologies, a global leader in satellite communication antennas, the terminal is now available to government and defence customers needing portable, resilient connectivity solutions. Intellian's OW7MP Manpack terminal enables government and defence users to securely access Eutelsat's global LEO network in scenarios where traditional communications infrastructure is unavailable, degraded, or denied. Designed to fit within a standard military rucksack and featuring one-touch network acquisition, the terminal supports rapid deployment for front-line operations, emergency response, disaster relief, and remote government missions. It is also capable of operating in GPS-denied environments, addressing a critical requirement for defence users operating in contested regions. This terminal supports Eutelsat's growing government business worldwide by expanding how high-speed, low-latency LEO connectivity can be delivered to mission-critical users. By combining OneWeb's global LEO services with a compact, mission-ready terminal, Eutelsat enhances the

flexibility, resilience, and operational choice available to governments seeking secure communications across diverse and demanding environments. Steve Mills, Vice President for Global Government at Eutelsat said: "Governments need connectivity that deploys anywhere, instantly, without compromise. This new terminal expands our ability to serve defence and government partners with solutions tailored to their operational reality – whether that's front-line communications, disaster response, or secure connectivity in remote locations. Our partnership with Intellian reflects our commitment to working with industry leaders to deliver the terminals government users need to access our network." "The OW7MP Manpack addresses the rapidly evolving demands of defence users by providing an ultra-portable solution where connectivity and safety are no longer a trade-off," said Eric Sung, CEO of Intellian Technologies. "By integrating advanced features like Tx Mute and R-GNSS into a form factor that supports both COTM and COTP, we are delivering a mission-critical technology that allows the operator to focus on the objective, not the devices."

Huawei Wins Nine Lightwave Innovation Reviews Awards

During the Optical Fiber Communication Conference and Exposition (OFC), Lightwave, a leading global optical networking media outlet, announced the Honorees of the annual Lightwave Innovation Reviews. Huawei secured nine awards across multiple categories, including its OptiXtrans DC908 Pro product, Next Generation OTN Solution, OptiXtrans E6600 OTN & QKD Integration Solution, OptiX OSN 1800 I X product, OptiX OSN 9800 P32CM product, OptiXaccess MA5800T product, NCE-T Transmission Digital Map Solution, AI Service Home Hub product, and FTTO Suite Solution. With these nine awards, Huawei emerged as the most honored vendor at this year's event, marking the second consecutive year it has achieved this distinction — a testament to Huawei's leadership in optical network technologies. Lightwave has been presenting the Innovation Reviews Honorees for many years, with a judging panel composed of operators, analysts, vendors, media, engineers, and academic researchers. It is recognized as one of the most influential technical awards for optical networks. Huawei's nine honored products and their respective categories are as follows:

- OptiXtrans DC908 Pro — DCI Platforms Category
- Next Generation OTN Solution — Optical Transport Systems Category
- OptiXtrans E6600 OTN & QKD Integration Solution — Optical Transport Systems Category
- OptiX OSN 1800 I X — Optical Transport Systems Category
- As the industry's first 1 U 100G optical-electrical integrated device, OptiX OSN 1800 I X
- OptiX OSN 9800 P32CM — Optical Transport Systems Category
- OptiXaccess MA5800T — FTTH/Optical Access Platforms Category
- NCE-T Transmission Digital Map Solution — SDN/NFV/Cloud Category
- AI Service Home Hub — Wi-Fi Solutions Category
- FTTO Suite Solution — Wi-Fi Solutions Category

MTN Group and Huawei Sign 2026 Strategic Memorandum of Understanding

During MWC Barcelona 2026, Huawei and MTN Group signed a 2026 Strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The two parties will deepen cooperation around AI-driven intelligent network evolution, digital inclusion, home broadband development, data monetization, digital infrastructure, and ESG initiatives. With Autonomous Networks (AN) L4 as a shared evolution target, the partnership aims to accelerate Africa's digital and intelligent transformation into a new phase. To address the growing demand for digitalization and intelligence across Africa, both parties will leverage AI as the core driving force to upgrade network planning, deployment, and operations capabilities. Together, they will accelerate the development of a next-generation intelligent network architecture represented by Agentic Networks. Powered by Copilots and intelligent Agents, and enabled by coordinated intelligence across device, network, and service layers, the network will evolve from automation toward autonomy. Aligned with the AN L4 target, Huawei and MTN will further build an intelligent agent-driven network architecture centered on Copilot and Agentic AI. This transformation will drive a structural shift in operations from "human-driven" to "agent-driven" models, establish closed-loop autonomous capabilities across the full network lifecycle, and steadily progress toward a sustainable and scalable high-level autonomous network framework. Building on their existing collaboration, the two parties will also deepen cooperation in the following key areas. Including addressing Coverage Gap and Usage Gap through scalable validation and replication of cost-efficient rural network solutions, while exploring affordable device strategies and innovative access models to advance digital inclusion; Advancing coordinated development of FTTH and 5G FWA, exploring innovative deployment models, affordable CPE solutions, and joint go-to-market approaches to accelerate home broadband growth; Enhancing broadband provisioning efficiency and intelligent O&M capabilities to optimize service delivery and OPEX performance; Exploring compliant and secure data monetization models powered by AI-driven precision operations to unlock the value of network and service data and strengthening digital

infrastructure capabilities, including AI-ready data centers, fiber networks, and connectivity platforms, to reinforce the foundation of Africa's intelligent economy. The two companies will also leverage the Huawei & MTN Technology Innovation Lab, located at MTN Group's headquarters in South Africa, to establish a phased innovation mechanism that enables priority use cases to progress systematically from proof-of-concept to pilot testing and commercial deployment, accelerating the large-scale transformation of joint innovation outcomes. Selorm Adadevoh, Group Chief Commercial, Strategy & Transformation Officer, MTN Group, noted that the long-standing partnership between MTN and Huawei has delivered tangible business value, supporting the Group's sustained and resilient growth. Looking ahead, MTN expects the collaboration to evolve from incremental optimization to structural transformation, particularly in AI-enabled network capabilities, operational efficiency, and business model innovation. The partnership aims to create measurable value that enhances the Group's profitability, while accelerating progress in home broadband, device upgrades, and intelligent capability development. Li Peng, Huawei Senior Vice President and President of ICT Sales & Service, said that Huawei's technology evolution is highly aligned with MTN's strategic direction. Huawei is driving the development of next-generation network architectures that enable intelligent coordination across equipment, network and service layers, accelerating the evolution from automated networks toward autonomous networks. In the future, networks will not only provide connectivity but will also support AI-driven experience and service innovation, enabling the coordinated growth of experience and business value. Huawei will continue to deepen strategic cooperation with MTN toward the AN L4 goal and jointly build AI-centric network capabilities to support the long-term sustainable development of Africa's digital economy. The signing marks a transition from exploratory collaboration to a more structured and scalable strategic partnership. Building on a strong foundation of long-term cooperation, Huawei and MTN will further integrate technological capabilities and industry resources to accelerate the upgrade of Africa's digital infrastructure and intelligent transformation.

Huawei and Partners Secure Six Prestigious GTI Awards at MWC Barcelona 2026

At MWC Barcelona 2026, Huawei and its partners bagged six coveted GTI awards. Reputed as one of the highest accolades in mobile communications, the GTI Awards acknowledge sustained commitments and achievements to propelling progress and transformation in the industry. These latest awards underscore the leadership of Huawei and its partners in technology, product and solution, and Mobile AI innovations. Innovative Technology Breakthrough Award: China Mobile and Huawei for their multi-agent system for mobile networks

This solution incorporates three major innovations: A2A-T interface protocol, single-domain agents powered by hybrid models, and RAN ultimate suppression of hallucination (RUSH), based on which the industry's first carrier-grade mobile multi-agent system has been made possible. Featuring high efficiency and performance and rock-solid reliability, the system has enabled China Mobile to improve O&M, optimization, energy saving, and user experience across more than one million cells. The achievements are remarkable, typically including 5.5% additional energy-saving gain per site in Henan, an up to 90% provisioning accuracy for experience boost packages in Fujian, and 20% shorter time on average in fault recovery. Innovative Technology Breakthrough Award: Turkcell and Huawei for their 50 Gbps full-duplex radio links in Türkiye

Full-duplex enables simultaneous data transmission and reception over microwave links on the same frequency, significantly raising spectrum efficiency and performance, which is instantiated by 50 Gbps over just 2 GHz of spectrum. Hailed as a next-gen technology, it is a breakthrough in wireless data transmission, greatly facilitating 5G developments. Recently, a commercial full-duplex 50 Gbps microwave link has been put into use for users across the Bosphorus strait in Istanbul. Innovative Product and Solution Award: Zain KSA and Huawei for their Mobile-Homestar solution

This solution provides seamless connectivity for flexible access to home-based computing, storage, and applications without public cloud or Internet. It fully taps into 5G-A to provide dedicated connections between homes and device's eUPF. Combined with the intelligent Easy FWAi algorithms, it allows for precise service identification and deterministic guarantee, offering a future-proof intelligent connectivity model that deeply integrates devices, homes, and mobile networks. Innovative Product and Solu-

tion Award: stc and Huawei for their New Calling translation service
The service combines network's low latency and high security with a deeply optimized speech model for Arabic and English to provide real-time translation between the two languages for voice calls. As a state-of-the-art New Calling feature, this service is independent of device hardware, ensuring universal accessibility, including from common phones. Now offered as a pilot towards users in Riyadh, the service is on track to upgrade voice service experiences.
Mobile AI Application Award: China Mobile and Huawei among other partners for their intelligent collaborative assurance and scaled experience-oriented operations
Huawei's IntelligentRAN technology features cross-domain synergy to enable real-time risk visualization and prediction of experience, while adding intelligence to network scheduling. This positions it as an ideal option for guaranteeing service quality for HD livestreaming and gaming. To date, it has assisted China Mobile in digitally transforming over 400,000 5G base stations to incubate a paradigm shift in operational models from network-first to experience-centric, setting a new benchmark for the mobile AI era. Honorary Award: Huawei Mobile AI OpenLab for its pioneering exploration and collaborative innovation in mobile AI
Jointly launched by GTI and Huawei, the Mobile AI OpenLab focuses on addressing the evolving needs of the mobile AI industry. Partnering with key players like China Mobile and Leju Robot, it delves into innovative applications, including multi-model and embodied AI, to pave the way for transformative advancements in the field. The lab was the first to identify differentiated uplink requirements for human-like interaction in mobile AI, diving deep into AI service traffic models, AoNR, and standardized AI-MOS evaluation, which are key to scaling up mobile AI applications, particularly in industrial settings. The era of agentic networks is now approaching fast, and the commercial adoption of 5G-A at scale is gaining speed. Huawei is actively working with carriers and partners around the world to unleash the full potential of 5G-A and pave the way for the evolution to 6G. We are also creating AI-Centric Network solutions to enable intelligent services, networks, and network elements (NEs), speeding up the large-scale deployment of level-4 autonomous networks (AN L4), and using AI to upgrade our core business. Together with other industry players, we will create leading value-driven networks and AI computing backbones for a fully intelligent future.

Edotco Malaysia and Huawei Announced Infrastructure Management Partnership

Service provider Edotco Malaysia says it has entered a next generation network operations partnership with technology giant Huawei to enhance telecommunications infrastructure management through technology-enabled operations and automation and smarter infrastructure solutions. The partnership is described as bringing together Edotco's operational standards and infrastructure expertise and Huawei's digital operations and maintenance capabilities. The partners say that through this collaboration, Edotco's customers are set to benefit from more intelligent and data-driven operating capabilities, including a unified operations and maintenance (O&M) platform, AI-assisted scheduling, geolocation-based task assignments, and more precise maintenance execution across field operations. These enhancements are expected to deliver more reliable connectivity, fewer avoidable service disruptions, and better overall experience as people and businesses increasingly depend on digital services in their daily lives. Referring to Malaysia's long-term digital ambitions, Adlan Tajudin, CEO of Edotco Group, says: "Through this partnership with Huawei, we are enhancing

our operational capabilities with advanced technologies and global expertise to ensure our infrastructure continues to deliver high standards of performance and meet customers' expectations as well as Malaysia's AI Nation 2030 goals." The country's Ministry of Digital notes that the key priority of these goals is to ensure that Malaysia is not only prepared in terms of artificial intelligence infrastructure and talent, but also equipped with a robust governance framework to become a globally competitive AI nation by 2030. Zac Chow, Deputy CEO, Huawei Technologies (Malaysia), adds that these enhancements are expected to deliver stronger service visibility, faster fault detection and restoration and improved incident coordination, as well as higher asset uptime. He explains: "By integrating intelligent inspection, smart dispatching and full-scale asset digitalization, we envision a future of predictive and preventive maintenance to achieve operational excellence. This strategic collaboration is set to fundamentally optimize network quality and operational efficiency.

Huawei Launches Enhanced AI-Centric Network Solutions for All Intelligence at MWC 2026

Huawei released a series of all-scenario U6 GHz products at MWC Barcelona 2026 to help carriers unlock the full potential of 5G-A and set the stage for a seamless transition to 6G. The company also launched enhanced AI-Centric Network solutions that will help carriers prepare for the agentic era by enabling intelligent services, networks, and network elements (NEs). Huawei is also showcasing its SuperPoD cluster for the first-time outside China, which they have created to offer "a new option for the intelligent world". The theme of Huawei's booth for this year's conference is "Advancing All Intelligence", reflecting the company's plans to build more AI-centric networks and computing backbones that will help carriers and industry customers seize opportunities from the AI era. According to Huawei, the next five years will provide a window of opportunity to unleash the full potential of 5G-A. They plan to work with global carriers on the large-scale 5G-A deployment, use high uplink to address surging consumer and industry demand for mobile AI applications, and use the U6 GHz band to unlock the full value of spectrum and pave the way for smooth evolution to 6G. There are already 70 million 5G-A users globally, and 5G-A is increasingly being adopted by carriers at scale. In China, Huawei has helped carriers deliver contiguous 5G-A coverage across 270 cities and launch 5G-A packages that monetize experience in over 30 provinces. The all-scenario U6 GHz products and solutions Huawei use innovative technologies to create a high-capacity, low-latency, optimal-experience backbone designed for mobile AI applications. The released all-scenario U6 GHz products and solutions Huawei use innovative technologies to create a high-capacity, low-latency, optimal-experience backbone designed for mobile AI applications. Three-layer intelligence with AI-Centric Network: Seizing opportunities in the agentic era. Following the trend to integrate AI directly into networks, Huawei is using AI to create AI-Centric Network solutions that will act as target networks for the agentic era. These solutions embed intelligence across three layers:

- At the service layer, Huawei is helping carriers build multi-agent collaboration platforms, with specialized agents for calling, experience monetization, and home broadband. These platforms will enable AI-driven transformation of carriers' core services like voice, internet access, and home broadband.
- At the network layer, Phase 1 of Huawei's L4 Autonomous Driving Network (AND L4) solution primarily focuses on single-scenario automation, helping carriers drastically improve O&M efficiency, network quality, and monetization capabilities. By the end of 2025, the company's single-scenario ADN solutions have been commercially deployed on more than 130 telecom networks worldwide. Moving forward, Huawei will continue to help carriers reshape operations with AI, going beyond single-scenario automation to support end-to-end single-domain network autonomy.
- At the NE layer, Huawei works with carriers to accelerate innovation in areas like algorithm optimization for RANs, intelligent and accurate service identification for WANs, and unified service intent for core networks that helps integrate B2C and B2H services. Innovations in these domains are already driving marked improvements in network energy and spectral efficiency, intelligent service awareness, and network resilience assurance.

Nokia Launches Suite of Application Optimized Optical Solutions for AI-Era Networks

Nokia has announced a suite of new optical networking innovations designed to address the unprecedented scale and application diversity demands driven by the AI supercycle. AI traffic and data center interconnect (DCI) requirements are continuing to accelerate, exceeding the practical limits of approaches based solely on incremental improvements over previous generations. As applications diversify, network operators increasingly require solutions that are specifically optimized for different performance, reach, and efficiency requirements. Nokia's latest innovations represent a fundamental

shift in how optical transport products are designed and developed, delivering application-optimized connectivity that maximizes performance while significantly reducing cost, space, and power and simplifying network operations. The innovations include a new suite of coherent optical solutions and a compact, multi-fiber optimized in-line amplifier. Nokia executives will be at the OFC conference in Los Angeles this week to share the company's latest vision for optical networking in the AI era. The industry is at a critical inflection point, requiring a whole new dimension of scale, trust and innovation. At Nokia, we are connecting intelligence by leveraging our unmatched global scale, deep vertical integration, and a co-creation model with our customer base. The result is trusted solutions that drive the best economics, lowest power and AI-enabled efficiency to advance connectivity for the AI era, said David Heard, President of Network Infrastructure at Nokia. At the core of Nokia's announcement is a new approach to building coherent optical solutions for AI-era networks. Rather than developing discrete solutions for each application, Nokia is introducing a building block-based development methodology that enables technologies to be easily assembled and integrated across a broad range of optical transport use cases. These building blocks include four new digital signal processors and multiple optical front ends built using both Indium Phosphide and Silicon Photonics. This approach results in a comprehensive suite of coherent optical transport solutions that are specifically optimized to address both existing and emerging network applications improving cost, space, and power efficiency while delivering up to 70% total cost of ownership savings.

The new solutions include:

- A 1.6T-capable coherent pluggable optimized for IP over DWDM DCI and scale across applications.
- A 2.4T-capable coherent pluggable optimized for thin transponder deployments supporting a broad range of terrestrial and subsea network applications.
- A 3.2T-capable coherent lite solution optimized for low power to address shorter reach campus and enterprise applications.
- A new class of double-sided pluggables optimized to pair with CPO-, LPO-, and NPO-based switches, supporting campus, metro and regional DCI and scale across applications.
- A new class of full-band transponders that combine hundreds of coherent components into a single, operationally simplified solution optimized for hyperscale capacity demands across campus, metro, regional, long-haul, and submarine applications.
- 2.4T and a 3.2T embedded transponders optimized to maximize fiber capacity at any distance for fiber-constrained applications.
- The new family of coherent optical solutions is expected to begin sampling in mid-2027 with general availability anticipated to begin in the second half of 2027.

Nokia Unveils Its Vision for Next-Generation Wifi Networks

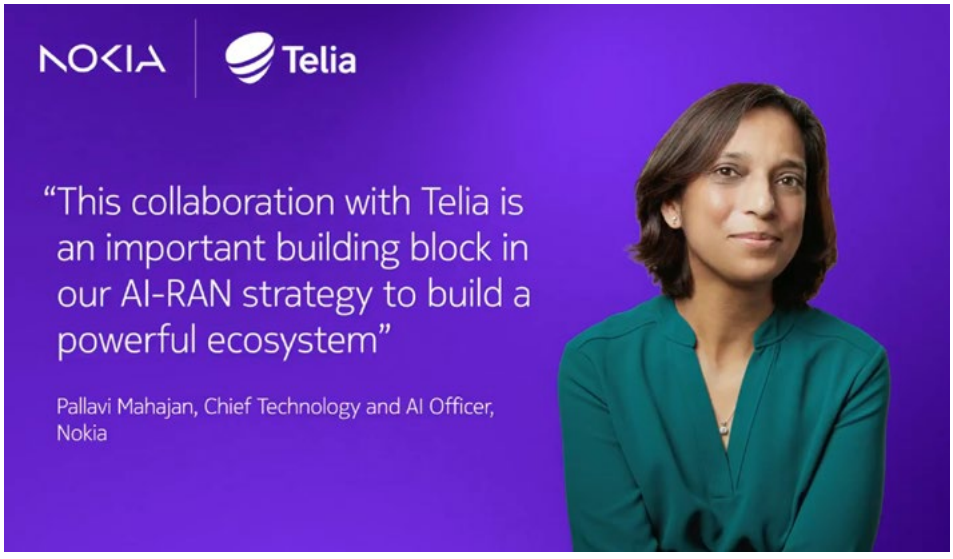
Finnish telecoms giant Nokia has unveiled a detailed vision for the ninth iteration of wireless networks, and it's centered around artificial intelligence. Ahead of meetings to discuss the future of internet connectivity, Nokia has revealed that it expects the focus of Wi-Fi 9 to be about supporting "real-time, immersive and AI-driven digital experiences". Klaus Doppler, head of the Wi-Fi Research Centre of Excellence at Nokia, made this prediction in a new analysis piece. He points out that past versions of the Wi-Fi protocol aimed to boost internet speeds and facilitate large networks of internet-connected devices. But he believes that the increasingly "immersive, intelligent and interactive" nature of the online world means developing an even faster version of WiFi won't be good enough. Instead, he says the technology industry needs to ensure Wi-Fi 9 offers the "responsiveness, reliability and predictability" needed for facilitating AI-fueled digital experiences. That's not to say speed doesn't matter, but he suggests it shouldn't be the sole focus. As well as arguing that enabling "real-world performance" should be the primary aim of Wi-Fi 9, he broke down some

of the different elements that would be needed to make the generation of wireless connectivity a success. Firstly, Doppler says Wi-Fi 9 must offer users "multi-gigabit speeds" that are commonplace on computers, extended-reality devices and smartphones - many of which now offer AI features out of the box. This, he says, is key to enabling people to "fully utilize next-generation fiber broadband connections". Secondly, the internet connectivity offered by Wi-Fi 9 will need to be "predictable" and "reliable", according to Doppler. He says this will be crucial as innovations like "immersive media, robotics and tactile interaction" become more widespread. He adds that these varied use cases won't be able to sustain "delays beyond 10ms and packet loss cannot be tolerated". Just imagine the disruption that could be caused if production at a factory making medical supplies, which relies solely on internet-connected robots, comes to a halt due to an unreliable Wi-Fi connection.

Thirdly, he says Wi-Fi 9 must be capable of delivering "high-performance" internet connectivity across "dense environments" that have "dozens of connected devices simultaneously running real-time and high-bandwidth applications". Lastly, amid a worsening global climate crisis, he says Wi-Fi 9 must also prioritize "improved efficiency". While Doppler acknowledges that improved performance will be an important consideration for future internet networks, he says it should not "come at the cost of increased power consumption for mobile devices and access points". AI, in particular, is well known for consuming high levels of energy that experts fear could contribute to rapid climate change.

Nokia and Telia to Collaborate on AI-RAN Use Cases

Nokia has announced a collaboration with Telia Finland to co-create on AI-RAN-based use cases. Both companies will jointly develop and test use cases on AI-driven Radio Access Network (RAN) technology to enhance network performance and support the commercialization of AI-enabled applications. AI-RAN is a key enabler for future business opportunities, network performance and efficiency improvements. This announcement follows Nokia's recent announcement about completed functional AI-RAN tests with key customers. The collaboration between Nokia and Telia builds on the transformative potential of AI-RAN in advancing the capabilities of today's 5G networks. With a clear focus on exploring commercial use cases, the companies will conceptualize and test AI-enabled systems for different industries, including mission critical. In order to be ready for the AI Supercycle, networks must deliver deterministic, trusted connectivity with transparency, traceability and safety controls embedded by design. We are working closely with our customers to get there, together. This collaboration with Telia is an important building block in our AI-RAN strategy to build a powerful ecosystem. Pallavi Mahajan, Chief Technology and AI Officer, Nokia. The collaboration with Nokia on AI-RAN use cases is an essential part of our journey on Autonomous Networks and will benefit our customers with increased network performance and reliability. Stefan Jäverbring, Group CTO and Head of Networks, Telia At MWC26, Nokia's booth 3B20 in Hall 3 features multiple live demonstrations of AI-RAN technologies, highlighting their role in enabling cognitive, software-defined radio systems. This includes Vision AI with reasoning capabilities from Vaidio, a delivery robot from ServeRobotics that can transform retail and the use of the radio network itself as a sensor for the physical world. There will be a demonstration of how spare GPU capacity in the distributed AI RAN network can be monetized by offering AI compute to external customers. Nokia's demonstrations also showcase how AI-RAN can optimize network operations, improve energy efficiency and support new AI-driven applications.



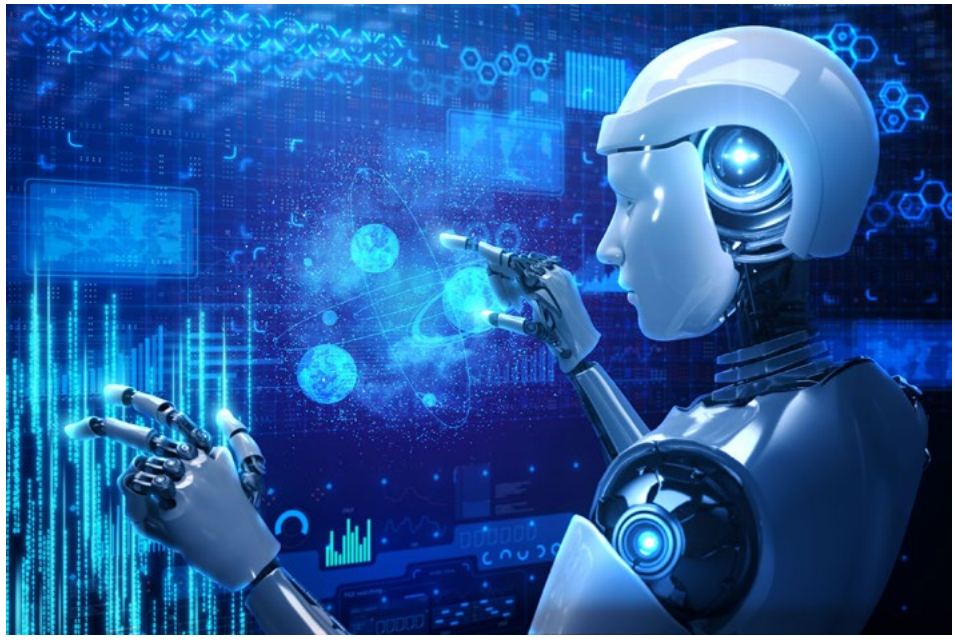
ZTE and Orange Morocco Launch Livebox 7, World's First prplOS 4.0 ONT for Smart Home

ZTE Corporation (0763.HK / 000063.SZ), a global leading provider of integrated information and communication technology solutions, has joined hands with Orange Morocco to officially launch the new-generation smart home terminal, Livebox 7. Exclusively developed and manufactured by ZTE with core R&D technologies, Livebox 7 is the world's first commercial ONT based on the prplOS 4.0 open-source standard and also the first prpl commercial ONT supporting a third-party multi-service ecology. This innovation enables Moroccan families to embrace an all-scenario smart home experience. Livebox 7 integrates cutting-edge technology, ultimate performance, and humanistic aesthetics in one. In terms of flagship hardware configuration, it is equipped with 1GB of memory, ten smart antennas, and tri-band Wi-Fi 7, delivering a seamless whole-home connection experience. It features enterprise-grade security protection with a built-in VPN to safeguard privacy, enhanced parental controls for refined internet management, and an intelligent energy-saving design

that embodies the concept of green, low-carbon development. For ecological openness, the terminal is compatible with third-party applications, building an open and integrated home digital ecosystem. Its design perfectly blends technology with North African humanistic aesthetics, drawing inspiration from traditional Moroccan Zellige tiles for an exquisite appearance. ZTE is committed to serving AI homes worldwide and delivering premium experiences to users. With home terminal shipments surpassing 100 million units for two consecutive years and ranking first globally for five consecutive years, ZTE will continue to collaborate closely with operator partners to shape the blueprint for next-generation smart life.

ZTE Unveils "Telco Service Agent" at MWC Barcelona 2026, Introducing Intent-Driven Network Intelligence

ZTE Corporation, a global leading provider of information and communication technology solutions, unveiled its innovative "Telco Service Agent" at MWC Barcelona 2026. This AI Agent-driven 5G personalized experience solution presented a systemic vision for transforming telecom networks from passive connectivity to active service, marking the industry's entry into a new era of intent-driven intelligent networking. The core innovation lay in an intelligent interaction layer capable of comprehending natural language. Moving beyond complex service plans, users can directly express their scenario-based needs, and the system interpreted this intent in real-time to orchestrate 5G/5G-A network resources, delivering dynamic and tailored service assurance. Powering this capability was ZTE's pioneering system architecture. The solution had achieved deep integration with the AI-enhanced 5G core network through the MCP Server, eliminating the configuration delays of traditional OSS systems and realizing end-to-end automation. This enabled the network to proactively sense user context, predicting service demand, and executing fully automated processes to assure optimal experience. This intelligent orchestration had demonstrated significant potential in early deployments, directly translating into measurable user experience gains in MOS for latency-sensitive services like live streaming. The "Experience as a Service" model pioneered by the Telco Service Agent provided a clear pathway for global operators to unlock network value in the AI era. It signaled that future network differentiation will rely not only on speed and coverage but, more critically, on the ability to understand and fulfill personalized, on-demand user needs. ZTE expressed its commitment to collaborating with global operators and industry partners to advance the evolution and ecosystem of network agent technology, enabling intelligent, personalized, and high-quality connectivity experiences for all industries.



ZTE HI-OTN Achievements Earn Dual Top-Scored Paper Recognition at OFC 2026

ZTE Corporation, a global leading provider of integrated information and communication technology solutions, announced that it has made significant progress in optical network research. Two core papers have been selected as Top-Scored Papers at the Optical Fiber Communication Conference and Exhibition (OFC) 2026 in the United States, an honor granted only to the top 10% of accepted submissions. These two research achievements respectively demonstrate the industry's highest-speed real-time S-band silicon photonics coherent transceiver and large language model training across multiple AI data centers (AIDCs) over long-haul optical networks, validated in real-world field trials. Together, they mark ZTE's dual breakthroughs at the forefront of exploring ultra-wide spectrum transmission and supporting distributed intelligent computing in core optical network technologies. At OFC 2026, the world's largest and most influential event in the optical communications industry, more than 16,700 professionals and over 700 enterprises gathered to showcase cutting-edge innovations across the full optical ecosystem. The Top-Scored Paper distinction is conferred following rigorous evaluation by the OFC Technical Committee, recognizing contributions with outstanding innovation, technical depth, experimental validation, and industry impact. In the digital era, emerging applications such as generative AI model training and inference are accelerating the evolution of optical networks toward higher speed, larger capacity, longer reach, and lower latency. To address industry challenges and enhance resource utilization and service orchestration, ZTE pioneered the HI-OTN solution and has successfully deployed the industry's first commercial C+L 12 THz integrated scheduling optical transmission system, laying a solid foundation for both cutting-edge research and real-world implementation. The two papers selected as Top-Scored Papers at OFC 2026 represent important outcomes of ZTE's continued deep engagement in core optical network technologies. The paper entitled Real-Time 1.2 Tb/s S-Band Silicon Photonics Transceiver Operating at 6-THz Tunable Bandwidth achieved three major technical breakthroughs. First, it developed the industry's first real-time coherent transceiver in the S-band, setting a record speed of 1.2 Tb/s. Second, by leveraging the wavelength-insensitive characteristics of silicon photonics (SIPh) transceivers, it enabled compatibility between the S-band and C+L bands, overcoming the limitations of traditional spectral transmission. Third, ZTE independently designed and nano-packaged an S-band Integrated Tunable Laser Assembly (ITLA), which delivers 17.5 dBm output power across a 6.4 THz bandwidth with a linewidth below 30 kHz, ensuring high-quality signal transmission. The nano-packaged ITLA can be flexibly integrated into mainstream coherent optical modules such as Octal Small Form Factor Pluggable (OSFP) and C Form-factor Pluggable 2 (CFP2). Ultimately, the demonstration of the 6 THz real-time coherent transceiver in the S-band achieved signal quality comparable to existing C/L-band systems under unrepeated transmission conditions. This achievement breaks through long-standing spectral bottlenecks and provides core technical support for the large-scale application of ultra-wideband optical networks. The other paper, Field Trials of 600-km Large Language Model Distributed Training Across Long-Haul Multi-AIDCs, focuses on analyzing the practical requirements of intelligent computing services in the OTN domain and addressing the challenges of cross-domain distributed AI clusters. As constraints on power supply and data center space become increasingly prominent, cross-regional distributed clusters are emerging as an industry trend. ZTE conducted real-world trials spanning three AIDCs, training the Large Language Model Meta AI 2-70B (LLaMA2-70B) with 1,024 Graphics Processing Units (GPUs). In this typical scenario, the company accurately constructed a compute transmission demand model and implemented a 16-channel 800G ultra-high-speed optical transmission solution. Through live network operation, the trials revealed the core requirements of large model training for optical network bandwidth and latency, with results confirming that long-haul transmission latency has become a key factor affecting GPU cluster efficiency. The team also evaluated the potential of hollow-core fiber, a new optical fiber technology that significantly reduces latency, and verified its ability to mitigate efficiency degradation and lower network energy consumption, providing essential data support and practical insights for the optimization of future cross-domain intelligent optical network architectures. Winning dual Top-Scored Paper honors at OFC 2026 reflects global recognition of ZTE's core optical networking capabilities and validates its "Technology-Driven Innovation" strategy. Looking ahead, ZTE will continue to advance the industrialization of S-band optical devices and deepen research into cross-domain intelligent optical network optimization, helping to build an efficient, green, and intelligent next-generation computing infrastructure.

ZTE Launches Linkpro Plus Wi-Fi 8 Solution

ZTE Corporation, a global leading provider of integrated information and communication technology solutions, announced the debut of its groundbreaking Linkpro plus Wi-Fi 8 home networking solution at MWC Barcelona 2026. Centered on the industry's first CPE product, F8849Q, which integrates XGS-PON 10G optical access with Wi-Fi 8 technology, this launch marks a pivotal step in ZTE's innovation across "optical access + wireless intelligence". By fusing proprietary AI capabilities with next-generation Wi-Fi standards, ZTE aims to redefine a "perceptible certainty" in smart home connectivity worldwide. Facing the four extreme challenges of coverage, latency, interference, and security posed by ultra-HD video, VR/AR, and whole-home intelligence, the ZTE Linkpro® plus solution is not a simple iteration. Instead, it achieves a leap across four dimensions from the underlying logic, elevating home networking from "best effort" to a new stage of "deterministic intelligent connectivity at will". Traditional Wi-Fi struggles with disconnection during mobility. ZTE's solution leverages Wi-Fi 8's native Single Mobility Domain (SMD) technology to build a seamless roaming foundation equivalent to a unified virtual base station. On top of this, ZTE's proprietary AI terminal positioning engine and beamforming technology deliver "dual intelligent gains", dynamically sensing terminal location and adjusting antenna arrays in real time. This enables precise signal tracking, achieving roaming latency of less than 10ms and extending coverage distance by 50%, ensuring smooth 8K video conferencing and immersive viewing from anywhere in the home. To address congestion caused by multiple concurrent devices, the solution leverages Wi-Fi 8's native Dynamic Sub-band Operation (DSO) technology, finely partitioning channel resources to create independent "data highways" for each device. ZTE's innovative AI smart antenna technology further enhances performance, dynamically matching optimal antenna units and transmission paths for each data stream. This hardware-software synergy greatly expands concurrent access capacity while ensuring high-quality transmission, enabling bandwidth-intensive scenarios such as gaming, online classes, and remote work to coexist seamlessly—delivering "HD movies in seconds, zero lag for critical tasks". In interference-heavy residential settings, the ZTE Linkpro® plus solution demonstrates strong adaptability. By integrating ultra-reliability features of Wi-Fi 8, P-EDCA (priority deterministic slot allocation) ensures low-latency transmission, while enhanced LDPC coding strengthens data immunity against interference. More importantly, ZTE's proprietary AI "spectrum brain" senses interference sources (neighboring Wi-Fi, Bluetooth devices) in real time and dynamically optimizes channels and air-interface parameters. This combination of native technology and intelligent tuning improves signal stability by 60% and reduces critical packet transmission delay by 25%, effectively eliminating service lag during peak hours. With the surge of smart home devices, privacy and security have become core concerns. The solution introduces Wi-Fi 8's quantum-level full-link encryption and privacy-enhanced transmission protocols, providing hard protection from device access to data transmission. Additionally, ZTE's proprietary cloud-edge collaborative AI security engine identifies and blocks potential threats within milliseconds, creating exclusive "security immunity" channels for privacy- and security-sensitive devices such as cameras and smart locks. This proactive firewall eliminates privacy risks at the source, safeguarding digital households. As a standard setter and core patent holder of Wi-Fi 8 technology, ZTE is leveraging its "standards, patents, and technology" advantages to elevate home networking from "consumer-grade" to "industrial-grade" reliability, meeting the needs of large apartments, duplexes, and future smart homes. Looking ahead, ZTE will continue to deepen the integration of AI and communication technologies, while proactively deploying next-generation integrated sensing and connectivity. Together with global industry partners, ZTE will build an open and win-win smart home ecosystem, injecting strong momentum into the development of the digital economy and jointly shaping the future of the intelligent world.

XLSMART Partners with ZTE to Launch Indonesia's First Nationwide 5G Blanket Coverage Network

ZTE Corporation, a global leading provider of integrated information and communication technology solutions, in partnership with Indonesia's operator XLSMART, has officially launched XL Ultra 5G+ commercial service, marking the deployment of the country's first nationwide 5G network. The network has been certified by Ookla as "The Fastest 5G Network in Indonesia, H2 2025". As XLSMART's strategic partner, ZTE has provided comprehensive support to help XLSMART deliver an exceptional 5G experience, driving a holistic uplift in network capabilities and commercial value. The XL Ultra 5G+ service adopts a "Blanket Coverage" strategy, aiming to deliver seamless 5G connectivity across all regions of Indonesia, ensuring high-speed access reaches XLSMART customers. At the 5G commercial launch event held in Surabaya, on-site testing demonstrated peak downlink speeds of up to 769 Mbps, with average experienced speeds exceeding 500 Mbps, enabling smooth 4K/8K video streaming, cloud gaming, and AR/VR applications, fully demonstrating the superior performance of the 5G network. Drawing on precise network planning, efficient deployment, and continuous performance optimization, ZTE, in partnership with XLSMART, has completed 5G network deployment in 24 of XLSMART's 33 5G cities across five major regions—including Surabaya, Semarang, Medan, Makassar, and Balikpapan—by January 2026. This achievement has positioned XLSMART as Indonesia's first operator to deliver nationwide 5G network coverage. To date, the collaboration has successfully integrated and upgraded more than 20,000 4G base stations and deployed over 7,000 new 5G base stations, substantially improving spectrum utilization and 4G/5G coordination, and steadily advancing the converged network toward higher quality, greater intelligence, and enhanced resilience. To guarantee the smooth execution of the "XL Ultraverse Festival" music event in Surabaya, which attracted tens of thousands of attendees, ZTE targeted "Double Beyond and Double Zero" objectives—beyond industry standards and customer expectations, with zero negative comments on services and complaints from customers. Leveraging advanced digital intelligent tools such as Mongoose and VMAX, ZTE implemented real-time visibility of equipment status, network performance, and user experience, combined with AI-driven proactive optimization. During the festival, peak concurrent connected users exceeded 10,000, enabling audiences across venues to engage in cross-city real-time interactions, high-definition live streaming, online gaming, and other innovative digital experiences—earning high praise from both the operator and users. This 5G commercialization represents a pivotal advancement in upgrading Indonesia's digital infrastructure. Moving forward, ZTE will continue to provide innovative technical solutions and ultimate network services, partnering closely with XLSMART to deepen intelligent network operations, accelerate 5G construction and applications across vertical industries, and contribute to building a faster, smarter, and greener digital intelligent network—jointly paving the way for a boundless digital future in Indonesia.

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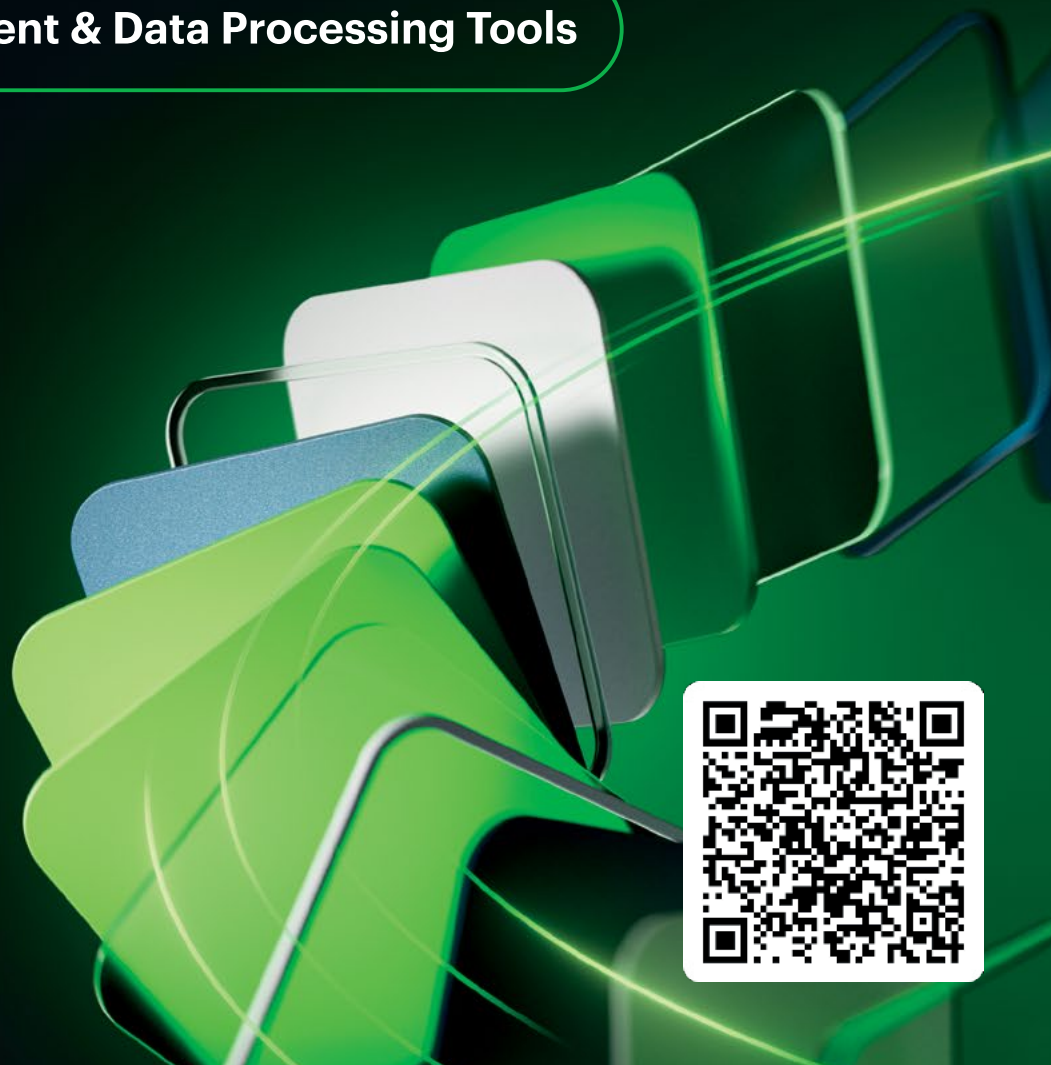

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ARTICLE

The UAE's Digital Infrastructure and Prowess as a Regional Resource

Izhar Ahmad
Director - Industry Affairs & Communication
SAMENA Telecommunications Council

The more significant story in AI today is not about which economy leads. It is about which populations gain access to AI-powered services and tools that can materially affect their socio-economic well-being, and which do not, and what role geography, infrastructure, and governance play in determining that outcome. The case of development divide is evident.

> *For operators, investors, regulators, and policymakers, the opportunity here is not simply a commercial one. It is a chance to participate in a model where digital capability becomes a vehicle for regional stability, shared economic growth, and strategic weight built on digital contributions of a new dimension.*

Across South Asia, the Middle East, and East Africa, within a 4,000-kilometer radius of the UAE lies a market of more than 2 billion people. This is significant and, arguably, can be considered as one of the world's largest markets where development divides exist and which may also be the world's largest underserved AI market. These regions have mobile connectivity. They have growing digital economies, and even 5G is either present or is starting, as in Pakistan. What several of these countries lack is trusted and secure compute infrastructure, sustainable governance frameworks, and a neutral platform from which AI services can be delivered to them at scale. The UAE can create and offer this foundation to markets within its strategic as well as physical reach.

The UAE's position is not simply that it is investing in AI. In fact, the country has committed over US$147 billion into artificial intelligence since the start of 2024. A world-class fixed-line and mobile infrastructure, a thriving 5G/5G-Advanced ecosystem, with 6G under preparation, a rapidly expanding base of data centers, cloud platforms, and AI capabilities, and a stable regulatory environment continually supported by clarity and agility are all firmly in play. The question is therefore not whether the UAE has the capability. It is what that capability can do beyond its own borders, and for whom.

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In the current international "situation", this question becomes strategically even more significant. A stable, neutral, and well-governed digital ground is more valuable when the region is navigating uncertainty. This is not a contradiction. It is an opportunity of a different kind.

Some skepticism is warranted, especially in the current situation, or a similar one in the future. However, the UAE has already been tested at scale. During the pandemic, its digital infrastructure absorbed a sudden and dramatic shift to remote work, remote government services, and remote commerce without meaningful failure. The current period of regional tension represents a different kind of test, and the UAE has met it with the same character: without hesitation, without disruption, and without compromise to the continuity of life and services for everyone inside its borders. It is worth noting here that redundancy is a design principle in the UAE's infrastructure. The mindset that drives this is consistent whether the context is national security or network resilience: continuity is non-negotiable, and the systems are built accordingly. For markets with complicated geopolitical alignments, this is not a peripheral consideration. A neutral, stable, and demonstrably resilient digital ground is precisely what they need, and precisely what the region around the UAE cannot consistently offer. The tension, in this sense, is not a risk to the proposition. It could be taken as a validation of it.

The UAE's digital infrastructure and AI investment capacity can therefore be extended outward, serving neighboring and proximate economies as a new economic engine, one that generates value for the UAE while simultaneously addressing the digital and AI deficits of the markets within its reach. What begins as a commercial proposition carries a larger implication. Extending digital capability to underserved neighbors, at a moments of turmoil, is an act of digital diplomacy (which does not necessarily require regional peace to be in practice). It builds and fortifies relationships, creates healthy interdependencies, and generates new strategic gains that could transcend transactional ones.

Leveraging its AI strategy, connectivity infrastructure, digital capabilities, and international relations, the UAE has the capacity and the prowess to become the region's data embassy, a neutral, sovereign, and trusted computational ground for governments, enterprises, and developers across some of the fastest-growing digital economies in the world. While Estonia pioneered the data embassy concept first almost a decade ago and has demonstrated that a country's critical data and digital infrastructure can reside physically in another jurisdiction while remaining legally and sovereignly tied to the home country, the UAE is in a position to take the concept to a new depth: The UAE is a well-governed computational ground on which the broader region's digital economy can run. In practical terms, this means that a government in East Africa or an enterprise in South Asia could run critical digital operations and process sensitive data through UAE infrastructure, with the security, neutrality, and scale that their own domestic infrastructure may not be sufficiently in place, or capable, to provide.

The international confidence-building experience gained over the years, whether materialized through hosting world-class industry conferences or through providing the best-in-class infrastructure, expertise in governance frameworks, and the nationally developed ability to offer governments and enterprises from markets with complicated geopolitical alignments the capability to route sensitive workloads through it, are key strengths that substantiate this role. The sector-level implications are already visible. AI-assisted logistics are making trade corridors more efficient and more competitive; digital financial services are reaching populations and business segments that traditional banking hesitates to serve; precision agriculture is already being piloted in desert conditions; the power of machine vision is being exploited in visual intelligence; and smart energy management systems are extending the productive life of existing infrastructure while simultaneously building the data layer that an economically diversifying economy requires. These are reflections of what a regional AI hub, operating with sovereign backing and strategic intent, looks like in practice.

The UAE may be a relatively small country, geographically, but it has the right vision and has made the right policy and investment decisions early, and attracted long-term capital of a quality and scale that few markets in the region, or the world, have seen. The infrastructure is built. The compute is alive. The demand is structural and non-discretionary. Heavy AI investments are underway. The AI market within reach is perhaps the largest underserved one on earth. And the UAE, at its center, has demonstrated, under real pressures, that it does not flinch, but embraces both opportunities and challenges alike.

For operators, investors, regulators, and policymakers, the opportunity here is not simply a commercial one. It is a chance to participate in a model where digital capability becomes a vehicle for regional stability, shared economic growth, and strategic weight built on digital contributions of a new dimension.

The UAE's next chapter is not just about what it builds for itself, but about what it makes possible for the region around it.

This article draws on the author's earlier thoughts published in Teletimes International.

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REGIONAL NEWS

Qatar: MoL Offers 325 Digital Services, Records 250,000 Transactions in February

The Ministry of Labor (MoL) has reaffirmed its commitment to advancing digital transformation and simplifying administrative procedures through its Integrated Digital Gateway, which now provides more than 325 digital services to employers and workers across the country. According to the ministry, the platform has witnessed significant usage, with over 250,000 transactions completed during the past month alone. The high volume of activity reflects the growing reliance on digital government services and the increasing adoption of online solutions that allow users to complete procedures quickly and efficiently. The Integrated Digital Gateway forms a key part of the ministry's broader efforts to modernize service delivery and enhance accessibility. Through the platform, employers and employees can carry out a wide range of labor-related transactions online without the need to visit service centers in person. This approach is designed to streamline administrative processes, reduce waiting times, and improve the overall user experience. Officials emphasized that the digital gateway enables users to complete transactions swiftly and securely through the ministry's official website. By providing a comprehensive range of services in one integrated platform, the system supports both businesses and workers in managing labor-related procedures with greater ease and flexibility. The ministry noted that the availability of more than 325 digital services demonstrates the scale of the platform's capabilities. These services cover numerous procedures and administrative requirements, helping users carry out their transactions remotely while maintaining efficiency and accuracy. In addition, the digital services are available around the clock, allowing users to access them 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This continuous accessibility ensures that employers and workers can complete their transactions at any time and from any location, whether through computers or mobile devices. The digital platform is also designed to improve convenience and speed in completing official procedures. With simplified interfaces and streamlined workflows, users can complete their transactions faster, making the system both practical and user-friendly. Officials further stressed that the Integrated Digital Gateway reflects the ministry's broader strategy to support digital government initiatives in Qatar. By embracing technology-driven solutions, the ministry seeks to enhance service efficiency, support the needs of employers and workers, and contribute to the country's ongoing digital transformation efforts. The ministry encouraged employers and workers to take advantage of the platform's services by accessing them through the official website. The system allows users to manage their labor-related transactions anytime and from anywhere, reinforcing the ministry's message of "no stress and no queues" when completing administrative procedures digitally.

PTA Gives Go-Ahead for Telenor, Ufone Merger

The Pakistan Telecommunications Authority (PTA) has granted technical approval for the merger of Telenor Pakistan and Ufone, and the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) will be informed of the development. Since the Pakistan Telecommunication Company Ltd (PTCL) is a listed company and Ufone is its key subsidiary, the company secretary will inform the PSX that Ufone was technically a part of PTCL. Meanwhile, a senior PTCL official, responding to Dawn's query, stated that no further approvals from the board were needed, as the required permissions for the takeover and merger of Telenor

Pakistan had already been granted. "Legal approvals are the next steps, and for that, an application for amalgamation will be filed in the Islamabad High Court soon," the official added. The amalgamation takes up to four weeks to complete, and matters related to court cases are cleared during the process. "This is a legal requirement to check if the parties concerned do not have any litigation related to individuals, bank loans, tax authorities, consumers or other telcos in this case," said a senior PTCL executive, adding that during the process the input is obtained from the State Bank, Federal Board of Revenue and legal departments from both the Telenor Pakistan as well as the PTCL. Meanwhile, the NOC granted by the PTA allows Ufone to implement the integration process with Telenor Pakistan. The backend technical teams of both companies will begin to converge on the spectrum and reduce the number of telecom towers. The merged company of Telenor Pakistan and Ufone has around 26,000 telecom towers, many of which are located in close vicinity. While the newly merged company can shut down such towers, the PTA has set conditions for towers shared by other telcos, including Jazz and Zong. The PTA has also imposed another restriction: any franchisee must be given at least six months' notice before their contract is terminated. The existing Telenor SIM number will continue on the Ufone network. Currently, there are around 202m mobile phone subscribers, including 74.19 million for Jazz and 53.90m for Zong. The total number of mobile subscribers for the merged company will be around 72.45m. However, it is expected that the number will drop by 10pc as many subscribers have SIMs from both Ufone and Telenor, and after the merger, these subscribers will shift to Jazz or Zong networks.

Oman Leads GCC Digital Gains

Oman has emerged as one of the strongest digital climbers in the Gulf, leading regional gains in the latest International Digital Competitiveness Assessment (IDCA) 2026 report, which tracks progress in digital readiness, infrastructure and policy effectiveness across global economies. The report shows that Oman advanced 16 places globally between 2022 and 2025, placing the Sultanate of Oman among the top 25 fastest-improving countries worldwide. This upward movement reflects sustained progress in digital infrastructure rollout, institutional reforms and investment in emerging technologies, including data centers and artificial intelligence. Within the Gulf Cooperation Council, Oman ranked second overall, with a digital readiness score of 47 out of 100, ahead of Saudi Arabia (44), Qatar (42), Kuwait (41) and Bahrain (35). Only the UAE ranked higher in the GCC with a score of 53, reinforcing Oman's position as a leading digital reformer among its regional peers. At the broader Caucasus and Middle East level, Oman placed fifth, following Georgia (64), Armenia (59), the UAE (53) and Jordan (48). The ranking positions the Sultanate of Oman ahead of Azerbaijan and Saudi Arabia (both 44), as well as Egypt and Qatar (42), highlighting Oman's relative strength in digital advancement despite its smaller population base. IDCA's assessment notes that the Middle East benefits from substantial investment capacity derived from the energy sector, but also faces structural challenges linked to fossil fuel dependence. Greenhouse gas emissions and economic efficiency penalties associated with hydrocarbons weigh on overall digital readiness scores, particularly in metrics tied to sustainability and energy intensity. Despite this, the report points to strong growth potential across the region, especially in data center and AI infrastructure. Oman is identified alongside Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and Jordan as countries with active plans to expand digital and AI ecosystems, initiatives that could significantly raise their global profile in data infrastructure over the coming decade. Saudi Arabia, for example, already operates a large data center backbone that consumes less than one per cent of its national grid, leaving substantial headroom for expansion. Smaller GCC states, including Oman, are pursuing parallel strategies focused on scalable digital infrastructure, cloud services and AI deployment. Oman's improved performance aligns with national priorities under Oman Vision 2040, which emphasizes economic diversification, digital government and the development of knowledge-based industries. Over recent years, the Sultanate of Oman has accelerated broadband expansion, strengthened digital public services and encouraged private-sector participation in technology investments. While Oman's score of 47 indicates that further progress is required to close the gap with global digital leaders, the 16-place climb underscores a clear positive trajectory. Analysts note that continued momentum will depend on regulatory agility, skills development and the integration of digital technologies across logistics, manufacturing, energy and services.

IDCA

Digital Readiness Rankings of GCC Nations

Country	Score (0-100)
UAE	53
Oman	47
Saudi Arabia	44
Qatar	42
Kuwait	41
Bahrain	35

Saudi Solutions Signs US$37 Million Computing Deal with Aramco

Arabian Internet and Communications Services Company (solutions by stc) has secured a $37 million contract with Saudi Aramco to develop high-performance computing (HPC) infrastructure for its upstream operations. The one-year agreement focuses on building advanced supercomputing capabilities to support critical functions such as oil and gas exploration and reservoir analysis. The project is expected to enhance Aramco's data processing, modelling, and simulation capabilities, enabling more efficient and accurate decision-making. The financial impact of the contract will begin reflecting in solutions by stc's balance sheet from Q1 2027. The deal highlights the growing role of advanced computing and digital infrastructure in the energy sector, as companies increasingly rely on high-performance systems to optimize operations and drive innovation.

Saudi Arabia Leads Banking Cyber Readiness in the Middle East and Africa

A recent technical report revealed a significant escalation in cyber risks facing financial institutions across the Middle East and Africa, driven by the accelerating pace of digital transformation and the expanding reliance on cloud infrastructure and advanced technologies. The report indicated a global increase of 1300% in fraud operations based on Deepfake technology during 2024, with a growing trend toward targeting digital banking services and mobile banking through phishing attacks and AI-driven digital identity impersonation. The report titled "Cybersecurity for the Banking Sector in the Middle East and Africa 2026", issued by Fortinet, the global cybersecurity leader driving the convergence of networking and security, explains that the threat landscape and regulatory environment within the financial sector are undergoing rapid transformation due to the growing complexity of digital threats and the expanding reliance on third-party provider ecosystems to support core operations. This has prompted regulatory authorities to strengthen operational resilience requirements in order to support financial stability, protect consumer confidence, and mitigate systemic risks associated with the increasing dependence on digital systems. The report pointed out that the expansion of Saudi banks in digitizing core services, along with the adoption of Banking-as-a-Service models and cloud computing, has increased reliance on third-party service providers, which has broadened the scope of cyber threats and prompted tighter oversight by the Saudi Central Bank and the National Cybersecurity Authority. The report also showed that emerging technologies, led by artificial intelligence, play a dual role within the financial sector. While they contribute to strengthening advanced cyber defense capabilities, they are also associated with the emergence of sophisticated digital threats including deepfake attacks, automated phishing, and digital identity theft. The report highlighted the rapid growth of sovereign cloud infrastructure across Gulf Cooperation Council countries and several African nations, driven by data localization requirements and national security considerations. The report estimated the global sovereign cloud market at approximately $154.7 billion in 2025, with projections indicating it will reach $823.9 billion by 2032. The report also noted the emergence of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a major regional hub in this field, as global cloud service providers commit to establishing cloud regions and service centers within the Kingdom to meet data localization requirements and strengthen protections associated with national security. Regarding cyber readiness indicators, the report highlighted that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia achieved the full score (20/20) in the Global Cybersecurity Index 2024 issued by the International Telecommunication Union, placing it among only 13 countries in the Middle East and Africa classified within the highest global tiers. This ranking reflects the scale of national investments in cybersecurity governance, digital infrastructure development, and strengthening the resilience of the financial sector in alignment with the objectives of Vision 2030. The report explained that AI-powered cybersecurity tools help financial institutions detect attacks more quickly and stop fraud operations in real time, in addition to enhancing the protection of customer data. These tools also enable the automation of routine tasks within cybersecurity teams, supporting operational efficiency and reducing the pressure caused by the shortage of specialized talent.

Pakistan Launches Landmark 5G Spectrum Auction to Double National Capacity

The Government of Pakistan officially commenced the auction for 5G spectrum, March 10, 2026, marking a pivotal transition in the country's digital landscape. Inaugurated by Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb and IT Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja, the process involves the three qualified telecom operators: Jazz, Zong, and Ufone. The auction offers approximately 600 MHz of spectrum across several bands, including the 700 MHz, 2600 MHz, and 3500 MHz frequencies. To ensure a robust rollout, the government has made it mandatory for each participant to acquire at least 100 MHz, a move designed to double the spectrum currently available in the national system and resolve persistent network congestion. Beyond the technological upgrade, the government has introduced significant policy shifts to encourage investment, most notably the abolition of "Right of Way" charges for fiber deployment, which previously cost operators roughly Rs. 36,000 per kilometer. The initial phase of the rollout will target federal and provincial capitals—Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, and Quetta—with services expected to go live within three to six months. While 5G takes center stage, the IT Ministry emphasized that a primary short-term goal remains enhancing 4G quality and coverage, with visible improvements for existing mobile users expected within the next four to five months.

Pakistan's Telecom Revenues Surpass Rs 1,075 Billion as 4G Users Near 150 Million

Pakistan's telecom sector delivered strong performance between 2022-23 and 2024-25, with total revenues reaching Rs 1,075 billion, according to a written reply submitted to the Senate by the Cabinet Division. Broadband penetration increased from 53.6 percent to 60.6 percent, marking a 13.1 percent rise. Total broadband subscribers grew 18.1 percent to reach 150 million, driven largely by a 26.4 percent jump in 4G users, which climbed from 111.9 million to 141.4 million. Mobile subscribers rose 3.6 percent to 197.8 million nationwide. Meanwhile, mobile data consumption surged 30.4 percent, increasing from 10,850 petabytes to 14,153 petabytes, reflecting higher digital engagement across the country. Network infrastructure also expanded, with operational cell sites increasing 9 percent to 58,423, improving coverage and capacity across urban and rural regions. Financial indicators showed robust growth. Sector revenues rose 31.6 percent to Rs 1,075 billion, while overall investment increased 8.8 percent. Foreign direct investment inflows jumped 67.2 percent, signaling renewed investor confidence. Average revenue per user improved 33.6 percent, rising from Rs 229 to Rs 306 per month. The telecom sector contributed Rs 402 billion to the national exchequer, up 17.9 percent. The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority continues to regulate spectrum allocation, ensure compliance with licensing obligations, promote competition, protect consumer interests, and oversee universal service commitments. The report also noted a 101.5 percent increase in local device assembly, underscoring progress in domestic telecom manufacturing capacity.

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SATELLITE NEWS

Axian Telecom Partners with AST SpaceMobile for Pan-African D2D

Axian Telecom, the parent company of pan-African telecom group Yas, says it is partnering with AST SpaceMobile to deliver direct-to-device (D2D) satellite services across Yas' markets in sub-Saharan Africa. Under the announced partnership, AST SpaceMobile's LEO satellite network will be integrated with Yas' core infrastructure across its markets, enabling seamless connectivity for voice, video, data, and internet services. Both companies will also jointly develop commercial offerings for consumers, enterprises, IoT, maritime, aviation, and emergency response, with Yas handling local distribution, regulatory coordination, and customer activation through a one-click SpaceMobile service. Yas currently operates in Tanzania, Madagascar, Togo, Senegal, Uganda, Kenya, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Comoros, Malawi, Réunion and Mayotte. Axian Telecom CEO Hassan Jaber said its partnership with AST SpaceMobile will give it the ability to connect more people and businesses outside of city centers where mobile coverage is typically concentrated. "Partnering with AST SpaceMobile gives us the ability to close that gap in a way that was not possible before," he said in a statement. "Their technology […] works with the phones people already own, which means we can reach underserved communities without asking them to do anything differently." The launch of commercial services will depend partly on securing the necessary regulatory clearances in each market, and also on AST SpaceMobile's own commercial launch schedule. AST SpaceMobile currently has five BlueBird LEO satellites in orbit, and aims to deploy between 45 and 60 more satellites this year. The Axian partnership is AST SpaceMobile's second major pan-African deal. In December 2024, it signed a ten-year commercial agreement with Vodafone Group to roll out its services in Vodafone's markets worldwide. In Africa, that includes Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique and South Africa. AST Spacemobile has also signed partnership deals with Safaricom in Kenya and Uganda Telecom.

Kenyan Regulator Launches Interference Audit for Starlink Direct-to-Cell Expansion

The Communications Authority of Kenya (CA) has initiated a technical audit of Starlink's Direct-to-Cell (D2C) technology to determine if the satellite service will disrupt existing mobile networks. The move follows an application by Airtel Kenya to utilize Starlink's Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellites to provide connectivity to customers in remote areas where traditional cell towers are unavailable. At the heart of the audit is the technical challenge of "spectrum sharing." Unlike some satellite services that use dedicated frequencies, Starlink's D2C service operates on the same spectrum used by terrestrial 3G, 4G, and 5G networks. While this allows users to connect via their standard smartphones without special hardware, it creates a risk of interference where satellite signals might "drown out" local cell towers. The CA's investigation aims to establish strict geographic and power limits for these transmissions to ensure a seamless co-existence. Airtel Africa, which partnered with SpaceX in late 2025, plans to roll out this service across 14 African markets once regulatory hurdles are cleared. The CA's findings, expected by mid-2026, will set the precedent for how D2D (Direct-to-Device) satellite technology is governed in Kenya, balancing the need for universal coverage with the stability of established urban networks.

EXMAR Enhances Fleet Connectivity with Inmarsat Maritime's NexusWave

Inmarsat Maritime, a Viasat company, is rolling out NexusWave across EXMAR's growing fleet of gas carriers to meet the Belgian shipping company's evolving commercial and crew connectivity demands. Operating globally in high-demand environments, EXMAR is seeking to close the gap between its ship and shore-based teams while enhancing seafarer welfare on board its vessels. NexusWave fully managed connectivity service intelligently bonds multiple network underlays (GX Ka-band, LEO, LTE and L-band) to help ensure a consistent uninterrupted connection. For EXMAR, this preserves business continuity and seafarer well-being, preventing costly operational delays and supporting crew retention. With NexusWave now active on part of the fleet, the company is already seeing enhanced ship-to-shore collaboration and more reliable access to business-critical applications, such as seamless video conferencing and real-time communications. Crew welfare remains central to EXMAR, and seafarers get access to free, unlimited data to enjoy in their spare time. EXMAR also reports that upgrading to NexusWave will reduce fleetwide operating expenditure by 20% by consolidating connectivity under a single provider. Maintaining consistent security across its vessels and shore-based offices was another important consideration for EXMAR. NexusWave is designed to enable seamless integration with EXMAR's existing enterprise IT and security infrastructure, delivering secure-by-design connectivity with end-to-end encryption and data splitting across the network underlays, to keep EXMAR's data safe. Before deploying NexusWave across EXMAR's operational vessels, both engineering teams conducted comprehensive configuration testing in a ship laboratory environment, completing validation within a single day and enabling rapid fleet-wide rollout. David de Roock, IT Director, EXMAR said that Inmarsat's understanding of our business needs, its round-the-clock global support offering, and its commitment to developing services in line with evolving requirements were all key factors in our decision to upgrade our fleet to NexusWave. The solution gives us the reliability, performance and security we need to operate efficiently, while also meaningfully enhancing life onboard for our crews. We are pleased to extend our longstanding relationship with Inmarsat as we prepare our vessels for the challenges and opportunities of a fast-evolving industry. Ab Argam, Senior Sales Manager, EMEA, Inmarsat Maritime said that EXMAR's decision to deploy NexusWave across its growing fleet of gas carriers underscores the trust and reliability we've built together for more than 20 years. This is just the beginning, and I'm proud to continue our partnership to unlock future NexusWave enhancements with EXMAR that grow alongside their fleet and future ambitions.

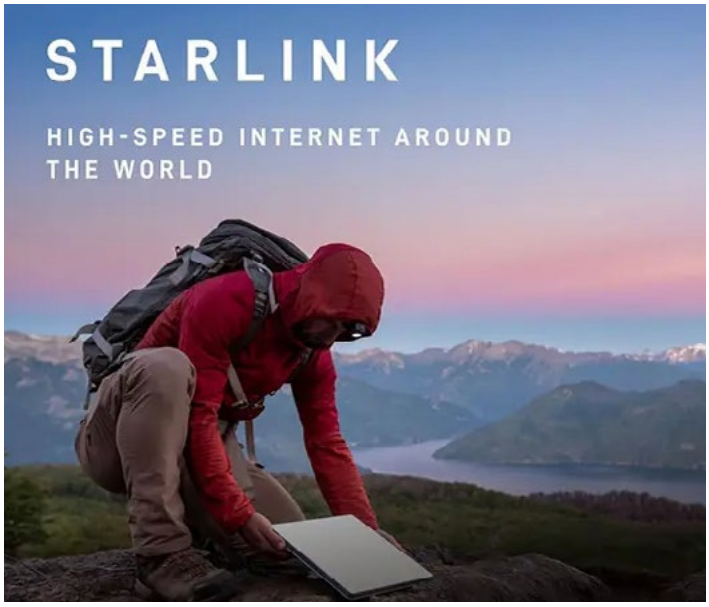
Russia Launches Low-Orbit Satellites in Bid to One Day Rival Starlink

Russia said it had launched 16 low-orbit satellites as Moscow seeks to build a rival to Elon Musk's Starlink network. Russia remains far behind Starlink, which since its first launch of operational satellites in 2019 has grown to more than 10,000 satellites in orbit. Bureau 1440, the Russian aerospace firm developing a low-Earth-orbit satellite system for global broadband data delivery, said it launched its first batch of 16 operational satellites. "The launch of the first devices of the target group is a transition from experiment to the creation of a communication service," it said in a statement. The Soviet Union led early milestones in the space race, launching the Sputnik 1 satellite in 1957 and sending Yuri Gagarin into space in 1961 as the first human to orbit Earth. But after the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Russia's space program struggled with funding shortages, corruption and complaints from young engineers about poor management. According to Ashlee Vance's 2015 biography of Musk, Russian officials dismissed Musk in 2002 as not credible, spurring him to find a way to undercut Russia's space launch fees.

Globalsat Group Announces Reseller Agreement with Amazon Leo

Globalsat Group, a provider of satellite connectivity and communications solutions, has announced a reseller agreement with Amazon Leo, Amazon's low Earth orbit (LEO) satellite network. Under the agreement, Globalsat Group will serve as an authorized reseller, bringing high-performance satellite internet to enterprise customers throughout the Americas. The agreement combines Amazon's next-generation satellite technology with Globalsat Group's regional expertise, enabling reliable connectivity for businesses operating in remote locations across the region. Amazon Leo is designed to provide high-speed, low-latency broadband connectivity to customers beyond the reach of traditional networks. Powered by a constellation of thousands of satellites, Amazon Leo will serve residential, business and government customers. These customers will connect to the network using one of several compact, high-performance antennas: Leo Nano, designed for mobility and basic connectivity; Leo Pro, for standard business and residential use; and Leo Ultra, the most powerful model in the line, capable of delivering download speeds of up to 1 Gbps and upload speeds of up to 400 Mbps – capacity that supports demanding enterprise applications. Globalsat Group will offer Amazon Leo as part of its portfolio of connectivity and communications solutions, tailored to the sectors it has served across the region, including mining, maritime, agriculture, forestry, energy, oil & gas and industrial operations. As the Satnews website reports, the service, which officially rebranded from Project Kuiper to Amazon Leo in November 2025, has significantly accelerated its deployment schedule over the last six months. It adds that the service's native integration with cloud computing business Amazon Web Services (AWS) is expected to be a primary differentiator, allowing enterprises to establish private network interconnects that bypass the public internet for enhanced security and lower latency. However, service across the Americas may not be imminent. Broader service rollouts, starting later in 2026, will focus on five key markets: The United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Canada. Coverage is expected to expand towards the Equator throughout 2027 as the constellation reaches its mid-stage deployment milestones.

SpaceX's Starlink Gets Nod for Satellite Internet in Vietnam



Vietnam's government has allowed SpaceX to launch its Starlink satellite internet service in the country, state media reported recently. The report said the Ministry of Science and Technology granted Starlink's local unit a license to provide both fixed and mobile satellite internet services. The company was also granted a license to use radio frequencies and radio equipment. The ministry did not immediately respond to a request for confirmation outside business hours. The approval came ahead of an expected visit next week of Vietnam's top leader To Lam to the United States to attend the inaugural meeting of U.S. President Donald Trump's Board of Peace initiative to address global conflicts. The trip has not been officially announced. Last year, Vietnam's government said it would allow SpaceX to operate its internet service on a trial basis. Local media said it was not clear when Starlink would launch its services in Vietnam. SpaceX did not immediately respond to a request for comment on a weekend. Vietnam and the U.S. are negotiating a trade deal after Washington imposed 20% tariffs on Vietnamese goods in August. The two sides held their sixth round of talks earlier this month, but have not announced an agreement.

Strategic Partnership Promises Easier Access to Advanced Satellite Technology

Satcoms company ST Engineering iDirect, has announced a strategic partnership with Q-KON, a premier African satellite engineering and service provider, to launch an initiative called Intuition Unbound across Africa. This collaboration, say the partners, will significantly lower barriers to entry for Q-KON and its customers, enabling businesses and organizations of all sizes to access premium satellite ground technology while accelerating time to market. Q-KON will provide satellite capacity and teleport facilities in South Africa, while ST Engineering iDirect will deliver Intuition Unbound's flexible, scalable and secure satellite ground connectivity. This model, it is claimed, will foster a more competitive market landscape and establish a strong foundation for new service providers and enterprises to join the ecosystem and build differentiated value-added services. Intuition Unbound leverages scalable infrastructure, advanced virtual network operator (VNO) capabilities, and global bandwidth management technologies to redefine how connectivity is accessed and delivered. Built on an as-a-service model, Intuition Unbound delivers flexible, scalable, and secure satellite ground connectivity without the heavy upfront capex commitments traditionally required. Through the partnership with Q-KON, ST Engineering iDirect says it will provide predictable and transparent pricing and deliver SLA-backed performance with enterprise-grade compliance and security. Dr. Dawie de Wet, Group CEO of Q-KON calls the partnership "a game-changer for our customers" that "maps a way forward to deliver sustainable, competitive GEO satellite services". Brian Jakins, SVP Global Sales at ST Engineering iDirect, adds: "By making advanced satellite technology accessible to smaller providers and emerging-market customers, we are unlocking innovation and growth where connectivity is essential. Our partnership with Q-KON represents a major step toward making premium satellite ground networks accessible to all." Together with Q-KON, ST Engineering iDirect is expected to commence deployment of Intuition Unbound across Africa by mid-2026. ST Engineering iDirect plans to expand Intuition Unbound into additional regions globally, extending the benefits of flexible, scalable, and secured satellite ground connectivity worldwide.

Orange and Partners to Demo D2D Satellite Connectivity in Romania

Telecommunications operator Orange has announced the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with AST SpaceMobile and Satellite Connect Europe, related to collaboration on direct-to-device (D2D) technology in relevant Orange markets. Luxembourg-headquartered Satellite Connect Europe is a joint venture between Vodafone and AST SpaceMobile, created to deliver seamless, secure and resilient D2D satellite connectivity for European mobile network operators. AST SpaceMobile says it is building the first and only space-based cellular broadband network accessible directly by everyday smartphones, Through this initiative, Orange intends to complement its terrestrial network coverage even in the most remote areas and to enhance its service resilience. In particular, Orange and Satellite Connect Europe will conduct D2D satellite connectivity demonstrations in Romania focusing on voice, SMS and data in the second half of 2026. In addition, the collaboration includes exploring specific measures to support European security requirements and studying integration into a core network managed by Orange. The agreement, says Orange, fully aligns with its new strategic plan, Trust the Future, which places trust at the core of the Group's services and operating model. Orange aims to provide always-available connectivity to its customers through the complementarity of Orange's best-in-class terrestrial (mobile and broadband) networks, and satellite connectivity. This, it says, has already been demonstrated in France with the commercial launch of the Satellite Message offer for SMS exchange in December 2025 – described as a first in Europe for a telecom operator. Building on 60 years of experience in the satellite sector, Orange says it continues to collaborate with the entire satellite ecosystem, covering all orbits. The Group plays a pivotal role in the provision of satellite services across consumer, enterprise and wholesale markets. In addition, Orange offers its services to satellite operators, thanks to its teleports and gateways. It also meets the interconnection needs of satellite operators by providing them with terrestrial segments or integrating their gateways.

Polish Airline Chooses Viasat for Internet Access

LOT Polish Airlines, the flag carrier of Poland, says it has begun rolling out internet access on its long-haul fleet – with help from global communications company Viasat. The Ka-band-supported in-flight connectivity (IFC) service is currently available on one Boeing 787 Dreamliner plane. It will be offered on two more aircraft by the end of April. The new IFC offering is supplied by Viasat's Amara connectivity service. LOT signed with Viasat in mid-2024 to equip 15 Boeing aircraft in its fleet with in-flight Wi-Fi as part of a major upgrade that includes improvements to the internal cabin design and seat replacements. On its launch in April last year Viasat described Amara as its next-generation solution for commercial aviation. Powering this solution are innovations in core satellite network design, hardware advancements, and a suite of digital products coupled with additional features, including smart network enhancements and application-level data linking to satellites in multiple orbits, Viasat says Amara is designed with powerful scalability so that airlines can differentiate a future-proof onboard passenger experience. The airline is supplying the service as a complimentary offering to business class and members of the European Miles & More loyalty program. Paid access is available in two tiers: one geared toward messaging and another (at a higher price) geared towards streaming. Viasat has signed new contracts or expansion deals with a number of airlines in Europe and the Middle East this year, including Lufthansa, Quantas, Korean Air and Royal Jordanian Airlines.

Starlink and MultiMax Seal Alliance in the USA to Bring Satellite Internet to Venezuela

Following a high-level meeting held in the city of Miami, United States, Starlink and MultiMax formalized a strategic alliance in which it was agreed that the conglomerate led by Venezuelan businessman Nasar Dagga would become the first official distributors of satellite internet in Venezuela. The agreement, materialized in the heart of Florida, designates MultiMax as the authorized channel to bring Starlink kits to Venezuelan homes and businesses. Consequently, the dependence on informal imports and international roaming is eliminated. Thus, the brand's presence is formalized with local support and a robust logistical network. It is important to remember that the satellite internet network owned by SpaceX announced the start of its operations in the South American country last February 3, 2026. In this way, it marks a milestone in the innovation and technological integration of the region. "This alliance with Starlink is not just a distribution contract, it is the validation that Venezuela is fertile ground for cutting-edge technology. In Miami, we consolidate a bridge that will allow no area of the country to be left behind; we are connecting Venezuelan talent with the opportunities of the entire world through the most advanced satellite network on the planet," pointed out Nasar Ramadan Dagga Mujamad. This strategy, according to sources involved in the negotiation, is part of a broader vision of digital modernization. One of the most notable benefits is the possibility of high-speed connection in rural and difficult-to-access areas, such as high schools located outside the city. In these rural areas, traditional connectivity is usually scarce, so by having a service that does not depend on cabling, the connection would be guaranteed. In this way, students could access global learning platforms, digital libraries, and even online training programs on some innovative topic. Thus, teachers would be training a new generation of professionals with greater competencies to face the global labor market in the future. "Starlink is ideal for areas where connectivity has been unreliable or completely unavailable. People all over the world are using Starlink to get access to education, health services, and even communication support during natural disasters," indicates the website of Elon Musk's company. The Starlink company decided to cut the price of its residential service in the country by 50%, a strategy aimed at massifying the use of satellite internet in Venezuelan homes by the hand of its official distributor, MultiMax. This measure also benefits those who already own the equipment under the "Itinerant" modality, as they can easily migrate their accounts to the Residential plan. The company confirmed that the change is made directly from the user settings, allowing current customers to access the new economic benefit immediately.

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AI NEWS

Saudi Arabia Designates 2026 as the "Year of AI" To Cement Tech Leadership

The Saudi Council of Ministers, led by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, has officially declared 2026 the Year of AI. This strategic designation is a core component of Saudi Vision 2030, designed to accelerate the Kingdom's transition into a top-tier global technology hub. Building on its 14th-place ranking in the 2025 Global AI Index, the initiative will focus on six pillars: aspiration, skills, policies, investment, innovation, and ecosystem growth. The year will be marked by the rollout of a new national visual identity—merging the traditional green of the Saudi flag with a technological blue—symbolizing the fusion of Arabic culture with digital progress.

Key Infrastructure and Human Capital Milestone

- Massive Infrastructure: The initiative is supported by the Shaheen III supercomputer and the Hexagon Data Center, a 480-megawatt facility that stands as the world's largest government-run data center.
- Data Integration: The National Data Lake has successfully connected over 430 government systems, creating a unified foundation for sovereign AI training and public service automation.

- Talent Development: To fuel this growth, Saudi Arabia has already trained 11,000 AI specialists. Its SAMAI initiative has reached over one million participants, ensuring a broad base of AI literacy across the population.
- Ethics and Governance: As the first Arab member of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence, the Kingdom also hosts the UNESCO-backed International Center for Artificial Intelligence

UAE Accelerates AI Native Transformation as Quantum Computing Enters Strategic Sectors

The UAE's rapid move toward embedding artificial intelligence across its economy is setting a new global benchmark for digital transformation. As the country strengthens its position as a hub for advanced technologies, enterprises across government, telecom, and finance are shifting from isolated AI use cases to fully AI native architectures, an expert said. Atul Soneja, Chief Operating Officer of Tech Mahindra, said the UAE's maturity in embracing new technologies makes this transition both natural and inevitable. "UAE organizations have long led in global technology adoption," he noted, adding that the nation's digital infrastructure and progressive policies are enabling enterprises "to scale AI faster than many global peers." Government departments, he explained, are already piloting autonomous citizen service orchestration, while telecom operators are building self optimizing networks. Financial institutions are advancing real time risk management and adaptive fraud detection systems — early indicators of a regional shift toward intelligent, continuously learning enterprise models. Rather than displacing workers, Soneja believes the technology will elevate human contribution by shifting focus from routine execution to judgment and strategic oversight. "By 2030, humans will no longer simply use AI; we will augment it," he said. In this new model, employees collaborate with intelligent systems, guiding and refining AI outcomes while ensuring governance and ethical alignment remain intact. The UAE's long term investments in talent development and future ready skills, he added, place the country at an advantage as enterprises redesign workflows around human AI co creation. Quantum computing, meanwhile, is emerging as the next frontier — one that could give UAE industries a decisive edge in solving problems that classical computers cannot efficiently handle. Soneja expects the first wave of adoption in sectors with heavy computational demands, including government, financial services, telecom, energy, and advanced manufacturing. "Think of it this way," he explained, "while AI acts as the brain, quantum computing will be the specialized engine providing the raw power." Over the coming years, he expects quantum systems to be "selectively applied to massive problems" such as logistics optimization, derivatives modelling, and even accelerating AI training. These hybrid quantum classical setups, he said, will offer enterprises a "disproportionate advantage" in tackling complex, high value challenges. Yet as AI and quantum systems become embedded in national infrastructure, responsible governance will define the next era of UAE innovation. Soneja emphasized that trust will be central to the country's digital evolution. "Enterprises that can consistently demonstrate ethical, responsible, and accountable AI practices at scale will earn not only long term confidence but also a meaningful and sustainable competitive advantage."

5G in MEA

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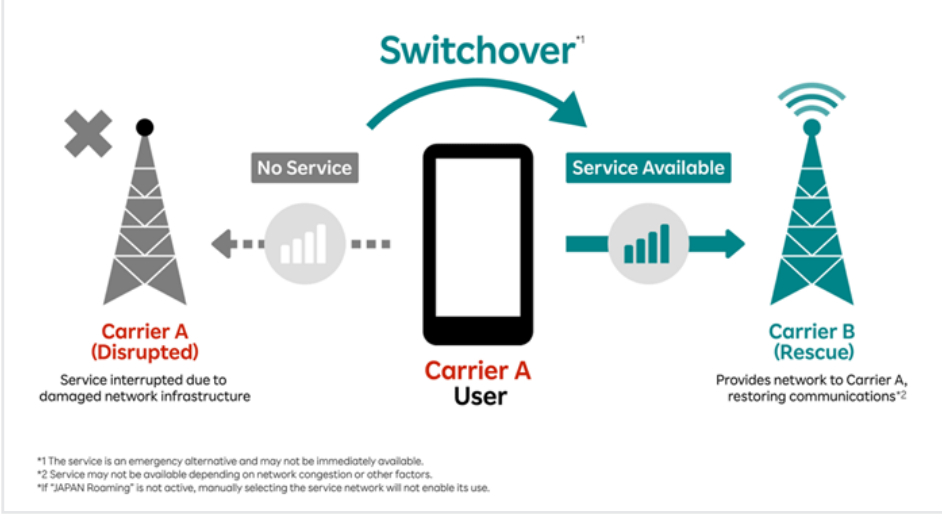
WHOLESALE NEWS

Japan's Five Leading Operators Team Up to Launch Nationwide Emergency Roaming Service

Japan's five leading mobile carriers – NTT DOCOMO, KDDI, Okinawa Cellular Telephone Company, SoftBank and Rakuten Mobile – announced the launch of JAPAN Roaming, a nationwide emergency roaming service available from April 1, 2026. JAPAN Roaming enables users to temporarily connect to another carrier's 4G LTE network if their primary service is disrupted by large-scale disasters or major outages. The initiative aims to ensure critical mobile communication remains available to people when they need it most. Mobile services are an essential lifeline for daily life, and ensuring continuous connectivity during large-scale disasters, such as earthquakes and typhoons, or significant infrastructure failures, is critical. While the five mobile carriers have promoted landlines, public payphones and free Wi-Fi services, including "00000JAPAN," as alternative communication methods during such incidents, maintaining connectivity for customers without access to these alternatives has remained a significant challenge.



EU 'Roam Like at Home' Moves Closer for Western Balkans, Deepening Integration Push

The European Commission proposed opening negotiations with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia to integrate them into the EU's "Roaming like at home" regime. The idea is for both EU and Western Balkan citizens to be able to travel, make calls, send text messages, and use mobile data without additional roaming costs," said European Commission spokesperson Ricardo Cardoso, answering journalists' questions during the daily press briefing. "Roaming like at home" is the European Union program that allows EU citizens to use their phones abroad in other EU/EEA countries under the same conditions as in their own country, without additional costs for calls, text messages, and data. It has been in force since June 15, 2017, and has been renewed until 2032. Getting on board requires a number of steps: it begins with the proposed negotiating mandate, with which the Commission requests the Council's authorization to open negotiations with Western Balkans partners, the spokesperson explained. Once adopted by the Council, the Commission will negotiate bilateral agreements with each of the Western Balkan partners. "Naturally, the prerequisite for accessing the EU roaming area and participating in the Roam like at home regime is full alignment with the relevant roaming legislation. This part is quite complex, and the timing depends on the willingness of each Western Balkan partner to conclude bilateral agreements with the EU and ensure full alignment with the relevant legislation," he concluded.

Zain Omantel International and Zong Partner to Expand Middle East–Pakistan Interconnect and Roaming Corridor

Zain Omantel International (ZOI) and Zong, a subsidiary of China Mobile Pakistan, have partnered to expand voice interconnect and roaming services between the Middle East and Pakistan. The partnership builds on an existing interconnect relationship where ZOI carries Zain Group and Omantel retail Pakistan traffic for Zong. The two companies will grow their cooperation across voice and mobility services and move toward consolidating roaming under a single group framework to simplify operations and strengthen commercial alignment across the corridor. Pakistan is one of South Asia's largest telecommunications markets, with more than 200 million mobile subscribers nationwide. Zong serves over 53 million subscribers and operates one of Pakistan's most extensive 4G networks. Its parent company, China Mobile, is the world's largest mobile operator by subscriber base, serving over one billion customers globally and operating one of the industry's most expansive international network infrastructures. "This partnership reflects our focus on quality mobility services and enabling customers growth," said Sohail Qadir, Chief Executive Officer at ZOI. "Pakistan is a strategically important market for the Gulf region. By aligning with Zong and the wider China Mobile ecosystem, we are strengthening service quality, simplifying governance and creating a scalable model for voice and mobility services across one of the region's highest volume routes." ZOI carries more than 10 billion international voice minutes across 200 roaming countries. It has the number one ranked ASN IP network in the Middle East and investments in more than 22 subsea cable systems globally. "ZOI is a trusted partner that understands our operational and commercial priorities," said Mr Khurram Ishaq, Head of International Business at Zong. "It delivers consistent, high quality mobility services across the Middle East and provides the reliability and responsiveness we need to support our international growth. This partnership gives us confidence that our customers benefit from stable interconnect performance and a framework built for scale." Traffic between the Middle East and Pakistan continues to grow, driven by retail demand and cross-border mobility. ZOI and Zong will standardize how they manage voice and roaming traffic across the Middle East–Pakistan route.

Free Roaming Now Available for Globe Customers in the Middle East

In response to increased tensions in the Middle East, Globe Telecom is launching a free roaming relief package for Filipinos living in a few Middle Eastern nations. Users who qualify for Globe Prepaid, TM, and Postpaid services in Saudi Arabia (stc, Zain), United Arab Emirates (du & e), Bahrain (Batelco, Zain, Bahrain), Qatar (Ooredoo, Vodafone), and Kuwait (Ooredoo Kuwait, stc Kuwait) will obtain 1GB of data and 15 minutes of calls and 15 SMS which will remain active for seven days. Users will receive automatic package delivery which will send them SMS messages for confirmation. Globe announced its customers in Iran who use MTN Iran cell as their partner will receive billing adjustments and load assistance. The move follows escalating conflict involving the United States, Israel, and Iran, with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. confirming the first reported Filipino casualty.

Ghana Launches Shared 5G Network as Government Shifts to Hybrid Model

Next Gen Infraco (NGIC), Ghana's wholesale 4G/5G infrastructure operator, announced March 3 that it has begun commercial operations after receiving approval from the country's telecom regulator. Mobile operators and internet service providers can now connect to its network, which is currently available in parts of Accra, Kumasi, Tamale and several other key areas, with nationwide expansion planned in stages. "Today, Ghana moves from 5G ambition to 5G execution. The shared backbone is commercially active and positioned to scale," NGIC Chief Executive Officer Tenu Awoonor said in a statement. He added that the model allows the country to coordinate national infrastructure investment while preserving competition and innovation at the retail service level. Launched in May 2024, NGIC was granted a ten-year exclusive license to deploy and operate a shared 5G infrastructure. But the commercial rollout was delayed several times. Facing repeated setbacks, the government set a deadline of late December 2025, warning that the terms of the agreement could be renegotiated if the launch did not move forward. By late February 2026, authorities announced they were withdrawing NGIC's exclusivity and would instead make frequency resources available through a competitive national tender. Telecom operators interested in deploying their own 5G networks will be able to obtain spectrum and licenses independently of the shared national infrastructure. The shift signals a hybrid strategy as the government pushes to expand 5G coverage to 70% of the population by March 2027, when Ghana will mark the 70th anniversary of its independence. NGIC's next phase will focus on expanding its infrastructure nationwide, in line with its licensing obligations and the government's coverage goals. "Achieving 70% coverage within the Ghana @70 timeframe demands coordination and long-term discipline," Awoonor said. "The shared architecture ensures investment is directed toward expanding reach rather than duplicating infrastructure." For now, however, the network's launch does not yet mean consumers can access 5G services. In a recent interview, Edmund Yirenkyi Fianko, director general of the National Communications Authority, said Ghanaians should begin gaining access to 5G services by the end of 2026.

Telco2Techco: Beyond Connectivity, Orchestrating the Intelligent Economies of Middle East and Central Asia Region

A Regional Review of Evolution, Lessons, and the Path Forward in the Middle East and Central Asia

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April 2026

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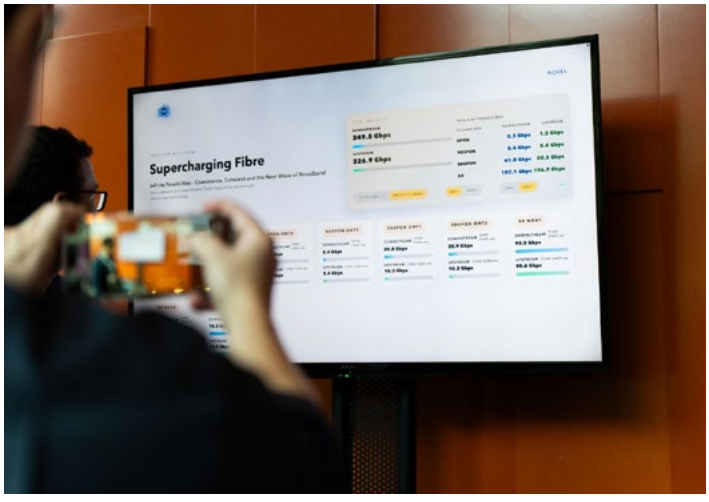
TECHNOLOGY NEWS

NBN Co Demonstrates Multiple Optical Technologies Co-Existing on Present

NBN Co successfully technically-trialed multiple generations of optical technologies over its present-day Fiber to the Premises (FTTP) network, demonstrating that its full fiber infrastructure is capable of supporting growing household and business data demands for decades to come. The lab technical trial, with partner Nokia, showcased multiple optical technologies which when used simultaneously, allowed NBN Co to achieve more than 230 Gigabits per second1 capacity, utilizing full fiber in the lab - with the potential to increase to Terabit rates in similar technical trials in future. The Supercharging Fiber trial took place at the Broadband Forum's Spring Member Meeting, which is being held in Australia for the first time and is being hosted by NBN Co. It successfully demonstrated the use of coherent optics with FTTP access technologies GPON, XGSPON and 50GPON, running at the same time over the same access physical full fiber infrastructure that NBN Co deploys to Australian homes and businesses today. Coherent optics are a type of advanced communications technology typically found within core and data center networks, with vast reach, low latency and massive capacity required to meet ever growing demand. This illustrates how NBN Co could utilize the existing fiber to provide further future-ready connectivity by supporting decades of growing data demand driven by cloud, immersive and next generation digital applications. Guy Scott, Chief Technology Officer, at NBN Co said: "Our Supercharging Fiber technical trial further demonstrates our full fiber technology is future-ready, especially as FTTP is now the dominant technology on nbn's fixed line network. "I'm proud that our existing full fiber infrastructure was able to support multiple generations of technologies, with world first results achieved. "More importantly the trial has successfully demonstrated the capabilities of nbn's world-class FTTP infrastructure and its potential to support ultra-fast speeds for households and business customers in the future. "Homes and businesses across Australia are demanding more data than ever before, and this will only continue to accelerate in coming decades as we see increased adoption and applications of emerging technologies. "Access to high-speed broadband is a critical enabler of productivity, innovation and economic growth and full fiber technology enables that with unmatched reliability, speed and scalability in the nbn residential space. "NBN Co and Nokia are close collaborative partners, and I'm delighted that we were able to work together in achieving these great results." Andrew Cope, Head of Global Sales and Customer Operations for Asia Pacific at Nokia said: "Full fiber remains the fixed network technology for advanced connectivity in the future. This nbn technical trial demonstrated that different optical technologies, including Coherent Optics and 50 GPON, have the capability to operate across a shared FTTP network simultaneously to deliver both consumer and enterprise services without new fiber infrastructure, saving deployment costs and the time to deliver services to customers. Nokia is proud to partner with nbn to deliver another world first technical trial."



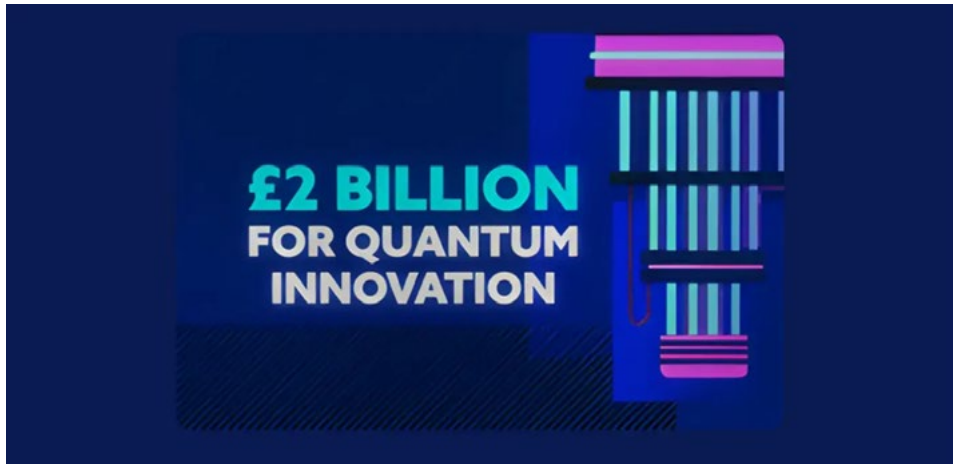
Korea Extends Facial Recognition Phone Activation Pilot Through June

The Ministry of Science and ICT announced on the 20th that it will extend the pilot operation of facial authentication procedures for mobile phone activations through June 30. The facial authentication system verifies subscriber identity using facial recognition technology when activating new phone lines. It was introduced as part of comprehensive measures to eradicate voice phishing and has been piloted since December 23 last year at in-person channels of the three major carriers and online channels of budget carriers. The extension comes at the request of industry stakeholders including the three major carriers, the budget phone association, and the mobile distribution association. Industry players have jointly requested an extension of at least three months, citing the need for supplementary operational manuals to prevent on-site confusion and alternative verification methods for digitally vulnerable groups and users uncomfortable with facial recognition. The ministry is reviewing various alternatives including PIN verification through the mobile ID app, video call verification, other biometric authentication such as fingerprint or iris scans, and bank account verification. Once alternative methods are finalized through feedback collected during the pilot period, they will be announced separately. Choi Woo-hyuk, Director General of Information

Security and Network Policy at the ministry, said, "Identity verification using facial recognition technology is the most effective means of preventing potential phone identity theft and fraudulent account registration." He added, "We will continue to communicate with carriers, relevant agencies, and experts while listening to diverse opinions to minimize inconvenience for users and field operations, and to build a safe and trusted telecommunications environment that citizens can feel."

UK Government Announces up to £2 billion for Quantum Technologies

The Government has announced up to £2 billion to support the development and commercialization of quantum technologies. This includes more than £1 billion over the next four years, as announced by UKRI in December 2025, and a first of its kind procurement program, ProQure to support scaling quantum computing in the UK. The Government has announced:



- Over £500 million dedicated to Quantum computing - helping companies scale and develop new uses for the technology in areas like pharmaceuticals, financial services, and energy.
- Over £400 million to support breakthroughs in sensing and navigation and the skills and infrastructure needed to bring these technologies to market.
- Dedicated funding of £125 million for Quantum networking and £205 million for Quantum sensing and navigation to ensure the UK is poised to accelerate innovations in medical diagnostics, greenhouse gas monitoring, and ultra-secure communications. This will transform the UK's ability to diagnose and treat medical conditions like childhood epilepsy and potentially Alzheimer's in the years to come – transforming outcomes for patients.
- An extra £13.8 million injected into the UK's 5 National Quantum Research Hubs delivered by UK Research and Innovation, with researchers working in healthcare, clean energy, and national security projects among the first to get access to the most powerful technology in the world.
- Fresh support for the Quantum Software Lab based in Edinburgh will accelerate the discovery of new applications for Quantum Computers in sectors such as financial services, life sciences, and advanced manufacturing.
- An additional £90 million to fund quantum infrastructure and meet the scaling needs of industry along with £20 million in skills and commercialization programs.

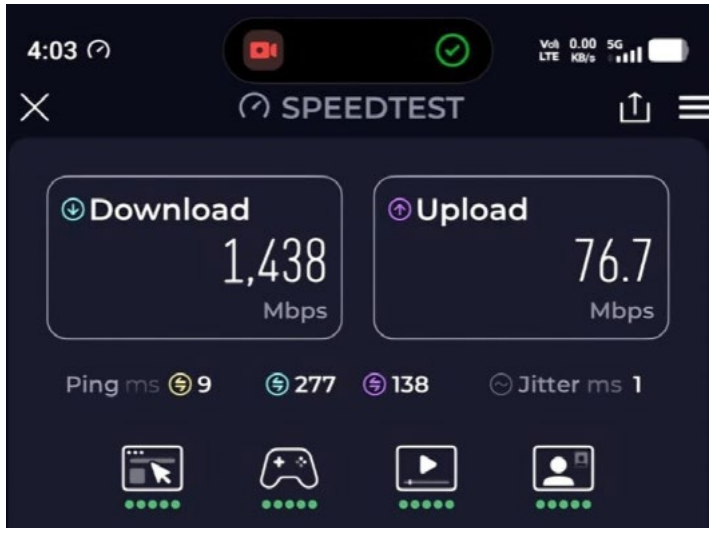
The announcement reflect sustained government investment in quantum technologies, since the announcement of the National Quantum Technologies Program in 2014, and signals a clear shift in the UK's approach to quantum, centered around commercialization and delivering impact in key sectors. They also demonstrate a commitment from government to support the skills and infrastructure that underpins the development of quantum technologies. techUK has long championed quantum commercialization as the key to realizing the UK's quantum potential, and welcomes these announcements from the Government.

Qatar's Power International Holding to Expand in Kazakhstan's Telecom and Energy Sectors

Qatar's Power International Holding (PIH), a major investment company, is planning to expand into Kazakhstan's telecommunications sector. They aim to acquire Mobile Telecom Service (Tele2), which would allow them to modernize the country's telecom infrastructure, improve service quality, and make mobile and internet services more accessible to Kazakh citizens. The meeting also covered energy cooperation, emphasizing that gas projects in processing, transportation, and energy production are key for Kazakhstan-Qatar investment ties and Kazakhstan's energy security. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to long-term collaboration and future investment projects in these strategic sectors. In short, it's about Qatar investing in Kazakhstan's telecom and energy industries, boosting infrastructure and strengthening bilateral economic relations.

Zong Reports 5G Trial Speeds Exceeding 1.4 Gbps in Islamabad

Zong has reported peak download speeds exceeding 1.4 Gbps during its latest 5G trials conducted across Islamabad, signaling strong technical readiness ahead of a potential commercial rollout. The pre-launch tests were carried out across diverse urban environments, including densely populated residential and commercial areas, to evaluate network performance under real-world conditions. The trials focused on handling high data loads, ensuring low latency, and maintaining consistent performance across different usage scenarios. According to the company, the results reflect advancements in infrastructure deployment and more efficient spectrum utilization, both critical factors in delivering reliable 5G services. Zong emphasized its ongoing efforts to enhance network efficiency through improved spectrum management and AI-powered traffic optimization systems. Zong has been actively involved in Pakistan's 5G journey for several years. It conducted the country's first 5G trial in 2019 and successfully completed an international 5G video call in 2020, demonstrating low-latency capabilities. Between 2021 and 2025, the operator continued investing in network expansion and upgrading its 4G infrastructure to support future 5G integration. While Pakistan has yet to announce an official timeline for commercial 5G deployment, operators are accelerating trials to showcase readiness as regulatory and spectrum allocation processes progress. Zong stated that its future rollout will prioritize a seamless transition for existing users, expansion of digital services, and stable network performance during peak demand. The announcement follows similar testing updates from competitors, including Jazz, indicating growing momentum across the telecom sector as Pakistan moves closer to adopting next-generation mobile technology.



Jazz Launches 5G, Powering Pakistan's Next Digital Leap

Jazz, Pakistan's leading digital operator under JazzWorld, has officially launched 5G services following the award of the Next Generation Mobile Services (NGMS)/5G license by the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA)—marking a defining moment in Pakistan's digital journey. The license agreement was signed by DG Licensing PTA Brig. (Retd.) Aamir Shahzad and CEO JazzWorld Aamir Ibrahim at a ceremony attended by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Federal Minister for IT & Telecom Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Chairman PTA Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Hafeez Ur Rehman, and senior public and private sector leadership—reflecting a strong, unified commitment to accelerating Pakistan's digital future. In its first phase, 5G is already live across ~180 sites, spanning Islamabad, all provincial capitals, and key metropolitan hubs including Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta, Multan, and Faisalabad. Powered by its strengthened spectrum portfolio, Jazz is delivering ultra-fast speeds, low latency, and enhanced reliability at scale. At the same time, the company continues to expand and upgrade its nationwide 4G network—ensuring that the benefits of connectivity reach every Pakistani, everywhere. Speaking at the occasion, Aamir Ibrahim, CEO JazzWorld, said: "Today marks the beginning of Pakistan's 5G era—unlocking a new wave of innovation, opportunity, and growth. As we lead this transition, our focus remains clear: delivering faster, more reliable connectivity while ensuring that no Pakistani is left behind. At Jazz, our purpose is to enable a Better Life for All—and this is a significant step forward in that journey." In the recent spectrum auction, Jazz emerged as the only operator to secure spectrum across all key bands—700 MHz, 2300 MHz, 2600 MHz, and 3500 MHz—giving it a uniquely powerful, multi-layered network capable of delivering both deep coverage and high-capacity performance. Backed by a recently announced USD 1 billion commitment to Pakistan's digital future—adding to over USD 11 billion invested over three decades—Jazz continues to build and scale the infrastructure powering the country's digital economy. Through JazzWorld, it now serves over 100 million users, enabling them to learn, earn, transact, and thrive in an increasingly connected world.

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REGULATORY NEWS

Over USD 82 Billion Pledged to Partner2Connect, Advancing ITU's Efforts to Connect the World

ITU, the UN agency for digital technologies, announced new industry pledges to its Partner2Connect Digital Coalition, bringing total commitments to over USD 82 billion to expand global Internet connectivity and bridge the digital divide. Launched in 2021, Partner2Connect serves as a mobilization platform to rally commitments from governments, the private sector, and civil society for projects and investments that support connectivity and digital inclusion – particularly in the world's most remote communities. The announcement was made by ITU Secretary-General Doreen Bogdan-Martin at Mobile World Congress 2026, against a backdrop of 2.2 billion people remaining offline, missing out on opportunities afforded by digital technologies, from education and healthcare to entrepreneurship and artificial intelligence. With P2C pledges steadily growing, the initiative is firmly on track to meet its USD 100 billion target by the end of 2026. "Today's milestone shows what's possible when we pool our collective resources towards making connectivity universal and meaningful," said Bogdan-Martin. "Reaching USD 82 billion in pledges through Partner2Connect means unlocking life-changing opportunities for hundreds of millions of people that are still offline." The pledges announced at MWC 2026 include:

Mobily: A USD 1.715 billion investment in data centers, submarine cables, and 5G and next-generation network infrastructure. Mobily reaffirms its commitment to supporting inclusive global connectivity in alignment with Saudi Vision 2030 aspirations towards becoming a hub connecting east with west. Through its investment, Mobily aims at scaling Saudi Arabia's AI and cloud computing capabilities, enabling competitive, resilient, and future-ready national development and meaningful global collaboration.

Ooredoo Group: A USD 500 million investment in submarine and terrestrial optical fibre infrastructure, aiming to expand high-capacity connectivity across the MENA region, strengthening regional and international digital links and supporting inclusive economic growth through resilient, future-ready network infrastructure.

These commitments directly support ITU's goal of achieving universal, meaningful connectivity — ensuring everyone has access to affordable, reliable Internet and the skills to use it safely and effectively.

Mobilizing resources for impact

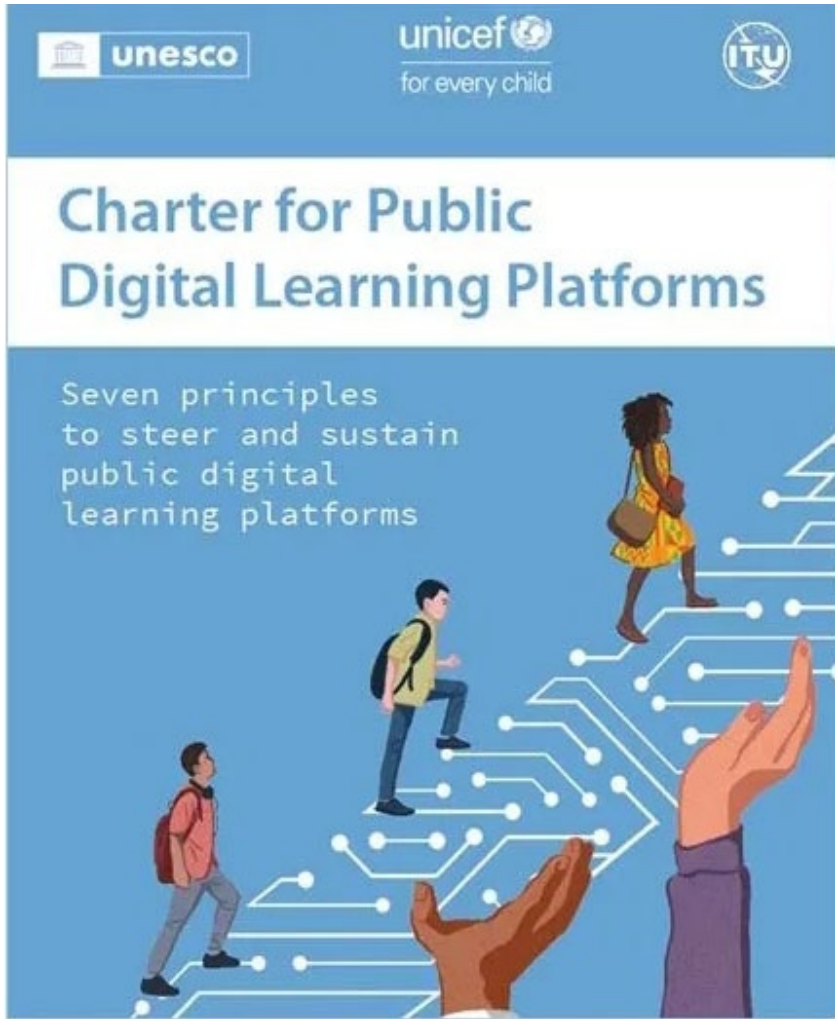
Since its inception, the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition has secured over 1,000 pledges from 149 countries, featuring investments in digital infrastructure, policy modernization, capacity-building initiatives, and innovative technologies designed to connect the hardest-to-reach populations. By including existing projects alongside new ones, Partner2Connect enables governments, companies and NGOs to align their ongoing work with the coalition's mission and showcase their contributions through regular updates. Overall, ITU estimates that achieving universal, meaningful connectivity by 2030 could require USD 2.6 trillion to USD 2.8 trillion. Every effort to advance digital inclusion matters. ITU calls on the public and private sectors to scale up their commitments through P2C and help connect the quarter of the world's population still unconnected. Looking ahead, Partner2Connect will continue to mobilize resources, foster innovative partnerships, and track progress to ensure pledges deliver tangible outcomes for communities worldwide.

UNESCO-UNICEF-ITU Charter for Public Digital Learning Platforms

As part of the global push to bring schools online, new guidance from United Nations organizations aims to help make digital learning platforms secure and interoperable. The Charter for Public Digital Learning Platforms – prepared jointly by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) – seeks to help countries support, extend and enrich school-based education through public digital learning platforms. Its launch in Helsinki, Finland, on 19 March, marks the International Day for Digital Learning. The Charter outlines seven principles to guide how such platforms can be designed, governed and sustained anywhere in the world. "Learning is increasingly happening online, and our public education systems need to keep pace," said ITU Secretary-General Doreen Bogdan-Martin. "That means building digital foundations that are safe, interoperable, and designed to protect learners. ITU is ready to support countries in transforming the principles of this Charter into inclusive, secure and trusted digital education platforms that leave no learner behind." Today, hundreds of millions of learners and teachers live in countries or communities that are not served by any public digital learning platforms. In other contexts, learners and teachers struggle with platforms that are poorly maintained, unreliable or difficult to navigate and use. With so many learners, teachers, and parents already immersed in digital spaces and able to benefit from digital services, public digital learning platforms are now 'need to have 'components of education, rather than 'nice to have components. As education systems adapt to rapid digital change, the Charter will help ensure that their transformation remains inclusive, coherent and aligned with public priorities. "In today's screen-based age, education needs to meet students where they are – and, more and more, that's online," said Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education at UNESCO. "The Charter clarifies that digital learning platforms are core education infrastructure. UNESCO is pleased to provide a positive vision for digital learning platforms in partnership with our sister UN agencies."

From connectivity to system integration

For Giga, the ITU/UNICEF joint initiative supporting governments to connect every school to the Internet, the milestone Charter reinforces global school connectivity efforts. Connectivity is the essential first step, but it alone does not guarantee transformation. As more schools come online, digital systems need to function coherently within national education ecosystems. Such system-wide coherence in digital platforms requires technical interoperability, strong safeguards and responsible governance. Otherwise, connected schools risk relying on fragmented platforms that limit scalability and long-term sustainability. The Charter responds to this challenge by establishing a shared normative reference to guide how public digital learning platforms are integrated within national systems. It emphasizes interoperability, safeguards, data stewardship and long-term sustainability as essential elements of trusted digital education ecosystems. Developed through consultation with national governments and international experts, the Charter reflects shared priorities and practical experience from many different countries. "This Charter is our collective commitment to ensure that the digital world becomes an extension of the education system, not a replacement for it," said Pia Rebello Britto, Global Director of Education of UNICEF. "Delivered responsibly as a public good, AI and other EdTech solutions offer a unique opportunity to connect private-sector innovation with public-sector policies, safeguards and systems to provide teachers with the training, tools and resources they need to deliver on our promise: quality education for all." By anchoring digital learning platforms within secure, interoperable and publicly governed national systems, countries can ensure that connectivity investments translate into durable public value, strengthening education systems for the long term.



Thailand's NBTC to Reclassify Data Center Licenses for Tighter Oversight

Thailand's National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) is reportedly planning to establish tighter regulatory oversight over the country's fast-growing data center market. According to a report from the Bangkok Post, the NBTC intends to reclassify its data center operations license from Type 1 to Type 3. A Type 1 license is usually for operators that don't have their own network infrastructure, while a Type 3 license is for those that do. Data center operators with Type 3 licenses would be subject to tighter scrutiny and higher annual regulatory fees. The proposed changes also include possible zoning for data center development, the report said. NBTC acting secretary-general Trairat Viriyasirikul told the Post the changes are meant to address the current data center boom in Thailand, which has become a magnet for foreign direct investment. There are now over 20 licensed data center operators in the country, with the Thai government's Board of Investment having approved over ten data center projects in 2025 alone. Earlier this year, Google Cloud launched its new Bangkok cloud region with three availability zones. While that's good news for Thailand's ambitions to become a key regional digital and AI hub, it also raises concerns over data centers gobbling up energy and water resources, as well as data sovereignty, the report said. Trairat said the NBTC is preparing a new regulatory draft that will presented to its board for approval in the coming months, followed by a public consultation. The NBTC aims to have the updated licensing regime in place before the end of this year, at which point existing data center operators will need to consult to the regulatory to have their licenses changed, the report said.

Ghana Unveils New SIM Registration System Focused on Security and Consumer Ease

The National Communications Authority has announced plans to implement a more robust and consumer-focused SIM registration process as part of efforts to strengthen security and improve accountability within Ghana's telecommunications sector. The move will introduce enhanced verification systems, including device control mechanisms to ensure that SIM cards and mobile devices on national networks can be properly identified and traced when necessary. Speaking during a media engagement in Accra, Director-General Edmund Yirenkyi Fianko explained that the initiative forms part of broader reforms aimed at safeguarding the integrity of the telecom ecosystem. The session, organized by the Ministry for Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations, brought together key stakeholders including the National Identification Authority to address concerns and provide clarity on the upcoming SIM registration exercise. Authorities indicated that the rollout of the new system will follow the completion of all required legal and technical frameworks. The NCA also committed to extensive stakeholder engagement throughout the process to ensure transparency, inclusiveness, and a smooth implementation. Consumer convenience has been identified as a central priority, with the system designed to be accessible and user-friendly for subscribers. In his remarks, Minister for Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations Samuel Nartey George stated that consumers will not bear any cost for the registration process, as telecommunications companies will cover fees associated with services provided by the National Identification Authority. He added that the initiative is expected to be comprehensive and potentially serve as the country's final SIM registration exercise. The new registration model will focus on linking individual phone numbers to verified identities, rather than just registering SIM cards. This approach is intended to address gaps identified in previous exercises, including discrepancies in identity data,

unverifiable biometric information, and inconsistencies between telecom and national ID databases. To further strengthen the system, the government plans to integrate the process with the Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR), enabling the detection and blocking of stolen or illegal devices. The initiative is expected to enhance national security, reduce fraud, prevent identity misuse, and improve trust in digital services. With the official launch date yet to be announced, authorities say the enhanced SIM registration exercise will play a critical role in modernizing Ghana's telecommunications framework while balancing strong security measures with ease of use for consumers.

US Regulator Bans Imports of New Foreign-Made Routers, Citing Security Concerns

The U.S. Federal Communications Commission said it was banning the import of all new foreign-made consumer routers, the latest crackdown on Chinese-made electronic gear over security concerns. China is estimated to control at least 60% of the U.S. market for home routers, boxes that connect computers, phones, and smart devices to the internet. The agency said a White House-convened review deemed imported routers pose "a severe cybersecurity risk that could be leveraged to immediately and severely disrupt U.S. critical infrastructure." It said malicious actors had exploited security gaps in foreign-made routers "to attack households, disrupt networks, enable espionage, and facilitate intellectual property theft," citing their role in major hacks like Volt and Salt Typhoon. The determination includes an exemption for routers the Pentagon deems do not pose unacceptable risks. Lawmakers have previously raised security concerns about Chinese-made routers and Representative John Moolenaar, the Republican chair of the House select committee on China, praised the FCC order. "Today's tremendous decision by the FCC and the Trump administration protects our country against China's relentless cyberattacks and makes it clear that these devices should be excluded from our critical infrastructure," Moolenaar said. "Routers are key to keeping us all connected and we cannot allow Chinese technology to be at the center of that."

CRT, CNA Launch Joint Review of Telecom Market Dominance

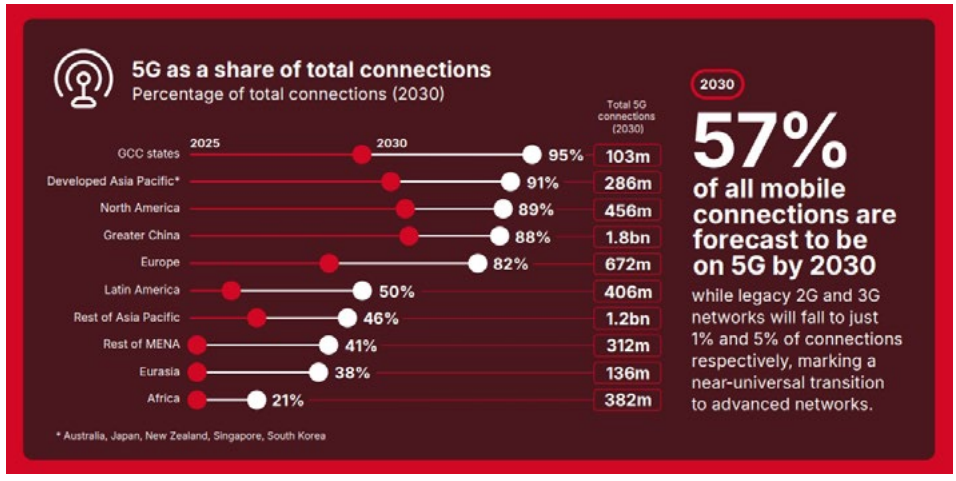
The Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (CRT) of Mexico and the National Antimonopoly Commission (CNA) signed an inter-institutional agreement to coordinate the Biennial Review of Preponderance Measures in Mexico's telecommunications and broadcasting sectors. The agreement, signed by CRT President Norma Solano Rodríguez and CNA President Andrea Marván Saltiel, establishes a framework for collaboration aimed at evaluating and, if necessary, modifying or eliminating existing regulatory measures to safeguard competition and market access. Under this arrangement, both agencies will share updated information, technical opinions, and documentation through defined coordination mechanisms and electronic channels. The goal is to ensure more effective oversight of dominant market players and maintain equitable conditions for industry participants. The CNA retains authority to identify Preponderant Economic Agents and impose measures related to market concentration, monopolistic practices, and potential asset divestitures. Meanwhile, the CRT oversees spectrum management, grants and revokes concessions, and regulates telecommunications and broadcasting services. Together, their coordination is expected to shape how competition policy is enforced in a sector historically dominated by a few key players. Currently, Grupo Televisa is designated as the preponderant agent in broadcasting, while América Móvil holds that status in telecommunications. The Biennial Review will determine whether existing asymmetrical regulations on these firms remain appropriate or require adjustment.

Background: New Regulatory Structure

This agreement comes amid a major institutional shift in Mexico's regulatory landscape. The Telecommunications and Broadcasting Law, published on July 16, 2025, repealed the 2014 framework and dissolved the Federal Institute of Telecommunications (IFT), an autonomous regulator that had overseen the sector for over a decade. The IFT's responsibilities were split between the Agency for Digital Transformation and Telecommunications (ATDT), a federal executive body, and the CRT, which operates as a technically autonomous entity under the ATDT. This restructuring has sparked debate over the true independence of the new regulatory model. On Oct. 14, 2025, the Senate ratified President Claudia Sheinbaum's appointments to the CRT's five-member board. The commissioners will serve staggered terms ranging from three to seven years, with Norma Solano Rodríguez presiding over the body. However, opposition lawmakers raised concerns about the commission's autonomy. Critics argued that the proximity of several appointees to the executive branch could open the door to political influence, censorship risks, or weakened regulatory enforcement. The IFT formally ceased operations on Oct. 17, 2025, marking the end of an institution that had positioned itself as an independent guarantor of competition, connectivity, and user rights. Beyond domestic concerns, the reform has drawn attention at the international level. Analysts warn that eliminating an independent regulator could conflict with obligations under the USMCA, which requires impartial oversight in telecommunications. A centralized regulatory structure may be perceived as undermining fair competition, potentially exposing Mexico to disputes with its trade partners. More broadly, experts caution that the concentration of regulatory power could erode investor confidence. Institutional trust, transparency, and regulatory certainty are critical factors for attracting private capital, particularly in infrastructure-intensive sectors like telecommunications.

5G Users in Africa to Reach 382 Million by 2030 Up from 54 Million

About 382 million (21%) African telecom subscribers are projected to be connected to the 5G (fifth-generation) network by 2030, from approximately 12% in 2025. This is according to a March 2026 report by GSMA titled 'The Mobile Economy 2026.' The surge is expected to be fueled by smartphone adoption, investment and an increase in telcos' AI adoption in operations. Internet adoption is rising in Africa, and the projection further cements the trends that Africa will not only grow in internet users but also in infrastructure. By another interpretation, 2 in every 10 Africans who use the internet will be connected by 5G. While this might not be large in numbers, the drivers speak a lot about the development. This is especially so for a region known to be grappling with smartphone adoption due to affordability issues. However, the rising smartphone adoption rate is now one of the drivers for the increasing adoption of fifth-generation networks. Smartphone adoption recently received a boost as the GSMA Coalition (G6) is planning to pilot affordable N55,000 4G smartphones in Nigeria, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda. Although the devices are low-cost 4G networks, they will be fueling internet penetration and bringing more Africans online, especially in remote areas. Another driver of 5G growth in Africa is AI. According to the GSMA report, investment in AI and emerging technologies, including data centers, AI chips and rapid adoption by operators, will be pivotal in delivering fast and reliable connectivity. "Enhanced connectivity will boost efficiency and raise productivity for consumers and enterprises alike, enabling access to the latest wave of digital technologies, including 5G, IoT and AI," part of the report reads. African telcos are also expected to expand 5G-enabled services by deploying supported telecom towers for more coverage. 5G adoption in Africa is still at a nascent stage, as less than 10% of African internet users are currently connected to the network. This means that, on average, only 3 in every 200 internet users in Africa are connected using the fifth-generation network. To bridge the gap, African telcos have been intensifying the expansion of their infrastructure by spreading. The advancement is heavily focused on Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) to address the continent's limited fiber. For instance, MTN Nigeria has been driving 5G connectivity through broadband services, FiberX. Aside from MTN, Airtel Nigeria is also driving innovation, and together both telcos have put nearly 4% of Nigeria's internet connections on 5G. Another West African country, Ghana, recently rolled out its first 5G network. Through Next Gen InfraCo (NGIC), telcos in the country will be distributing the advanced network to users. The network is also improving in South Africa which leads the continent in 5G penetration, with over 10.8 million users and more than 50% population coverage by September 2025. Operators such as MTN, Vodacom, Rain, Telkom, and Cell C are behind this push. In addition to providing high-speed internet for users, 5G is expected to contribute $10 billion to the African economy by 2030, supporting fintech, agriculture, and other core aspects of the economy.



PTML Secures 180 MHz Spectrum in Pakistan's 5G Auction

Pak Telecom Mobile Limited (PTML), the PTCL subsidiary known for its Ufone 4G and Onic brands, has officially secured 180 MHz of spectrum in Pakistan's landmark 5G auction. In a disclosure to the Pakistan Stock Exchange, PTCL confirmed the acquisition includes 60 MHz in the 2600 MHz band and 120 MHz in the 3500 MHz band, totaling a $156.75 million investment. This move is particularly significant as PTML prepares to integrate the spectrum across its network, which will eventually support Telenor Pakistan customers following their planned merger. With the assignment stage finalized on March 12, PTML is now positioned to begin deploying next-generation connectivity designed to power high-speed digital services and industrial AI applications across the country.

Nigeria Attracts US$75 Billion Telecom Investment since Liberalization

Nigeria's telecommunications sector has attracted more than US$75 billion in infrastructure investment since its liberalization in 2001, according to the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), underscoring the long-term impact of market reforms on the country's digital economy. The NCC disclosed the investment milestone in its Spectrum Roadmap for the Communications Sector (2026–2030), a strategic policy framework aimed at improving spectrum allocation and supporting future growth. The commission traced the sector's transformation to the National Communications Policy of 2000, which opened the market to private participation. Liberalization formally commenced in January 2001 with the licensing of private telecom operators and competitive spectrum auctions. These early reforms catalyzed rapid expansion in network infrastructure, enabling widespread deployment of second- and third-generation (2G and 3G) services. The result was a significant improvement in access, affordability, and nationwide connectivity. The NCC noted that early spectrum auctions in 2001 and 2007 attracted strong investor participation, reflecting confidence in a newly liberalized market. Subsequent auctions in 2014 and 2016 signaled a shift towards a more mature market structure. Operators adopted more selective investment strategies, focusing on efficiency and capital optimization rather than rapid expansion. A key inflection point occurred between 2021 and 2022 with the auction of the 3.5 GHz spectrum band, which enabled the rollout of fifth-generation (5G) services in Nigeria. According to the NCC, this development marked a transition to next-generation connectivity and established a benchmark for future spectrum assignments. The $75 billion investment reflects a combination of foreign direct investment and domestic capital expenditure, positioning telecommunications as one of Nigeria's most critical non-oil sectors. Industry data shows that the sector has consistently contributed significantly to Nigeria's gross domestic product (GDP), supported by rising demand for mobile data, broadband services, and digital platforms. Nigeria remains one of Africa's largest telecommunications markets, with strong subscriber growth and increasing internet penetration driving sustained capital inflows and infrastructure expansion. The NCC's Spectrum Roadmap outlines short, medium, and long-term strategies to ensure efficient spectrum utilization and support the expansion of Nigeria's digital economy. Key priorities include:

- Enhancing regulatory clarity to attract further investment
- Supporting 5G deployment and emerging technologies
- Improving spectrum efficiency to meet rising data demand

These measures aim to sustain the sector's growth trajectory while addressing infrastructure gaps and service quality challenges. Nigeria's telecom sector has evolved into a major investment destination, attracting over $75 billion since liberalization in 2001. The sustained inflow of capital highlights the effectiveness of policy reforms and regulatory oversight. Going forward, continued investment, spectrum efficiency, and supportive policies will remain critical to unlocking the next phase of growth in Nigeria's digital economy.

Ofcom Open 10GHz of UK Spectrum in Q and V Bands for Satellite Broadband

The UK communications regulator, Ofcom, has allowed broadband satellite operators (e.g. Starlink and Amazon Leo) to harness up to 10GHz of extra radio spectrum frequency in the Q and V bands to help boost the backhaul data capacity of their ground-based gateway sites. But the main focus of this will initially be on rural "low density" areas covering 94% of the UK's landmass. A number of satellite operators are currently known to be preparing to harness the Q/V band(s) to support their broadband services, which could significantly boost their network capacity and thus service speeds to customers. Suffice to say that there's plenty of demand for these bands and Ofcom has thus made the spectrum available to both traditional geostationary orbit (GSO) satellites and also those in non-geostationary orbits (NGSO), such as Starlink in Low Earth Orbit (LEO). The regulator said they plan to assess requests for licenses to use this spectrum on a first come, first served basis, in line with the usual application processes for an NGSO gateway license or GSO Permanent Earth Station license. Access to the 39.5 – 40.5GHz and 50.4 – 51.4GHz bands will also be subject to additional coordination with the Ministry of Defence (MoD), which still makes use of it.

The Netherlands Strengthens Its 6G Position to Secure Future Economic Growth and Digital Sovereignty

The Future Network Services (FNS) consortium, in which companies and knowledge institutions work together with TNO on the future of connectivity, is taking a next step in the development of 6G network technology for smarter, more energy-efficient and faster data transmission. With €142 million in funding from the National Growth Fund, the consortium - spanning universities, research institutes and companies active in antennas, semiconductors, network software and mobile networks, can now launch phase 2 of the FNS program. In this phase, to which participating companies are contributing an additional €72 million, the focus shifts to converting research into concrete 6G technologies, products and services. Over the past two years, FNS developed knowledge, prototypes and tests for 6G applications. From 2030 onwards, 6G will form a core part of the digital infrastructure, the backbone of the Dutch digital economy. By investing today, the Netherlands and Europe strengthen their strategic autonomy and competitive edge. In phase 1, the FNS program produced several component prototypes. The team in Eindhoven demonstrated a wireless optical link spanning 4.6 kilometers and achieving a world record speed of 5.7 terabits per second. NXP developed the first Wi Int chips, a new international standard that acts as a wireless USB connection. Partners also built Oakestra, an AI driven tool for automated mobile network control. The consortium tested multiple real world applications: drones carrying urgent medical goods, a wireless factory where machines communicate without cables, connected medical equipment in an operating theatre, and smart traffic detection at a Rotterdam junction. Partners also established the National 6G Testbed, an infrastructure of five regional testing sites in Groningen, Amersfoort, The Hague, Delft and Eindhoven, where companies can trial their 6G innovations. In phase 2, partners will turn the program's knowledge into economic value. More than 100 SMEs have already signed up to run pilots within the National 6G Testbed, developing and testing wireless innovations. A new 6G Business Board, comprising representatives from participating companies, will steer innovation and value creation. Fast growing young companies will receive additional support to secure funding. Fifteen new companies will join the consortium. International cooperation will intensify, particularly with Finland, Sweden and Germany, and beyond Europe with Japan and Taiwan. A further ambitious goal: building the first fully wireless factory in the Netherlands, setting a new global benchmark for the manufacturing industry.

Egypt Launches 2025–2030 AI Strategy and Open Data Policy

In a landmark meeting of the National Council for Artificial Intelligence (NCAI), Minister of Communications and Information Technology Raafat Hindi announced the formal adoption of Egypt's National Artificial Intelligence Strategy for 2025–2030. The executive plan is supported by 56 performance indicators designed to track the integration of AI across various economic sectors, marking a significant step in the country's journey toward becoming a global digital hub. A major pillar of this new phase is the activation of an open data policy. The council has formed a dedicated committee to improve data accessibility, a move intended to provide startups and developers with the "raw material" needed to build innovative smart applications. Furthermore, Egypt is prioritizing digital safety; the NCAI approved a 2026 governance work plan that includes specific guidelines for the safe use of AI by children, ensuring the technology's adoption is both responsible and secure. On the international stage, Egypt is positioning itself as a regional leader through a capacity-building program launched in partnership with UNESCO, aimed at training government officials across Arab and African nations. Minister Hindi also confirmed that Egypt has requested observer status on the Steering Committee for New and Emerging Digital Technologies (CDNET), signaling the nation's intent to play a more active role in shaping global technology standards and digital transformation dialogues.

Top Turkish Cypriot Court to Review Legality of Disputed Fiber Optic Deal with Turkey

The President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (KKTC) has sent a law approving a fiber optic deal with Turkey to the KKTC's Constitutional Court to review its legality, opening a battle over an agreement critic say would hand control of a public communications network to Turkey's Türk Telekom without a tender. President Tufan Erhürman said he had referred the law for constitutional review after it was passed by the KKTC assembly. The move puts fresh scrutiny on a protocol signed by Ankara and the Turkish Cypriot administration on July 11, 2025, to expand fiber infrastructure and connect homes and businesses through a long-term project led by Türk Telekom. The agreement has become a political flashpoint in Northern Cyprus, the breakaway state in the island's north that is recognized only by Turkey. Supporters in the ruling coalition have described it as a strategic investment worth about $100 million that would bring fiber internet to 150,000 homes. Opposition lawmakers and trade groups, however, say the arrangement was approved without a competitive bidding process and would give Türk Telekom the right to operate the infrastructure for 25 years. The bill passed the assembly with 27 votes in favor and 20 against after days of debate. The main opposition Republican Turkish Party objected to the lack of a tender and to the scale of control granted to Türk Telekom, while the coalition government at the time defended the deal as a needed upgrade to an outdated internet network. Trade unions and internet service providers have also challenged the project. Tel-Sen, a union representing telecommunications workers, said it had gone to court over what it called an improper transfer of public assets. Industry representatives said the protocol could block other companies from providing service for years and shift revenue from the telecommunications department to a private company. Critics say the case is not about whether Northern Cyprus needs faster internet but about who will control a strategic network and under what terms. They argue that turning over infrastructure built with public resources to a company tied to Turkey's sovereign wealth fund raises questions about transparency, state authority and the future role of local institutions.

Türk Telekom said when the protocol was signed that it would lead the fiber rollout and link the territory's digital backbone more closely to Turkey. If the Constitutional Court finds that parts of the law violate the KKTC constitution, those provisions could be struck down or returned to the assembly for revision. A broader ruling against the law could halt or reshape Ankara's plan to put northern Cyprus's fiber network under Türk Telekom's management. Cyprus has been divided since 1974, when Turkey intervened after a coup by Greek Cypriot hard-liners seeking union with Greece, leaving the island split between the internationally recognized Republic of Cyprus in the south and the KKTC in the north, separated by a United Nations buffer zone. Erhürman, a center-left Turkish Cypriot leader, is generally seen as more supportive of renewed reunification talks and a UN-backed federal framework than Ankara's recent push for a permanent two-state formula, putting him at odds with efforts by Turkish nationalists to treat northern Cyprus less as a self-governing entity and more as an extension of Turkey.

European Commission Launches €200 Million Calls for Submarine Cables and Digital Infrastructure

The European Commission has launched two new calls for proposals worth €200 million to support high-capacity networks, including submarine cables, in a move aimed at strengthening the security and resilience of the European Union's digital infrastructure. The European Commission said these investments are aligned with the objectives of the EU Action Plan on Cable Security and will help ensure secure and resilient connectivity both within the European Union and beyond. The first call, worth €180 million, is aimed at deploying or significantly upgrading backbone networks. The objective is to improve the security, capacity and resilience of the EU's digital infrastructure. The call focuses on the 13 Cable Projects of European Interest identified as priority areas in the report on the security and resilience of EU submarine cable infrastructures. The second call, worth €20 million, targets smart upgrades to digital infrastructure. These upgrades enable real-time monitoring to protect critical infrastructure by collecting environmental or incident data. The aim is to improve situational awareness and strengthen early warning systems, including for detecting seismic or tsunami activity, as well as monitoring the impact of climate change. The technological dimension of the initiative is matched by a security angle. The Commission highlights that these upgrades directly contribute to protecting critical infrastructure, at a time when submarine cables are increasingly seen as essential for the functioning of the digital economy and global data flows. At the same time, the initiative reflects a broader shift in the European approach, where digital infrastructure is treated as critical infrastructure, comparable to energy or transport systems. By investing in networks and monitoring systems, the EU is seeking to reduce vulnerabilities related to sabotage, natural incidents or disruptions in communication flows. The Commission underlined that these investments demonstrate the EU's commitment to secure, future-proof digital networks that reinforce economic and

strategic resilience. The Connecting Europe Facility – Digital is presented as a key instrument for strengthening the security of critical submarine cable infrastructure and countering risks of intentional damage and sabotage. Another angle of the initiative lies in project selection. The focus on the 13 Projects of European Interest shows that the EU is not funding infrastructure generically, but is prioritizing specific routes and strategic nodes considered essential for connectivity and security. The economic and strategic dimension is complemented by the implementation timeline. Applicants must submit their proposals by 30 June 2026, indicating that the EU is aiming to accelerate investments in this area within a relatively short timeframe. The broader context of the initiative is the growing concern within the European Union about the security of digital infrastructure. Submarine cables, which carry most of the world's data traffic, are increasingly seen as vulnerable to both natural risks and deliberate actions. In this context, investments in capacity, redundancy and monitoring are being treated as essential tools for protecting the digital economy and the Union's strategic autonomy.

UNHCR and ITU Receive Global Mobile Industry Award for Connectivity for Refugees Initiative

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and ITU, the UN agency for digital technologies, are honored to receive the Chairman's Award at the Global Mobile (GLOMO) Awards for their joint flagship initiative, Connectivity for Refugees, supporting access to meaningful, affordable, and reliable connectivity for people forced to flee and their host communities. Recognized as the mobile industry's most prestigious accolades, the GLOMO Awards celebrate innovation and societal impact across the global digital ecosystem. This year's distinction, titled "Keeping the World Connected in Crisis," was presented to Doreen Bogdan-Martin, ITU Secretary-General, and Kelly T. Clements, UNHCR Deputy High Commissioner. Connectivity for Refugees seeks to connect 20 million refugees and host-community members by 2030, addressing critical barriers such as affordability, infrastructure gaps, digital literacy, and enabling regulatory environments. By mid-2026, the initiative will have reached over 1 million forcibly displaced people and their hosts across more than 15 countries, with rapid expansion underway despite funding challenges. Since 2023, UNHCR and ITU have been working closely with governments, private sector partners, and local communities across Africa, Asia, and the Americas to empower refugee and host populations with access to information, education, livelihoods, and essential services. "When we work together to help refugees access digital lifelines, pathways to dignity and hope emerge," said Bogdan-Martin. "This recognition underscores the power of collaboration in ensuring forcibly displaced people and their host communities are not left behind." "Connectivity is a lifeline, not a luxury. For millions of refugees and displaced communities, a mobile signal isn't just about a phone call – it can be the difference between life and death, dependency and self reliance," said Clements when receiving the award. "We are extremely grateful for this recognition that highlights the transformative impact connectivity has in displacement settings, fostering resilience, dignity and inclusion." Translating the transformative spirit of the UN80 reform into action, the Connectivity for Refugees initiative is scaling innovative solutions, supporting policy reforms, and promoting sustainable, community-driven models to expand digital access. UNHCR and ITU extend their gratitude to the GSMA and the GLOMO Awards jury for this honor and reaffirm their commitment to accelerating digital inclusion for refugees and their hosts worldwide. The two agencies call for increased partnerships and funding to sustain long-term benefits for all.

ITU Raises Over US$82 Billion Cash to Bridge Digital Divide in Nigeria, Others

International Telecommunications Union (ITU) said it has raised over US$82 billion under its Partner2Connect (P2C) Digital Coalition to expand internet connectivity in Nigeria and other parts of the world in an effort to bridge the digital divide. ITU, the UN agency for digital technologies, launched P2C in 2021, to serv as a mobilization platform to rally commitments from governments, the private sector, and civil society for projects and investments that support connectivity and digital inclusion – particularly in the world's most remote communities. ITU Secretary-General Doreen Bogdan-Martin made the announcement at Mobile World Congress 2026, against a backdrop of 2.2 billion people remaining offline, missing out on opportunities afforded by digital technologies, from education and healthcare to entrepreneurship and artificial intelligence. With P2C pledges steadily growing, the initiative is firmly on track to meet its $100 billion target by the end of 2026. "Today's milestone shows what's possible when we pool our collective resources towards making connectivity universal and meaningful. Reaching $82 billion in pledges through Partner2Connect means unlocking life-changing opportunities for hundreds of millions of people that are still offline," Bogdan-Martin said. The pledges announced at MWC 2026 include: Mobily: A $1.715 billion investment in data centers, submarine cables, and 5G and next-generation network infrastructure. Mobily reaffirms its commitment to supporting inclusive global connectivity in alignment with Saudi Vision 2030 aspirations towards becoming a hub connecting east with west. Through its investment, Mobily aims at scaling Saudi Arabia's AI and cloud computing capabilities, enabling competitive, resilient, and future-ready national development and meaningful global collaboration; and Ooredoo Group: A $500 million investment in submarine and terrestrial optical fiber infrastructure, aiming to expand high-capacity connectivity across the MENA region, strengthening regional and international digital links and supporting inclusive economic growth through resilient, future-ready network infrastructure. These commitments directly support ITU's goal of achieving universal, meaningful connectivity — ensuring everyone has access to affordable, reliable Internet and the skills to use it safely and effectively. investments in digital infrastructure, policy modernization, capacity-building initiatives, and innovative technologies designed to connect the hardest-to-reach populations. By including existing projects alongside new ones, P2C enables governments, companies and NGOs to align their ongoing work with the coalition's mission and showcase their contributions through regular updates.

Overall, ITU estimates that achieving universal, meaningful connectivity by 2030 could require $2.6 trillion to $2.8 trillion. Every effort to advance digital inclusion matters. ITU calls on the public and private sectors to scale up their commitments through P2C and help connect the quarter of the world's population still unconnected. Looking ahead, P2C will continue to mobilize resources, foster innovative partnerships, and track progress to ensure pledges deliver tangible outcomes for communities worldwide.

FCC Approves Charter's $34.5B Acquisition of Cox

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has approved a $34.5 billion deal which will see Charter Communications acquire a wide range of assets from Cox Enterprises. The approved deal includes Cox's residential cable, commercial fiber, managed IT, and cloud businesses, according to the FCC. FCC Chairman Brendan Carr said the approval "ensures big wins for Americans." Comments from Carr were included in the FCC's announcement. "This deal means that jobs are coming back to America that had been shipped overseas," he said. "It means that modern, high-speed networks will get built out in more communities across rural America. And it means that customers will get access to lower priced plans." Carr's statements about the deal took aim at diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies, which he has lobbied against fiercely on the FCC. "On top of this, the deal enshrines protections against DEI discrimination,"

he stated. According to the FCC, Charter implemented "new safeguards" to "protect against DEI discrimination," the statement reported. "Specifically, Charter commits to recruiting, hiring, and promoting individuals based on the factors that matter most: skills, qualifications, and experience," the statement also read. The recently approved deal was first announced back in May. In the deal, Cox Enterprises contributes Cox Communications' residential cable business to Charter Holdings, which is an existing subsidiary partnership of Charter, the company previously announced. The FCC says Charter will" invest billions of dollars to upgrade its network and deliver high-speed service to homes and businesses across the country" as a result of the deal. "This means that Americans will see faster broadband and lower prices," the FCC's release stated. "Additionally, Charter's Rural Construction Initiative is activating new services across rural states, which can bring better service and job opportunities to rural America."

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

Algeria

Algeria has unveiled four national digital platforms aimed at transforming its higher education and research ecosystem. The initiatives were launched by Higher Education and Scientific Research Minister Kamal Badari as part of a broader digital transformation strategy. The new platforms are designed to improve university operations, enhance student services, and strengthen innovation frameworks nationwide. A key initiative is the University Network for Business Incubators and Entrepreneurship Development Centers, which connects incubators and entrepreneurship hubs to foster startup creation and collaboration between academia and industry. Authorities also introduced a Digital Registry of University Spin-off Companies to track and support academic enterprises, improving governance and sustainability. To promote student wellbeing, a Digital Platform for Psychological Counseling was launched, alongside a Digital Meal Reservation Platform to modernize campus dining services and boost operational efficiency. The rollout underscores Algeria's commitment to leveraging digital tools to enhance governance, enrich student experiences, and position universities as drivers of innovation and national development. (March 2, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com

Bahrain

Telecoms Minister Dr. Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed Al Khalifa conducted field visits to a number of telecommunications companies in Bahrain to review the sector's operational readiness and precautionary measures aimed at ensuring the continuity of vital services in light of regional developments. He visited a branch of Batelco. He was briefed on the company's network readiness and the procedures in place to ensure uninterrupted telecommunications services. He also visited the branch of stc Bahrain at the same complex, where he was received by chief executive officer Khalid Al Osaimi. The visit included a review of the technical and operational preparations adopted by the company to enhance network efficiency and maintain service continuity. Dr. Shaikh Abdulla also toured the headquarters of Zain Bahrain in Seef District. Discussions focused on the company's efforts to strengthen its network and develop its technical capabilities to ensure the reliability of telecommunications services. The minister also visited BNET and was briefed on the company's initiatives to enhance the efficiency of the kingdom's digital infrastructure and its emergency response plans to ensure uninterrupted connectivity. Dr. Shaikh Abdulla emphasized the importance of maintaining a high level of readiness across the telecommunications sector, noting that it represents a key pillar of national security and digital infrastructure. He commended the efforts of telecommunications companies in strengthening their technical capabilities and enhancing rapid response mechanisms to address emergency situations. (March 6, 2026) newsofbahrain.com

Bangladesh

Bangladesh's Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology Minister, Fakir Mahbub Anam, announced that all airports, railway stations, and high-speed vehicles will be equipped with free Wi-Fi. The initiative supports Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's vision to expand ICT access, boost connectivity, and create employment opportunities in the technology sector. The minister emphasized the importance of ICT for national development, directing district-level officials to coordinate on communication modernization and ICT progress. The program aims to ensure widespread internet access across households and strengthen Bangladesh's digital infrastructure for economic growth and technological advancement.

(March 2, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com

Egypt

Egypt has signed multiple commercial agreements between the National Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, Telecom Egypt, and e& Egypt to boost mobile services and attract national and international investments. Minister of Communications and Information Technology Raafat Hindy stated the agreements demonstrate the government's commitment to addressing investor challenges and enhancing collaboration across the communications and IT sector. The initiatives aim to improve service quality, drive economic development, and support the ministry's strategy to build a digital Egypt. The agreements are expected to contribute to continuous improvements in telecommunications services for Egyptian citizens while opening new channels of cooperation among operators. (February 27, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com

Jordan

The Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC) stated that it is currently working on several key sectoral files for the year 2026, most notably the Mobile Number Portability (MNP) project and the expansion of 5G services. In response to inquiries from Al-Mamlaka, the TRC explained that MNP is a strategic regulatory project designed to allow subscribers to switch mobile service providers while retaining their existing phone number. This initiative aims to: Enhance market competitiveness. Increase the efficiency of options available to consumers. Incentivize operators to improve service quality and commercial offerings. The TRC noted that it amended the MNP service instructions in 2025 within a specific implementation timeframe. The service is expected to be fully available in the Jordanian market by April 2027, following the completion of necessary technical and operational requirements. Mobile Market Statistics (Q3 2025) According to the TRC's Q3 2025 report, total mobile subscriptions in Jordan reached 8,475,725. Prepaid: 5,494,414 (65% of total) Postpaid: 2,981,311 (35% of total). The TRC highlighted 5G deployment as a top priority due to its direct link to enhancing digital infrastructure, supporting digital transformation, and preparing the Kingdom for advanced applications. The commission is monitoring the progress of licensed companies as they expand coverage. Indicators from 2025 show steady growth, marking the transition of 5G into a phase of gradual market expansion. (March 16, 2026) www.jordannews.jo

Kuwait

Kuwait's General Directorate of Civil Defense has begun testing a new mobile alert system designed to notify residents of potential or ongoing emergencies. Authorities clarified that recent alert messages sent to users were part of this trial phase and asked the public to disregard them, apologizing for any inconvenience. The system is intended to enhance emergency communication and improve public response during critical situations. It is currently being rolled out on Android and Huawei devices, with plans to expand to Apple devices later. The alert system operates on multiple levels, with the highest level triggering urgent warning tones, while lower levels deliver notifications via SMS with alert sounds. (March 19, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com

The Communications and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) has granted Starlink a license to provide satellite internet services in Kuwait. In a statement to the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), CITRA confirmed that the license was issued after Starlink fulfilled all regulatory and technical requirements set by the authority, ensuring full compliance with Kuwait's telecommunications laws and spectrum regulations. The authority explained that the introduction of low-Earth orbit (LEO) satellite technologies will enable high-speed internet connectivity with low latency. This is expected to enhance competition in Kuwait's telecommunications market while providing users with more diverse connectivity options. CITRA also commended the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority for helping create a supportive investment environment and facilitating Starlink's entry into the Kuwaiti market. According to the statement, Starlink will begin offering its equipment and services to the public in Kuwait once the final technical and procedural arrangements are completed.

(March 16, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com

Oman

Oman is doubling down on its technological sovereignty with a newly unveiled initiative by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MTCIT). Designed to span from 2026 to 2030, this ambitious program aims to weave digital infrastructure into the very fabric of every governorate, moving beyond centralized hubs to establish regional digital transformation centers tailored to local economic needs. The strategy marks a significant pivot toward high-tech self-reliance. Key pillars include the development of a national predictive AI platform powered by large language models to assist in government decision-making, and a major push for local manufacturing of servers and cloud hardware to reduce dependence on global suppliers. Furthermore, the Sultanate is exploring a national payment card and a dedicated cloud environment to process satellite data for research and economic growth. This new phase builds on a successful five-year foundation (2021–2025) that saw over 2,200 government services digitized and more than RO79mn invested in artificial intelligence. With the digital economy already contributing RO800mn to the national GDP as of 2023, Oman is firmly on track toward its "Vision 2040" goal of having the digital sector represent 10% of its total economy.

(March 11, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com

Pakistan

The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has granted 5G licenses to all major telecom operators Zong, Ufone, Jazz. The development marks a significant step toward modernizing Pakistan's telecommunications sector. Experts say the 5G launching would accelerate digital innovation, support tech startups, and improve mobile broadband experiences nationwide. With 5G now officially licensed, Pakistanis can expect high-speed mobile internet, seamless streaming, improved online services, and a stronger foundation for smart city initiatives. Analysts highlight that the rollout will also position Pakistan competitively in the region for technological advancement. The PTA confirmed that all operators have met regulatory and technical requirements, ensuring a smooth and secure introduction of 5G services. Citizens can anticipate phased network deployments in major urban centers over the coming months. (March 22, 2026) www.dunyanews.tv

Pakistan's ICT sector continues its strong growth trajectory, recording a 19.7% increase in export remittances during the first eight months of FY 2025–26. ICT export remittances reached US$ 2.97 billion from July to February, compared to US$ 2.48 billion during the same period last year. In February 2026 alone, ICT exports reached US$ 365 million, reflecting a 19.3% year-on-year increase. The industry also recorded a US$ 2.55 billion trade surplus, representing 86% of total ICT export remittances, reaffirming ICT as the top-performing services sector in Pakistan's economy. (March 17, 2026) www.moitt.gov.pk

Qatar

The Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA) of Qatar has rolled out a new Regulation for the Construction, Installation, and Sharing of Radio Communications Sites. The update brings fresh rules to strengthen safety measures and push for wider infrastructure sharing across future networks. The move follows wide public consultation and discussions with several stakeholders. The new framework blends global standards with Qatar's own needs and is intended to make the site approval process clearer and more transparent. The regulations for telecom infrastructure set out one unified approach for planning and designing mobile network sites across the country. It promotes cooperation between licensed telecom Service Providers and government bodies to ensure that site development follows uniform technical standards and a smoother approval process. CRA has combined three older regulatory documents into one complete guideline, replacing earlier instructions for radio station construction, base station and tower standards, and mobile site sharing. The unified framework promotes the sharing of infrastructure, reduces overlap in development, and helps protect both the environment and public health, keeping Qatar's telecom sector in step with international standards. The revised regulations for telecom infrastructure lay out specific technical and safety standards for network sites, including ground-based towers, rooftop setups, wall-mounted units, and temporary structures. They also specify safety distances, load capacities, and electromagnetic field (EMF) exposure limits that follow international guidelines. Service Providers are also required, where possible, to share and co-locate infrastructure to use resources efficiently. Early coordination between Service Providers, municipal authorities, and developers is encouraged to ease site selection and speed up approvals. CRA will oversee implementation through audits, technical reporting, and enforcement when necessary. (March 23, 2026) www.teleinfotoday.com

Saudi Arabia

The Communications, Space and Technology Commission (CST) of Saudi Arabia has reported success of its operational plan during Ramadan 2026, highlighting significant improvements in mobile internet speeds, data usage, and call volumes across Makkah and Madinah. From Ramadan 1 to 27, mobile internet speeds in Makkah reached 234 Mbps, a 19 percent increase compared to last year, while Madinah recorded speeds exceeding 318 Mbps, up 17 percent from 2025. Average daily per capita data consumption also rose, reaching 1,297 Mb in Makkah and 1,828 Mb in Madinah, more than three times the global average. Local call volumes in Makkah surpassed 378 million, with international calls exceeding 44 million, while Madinah recorded over 238 million local calls and 22 million international calls. CST emphasized that these achievements reflect the successful implementation of advanced digital infrastructure and meticulous operational readiness for Ramadan 1447 AH. In close coordination with service providers, 5G networks around the Grand Mosque in Makkah and the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah were significantly expanded, while wireless coverage across public facilities, transportation hubs, and pilgrimage routes was strengthened to ensure uninterrupted access to online services, mobile applications, and real-time digital platforms for worshipers and Umrah performers. CST's comprehensive operational plan for Ramadan 2026 demonstrates the Kingdom's commitment to leveraging cutting-edge digital technologies and innovative solutions to enhance the spiritual, social, and logistical experience of worshipers visiting Makkah and Madinah, supporting both religious devotion and modern digital convenience. (March 18, 2026) www.gccbusinessnews.com

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka will implement its biometric-based digital ID system (SLUDI) through a phased rollout, prioritizing security, privacy, and performance standards at each stage. The nationwide launch is planned for the third quarter of 2026. The government aims to build public trust through transparency, clear data protection measures, and ongoing stakeholder engagement. The system is expected to streamline public services, reduce fraud, and eliminate repetitive identity verification across agencies. By developing local capacity and governance frameworks, Sri Lanka is positioning digital identity as a foundation for more efficient, secure, and accessible government services. (March 24, 2027) www.meatechwatch.com

Syria

The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology announced the launch of an international tender for a new mobile network operator license valid for 20 years, as part of a broader reform program aimed at modernizing the telecommunications sector and strengthening regional digital connectivity. The announcement was made by Minister of Communications and Information Technology Abdul Salam Haykal during the Mobile World Congress 2026 in Barcelona. The licensing process will remain open until June 15, with full application documents issued by the ministry in Damascus. Haykal said the initiative is designed to improve telecommunications services across Syria and attract major global investors committed to supporting the country's long-term digital development. The new license will replace the current MTN Syria license and combines an existing operational business with a long-term concession to build next-generation mobile infrastructure across the country. According to the ministry, Syria will maintain a two-operator market for a five-year transition period, during which MTN Syria will continue providing services until the new operator fully assumes operations to ensure uninterrupted service for subscribers. The winning operator will take over the existing subscriber base and infrastructure while leading nationwide network expansion and modernization.

(March 4, 2026) www.sana.sy

Turkey

The President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (KKTC) has sent a law approving a fiber optic deal with Turkey to the KKTC's Constitutional Court to review its legality, opening a battle over an agreement critic say would hand control of a public communications network to Turkey's Türk Telekom without a tender. President Tufan Erhürman said he had referred the law for constitutional review after it was passed by the KKTC assembly. The move puts fresh scrutiny on a protocol signed by Ankara and the Turkish Cypriot administration on July 11, 2025, to expand fiber infrastructure and connect homes and businesses through a long-term project led by Türk Telekom. The agreement has become a political flashpoint in Northern Cyprus, the breakaway state in the island's north that is recognized only by Turkey. Supporters in the ruling coalition have described it as a strategic investment worth about $100 million that would bring fiber internet to 150,000 homes. Opposition lawmakers and trade groups, however, say the arrangement was approved without a competitive bidding process and would give Türk Telekom the right to operate the infrastructure for 25 years. The bill passed the assembly with 27 votes in favor and 20 against after days of debate. (March 13, 2026) www.turkishminute.com

United Arab Emirates

e& has partnered with Khalifa University to outline a new vision for AI-native 6G networks. Their joint whitepaper presents a framework in which intelligence is embedded at the core of the network architecture rather than added as a feature. The proposal introduces a dedicated AI plane alongside existing network layers to enable continuous learning and automation. This approach supports sensing, reasoning and autonomous decision-making across radio, core and edge systems. The framework includes distributed AI agents, digital twin integration and closed-loop automation models. It is designed to support multi-vendor environments while enabling scalable and coordinated intelligence across networks. Five core pillars underpin the model, including AI frameworks, cloud-edge computing and sustainability-focused design. Together, these elements position 6G as a cognitive infrastructure capable of predictive optimization and advanced service delivery. The whitepaper also defines measurable performance indicators such as latency, learning accuracy and energy efficiency. The initiative aims to contribute to global standards while strengthening the UAE's role in shaping future telecom systems.

(March 19, 2026) www.dig.watch

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REGULATORY ACTIVITIES BEYOND THE SA-ME-NA REGION

Canada

Canada's telecommunications regulator says it will prevent companies from charging customers when they cancel, change or activate plans. The CRTC says the move is meant to make it easier for consumers to switch internet and cellphone plans, with the ability to take advantage of better offers without having to worry about unexpected costs. The new rules will come into effect on June 12. The regulator says it will announce additional consumer protection measures in the coming months to make it easier to shop for, compare and choose plans. In late 2024, the CRTC launched a handful of consultations related to empowering cellphone and internet customers, seeking feedback on potential changes around notifications, self-serve options and fees. The commission has been considering measures to ensure people know when their plans or discounts are about to end to avoid bill shocks. The CRTC is also exploring potential self-serve options for when customers need to change or cancel their plans to make those actions easier. The proposals came after the federal government made changes to the Telecommunications Act which required the CRTC to put new consumer protection measures in place.

(March 13, 2026) www.cbc.ca

Czech Republic

CTU has published a draft measure of a general nature for public consultation – part of the radio spectrum utilization plan for the 24.25–27.5 GHz band. The draft sets out updated technical conditions and rules for the use of this band by fixed and mobile electronic communications networks. The aim of the new regulation is to create a transparent and predictable environment for the development of high-speed wireless networks, in particular fifth-generation (IMT/5G) networks and fixed wireless access (FWA) networks, while supporting the use of this spectrum for Industry 4.0 and campus networks. To facilitate coordination with existing users, CTU will also make available information on the use of radio frequencies in the shared parts of the 24.25-27.5 GHz frequency band. The 24.25–27.5 GHz frequency band allows for the use of wide spectrum blocks and the achievement of very high transmission speeds. The new proposal reflects technological developments and market demand for high-capacity wireless solutions for urban agglomerations, industrial areas, and locations with insufficient coverage. Among other things, CTU proposes to define parts of the band for local fixed wireless access (FWA) networks or to establish a comprehensive section for mobile networks with mobile terminals. The intention is also to gradually release up to 2400 MHz of spectrum for future mobile networks operated by radio frequency license holders. CTU therefore anticipates that, as of 1 January 2032, the number of rights to use frequencies in the 25.1–27.5 GHz band will be limited in order to create a contiguous spectrum for future high-capacity mobile networks. The proposal also regulates the conditions for fixed point-to-point connections in part of the band. Existing connections will only be allowed to operate for a transitional period: in part of the band until 31 December 2028, and in the remaining part until 31 December 2031.

(March 1, 2026) www.ctu.gov.cz

France

French regulator Arcep has launched a public consultation on the future of the wholesale market for terrestrial audiovisual broadcasting services, as the role of digital terrestrial television continues to weaken against broadband-based delivery. The consultation centers on Arcerp's Assessment and Outlook for the Wholesale Market for Terrestrial Audiovisual Broadcasting Services, which reviews the competitive position of the DTT transmission market and considers its prospects as alternative forms of audiovisual distribution and consumption continue to grow. Arcep is also seeking views on a set of commitments submitted by TDF, the leading terrestrial audiovisual broadcasting operator, for the next regulatory cycle. DTT in France remains subject to minimum coverage obligations, requiring national television services to reach at least 95% of the population. However, the regulator said the platform's position in the television market continues to decline as households increasingly turn to broadband and very high-speed networks for video consumption.

(March 23, 2026) www.broadbandtvnews.com

Ghana

The shared 5G infrastructure operated by Next-Gen InfraCo (NGIC) has been activated in Ghana, enabling telecom operators to connect and launch high-speed services. According to the National Communications Authority, 49 sites have already been installed across several regions including Accra, Kumasi and Tamale. The government targets 70% population coverage by 2027, the year Ghana marks the 70th anniversary of its independence. (March 10, 2026) www.africa-news-agency.com

Ghana has rolled out its 5G internet network to boost network reliability and digitalization, according to a statement. Next Gen Infraco (NGIC), the company licensed by the government to build and operate the wholesale 4G and 5G networks in the country, said in a release that the National Communications Authority (NCA) had approved its preparation and requirements processes, paving the way for the commencement of operations. "Following inspections and technical validation processes, the NCA has confirmed that NGIC is cleared to proceed in accordance with its Wholesale Electronic Communications Infrastructure License. With that confirmation, Ghana's wholesale 4G/5G platform is now live in selected locations in Accra, Kumasi and Tamale," the statement announced. It said the network is also live in other key locations, but nationwide expansion will progress in phases, marking a significant milestone in Ghana's digital development agenda. "Today, Ghana moves from 5G ambition to 5G execution. The shared backbone is commercially active and positioned to scale," NGIC Chief Executive Officer Tenu Awoonor said. According to Awoonor, the NGIC structure enables nationwide coordination of infrastructure investment while preserving innovation and competition at the retail level. The NCA licensed NGIC in 2024 to build, deploy and operate the 4G/5G network platform on a wholesale basis, enabling licensed mobile network providers to deliver competitive retail services over a common national backbone, as Ghana seeks to achieve 70 percent 5G network coverage by 2027.

(March 4, 2026) www.capitalfm.co.ke

India

The telecom regulator has quietly acknowledged what the industry has been saying for years. In its latest recommendations for the upcoming spectrum auction, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has proposed cutting reserve prices by up to 40% for the next spectrum auction. TRAI has recommended the sale of over 11,700MHz of spectrum across the 800MHz, 900MHz, 1,800MHz, 2,100MHz, 2,300MHz, 2,500MHz, 3,300MHz and 26GHz bands at an estimated total reserve price of 2.1 trillion Indian rupees (US$22.39 billion). While prices are lower across all bands on a country-wide basis, they are slightly higher in some regions where the spectrum was sold above the reserve price in previous auctions. It's not the first time TRAI has reduced reserve prices, but its scale makes this one of the most significant price cuts ever. India has held around nine spectrum auctions in the last 15 years and unsold spectrum is a regular phenomenon. For instance, the 700MHz band remained unsold in the 2016 and 2021 spectrum auctions. The 2024 auction was a particularly stark example. Of the 10,523MHz of spectrum on sale at a reserve price of INR963 billion ($10.27 billion), service providers picked up only 141MHz, just 1.34% of what was available.

(March 23, 2026) www.lightreading.com

Libya

The Governor of the Central Bank of Libya, Naji Issa, has highlighted a significant expansion in the nation's digital finance landscape during a high-level review of performance indicators for early 2026. Data from the first two months of the year reveal a sharp increase in digital banking infrastructure, with Point-of-Sale (POS) terminals reaching over 170,000 units and activated bank cards exceeding 5.5 million. This surge reflects a clear shift in consumer behavior toward non-cash transactions, supported by a robust increase in ATM and POS transaction volumes that reached billions of Libyan dinars. Mobile banking and instant payment services have also seen unprecedented uptake, with over 4.3 million subscribers now utilizing mobile platforms. Electronic applications processed more than 43 million transactions in just sixty days, totaling nearly 48 billion dinars in value. To further accelerate this digital transformation, the Central Bank and major financial institutions have agreed to launch QR code payment services at all points of sale. This initiative aims to enhance public confidence in digital channels and streamline the nation's financial systems in line with global fintech trends.

(March 9, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com

Namibia

Namibia has declined an application by Starlink to obtain a telecommunications service license and radio spectrum access, saying the satellite internet provider failed to meet several legal requirements. The application was submitted through local partner Starlink Internet Services Namibia, but the Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN) decided not to grant the license. Addressing a media briefing in Windhoek, CRAN Board Chairperson Tulimevava Mufeti said that while the applicant met requirements relating to competition, technical and financial capacity, and frequency availability, it failed to satisfy key criteria on ownership, national security and compliance history. "Starlink does not comply with the ownership requirements prescribed under Section 46 of the Communications Act, as the entity is wholly foreign-owned," she said. In addition, the company did not obtain an exemption from the statutory requirement that a license holder must have at least 51 percent Namibian ownership, according to Mufeti. Upon assessment, the CRAN found that the applicant met only three of the six criteria required under the law and therefore did not qualify for approval under the Communications Act, she said.

(March 24, 2026) www.english.news.cn

Nigeria

The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has directed mobile network operators and other communications service providers to report any cyberattack within four hours of detecting it. The regular aims to strengthen the security of the country's telecom infrastructure and protect the data of millions of subscribers. The new requirement will take effect in February 2027, giving operators a year to upgrade their monitoring systems and build the rapid-response reporting structures required under the directive. New Rules for Faster Incident Reporting The order forms part of the Cyber Resilience Framework for the Nigerian Communications Sector (CRF-NCS), released by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) in February 2026. The framework brings strong procedures for how telecom companies must handle and report cybersecurity incidents. Under the new guidelines, operators must quickly notify the regulator once a cyber threat is detected and continue to provide updates until the incident is fully resolved. "Under the framework, telecommunications companies must alert the regulator within four hours of detecting a cyber incident and continue to provide updates every four hours until the situation is contained. Operators are also required to submit a confirmation report within 24 hours through a dedicated reporting portal," the framework states. Regulators say the goal is to prevent minor security breaches from escalating into major service disruptions or large-scale data leaks that could affect Nigeria's digital economy. (March 10, 2026) www.techeconomy.ng

Peru

Peru is seeking to test new business models and facilitate innovation in the telecommunications sector. The country's telecom regulator, Osiptel, launched a public consultation to define the regulatory framework for a sandbox, with a deadline for submitting contributions of Mar 16, 2026. The objective is to balance technological innovation with the protection of users' rights and to facilitate the launch of new services or business models that would be unfeasible under current regulations. A sandbox is a controlled experimental environment created by regulatory bodies that allows companies to test innovative products, services and business models under rules that are relaxed or suspended for a limited period. Such a testbed seeks to foster innovation without compromising security, while monitoring risks before formal regulations are adopted. In the public consultation document, Osiptel cites international experiences and lists countries in the region such as Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Colombia and the Dominican Republic as having defined frameworks for regulatory sandboxes.

(March 5, 2026) www.bnamericas.com

Russia

Russian authorities are moving to tighten their grip on internet access by introducing a system that limits users to a government-approved list of websites and services amid ongoing internet shutdowns, according to local media reports. Mobile internet in Moscow has been intermittently disrupted since March 6, with some areas still experiencing outages, local reports say. Authorities in St. Petersburg have also warned residents this week to expect similar disruptions. Officials have said the measures are intended to protect against Ukrainian drone attacks. Similar restrictions have previously been imposed in other regions of Russia. Under the "whitelist" system, only pre-approved Russian platforms — including social media, marketplaces, taxi and delivery apps, telecom services and government websites — remain accessible when mobile internet is restricted. The list was first compiled last year but appears to have only recently become operational, according to Russian newspaper Kommersant. Russian authorities have not publicly confirmed the rollout. However, Forbes journalists in Moscow reported that approved services remained available even as broader connectivity was disrupted.

(March 18, 2026) www.therecord.media

Rwanda

As cybersecurity threats continue to grow in size and seriousness throughout Africa, a new initiative has been launched in Rwanda that aims to build Africa's cyber resilience. The International Cybersecurity Community for Africa (ICCA) describes itself as a pan-African cybersecurity community dedicated to strengthening Africa's cyber resilience through collaboration, capacity building, standards, research, innovation and advocacy across the continent. It adds that it operates as a community-driven, mission-led organization delivering high-impact programs while creating a trusted space for experts and partners to co-create solutions for Africa's evolving threat landscape. The initiative certainly addresses a critical issue: African organizations reportedly face an average of 1,848 cyberattacks per week. However, the continent employs fewer than 300,000 cybersecurity professionals against 2.8 million unfilled global positions. With this in mind, ICCA's founders have set themselves an ambitious goal: to train one million cybersecurity specialists by 2030. In the coming years ICCA also plans to launch certification programs and an African Cyber Resilience Index to benchmark national preparedness against cyber threats. However, it's fairly early days so far for ICCA, which officially launched in Kigali in Rwanda on the 20th of March 2026. It says it is establishing a pan-African platform aimed at building a united, resilient cybersecurity ecosystem through collaboration, capacity building, and threat intelligence sharing across all 54 African countries. The immediate aim for the platform is to expand to around 15 African countries by 2027, although it seems that Rwanda is and will remain the center of the organization.

(March 25, 2026) www.developingtelecoms.com

Singapore

The Cyber Security Agency of Singapore (CSA), in collaboration with the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA), has announced a significant update to the mandatory cybersecurity requirements for residential routers. By the end of 2027, the baseline security standard for these devices will be elevated from the Cybersecurity Labelling Scheme (CLS) Level 1 to Level 2. This proactive measure addresses the growing vulnerability of residential routers, which are increasingly targeted by malicious cyber actors to exploit home networks or integrate devices into global botnets for Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks. Currently, all residential routers sold in Singapore are required to meet CLS Level 1 standards, which provide basic protections such as unique default passwords and regular software updates. However, as cyber threats become more sophisticated, these foundational measures are no longer sufficient against attacks targeting data encryption and authentication weaknesses. The transition to CLS Level 2 mandates that manufacturers incorporate more robust security features. These enhancements include secure communications protocols, the secure storage of sensitive data, and advanced authentication mechanisms designed to better protect user privacy and reduce the risk of compromise.

(March 18, 2026) www.globalvalidity.com

South Africa

ICASA has issued a warning to fiber network operators and internet service providers (ISPs) in South Africa to submit license renewal applications within the required timeframe—no earlier than 12 months and no later than six months before expiry—or risk losing operating rights. The notice applies to Individual Electronic Communications Network Service (I-ECNS) and Individual Electronic Communications Service (I-ECS) license holders, including Axxess, MTN, Vodacom, Rain, Webafrica, Seacom, Broadband Infraco, and Sentech. Compliance with the Electronic Communications Act, including maintaining at least 30% ownership by historically disadvantaged South Africans, is also required. Past enforcement, such as StarSat's shutdown, highlights ICASA's strict approach.

(February 27, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com

United States

In an interview with Mobile World Live, Federal Communications Commission (FCC) chairman Brendan Carr has urged regulators to adopt a "humble approach" when formulating policies for the AI era. Drawing parallels to the 1990s internet boom, Carr highlighted the benefits of a light-touch regulatory approach that allowed the internet to flourish in the U.S. He also called on European markets to collaborate with the US in AI development to counter China's growing influence in the sector, noting that China has been explicit about its AI ambitions. Carr expressed optimism about Europe's progress in simplifying regulations and allowing providers to scale, reiterating his support for a less restrictive AI policy framework.

(March 10, 2026) www.thelegalwire.ai

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