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SAMENA TRENDS

CONTEXT FOR DIGITAL-ECOSYSTEM DECISIONS
BUILDING DIGITAL ECONOMIES

Featured Capabilities
in Context

7 Essentials of
Regulatory
Governance

Why 5G-A is the Telco's
Most Critical
Investment Decision

SAMENA Macro-View
and Policy & Regulatory
Reading



THIS MONTH

DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPERATIONAL CONFIDENCE

SAMENA TRENDS

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Members remain central to the publication's coverage, contributions, and institutional visibility, with their perspectives placed within the wider developments shaping the digital ecosystem. The publication is also relevant to regulators, policymakers, industry partners, investors, technology providers, cross-industry participants, and other stakeholders seeking context beyond day-to-day industry reporting.

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CONTENTS

03 EDITORIAL

09 REGIONAL & MEMBERS UPDATES

- Featured Capabilities in Context
- Members News
- Regional News

61 SAMENA MACRO-VIEW

- Operationalizing Strategic Autonomy...

82 SATELLITE UPDATES

- Satellite News

94 AI UPDATES

- AI News

102 WHOLESALE UPDATES

- Wholesale News

107 TECHNOLOGY UPDATES

- Technology News

113 SAMENA REGULATORY SNAPSHOT

117 REGULATORY & POLICY UPDATES

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

ARTICLES

53 Navigating the Digital Frontier: Why the Governance of Digital...

77 5G-Advanced: Why 5G-A is the Telco's Most Critical Investment Decision...

104 In the GCC, National AI Sovereignty Is Reshaping the Operator Investment...

INTERVIEW

92



AMH Tourism In Conversation with the SAMENA Council

SAMENA COUNCIL ACTIVITY

05



ZainTECH Joins SAMENA Council to Expand Role in Enabling Enterprise-Scale Digital Infrastructure...

06



SAMENA Council Welcomes MTN Group to its Membership of Operators, Tech Providers, and Ecosystem partners

07



Opensignal Joins the SAMENA Telecommunications Council to Advance Real-World Network Experience Measurement...

Digital Infrastructure and Operational Confidence

The digital sector across the region continues to develop at a rapid pace as AI platforms, data centers, cloud services, fiber networks, mobile networks, satellite systems, and private networks become more closely connected. These parts of the digital ecosystem are now supporting a wider range of services across government, business, industry, and everyday digital activity.

Recent developments show that more attention is being placed on how digital infrastructure operates, how it is governed, and how it supports national priorities. Countries are increasing their focus on AI infrastructure, data control, secure platforms, and reliable networks. This reflects the growing importance of digital systems in economic planning, public services, cybersecurity, industrial operations, and long-term technology development.

In the SA-ME-NA region, this direction is becoming more visible. Governments and industry stakeholders are paying closer attention to sovereign AI platforms, local data capabilities, cybersecurity requirements, and the infrastructure needed to support advanced digital services. The launch of national-scale AI platforms, the creation of new AI and data authorities, and the expansion of data center and connectivity investments all point to a stronger focus on digital control, operational readiness, and trusted service delivery.

Within this environment, telecom operators remain central to digital development. Their networks are carrying rising levels of traffic linked to AI applications, cloud platforms, enterprise services, streaming, connected devices, and public digital services. Operators are therefore investing in capacity, automation, fiber infrastructure, 5G development, and service-quality improvements. These efforts are becoming more important as businesses, governments, and users depend more heavily on reliable digital access.

Network stability and overall resilience are also becoming major areas of attention.

As digital services become more deeply connected with economic activity, outages and service interruptions can create serious financial and operational consequences. This is pushing operators and technology providers to focus more on automation, real-time monitoring, faster fault resolution, and stronger network protection. Autonomous network operations and advanced cybersecurity tools are becoming more relevant as networks become larger, more complex, and more important to national activity.

Regulators are also adapting to this environment. Spectrum planning, service-quality monitoring, cybersecurity oversight, infrastructure policy, and consumer protection are all becoming more connected with broader digital development goals. In several markets, regulators are placing more emphasis on outcomes, including network performance, service reliability, market development, and the protection of users. Regulatory sandboxes and capacity-building programs are also helping markets test new technologies and improve policy readiness before wider deployment.

At the infrastructure level, physical assets remain central to digital growth. Submarine cable systems, terrestrial fiber networks, mobile infrastructure, data centers, satellite systems, and private 5G networks are all supporting the expansion of digital services. Recent subsea cable investments, private 5G deployments, and satellite initiatives show that infrastructure is being viewed as a national and regional priority. These assets support cloud services, AI platforms, logistics, industry, financial services, public services, and international connectivity.

Satellite connectivity is also becoming more important in the wider digital landscape. Regional satellite initiatives, direct-to-device developments, and satellite IoT solutions are helping extend connectivity beyond traditional network coverage. These developments are especially relevant for remote areas, emergency response, logistics, maritime services, and critical infrastructure. At



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

the same time, regulators are looking more closely at how satellite services should fit within national licensing, security, and service-quality frameworks.

For the SAMENA Council, these developments reflect a wider shift in the digital ecosystem. Infrastructure expansion remains important, while markets are also focusing on how digital systems can be operated, protected, regulated, financed, and improved over time. This requires stronger coordination among governments, regulators, operators, infrastructure providers, technology companies, and institutional stakeholders.

As digital demand continues to grow, the main priority will be to build infrastructure that can support reliable services, secure operations, economic development, and public-sector needs. The next stage of digital development will depend on how effectively markets connect investment, regulation, technology, and operational performance. For the SA-ME-NA region, this means treating digital infrastructure as a shared foundation for connectivity, competitiveness, resilience, and long-term digital progress. 🌐

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SAMENA Council Activity

ZainTECH Joins SAMENA Council to Expand Role in Enabling Enterprise-Scale Digital Infrastructure Across the Region

The SAMENA Telecommunications Council announces that ZainTECH, the digital solutions arm of Zain Group, has joined its membership strengthening its engagement with regional operators, regulators, and technology partners. ZainTECH enables government bodies and organizations to become Digital, Intelligent, and Resilient; modernizing operations, embedding AI, and ensuring secure, always-on performance at scale.

ZainTECH provides cloud, cybersecurity, data, AI, and digital infrastructure services across multiple markets. Its participation in the Council will focus on infrastructure resilience, cross-border data flows, and accelerating enterprise adoption of emerging technologies.

As telecom operators expand beyond connectivity toward cloud-based networks, cybersecurity frameworks, and data-driven services, the company sees closer coordination with industry stakeholders as necessary to scale these capabilities effectively.

Andrew Hanna, CEO of ZainTECH, said "Our role sits at the intersection of telecom and enterprise technology, where infrastructure, data and security must come together to support scalable, real-world operations. Joining SAMENA alongside many other



distinguished entities allows us to engage more closely with operators, policymakers and ecosystems partners on how this transition is being shaped across the region. At ZainTECH, we see this evolution not just as a technology shift, but as an operational one requiring structured delivery models, strong governance, and regional execution at scale"

The SAMENA Telecommunications Council brings together telecom operators, technology companies, and government stakeholders across the Middle East, South Asia, and North Africa. Its work includes policy dialogue, industry coordination, and initiatives tied to connectivity and digital development.

Bocar A. BA, CEO of the Council, said ZainTECH's addition reflects a broader shift in the sector. "Telecom is no longer defined by connectivity alone. Capabilities such as cloud, cybersecurity, and data platforms are becoming core to how operators deliver services. ZainTECH brings experience in these areas that is directly relevant to our members."

ZainTECH will contribute to the Council's broader industry work, contributing to discussions and initiatives related to telecom development, digital infrastructure, and evolving technology needs across the region and afar. 🌍

SAMENA Council Welcomes MTN Group to its Membership of Operators, Tech Providers, and Ecosystem partners

The SAMENA Telecommunications Council has announced the membership of MTN Group to its membership. MTN will be represented by Ms. Lele Modise, the Group's Chief Legal and Regulatory Officer and an internationally-recognised professional featured on the Legal500 GC Powerlist and Chambers Global rankings as well as Vice-Chair of the ITU Industry Advisory Group on Development Issues and the Private Sector Chief Regulatory Officers forum (IAGDI-CRO).

As a Pan-African digital operator, MTN Group brings practical experience from markets where infrastructure investment, digital inclusion, regulatory certainty, cross-border connectivity, and trusted platforms are closely linked. Through the SAMENA Council, MTN Group aims to contribute operator perspectives to regional industry discussions on critical issues. This includes advancing discussions on infrastructure protection and resilience, enabling sustainable investment models, strengthening data governance frameworks, and promoting trusted digital infrastructure. Additional interest areas for MTN include shaping conversations on cybersecurity, AI readiness, and enabling policy and regulatory frameworks that support long-term sector development, innovation, and inclusive growth across the region.

Commenting on MTN's membership of the SAMENA Council, Ms. Lele Modise



stated: "Our participation in the work of the SAMENA Council reflects our commitment to shaping bold industry dialogue that supports resilient networks, in an increasingly complex geopolitical environment, catalyzes investment-ready policy frameworks, and drives inclusive digital growth across the markets we serve, thus ensuring better outcomes for customers, enterprises, and the societies."

Welcoming MTN Group and Ms. Modise to the Council, CEO of the SAMENA Council Bocar BA stated: "We are pleased to welcome MTN Group to the SAMENA Council. MTN's experience as a major operator, digital infrastructure investor, and provider of fintech and connectivity platforms across Africa is highly relevant to the priorities of the Council. As telecom infrastructure becomes more central to national resilience, economic development,

enterprise growth across industries, and digital transformation, MTN's perspective will add practical value to our regional industry dialogue and to the wider effort to strengthen secure, sustainable, and investment-ready digital ecosystems."

As networks increasingly transform and support new essential services and as AI, cloud, fintech, enterprise platforms, and cross-border data flows increase demand on connectivity, operators and ecosystem partners need stronger alignment around infrastructure security, regulatory clarity, cyber resilience, and long-term investment models. In this context, leading operators' participation in the SAMENA Council supports more focused cross-regional conversations and recommendations on how critical digital infrastructure should be developed and how sustainable digital ecosystems needs to be built. 🌱

Opensignal Joins the SAMENA Telecommunications Council to Advance Real-World Network Experience Measurement Across SA-ME-NA Markets

The SAMENA Telecommunications Council, the South Asia–Middle East–North Africa (SA-ME-NA) region's leading industry association of telecom operators, service providers, technology providers, and digital ecosystem players, has announced that Opensignal®, a global provider of independent insights into consumers' connectivity experiences and choice of carrier, joined its members ecosystem earlier this year.

Opensignal's decision to join the SAMENA Council reflects its focus on enabling mobile and broadband network operators, regulators, financial analysts, and other telecom-sector stakeholders to analyze how users actually experience connectivity. As markets across the SA-ME-NA region continue to invest in mobile broadband, fixed broadband, 5G, 5G-Advanced, and digital services, real-world network experience insight is becoming increasingly important for service quality improvement, network investment planning, market assessment, and regulatory dialogue.

Opensignal brings to the SAMENA Council community practical experience in measuring and analyzing mobile and broadband network performance from the user perspective. Its insights help operators benchmark performance, identify areas for improvement, understand competitive positioning, assess network performance claims, and assess consumer decision dynamics. For regulators and policy stakeholders, Opensignal's work can support a more accurate understanding of quality of service, coverage, consistency, reliability, and the user-level outcomes of network development.



Commenting on the membership, Shawn Heidel, President of Opensignal's Network Experience Division, stated that *"the SA-ME-NA region is an important connectivity market, with operators and regulators placing greater emphasis on network quality, user experience, and the measurable impact of infrastructure investment. Joining the SAMENA Council gives Opensignal a valuable platform to engage with regional telecom leaders, contribute independent network experience insight, and support discussions on how mobile and broadband networks are measured, improved, and understood across the region."*

Through the SAMENA Council, Opensignal will be able to draw attention to key data-analytics findings and engage more closely with regional operators, participate in industry dialogue, gain exposure to and contribute in creating policy and regulatory perspectives, and contribute to discussions where network experience, service quality, and infrastructure performance are central to mobile and broadband market development. The membership also supports stronger visibility for Opensignal

among telecom and digital infrastructure stakeholders across the SA-ME-NA region.

Welcoming Opensignal, SAMENA Council CEO Bocar BA stated: *"Opensignal brings valuable expertise in real-world network experience measurement and connectivity analytics. Its ability to provide independent insight into how users experience mobile and broadband networks can support operators, regulators, and industry stakeholders in making better-informed decisions on service quality, coverage, consistency, reliability, and investment outcomes. This is highly relevant as SA-ME-NA markets continue to invest in mobile and broadband network development."*

Opensignal's membership reinforces the growing importance of real-world network experience insight in telecom development. As broadband, mobile services, cloud access, digital applications, and data-intensive digital services place greater demand on network quality, reliable measurement of actual user experience can help strengthen service improvement, regulatory alignment, investment confidence, and customer trust across the region. 🌐

**Circulation is a Number.
Context is a Credential.**

Be seen in the right industry context.

Selected visibility for organizations and executives within a SAMENA Council publication environment connected to policy, regulation, infrastructure, technology deployment, national ICT priorities, and regional ecosystem development.

FEATURED CAPABILITIES IN CONTEXT

The SAMENA Council's Membership brings together capabilities spanning telecommunications, broadband infrastructure, satellite communications, network technology, digital platforms, policy and regulatory intelligence, strategic advisory, service experience, security and monetization.

THESE PROFILES PRESENT THE FACTUAL CORPORATE CAPABILITIES OF THE COUNCIL'S MEMBERS WITHIN THE ISSUES SHAPING THE DIGITAL SECTOR TODAY.

stc GROUP



Telecommunications and Digital Enablement

stc Group provides telecommunications, digital platforms, enterprise technology, cloud, cybersecurity, IoT, infrastructure and related digital services through its operations and subsidiaries.

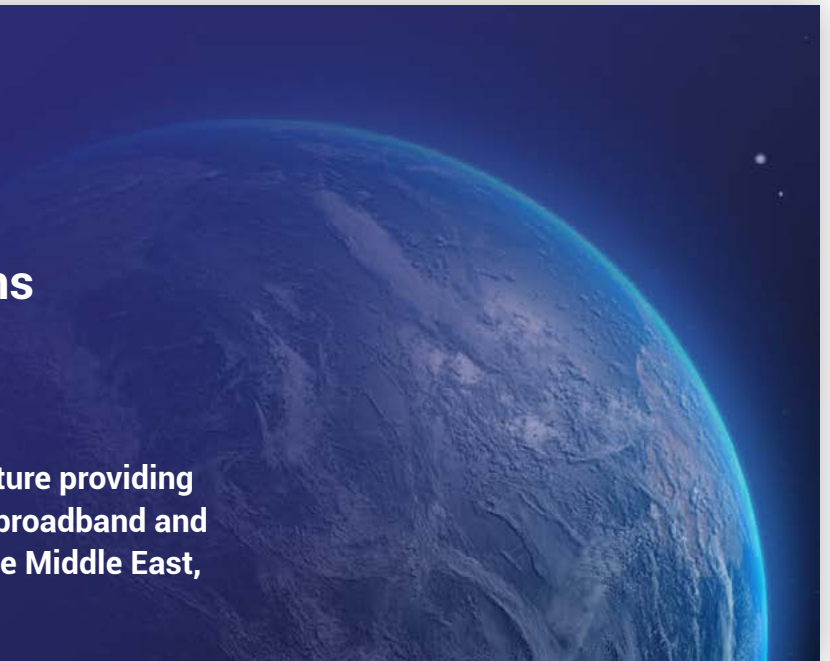


ARABSAT



Satellite Communications and Broadcasting

Arabsat operates satellite infrastructure providing broadcasting, telecommunications, broadband and data-connectivity services across the Middle East, Africa, Europe and Central Asia.



MOBILY



Mobile, Fixed and Digital Services

Mobily provides mobile, fixed, fiber, enterprise, wholesale, cloud, hosting and data-center services for individuals, businesses and telecommunications partners in Saudi Arabia.

OMANTEL



Integrated and International Connectivity

Omantel provides mobile, fixed, broadband, enterprise, wholesale and international connectivity services for consumers, businesses, operators, content providers and other communications partners.



ZAIN GROUP



Digital Communications and Enterprise Services

Zain Group provides mobile communications, broadband, enterprise solutions, digital services and financial technology across its markets in the Middle East and Africa.



ANALYSYS MASON



Technology, Media and Telecom Consulting

Analysys Mason provides consulting, research and data services across technology, media, telecoms, digital infrastructure and space, supporting strategy, policy, regulation, transactions, transformation and market analysis.



ARTHUR D. LITTLE

The logo for Arthur D. Little, featuring the company name in a bold, sans-serif font. The letter 'D' is stylized with a white semi-circle cutout on its right side.

Strategy and Transformation Advisory

Arthur D. Little advises telecommunications, technology, media and electronics organizations on strategy, growth, innovation, transformation, operating performance and the development of new technology-enabled business opportunities.

AT&T



Global Enterprise Connectivity

AT&T provides multinational enterprises with secure networking, internet, voice, mobility, IoT and managed communications services, supported by sales, design and operational capabilities across international markets.

CISCO



Secure Networking and Digital Infrastructure

Cisco provides networking, security, observability, collaboration and computing technologies that connect and protect users, devices, applications, data centers and cloud environments.



CHINA MOBILE INTERNATIONAL



China Mobile
International

International Telecommunications Services

China Mobile International provides carriers and enterprises with international voice, messaging, roaming, data connectivity, China access, cloud, data-center, ICT and IoT services.



CULLEN INTERNATIONAL



Regulatory Intelligence

Cullen International provides independent regulatory and competition-law intelligence across telecommunications, media, the digital economy and postal services through subscriptions, research, benchmarks, training and direct analyst support.

EUTELSAT



Multi-Orbit Satellite Connectivity

Eutelsat provides satellite connectivity and broadcasting through geostationary and low Earth orbit infrastructure, serving telecommunications providers, enterprises, governments, broadcasters, aviation, maritime and remote locations.

HUAWEI



ICT Infrastructure and Smart Devices

Huawei provides information and communications technology infrastructure and smart devices, with capabilities spanning carrier networks, enterprise digital infrastructure, cloud computing, data centers and connected devices.

MEDIAFON



Messaging Traffic Control and Revenue Assurance

Mediafon provides telecom IT capabilities that help operators detect and eliminate grey routes, apply commercial controls to international A2P messaging traffic, and convert previously unmonetized volumes into regulated revenue streams while supporting integration with existing operator environments.

MTN GROUP



Connectivity and Digital Platforms

MTN Group provides mobile and data connectivity, digital services, financial technology and enterprise solutions across markets in Africa and the Middle East.

NEXIGN

The Nexign logo, featuring the word "nexign" in a lowercase, white, sans-serif font. The background of the slide is a deep green with a subtle pattern of glowing network lines and towers.

nexign

Telecom BSS and Monetization

Nexign provides telecom business-support and network-monetization software, including converged charging, billing, revenue management and product-management capabilities for communications service providers.

NOKIA

NOKIA

Network Technology and Infrastructure

Nokia provides technology for mobile, fixed, IP, optical, data-center and cloud networks, supporting communications service providers, enterprises and cloud operators with connectivity, automation and network-management capabilities.

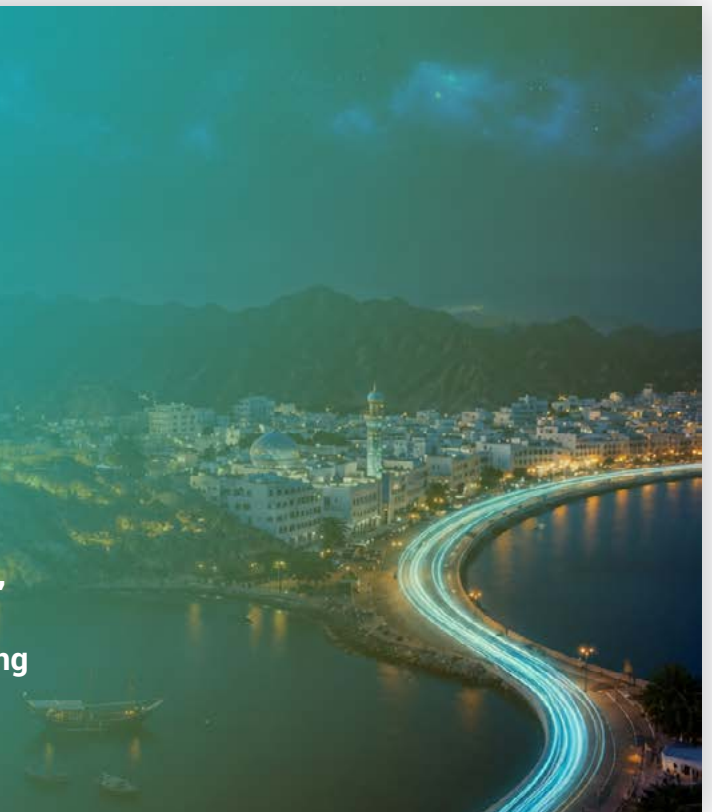


OMAN BROADBAND

omq
BROADBAND
العمانية للنطاق العريض

National Broadband Infrastructure

Oman Broadband develops and operates wholesale broadband infrastructure in Oman, providing licensed telecommunications operators with open-access services including fiber connectivity, backhaul, co-location and transmission capacity.



OPENSIGNAL



OPENSIGNAL

Network Experience Intelligence

Opensignal independently measures and analyzes consumers' mobile and broadband connectivity experiences, providing operators, regulators and other industry participants with network-performance, market and subscriber intelligence.

PALTEL GROUP



مجموعة الاتصالات الفلسطينية
PALTEL GROUP

Integrated Telecommunications Services

Paltel Group provides fixed, mobile, internet, broadband, data-connectivity and ICT services in Palestine through its operating companies, serving consumers, businesses and institutions.

SALAM



Integrated Connectivity and ICT Services

Salam provides mobile, fixed, fiber, 5G, national and international data connectivity, satellite, voice, cloud, cybersecurity and managed services for consumers, enterprises and public-sector customers in Saudi Arabia.

stc BAHRAIN



Telecommunications and Digital Services

stc Bahrain provides mobile, broadband, fixed connectivity, enterprise communications, cloud, cybersecurity and other digital services for consumers, businesses and public-sector organizations in Bahrain.

ZAINTECH

zainTECH

Integrated Digital Solutions

ZainTECH provides enterprise and government customers with solutions across cloud computing, cybersecurity, data and AI, digital solutions, IoT, smart infrastructure, and drones and robotics.

MEMBERS NEWS



stc Group wins CST Awards for Best User Experience

stc Group, a leading digital enabler, has been honored by the Communications, Space and Technology Commission (CST) with the 2025 Best User Experience Awards for Mobile Telecommunications Services and Fixed Telecommunications Infrastructure Services. The awards were presented by CST Governor Eng. Haitham bin Abdulrahman AlOthali and received by stc group CEO Eng. Olayan bin Mohammed Alwetaid. The recognition reflects stc group's excellence in delivering fixed and mobile telecommunications services to individual customers, and its rigorous adherence to user experience standards and performance benchmarks. This span customer satisfaction measurement, accessibility to digital services, and alignment with CST's technology indicators, all aimed at advancing telecommunications services, strengthening competitiveness, and elevating user experience across the Kingdom. The awards further highlight stc

group's role in advancing the telecommunications and information technology sector, underpinned by sustained investment in advanced technologies and continuous

innovation in digital services, contributing to an enhanced digital quality of life and supporting the sector's development in line with global best practices.



stc Group Launches Advanced O&M Solution to Enhance Network Automation and Operational Efficiency

stc Group, a leading digital enabler, together with Huawei, has launched an advanced operations and maintenance (O&M) solution designed to support the evolution of stc Group's core network toward Autonomous Networks Level 4 (AN L4). Built on 3GPP Management Data Analytics Function (MDAF) standards, the solution enhances automation, scalability, and operational efficiency across stc Group's core network infrastructure. The launch comes as telecom networks continue to grow in scale and complexity, driven by the expansion of 5G and 5.5G services and digital applications. Over the past five years, stc Group's core network elements have increased by 2.5 times, service categories have grown by 75%, and the underlying technology stack has doubled in scale, creating a need for more advanced, data-

driven operational capabilities. To address this growing complexity, stc Group has introduced ICNMaster, an intelligent O&M orchestration platform built on MDAF standards. The platform enables real-time topology visualization, cross-domain data correlation, anomaly detection and closed-loop automation, helping stc Group move from reactive troubleshooting toward more proactive and predictive network management. Within ICNMaster, FaultSpirit supports faster alarm diagnosis and complaint resolution by drawing on an updated technical knowledge base and advanced reasoning capabilities. It helps operations teams identify and resolve alarm-related faults, as well as issues affecting signaling and data transmission processes, reducing resolution times to minutes while improving network

reliability and operational productivity. The solution also includes NOCMate, a unified knowledge platform that brings together technical standards, vendor documentation and institutional expertise in one accessible system. This gives O&M teams faster access to accurate technical information, supports more agile decision-making and helps reduce onboarding time for new engineers. The collaboration between stc Group and Huawei supports the group's continued progress toward more autonomous network operations, aligned with TM Forum standards and global industry practices. It also reinforces stc Group's commitment to operational excellence and future-ready digital infrastructure, enabling robust network growth and service diversification across Saudi Arabia.

stc Group Launches “Pulse by Solutions” to Strengthen Its Integrated Digital Ecosystem

stc Group announced the official launch of the “pulse by solutions” brand identity as a strategic step to further integrate its digital ecosystem across the Middle East and Africa. The new identity builds on a legacy spanning nearly five decades under Giza Systems, a leading systems integrator founded in 1974. solutions by stc, the group’s technology arm, plays a central role in this transformation, with pulse by solutions operating under its umbrella

as a key enabler of advanced systems integration following its acquisition at an enterprise value of USD 158 million in 2022. This brand transformation reflects the unification of operational capabilities and the acceleration of growth and client services across the stc ecosystem. Commenting on the launch, Eng. Omer Alnomany, CEO of solutions by stc and Chairman of pulse, said: “The launch of pulse by solutions marks an advanced

stage of integration across the group, aligned with our strategy to enable digital transformation. Bringing pulse’s capabilities ICT and systems integration under a unified identity enhances our competitiveness across regional markets and accelerates value creation in line with stc group’s strategic direction.” Eng. Ahmed ElHarany, CEO of pulse by solutions, added: “This new identity reflects our transition from a strong regional legacy to a broader global presence. Operating under solutions by stc and within the stc group ecosystem provides a stronger institutional platform to deliver large-scale strategic projects. We will continue to focus on advancing the integration of intelligent systems and critical infrastructure, enhancing operational efficiency across sectors by enabling seamless connectivity between operational systems and data platforms — delivering innovative solutions that support business sustainability across the Middle East and Africa.” This transformation reinforces stc group’s position as a key enabler of digital transformation in the region, supporting the expansion of advanced systems integration and digital solutions across its markets.



e& Announces US\$5.95 Billion Strategic Exit from Vodafone Investment



Following a comprehensive strategic review of its international investment portfolio, Emirates Telecommunications Group Company PJSC (“e&”) announced the termination of its Relationship Agreement with Vodafone Group PLC (“Vodafone”). In connection with this, e&’s Board representative has stepped down from his position as a non-executive Director of Vodafone. Following the termination of the Relationship Agreement, e& has signed a binding agreement with Vega, an acquisition vehicle wholly owned by the Niel family group, to divest its entire holding of 3,944,743,685 ordinary shares in Vodafone, representing approximately 16.21% of Vodafone’s issued share capital and 17.13% of its total

voting rights, for a total consideration of 112.5 GBp per share. This comprises approximately 110.5 GBp per share in cash from the buyer and Vodafone's final FY26 dividend (of 2.02 GBp per share, to be received on 30 July 2026). The shares will

be sold simultaneously through off-market block trades to three financial institutions, who will hold the shares until Vega completes regulatory requirements. Upon completion of the transfer of the Shares to the financial institutions, the transac-

tion will generate cash proceeds to e& of approximately AED 21.8 billion (USD 5.95 billion), inclusive of final FY26 dividend. The transaction is expected to deliver a net cash return of approximately AED 4.7 billion (USD 1.3 billion).

e&, Cyber Security Council, and Open Innovation AI Launch the UAE Sovereign AI Platform for National-Scale Infrastructure

The UAE Cyber Security Council (CSC), e& UAE, and Open Innovation AI (OI) launched the UAE Sovereign AI Platform for national-scale infrastructure, an initiative delivering secure AI capabilities across national security, mission-critical operations, critical infrastructure, and classified government environments. The launch was announced at ISNR 2026 in Abu Dhabi, with the platform available for onboarding. The platform enables organizations to deploy and operate advanced AI technologies, including generative AI, large language models, AI agents, advanced analytics, and autonomous workflows, within fully UAE-controlled infrastructure designed for the highest levels of security, resilience, and regulatory compliance. At its core, the platform introduces a Sovereign AI Security Framework that validates, governs, and monitors AI models, agents, applications, and workflows before deployment into sensitive environments. The framework is designed to address emerging national security challenges associated with AI adoption. The initiative brings together the UAE Cyber Security Council's national governance and cyber resilience frameworks, e& UAE's national-scale digital infrastructure and secure connectivity, and Open Innovation AI's AI orchestration platform and end-to-end technology stack. The complete platform, covering GPU orchestration, AI infrastructure management, model deployment, AI agents, secure inference, and operational controls, was designed, engineered, and built in the UAE. The platform is designed for sectors requiring air-gapped, cyber-secure AI environments: National security and mission-critical operations, intelligence and cyber operations, emergency response, critical infrastructure, smart government and regulated strategic industries. Dr. Mohamed Al Kuwaiti, Head of Cyber Security for the UAE Government, said:



"AI adoption in sensitive environments must be supported by strong governance, secure infrastructure and clear national controls. This platform is an important step in enabling government entities and mission-critical organizations to benefit from AI while maintaining the highest levels of cyber resilience, data protection and policy alignment. By working with e& UAE and Open Innovation AI, we are supporting a secure national AI ecosystem that is built around trust, sovereignty and operational readiness." Abdulla Ebrahim Al Ahmed, Chief Government & VVIP Relations Officer, e& UAE, said: National security and high-assurance government environments require AI platforms that are secure by design, sovereign by architecture and built for real-world deployment. Through our collaboration with the UAE Cyber Security Council and Open Innovation AI, we are building a platform that keeps sensitive workloads within UAE-controlled infrastructure while enabling advanced AI, analytics and agentic AI capabilities. This reflects e& UAE's role as a trusted technology partner for government entities and strategic sectors. Dr. Abed Benaichouche, CEO and Co-Founder of Open Innovation AI, said: "Built for organizations that manage sensitive

operations and critical national data, the platform is designed to help government entities and mission-critical organizations adopt AI while maintaining control over data, compute, models, applications and security policies. It will also support compliance with UAE cyber security and AI policy requirements through an advanced AI Security Framework. The platform's technology stack, from GPU orchestration and model deployment to AI applications and intelligent agents, has been developed and built in the UAE. This local development approach is designed to strengthen national capabilities, accelerate secure AI adoption and support the UAE's position as a global hub for trusted digital infrastructure". The platform is expected to support a range of secure AI use cases, including AI agents, advanced analytics, classified workload processing, decision-support capabilities, knowledge management, workflow automation for sensitive environments, and controlled AI applications for government and mission-critical environments. The collaboration builds on e& UAE's broader AI strategy and its ongoing work with national partners to support secure digital transformation, cyber resilience and sovereign technology development across the UAE.

e& Money Supports UAE Businesses and Employees with a Smarter Salary Solution

As businesses across the UAE continue to focus on efficiency while supporting their workforce, e& money, part of e&'s fintech portfolio, has introduced a new salary solution designed to simplify payroll, reduce costs, and enhance the financial experience for employees. Built as a fully digital, end-to-end ecosystem, the solution brings together WPS (Wage Protection System) compliance, salary processing, a Universal Account with IBAN access, and employee benefits into one seamless platform, aligned with national priorities around financial inclusion and the UAE's "We the UAE 2031" vision. Moving beyond traditional payroll systems, e& money's approach focuses on creating a smoother,

more rewarding experience for both employers and employees. Businesses benefit from a simplified payroll process and reduced operational costs, while employees gain easier access to their salaries along with added financial benefits. For businesses, the solution offers a simple and efficient way to manage payroll through a single platform that meets all WPS requirements while reducing administrative effort. To further support companies, e& money is waiving all salary processing fees, enabling immediate cost savings. Employers also benefit from a secure dashboard, payroll funding through IBAN, and real-time tracking with instant status updates, allowing HR teams to operate more efficiently and focus on higher-value priorities. For employees, the experience is designed around convenience, transparency, and added value. The solution provides a simpler and more transparent salary experience by giving employees access to core financial services without extra everyday charges. Each employee receives a free IBAN account, along with a free virtual and physical e& money card, providing easy access and full control over their income through a single platform. In addition to easy salary access, employees can enjoy a range of financial benefits, including free local transfers, one free international transfer per month, up to 1% cashback on card spending, and total annual benefits of up to AED 400. "At e& money, we are focused on making every day financial services simpler, more accessible, and more rewarding for everyone," said Melike Kara Tanrikulu, Chief Executive Officer, e& money. "With this solution, employees receive a free IBAN, a card, and access to a wide range of financial services on a single platform, along with benefits of up to AED 400 annually. At the same time, we're helping businesses streamline payroll and reduce costs, creating a win-win experience that brings greater ease and peace of mind to both employers and their employees." The solution builds on the successful rollout of e& money's salary processing services for domestic workers, where thousands of employees have already chosen to receive their salaries through an e& money IBAN and card. This strong adoption highlights the growing demand for simple, transparent, and digital-first financial solutions. e& money now extends this experience to businesses across the UAE, offering a modern, efficient, and people-focused approach to payroll, designed to support both organizations and their employees in a rapidly evolving financial landscape.



Omantel in Partnership with Port of Salalah Launch First-Of-Its-Kind 5G Private Network

Amid the rapid global transformations reshaping the logistics sector, modern technologies, particularly 5G networks, smart solutions, and real time connectivity, have become central to enhancing supply chain efficiency and strengthening the reliability of port operations. Today, advanced communication networks

and digital solutions serve as a fundamental pillar in enabling automation, improving the management of movement and equipment, and accelerating data driven decision making. These advancements contribute to boosting productivity and enhancing the competitiveness of ports regionally and globally. Building on

the vital role of technology in advancing the logistics ecosystem, Omantel, the leading provider of telecommunications and integrated technology solutions in the Sultanate of Oman, partnered with the Port of Salalah to implement Oman's first of its kind Managed Private 5G Network, marking a significant milestone in the country's digital transformation journey. The project will support the port's ongoing automation program and further strengthen Omantel's role as a national enabler of advanced digital infrastructure across Oman's logistics and maritime sectors. Omantel will deploy a dedicated 5G Standalone private core supported by upgraded mobile sites to ensure robust coverage across the port. The solution includes ruggedized customer premises equipment designed for harsh industrial conditions, along with 600 SIMs provisioned with monthly data allowances to support the port's extensive device ecosystem. The network will be delivered as a fully managed service with 99.9% availability, supported by Omantel's Network Operations Center and dedicated Business Call Center, ensuring continuous monitoring and rapid response capabilities. The Port of Salalah is advancing its digital transformation strategy to improve productivity and competitiveness. As part of this effort, the port requires a high availability communication network capable of supporting hundreds of simultaneous connections, maintaining local survivability, and integrating seamlessly with existing operational systems. Omantel's Managed Private Network solution is engineered to meet these requirements, ensuring uninterrupted connectivity for critical port operations and enabling real time data exchange across cranes, vehicles, equipment, and workforce applications. International best practices across global ports have demonstrated



the growing role of advanced technologies in automating operational processes, resulting in productivity increases of up to 30% and reductions in operational costs by 30%. These advancements have also strengthened ports' contribution to national GDPs, driven by the multiplier effect of technology across the broader ecosystem of stakeholders involved in port operations. Commenting on the partnership, Steven Yoogalingam, the CEO of the Port of Salalah, said, this collaboration with Omantel represents an important milestone in our journey toward becoming one of the most advanced and efficient ports in the region. As we continue to modernize our operations and embrace automation, reliable and high performance connectivity becomes essential to our success. The 5G private network will allow us to validate new capabilities, enhance real time decision making, and strengthen

the resilience of our operations. We are pleased to partner with Omantel on this project and look forward to unlocking new opportunities for innovation and growth." On his part, Aladdin bin Abdullah Bait Fadhil, Chief Executive Officer of Omantel, stated, "Our Partnership with the Port of Salalah is a tangible demonstration of Omantel's commitment to accelerating digital transformation across Oman's logistics sector. Through the deployment of advanced private 5G infrastructure, we are enabling smarter operations, greater efficiency and sustainable growth while empowering people with technologies and capabilities needed to thrive in a digital economy. This project reflects our vision to be the digital enabler of choice, driving innovation, strengthening national competitiveness, and supporting long-term economic resilience."

Omantel Innovation Labs Strengthens Cybersecurity Capabilities Through Startup Bootcamp

Omantel Innovation Labs continues its efforts to support the cybersecurity ecosystem and technology entrepreneurship in the Sultanate through specialized initiatives and programs focused on empowering tech startups and innovators, while fostering

digital innovation that supports Oman's digital transformation goals. As part of these efforts, Omantel Innovation Labs organized the "Cybersecurity Startup Bootcamp," bringing together more than 80 participants representing 32 teams, including over 10 early-stage startups, with

the aim of accelerating the development of secure, scalable, and investment-ready cybersecurity ventures in Oman. The bootcamp featured a combination of expert-led cybersecurity sessions, startup development workshops, mentorship, and business support, enabling participants

to transform innovative ideas into commercially viable solutions. Attendees also participated in market validation exercises, networking opportunities, and practical training designed to strengthen Oman's cybersecurity and digital innovation ecosystem. The program aimed to support the growth of cybersecurity-focused startups in Oman by equipping founders with both cybersecurity expertise and entrepreneurial capabilities. It also sought to encourage innovation aligned with evolving market and industry needs, while contributing to Oman Vision 2040

through the advancement of the national innovation and cybersecurity landscape. Commenting on the occasion, HH. Sayyida Ghada bint Jaifer Al Said, General manager of Omantel innovation labs said: "Cybersecurity is no longer only a technical priority; it is a fundamental pillar of trust within the digital economy. Through this bootcamp, Omantel Innovation Labs continues to invest in the talent and ideas that will help shape and secure Oman's digital future. By empowering startups to innovate and grow, we are further strengthening Oman's position as

a regional hub for technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship, while supporting the objectives of Oman Vision 2040." Omantel Innovation Labs is the strategic innovation arm of Omantel, dedicated to fostering entrepreneurship, emerging technologies, and digital transformation. With a focus on AI, cybersecurity, and next-generation solutions, the Labs serve as a launchpad for startups and innovators, driving Oman's position as a regional leader in digital innovation. Omantel has succeeded, through the integration of its operations, processes, and extensive expertise in the field of communications and digital technology, in establishing its position as a leading telecommunications company within the Sultanate of Oman and beyond. The company's innovative approaches have contributed to providing state-of-the-art solutions to different consumer and business sectors. The company aims to deliver an unparalleled, exceptional experience to its customers and strives to always exceed their expectations. To achieve the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, Omantel invests in emerging technologies and provides cutting-edge ICT solutions, such as cloud solutions, AI, Smart solutions, cybersecurity, and much more, in addition to harnessing its technological capabilities to enhance innovation and leadership in new and advanced technologies.



Omantel Reports Q1 2026 Results Delivering a Strong Start to the Year

Oman Telecommunications Company ("Omantel" or the "Company") (MSX: OTEL), the leading integrated telecommunications and technology provider in the Sultanate of Oman, today announced its financial and operating results for the first quarter ended 31 March 2026, reporting year-on-year growth in revenue, EBITDA and net profit. The Group's performance was supported by resilient domestic operations and a stronger contribution from Zain Group. Reflecting on the first-quarter performance, Qais Al-Zakwani, Chairman of the Board of Directors for Omantel, noted that the first quarter of 2026 represented an important phase of preparation for the Group's upcoming transformation journey, as the Company works to lay the foundations for the next stage of its growth and transformation. He

explained that while domestic performance reflects this transitional phase, Zain Group continued to make positive contributions to Omantel Group's consolidated results, reaffirming the value created by Omantel's diversified investment portfolio. He further noted that the launch of OTech represents a pivotal step in strengthening Omantel's technological capabilities and opens new horizons for value creation, in alignment with the targets of the Company's strategy. He expressed his confidence in the Company's path forward, supported by the resilience of its core operations and the commitment of its people. Commenting on the results, Aladdin Abdullah Baitfadhil, Chief Executive Officer of Omantel, said that the Company's diversified portfolio and disciplined strategic execution enabled Omantel to deliver a strong start

to the year despite ongoing economic and regional uncertainty. He noted that growth across revenue, EBITDA and net profit reflects sustained momentum in fixed broadband and wholesale services, the improving performance of Zain Group, and the continued progress of ZOI together with Zain Group. He added that the launch of OTech, bringing Oman Data Park and Tadoom together under a unified technology platform, marks a key step in strengthening the Company's technology capabilities, reinforcing Omantel's market leadership, and enabling its long-term growth plans. Continued investment in fiber, 5G and emerging technologies, he noted, further strengthens Omantel's role in driving the Sultanate's digital transformation.

Omantel Launches AI Centre of Excellence to Accelerate Oman's Digital Innovation Ecosystem

Omantel has announced the activation of its AI Centre of Excellence, a national platform designed to accelerate the transition of ideas into practical, high-impact applications. The center brings together an integrated digital ecosystem spanning advanced infrastructure, innovation, and skills development, enabling Omani startups to build scalable, market-ready solutions with the potential to expand globally. The center aims to strengthen national capabilities in artificial intelligence, open new avenues for growth, and accelerate the adoption of advanced technologies across sectors, supporting more efficient operations and the development of competitive, future-ready business models. The announcement was made during Omantel's hosting of the 10th Rawabet Forum, organized by the Oman Investment Authority. The forum serves as an annual platform to strengthen alignment across portfolio companies, unify strategic direction, and showcase key achievements and joint initiatives. Alongside the activation of the center, Omantel signed collaboration agreements with five Omani startups accelerated through its Innovation Labs, namely Remedy, ORKI, Decoil, DeepAstra, and Wiya. These partnerships are focused

on developing and launching advanced solutions aligned with national priorities and the evolving needs of business sectors across the region. By combining capabilities and providing real deployment environments, the collaboration supports the transition from concept to market-ready products that are practical, scalable, and commercially viable. "Omantel's AI strategy goes beyond a strategic framework; it is a vision focused on making artificial intelligence more accessible and easier to adopt, positioning it as a driver of meaningful progress. Our partnerships with Omani startups under the AI Centre of Excellence represent a key step in this journey. We are enabling startups to develop market-ready solutions and scale them effectively, contributing to the growth of an innovation ecosystem that places people at its core and translates ideas into tangible outcomes. Through this approach, we will continue to lead the digital transformation journey in Oman and the wider region." Said Eng. Aladdin Baitfadhil, Chief Executive Officer, Omantel. Startups participating in the program will operate within a structured environment designed to accelerate their transition from development to deployment. They will benefit from access to Omantel's

advanced infrastructure, integrated data environments, specialized technical expertise, and executive mentorship. This enhances solution readiness, shortens time to market, and supports the creation of sustainable commercial value. The center also provides participating startups with a pathway to expand beyond the local market. By leveraging Omantel's growing regional presence and international partnerships, the program enables faster entry into high-growth markets, supports the development of effective go-to-market strategies, and expands access to new customer segments, strengthening long-term growth opportunities beyond Oman. Omantel is the leading integrated telecommunications and ICT services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, with a growing presence across regional and international markets. The Group delivers a comprehensive portfolio of services for individuals and businesses, including cloud computing, artificial intelligence, smart solutions, and cybersecurity. In line with Oman Vision 2040, Omantel continues to invest in emerging technologies to enhance customer experience, enable digital transformation, and support innovation across key sectors of the economy.



Omantel Wins Platinum Award in ESG Category at Oman Sustainability Week Awards



Omantel, Oman's leading provider of integrated telecom and ICT solutions, has further strengthened its position as a national and regional sustainability leader following its recognition at Oman Sustainability Week through the prestigious OSW Awards. The company's presence across both the ESG Awards and the OSW Exhibition reflected a comprehensive approach to embedding sustainability across its operations, digital infrastructure, and long-term value creation strategy. For the fourth consecutive year, Omantel participated in the prestigious OSW Awards, where it received the Platinum Award in the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) category in recognition of its strong governance frameworks,

proactive environmental initiatives, and clear emissions reduction targets. The achievement reflects Omantel's commitment to Oman's national sustainability agenda, including its pledge to achieve Net-Zero emissions by 2050 and reduce Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions by 45% by 2030, using 2023 as the baseline year. As part of its decarbonization roadmap, Omantel also purchased 100,000 MWh of renewable energy in 2025 from Nama Power and Water Procurement (Nama PWP), reinforcing its transition towards more sustainable operations. Lujaina Al Kharusi, Vice President of GRC at Omantel, said: "Our sustainability journey is about more than reducing emissions. We are enabling a future where technology

empowers communities, protects the environment, and drives inclusive growth. Oman Sustainability Week provides an important platform to showcase how Omantel is helping shape that future for Oman and the wider region." Omantel's sustainability journey is increasingly driven by technology. Through its sustainability initiatives, as well as the capabilities of its subsidiary Otech and associate company Zain Omantel International (ZOI), Omantel showcased a range of advanced solutions designed to support smarter and more sustainable futures. Beyond infrastructure, Omantel continues to invest in inclusive digital initiatives that empower communities. Key initiatives include:

- Digital Hero Initiative – Minecraft, an interactive program that equipped more than 10,300 children with digital safety, coding, and analytical skills.
- AI Training for the Visually Impaired, through hands-on workshops that helped 30 participants enhance their independence and professional development using artificial intelligence tools.
- Mubadira Women Empowerment Program, which benefited 45 women from 10 Omani Women's Associations. Omantel invested in two projects developed from ideas presented during the first hackathon organized for Omani Women's Associations.
- AI-Powered Cancer Diagnosis Tool, supporting the early detection of cancer for more than 10,000 patients annually through advanced medical imaging analysis.
- Artificial Coral Reef Initiative, which developed reef structures designed to simulate marine ecosystems and provide safe habitats for marine life, while contributing to environmental sustainability and supporting tourism and economic value.
- Maqroo Arabic Dyslexic Font, the world's first Arabic typeface designed specifically for individuals with dyslexia, benefiting more than 80 million Arabic speakers.



Zain Group Awarded 25-Year Syria Telecom License Following USD 747 Million Bid

Zain Group, a leading regional TechCo has been awarded a 25-year license (20 years plus an extendable five-years), to operate a mobile telecom network in the Syrian Arab Republic. This milestone follows a rigorous and highly competitive tender process for the existing MTN network, conducted by the country's Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCOT), that encompassed comprehensive technical and financial evaluations, in which Zain secured the award with the most competitive and fully compliant bid for a total of USD 747 million. Zain will establish a new operating entity in Syria in which the Group will hold a 75% stake and a Syrian government entity will hold 25%. The targeted commercial launch for the Zain Syria brand is expected in Q1 2027, subject to completion of all regulatory and license conditions. During a six-month transition handover period, the Zain team will work closely with the Syrian MCOT and the MTN team in supporting the improvement and continuity of services for the current 6.3 million customer base. The license marks Zain's entry as the second operator into one of the Levant's most promising markets, underpinned by a young population and rising demand for high-quality mobile and data services for individuals and businesses, given the improving socio-economic conditions. As part of the award, the Zain Syria entity will invest more than USD 800 million to expand and modernize the network with 5G network and other AI-powered digital technologies over the next decade. This will be funded through the financial resources generated from the Syrian operation. Zain Group's technical, investment and operational expertise will ensure efficient capital deployment, accelerate network development and enhance service quality and performance. Zain Vice-Chairman & Group CEO, Bader Al-Kharafi said: "We extend our sincere appreciation to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and H.E. Abdulsalam Haykal, Minister of Communications and Information Technology and his team for conducting a transparent, professional and rigorous tender process. Their confidence



in Zain is a responsibility we embrace with the highest level of commitment. The Zain Group Board and executive management are fully committed to building a modern, reliable network that supports Syria's digital transformation and delivers high-quality telecom and digital services to the Syrian community." Al-Kharafi added, "Guided by the directives and wise vision of H.H The Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, we reaffirm our firm belief in the importance of strengthening Arab cooperation and advancing development and investment initiatives that foster stability and prosperity across the region, while reinforcing the foundations of sustainable development for generations." "I was honored to meet with President of Syria, H.E. Ahmed Al-Sharaa, during which I emphasized that Zain's entry into the Syrian market represents more than a strategic business expansion; it reflects our deep confidence in Syria's future, the capabilities of its people, and its development ambitions. I also conveyed Zain Group's commitment to being a true partner in supporting Syria's digital transformation and economic growth through investing in local talent, advancing digital infrastructure, and support for SMEs and government entities through advanced AI-powered digital solutions

that will serve generations to come." Mr. Al-Kharafi continued, "We are confident in Syria's economic recovery and long-term prospects. Zain's entry into the market, alongside the operation's committed CAPEX investment over the coming decade, reflects this confidence. This expansion strengthens our presence in the Levant, reinforces longstanding Kuwaiti Syrian ties, and enhances regional connectivity by enabling cross-border digital services that leverage Zain's regional footprint and technological capabilities." "Guided by our '4WARDProgress with Purpose' corporate strategy and our purpose of creating 'Better Lives and Lasting Connections', we look forward to welcoming the people of Syria into Zain's Wonderful World and becoming a trusted partner in the country's digital transformation and socioeconomic progress." "Established Zain entities such as ZainTECH, Zain Omantel International (ZOI), our fintech platforms and other digital businesses will extend their services to the country. In parallel, financial support and innovation-driven initiatives will be implemented to foster the Syrian entrepreneurial startup ecosystem. This approach underscores Zain's commitment to creating long-term value that extends beyond telecom and contributes meaningfully to the country's digital development."

Mr Al-Kharafi concluded: "We are confident that this expansion will enhance shareholder value through an expanded customer base and increased revenues, driven by synergies with neighboring markets, while reinforcing Zain's position

as a leading regional TechCo on the global stage." During the six-month transition phase, the Zain Syrian entity will implement a comprehensive network modernization program while also supporting uninterrupted service for approximately 6.3

million existing customers. The rollout will include significant 5G deployments and infrastructure upgrades and AI-powered solutions, with early phases targeting more than 98% population coverage.

Zain Esports Powers One of MENA's Biggest PUBG MOBILE Championship Platforms Across 7 Countries

Zain Esports, the esports brand of Zain Group, powered the 2026 PUBG MOBILE National Championship (PMNC) MENA Spring Series across seven countries, marking a major milestone in its growing role as a regional force in the gaming and esports industry. The thrilling series of events were held across Kuwait, Jordan, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Palestine, and Iraq, brought together players and teams from across the region in one of MENA's most prominent competitive PUBG MOBILE platforms. 2026 PMNC MENA Spring was organized through an official partnership with Tencent, the global technology and gaming powerhouse behind some of the world's most influential digital entertainment platforms, which handpicked Zain Esports and granted it the official license to operate the championship in the MENA region, in collaboration with Bahrain-based Teal Flamingo Studios. The series ran for two months and featured 9 days of live-streamed finals, attracting 144,000+ registered players, 790,000 livestream views, 200+ matches played, and 25+ million social media views. The tournament further reinforces Zain Group's position as a regional digital innovator and leading TechCo, using its scale, advanced connectivity infrastructure, and digital ecosystem to support new high-growth sectors such as gaming and esports. It also brings the Group's purpose of 'Better Lives. Lasting Connections' to life by creating meaningful digital experiences that connect communities, empower youth, and expand opportunities for talent and creators across the region. The Series included the 2026 PUBG Mobile National Championship MENA Wildcard Spring across Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Palestine, and Qatar, alongside the 2026 PUBG Mobile National Championship Iraq Spring and



2026 PUBG Mobile National Championship Jordan Spring. The tournament structure was designed to provide a competitive pathway for players, beginning with open qualifiers, progressing into group stages, and concluding with the national finals across the participating markets. Through this championship, Zain Esports powered the full tournament journey, from planning and organization to media campaigns, streaming, broadcast execution, community engagement, and digital content amplification. The initiative further strengthened Zain Esports' role as an enabler of regional gaming communities, connecting players, fans, content creators, and partners through a professional competitive platform. Wildcard Spring, Nigma Galaxy secured first place, followed by KHK Esports in second place and Earth Quake in third place; in 2026 PMNC Jordan Spring, FourWiz secured first place, followed by GEE Seven in second place and STG Esports in third place; in 2026 PMNC Iraq Spring, IKURD Esports secured first place, followed by Lost Savage in second place and Rage Esports in third

place. This milestone builds on Zain Esports' broader strategy to develop a sustainable esports ecosystem across the region through tournaments, partnerships, content development, and talent-focused platforms. PUBG MOBILE is one of the world's leading battle royale mobile games, offering competitive survival gameplay that brings players together in high-intensity matches built around strategy, teamwork, and skill. The game is the original mobile version of PUBG: BATTLEGROUNDS and is co-developed by LIGHTSPEED STUDIOS of Tencent Games and KRAFTON, Inc., with Level Infinite serving as publisher. Released in more than 200 markets, PUBG MOBILE has surpassed 1 billion downloads worldwide, reflecting its global popularity and strong appeal among mobile gamers. Zain Esports' footprint, influence, and operational capabilities continues to grow across the regional esports map, as well as its ability to deliver large-scale tournaments, media campaigns, livestream production, community engagement, and competitive experiences at a demanding and high regional standard.

Zain Launches Landmark 'Regulatory Academy' with GSMA Advance to Empower Its Policy and Regulatory Professionals

Zain Group, a leading ICT and digital lifestyle provider across eight Middle East and Africa markets, has entered a landmark 'People Excellence Partnership' with GSMA Advance, the GSMA's learning and skills arm. This collaboration sees the launch of the 'Zain Regulatory Academy', an industry-first initiative that falls under Zain's Inclusion, Diversity & Equity University (IDEU), delivering accredited training to build world-class expertise among its groupwide policy and regulatory professionals. The Academy provides Zain's policy, regulatory, legal, and compliance professionals access to GSMA Advance's globally recognized 'Best Practice in Public Policy & Regulatory Impact Accreditation'. This structured program blends self-paced online modules, expert-led seminars, practical assignments, and tailored regional content on critical topics like spectrum management, 5G evolution, IoT, mobile privacy, cybersecurity, competition policy, and digital-age fintech and more. Falling under IDEU, the Academy advances Zain's strategic priorities of bolstering

governance, fostering market alignment, building a sustainable talent pipeline, and positioning regulatory leaders as industry thought leaders. It equips Zain teams to navigate complex regulatory landscapes shaped by 5G, AI, cloud, IoT, and data-driven models, ensuring robust compliance, advocacy, and contributions to digital ecosystems. Dr. Andrew Arowojolu, Zain Group Chief Regulatory Officer, said: "The Zain Regulatory Academy extends our people-first investment into a highly specialized capability area that is becoming increasingly central to the future sustainability of our industry. As operating environments evolve, this learning initiative strengthens governance, alignment, and sustainable growth through capability-building our teams with globally informed expertise, practical regulatory insight and the confidence to shape sector-defining conversations that support the economic visions of the nations we serve." Dr. Drew MacFarlane, Head of GSMA Advance, added: "We are delighted to welcome Zain Group as a GSMA Advance People Excellence

Partner. This collaboration reflects a clear commitment to investing in people as a driver of organizational success. By supporting their policy and regulatory professionals through structured, globally recognized accreditation, Zain is not only strengthening its internal expertise but also setting a benchmark for excellence across the industry." He continued: "As the regulatory landscape continues to evolve alongside new technologies and business models, organizations must ensure their teams are equipped not just with knowledge, but with validated, industry-recognized capabilities. This partnership is a strong example of how leading operators are taking proactive steps to build those capabilities at scale." The Academy builds on Zain's IDEU's flagship platform with Spain's IE University. Since 2023, IDEU has engaged 2,000 employees with digital transformation programs (including master's pathways), achieving a 92% course pass rate, 800+ active master's students, 10,000+ certificates, and 100,000+ training hours.



AT&T has the Fastest Upload Speeds in America

Opensignal's first-ever Converged Report shows that AT&T wins the nation's fastest converged upload speeds by a wide margin. AT&T's converged upload speeds were more than twice as fast as the closest competitor. The same report explored leadership based on home broadband technology for users who subscribe to the same provider for their broadband and mobile services. AT&T Fiber ranked #1 in both upload and download speeds, outperforming other fiber, cable and fixed wireless competitors by double digits. As AI becomes a bigger part of everyday life, upload speed is becoming increasingly important to a seamless connectivity experience. A recent broadband report showed that upstream usage grew faster

AT&T has the Fastest Upload Experience

Opensignal USA, Converged Experience, April 2026

OPENSIGNAL

than other broadband usage metrics in 2025. With the nation's largest fiber and wireless networks, AT&T is delivering the upload and download speeds customers need at home and on the go. Quotable: "Fast upload speeds are indispensable as customers game, stream, share, and rely

more on AI enabled experiences," said Jenifer Robertson, executive vice president & GM, AT&T Mass Markets. "This win further demonstrates how AT&T is delivering the performance our customers need at home and on the go." More Details: AT&T's continued investment in fiber and wireless

infrastructure underscores the value of having both services, with 42% of AT&T's home internet customers also choosing AT&T wireless. We remain focused on extending our converged leadership and standing behind the experience it delivers through the AT&T Guarantee.

AT&T Launches eSIM by AT&T

AT&T is rolling out the blue carpet for international travelers visiting the U.S., Mexico and Canada for this summer's big soccer games – and delivering reliable connectivity you can trust on the largest wireless network in North America¹ so that fans capture every play and special moments on their smartphones, powered by eSIM by AT&T. Building on its position as the first major U.S. carrier to launch

short-term connectivity packages for international visitors via eSIM technology, AT&T is introducing a unique travel package that includes unlimited data and 5GB of hotspot access³, plus will be expanding to unlimited talk and text soon. AT&T is also simplifying its eSIM offerings by giving customers flexible options like one-day passes (U.S. only) and control to purchase wireless coverage only in the

U.S. or across North America, their choice. International customers who activate eSIM can also unlock Turbo Live by AT&T so they can leverage our VIP connection⁴ in crowded U.S. soccer stadiums. With a high-priority data boost, soccer fans can enjoy smoother live streaming and seamless booking of rideshares during peak hours.

AT&T Named a Leader in the 2026 Gartner® Magic Quadrant™ for Managed IoT Connectivity Services, Worldwide

AT&T has been named a Leader in the 2026 Gartner Magic Quadrant for Managed IoT Connectivity Services, Worldwide. We believe this recognition highlights AT&T's proven scale and continued progress as IoT evolves beyond connectivity toward platform- and intelligence-driven solutions. AT&T's IoT portfolio brings together global connectivity, unified management platforms, and

managed services to help enterprises turn connected devices into operational insight at scale. With capabilities such as the AT&T IoT Console Single Pane of Glass and the AT&T IoT Marketplace, AT&T enables customers to manage devices, connectivity, and services across complex, multi network environments while simplifying onboarding, automation, and lifecycle management. Recent innovations, including Global SIM Advanced, AT&T Connection Manager, and AT&T's work on the Cisco AI Grid with NVIDIA to deliver network-driven edge AI, further support multinational deployments by enhancing global SIM flexibility, subscription management, and cloud-native connectivity orchestration. Security remains foundational to AT&T's IoT strategy. With secure connectivity options, private and custom APNs, integrated threat detection, and enterprise wide security governance, AT&T helps customers protect devices, data, and applications across the IoT lifecycle. "IoT is entering a new era where intelligence, security, and scale must work together," said Cameron Coursey, vice president, AT&T Connected Solutions. "Our focus is helping organizations move beyond simply connecting devices to securely delivering insight and action at the edge of operations so that they can innovate with confidence across complex, distributed environments." AT&T supports IoT deployments at global scale, working with enterprises across industries to design, deploy, and manage millions of connected devices aligned to business outcomes. Through ongoing innovation in connectivity, platforms, analytics, and managed services, AT&T continues to help organizations scale IoT with greater visibility, control, and confidence.



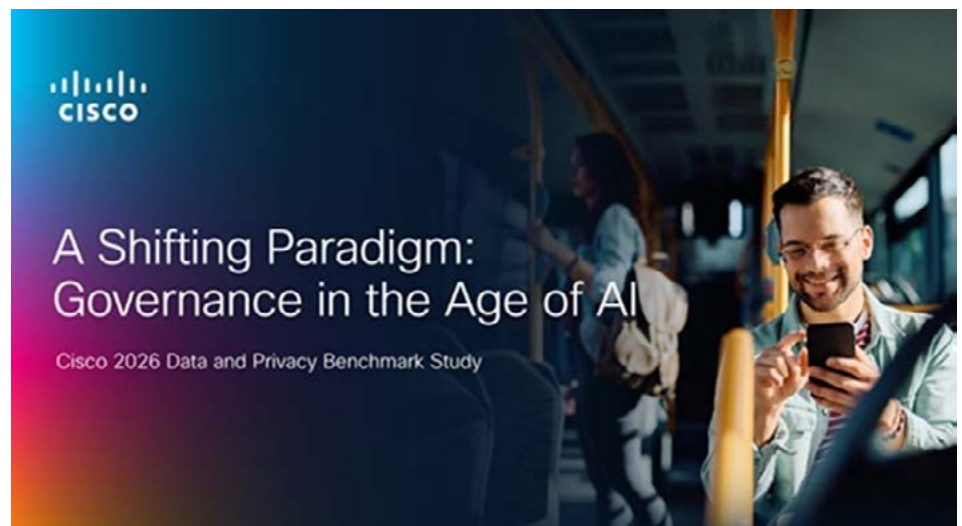


Cisco Study Reveals AI is Reshaping Data Privacy and Governance Priorities

Cisco, the worldwide leader in networking and security, unveiled the results of its 2026 Data and Privacy Benchmark Study, showing a striking shift in how organizations approach data privacy and governance. As AI adoption accelerates, nearly all companies are expanding privacy programs and governance frameworks to protect their data and innovate at scale. The growing demand for high-quality data to power AI is exposing gaps in oversight, and raising the stakes for trust, security, and competitiveness. The bottom line: for organizations to succeed in the AI era, scalable and responsible AI strategies must be built through a mature, integrated approach to privacy and data governance. Cisco surveyed 5,200 IT, technology, and security professionals with data privacy responsibilities across 12 markets worldwide. The study reveals AI as the primary catalyst driving 90% of companies to report expanded privacy programs, with 93% planning further investment to keep up with the complexity of AI systems and expectations of customers and regulators. Notably, 38% of organizations surveyed spent at least \$5 million on their privacy programs in the past year, up from 14% in 2024. An overwhelming 96% of organizations report that robust privacy frameworks unlock AI agility and innovation, while 95% recognize privacy is essential for building customer trust in AI-powered services. This year's report points to a deep structural shift, where trust is no longer established simply by meeting regulatory requirements. Data governance is now seen as a strategic business enabler with 99% of organizations reporting at least one tangible benefit

from their privacy initiatives, such as enhanced agility, innovation, and greater customer loyalty. Forty-six percent say that clear communication about how data is collected and used is the most effective way to build customer confidence. With this momentum, governance is evolving to meet the needs of this changing landscape. Many organizations are still working to define and establish the governance structures required to manage AI responsibly at scale. While 3 in 4 organizations report having a dedicated AI governance body in place, only 12% describe these structures as mature. And, as AI systems draw from increasingly complex and distributed datasets, 65% of organizations struggle to access relevant, high-quality data efficiently. "AI is forcing a fundamental shift in the data landscape, calling for holistic governance of all data – both personal and non-personal," said Jen Yokoyama, Senior Vice President, Legal Innovation and Strategy at Cisco.

"Organizations must deeply understand and structure their data to ensure every automated decision is explainable. It's not just for compliance, but a necessary scaling engine for AI innovation." While around 72% of respondents are generally positive about data privacy laws, there is a growing push to streamline and update data requirements. The study found that 81% of organizations surveyed face heightened demand for data localization. Eighty-five percent of organizations say data localization adds cost, complexity, and risk to cross-border service delivery. Further, 77% report these requirements limit their ability to offer seamless 24/7 service across markets. Global companies increasingly prefer technology partners that match their footprint: 82% believe global scale providers are better at managing cross border data flows. The assumption that locally stored data is inherently more secure is gradually eroding, from 90% in 2025 to 86% in 2026.



AI Art Installation Brings Cisco to Venice Biennale

Cisco has presented Echo, an immersive AI art installation at the Venice Biennale that turns visitor impressions of the city into light, music and motion. The project brings together artists, engineers and AI systems to explore how technology can support creative collaboration rather than replace it. The project is relevant because it shows

how agentic AI, digital twins, collaboration tools and human-machine interfaces are moving beyond enterprise workflows into cultural and experiential environments. Echo was developed with artist and scenographer Paolo Fantin, composer Dardust, Cisco engineers and designers, and partners H-Farm/Shado and Logotel.

The installation invites visitors to share spontaneous impressions of Venice, which are then translated into an evolving audio-visual experience inside a 15-metre tunnel through the Venice Lagoon. "We started from human emotion," Fantin said. "The technology was there to make that connection, to translate those human

emotions, those memories, into visual and musical poetry." Cisco's Gianpaolo Barozzi, VP and chief technology officer for people, policy & purpose, said the project was intended to offer a more nuanced view of AI's role in human creativity. "In a world where utopians believe AI will take us to heaven and dystopians fear it will cause the end of humanity, I was trying to find a new way of looking at it," he said, "particularly how AI and humans can not only coexist but work together and create together." The project required close work between creative and technical teams. Cisco used Webex during development, while AI tools helped the teams test ideas and move towards a working prototype. "Our Cisco designers poured their energy and passion into this project," Barozzi explained. "Thanks to our Webex platform, we shared feelings, feedback, and perspectives across dozens of meetings. And AI enabled us to ideate all kinds of ideas virtually and quickly, so that when we built a prototype, it was exactly what we wanted." The technical challenge was not only to generate content, but to create a system that could respond to abstract human input. Cisco product designer Nick Zolfo said this pushed AI beyond more conventional productivity use cases. "A lot of the current focus and efficiency of AI tools is in things like engineering, administrative work, and even some design," explained Zolfo.



"When you ask AI to create an artistic representation of an abstract idea, you are pushing the boundaries of how we work with AI agents." Cisco senior software engineer Edgar Uribe said the team used digital twins and room-scale prototypes to help the artist experience the work before final installation. "I needed to not just help create a platform for the artist to see his vision," he said, "it needed to be one where he could feel his vision." For Cisco, Echo also supports its broader messaging around responsible AI and human-centered technology.

Cisco Unveils Agentic Platform for Operating and Defending Critical IT Infrastructure

In an agentic AI world, organizations must act and defend at machine speed and scale. Cisco Cloud Control, unveiled at Cisco Live, is a unified platform built for humans and AI agents to manage, monitor and defend critical IT infrastructure — and the foundation for Cisco's AgenticOps operating model. With one login, Cisco Cloud Control delivers a single view of Cisco networking, security, compute, observability, and collaboration in one secure environment. People and agents work from a single data layer, sharing the same operational context and the same system of action, while humans stay in control. Customers can build their own applications and agents using natural language directly within the platform, which also connects to a large ecosystem, including AWS, Linear, Microsoft, PagerDuty, ServiceNow, Slack, and Google Cloud, which now includes Wiz. "AI agents reason and act continuously at software speed, and that changes everything about how we scale, manage, and defend our critical infrastructure," said Jeetu Patel, President and Chief Product Officer, Cisco. "Cisco Cloud Control is a command center for agentic AI: a platform where your team and your AI agents work together, in the same environment, with the same information, and with humans in control." One platform for humans and agents to run the agentic enterprise Cisco Cloud Control is the single management plane that brings a customer's entire estate into one environment — one login, one view. It's a new way to run critical infrastructure that ties together:

- Cross-domain telemetry. The rich data flowing across networking, security, observability, collaboration, and more — comes together in Cloud Control so humans and agents can act on the same information to address key business imperatives like uptime, agent behavior, and tokenomics.
- Purpose-built models. Cloud Control reasons across complex

problems with the right mix of purpose-built and frontier models — including Cisco's Deep Network Model, grounded in 40 years of Cisco operational networking data. The result is system intelligence that scales with the complexity of the problem, not the size of the model alone.

- Trusted agents. Through Cisco Cloud Control, operators will be able to work with autonomous agents that can follow a structured path from signal to action: spotting trouble, identifying causes, carrying out fixes, testing changes before deployment, and confirming the user experience has recovered. These agents will be powered by Cisco telemetry and purpose-built models, and they will leverage other capabilities, such as Expanded Experience Metrics, Deep Reasoning, Digital Twin, and Cisco Agentic Workflows. Teams will be able to automate network ops with an agentic loop, while keeping actions visible and governed.
- Cisco AI Canvas. A multiplayer, generative workspace where operators and agents work from the same live evidence to investigate and resolve complex issues together in real time. Context persists across shifts and escalations, so nothing is lost, and nothing is repeated.
- Cloud Control Studio. The design space that unlocks two customization environments. Agent Builder lets customers build agents for Cloud Control tailored to their own policies and workflows, with the ability to connect to more than 50+ third-party platforms and tools through native connectors or the open Model Context Protocol (MCP). App Builder lets customers build and publish apps and workflows for Cloud Control from natural-language prompt, with OpenAI Codex, an agentic platform that helps you build and ship with AI, built in. Everything built in Studio — plus agents and apps from across Cisco's ecosystem — can be published to Cloud Control Marketplace.



Inwi partners with China Mobile International to rollout Morocco's first private industrial 5G network

Inwi has announced a major strategic milestone in Morocco's telecom and industrial connectivity landscape through a new partnership with China Mobile International Limited, one of the world's leading telecommunications operators. Under this collaboration, Inwi will design, deploy, and operate Morocco's first private 5G network dedicated to industrial use. The network will serve one of China Mobile International's key regional clients, marking a significant step forward in the country's advanced connectivity infrastructure. The project is positioned as one of the largest private 5G installations in Africa, underscoring Morocco's growing role in next-generation telecom deployment and industrial digital transformation across the continent. To deliver this large-scale initiative, Inwi is also leveraging its long-standing partnership with Huawei. Together, the two companies have developed a comprehensive private 5G offering tailored for Moroccan enterprises,



spanning multiple strategic sectors and enabling advanced industrial use cases. This development reinforces Inwi's commitment to accelerating digital

innovation and supporting Morocco's transition toward high-performance, intelligent industrial networks.



MENA Countries Deciding on Change of Use for the 6 GHz Band

All of 13 researched countries in the MENA region, except Algeria and Lebanon, have identified the lower 6 GHz band for RLAN/Wi-Fi use. Saudi Arabia has taken the most expansive approach among the researched countries by making the full 6 GHz band available for unlicensed use, primarily for indoor Wi-Fi. CST, the Saudi regulator, plans to allow outdoor WLAN use under an automated frequency coordination (AFC) framework. Cullen International's new benchmark examines regulatory treatment of the 6 GHz band, which is attracting increasing regulatory attention as demand grows for additional spectrum to support Wi-Fi and

mobile broadband services. Historically, the band has been used mainly by fixed services, including point-to-point links and satellite services. However, regulators are now considering the band to support future wireless demand. The upper 6 GHz band remains subject to differing regulatory approaches. Bahrain, Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have identified this band for mobile services, although only the UAE has so far announced the official assignment of this spectrum to mobile operators. e& in the UAE plans a commercial launch of mobile services in the upper 6 GHz band by the end of 2026, using 350 MHz of spec-

Most researched countries have not yet made a final decision on the future use of the upper 6 GHz band (Cullen International)

Country	Identified for mobile or Wi-Fi	Details
Algeria	X	—
Bahrain	✓	Not yet assigned
Egypt	X	—
Jordan	X	—
Kuwait	X	—
Lebanon	⊙	—
Morocco	X	—
Oman	✓	Not yet assigned
Qatar	X	—
Saudi Arabia	✓	Indoor Wi-Fi
Tunisia	X	—
Türkiye	X	—
United Arab Emirates	✓	Assigned to mobile operators

⊙ Under consultation

trum. Cullen International's new benchmark provides information for selected MENA countries on:

- whether the lower 6 GHz band has been made available for RLAN/Wi-Fi use;
- whether the upper 6 GHz band has been identified or assigned for mobile services; and
- the operating environment for allowed technologies.



Eutelsat and Voimatel Partner to Deliver LEO Connectivity Services in Finland

Eutelsat and Voimatel, a leading Finnish provider of telecommunications and critical digital infrastructure services, announced a new partner agreement for Eutelsat's Low Earth Orbit (LEO) connectivity services in Finland. Voimatel will integrate Eutelsat's LEO connectivity services into its network solutions, combining satellite and terrestrial connectivity to support critical network infrastructure. The solution will deliver resilient and redundant communications for enterprise and public-sector customers across urban, rural, and remote regions. Voimatel designs and operates fixed and wireless communication networks for telecom operators, utility companies and public-sector organizations across Finland. By integrating Eutelsat's OneWeb LEO services, Voimatel will extend connectivity into high northern latitudes, including Arctic regions where terrestrial coverage can be limited. Eva Bisgaard, President of Eutelsat's Connectivity Business Unit said: "Our partnership with Voimatel reflects the growing role of LEO connectivity in supporting critical telecom infrastructure. By combining satellite and terrestrial networks, operators can strengthen the resilience and reach of their communications services, including in Arctic regions where reliable connectivity remains essential." Mikko Heinonen, CEO, Voimatel, added: "The addition of Eutelsat's LEO services strengthens our ability to support telecom and data network customers across Finland. Their low-latency satellite connectivity and Arctic coverage will complement our existing infrastructure



capabilities and support the evolving connectivity requirements of our customers."

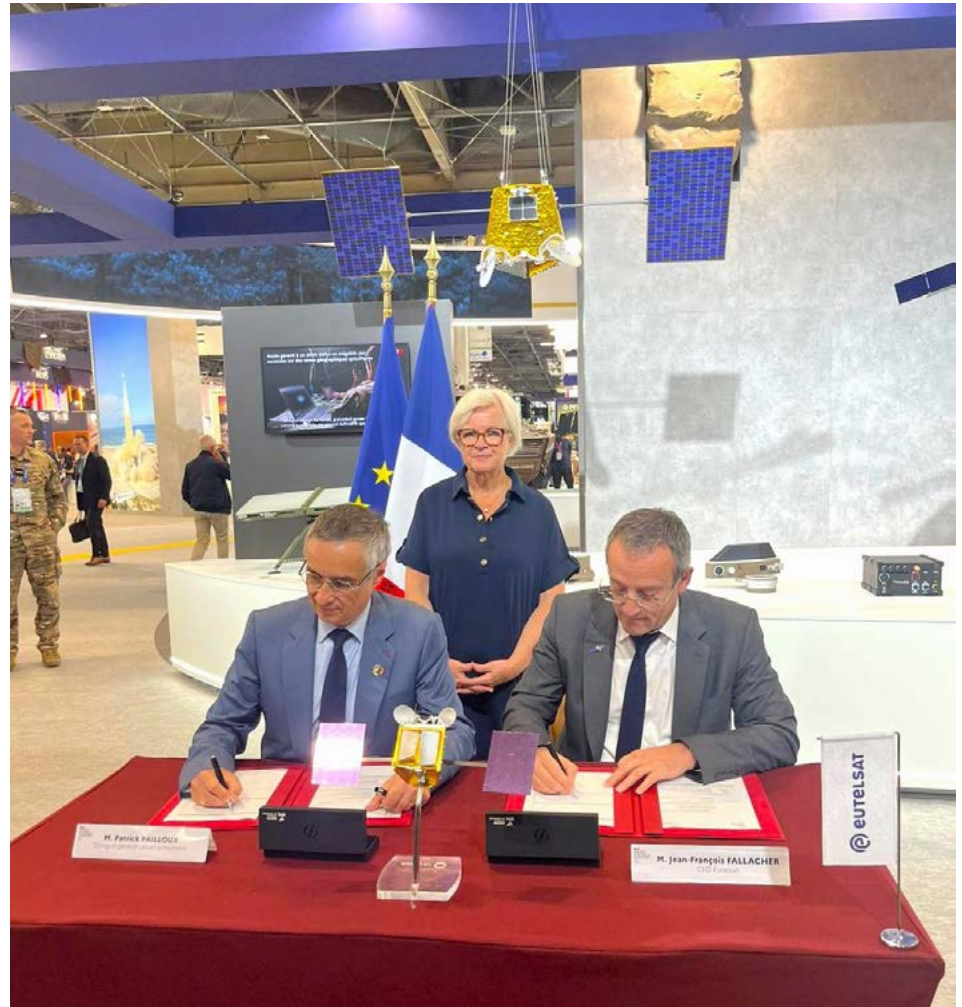
Eutelsat and Mercury Sign New Multi-Year Agreement for LEO Connectivity in Angola

Eutelsat and Mercury, a subsidiary of Sonangol Group and leading provider of telecommunications services in Angola, have signed a new multi-year, multi-million agreement for Eutelsat's LEO connectivity services. Building on the historic partnership between the two companies, Mercury, previously known as MSTelcom will continue to expand the reach of Eutelsat's LEO services for enterprise, public sector, offshore and telecom customers across Angola. Eutelsat is the only licensed LEO operator in Angola and already has a significant operational presence in the country via its local partners. Through investments in local infrastructure, including a ground station and local point of presence (PoP), and its long-standing commitment to the country, Eutelsat has positioned itself as a leading satellite connectivity provider in Angola, supporting the delivery of low-latency connectivity

services across the country and the wider region. Philippe Baudrier, VP Africa at Eutelsat, said: "This new commitment from Mercury reflects the growing demand for Eutelsat's LEO services in Angola and the continued success of our longstanding partnership. Together, we are expanding access to secure, low-latency connectivity across the country, helping enterprise, public sector, offshore, and telecom customers strengthen network resilience and reach locations beyond the coverage of traditional infrastructure." Francisco Pinto Leite, CEO, Mercury, added: "This new agreement reflects the strength of our partnership with Eutelsat and the value that LEO connectivity brings to our customers. Together, we are expanding the range of connectivity solutions available across Angola and helping organizations meet evolving communications requirements."

Eutelsat and French Armed Forces Ministry Announce Call-Off Capacity Contract in the Context of the NEXUS Framework Agreement

Eutelsat announced the signature, through the French Directorate General of Armaments (DGA), of the CENTAURE contract, marking the first call-off contract under the €1bn NEXUS framework agreement with the French Ministry of the Armed Forces and Veterans inked in June 2025. This new milestone marks the first concrete implementation of the NEXUS project (Neo-Space for Multiple Secure Uses), a strategic initiative led by the French Ministry of the Armed Forces and Veterans to strengthen France's military satellite communications capabilities by combining sovereign assets with trusted commercial capacity. Against a geopolitical backdrop characterized by growing demand for secure, resilient and sovereign connectivity, France is continuing to enhance its space capabilities while preparing for the deployment of the future European IRIS² constellation. The total CENTAURE contract is valued at circa €350 million¹, for a duration of up to eight years. It is comprised of an initial firm commitment of €138 million² over a period of four years for the provision of low Earth orbit (LEO) satellite capacity across multiple areas of strategic interest to the French Armed Forces as well as an initial stage aimed at enhancing the security of Eutelsat's OneWeb services. This approach ensures the French Armed Forces benefit from sustained access to low-latency, globally available satellite resources, while maintaining operational continuity and flexibility during the ramp-up of the European IRIS² program. Through its OneWeb constellation, the only global LEO constellation currently operated by a European provider and readily available for governmental use, Eutelsat delivers secure operational capabilities tailored to the requirements of today's most demanding defence missions. The NEXUS agreement demonstrates how trusted European commercial space infrastructure can complement sovereign defence assets and accelerate the deployment of next-generation capabilities. As space becomes an increasingly critical component of



national security, Europe must be able to rely on resilient, secure and sovereign connectivity solutions under its own control. Jean François Fallacher, Chief Executive Officer of Eutelsat, said: "The signature of the CENTAURE contract marks a major milestone in the implementation of the NEXUS framework agreement and reflects the continued trust placed by the French Ministry of the Armed Forces in the capabilities of our OneWeb constellation. In a profoundly transformed strategic environment, secure, resilient and low-latency connectivity has become a decisive driver of military operational effectiveness. With an infrastructure that is immediately available and field-proven, Eutelsat is now delivering a concrete response to the needs of the French Armed Forces." Patrick

Pailloux, Director General for Armaments (DGA) added: "With the CENTAURE call-off contract, France is taking another step forward in the modernization of its military satellite communications capabilities. Recent conflicts have demonstrated the critical importance of diverse, secure, resilient and sovereign connectivity for the conduct of modern operations. By relying on a trusted European solution that is immediately available and provides global low-latency coverage, the French Ministry of the Armed Forces and Veterans is acquiring the necessary resources to address today's operational challenges while laying the groundwork for the future sovereign European capabilities that will be delivered through the IRIS² program."

Eutelsat and Tototheo Global Sign Partnership Agreement for Maritime, Enterprise and Government Connectivity

Eutelsat and Tototheo Global, a leading provider of maritime technology and connectivity solutions, have signed a new partner agreement for Eutelsat's Low Earth Orbit (LEO) connectivity services. Under the agreement, Tototheo Global will deliver Eutelsat's LEO services to maritime customers worldwide and serve as a key partner for Enterprise, Civil and Military Government connectivity requirements across Greece and Cyprus. Headquartered in Cyprus, Tototheo Global, is a leading provider of advanced connectivity and technology solutions, supporting organizations operating in demanding and mission critical environments across maritime, enterprise and government sectors. By partnering with Eutelsat, Tototheo Global strengthens its connectivity offering to enable safe and resilient operations. With four decades of expertise, Tototheo Global delivers tailored, future-focused solutions that enhance performance and long-term operational excellence. Eva Bisgaard, President of Eutelsat's Connectivity Business Unit, said: "We are delighted to partner with Tototheo Global, whose deep expertise in maritime connectivity and strong technical capabilities make them a natural partner for bringing LEO connectivity to mission-critical applications. With our OneWeb LEO services, we are enabling customers to strengthen network resilience and benefit from secure, low-latency connectivity in environments where dependable communications are essential." Despina Panayiotou Theodosiou, Co-CEO of Tototheo Global, said: "At Tototheo Global we are committed to delivering connectivity solutions that

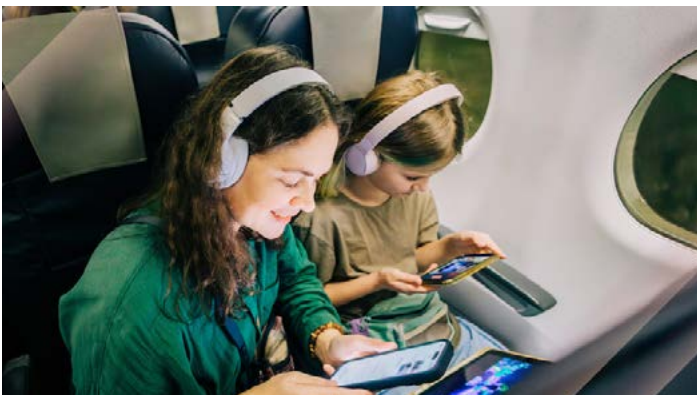
provide performance, flexibility, and resilience for our customers. Eutelsat's OneWeb LEO services strengthen our ability to offer secure, low-latency connectivity, providing a critical capability for customers operating across the demanding maritime, enterprise, and government sectors."



Eutelsat And Anuvu Ink New Capacity Contract on EUTELSAT 10B for In-Flight Connectivity

Eutelsat and Anuvu, one of the world's leading providers of inflight entertainment (IFE) and high-speed inflight connectivity (IFC) technologies for airlines, VIP/VVIP aircraft, and other mobility markets have signed a new multi-year agreement for capacity on the EUTELSAT 10B satellite. Under the agreement, Anuvu will leverage high-throughput Ku capacity on EUTELSAT 10B to enhance its in-flight connectivity services, including for a major global airline. In service since July 2023, EUTELSAT 10B is located at 10° East, an orbital position that offers unique visibility spanning from the Americas to Asia. A state-of-the-art all-electric

satellite, EUTELSAT 10B embarks a powerful fifth generation digital transparent processor, enabling capacity allocation flexibility and optimal spectrum use, and carries multi-beam HTS Ku-band payloads specifically tailored to the mobile connectivity sector. The satellite is part of a suite of high-performance in-space assets within the Eutelsat fleet, including EUTELSAT 3B, EUTELSAT 172B and KONNECT VHTS, and in Low Earth Orbit, with the OneWeb constellation, all providing compelling solutions to address the aviation connectivity market as part of a multi-technology, multi-orbit landscape which is evolving to address the global demand for ever-more efficient in-flight connectivity. Thierry Polycarpe, VP Aero and Maritime Connectivity at Eutelsat said, "We are pleased to partner with Anuvu on this multi-year agreement, leveraging the advanced capabilities of EUTELSAT 10B to deliver high-performance, scalable in-flight connectivity worldwide. This agreement underscores the continued strategic importance of GEO within our multi-orbit architecture, enabling us to meet the evolving needs of the aviation market with flexibility, resilience and efficiency." Tim Southard, VP, Network, Anuvu added, "The high power and vast coverage area of the EUTELSAT 10B satellite is ideal for Anuvu's Dedicated Space to achieve peak performance across the Middle East and Europe. They're enabling our platform to achieve its highest ability."



Qatar Media Corporation Selects Eutelsat to Launch QBC Business Channel in 4K at MENA's Leading 7/8° West Video Neighborhood

Eutelsat announces the launch of QBC Business Economic Channel by Qatar Media Corporation, broadcasting in 4K/UHD via Eutelsat's 7/8° West video neighborhood. The new channel, first of its kind in Qatar, officially launched on May 5, 2026 and marks a significant milestone in the region's media landscape as one of the first end-to-end 4K and SMPTE 2110 economic channels in the Middle East and North Africa, delivering financial news, market insights, and expert analysis to audiences across the region. By leveraging Eutelsat's satellite infrastructure, QBC benefits from unmatched reach, reliability and signal quality, ensuring seamless delivery of premium content to millions of

viewers. The 7/8° West video neighborhood is the leading broadcast position in MENA, already chosen by around 900 TV channels and reaching over 66 million satellite TV homes across the region. The launch reflects Qatar Media Corporation's ambition to develop a leading business media platform, aligned with the highest international standards, while reinforcing the role of satellite distribution as a cornerstone for broadcasting. Hamad Elbordini, Sales Director, MENA, Eutelsat's Video Business Unit said, "The launch of this 4K channel demonstrates the dynamism of the MENA broadcast market and the growing demand for premium, high-quality content. Eutelsat's 7/8° West

video neighborhood continues to be the platform of choice for leading broadcasters, and we are proud to support Qatar Media Corporation." "With QBC, we aim to reflect the evolution of Qatar's economy and global markets. We see media investment as a key pillar of sustainable development. Through our collaboration with Eutelsat, we deliver this channel with the highest levels of quality and reliability, offering audiences an enhanced viewing experience. We are proud to launch QBC as a first end-to-end 4K and SMPTE 2110 economic channels in the Middle East and North Africa", added Eng. Samer Younis, QBC Engineering Consultant.



Huawei Appoints Corey Deng as Chief Cybersecurity and Privacy Officer for Middle East and Central Asia

Huawei, a global leader in information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and smart devices, has appointed Corey Deng as Chief Cybersecurity and Privacy Officer (CSPO) for its Middle East and Central Asia Region, underscoring its continued focus on strengthening cybersecurity and privacy governance across the region. In this role, Corey Deng will lead Huawei's regional cybersecurity and privacy strategy, overseeing frameworks spanning cybersecurity, data protection, AI security, and privacy compliance. He will work closely with customers, partners, and regulators to further advance Huawei's end-to-end cybersecurity assurance system and support the region's evolving digital landscape. Corey Deng brings over 18 years of experience within Huawei, having joined the company in 2008. His career reflects a combination of technical depth and international leadership across both mature and emerging markets. Prior to this appointment, he served as Chief Cybersecurity and Privacy Officer at Huawei's Digital Power Business Unit Headquarters. He has also held roles as

Cybersecurity Director and Vice President of Solutions Sales in the United Kingdom, Solutions Sales Director in the Netherlands, and earlier positions in Research and Development as a Marketing Manager and IC Chipset Designer. Commenting on the appointment, Phillip Gan, President of Huawei Middle East and Central Asia, said: "Cybersecurity and privacy are foundational to building a trusted digital ecosystem. Corey Deng's experience and leadership will further strengthen our ability to support clients and partners with secure, resilient solutions aligned to the region's digital ambitions." Corey Deng added: "As digital transformation accelerates across the Middle East and Central Asia, trust must remain central to innovation. I look forward to working with stakeholders across the region to strengthen cybersecurity and privacy frameworks that enable sustainable and secure growth." The region faces a complex threat situation, which is influenced by ongoing geopolitical dynamics. As rapid technology adoption expands the attack surface, Huawei emphasizes that traditional security must evolve and adapt



to the new era by focusing on sovereign AI infrastructure and quantum safety. Under Deng's leadership, Huawei will continue to integrate cybersecurity and privacy protection into its products, solutions, and internal governance practices. This appointment reflects the company's ongoing commitment to supporting a secure and trustworthy digital environment across the Middle East and Central Asia.

Huawei Unveils the Upgraded Xinghe Intelligent Network Powered by Secure Intelligent Connectivity

The Huawei Network Summit 2026 (HNS 2026) recently made its global debut in Cairo, Egypt. At the summit, Huawei unveiled the upgraded Xinghe Intelligent Network for Northern Africa. This release embodies Huawei's philosophy of secure intelligent connectivity, embracing new growth with customers and partners in the Agentic AI era. Yang Chaobin, Executive Vice President, CEO of the ICT Business Group, Huawei, said, "Enterprise networks are becoming AI centric, shifting from ubiquitous ultra-broadband to Lossless Compute, Integrated Sensing and Communications, Full-scope Security, and Network Autonomy. Huawei is focused on providing 'AI for All, All on Secure IP', and forging secure and intelligent next-generation networks that unlock new possibilities in the AI era." Rock Qin, Vice President, Northern Africa (North,

West & Central Africa), Huawei, stated, "AI and security are the main themes for the future development of networks. Huawei has proposed five inclusive strategies in Northern Africa, working closely with customers in areas such as government, education, and finance to jointly build advanced and secure networks." Huawei also launched an all-new suite of Xinghe Intelligent Network products and solutions for Northern Africa. Richard Wu, Vice President of Huawei's Data Communication Product Line, remarked, "To address intelligence challenges, Huawei has upgraded its Xinghe Intelligent Network to adhere to the philosophy of secure intelligent connectivity. This upgrade brings three key capabilities: green ultra-broadband, security & resilience, and network autonomy. Together, they strengthen the network foundation, ensure business stability, and

enhance network intelligence, advancing industrial all intelligence for Africa." This upgrade features innovative products and solutions across campus network, wide area network (WAN), data center network (DCN), and network security scenarios to meet the latest network demands of the AI era. Key highlights include:

- The Pre Wi-Fi 8 solution delivers twice the industry average wireless performance.
- The full-scope security campus solution addresses the growing demand for campus security.
- iFlashboot 2.0 ensures uninterrupted inference services and guaranteed user experience.
- The upgraded StarryWing Digital Map 2.0 and Rock-Solid Architecture 2.0 enhance DCN resilience.
- The industry-unique intelligent intrinsic security board defends against WAN attacks.
- Agentic SOC builds an autonomous, intelligent security operations system.

An awards ceremony was also held to honor Huawei's long-standing partners in the data communication field, including ACUD, ENR, and TMG. They were recognized with awards celebrating ten years of collaboration. Looking ahead, Huawei will continue collaborating with partners to seize intelligent transformation opportunities, create greater value for industries, and drive new growth together. This will be achieved by leveraging the fully upgraded Xinghe Intelligent Network powered by secure intelligent connectivity.



Huawei Cloud Announces Agentic AI Products, Shaping the Foundation for the Intelligent Era

On June 5, Huawei Cloud INSPIRE 2026 kicked off at the West Bund International Convention & Exhibition Center in Shanghai. At the event, Huawei Cloud officially introduced the new paradigm of Agentic Infra, and unveiled a series of Agentic AI products, including the Agentic Infra unified infrastructure for general & AI workloads, a new-generation model

training and inference platform, and an enterprise-grade agent platform, laying the foundation for enterprise agentic AI innovation. Huawei Cloud also announced four dedicated zones: the Smart Healthcare Zone, Embodied AI Zone, Smart Manufacturing Zone, and Scientific Computing Zone, on its Industry AI Foundry. Huawei Cloud is committed to solving industry

challenges with AI and accelerating the development of an ecosystem for industries' digital and intelligent transformation. Defining a new paradigm with Agentic Infra, fortifying the foundation for AI with hardware-software synergy Dr. Peter Zhou, Director of the Board at Huawei and CEO of Huawei Cloud, pointed out that the era of agentic AI is driving a fundamental shift

in computing paradigms. At this event, Huawei Cloud officially introduced Agentic Infra, a new paradigm featuring an efficient token factory, continuous learning, unified general & AI compute scheduling, and secure autonomy. Four new Agentic Infra products were also released: AI Cluster Service (AICS): Built on the ultra-high bandwidth UnifiedBus (UB) network, it supports clusters with over 100,000 cards, delivering a total computing power of up to 200 EFLOPS. The latency for token generation is reduced to less than 10 milliseconds, with a throughput of 5 million tokens per second across 1,000 cards. The online service availability reaches 99.95%,

making it a token factory with the ultimate efficiency. Agentic Memory Storage (AMS): The solution leverages NPU passthrough to Context Memory Storage (CMS) hardware, creating a PB-scale memory space. It also supports tiered KV-cache pooling, which reduces inference costs while enabling multi-day long-running tasks, breaking the memory bottleneck of agents and facilitating continuous learning for agents. CCE VolcanoNext unified general & AI scheduling engine: It achieves innovation in unified general-purpose and AI workload scheduling through "shared training-inference pooling + fragmentation consolidation", improving resource utilization by over

30%. AgentSphere: It delivers a secure and autonomous agent runtime environment, providing a secure autonomous runtime foundation with ultimate elasticity and proactive intent protection. Leveraging ultra-lightweight sandbox technology, it achieves fast startup within 100 milliseconds and the ability to batch-create hundreds of thousands of instances per minute, helping agents scale securely and efficiently on the cloud. ModelArtsNext: The new-generation model platform to bring foundation models into enterprise scenarios. ModelArtsNext is a model training and inference platform that provides four core capabilities: Reinforcement Learning as a Service (RLaaS), confidential inference, model routing, and model matrix. MaaS model routing supports three policies: experience-first, efficiency-first, and balanced mode, and dynamically routes each request to the optimal model based on its characteristics. To date, more than 15 state-of-the-art (SOTA) model services have been provided, with a model scheduling accuracy of over 95% and an average reduction of 20% in calling costs. The enterprise-grade RLaaS service enables reinforcement learning as a core capability that can be invoked by every enterprise. It allows users to create tasks in just one minute, achieve end-to-end visualization, and ensure consistency between training and inference. This enables large models to be applied to more specific scenarios and become smarter with each use.



Huawei Releases the Full-Stack Data Infrastructure Solution of AI Data Centers

MTN Nigeria and Huawei have deployed the world's first commercial sub-1 GHz Massive MIMO site. This cutting-edge solution increases low-band LTE traffic by an impressive 104%, boosts downlink user-perceived rate by 28%, and reduces physical resource block usage by 8% compared with previous 4T4R equipment, representing significant improvements in network capacity and 4G user experience. By building on the earlier adoption of C-band and tri-mid-band Massive MIMO, the two companies have deployed the world's first all-band Massive MIMO site. This milestone signifies MTN's pioneering

entry into the "All Bands to Massive MIMO" era. As the most populous country in Africa, Nigeria is seeing a profound transformation in its mobile communications networks. With large numbers of 2G and 3G users migrating to 4G and the rise of new services such as short videos, live streaming, and mobile payments, LTE traffic has experienced explosive growth across the nation. However, limited low-band spectrum resources mean networks are facing increasingly severe congestion that degrades user experience. MTN Nigeria and Huawei have thus deployed sub-1 GHz Massive MIMO to address

these challenges. Compared with 4T4R, this innovative solution doubles downlink LTE capacity and is capable of a 3.2-fold capacity expansion upon future evolution to NR. It effectively alleviates network congestion and fully unleashes suppressed traffic, delivering users a more stable, smoother, and faster mobile experience. Huawei's sub-1 GHz Massive MIMO is the first solution in the industry to combine extremely large antenna arrays with wideband technology in the prized low-band spectrum. This solution significantly enhances low-band spectral efficiency through the efficient integration

and coordination of fragmented spectrum resources. It also supports the coexistence of GSM, UMTS, LTE, NR, and NB-IoT, facilitating the seamless evolution of all bands to 5G. Furthermore, with innovations in materials, architecture, and algorithms, this breakthrough solution overcomes theoretical limitations to address challenges such as the excessive size, width, and weight of sub-1 GHz Massive MIMO equipment. Yahaya Ibrahim, CTO of MTN Nigeria, stated, "At MTN, we are committed to building the most extensive, highest-quality, and best-performing communications network." He went on to say that "Our successful collaboration with Huawei on the commercial debut of sub-1 GHz Massive MIMO has significantly boosted network performance. We now deliver faster, more stable connectivity to every user. Moving forward, we will deepen our partnership with Huawei to drive technological innovations, tackle key challenges in network development, and fuel the digital economy in Nigeria."



James Zeng, President of Huawei Wireless FDD Product Line, explained, "The first commercial rollout of sub-1 GHz Massive MIMO validates its ability to significantly enhance spectral efficiency, network coverage, uplink speeds, and energy efficiency while reducing latency. This

milestone paves the way for broader adoption, which will provide stable, reliable connectivity for diverse mobile AI terminals and large numbers of IoT devices. This will deliver superior experience to users anytime, anywhere."

Huawei and Partners Receive GSMA Global Mobile LATAM Award for Tech4Nature Mexico Project to Protect Jaguars

Huawei received the Global Mobile (GLOMO) LATAM award on May 13 for Social Impact in Latin America for its Tech4Nature – Dzilam de Bravo Nature Reserve project in Yucatan, Mexico. The GLOMO, which was awarded by GSMA at M360 LATAM 2026, recognizes the project's contribution to environmental conservation for using technology to protect jaguars in the reserve. Under the Tech4Nature global partnership between International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Huawei, the Mexico project uses advanced technological tools to monitor and preserve the natural habitat of the jaguar, an iconic and endangered species in Yucatan. "This recognition reflects the power of technology when it is put to the service of people and the planet," said Samira Herrera, Communications and Public Relations Director for Huawei Mexico. "Tech4Nature Mexico is an example of how cross-sector collaboration can generate a tangible positive impact on communities and biodiversity conservation." The project, which began in 2022 and is currently in its second phase,

is the result of collaboration between IUCN, Huawei, the Government of the State of Yucatán, C Minds, Yucatan Polytechnic University (UPY), and the local community of Dzilam de Bravo. The solution integrates AI-powered species detection and individual identification, community-led monitoring and governance, and cross-sector collaboration across government, academia, civil society, and the private sector. "Tech4Nature Mexico demonstrates that the true potential of technology lies in transforming data into coordination, collective action, and public policies for the protection of nature. Through multi-sectoral collaboration focused on communities and human rights, the initiative puts tools such as artificial intelligence at the service of the ecosystems that sustain our economies and our future," said Regina Cervera, Project Coordinator for Tech4Nature México from AI for Climate at C Minds. Since project launch, 26 camera traps and 60 acoustic devices deployed in the reserve have identified more than 147 species, 40 of which are

endangered. Crucially, the system has identified 16 individual jaguars, providing key information for understanding the behavior, movement, and conservation measures that can protect the species, which is key to the environmental balance of the reserve. Huawei's cloud-based solutions are used to process and analyze field data. As well as video footage of the jaguars, more than 100,000 images and 600,000 audio recordings have been captured and automatically analyzed by the system, strengthening the monitoring of local fauna and the ecosystems they inhabit. The resulting data-driven insights enable a better understanding of the ecosystem and more efficient decision-making for biodiversity conservation that reaches into public policy. Beyond the ecological data, the landscape-level impacts are visible – the protected area has expanded from 69,000 to 104,000 hectares. Technologies such as AI, cloud storage, and data analytics have enabled the Tech4Nature Mexico project to create a sustainable scientific conservation model that combines scientific innovation

with community participation. Alongside these technologies, Huawei's wireless connectivity solutions are a key aspect of environmental data transmission in Tech4Nature projects, a theme that resonated at M360 LATAM 2026. The event on May 13 and 14 brought together

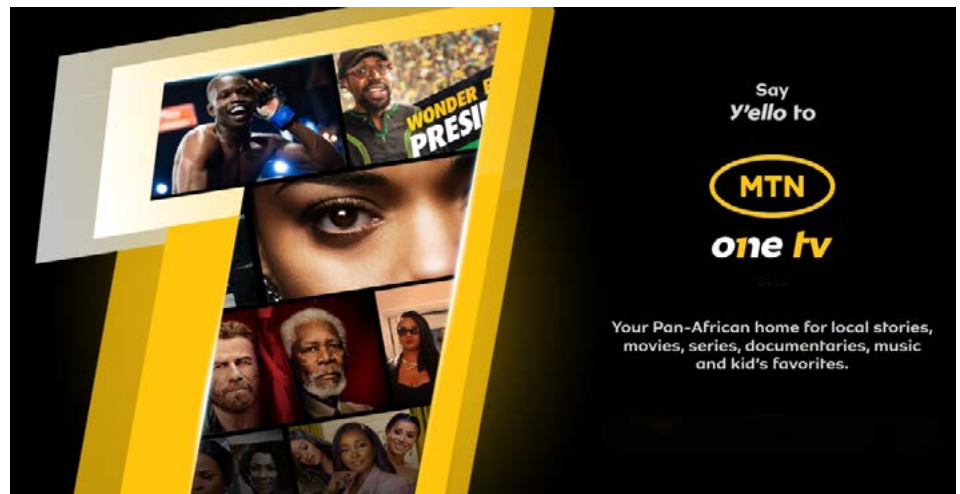
regional and global leaders from across the tech ecosystem, mobile networks, governments, and connected industries to debate how to harness the power of technology – and work towards a better future for all. The GLOMO LATAM Awards celebrate the changemakers that redefine

technology, connectivity and social advancement in the region. The award for the TechNature Mexico project recognizes the solution for its innovation and ability to generate significant social and environmental benefits for Latin America.



MTN One TV Launched to Expand Digital Entertainment Access Across Africa

MTN Group has begun rolling out MTN One TV, a new entertainment proposition designed to make digital video content more accessible, relevant, and flexible for customers across African markets. Introduced in line with MTN's Ambition 2030 strategy, MTN One TV brings together local storytelling, live channels, international programming, and market-specific viewing options tailored to how customers across the continent access and pay for digital entertainment. The proposition is designed to give customers greater choice in how they watch content, with viewing models that may vary by market and can include free-to-view content, advertising-funded experiences, pay-as-you-watch access, and subscription offerings. Depending on local availability, customers may also be able to pay through airtime, Mobile Money, and other locally supported payment methods, helping to reduce common barriers to streaming access. Beyond enhancing customer experiences, MTN One TV creates new opportunities for African creators, broadcasters, advertisers, and ecosystem partners by helping connect content to wider audiences through MTN's scale across connectivity, payments, and digital services. By bringing together a broad mix of content experiences under a single proposition, MTN aims to support greater content discovery, broader audience reach, and sustainable growth across Africa's digital entertainment ecosystem. Anchored in



MTN's strategic platforms of Connectivity, Fintech, and Digital Infrastructure, MTN One TV forms part of the Group's broader ambition to build digital experiences that create value for customers while enabling participation and growth across Africa's digital economy. "Entertainment is increasingly becoming an important gateway to digital participation," said Selorm Adadevoh, MTN Group Chief Commercial, Strategy and Transformation Officer. "Through MTN One TV, we are leveraging the scale of our connectivity, fintech, and digital capabilities to make relevant content more accessible while creating new opportunities for Africa's creative and digital economies. This is aligned with our ambition to deliver digital solutions for Africa's progress." MTN One TV is being introduced progressively

across MTN markets through a phased rollout approach that reflects local market needs, existing services, and partnership opportunities. Over time, MTN will bring together a combination of video capabilities, content partnerships, and customer experiences under the MTN One TV brand to create a more consistent and scalable entertainment proposition across its footprint. Through MTN One TV, MTN continues to extend its role beyond connectivity by combining entertainment, payments, and digital services to deliver experiences tailored to the needs of African consumers. The rollout supports MTN's Ambition 2030 vision of leading digital solutions for Africa's progress while expanding access to digital entertainment across the continent.



Nokia Offloads FWA to US' Wireless Solutions Firm Inseego

US firm Inseego is to acquire Nokia's Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) CPE business. The deal is expected to close in Q4 2026, subject to meeting regulatory and other terms and conditions. Juho Sarvikas, CEO of Inseego, stated, "This is a transformative step for Inseego. It expands our scale, broadens our portfolio, and positions us as a global leader in wireless broadband across consumer and business markets. Just as importantly, it creates strong collaboration opportunities with Nokia at the wireless edge, where AI-driven workloads, cloud connectivity, and next-generation networks are increasingly coming together."

Nokia signaled its intention of leaving the sector last November on Capital Markets Day, when the company announced its

restructure under its newish CEO, Justin Hotard. The transaction includes plans for joint go-to-market initiatives in 6G and wireless edge to capture the opportunities in AI and to further the FWA business. The collaboration will also explore joint innovation and 5G monetization for operators, as well as consumer and enterprise growth at the wireless edge. These efforts are expected to support and drive customer continuity, future revenue growth and technology leadership at the wireless edge. If the deal goes ahead as expected, at its closure, Nokia will receive an equity stake of about 7% in Inseego in the form of common stock and warrants for \$20 million, which values the company about \$285.71 million although its market cap is about \$240 million. Also, Nokia will

make an additional \$10 million investment in Inseego in the form of common stock and warrants, to strengthen their commercial collaboration, bringing its total ownership to around 11%. Inseego announced its enterprise-class mobile router, MiFi PRO M4, is to be paired with AT&T's 5G mobile network in the US so that companies can integrate that connectivity into "a broader and more secure mobility strategy" instead of hotspots acting as standalone devices. The service is for firms and individuals that rely on mobile connectivity as a core part of operations and daily workflows, with the router extending enterprise-grade wireless access wherever work happens, such as the field and the road, to pop-up locations, branch offices and remote environments.

Nokia Appoints Emma Falck as President of Mobile Infrastructure and Member of The Group Leadership Team



Nokia has announced the appointment of Emma Falck as President of Mobile Infrastructure and member of the Nokia Group Leadership Team, effective 1 September 2026. Falck brings extensive experience leading transformation and improving performance in complex global technology businesses. She joins Nokia from Siemens, where she serves as Executive Vice President, Products, Smart Infrastructure Buildings, leading a global organization across product management and development, and supply chain. At

Siemens, she held senior strategy roles and led technology organizations building automation, software and connected devices. Earlier in her career, she was a Partner and Managing Director at Boston Consulting Group and held senior leadership roles at KONE. She holds a PhD in Computational Physics from Aalto University. "I'm delighted to welcome Emma to Team Nokia. As AI moves toward physical AI, networks need to become AI-native by design for both 5G Advanced and 6G. Our focus in Mobile Infrastructure

is clear: To help our customers succeed by building a software-led infrastructure business that leverages open interfaces, standards, and a rich partner ecosystem to accelerate innovation. Emma brings broad transformation experience, operational leadership and a fresh perspective from global businesses that use technology to enable automation. She is the right leader to take MI into this new chapter," said Justin Hotard, President and CEO of Nokia. "I'm excited to join Nokia at a pivotal moment for our customers and the industry. As networks evolve to support new AI-driven demands, customers need partners who can deliver with speed and predictability, and turn technology roadmaps into real-world performance. Mobile Infrastructure's breadth across core software, radio networks and technology standards is a solid foundation. I look forward to working with the team to strengthen our execution, embed AI into our development and delivery processes, and bring the next wave of innovation to our customers," said Falck. Falck will be based in Espoo, Finland and report to Nokia's President and Chief Executive Officer, Justin Hotard.

Nokia Announces Major Expansion of U.S. Semiconductor Advanced Test and Packaging in Pennsylvania to Bolster AI Growth

Nokia announced a major expansion of its advanced test and packaging (ATP) operations in Allentown, Pennsylvania. The investment will increase domestic production capacity of the optical networking technologies that power scalable AI infrastructure connectivity across the United States. The expansion is expected to nearly double Nokia's Pennsylvania workforce to more than 500 jobs in engineering, manufacturing, and R&D, while generating a projected economic impact of more than \$500M over the next five years. Less than two percent of global semiconductor ATP takes place in the U.S. Nokia's Allentown facility is one of only a few in the U.S. providing ATP of photonic chips into optical modules for use in AI and telecom infrastructure. Through investment in new manufacturing equipment and an expanded manufacturing footprint, Nokia is increasing the site's production capacity by up to 10 times its current level, with new capacity expected to be commercially available by the end of the third quarter. Nokia's optical technologies provide advanced connectivity solutions

for telecom networks to enable AI infrastructure and can reduce energy usage by as much as 75 percent. Nokia's investment results in the domestic manufacturing of components used in AI infrastructure, creates new jobs, and significantly reduces energy usage in AI communications. "The AI supercycle is fundamentally reshaping network and infrastructure requirements in the U.S. and globally. Our expansion in Allentown is a direct investment in that future—scaling domestic manufacturing of the optical networking technologies that power AI infrastructure. It also reflects the strong partnership between Nokia, the United States, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to support advanced manufacturing, create jobs, and strengthen U.S. technology leadership and global competitiveness," said Justin Hotard, President and CEO of Nokia. "Nokia is doubling down on the Lehigh Valley and ensuring that the future of chip production continues to run through this region because we've made smart investments to make Pennsylvania more competitive and proven that our Commonwealth is a great place to do business," said Governor Shapiro. "As demand for semiconductors continues to grow across industries, we'll continue to position Pennsylvania as a leader in innovation, with a supportive, thriving business climate that helps companies compete on a global scale. From advanced manufacturing to the research and development of new technology like advanced chip packaging, Pennsylvania has all the resources to be a world leader in chip production." "This is great news for Pennsylvania. Nokia is doubling its local workforce to more than 500 good-paying jobs in engineering, manufacturing, and R&D, all while expanding our ability to domestically produce the critical technologies that power AI infrastructure. This matters for both our economy and our national security," said Senator Dave McCormick. "These technologies also help cut energy use in AI communications, showing that we can lead on innovation while also smartly managing our resources at the same time." "Nokia's investment in Pennsylvania is directly advancing America's AI leadership," said Bill Frauenhofer, Executive Director of Semiconductor Investment and Innovation at the Department of Commerce. "Supported by CHIPS and Science Act funding, Nokia is deepening its commitment to innovation and the production of photonic chips in the United States. This project enables critical optical technology and strengthens America's semiconductor supply chain."



Nokia Upgrades Symphony Communication's MCT Subsea Network to Deliver Advanced Connectivity Across Southeast Asia

Nokia announced that it has been selected by Symphony Communication Public Company Limited (SYMPHONY) to upgrade the Malaysia-Cambodia-Thailand (MCT) subsea cable system with its industry-leading optical solutions. As part of the initiative, legacy equipment will be replaced with Nokia's Submarine Line Terminal Equipment (SLTE), powered by its sixth-generation Photonic Service Engines (PSE-6) coherent optics. Once completed, the initiative will enable up to 30 Tbps of

capacity per fiber pair, three times that of legacy systems, and will deliver low-latency connectivity between Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore. This will support advanced, real-time use cases such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) inference, cloud bursting and mission-critical enterprise applications. The upgrade also supports the sustainability goals of the subsea network operators by reducing the carbon footprint through improving power efficiency. The MCT cable is the only subsea system landing in Rayong in

Thailand's EEC, the country's primary hub for AI-driven data center investment. Thailand is rapidly emerging as a regional digital infrastructure hub, attracting more than USD23 billion in data center investment across 36 projects, according to Thailand's Board of Investment (BOI) data. This growth is attracting several global hyperscalers seeking trusted, high-capacity connectivity routes. The upgraded MCT cable provides a critical, low-latency and sovereign connectivity, addressing the region's growing demand for secure, high-performance subsea infrastructure. We are pleased to expand our longstanding partnership with SYMPHONY from terrestrial and cross-border networks into the subsea domain. This upgrade will help

deliver advanced, trusted connectivity across Southeast Asia and support Thailand's ambition to become a regional hub for AI and cloud-driven digital services. Ajay Sharma, Country Manager of Thailand at Nokia. The MCT upgrade underscores our commitment to continuously improve network performance to provide the best-in-class experience to our customers. With Nokia's submarine network solution, we will deliver unmatched capacity and reliability and become the connectivity partner of choice for hyperscalers and enterprises, building next-generation digital infrastructure hub in Southeast Asia. Alex Loh, Chief Executive Officer of Symphony Communication Public Company Limited said, Nokia's PSE-6 solution uses

advanced 5nm DSP technology and intelligent signal optimization to deliver higher capacity, better efficiency and long-term scalability. It enables a direct, high-capacity and low-latency connectivity route for enterprises, OTT players and AI and cloud providers, while reducing network power consumption by 60%. The deployment is further supported by Nokia's WaveSuite optical network automation platform. The solution will enable a single pane of glass improved multilayer network visibility along with support for cross-domain automation to achieve sustainable energy optimization, lifecycle operations, and network resiliency in their high-performance end-to-end connectivity.

Nokia Launches Deepfield Genome Shield Security Automation System to Deliver Proactive, Network-Wide DDoS Protection for the AI Era

Nokia has announced the launch of Nokia Deepfield Genome Shield, the industry's first security automation system that delivers proactive, always-on DDoS protection for telecommunications providers, hosting companies, internet exchange points, and cloud builders in the AI era. Genome Shield addresses the fundamental shift in DDoS threats driven by the emergence of residential proxy botnets, which now comprise approximately 200 million compromised devices worldwide. The DDoS threat landscape has shifted over the past 12 months. Attacks now come from real subscriber devices, deliver multi-terabit bursts that last seconds to minutes, and rapidly rotate IPs across thousands of nodes. Residential proxy botnets – estimated at 250–600 Tbps – are used to dynamically leverage large numbers of residential users who are unaware their connections are used to generate evasive attacks impacting many national networks. Traditional scrubber-based diversion and reactive mitigation can't respond quickly enough to these sub-minute attacks. Automated, AI-driven DDoS has industrialized the residential proxy supply chain used by botnets like Kimwolf, while AI-assisted code generation is accelerating the evolution of evasion techniques. Nokia Deepfield Genome Shield introduces a new class of proactive, network-wide security automation that extends Deepfield Defender to address previously unaddressable use cases. The



solution has been shaped through close engagement with customers and the wider security community as part of ongoing efforts to combat DDoS and botnet-driven threats. It shifts protection from reactive mitigation to proactive enforcement leveraging existing network infrastructure. Genome Shield aggregates continuously updated threat intelligence from multiple sources, including Nokia Deepfield Secure Genome® (spanning over five billion internet endpoints), GDTA telemetry, and Deepfield's cyber range, where live malware and botnet command-and-control (C2s) generate real-time insights. All of this intelligence is compiled in Deepfield Defender into automated DDoS policies and enforced as a security shield across the network. "Protecting our infrastructure

from inbound DDoS attacks while managing compromised subscriber devices requires carrier-grade automation. By implementing Nokia Deepfield Genome Shield, we have transitioned from reactive, manual workflows to a proactive, unified security platform. Disrupting botnet command-and-control at the network edge, before attacks hit, ensures maximum uptime and clean traffic. This deployment guarantees that when clients connect to Reddot, they are choosing a network engineered for absolute security and peace of mind," said Charlie Attoum, Network Infrastructure Director at Reddot. "The past year has fundamentally changed DDoS security. Residential proxy botnets have invalidated 25 years of assumptions about how attacks work and how to defend

against them. The hard problem today is maintaining dynamic, massive IP threat feeds and enforcing protection against them in real time, at network scale, continuously and automatically. Genome Shield is the industry's answer to that challenge. It combines several intelligence sources, including our unique cyber range and Secure Genome's visibility into more than five billion internet endpoints, with automated policy compilation and enforcement across the entire network. For the more than 1,000 hosting companies, service providers, and internet exchange points that face

this new generation of threats, Genome Shield delivers the commercial, scalable answer," said Jeff Smith, Vice-President and General Manager of Nokia Deepfield. Genome Shield extends Deepfield Defender's existing DDoS countermeasure portfolio with network-wide automated enforcement, organized across four pillars: Botnet C2 Disruption, which blocks command-and-control communications so attacks cannot be launched; DDoS Policers, which suppress amplification and volumetric traffic through proactive rate limiting; Custom Policies, enabling

user-defined rules via open APIs for easy integration; and Observability, providing dashboards for compromised devices, botnet endpoints, and emerging security trends. Genome Shield requires Nokia Deepfield Defender and is compatible with both router-based edge mitigation and with the Nokia 7750 Defender Mitigation System (DMS) for dedicated L4-L7 DDoS scrubbing. It supports on-premises, cloud-based (SaaS), and hybrid deployment models with flexible pay-as-you-grow licensing.

Nokia Federal Solutions, Lockheed Martin Introduce Mission-Critical 5G Solution

Nokia Federal Solutions, the U.S. government-focused arm of Nokia and Lockheed Martin announced the launch of a new modular, open architecture 5G solution built for the U.S. and allied defense forces. The capability is designed to deliver secure, resilient communications at the point of need. It enables military vehicles and platforms to use commercial-grade 5G in operational environments, aligned to the Department of War (DoW) open architecture standards and its commercial-first strategy. "Nokia recognizes the need to adapt our advanced technology portfolio to align with DoW-defined open systems," said Mike Loomis, president and chief executive officer of Nokia Federal Solutions. "This launch reflects how Nokia is building focused defense capabilities, leveraging our commercial technology and strong partnerships into a meaningful, ready-to-use solution that is deployable by our defense customers." The new solution integrates Nokia's carrier grade 5G within the DoW's open architecture framework, utilizing the Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Cyber, Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance (C5ISR)/Modular Open Suite of Standards (CMOSS). By aligning to CMOSS hardware and software module specifications, this plug and play architecture reduces complexity and accelerates integration across vehicle and expeditionary systems, improves interoperability, and enables new capabilities to be introduced and updated without disrupting existing platforms. "Moving advanced communications from concept into the field requires discipline,



scale, and an understanding of how defense systems are built and sustained," said Sarah Hiza, senior vice president for Technology and Strategic Innovation at Lockheed Martin. "This collaboration is about rapidly delivering capability that can be deployed, sustained and trusted over the long term." By combining Nokia's commercial 5G technologies with Lockheed Martin's 5G.MIL® solutions, the companies are delivering a hybrid network that allows mission critical systems to connect with high speed, cost effective, commercially driven 5G while maintaining the security and resilience required by defense forces. As NATO nations increasingly integrate 5G into their mission systems, this CMOSS aligned approach provides an additional pathway to incorporate commercial grade 5G into allied platforms using a standardized, modular framework also outside of the U.S. This announcement represents a

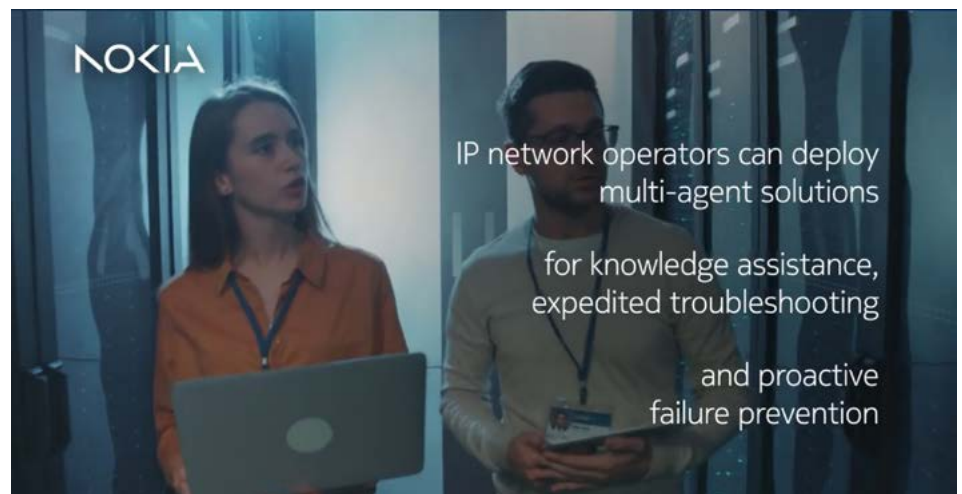
key follow-on milestone from the Nokia and Lockheed Martin collaboration first announced in 2025, which introduced the initial integration of Nokia's industry-leading, military-grade 5G solutions with Lockheed Martin's Hybrid Base Station. Together, the companies are moving beyond integration demonstrations to deliver a field ready, modular 5G capability aligned with DoW open architecture standards and deployable across military vehicles and platforms. The CMOSS standard is developed and maintained by the U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command. Through this new solution, Nokia Federal and Lockheed Martin are moving standards-based 5G from concept to deployable reality. The collaboration reflects a shared focus on delivering practical, mission-ready technology that can be integrated quickly and evolve alongside operational requirements.

Nokia Introduces Agentic AI Framework in Network Services Platform to Enable Trust-Based AI Operations for IP Networks

Nokia has announced an enhancement to its Network Services Platform (NSP), the company's comprehensive management and automation platform for multi-vendor IP networks, with the introduction of an agentic AI framework designed specifically for IP network operations. The new framework enables network operators to deploy AI agents that can reason over real network context and take guided actions within defined policy and security boundaries. As IP networks grow in size and complexity with the rise of AI traffic, operators face increasing pressure to improve efficiency and reliability while maintaining full operational control. While AI has the potential to transform network operations, many operators have remained cautious due to concerns around explainability, trust, and risk in production environments. Nokia's approach with NSP addresses these concerns by embedding agentic AI capabilities directly into the platform that already serves as the authoritative controller for IP networks. Appledore has been advocating for operators to focus on the primary importance of quality data and ontological relationships – which are proving far more important than specific AI models for efficient and accurate AI reasoning. Nokia's NSP embraces this approach with extensive AI-native infrastructure built on trusted data and operating norms, providing a solid and secure foundation for a myriad of AI use cases. Domain expertise is likely the most critical quality in designing effective automation for complex networks. Grant Lenahan, Partner and Principal Analyst, Appledore Research NSP grounds AI agents in an accurate and continuously updated view of the network, including topology, protocol behavior, configuration

state, service relationships, and recent network changes. This enables AI agents to reason based on network truth, rather than inferred or fragmented data, and to operate within operator-defined intent, policies, and access controls. The NSP agent framework also allows for communication with external agents via AI-based protocols, such as Model-context protocol (MCP), across operators' multi-vendor, multi-domain networks empowering them on their journey toward fully autonomous networks. The first use case built on this new framework is an AI-driven Troubleshooting Agent, aimed at helping operators identify root causes faster, reduce operational noise, and resolve complex IP network issues with greater confidence. This marks a significant step in Nokia's strategy to help operators adopt AI safely, incrementally, and at scale in live networks. The industry is moving quickly toward AI-native operations, but trust remains the deciding factor. We are enhancing NSP with AI agents built on an agent framework in a way that respects how networks are

actually operated. This will have a major impact on the way operators manage their networks and will enable them to enhance their operations significantly and accelerate their journey toward autonomous networks with focus on solving real operational problems, starting with high-impact use cases like troubleshooting. This is an incremental, pragmatic step toward AI-native networks. Sasa Nijemcevic, Vice President and General Manager, IP Network Automation software, Nokia For network operators, the new agentic framework provides a flexible foundation to introduce multiple AI use cases over time without creating siloed solutions. Operators can start with focused, high-confidence scenarios and gradually expand the role of AI as trust builds, using a shared framework that enforces consistent governance and operational controls. End-users also benefit from this evolution through faster fault resolution, improved service reliability, and reduced likelihood of prolonged or cascading outages—delivering better experiences without increasing operational risk.



Nokia and Vodafone Trial AWS Cloud to Scale Internet of Things Services

Vodafone has announced the successful completion of a trial using Amazon Web Services (AWS) Cloud infrastructure to run key Internet of Things (IoT) voice and data network applications operating on Nokia core systems. Cloud technology helps Vodafone automate network expansion and scale capacity where customers need it

most. Vodafone aims to add extra capacity in days using a cloud-based architecture that scales with demand, further extending the company's global reach with additional points of presence to deliver services to more customers worldwide. In phase one, Vodafone, Nokia, and AWS deployed a proof of concept of Nokia's mobile data core and

voice core on AWS cloud infrastructure in Frankfurt, Germany, integrating with network components in Vodafone data centers across several European countries. The wide-ranging trial included support for IoT services on Nokia's IP Multimedia Subsystem (IMS) for voice applications such as emergency calling in vehicles

and elevators, and on Nokia's Packet Core for data services such as smart metering for utilities. Both voice and packet core's cloud-native network functions were hosted on AWS cloud infrastructure. The next phase will address security and sovereignty ahead of commercial trials later this year. The option to incorporate large cloud provider infrastructure into its future architecture will allow Vodafone to further strengthen its global managed IoT connectivity platform, which currently has over 240 million connections worldwide. Marco Zangani, Director of Network Strategy and Architecture, Vodafone, said: "Our multi-cloud strategy gives Vodafone greater agility to capitalise on advances in technology like the rise of Agent AI to enhance the customer experience. By validating AWS as an effective infrastructure option for network functions, we can introduce services faster,

leaving more time for experimentation and innovation." Vodafone, Nokia and AWS assessed lifecycle management, integration with Vodafone's existing systems, and operational performance. They also evaluated costs and potential new business opportunities enabled by using AWS public cloud for Vodafone's global managed IoT connectivity platform. The collaboration supports Vodafone's multi-cloud strategy by leveraging Nokia's cloud native network functions operating on AWS infrastructure. This includes Amazon's cloud platform Elastic Kubernetes Service (EKS) for managing containers that bundle and run applications, and Elastic Compute Cloud (EC2) for compute workloads. The architecture was designed to deliver the elasticity, scalability, and operational agility that modern telecommunications networks require. "Nokia is committed to advancing connectivity by helping telecommunication

providers transform their networks through cloud-native solutions," said Kal De, SVP, Core Networks, at Nokia. "This successful trial with Vodafone and AWS demonstrates how our voice (IMS) and data (mobile core) solutions can leverage public cloud infrastructure to deliver carrier-grade performance while enabling greater operational flexibility. The result is a more scalable service, to more customers, at times when it's needed the most." "Working with Vodafone and Nokia on this trial demonstrates AWS commitment to providing the secure, scalable, and high-performance infrastructure that telcos need to run their most critical network workloads in the cloud," said Fabio Cerone, Managing Director, EMEA Telco Business Unit, AWS. "This solution shows how telcos can redefine their operating models through full automation and elasticity at scale."



Salam Expands its Community Initiatives with the Launch of its Second Research and Technical Innovation Center in Al-Ahsa

Etihad Salam Telecom Company (Salam), a leading provider of telecommunications services and digital infrastructure in Saudi Arabia, announced the opening of its second Research and Technical Innovation Center at the Girls' Technical College in Al-Ahsa. The inauguration ceremony was officially opened by His Excellency Dr. Adel bin Hamad Al-Zunaidi, Vice Governor for Training at the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC) together with Salam CEO, Eng. Ahmed Alangari, marking a strategic step as part of its social responsibility efforts and reflecting its commitment to empowering Saudi youth while advancing technical education and innovation across the Kingdom. The new Al-Ahsa center represents a strategic expansion of Salam's successful partnership with the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC), building on the proven model established at the Digital Technical College for Girls in Riyadh. The center aims to foster a culture of innovation, support practical education aligned with labor market needs, and empower trainees to develop impactful, real-world



projects, contributing to the preparation of a new generation of national talent capable of leading Saudi Arabia's digital transformation and innovation journey. Ahmed Al Anqari, Chief Executive Officer of Etihad Salam Telecom Company (Salam), said: "Investing in national talent is an investment in the Kingdom's future. At Salam, we are committed to building an integrated innovation ecosystem, strengthening

partnerships with government entities and educational institutions, and empowering Saudi youth to develop their capabilities and transform their ideas into solutions that contribute to building a more competitive and sustainable digital economy, in line with the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030." Al-Ahsa was carefully selected for this expansion due to the presence of the Girls' Technical College, aligning with

Salam's commitment to empowering Saudi women in technical and digital fields. The region is also home to promising national talent, while its strategic location makes the center the first of its kind in the region. The Riyadh Centre, established in 2023, has demonstrated remarkable success in its mission. Operating through three specialized departments, Training Workshop, Fabrication Laboratory, and Research and Study, the center has served approximately 1,300 trainees and trainers, while extending its reach to external beneficiaries through organized workshops and events. The achievements of the Riyadh center underscore the transformative potential of Salam's innovation model. The center's

trainees have earned international recognition through winning awards at several international exhibitions. Locally, the center has achieved numerous accomplishments in the fields of technical innovation and invention. In addition, several trainee-led innovations have progressed to the incubation stage, with projects focused on developing practical solutions for real-world challenges in healthcare, environmental monitoring, and improving quality of life for people with disabilities. Al-Ahsa center's model is designed to bridge academia and industry by providing exposure to real-world applications, supporting skill development aligned with market needs, and enhancing employability through

practical learning and collaboration. This reflects Salam's commitment to supporting the national innovation ecosystem and empowering young talent while preparing a distinguished generation of innovators to develop innovative solutions that serve society and the national economy. The expansion of these centers contributes to achieving the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030. This scalable model also supports Salam's future plans to establish five research and technical innovation centers across different regions of the Kingdom, further strengthening the foundations of the national digital economy and supporting a more sustainable and innovative future.



stc Bahrain Wins the "Most Innovative Community Impact" Award at 2026 MENA Stevie® Awards for Its jeel ICT Program

stc Bahrain, a digital enabler, has been honored with the "Most Innovative Community Impact" award at the 2026 Middle East & North Africa Stevie® Awards for its flagship talent development initiative, jeel ICT. This significant recognition highlights the program's success and demonstrates stc Bahrain's strategic contribution to the Kingdom of Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030. The award acknowledges jeel ICT as a leading initiative in the region for creating a sustainable pipeline of digital-ready professionals. The jeel ICT program is a transformative 12-month talent development initiative designed to bridge the gap between academic learning and the demands of the digital economy. Delivered in partnership with the Ministry of Labor, Tamkeen, and the Bahrain Institute of Banking and Finance (BIBF), the program immerses graduates in a hands-on, project-based environment at stc Bahrain. This intensive approach has proven highly effective, culminating in the program's most significant achievement: a 100% employment rate for its graduates, who are equipped to become future leaders in the ICT sector. Sh. Zeyad Bin Faisal Al Khalifa, Chief Government Affairs Officer at stc Bahrain, commented on the achievement, stating, "We are incredibly proud to receive this award, as it validates our deep-rooted commitment to Bahrain's future. At stc Bahrain, we believe that investing in our youth is the most powerful investment we can make. jeel ICT is more than a program; it is a strategic pillar of our mission to cultivate the next generation of digital leaders who will drive the Kingdom's success in the global digital economy and secure our nation's prosperity for years to come." stc Bahrain remains dedicated to pioneering impactful initiatives that not only advance the telecommunications sector but also contribute directly to building a brighter, more prosperous digital future for the Kingdom of Bahrain.



stc Bahrain and Ithmaar Bank Forge Strategic Partnership to Streamline Cloud Financial Management

stc Bahrain, a digital enabler, announced a strategic partnership with Ithmaar Bank, one of the region's leading Islamic retail banks, to provide comprehensive management of its Amazon Web Services (AWS) billing. As an AWS Premier Tier Services Partner, stc Bahrain will deliver a powerful cloud financial management solution, empowering Ithmaar Bank to enhance efficiency, optimize costs, and accelerate its innovation pipeline. This collaboration addresses the growing complexity of managing cloud expenditures as financial institutions deepen their digital transformation efforts. By consolidating Ithmaar Bank's AWS billing, stc Bahrain will provide a single, transparent monthly invoice, eliminating administrative overhead and offering a clear, predictable view of cloud spending. Through this partnership, Ithmaar Bank will gain access to stc Bahrain's highly

qualified team of AWS experts, ensuring its cloud financial operations are governed by industry best practices. The creation of a single point of contact for billing and support simplifies vendor management and creates a seamless operational workflow, allowing the bank's team to focus on its core objective: driving innovation in Islamic banking. Hesham Mustafa, Chief Business Officer at stc Bahrain, commented, "This partnership with Ithmaar Bank is a testament to our role as a strategic enabler of digital transformation in the Kingdom. By simplifying the complexities of cloud financial management, we are empowering leading financial institutions to innovate with greater confidence and agility. This collaboration directly supports Bahrain's digital economy by providing the tools for streamlined cloud governance, and we are proud to support Ithmaar Bank on their digital journey." Mohamed Ahmed

Bucheerei, Ithmaar Bank Head of Strategy, Transformation & Business Development said: "We are pleased to partner with stc Bahrain to enhance the efficiency and governance of the Bank's cloud financial management. This collaboration supports our ongoing digital transformation agenda by strengthening cost optimization, operational transparency, and resilience across our technology infrastructure. We are confident that this partnership will further enhance our digital capabilities and cybersecurity posture, enabling us to deliver secure, efficient, and scalable banking solutions to our corporate clients." This collaboration serves as a model for the future of strategic partnerships in Bahrain's financial landscape, equipping key institutions to advance their digital capabilities and contribute to the Kingdom's vision for a thriving, technology-driven economy.

ZAINTECH

ZainTECH Named a Leader in IDC MarketScape: Gulf Countries AI Professional Services

ZainTECH, the integrated digital solutions provider of Zain Group, has been recognized in the Leaders Category of the IDC MarketScape: Gulf Countries AI Professional Services 2025 Vendor Assessment, (Doc #META52993125, October 2025) published by International Data Corporation (IDC), a global provider of market intelligence, advisory services, and events for the information technology, telecommunications, and consumer technology markets. The IDC MarketScape evaluates providers based on execution capability and long-term strategy. ZainTECH's placement reflects its ability to deliver secure, scalable, and industry-led AI solutions across regulated and mission-critical environments in the GCC. The IDC MarketScape notes that ZainTECH demonstrates strong vertical expertise in the Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance (BFSI) and telecom sectors, investing in industry talent and centers of excellence to drive consultative, value-led

AI engagement. A key trend highlighted in this IDC MarketScape is the accelerated growth of the AI professional services market in the GCC, driven by organizations positioning AI as a core pillar of their digital transformation agendas. The IDC MarketScape underscores the importance of industry context, certified delivery capability, regional execution strength, and governance-driven frameworks that enable intelligence to be secure, compliant, scalable, and built for long-term impact. ZainTECH's industry-focused AI strategy spans banking and financial services, telecommunications, retail, public sector and energy. The company enables high-value use cases including fraud and AML analytics, AIOps and predictive maintenance, AI-driven inspections and asset performance optimization, and customer intelligence and personalization. Clients are guided through a defined progression covering AI readiness, advanced analytics and machine

learning, generative AI, and emerging agentic systems. Andrew Hanna, CEO of ZainTECH, commented: "As organizations shift from experimentation to embedding intelligence into core operating models, the priority is ensuring AI is secure, governed, and resilient. This recognition reaffirms our ability to deploy production-grade AI solutions aligned with regulatory requirements and industry realities across the region." ZainTECH operates multi-country AI Centers of Excellence across the MENA region, delivering sovereign, hybrid, and 100% in-country execution models tailored to national data residency and regulatory mandates. Through continued investment in AI talent, governance frameworks, and sustainable infrastructure, ZainTECH enables organizations to scale AI responsibly while driving measurable business outcomes aligned with Group innovation priorities and long-term sustainability goals. 🌱

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ARTICLE

Navigating the Digital Frontier. Why the Governance of Digital Infrastructure Must Evolve



Imme Philbeck

Chief Economist and Director of
Sector Development
SAMENA Telecommunications Council



When the ITU chose 'Navigating the Digital Frontier' as the theme for GSR-26 in Ankara, it captured something the industry has long argued: the regulatory toolkit assembled for the commercial telecom era is no longer sufficient. This article sets out what the private sector brought to the table, what the Best Practice Guidelines delivered, and where the governance agenda must go next.

The digital frontier is not a comfortable space of incremental evolution. It is defined, on one side, by extraordinary innovation – AI-native infrastructure, satellite-terrestrial convergence, sovereign data ecosystems – and on the other by profound inequality. Some 2.2 billion people remain unconnected. Those who are connected are increasingly dependent on digital infrastructure for economic participation, healthcare, education, and public services. Getting governance right matters enormously, and the stakes are not abstract.

Across the SA-ME-NA region, the private sector is at the centre of both the opportunity and the challenge. The infrastructure SAMENA members build and operate – subsea cable systems, hyperscale data centres, AI compute facilities, 5G backbone networks – has crossed a threshold. These assets are no longer just the pipes of the digital economy. They are the infrastructure of national economic security, societal continuity, and sovereign digital strategy. Governance frameworks must be adequate to that reality, and the question of who bears the cost of building and maintaining them is no longer separable from questions of national resilience and digital equity.

The private sector's contribution to the Ankara debate was set out in the IAGDI-CRO Outcome Statement, delivered at the GSR-26 Closing Ceremony on behalf of ITU-D Sector Members. It identified four interconnected priorities: sustainable digital infrastructure investment; strategic infrastructure, cybersecurity, and digital sovereignty; converging connectivity architectures; and meaningful connectivity and digital trust. These are not abstract policy preferences. They reflect the operational realities that SAMENA member companies – from the GCC to South Asia to North Africa – are navigating every day.

The Private Sector Agenda

IAGDI-CRO Priorities presented at GSR-26, Ankara, May 2026



The Private Sector Agenda — IAGDI-CRO priorities presented at GSR-26, Ankara, May 2026

Investing in the Right Framework

The most fundamental design choice in digital governance is whether to regulate inputs or outcomes — to prescribe how operators build, or to define what they must deliver. SAMENA Council's position has been consistent: outcome-based frameworks produce better results, and the evidence from the region bears this out. The UAE's TDRA holds operators accountable to performance outcomes through annual QoS benchmarking and real-time network monitoring, while leaving technology choices to the market.¹ Saudi Arabia's CST provides structured regulatory sandbox environments for testing new services and business models under

supervision.² Regulators who engage early, consult genuinely, and create space for experimentation consistently produce better outcomes than those who mandate first and adapt later. The GSR-26 BPG Essential 1 captures this well: stable public-interest outcomes should anchor decision-making across sectors and over time.

The sovereign dimension of digital infrastructure is now an operational fact. STC, e&, Omantel, and ZOI are co-investing in subsea cables, AI data centres, and sovereign cloud platforms in partnership with national governments. Governance frameworks for these assets must provide clear, predictable investment-screening criteria grounded in transparent national security

'Governance frameworks for strategic digital infrastructure must be predictable enough for investors to plan across decade-long investment cycles. When regulatory environments cannot be projected forward with confidence, the cost of capital rises and the connectivity gap widens.'



The four consultation themes structuring the GSR-26 Best Practice Guidelines process

assessments; establish government-industry partnership models that reinforce resilience without constraining cross-border financing; and ensure that security mandates are technology-neutral and evidence-based. Unilateral data localisation, network separation, or technology exclusion mandates that fragment the open internet raise costs and often undermine the resilience objectives they claim to serve.

Underneath this lies a structural economic problem that governance frameworks can no longer defer. Connectivity providers bear the overwhelming share of infrastructure investment costs while traffic driven by AI-intensive platforms continues to grow and revenues remain under pressure.³

The Dual Burden on Operators



Who funds the gap?

The dual burden on operators – commercial pressures alongside growing sovereign obligations

Simultaneously, governments are adding to operators' cost base through sovereign mandates: security obligations, redundancy requirements, AI-ready infrastructure expectations. SAMENA Council co-chaired the UN Broadband Commission's Working Group on 21st Century Financing Models to build the analytical foundation for a broader conversation about who contributes to the digital commons and how. The IAGDI-CRO Outcome Statement was direct: all actors benefiting substantially from

the digital ecosystem must contribute proportionately to its sustainability.

Measuring What Matters

Governance without measurement is aspiration without accountability. Meaningful connectivity is a far richer concept than coverage alone. ITU's Universal and Meaningful Connectivity framework defines six dimensions: quality, availability, affordability, devices, skills, and security.⁴ SAMENA Council's position is that a seventh dimension now deserves explicit

The Six Dimensions of Meaningful Connectivity



The six dimensions of meaningful connectivity – with AI-readiness proposed as a seventh



GSR-26 Best Practice Guidelines

CORE REGULATORY GOVERNANCE KIT

The seven essential components set out below are intended as that minimum core toolkit to make digital markets deliver in practice. They are selective rather than exhaustive. Together, they define the baseline governance architecture that regulators should establish first.

ESSENTIAL 1.

PUBLIC-INTEREST OUTCOMES AND STRATEGIC FOCUS

Regulators should begin by defining a limited set of outcomes that digital markets are expected to deliver and use them to discipline regulatory action.

The first task is to make explicit what governance is for. A modern framework should not try to optimize for everything at once. It should identify a small number of public-interest outcomes that are sufficiently stable and material to anchor decision-making across sectors and over time. In practice, these are likely to include meaningful connectivity, affordability, accessibility, reliability and resilience, consumer protection, and market contestability. The point is not to create a long catalogue of objectives, but to establish a clear strategic focus against which regulatory choices can be tested and regulatory performance can be assessed.

recognition: latency and compute proximity. As AI-native services become standard, connectivity that cannot support these applications in real time will exclude users from the next decade of digital development. Governance frameworks measuring only traditional broadband parameters will systematically undercount the gap that matters most.

The reporting asymmetry between network operators and large digital platforms also needs to be addressed. As AI providers and OTT services assume larger roles in the digital economy –

shaping the investment requirements and cost structures of the networks they depend on — governance frameworks should ensure visibility across the full value chain. The GSR-26 BPG Essential 2, which calls for obligations to be assigned by market position and function rather than legacy regulatory category, is an important step in the right direction. Balanced ecosystem-wide observability is a prerequisite for evidence-based governance of the digital economy as it actually operates.

Making Supervision Predictable

Regulatory predictability is a capital markets issue, not a comfort issue. The financing conditions for large-scale infrastructure investment are directly sensitive to regulatory risk. In a region where infrastructure carries both commercial and sovereign dimensions, sudden or opaque enforcement actions affect cost of capital, sovereign credit perceptions, and deployment timelines in ways that have real consequences for those who remain unconnected.

The complexity of the supervisory environment is increasing rapidly. The same infrastructure asset may now face simultaneous oversight from telecommunications regulators, competition authorities, data protection bodies, national security agencies, and AI regulators. Overlapping obligations that add cost without commensurate benefit

ESSENTIAL 2.

RISK-BASED AND PROPORTIONATE CALIBRATION OF OBLIGATIONS

Where warranted, regulators should consider differentiating obligations -for market actors according to function, market position, and risk, so that responsibility sits where it is most relevant and regulatory action remains proportionate to likely harm.

Digital markets are highly heterogeneous, making uniform obligations inefficient. In this context, effective governance requires a clear and transparent basis to determine when obligations may be appropriate, together with a well-defined approach to tailoring them. Regulators should consider differentiating obligations according to the functions performed, the market actor's position in the value chain, or the risks associated with the activity or service. This approach can support lighter obligations where risks are limited while allowing for more robust oversight where justified.

are a genuine operational risk — one the GSR-26 discussions in Ankara confirmed is widely shared across the industry. The GSR-26 BPG Essential 7 on domestic

ESSENTIAL 3.

OBSERVABILITY AND CREDIBLE EVIDENCE

Regulators should ensure that public-interest outcomes in digital markets can be measured, observed, and verified through a proportionate observability model that supports effective oversight without excessive burden.

Governance requires a minimum evidence architecture that allows regulators to see whether declared outcomes are actually being delivered. This means moving beyond fragmented, procedural reporting toward a more structured observability model: one that combines clear indicators, consistent reporting formats, proportionate data collection, and targeted verification where justified. Regulators should focus on a core set of decision-relevant indicators, especially in contexts where regulatory data capabilities are still developing. These indicators should generate evidence that is sufficiently credible, comparable, and timely to support intervention, review, accountability, and public transparency.

Observability should be strong enough to give regulators a clear view of performance and risk, while remaining proportionate to the burdens it creates and avoiding the creation of reporting requirements that do not directly inform regulatory decision-making.

and cross-border regulatory coherence directly addresses this, recommending whole-of-government coordination, clear responsibility allocations, and compatible remedies.

The SAMENA Council's considered view is: supervisory frameworks need graduated pathways with clearly defined criteria for both escalation and de-escalation. Frameworks without explicit de-escalation mechanisms create open-ended regulatory exposure that functions as a

The Graduated Supervisory Pathway



The graduated supervisory pathway — from guidance and engagement through to stronger measures, with explicit de-escalation

structural investment disincentive. The GSR-26 BPG Essential 5 endorses this principle directly — supervision should be corrective rather than punitive, and de-escalation criteria are as essential as escalation criteria.

Cross-Border Cooperation: Where the Work Remains

The GSR BPG series has delivered durable value for regulators across the region for over two decades, and the GSR-26 BPGs extend this foundation well. Two specific areas, however, warrant further development:

The first is the connectivity-layer governance gap for cross-border AI and platform services. GSR discussions on AI have focused on governing AI as a general technology and deploying AI as a supervisory tool.⁵ Both are valuable. Neither addresses the coordination challenge that national telecom regulators face as AI-native services scale across multiple markets simultaneously. Who holds jurisdiction when a cross-border AI service causes consumer harm without any local regulatory presence? How should

'The MENA region is well-positioned at the WRC-27 preparation stage. The window to develop harmonised post-WRC licensing and coexistence frameworks is open — but it will not remain so once WRC-27 decisions are locked in.'

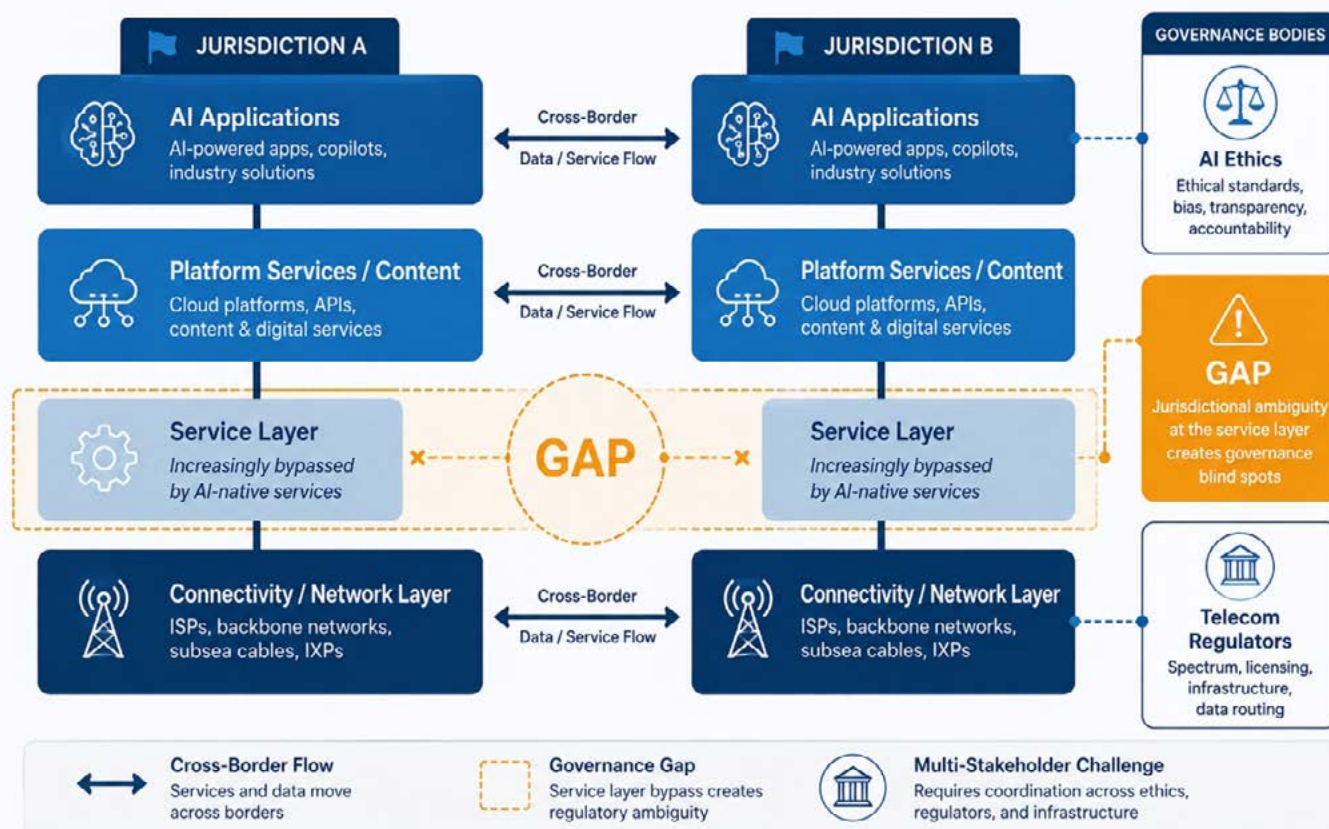
ESSENTIAL 4.

INCENTIVE-BASED MARKET SHAPING

Regulators should use incentive levers and enabling measures to steer behaviour toward public-interest outcomes before relying on more directive intervention.

Incentive-based governance is often more effective at improving market outcomes. Alongside formal obligations where needed, regulators must actively create enabling conditions in which markets invest, innovate, comply, and extend services. The minimum toolkit should therefore include incentive levers and enabling measures that align business decisions and market behaviour with public interest outcomes, whether through adaptive licensing, infrastructure-sharing arrangements, temporary adjustments to regulatory requirements, or targeted deployment incentives. Used well, regulatory incentives make desired conduct more likely from the outset and reduce the need for later corrective action.

The Cross-Border AI Governance Gap



The cross-border AI governance gap — jurisdictional ambiguity at the service layer creates regulatory blind spots

ESSENTIAL 5.**GRADUATED SUPERVISION, DUE PROCESS, AND DE-ESCALATION**

Regulators should put in place a predictable supervisory pathway that moves from guidance and corrective action to stronger intervention where justified, and that includes clear conditions for scaling measures back.

The credibility of governance depends not only on the powers available to the regulator under its mandate, but on how those powers are exercised in practice. A modern regulatory framework should therefore establish a graduated pathway for intervention, beginning with preventive engagement and targeted remediation, and escalating to more directive or restrictive measures only where risks persist, harms materialize, or non-compliance becomes serious or systemic. This pathway should be transparent, evidence-based, and supported by clear procedural safeguards. Just as importantly, it should not be one-way. Clear criteria for deescalation are essential if supervision is to remain proportionate, predictable, and genuinely corrective rather than punitive.

traffic from these services be treated under national QoS and net neutrality frameworks as the boundary between the service layer and the network layer becomes less distinct? The broader international AI governance landscape — OECD principles, the UN Global Digital Compact, the G7 Hiroshima Process, UNESCO's ethics framework — addresses safety and general governance, but not the connectivity-layer asymmetry between network operators and the global platform providers that depend on their infrastructure. The GSR is uniquely positioned as a forum of telecom regulators to begin establishing principles here.

The second gap concerns non-terrestrial networks and direct-to-device services. WRC-27 Agenda Item 1.13 will determine

ESSENTIAL 6.**ADAPTIVE REGULATION AND STRUCTURED LEARNING**

Regulators should treat the capacity to test, learn, review, and adjust as a core requirement, using evidence, experience and structured engagement with market actors, consumers, technical experts, and other public authorities so that governance can evolve with technologies, markets, and patterns of harm.

Effective governance requires a structured capacity and practical mechanisms that allow learning to be incorporated into regulation as a regular discipline, not an exceptional exercise. Regulators should therefore have access to the institutional capacity, technical expertise, and tools needed to support structured learning, such as sandboxes, pilot authorizations, phased implementation, feedback loops, review triggers, and ex post assessment mechanisms. These instruments should include clear objectives, application criteria, monitoring indicators, evaluation mechanisms and conditions for scaling, adjusting or closing the adopted measures. Designed and used with clear purpose, these adaptive tools and mechanisms help keep regulation workable under uncertainty and allow frameworks to improve as evidence accumulates.

spectrum allocations for direct mobile satellite-to-device connectivity — a pivotal regulatory moment for the region's connectivity architecture.⁶ The Arab Spectrum Management Group is actively engaged: its 33rd meeting, held in Abu Dhabi in September 2025 alongside the 9th MENA Spectrum Management Conference, addressed WRC-27 agenda items with the explicit goal of shaping common Arab positions. SAMENA Council has reinforced this work at successive Leaders' Summits — the 2025 Summit dedicated a full roundtable to WRC-27, Mobile Satellite Services, and NTN,⁷ and the 2026 Summit

ESSENTIAL 7.**DOMESTIC AND CROSSBORDER REGULATORY COHERENCE**

Regulators should ensure that governance remains coherent across mandates, sectors, and jurisdictions, and over time, so that digital services are not hampered by institutional fragmentation.

Digital services cut across administrative boundaries. Even a well-designed domestic governance framework will underperform if it is fragmented across agencies or inconsistent across borders. Institutional and regulatory coherence, both domestically and internationally, is therefore part of the core requirements, not an additional layer to be considered later. Domestically, it requires practical coordination among relevant authorities, clear allocation of roles, routine information-sharing, and structured cooperation on supervision and remedies based on shared goals. Internationally, cross-border cooperation is recommended to share experience and knowledge in emerging areas to address common challenges and to mitigate the risk of unwarranted divergences in regulatory approach. In both cases, the aim is not uniformity for its own sake, but a more joined-up form of governance that reduces duplication, closes gaps, and improves the effectiveness of oversight in increasingly interconnected digital ecosystems.

continued the agenda, covering WRC-27 preparations, 6 GHz spectrum policy, and hybrid terrestrial-NTN governance.⁸

The gap is not at the WRC preparation stage, where coordination is working. It lies at the next layer: the post-WRC licensing frameworks, coexistence rules, and regulatory parity between satellite and terrestrial operators that will determine whether the region captures the commercial and social potential of NTN deployment. Europe is already moving —

CEPT is developing harmonised technical conditions for D2D services ahead of WRC-27 decisions. The MENA region has the coordination infrastructure in ASMG. What is needed is a parallel mandate to develop harmonised post-WRC licensing and coexistence frameworks before that window closes.

'The MENA region is well-positioned at the WRC-27 preparation stage. The window to develop harmonised post-WRC licensing and coexistence frameworks is open — but it will not remain so once WRC-27 decisions are locked in.'

A Governance Architecture for the Digital Frontier

The quality of recognition across industry, regulators, and governments in Ankara — that the governance frameworks of the commercial telecom era require fundamental extension — has reached a point of critical mass. The GSR-26 Best Practice Guidelines, with their seven governance essentials, provide a practical and actionable foundation for that extension. SAME-NA Council commends the process and is committed to building on it.

The four IAGDI-CRO private sector priorities are the industry's answer to what that extension must deliver in practice:

sustainable infrastructure investment, strategic infrastructure governance, converging connectivity architectures, and meaningful connectivity and digital trust. They are not separate agendas. They are the interlocking components of a governance architecture adequate to a digital economy that is simultaneously commercial and sovereign, local and global, technical and geopolitical. That architecture is still being constructed, and the private sector is committed to partnering with governments and regulators to complete it — because the 2.2 billion people who remain unconnected deserve governance frameworks that are equal to the task. 🌱

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SAMENA Macro-View

Market Analysis from This Edition

Operationalizing Strategic Autonomy: The Mid-2026 Shift Toward Intelligence Systems and Outcome-driven Oversight

By mid-2026, the digital infrastructure sector was being defined by the integration of networks, compute, data systems, automation, and regulatory oversight into a single operating environment. For governments and operators, coverage and capacity remain essential. The sharper test is whether digital infrastructure can support national priorities with sufficient control, resilience, service quality, and economic usefulness.

Across the SA-ME-NA region and adjacent markets, recent developments point to a more disciplined phase of infrastructure development. Sovereign AI platforms, integrated data center and power investments, private 5G networks, subsea cable expansion, satellite initiatives, regulatory sandboxes, and autonomous

network operations are being treated as connected parts of the same national capability. The implication is clear: digital infrastructure is now being judged by the outcomes it enables, including continuity, security, productivity, service quality, and public trust.

Building Sovereign Intelligence: Capital, Compute, and National Control

A central development in mid-2026 is the formalization of sovereign intelligence environments that keep sensitive workloads, data, and operational control within trusted national or jurisdictional boundaries. In the UAE, the launch of a Sovereign AI Platform at ISNR 2026 by the UAE Cyber Security Council, e& UAE, and Open Innovation AI reflects this direction. The platform is positioned to support generative AI and

Sovereign AI platforms, integrated data center and power investments, private 5G networks, subsea cable expansion, satellite initiatives, regulatory sandboxes, and autonomous network operations are being treated as connected parts of the same national capability.

Integrated Infrastructure Intelligence: Mid-2026

Focus: Operationalizing Strategic Autonomy

01 Sovereign Intelligence & Capital

The Global Coordination Engine:

The launch of Helix Digital Infrastructure, a US\$10 Billion investment platform (KIA, NVIDIA, KKR, and Vistra) to integrate data center development, fiber, and power.

Mission-Critical Compute:

Activation of the UAE Sovereign AI Platform at ISNR 2026 for high-assurance government workloads.

Market Momentum:

Saudi establishment AI adoption has reached 33.1% overall, led by a peak of 61.1% in the ICT sector.

02 Systemic Stability & Economic Risk

The Cost of Inaction:

Aggregate annual cost of unplanned downtime for the Global 2000 has surged to US\$600 Billion (a 50% increase since 2024).

The Micro-Economic Toll:

Average annual revenue loss per organization is now US\$95 Million.

Operational Continuity

Case Study:

stc Group has transitioned to Autonomous Networks Level 4 to manage a 2.5x growth in core network complexity over five years.

03 National Asset Foundation

GCC Subsea Depth:

The Fiber in the Gulf (FIG) system is delivering a capacity of 720Tbps across 24 fiber pairs.

Orbital Autonomy:

Resolution signed by Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, and South Sudan to finalize a feasibility study for a regionally owned communications satellite.

Architecture Innovation:

Successful testing of the "Made-in-India" 5G Satellite IoT chipset, utilizing open 3GPP Release 17 standards to dismantle proprietary silos.

04 Strategic Oversight (Outcome-Driven)

The Ankara Mandate:

Adoption of the GSR-26 Best Practice Guidelines, shifting global regulation from prescriptive rules to outcome-based oversight.

Experimental Success:

More than 23 technology products successfully tested within the Saudi CST Regulatory Sandbox.

Institutional Consolidation:

Creation of the UAE Federal Authority for Artificial Intelligence and Data to resolve regulatory fragmentation.

autonomous workflows for mission-critical government use, while keeping sensitive workloads inside a domestically controlled environment.

Demand for intelligence-enabled operations is also increasing inside regional economies. According to Saudi Arabia's General Authority for Statistics, AI use among Saudi establishments reached 33.1 percent in 2025, with the information and communications sector recording a much higher adoption rate of 61.1 percent.

The development reflects a broader requirement for national-scale compute, secure data handling, operational governance, and trusted deployment models. For regulated sectors, AI deployment must satisfy national security, data protection, procurement, continuity, and technical feasibility requirements at the same time.

Capital is also being organized around this requirement. The launch of Helix Digital Infrastructure by the Kuwait Investment Authority, NVIDIA, KKR, and Vistra, with more than US\$10 billion in long-duration capital, shows how AI infrastructure is being treated as an integrated investment category. Helix has been described as a coordination platform for data center development, fiber connectivity, and power generation. This matters because large-scale AI customers increasingly need repeatable infrastructure delivery, assured power, network depth, and execution certainty across the full AI infrastructure stack.

Demand for intelligence-enabled operations is also increasing inside regional

economies. According to Saudi Arabia's General Authority for Statistics, AI use among Saudi establishments reached 33.1 percent in 2025, with the information and communications sector recording a much higher adoption rate of 61.1 percent. These figures suggest that intelligence-led operations are becoming a normal part of economic participation, particularly in sectors that depend on data, automation, and digital service delivery.

The UAE's creation of the Federal Authority for Artificial Intelligence and Data further reinforces this movement. The authority is intended to consolidate national capabilities related to AI, digital government, and data under a unified mandate. This matters because sovereign intelligence requires institutional accountability, data governance, and clear rules for how AI-enabled systems are introduced into public-sector and regulated environments.

Governance as Operating Discipline: Outcome-based Oversight

Regulation is also adapting to the complexity of converged digital infrastructure. The 2026 Best Practice Guidelines endorsed at the Global Symposium for Regulators in Ankara place emphasis on outcome-based oversight, measurable service quality, consumer protection, resilience, market trust, and technology-neutral compliance.

This direction is already visible in the SA-ME-NA region. The UAE's TDRA uses benchmarking and network monitoring to assess operator performance against service outcomes, while giving operators room to make technical and commercial choices. Saudi Arabia's CST has used its Regulatory Sandbox to test more than 23 technology products before wider regulatory treatment is finalized. These approaches are important because AI, cloud, 5G-Advanced, satellite connectivity, private networks, and data-intensive services do not fit comfortably inside older regulatory categories.

Capacity-building is becoming part of the same regulatory agenda. The Zain Regulatory Academy, launched with GSMA Advance, is designed to strengthen the expertise of policy and regulatory

professionals dealing with 5G evolution, AI governance, cybersecurity, and digital market development. This kind of initiative is useful because regulation now requires technical fluency, market understanding, institutional coordination, and the ability to distinguish real risk from speculative concern.

A harder issue remains unresolved: cross-border service governance. AI-native platforms, cloud services, satellite connectivity, digital applications, and automated service layers can scale across borders faster than regulatory coordination can respond. This creates jurisdictional ambiguity when services affect local consumers, local data, quality of service, cybersecurity, or national security interests. For regional leadership, the next requirement is stronger coordination around data flows, service accountability, consumer protection, lawful access, resilience, and operational transparency.

As economic activity becomes more dependent on digital systems, network instability has become an economic and institutional risk.

Network Stability as an Economic Issue

As economic activity becomes more dependent on digital systems, network instability has become an economic and institutional risk. Research from Splunk, a Cisco company, places the annual cost of unplanned downtime for the Global 2000 at US\$600 billion, a 50 percent increase since 2024. It also estimates average annual revenue loss from outages at US\$95 million per organization. The exact cost will vary by sector and market. The direction is clear: downtime now carries financial, operational, reputational, and public-service consequences.

This is driving operators toward proactive and increasingly autonomous network management. stc Group, working with Huawei, has launched ICNMaster as an operations and maintenance solution intended to move its core network closer to Autonomous Networks Level 4. The

system supports real-time topology visualization and anomaly detection, with the stated aim of reducing fault-resolution times. This is relevant because stc's core network elements have reportedly increased by 2.5 times over the past five years, making manual oversight less sufficient as network complexity rises.

Similar logic is visible in network security. Nokia's Deepfield Genome Shield is positioned as an automation system that disrupts residential proxy botnets and strengthens network-wide DDoS protection before attacks affect user experience. The wider point is that operators are being pushed to detect, isolate, and contain instability earlier, especially as consumer services, enterprise operations, government systems, and industrial processes become more tightly connected. The same stability requirement applies to industrial connectivity. Omantel's partnership with the Port of Salalah to implement Oman's first managed private 5G network shows how dedicated connectivity is being used to support critical logistics infrastructure. With stated availability of 99.9 percent, the network is intended to support industrial equipment, operational monitoring, and continuity in demanding conditions. For ports, energy sites, factories, airports, and logistics corridors, private networks are becoming part of operational resilience and continuity planning.

Infrastructure Depth: Terrestrial Capacity and Orbital Control

The physical infrastructure layer is also being reinforced. Ooredoo Group and du have announced a partnership to land the Fiber in the Gulf subsea cable system in the UAE. With planned capacity of up to 720Tbps across 24 fiber pairs, FIG is

positioned as a major GCC subsea system serving rising demand from AI platforms, cloud services, enterprise traffic, and regional digital growth. Tunisia's activation of its Medusa subsea cable connection reflects a similar requirement in North Africa: more international capacity to support cloud, fintech, digital services, and economic integration.

Satellite infrastructure is moving in the same strategic direction. Ministers from Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, and South Sudan have signed a resolution to study the feasibility of a regionally owned communications satellite under the Northern Corridor Integration Projects. The initiative reflects a desire for greater regional control over connectivity, continuity of service, and long-term digital sovereignty. In South Asia, Viasat and India's WiSig Networks have started testing a Made-in-India 5G satellite IoT chipset based on open 3GPP standards, supporting the use of common hardware across terrestrial mobile and satellite networks.

As LEO satellite services continue to expand, national regulators are likely to attach conditions that protect domestic policy, security, and consumer interests. These may include requirements linked to licensing, local presence, gateway arrangements, lawful access, consumer protection, resilience, and coordination with national emergency and security frameworks. The larger issue is clear: orbital connectivity is becoming part of national infrastructure governance.

Conclusion

The mid-2026 developments covered in this SAMENA Macro-View show a sector moving toward integrated national

As LEO satellite services continue to expand, national regulators are likely to attach conditions that protect domestic policy, security, and consumer interests. These may include requirements linked to licensing, local presence, gateway arrangements, lawful access, consumer protection, resilience, and coordination with national emergency and security frameworks.

capability. AI platforms, data centers, power, fiber, private 5G, subsea systems, satellite assets, regulatory oversight, and automated operations are becoming parts of the same operating environment. Markets that connect these pieces more effectively will be better positioned to build systems that are resilient, governable, and economically useful.

In the SAMENA Council's view, a key priority for the SA-ME-NA region is to achieve and demonstrate operational confidence: infrastructure that can be trusted, regulated, secured, financed, and adapted as AI, cloud, terrestrial networks, and non-terrestrial networks become more interdependent. 🌐

REGIONAL NEWS

Oman Strengthens Digital Resilience through Expanded 5G Emergency Preparedness Initiatives

Oman is accelerating efforts to strengthen national digital resilience through expanded 5G-enabled emergency preparedness and crisis response capabilities, reflecting the growing strategic role of advanced telecommunications infrastructure in public safety and national continuity planning. The initiative highlights how next-generation mobile networks are increasingly being integrated into emergency management frameworks to support faster communication, real-time coordination, and resilient digital operations during critical situations. As governments across the Gulf continue investing in smart infrastructure and digital transformation, resilient telecom networks are becoming central to national security, disaster response, and operational continuity strategies. Oman's latest efforts

focus on improving the reliability and responsiveness of digital communications infrastructure during emergencies and high-demand operational scenarios. Advanced 5G capabilities are expected to support faster data transmission, low-latency communications, improved situational awareness, and more efficient coordination between emergency response entities and public sector agencies. Telecommunications infrastructure is increasingly viewed as critical national infrastructure, particularly as governments expand dependence on digital public services, connected systems, and real-time operational technologies. The integration of 5G into emergency readiness frameworks also supports broader smart city and digital governance ambitions across the Gulf

region. Countries across the Middle East are steadily strengthening digital resilience frameworks as cyber risks, infrastructure dependencies, and climate-related operational challenges continue to grow. Telecom operators and governments are investing heavily in network redundancy, emergency communications systems, edge computing, cloud infrastructure, and secure digital ecosystems to ensure continuity during disruptions. Oman has continued expanding its national digital transformation agenda through investments in connectivity infrastructure, e-government modernization, and technology-driven economic diversification initiatives. The growing use of 5G in emergency preparedness reflects the broader evolution of telecom networks from consumer connectivity platforms into foundational infrastructure supporting critical national operations. The expansion of emergency-ready digital infrastructure also aligns with increasing regional focus on digital sovereignty and infrastructure resilience. Governments are placing greater emphasis on maintaining secure, reliable, and locally resilient communications ecosystems capable of supporting public safety, economic stability, and essential services during crises. 5G technologies are expected to play an increasingly important role in enabling connected emergency systems, AI-powered monitoring platforms, autonomous operational tools, and real-time data coordination across public sector environments.



Qatar's Environment Ministry Launches New Digital Services Platform

Qatar's Ministry of Environment and Climate Change has launched a new package of electronic services aimed at improving public access, streamlining administrative processes, and accelerating digital government transformation

across environmental services. The new e-services platform is designed to simplify procedures for individuals and businesses by enabling users to complete applications and access ministry services digitally rather than through traditional

in-person processes. According to the ministry, the initiative supports Qatar's broader national digital transformation agenda and aligns with ongoing efforts to modernize government operations through integrated digital platforms and smart

service delivery models. The services are expected to enhance operational efficiency, reduce processing times, and improve user experience across a range of environmental and regulatory functions managed by the ministry. Governments across the Gulf have increasingly prioritized digital public service delivery as part of wider smart government and economic diversification strategies, with ministries accelerating investments in automation, cloud infrastructure, AI-enabled systems, and integrated citizen

service platforms. Qatar has continued expanding digital government capabilities across sectors including healthcare, transportation, licensing, finance, and environmental management as the country strengthens its broader digital economy ecosystem. The launch also reflects a growing regional trend toward digitizing regulatory and compliance-heavy sectors to improve transparency, accessibility, and administrative coordination. Industry observers note that digital government platforms are becoming foundational

infrastructure layers within national transformation agendas, enabling governments to improve service scalability while supporting data-driven policymaking and operational oversight. As environmental governance and sustainability initiatives gain greater policy importance globally, digital tools are also playing an increasing role in regulatory monitoring, reporting, and resource management frameworks.

Oman and Kuwait Sign Cybersecurity and Digital Standards Cooperation Agreement

Oman and Kuwait have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to strengthen cooperation in cybersecurity, digital standards, and technical expertise exchange, reflecting growing regional efforts to enhance cyber resilience and harmonize digital governance frameworks. The agreement was signed between the two countries' relevant technology and standards authorities and aims to deepen collaboration in cybersecurity practices, digital standards development, capacity building, and knowledge sharing. The partnership underscores the increasing importance Gulf countries place on securing digital infrastructure as economies become more connected and data-driven. Cybersecurity has become a strategic priority across the GCC as governments accelerate digital transformation initiatives, expand cloud adoption, deploy artificial intelligence solutions, and digitize public services. These developments create significant opportunities for innovation but also increase exposure to cyber risks, making cross-border cooperation increasingly important. Under the agreement, Oman and Kuwait will work together on initiatives related to cybersecurity frameworks, standards development, technical coordination, and the exchange of expertise. Such cooperation can help strengthen national capabilities while promoting greater consistency in how digital systems are secured and governed. The focus on standards is particularly significant. As digital economies expand,



technical standards play an essential role in ensuring interoperability, security, reliability, and trust across technology ecosystems. Common standards can facilitate cross-border cooperation, improve service quality, and support the adoption of emerging technologies. The MoU reflects a broader trend toward regional cybersecurity collaboration. Cyber threats increasingly operate across borders, making international partnerships a critical component of effective cyber defense strategies. Governments are increasingly recognizing the need to share knowledge, coordinate responses, and align best practices to address evolving threats. For Oman and Kuwait, the agreement supports wider digital economy objectives. Secure digital environments are essential for attracting investment, supporting innovation, and enabling the growth of sectors such as fintech, e-commerce, cloud computing,

and digital government services. The partnership also aligns with ongoing efforts across the Gulf to strengthen national cybersecurity ecosystems through investments in infrastructure, skills development, regulatory frameworks, and public-private collaboration. Regional governments are increasingly integrating cybersecurity considerations into broader technology and economic development strategies. As organizations adopt more connected technologies and digital platforms, the importance of robust cybersecurity governance continues to grow. Cooperation agreements such as this can help accelerate capability development while promoting a more secure regional digital environment. The initiative demonstrates how cybersecurity is evolving from a technical issue into a strategic area of national and regional cooperation, supporting the long-term resilience of digital economies.

Saudi Arabia Invests SAR32 Billion (US\$8.53 Billion) in Digital Government Services to Accelerate Public Sector Transformation

Saudi Arabia invested more than SAR 32 billion (\$8.53 billion) in the development of digital government services during 2025, underscoring the Kingdom's commitment to building a digitally enabled public sector and advancing the objectives of Vision 2030. The investment was highlighted during the launch of the Digital Government Authority's (DGA) annual report, which outlined the progress achieved in government digitization, service modernization and the expansion of digital platforms across the public sector. The spending reflects the scale of Saudi Arabia's efforts to transform government operations, improve service delivery and create a more efficient and citizen-centric digital ecosystem. Over the past several years, the Kingdom has emerged as one of the region's leading digital government markets, leveraging technology to streamline public services, reduce bureaucracy and enhance accessibility for residents and businesses. According to the report, government entities continued to expand the availability of digital services, enabling citizens, residents and enterprises to access a growing number of public services through online platforms and mobile applications. These efforts are helping reduce reliance on physical government offices while improving convenience and service efficiency. Digital government has become a core pillar of Saudi Arabia's economic diversification agenda. Authorities view digitization not only as a means of improving public administration but also as an enabler of broader economic growth, investment attraction and private-sector development. The Kingdom has made significant progress in deploying digital identity systems,

integrated government platforms, cloud infrastructure and data-sharing frameworks that support interoperability between government agencies. These capabilities are increasingly being used to simplify administrative procedures, accelerate service delivery and improve user experiences. Saudi Arabia's investment also reflects a broader regional trend in which governments are prioritizing digital transformation as a strategic national objective. Across the Middle East, public sector organizations are investing heavily in cloud computing, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and digital infrastructure to improve operational efficiency and support growing digital economies. The DGA report highlighted continued advancements in government service integration and digital maturity, areas that have contributed to Saudi Arabia's improving performance in international digital government rankings. The Kingdom has consistently sought to position itself among the world's leading digital governments through sustained investments in technology and innovation. Beyond service delivery, digital government initiatives are increasingly supporting business activity by simplifying licensing procedures, enabling digital transactions and reducing administrative burdens. These improvements can enhance the investment environment and contribute to greater economic competitiveness. As emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence become more integrated into public services, Saudi Arabia is expected to continue investing in next-generation digital capabilities aimed at further improving efficiency, personalization and service quality across government institutions.

Iraq's Communications Commission Pushes for Faster Nationwide 5G Rollout

Iraq's Communications and Media Commission has pledged to accelerate the rollout of 5G services across the country, reflecting growing national efforts to modernize telecommunications infrastructure and strengthen digital economy readiness. The move highlights Iraq's increasing focus on next-generation connectivity as governments across the Middle East expand investments in advanced mobile networks, broadband modernization, and digital transformation ecosystems. The rollout of 5G infrastructure is expected to support higher-capacity connectivity, lower latency services, and improved readiness for future digital technologies and smart infrastructure applications. Countries worldwide are accelerating 5G deployment as rising demand for cloud services, AI applications, streaming platforms, enterprise digitization, and connected devices places greater pressure on telecommunications networks. For Iraq, faster 5G deployment is expected to strengthen connectivity capabilities while supporting broader ambitions around digital public services, fintech ecosystems, smart infrastructure, and enterprise modernization. Telecommunications infrastructure is increasingly viewed as foundational to economic competitiveness and digital inclusion within emerging digital economies. The rollout of advanced mobile networks also improves readiness for future technologies tied

to IoT ecosystems, industrial automation, and intelligent urban infrastructure. Iraq has steadily increased focus on broadband expansion, internet infrastructure development, and digital modernization as demand for reliable connectivity continues growing. The country's digital transformation ambitions depend heavily on scalable and resilient telecommunications infrastructure capable of supporting long-term technological growth. Regional telecom operators and regulators are increasingly prioritizing 5G deployment to support evolving consumer behavior and rising enterprise connectivity requirements. The expansion of mobile broadband services is also expected to improve access to online services, digital commerce, education platforms, and connected operational environments. The Gulf and wider Middle East remain among the world's most active regions for telecommunications modernization and 5G investment. Governments across the region are competing to strengthen digital infrastructure ecosystems and position themselves more competitively within the global digital economy. As data consumption and AI-driven applications continue expanding, countries accelerating 5G deployment are expected to gain stronger advantages in digital economy development and infrastructure readiness.

Nepal's 4G User Base Surpasses 26 Million

Nepal's 4G subscriber base has exceeded 26 million users, underscoring the continued growth of mobile broadband adoption and the increasing importance of high-speed connectivity in supporting the country's digital economy. According to the latest telecommunications data, 4G services now account for the majority of mobile internet usage across Nepal, reflecting growing consumer demand for faster data services, digital applications and online platforms. The milestone highlights the significant progress made by operators in expanding network coverage and improving access to mobile broadband services nationwide. The rapid adoption of 4G has transformed how consumers access digital services, enabling greater use of video streaming, social media, digital payments, e-learning and e-commerce applications. Mobile broadband has become a critical enabler of economic activity, particularly in markets where fixed broadband penetration remains relatively limited. Nepal's telecom sector has witnessed steady growth in data consumption over recent years as operators continue investing in network modernization and coverage expansion. Increased smartphone adoption and the availability of more affordable data services have further accelerated the shift toward mobile-first internet usage. The growth of 4G connectivity is also supporting broader government objectives around digital transformation and digital inclusion. Improved access to reliable internet services helps connect underserved communities to education, healthcare, financial services and government platforms, contributing to socio-economic development. While 4G adoption continues to rise, attention is gradually shifting toward the next phase of network evolution. Telecommunications stakeholders are increasingly evaluating future investments in 5G infrastructure as demand for advanced digital services, cloud applications and emerging technologies continues to grow. However, for many developing markets, maximizing the value



of existing 4G networks remains a priority. Enhancing coverage, improving service quality and expanding affordability continue to be essential steps in ensuring that connectivity benefits reach a larger share of the population. The milestone also reflects broader trends across South Asia, where mobile broadband networks are serving as the primary gateway to the internet for millions of users. As smartphone penetration rises and digital ecosystems mature, operators are seeing sustained demand for high-capacity mobile networks capable of supporting increasingly data-intensive applications. For telecom operators, the continued expansion of 4G users presents opportunities to introduce new digital services, strengthen customer engagement and diversify revenue streams beyond traditional voice offerings. Mobile broadband remains a foundational component of digital economy growth and a key driver of future innovation.

Pakistan Targets 10 Million FTTH Connections as Digital Inclusion and AI Skills Agenda Expands

Pakistan plans to expand fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) coverage to 10 million household passes in the coming years, doubling the country's current footprint as the government accelerates efforts to strengthen digital infrastructure, expand digital inclusion and prepare the workforce for an AI-driven economy. The target was announced by Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja during a community-focused connectivity forum, where she outlined the government's broader vision for digital transformation, connectivity expansion and skills development. According to the minister, Pakistan's FTTH coverage has already grown from approximately 3 million household passes to more than 5 million, reflecting increasing investment in fixed broadband infrastructure. Expanding coverage to 10 million homes would significantly improve access to high-speed and reliable internet services, supporting growing demand for digital services, remote work, online education and digital

commerce. The announcement comes as governments worldwide place increasing emphasis on fiber infrastructure as a foundation for digital economies. While mobile broadband remains the primary internet access channel for many users, fiber networks provide the high-capacity connectivity required to support cloud services, smart applications, AI adoption and future digital growth. Alongside connectivity expansion, Pakistan is also advancing an ambitious digital skills agenda. The government aims to train one million people in artificial intelligence and digital technologies, extending beyond traditional technology professionals to include workers in agriculture, manufacturing, healthcare, legal services and other sectors. The initiative reflects a growing recognition that AI literacy and digital skills are becoming essential across the broader economy. As automation and AI technologies reshape industries, governments are increasingly investing in workforce development to ensure citizens can participate in emerging

digital opportunities. The minister also highlighted ongoing reforms aimed at accelerating telecommunications infrastructure deployment, including the removal of right-of-way charges and legislative measures designed to improve policy continuity and encourage long-term investment in connectivity projects. Such reforms are particularly important for fiber rollout, where permitting processes and infrastructure costs have historically slowed network expansion. Industry stakeholders have long argued that streamlined regulations are essential to achieving nationwide broadband coverage goals. Digital inclusion remains another key pillar of Pakistan's strategy. The government reported progress in narrowing the gender digital divide through targeted interventions focused on digital literacy, mobile connectivity and access to online services. Millions of women have already received digital skills training, while additional free training programs continue to be offered through public and private sector partnerships.

Collaboration with organizations such as Ignite and international partners is also supporting advanced digital training programs covering technical, entrepreneurial and soft skills development. These initiatives aim to prepare young people for opportunities in the digital economy while strengthening Pakistan's technology talent pipeline. The government is also leveraging digital platforms to improve financial inclusion. Digital wallets have enabled millions of women to receive financial assistance electronically while providing access to broader financial services, including bill payments, mobile top-ups and online commerce. These efforts align with a broader multi-stakeholder approach involving government agencies, telecom operators, development organizations and civil society groups. Policymakers increasingly view connectivity, digital skills and financial inclusion as interconnected pillars of economic development.

Qatar Launches Enhanced Hukoomi Platform to Advance Digital Government Services

Qatar's Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) has officially launched an enhanced version of the Hukoomi platform, marking a significant step in the country's efforts to modernize public services and strengthen its digital government ecosystem. The upgraded platform is designed to provide citizens, residents, businesses and visitors with improved access to government information and digital services through a more integrated and user-centric experience. The launch forms part of Qatar's broader strategy to accelerate digital transformation and enhance the accessibility, efficiency and quality of public sector services. Hukoomi serves as Qatar's national digital government gateway, offering access to a wide range of government services and information from multiple public sector entities. The enhanced platform aims to simplify interactions with government agencies by creating a more streamlined digital experience and improving access to essential services through a centralized interface. According to MCIT, the upgraded platform incorporates enhanced features designed to improve usability, navigation and service accessibility. The initiative aligns with Qatar's ongoing investments in digital infrastructure and smart government capabilities as the country continues to expand its digital economy. Governments across the Gulf are increasingly prioritizing the digitization of public services as part of wider economic diversification and digital transformation agendas. Digital government platforms are becoming critical tools for improving citizen experiences, reducing administrative complexity and increasing operational efficiency across public institutions. The modernization of Hukoomi reflects a growing shift toward integrated government service delivery, where users can access multiple services through unified digital channels rather than interacting separately with individual government entities. Such platforms are helping governments improve service consistency while reducing time and effort for users. For Qatar, enhancing



digital government services supports national objectives related to innovation, competitiveness and public sector modernization. Digital platforms also play an important role in supporting businesses by simplifying regulatory interactions, improving access to information and enabling more efficient service delivery. The launch comes as demand for digital public services continues to grow. Citizens and businesses increasingly expect government services to offer the same levels of convenience, responsiveness and accessibility found in private-sector digital platforms. As a result, governments are investing in modern user experiences, data integration and emerging technologies to improve service delivery. The enhanced Hukoomi platform is expected to support these objectives by providing a more efficient gateway to government services while strengthening digital engagement between public institutions and users.

Asiacell Deploys IPv6 Dual-stack Network to Support Iraq's Internet Modernization

Iraq's Asiacell has deployed IPv6 dual-stack capabilities across its network, enabling simultaneous support for both IPv4 and IPv6 protocols as the operator prepares for the long-term transition to next-generation internet infrastructure. The deployment marks an important step in Iraq's digital infrastructure evolution, allowing Asiacell to continue supporting existing IPv4 services while expanding compatibility with IPv6, the protocol designed to address the growing demand for internet-connected devices and digital services. By implementing a dual-stack architecture, Asiacell can operate IPv4 and IPv6 in parallel, ensuring service continuity for customers and enterprises while facilitating a gradual migration to the newer protocol. The approach is widely regarded as one of the most effective strategies for managing the transition between the two internet standards. IPv4, which has served as the foundation of the internet for decades, faces

limitations due to the exhaustion of available IP addresses. IPv6 was developed to overcome these constraints by providing a vastly larger address space capable of supporting billions of connected devices, cloud services, IoT deployments and future digital applications. The move comes as telecom operators globally accelerate efforts to modernize network infrastructure and prepare for increasing demand generated by 5G, smart devices, cloud computing and digital transformation initiatives. IPv6 adoption is becoming increasingly important as operators seek to future-proof their networks and support emerging technologies. For Iraq, the deployment contributes to broader efforts to strengthen digital infrastructure and improve network readiness for future growth. As internet usage expands and digital services become more central to economic activity, modern network protocols will play a critical role in ensuring scalability and performance. Asiacell's implementation enables customers and businesses to access IPv6-compatible services while maintaining seamless connectivity with legacy IPv4 applications. This interoperability is particularly important during transition periods when much of the global internet ecosystem continues to rely on IPv4 infrastructure. The adoption of IPv6 is also expected to benefit enterprise customers, cloud service providers and technology developers by enabling more efficient network management, improved scalability and support for increasingly connected environments. Across the Middle East, governments and telecom operators are placing greater emphasis on network modernization as part of wider digital economy strategies. IPv6 readiness is increasingly viewed as a foundational requirement for supporting smart city initiatives, IoT ecosystems, digital government services and next-generation connectivity platforms. Industry experts note that while IPv6 adoption has progressed steadily worldwide, transition efforts remain uneven across regions. Operators implementing dual-stack architectures are helping bridge this gap by providing a practical pathway toward broader IPv6 adoption without disrupting existing services.



Pakistan Approves In-Flight Internet and Mobile Services in Major Aviation Connectivity Move

Pakistan has approved the use of in-flight internet and mobile communication services, marking a significant step toward modernizing the country's aviation and digital connectivity landscape. The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has granted approval for the deployment of onboard connectivity services, enabling passengers to access internet and mobile communication during flights. The move aligns Pakistan with a growing number of markets where

airlines are integrating connectivity into the travel experience. In-flight connectivity is increasingly becoming a standard expectation for both business and leisure travelers, driven by rising dependence on digital communication, streaming, and cloud-based work environments. Airlines globally are using onboard internet services not only to improve passenger experience but also to unlock additional revenue streams through premium digital services. The approval also reflects

broader growth in Pakistan's digital ecosystem, where connectivity expansion is extending beyond traditional ground-based infrastructure into transportation and mobility environments. Implementing such services will require coordination between telecom operators, airlines, satellite providers, and aviation regulators to ensure compliance, network stability, and operational safety.

SDRPY, CST Hold Training Program for Yemeni Telecommunications Personnel

The Saudi Development and Reconstruction Program for Yemen (SDRPY), in partnership with the Communications, Space and Technology Commission (CST), held a two-day training program in Aden Governorate for personnel from Yemen's Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology. The program, held from June 14 to 15, included 44 trainees. The program was inaugurated via video-conference by CST Governor Eng. Haitham bin Abdulrahman Al-Ohali, Yemen's Minister of Communications and Information Technology Dr. Shadi Basurra, and SDRPY Assistant Supervisor General Eng. Hassan Al-Attas. The program featured several specialized modules delivered by experts and specialists from CST. It aimed to develop participants' technical and administrative skills and enhance their knowledge of the latest practices and technologies in the communications and information technology sector. The initiative marks the second training program implemented through the partnership between SDRPY and CST, following the success of the first edition, which included 32 trainees. The previous program contributed to strength-

ening the capabilities of Yemeni personnel and promoting the transfer of advanced Saudi expertise in the sector. The training program is part of broader efforts to support institutional capacity building and develop Yemeni national competencies. It contributes to enhancing the performance of the communications and information technology sector, increasing its readiness to keep pace with rapid technological developments, and improving the quality of services provided to citizens. SDRPY's

development projects and initiatives have also contributed to the economic empowerment of women, youth, and local communities while supporting investment in human capital. These efforts include the "Building the Future for Yemeni Youth" program, projects supporting livelihoods in affected communities, and initiatives aimed at enhancing the capabilities of personnel working in the transportation sector.



Iraq Explores Telecom Sector Modernization as Senior Leaders Review Infrastructure Development Plans

Iraq is continuing efforts to strengthen its telecommunications sector following discussions between Asaib Ahl al-Haq Secretary-General Sheikh Qais Al-Khazali and Minister of Communications Hiyam Al-Yasiri on the future development of the country's digital infrastructure. According to the Iraqi News Agency (INA), the meeting focused on ongoing initiatives aimed at modernizing telecommunications services, expanding infrastructure capabilities, and improving the overall quality of communications services available to citizens. During the discussions, Minister Al-Yasiri outlined the Ministry's current plans and projects designed to advance the sector, highlighting efforts to improve network performance, enhance service delivery, and support

broader digital transformation objectives across Iraq. The meeting also reviewed challenges facing the telecommunications industry and explored opportunities to accelerate infrastructure deployment and technological advancement throughout the country. Iraq's telecommunications sector has undergone significant changes in recent years as demand for mobile broadband, digital services, and connectivity continues to rise. The government has increasingly prioritized digital transformation initiatives as part of wider economic modernization efforts, recognizing telecommunications infrastructure as a key enabler of public services, business growth, and investment attraction. The discussions come as Iraq continues to evaluate pathways for

expanding network capacity, improving service quality, and supporting emerging technologies that can contribute to economic development and greater digital inclusion. Industry observers note that strengthening telecommunications infrastructure remains essential for enabling e-government services, expanding digital commerce, and supporting future technologies such as cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and next-generation mobile networks. As digital adoption accelerates across the region, Iraq's ability to modernize its telecommunications ecosystem will play an important role in enhancing connectivity, improving citizen services, and supporting long-term economic diversification goals.

Tunisia Activates Medusa Subsea Cable Connection to Strengthen International Digital Connectivity

Tunisia has officially connected to the Medusa subsea cable system, a development that strengthens the country's international telecommunications infrastructure and enhances its position within the Mediterranean's growing digital connectivity network. The activation of the cable marks a significant milestone for Tunisia's digital infrastructure ambitions, providing additional international bandwidth capacity and creating new opportunities to improve connectivity between North Africa and Europe. As data traffic continues to surge and digital services become increasingly dependent on high-capacity international networks, investments in subsea cable infrastructure are becoming critical to national digital transformation strategies. The Medusa system is one of the Mediterranean region's most significant connectivity projects, designed to create a high-capacity fiber network linking countries across North Africa and Southern Europe. The cable is expected to support rising demand for internet services, cloud computing, digital content delivery, enterprise connectivity, and emerging AI-driven workloads. For Tunisia, the new connection strengthens international network resilience while expanding access to global digital infrastructure. Additional international routes can help reduce congestion, improve service reliability, and support growing demand from businesses, government institutions, technology companies, and consumers. Subsea cables form the backbone of the global internet, carrying the vast majority

of international data traffic. Despite their critical role in the digital economy, these networks often receive less attention than visible infrastructure such as data centers or mobile networks. Yet their importance continues to grow as economies become increasingly dependent on digital services and cross-border data flows. The Medusa connection arrives at a time when Tunisia is seeking to expand its digital economy and attract greater investment in technology-enabled industries. Reliable international connectivity is an important factor for sectors such as business process outsourcing, cloud services, fintech, software development, digital media, and technology startups. The development also supports broader regional connectivity objectives. North African countries are investing heavily in telecommunications

infrastructure to improve digital competitiveness and strengthen links with global markets. Enhanced international connectivity can facilitate trade, innovation, and collaboration while supporting digital transformation initiatives across multiple sectors. In addition to increasing bandwidth capacity, modern subsea cable systems play an increasingly important role in supporting cloud adoption and AI deployment. Data-intensive applications require low-latency, high-capacity international networks capable of handling growing volumes of traffic between regional markets and global cloud platforms. As demand for digital services continues to accelerate, investments in international connectivity infrastructure are becoming a strategic priority for countries seeking to strengthen their role in the global digital economy.



Saudi Establishments Near Full Digital Connectivity as Internet Penetration Hits 98% And AI Adoption Surges 20% in 2025

Saudi Arabia has been witnessing comprehensive breathtaking digital transformation, according to the latest report of the General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT). The latest statistics on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) penetration and usage among Saudi establishments, released by GASTAT, revealed that

98.1 percent of Saudi establishments have an active internet connection, reflecting a significant expansion in the adoption of digital services. Reliance on e-government services reached 93.2 percent, while internet usage for transactions and e-banking stood at 79.1 percent. In a notable leap that reflects the Saudi business sector's

growing appetite for smart solutions, the use of artificial intelligence technologies among establishments increased by 20 percent, bringing the overall adoption rate to 33.1 percent. These figures underscore the strength of the technological infrastructure and the growing reliance of the business sector on advanced technology

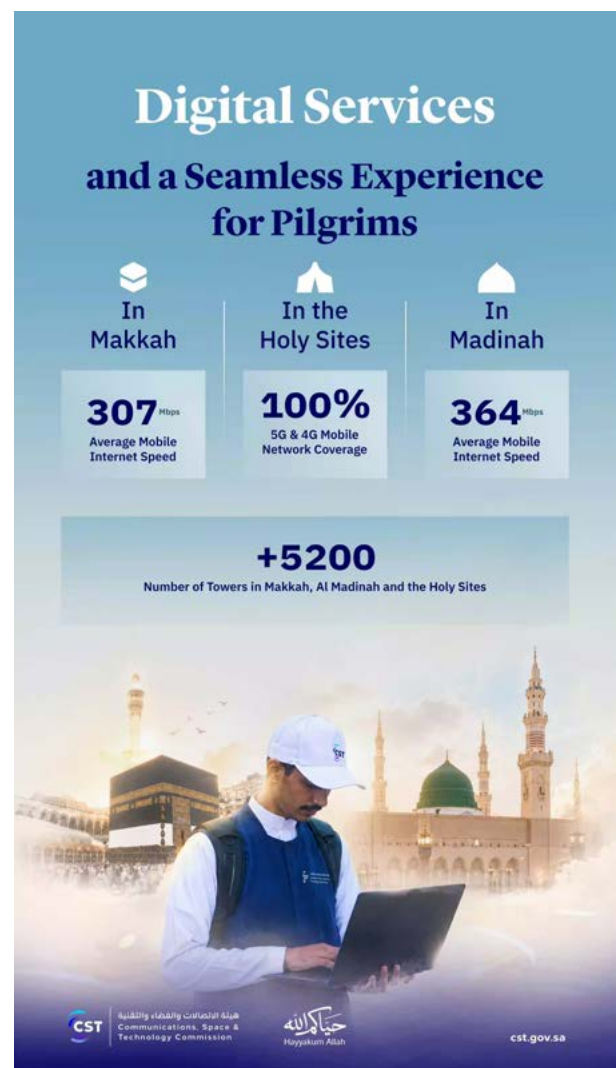
solutions to enhance operational efficiency and support digital transformation objectives in line with Saudi Vision 2030. In the area of digital marketing and communication, 66.3 percent of establishments use social media platforms, while 52.3 percent promote their products and services through these digital channels. Across economic sectors, the highest rates of artificial intelligence adoption were recorded in information and communications sector, leading all sectors with a usage rate of 61.1 percent. Finance and insurance activities ranking second at 52.9 percent. The overall percentage of establishments using cloud computing services reached 51.3 percent. The report also provided a detailed breakdown of usage and year-on-year growth. Cloud-based office software: Represented the largest share

at 56.4 percent, marking an increase of 5.4 percent. Cloud-based email computing: Reached 55.3 percent, recording the highest annual growth rate within this category at 9.9 percent. Cloud-based file storage: Stood at 42.8 percent, reflecting an annual increase of 4.1 percent. In terms of sales and logistics flexibility, 33.5 percent of establishments use the internet to display or sell goods and services, with the finance and insurance sector leading at 48.5 percent. Demonstrating the growing efficiency of digital order fulfillment, 28 percent of establishments that received online orders completed their sales entirely through digital channels. With regard to operational automation and the development of smart offices, the GASTAT report highlighted the widespread adoption of Internet of Things (IoT) technologies across a range

of operational and security applications: Building security: Recorded the highest IoT adoption rate at 71.4 percent, including smart alarm systems, smart surveillance cameras, fire detection systems, and smart locks. Customer service: Adopted by 54.6 percent of establishments. Energy management: Utilized by 40 percent of establishments to optimize energy consumption and support environmental sustainability; and maintenance operations: Relied upon by 25.4 percent of establishments. These indicators collectively demonstrate the accelerating pace of digital transformation within Saudi establishments and the increasing integration of advanced technologies across business operations, customer engagement, and infrastructure management.

The Communications, Space and Technology Ecosystem Leverages All Its Digital Capabilities to Serve Pilgrims in the Hajj 2026 Season

The Communications, Space & Technology Commission (CST) announced the readiness of the ICT services for the 2026 Hajj season, with unlimited support and enablement from the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques H.R.H. King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and H.R.H. Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud, Crown Prince and Chairman of the Council of Ministers, along with the integrated efforts among all government entities, the private sector, entrepreneurs, and the non-profit sector. H.E. Eng. Abdullah bin Amer Al Swaha, Minister of Communications and Information Technology and the Chairman of the CST's Board of Directors, accompanied by H.E. Eng. Haitham Abdulrahman Al Othali, the Governor of CST, visited several telecom service provider sites in Makkah and the Holy Sites, to review the readiness of the digital infrastructure and ICT services for this year's Hajj season. CST highlighted that the readiness of digital infrastructure among service providers included the delivery of advanced, innovative solutions powered by emerging technologies and artificial intelligence (AI). More than 5,200 telecom towers have been deployed across Makkah, Madinah, and the Holy Sites, achieving 100% 4G and 5G coverage in the Holy Sites. Mobile internet speeds reached 307 Mbps in Makkah and 364 Mbps in Madinah. CST harnesses all its human and technical capabilities to facilitate communications and technology services and ensure their delivery at the highest quality. This is achieved through a robust digital infrastructure with the efficiency and reliability required to enable both public and private sectors to leverage the latest innovations in emerging technologies and AI. CST completed its preparations early on, in collaboration with telecom service providers across Makkah, Madinah, the Holy Sites, and various entry points, ensuring the readiness of digital infrastructure and its seamless integration with public and private entities to serve pilgrims throughout their Hajj journey.



Saudi Arabia Ranks Second Globally in Data Center Market Attractiveness as AI and Cloud Demand Surge

Saudi Arabia has emerged as one of the world's most attractive markets for data center investment, ranking second globally after the United States, according to a Bloomberg analysis. The milestone reflects the Kingdom's rapid expansion in digital infrastructure and its growing role in supporting AI and cloud-driven demand. The analysis highlights that power availability and land enablement account for 58 percent of overall market attractiveness, positioning Saudi Arabia strongly as global capacity constraints begin to tighten. With 22.8 gigawatts of new data center capacity expected to come online worldwide within the next three years, markets capable of scaling quickly are becoming increasingly critical. Saudi Arabia's growth trajectory has been significant. Operational data center capacity increased from 68 megawatts in 2021 to 440 MW in 2025, marking nearly

sixfold growth in four years. The momentum has continued into 2026, with capacity reaching 467 MW in the first quarter, reflecting sustained expansion across the sector. The Kingdom now hosts more than 60 data centers across multiple regions, supported by a combination of geographic scale and strategic positioning. Its location between Asia, Europe, and Africa enables operators to serve multiple high-demand markets from a single hub, while domestic land availability allows for phased expansion and large-scale deployments. Government-backed digital infrastructure development has played a central role. According to Bassam Al-Bassam, head of the Artificial Intelligence Enablement Office at the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, the Kingdom's progress reflects strong execution across power readiness, infrastructure development, and operational capability.

These factors are driving increased investor confidence and attracting high-quality projects. Saudi Arabia's broader digital ecosystem further strengthens its position. The country ranks first globally in the Digital Readiness Framework 2025 with a score of 94, supported by high internet penetration at 99 percent, fiber coverage reaching 5.8 million homes, and a technology market valued at over SR199 billion. Local internet exchange traffic has also surpassed 2.462 terabits per second, indicating strong network maturity. As global markets face increasing pressure on energy and land availability for large-scale data center deployments, Saudi Arabia is positioning itself as a scalable alternative. Its ability to combine infrastructure readiness, regulatory maturity, and geographic advantage is placing it at the center of the next phase of global digital infrastructure growth.

Saudi Arabia Ranks Second Globally for Data Center Market Attractiveness

The Kingdom's leadership in digital infrastructure, power availability, and connectivity is positioning it as a global hub for AI and cloud computing.



#2

Globally for data center market attractiveness



58%

Power availability and land access drive attractiveness



467MW

Operational capacity reached in Q1 2026, up over 6% YTD



60+

Data centers across multiple regions



99%

Internet penetration



SAR 199B+

Technology market size in 2025

Qatar Showcases Its Readiness for the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2026 During Its Participation in the ITU Council Meeting

The State of Qatar, represented by the Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA), is participating in the 2026 session of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Council, taking place in Geneva from April 28 to May 8, 2026. The Qatari delegation is headed by Engineer Ahmad bin Abdulla AlMuslemani, President of CRA and Chair-Designate of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2026 (PP-26) and includes representatives from CRA and the Permanent Committee for Organizing Conferences (PCOC). Qatar's participation in the sessions, reflects its strong commitment to strengthening international cooperation and contributing to global discussions shaping the future of telecommunications and digital technologies, while fostering joint efforts to build a more inclusive and sustainable digital ecosystem, in line with ITU's mission. During the Council session, CRA will engage in discussions on a range of priority agenda items, including enhancing global connectivity, internet governance, child online protection, and the governance of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence. These discussions contribute to advancing international efforts aimed at developing resilient and secure digital infrastructure that meets future needs worldwide. The PCOC, in turn, will deliver a comprehensive presentation highlighting the State of Qatar's preparations to host the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2026 in Doha this November. Held every four years, the Plenipotentiary Conference represents the highest decision-making body of the ITU and will bring together ministers, regulators, industry leaders, and international organizations to define the Union's strategic priorities. On the sidelines of the ITU Council meetings, Engineer Ahmad bin Abdulla AlMuslemani, in his capacity as the PP-26 Chair-Designate, will chair the second informal inter-regional preparatory meeting for PP-26, to be held on April 30. The meeting will bring together all regional groups of Member States of the ITU to facilitate coordination, information exchange, and strengthen consistency among all



regional groups as part of preparations for the conference. The Qatari delegation also hosted a luncheon reception for ITU Member States and senior officials, as part of efforts to present Qatar's candidacy for membership of the ITU Council for the 2027–2030 term and to strengthen dialogue with Member States. Engineer Ahmad bin Abdulla AlMuslemani, President of CRA and Chair-Designate of the ITU PP-26 stated: "Qatar's participation in the ITU Council reflects our commitment to strengthening international cooperation in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector and advancing a secure and inclusive digital future. Our candidacy for the ITU Council for the 2027–2030 term underscores its continued commitment to supporting the Union's work and advancing policies that expand access to digital technologies worldwide. As we prepare to host the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2026 in Doha, we look forward to bringing the international ICT community together to shape the next chapter of global connectivity and continue to support international efforts to harness ICTs for sustainable

development, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and Qatar National Vision 2030". He added, "As Chair-Designate of the ITU PP-26, this leadership role is central to steering the conference's preparatory process at the international level, by chairing interregional preparatory meetings and guiding coordination and alignment among regional groups, thereby strengthening the coherence of positions and ensuring full readiness for the successful delivery of this global event." ITU is the United Nations specialized agency for digital technologies (ICTs). The Organization is made up of a membership of 194 Member States and more than 1000 companies, universities and international and regional organizations. Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, and with regional offices on every continent, ITU is the oldest agency in the UN family – connecting the world since the dawn of the telegraph in 1865. The State of Qatar joined the ITU in 1973, and since then has been an active contributor to its work, supporting the advancement of the global ICT sector.

Oman Establishes Artificial Intelligence Special Zone to Accelerate Digital Economy Growth

Oman has launched a dedicated Artificial Intelligence Special Zone, marking a strategic move to position the country as a hub for advanced technologies and AI-driven innovation. The zone is designed to attract global and regional technology companies, startups, and investors by offering a supportive environment for AI development, testing, and deployment. It aims to provide infrastructure, regulatory support, and incentives tailored to accelerate innovation across sectors such as logistics, energy, healthcare, and smart cities. The initiative aligns with Oman's broader digital transformation agenda, which focuses on diversifying the economy and building capabilities in high-growth technology sectors. By creating a specialized zone, the country is looking to concentrate talent, capital, and infrastructure in a way that can drive faster development and commercialization of AI solutions. Special economic zones focused

on technology are becoming a common strategy across the region, as governments compete to attract investment and build local ecosystems that can support long-term digital growth. Oman's approach also reflects the increasing importance of AI as a foundational technology that cuts across

industries, enabling efficiency gains, new business models, and enhanced decision-making. The success of the AI Special Zone will depend on its ability to attract meaningful investment, foster collaboration, and translate innovation into scalable, real-world applications.



Pakistan Targets 60% Telecom Fiberization in Three Years to Support 5G and Digital Growth

Pakistan's government has set an ambitious target to increase telecom fiberization to nearly 60% within the next three years, a move aimed at strengthening the country's digital backbone and preparing for next-generation connectivity. Fiberization refers to the extent to which telecom networks, particularly mobile towers, are connected via fiber-optic cables rather than microwave links. Higher fiber penetration is critical for delivering high-speed data, improving network reliability, and enabling technologies such as 5G, cloud services, and enterprise connectivity. Currently, Pakistan's fiberization levels lag behind regional benchmarks, creating a bottleneck for scaling data capacity and

improving service quality. Increasing fiber deployment is expected to significantly enhance network performance, reduce latency, and support the growing demand for digital services. The initiative aligns with broader national goals to expand digital infrastructure, improve internet access, and drive economic growth through technology. As data consumption continues to rise across sectors such as e-commerce, fintech, and digital media, robust backhaul infrastructure becomes increasingly important. Achieving the 60% target will require substantial investment, regulatory support, and coordination between telecom operators, infrastructure providers, and government agencies.

Challenges such as right-of-way issues, high deployment costs, and fragmented infrastructure ownership will need to be addressed to accelerate rollout. The push toward fiberization is also closely linked to Pakistan's 5G ambitions. Without a strong fiber backbone, 5G networks cannot deliver their full potential in terms of speed, capacity, and low latency. As a result, fiber investment is becoming a prerequisite for future telecom evolution. Globally, countries that have successfully scaled fiberization have seen improvements in digital competitiveness, innovation, and service delivery. Pakistan's target signals recognition of this reality. 🌐



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- Self-installation



AI For User Security

- Anti-attack for user
- Internet Access for children



AI For User Experience

- Wi-Fi Anti-Interference for connection
- Wi-Fi Enhancement for coverage
- Smart Antenna for best network



AI For New Service

- Lower latency for new service
- Higher speed for new service

ARTICLE

5G-Advanced: Why 5G-A is the Telco's Most Critical Investment Decision in the Recent Times



Rajesh Duneja
Partner



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Senior Principal

ARTHUR D. LITTLE

Across the SAMENA and globally, operators have invested billions in 5G networks. Yet for most, the monetization dividend remains elusive. ARPU growth is modest, enterprise revenue is underdeveloped, and the cost of carrying exponentially growing data volumes continues to squeeze margins. 5G-Advanced marks the inflection point where that equation fundamentally shifts.

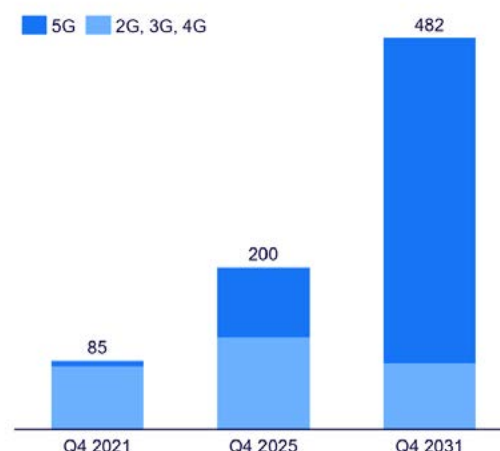
1. The inflection point: why 5G-A, why now

The world reached over 2.7 billion 5G connections by end-2025, and is forecasted to reach 5.5 billion by 2030. However, connection growth has not translated into proportional revenue growth. Since 2020, global ARPU has grown at just 2% CAGR, while mobile data traffic is projected to reach around 482 exabytes per month by 2031 (from 200 exabyte per month in 2025), a 20% CAGR. This deepening gap

between the cost of carrying traffic and the revenue earned from it is the fundamental challenge 5G-A is designed to resolve.

For SAMENA operators, sovereign alignment is a unique advantage: Saudi Vision 2030, UAE Centennial 2071, and India's National Digital Mission all name advanced connectivity as a strategic enabler, creating co-funding pathways and anchor enterprise customers that de-risk private network development.

SAMENA monthly mobile network data traffic (EB per month)



Source: Ericsson, Arthur D. Little

For most operators, the majority of 5G-A capabilities arrive as software upgrades on existing 5G radio units, and not a new capital cycle. This fundamentally changes the investment thesis. Over half of operators globally expect to begin 5G-A deployments within 1 - 2 years of commercial availability. Those that delay risk rivals locking in enterprise contracts and widening efficiency advantages before the 6G clock (expected from 2030) accelerates depreciation of existing assets.

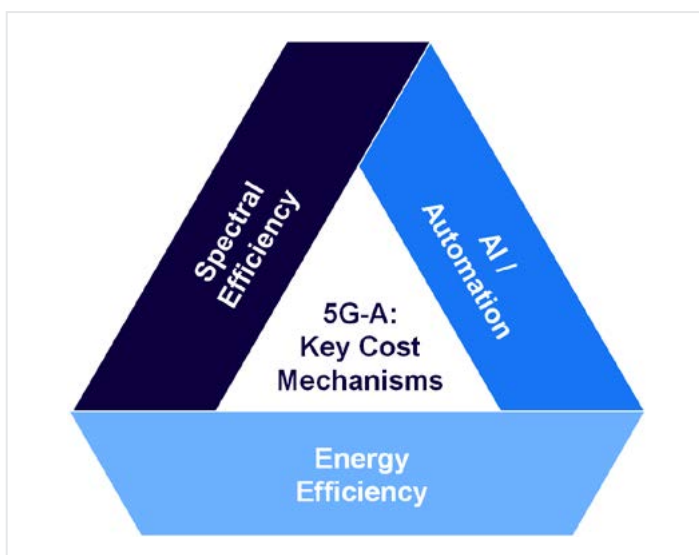
2. Technical levers that matter to business

5G-Advanced is best understood as a portfolio of commercial enablers:

- AI/ML-native RAN (Release 18) standardizes artificial intelligence directly into the radio layer - Nokia's MantaRay Energy solution powered by AI delivers up to 15% additional network-wide energy savings; modernised sites using Nokia's Tuuli baseband have shown up to 70% energy reduction
- Carrier Aggregation unlocks the throughput needed to make FWA 2.0 a true competitor to fibre
- Network slicing is now truly ready for market, enabling programmable, SLA-backed enterprise services
- RedCap and eRedCap chipsets target sub-\$15 bill-of-materials, opening mass IoT monetization
- NTN integration enables satellite-backed ubiquitous coverage for maritime, aviation, and rural FWA
- Sub-10cm positioning opens paid location API services for logistics, retail, and emergency response

5G-A Vendor and Platform Ecosystem

Category	Key vendors (sample)	Strategic relevance to telcos
RAN infrastructure	Ericsson (Cloud RAN, Radio 4490), Nokia (AirScale, Tuuli), Huawei (MetaAAU 5G-A), ZTE (PowerPilot), Samsung Networks	Release 18 software upgrades available on existing radio units; hardware-light deployment path
5G core / cloud-native	Ericsson Dual-Mode 5G Core, Nokia Core, Cisco Ultra Cloud Core, Rakuten Symphony	5G SA core is the prerequisite for dynamic slicing and real-time SLA management
Open RAN / vRAN	Mavenir, Rakuten Symphony, Fujitsu, NEC (vRAN), Parallel Wireless	Vendor diversity and OPEX reduction; gaining traction in MENA market diversity requirements
Edge / MEC platforms	AWS Wavelength, Microsoft Azure Private MEC, Google Distributed Cloud Edge, HPE Aruba, Cisco Edge	Hyperscaler co-investment reduces CAPEX; critical for sub-10ms enterprise SLA delivery
Slicing & orchestration	Amdocs (5G Slice Manager), Netcracker, IBM Telco, Ericsson OSSA, Nokia NSP	Automated slice provisioning and monetisation — essential for scaling beyond pilots
Handset chipsets	Qualcomm Snapdragon X80 (Samsung Galaxy S25), MediaTek Dimensity 9400 (mid-range), Huawei Kirin 9020 (Mate 70)	Snapdragon X80 supports Release 18; MediaTek critical for South Asia mass-market 5G-A
RedCap / IoT modules	Quectel, Telit, u-blox, Sierra Wireless (Semtech), Fibocom	Sub-\$15 BOM targets unlock mass IoT; critical for smart metering and logistics in MENA/South Asia
FWA CPE	Huawei H122-373, Nokia FastMile 5G-A, Ericsson CODA, ZTE MC888 Pro	CA-capable CPE refresh required to realise 5G-A FWA throughput gains for consumers
AI / network automation	NVIDIA AI Aerial (AI-RAN), Ericsson AI RAN (rApps), Nokia MantaRay Energy, Amdocs AI-native BSS	AI-RAN is the OPEX efficiency engine — automates optimisation, manages energy dynamically
Security	Palo Alto Networks (5G Security), Ericsson Security Manager, Nokia NetGuard, Fortinet	Slicing and private 5G expand the enterprise security perimeter; managed security is a value-add opportunity



3. Operator economics: the lower cost per GB imperative

The structural challenge is captured in one trend: traffic grows at 20% CAGR while revenue per gigabyte continues to decline in most markets. 5G-A attacks the cost side through 3 key mechanisms:

- **Spectral efficiency:** high-order Massive MIMO (up to 64T64R), enhanced carrier aggregation, and AI-driven interference mitigation deliver significantly more data per MHz compared to the Release 15 baseline
- **Energy efficiency:** Nokia's assessment has confirmed that 5G is approximately 10x more energy-efficient than earlier radio generations – with traffic increase, the electricity use of 5G does not grow by the same rate; AI-native RAN adds up to 15% on top of that
- **AI/ Automation:** Ericsson's AI power-saving software has demonstrated sleep-time extensions of at least 13% network-wide without blocking active capacity

For MENA, operators where energy costs are elevated and network density in GCC markets is high, the OPEX justification from software upgrades alone is compelling.

4. New revenue streams: from pipes to platform operators

• Network slicing as a managed service

With Release 18 bringing slicing to commercial maturity, operators can sell guaranteed SLA-backed connectivity slices to enterprise customers. As per industry reports global slicing market was valued at USD 3 billion in 2024 and is projected to reach USD 25 billion by 2032.

• Private 5G-A networks

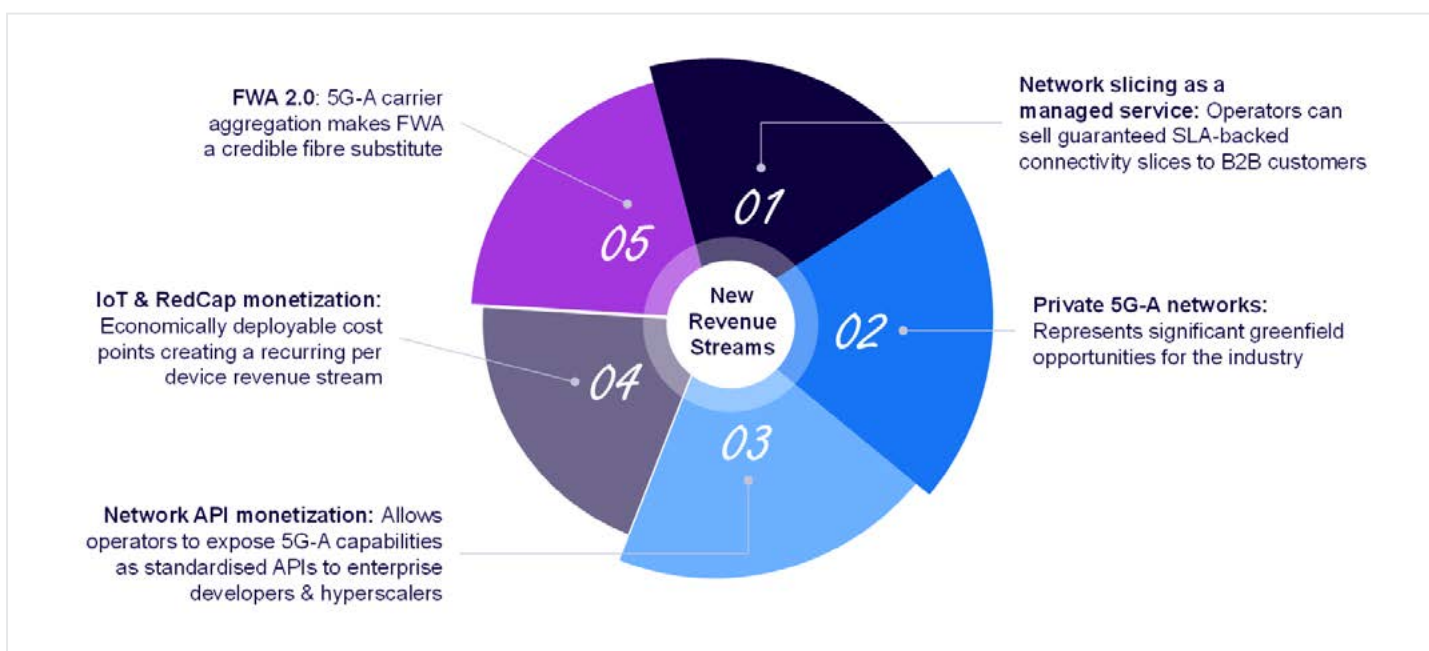
The private 5G market, factories, ports, airports, smart cities, represents significant greenfield opportunities for the industry. The Private 5G network market worth USD 4.35 billion in 2026 is expected to reach 25 billion in 2031, growing at a 42% CAGR. For SAMENA operators, the addressable market includes King Salman Energy Park (SPARK), UAE industrial free zones, India's PLI manufacturing corridors, Jebel Ali, and King Abdullah Port. Private network deployments have demonstrated productivity gains of 20–50% in manufacturing processes & up to 40% cost savings.

• Network API monetisation

GSMA Open Gateway, backed by 47 operator groups representing 239 networks and 65% of global connections, enables operators to expose 5G-A capabilities (quality-on-demand, location, slice booking) as standardised APIs to enterprise developers and hyperscalers. This positions the network as a programmable platform generating ecosystem revenue beyond direct subscriber billing.

• IoT and RedCap monetisation

Enterprise IoT connections are projected to more than double to 38.5 billion globally by 2030. RedCap and eRedCap devices from Quectel, Telit, and u-blox bring 5G-native connectivity to billions of smart meters, sensors, logistics tags, and wearables at economically deployable cost points, creating a recurring per device revenue stream largely absent from today's operator books.



• FWA 2.0

5G-A carrier aggregation makes FWA a credible fibre substitute. FWA is projected to account for more than 35% of all new fixed broadband connections, reaching 350 million globally by 2030.

- In MENA, Saudi Arabia households show strong preference for 5G FWA; du in the UAE is actively expanding its FWA portfolio.
- India's Jio became the world's largest FWA provider by 2025 with 9.5 million connections

Mission-critical connectivity, ultra-high reliability targeting 99.999% availability, deterministic sub-1ms latency, regulatory security compliance, is the highest-margin enterprise segment and the one 5G-Advanced fully serves for the first time in mobile.

5. Mission-critical networks: the high-margin enterprise segment

Mission-critical connectivity, ultra-high reliability targeting 99.999% availability, deterministic sub-1ms latency, regulatory security compliance, is the highest-margin enterprise segment and the one 5G-Advanced fully serves for the first time in mobile.

In SAMENA, the verticals are significant:

- Saudi Aramco and ADNOC require real-time grid automation and offshore control networks; public safety agencies are migrating from legacy TETRA; hospital campuses require carrier-grade telemetry
- Jebel Ali and King Abdullah Port have zero tolerance for latency in AGV and autonomous crane control

Mission-critical enterprise customers command ARPU multiples of 5–10x standard enterprise accounts and sign multi-year contract structures, transforming operator revenue from a commodity pricing game into a value-based recurring model.

6. The business case: enhancing and de-risking the 5G-A investment

For operator CFOs and strategy teams, the 5G-A investment case rests on a 3-strategic layers:

- The defensive layer protects existing revenue by reducing churn through superior network experience. Ericsson Consumer Lab research across 23,000 respondents in 16 markets found 35% of 5G users are willing to pay extra for differentiated 5G-A service. Dynamic plan tiers have been shown to boost ARPU by 15–20% - Thailand operators have reported 10–15% ARPU uplift among 5G users
- The efficiency layer reduces cost per GB and energy OPEX, delivering returns even in the absence of new revenue
- The growth layer captures net-new revenue from enterprise slicing, private 5G-A, FWA 2.0, IoT, and Network APIs, all structurally higher-margin, longer-contract, lower-churn than traditional

mobile connectivity

Risk mitigation follows a phased approach:

- Prioritise RAN software upgrades first
- Launch enterprise slicing pilots in industrial zones
- Co-invest in multi-access edge computing with hyperscalers as they are actively seeking telco partners to share edge infrastructure costs

For SAMENA operators, sovereign alignment is a unique advantage: Saudi Vision 2030, UAE Centennial 2071, and India's National Digital Mission all name advanced connectivity as a strategic enabler, creating co-funding pathways and anchor enterprise customers that de-risk private network development.

7. The operator mandate

5G-Advanced is the commercial fulfilment of 5G. 3 imperatives are non-negotiable:

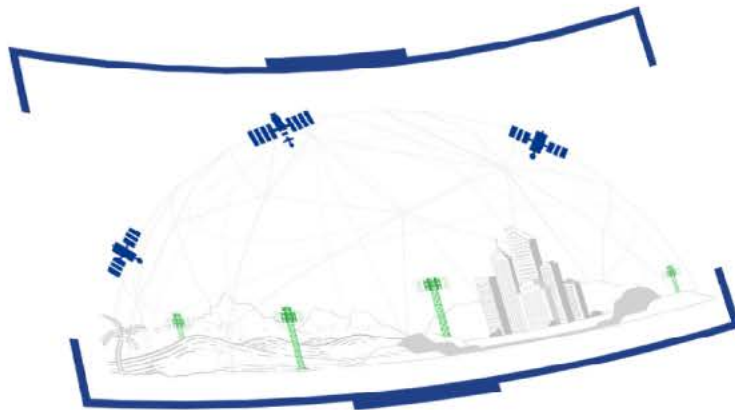
- Upgrade RAN software to Release 18 on existing infrastructure now, the energy and efficiency gains are an immediate OPEX justification
- Launch enterprise slicing and private 5G-A managed services with urgency in industrial and logistics zones where the revenue case is immediate
- Build ecosystem partnerships, hyperscalers for MEC, device vendors for CPE refresh, system integrators for vertical solutions, that no operator can deliver alone

The operators who define the 5G-A era in SAMENA markets will hold the enterprise connectivity position for the next decade. The window to act and monetize is now. 🚀

Mobile Satellite Services in the GCC

Strategic Pathways for Spectrum Harmonization and Regional
Leadership in Hybrid Connectivity

April 2026



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SATELLITE NEWS

Direct-to-Device (D2D) Satellite Connectivity Milestone in the UAE

UAE-based Space42 and non-terrestrial network (NTN) provider Skylo have successfully completed testing of direct-to-device (D2D) satellite SMS and SOS services, marking an important step toward expanding ubiquitous mobile connectivity through satellite-enabled communications. The successful trials demonstrated the ability of standard mobile devices to send SMS messages and emergency SOS alerts via satellite when outside the coverage of terrestrial mobile networks. The milestone advances the commercialization of direct-to-device services, enabling users to remain connected in remote, rural and disaster-affected areas without requiring specialized satellite hardware. The collaboration reinforces the UAE's growing role in satellite communications and highlights the increasing convergence of terrestrial and space-based connectivity. Direct-to-device technology enables conventional smartphones to communicate directly with satellites, allowing users to access essential services even when cellular coverage is unavailable. Unlike traditional satellite communications, D2D services are designed to work with compatible commercial mobile devices, reducing barriers to adoption while expanding connectivity beyond the reach of terrestrial infrastructure. Initial services typically focus on SMS, emergency messaging and SOS capabilities before evolving to support voice and broadband data as satellite networks mature. Industry analysts view D2D as one of the most significant developments in the evolution toward ubiquitous mobile connectivity. Satellite-based communications play an increasingly important role in ensuring service continuity during natural disasters, network outages and emergencies. Direct satellite messaging provides an additional layer of resilience by enabling emergency communications in isolated regions where terrestrial infrastructure may be unavailable or disrupted. The technology also supports governments, emergency responders, transportation operators and critical industries that require reliable communications across large geographic areas. As climate-related events and connectivity demands increase, satellite resilience is becoming an important component of national digital infrastructure. The telecommunications industry is moving toward hybrid connectivity models that integrate



terrestrial mobile networks with satellite infrastructure. This convergence will allow operators to deliver more seamless coverage across urban, rural, maritime and remote environments while supporting sectors such as logistics, aviation, energy and public safety. Standards developed by the 3GPP for non-terrestrial networks (NTNs) are accelerating interoperability between mobile and satellite ecosystems, paving the way for broader commercial deployment. Hybrid networks are expected to become a defining feature of future 5G and eventually 6G connectivity.

Starlink Launches Satellite Broadband Services in Seychelles

SpaceX's Starlink satellite internet service has officially launched in Seychelles, bringing high-speed, low-latency broadband connectivity to the island nation and strengthening digital inclusion across one of Africa's most geographically dispersed markets. The launch marks another milestone in Starlink's rapid expansion across Africa, offering residents, businesses and remote communities access to broadband services delivered

via a Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite constellation. For island nations such as Seychelles, where extending fiber infrastructure can be costly and logistically challenging, satellite connectivity provides an alternative means of delivering reliable internet access. The rollout also supports Seychelles' broader ambitions to strengthen its digital economy, improve connectivity and expand access to online services. Low Earth Orbit satellite



networks are reshaping global broadband by delivering high-speed internet to areas where traditional terrestrial infrastructure

is difficult or uneconomical to deploy. Unlike conventional geostationary satellites, LEO systems operate much

closer to Earth, significantly reducing latency while supporting faster download and upload speeds. This makes satellite broadband suitable for applications such as video conferencing, cloud services, online education and digital business operations. The technology is increasingly being adopted to complement fiber and mobile networks rather than replace them. Countries with dispersed populations and remote islands often face unique challenges in expanding fixed broadband infrastructure. Satellite connectivity provides a practical solution for connecting underserved communities, tourism operators, maritime industries and public institutions without requiring extensive terrestrial network deployment. Improved internet access can also strengthen disaster resilience by providing alternative communications infrastructure during emergencies. For Seychelles, enhanced connectivity supports both social inclusion and economic diversification.

Amazon's Strategic Partnership for Satellite Internet in South Africa

Amazon's Low Earth Orbit satellite internet venture Amazon Leo has signed an agreement with South Africa's Herotel to launch a new broadband service aimed at connecting underserved rural communities, it said on Wednesday. Under the agreement, Herotel, South Africa's largest fixed internet service provider, will use Amazon Leo's satellite technology to offer a new service called evry, which is expected to launch commercially in 2027 for residential customers. The deal comes as satellite internet providers race to expand in Africa. SpaceX's Starlink is also seeking to enter the South African market, but is awaiting proposed changes to licensing rules that could allow foreign satellite operators to meet local ownership and empowerment requirements through alternatives to equity stakes. Amazon Leo and Herotel said their partnership would help address a longstanding connectivity gap in South Africa, where millions of people living on farms, in small towns and rural communities remain beyond the

reach of reliable internet services because conventional fiber and wireless networks are often uneconomical to deploy. "This collaboration is about breaking down barriers and unlocking opportunity for

millions of people who don't yet have reliable access for work, education, or the services they depend on," David Zapolsky, Amazon's chief global affairs and legal officer, said in a statement.



AST SpaceMobile Launches Three More D2D Satellites

AST SpaceMobile is building the first and only space based cellular broadband network accessible directly for everyday smartphones, designed for both commercial and government applications, announced the successful orbital launch of its BlueBird 8, 9 and 10 satellite. BlueBirds 8, 9, and 10 satellites are the largest commercial communications arrays ever deployed in low Earth orbit, measuring approximately 2,400 square feet. Their expansive antenna arrays enable direct, reliable connectivity to standard smartphones, with high power generation in orbit. The result is more targeted coverage, reduced interference, increased capacity, and seamless cellular broadband experience. These next-generation satellites are designed to deliver nearly double the peak data speeds



of the company's initial Block 1 BlueBird satellites, which recently achieved peak download speeds of 98.9 Mbps directly to

standard smartphones, supporting voice, broadband data, and video applications from space.

Virgin Media O2 Extends Satellite Connectivity Support to Google Pixel Smartphones

Virgin Media O2 has expanded O2 Satellite to compatible Google Pixel devices, marking another milestone for the UK's first and only direct-to-device satellite service. The expansion means more customers can access satellite-powered connectivity in areas beyond the reach of the traditional mobile network, helping them stay connected when travelling through remote

locations or during unexpected outages. Launched earlier this year, O2 Satellite allows customers to connect directly to satellites using everyday smartphones, without the need for specialist equipment. The service was initially available on selected devices, and Virgin Media O2 has expanded availability to more devices in recent weeks. The service has boosted

Virgin Media O2's UK landmass coverage to 95%, delivering a coverage uplift equivalent to an area around two thirds the size of Wales. Support for Google Pixel devices follows the introduction of Apple compatibility and represents another milestone in Virgin Media O2's ambition to bring satellite connectivity to as many customers as possible. Available as a £3-per-month Bolt On, on standard pay monthly plans, and included at no extra cost for Ultimate Plan customers, O2 Satellite is already helping tens of thousands of customers stay connected in remote areas. Chris Bournes, Commercial Director at Virgin Media O2 said, when we launched O2 Satellite, we wanted to make satellite connectivity available on the devices our customers already use every day. The addition of Google Pixel devices is another important step forward and means even more customers can benefit from the reassurance of staying connected in places where traditional mobile coverage isn't available. As satellite technology continues to evolve, we're excited to keep expanding



access and bringing the benefits to more people. Francois Mahieu, UK and Ireland General Manager for Devices and Services at Google said, we are delighted to partner

with Virgin Media O2 to bring O2 Satellite to Google Pixel users. Pixel phones are designed to be helpful and reliable devices and those using O2 Satellite have the

reassurance of staying connected, even in the most remote parts of the UK. It's a fantastic step forward in making next-generation connectivity truly accessible.

Angola's Mercury Signs Bigger LEO Deal with Eutelsat OneWeb

Eutelsat announced that Angolan telco Mercury (previously known as MSTelcom) will use its OneWeb LEO satellite connectivity services under a new multi-year, multi-million agreement. Mercury – a subsidiary of Sonangol Group – said the new agreement builds on previous deal signed with Eutelsat in November 2025, and will enable the telco to further expand the reach of Eutelsat OneWeb's LEO services for enterprise, public sector, offshore and telecom customers across Angola. "This new agreement reflects the strength of

our partnership with Eutelsat and the value that LEO connectivity brings to our customers," said Mercury CEO Francisco Pinto Leite in a statement. Philippe Baudrier, VP Africa at Eutelsat, added that the new commitment from Mercury reflects the growing demand for Eutelsat's LEO services in Angola. "Together, we are expanding access to secure, low-latency connectivity across the country, helping enterprise, public sector, offshore, and telecom customers strengthen network resilience and reach locations beyond the

coverage of traditional infrastructure," he said. Eutelsat – which remains the only LEO satellite operator licensed to offer services in Angola – said it has a significant operational presence in the country via local partners, as well as investments in local infrastructure, including a ground station (in partnership with Paratus Group) and a local point of presence (PoP). No financial details were disclosed on the value of the new multi-year deal.

Viasat and India's WiSig Networks Collaborate on 5G Satellite IoT Chipset



Satellite communications giant Viasat and Indian deep-tech company WiSig Networks say they have officially launched global testing of a newly developed Made in India 5G satellite Internet of Things (IoT) chipset. The partners say that this development, announced at the Bharat Innovates 2026 deep-tech showcase in Nice, France from 14-16 June 2026, marks a major step forward for the global standardization of the direct-to-device (D2D) ecosystem. The Satnews website says the hardware module has entered advanced evaluation at Viasat's specialized laboratories in the UK. The testing will validate the chipset's ability to communicate directly with Viasat's globally positioned L-band geostationary satellite fleet. Historically, the website points out,

satellite IoT systems have relied on highly proprietary, closed hardware architectures. The Viasat-WiSig collaboration aims to dismantle these technological silos by introducing a device class built entirely around 3GPP Release 17 standards – standards specifically designed for narrowband-IoT non-terrestrial networks (NB-IoT NTN). WiSig says it developed the entire technology stack from the ground up, including the baseband processor, the radio-frequency system-on-chip (RF SoC), and the compact communication module. By ensuring the chip supports both L-band and S-band satellite frequencies, WiSig claims to have engineered a highly adaptable component capable of delivering secure two-way messaging, real-time location streaming, and low-rate telemetry. Because the chipset relies on narrowband protocols, it is engineered for ultra-low power consumption, with all that this means for the life of connected field devices utilizing the module. If laboratory validation proves successful, Viasat plans to integrate the WiSig module as a low-cost, mass-producible entry point into its expanding global connectivity portfolio, including maritime operations, industrial telemetry and disaster response. The Made in India element should not be underestimated. The development of the WiSig chipset was heavily backed by Indian government-led initiatives under the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY). The validation of an indigenous chip on a premier global satellite platform means – or could mean – that India can position itself as a primary architecture contributor to the underlying technologies shaping the future 5G-Advanced and upcoming 6G NTN frameworks.

Telecom Namibia Signs More Satellite, Subsea Connectivity Deals with Angola Firms

Telecom Namibia has taken more steps to expand its regional satellite and subsea cable connectivity with Angola via separate agreements signed with Angola's Gabinete de Gestão do Programa Espacial

Nacional (GGPEN), Angola Telecom, and SATCAB (Satélite e Cabo TV). Telecom Namibia revealed it had signed a pilot commercial agreement (PCA) with GGPEN to use the Angosat-2 satellite platform to

expand access to digital services across Namibia and the broader Southern African region. The PCA formalizes the transition from a successful Proof of Concept phase into a structured real-network trial of Angosat-2 satellite services. The pilot phase will enable Telecom Namibia to evaluate the platform's technical performance, service capabilities, and commercial viability under operational conditions. Telecom Namibia and GGPEN will work towards commercially launching Angosat-2 satellite services once the pilot is completed. Telecom Namibia aims to target a range of customers for the service, including lodges and tourist establishments, mining operations, schools and other educational institutions, agricultural enterprises, farms, businesses and rural communities. "Through this pilot commercial agreement, we are not only testing technology, we are actively shaping the future of connectivity in our region," said Telecom Namibia chairperson Fimanekeni Petrus in a statement.



Airtel Uganda to Test D2C After Starlink Bags Provisional License

Airtel Uganda announced that it has begun testing Starlink's direct-to-cell (D2C) LEO satellite service, shortly Starlink received a provisional license to offer services in the country. In a LinkedIn post, Airtel Uganda MD and CEO Soumendra Sahu, confirmed that the telco has entered the testing phase for D2C satellite services with Starlink. "Today, we are pleased to begin our journey of exploring our long-awaited partnership with Starlink," he said. "This marks the start of testing a highly advanced technology that enhances smartphone network connectivity through direct-to-cell satellite services." The test is part of Airtel Africa's deal with SpaceX in December 2025 to launch Starlink's D2C in all of its 14 markets sometime this year. The announcement followed hot on the heels of the news that the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC)

granted Starlink an provisional license to offer broadband satellite services. Under the license conditions, Starlink must deploy a national gateway with a physical point of presence in Uganda, ensure that all devices activated in the country are properly registered, and maintain an operational office in Uganda with critical technical, legal and support staff. As part of the agreement, the UCC has established a formal operating framework in Uganda to certify and guide Starlink's operational rollout, including requirements for compliance with national regulatory standards. Dr. Aminah Zawedde, permanent secretary for the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, said the license agreement follows extensive engagements between the government and Starlink officials to ensure compliance with Uganda's regulatory framework.

Starlink/SpaceX representative Ryan Goodnight said Starlink intends to support sectors such as education and health by donating internet connectivity devices to selected facilities across the country. "We believe this partnership will lower internet costs and enable more people to join the digital economy," Goodnight said. "We are ready to comply with Uganda's laws and work closely with the government and UCC to ensure successful implementation." Starlink has been available in Uganda since 2023, although only via its roaming feature in which users buy Starlink kits and subscriptions in neighboring countries where Starlink operates legally. The UCC ordered Starlink to shut down service in Uganda at the start of this year ahead of the country's general elections in mid-January.

China Launches 18 Satellites, Expands Qianfan Internet Constellation to 182 Spacecraft

China launched 18 satellites into orbit, expanding its Qianfan satellite internet constellation to 182 spacecraft as the country accelerates the development of its low-Earth-orbit communications network. The satellites were launched at 7:39 p.m., June 4, Beijing time from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center aboard a Long March 6A carrier rocket and successfully entered their planned orbit, according to the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC). The mission marked the deployment of the 11th group of satellites for the Qianfan constellation, a low-Earth-orbit satellite internet network being built and operated by Shanghai Yuanxin Satellite Technology Co. The launch is part of China's broader push to expand its space-based communications infrastructure amid growing global competition in satellite internet services. The Long March 6A is a

medium-lift rocket designed for multiple-satellite deployments. The launch was the

648th flight of China's Long March rocket family, CASC said.



Space Technology Firms Accelerate Satellite Internet Expansion

Competition in the satellite internet industry intensified as major aerospace and telecommunications companies expanded efforts to deliver high-speed connectivity to underserved regions worldwide. Several firms announced new satellite launches aimed at strengthening broadband coverage across remote areas lacking reliable internet infrastructure. Industry executives said demand for low-latency communication services continues to grow rapidly. The expansion of satellite-based internet networks has become increasingly important for rural communities, maritime

industries and emergency response operations. Governments are also exploring partnerships with private firms to improve digital access in isolated regions. Experts say next-generation satellite systems could transform global connectivity by reducing dependence on traditional ground-based infrastructure. Advances in launch technology and miniaturized satellites have significantly lowered deployment costs in recent years. However, concerns remain regarding space congestion and orbital debris as thousands of satellites are added to low-Earth orbit.

International regulators are discussing updated guidelines to prevent collisions and maintain long-term sustainability in space operations. Analysts believe satellite internet services will play a major role in future communication networks, especially as demand rises for faster global data transmission and resilient digital infrastructure. The sector has also attracted growing investor interest as competition expands between established aerospace firms and emerging private technology companies.

Starlink Launches Satellite Internet Service in Kyrgyzstan

Starlink satellite internet is now available in Kyrgyzstan, as the service's official website now lists the country within its coverage area, Kabar reports. A dedicated Kyrgyzstan page in both Kyrgyz and Russian has also been launched, providing

users with information about the network and available services. Starlink is a global satellite internet system developed by SpaceX, the company founded by Elon Musk. The project was created to deliver high-speed internet access to remote

and hard-to-reach areas. Earlier, it was reported that Starlink's satellite internet service had been officially launched in Tajikistan.

East African Ministers Sign Resolution to Advance Regional Satellite Initiative

Ministers responsible for ICT from Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda and South Sudan have jointly signed a resolution to undertake a feasibility study for a regionally owned communication and broadcasting satellite under the Northern Corridor Integration Projects (NCIP). The resolution was adopted at an inter-ministerial meeting held in Nairobi on 29th April 2026, on the sidelines of the Connected Africa Summit. The meeting was chaired by Uganda and hosted by Kenya. This was a follow-up to the 14th Summit, where the Heads of State directed Partner States to develop a regional, member-state-owned communication satellite to strengthen sovereignty, expand connectivity, and support digital transformation. Ministers reaffirmed the need to reduce reliance on external systems and invest in shared infrastructure aligned with regional priorities. In his remarks, the Chair of the ICT Infrastructure Development Cluster at the Ministerial level and Uganda's Minister of ICT and National Guidance, Hon. Dr. Chris Baryomunsi, emphasized the urgency of moving forward. "We are now at a stage where we must move from preparation to implementation. The decisions we take today will determine how quickly we deliver this project," he said. Discussions focused on advancing the Northern Corridor Regional Communication and Broadcasting Satellite Initiative as a joint effort to strengthen connectivity across the region. Ministers agreed on the need to reduce reliance on external systems and limited international connectivity routes, and to invest in infrastructure that supports regional priorities. Speaking on behalf of the host country, the Cabinet Secretary for Information, Communications and the Digital Economy, H.E Hon. William Kabogo Gitau, highlighted the risks of external dependence. "Our countries continue to rely heavily on external systems. This has implications for cost, reliability and



continuity of services. Strengthening the resilience of our communications infrastructure is not optional," he noted. As a first step, Partner States committed to undertake a feasibility study to assess the technical, financial and legal requirements of the project. Ministers also agreed to establish a dedicated project account with clear oversight to ensure transparency and accountability. The Permanent Secretary at Uganda's Ministry of ICT and National Guidance and Chair of the ICT Infrastructure Development Cluster at the Technical Level, Dr .Aminah Zawedde, confirmed that the concept note, implementation roadmap, and terms of reference for the feasibility study are complete, enabling the mobilization of resources and the commencement of the procurement process. The proposed satellite will complement terrestrial infrastructure, extend connectivity to underserved areas, and support broadcasting and digital services across the region. Ministers also expressed commitment to the eventual design and launch of a jointly owned satellite. In closing, delegations acknowledged the progress made and the responsibility to move into implementation, noting that the resolution marks a shift from discussion to action

with clear timelines, funding commitments and governance arrangements. The meeting concluded with the resolution being signed by Partner State Ministers. The feasibility study, expected to take 12 to 18 months, will define the technical, financial and institutional model for the project and guide the next phase. Also in attendance were the Minister of Information, Communication Technology and Postal Services of the Republic of South Sudan, Hon. Ateny Wek Ateny; the representative of Hon. Paula Ingabire, the Minister of Information, Communication Technology and Innovation of the Republic of Rwanda, Mr. Karisa Benon; the Principal Secretary for the State Department of Broadcasting and Telecommunications in Kenya's Ministry of Information, Communications and the Digital Economy, Mr. Stephen Motari Isaboke; and the Undersecretary for the Information Sector in South Sudan's Ministry of Information, Communication Technology and Postal Services, Hon. Arok Dut Arok. Also present from Kenya were the Cabinet Secretary for East African Community Affairs, Hon. Beatrice Askul, and the Principal Secretary for ICT and Digital Economy, Eng. John Kipchumba Tanui.

SpinLaunch, Aalyria Collaborate on Next-Generation LEO Connectivity



SpinLaunch, a pioneer of disruptive space solutions, announced a partnership with Aalyria Technologies, a leading provider of advanced network orchestration software. The two companies will collaborate on the design and development of key infrastructure supporting SpinLaunch's low-cost Meridian low-Earth orbit (LEO) communications constellation. Aalyria will serve as a strategic partner, providing technical and commercial support for the Meridian constellation architecture. Central to the collaboration is the integration of Aalyria's Spacetime platform as a network orchestration layer for Meridian. This is a critical step for both companies toward accelerating the deployment of high-performance, next-generation satellite connectivity for commercial and government customers around the globe. Beyond the integration of Aalyria's Spacetime platform with Meridian, we're excited to see a strong alignment in how our teams are approaching both technology and the evolving needs of our customers, said Massi Ladovaz, CEO of SpinLaunch. Spacetime's ability to dynamically manage and optimize complex satel-

lite and ground networks through a unified platform is powerful. Equally important is its open-standards-based approach, which aligns with how we are designing the Meridian program to support long-term flexibility, interoperability, and a multi-partner ecosystem as the constellation scales. The Meridian constellation is being developed with an emphasis on flexibility, rapid deployment, and operational efficiency. The network architecture requires a highly flexible and vendor-agnostic control layer to maximize mission success and service uptime. A key capability enabled through this collaboration is support for Meridian's fractional ownership model, allowing customers, including government, defense, and national telecommunications providers, to operate a dedicated portion of a global LEO network. This approach provides sovereign control over capacity, coverage, and performance without the need to deploy and manage a stand-alone system. Customers retain data sovereignty and operational autonomy without dedicated physical infrastructure, yet remain part of a broader, interoperable "network

of networks" within Meridian's open, scalable design. We are incredibly excited to partner with SpinLaunch as they build one of the most ambitious and transformative satellite communications programs in development today. SpinLaunch's ambitious goal to redefine space communications is squarely aligned with Aalyria's mission, and we look forward to supporting the Meridian program – from shared technical vision to long-term technology support – as it progresses toward operational and market success, said Chris Taylor, CEO of Aalyria. This collaboration reflects a strong alignment between our two companies, and our teams are working together to help enable a connectivity future that is more accessible and robust for users worldwide. Spacetime is purpose-built for the complexity of LEO constellations and can dynamically plan, manage, and optimize multi-domain networks across ground, air, and space in real time. The AI-powered, software-defined networking solution has been demonstrated across a wide range of operational environments and is used in commercial and U.S. government programs. The native O-RAN interface support enables seamless integration into SpinLaunch's 5G NTN-powered network, unlocking unparalleled speed, reliability, and scalability for the end user. This collaboration is expected to accelerate Meridian's ground segment readiness, ensuring the critical communications infrastructure is in place to support the initial deployment of LEO satellites. 🚀

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Q. How is digital transformation reshaping the travel experience across Africa?

A. Africa's travel market is growing from USD 27 billion in 2026 to nearly USD 40 billion by 2034. Digital tools, rising incomes, and improving connectivity are transforming how trips are planned, booked, and managed. At AMH Tourism, we see this every day across the GCC-Africa corridor. Corporate travellers and delegations expect the same seamless, transparent, and instant digital experience whether they are travelling between Dubai and Lagos, Nairobi or Kigali. AI-driven pricing, automation, and digital platforms are enabling travel companies to meet these higher expectations with greater speed and accuracy.

Q. What role do digital identity and biometric technologies play in improving passenger journeys?

A. The WTTC estimates smarter border management could add USD 401 billion to the global economy and generate 14 million jobs by 2035. For travellers, the greatest value is the reduction of uncertainty. Biometric processing reduces queues, minimizes stress, and allows travellers to focus on their business objectives. At AMH Tourism, we manage travel for executives and conference delegates where timing is critical. Any improvement in

border efficiency directly enhances productivity and traveller satisfaction.

Q. How can technology help improve border efficiency while maintaining security?

A. Modern systems shift verification to the pre-travel stage. By the time travellers arrive, identity checks are largely complete. This proactive

Africa is entering a defining decade for travel and tourism. The technology exists, the demand is growing, and the policy frameworks are steadily evolving. The next step is collaboration between governments, airlines, airports, travel companies, and technology providers. Those who embrace that collaboration will help shape one of the most exciting travel growth stories of the next decade.

AFRICA TRAVEL MARKET SNAPSHOT (2026)



Sources: MarketDataForecast (Feb 2026) | A-Listware (Apr 2026) | Travel Distribution News (Feb 2026)
ICCA 2025 | ACI Africa 2025 | African Development Bank (2026)

approach strengthens security while significantly reducing friction. For corporations managing multi-country travel, it means fewer delays, lower costs, and more confident travellers. E-Visa adoption has grown to 57% of African countries in 2025, up from 17% in 2016. Rwanda's visa-on-arrival and open-sky strategy shows how digital policy and connectivity can work together to build a hub.

The next generation will expect personalization, AI support, instant alerts, biometric journeys, and mobile-first services. Dubai is at the heart of this transformation – connecting Africa with Asia and Europe. The GCC-Africa corridor is becoming one of the world's most dynamic travel and trade routes.

Q. What opportunities exist to create more seamless travel experiences across African countries?

A. With 38 countries signed to the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), the potential is significant: lower fares, more routes, and greater connectivity. One of the biggest opportunities is interoperability: shared e-visa platforms, common data standards, and mutual recognition of biometrics. Travellers think in terms of journeys, not borders. For AMH Tourism, this enables truly multi-country itineraries for MICE and corporate programmes with the same ease we see in other advanced travel regions.

Q. How can digital travel platforms support tourism growth and economic development?

A. Digital platforms drive visibility, simplify access, and enable better destination marketing. A single international conference can impact hotels, transport, restaurants, suppliers, and communities far beyond the event venue. Cities such as Kigali, Nairobi, Cape Town, Casablanca and Marrakech are climbing global MICE rankings. Digital event platforms and integrated booking tools help them compete more effectively. As a company

deeply involved in MICE and corporate travel, we see Africa becoming one of the world's fastest-growing business-events markets in the coming decade.

Q. What are the biggest challenges facing digital travel transformation initiatives today?

A. The biggest challenge is not technology but adoption. Many travellers are still building confidence with digital tools like e-visas and self-service platforms. We need simple, inclusive solutions supported by human assistance. Successful transformation must focus as much on people as on technology.

Q. How important is regional interoperability for digital travel systems?

A. Interoperability multiplies the value of every digital solution. When countries and systems work together, travel becomes simpler, trade grows, tourism expands, and economies benefit. Global travel regions that embraced interoperability such as the EU have seen strong growth in mobility and economic integration. Africa has the opportunity to leapfrog by doing the same.

Q. What does the future of the connected traveller look like in Africa?

A. The next generation will expect personalization, AI support, instant alerts, biometric journeys, and mobile-first services. Dubai is at the heart of this transformation – connecting Africa with Asia and Europe. The GCC-Africa corridor is becoming one of the world's most dynamic travel and trade routes. At AMH Tourism, our vision is to build connected, intelligent, and frictionless travel ecosystems that support business growth, tourism development, and long-term economic collaboration.

THE IMPACT IN NUMBERS

 **38**
African countries signed to SAATM

 **57%**
African countries offering e-visas in 2025 (up from 17% in 2016)

 **USD 80+ BILLION**
UAE-Africa non-oil trade in 2025

 **Top 5**
African cities rising in ICCA global rankings (Kigali, Nairobi, Cape Town, Casablanca, Marrakech)

 **401 BILLION**
Economic boost from smarter border management by 2035 (WTTC)

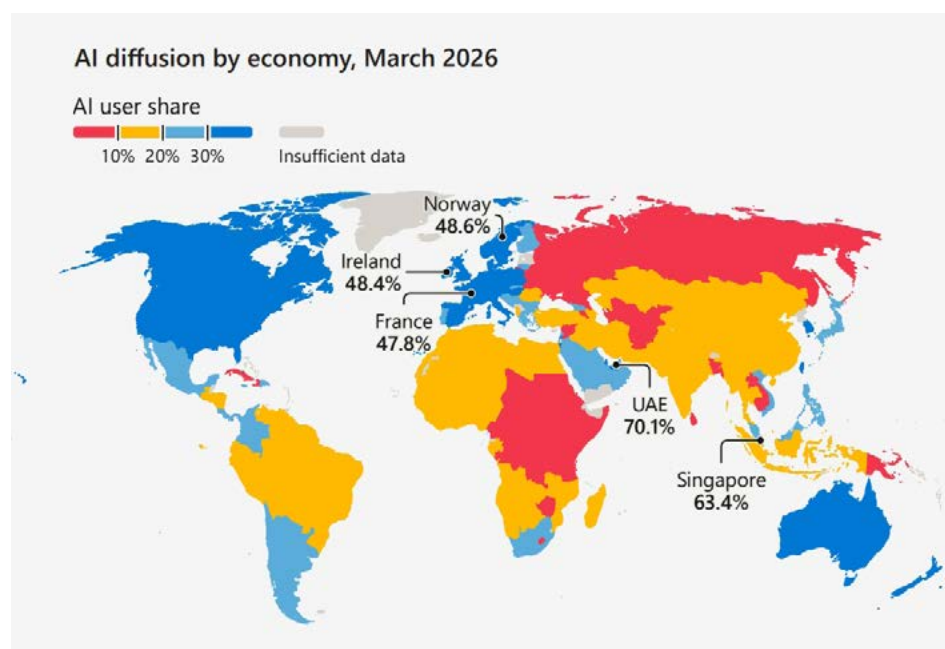
AI NEWS

UAE Ranks First Globally in AI Adoption

The UAE has ranked first globally in artificial intelligence adoption, according to a new Microsoft report, reinforcing the country's growing position as a leading market for AI deployment and digital transformation. The report highlights strong uptake of AI technologies across businesses, government entities, and digital services, reflecting years of investment in infrastructure, policy frameworks, and innovation ecosystems. The UAE has been aggressively positioning AI as a core pillar of economic diversification and future competitiveness. High adoption levels are being driven by enterprise modernization, government digital initiatives, cloud infrastructure expansion, and growing interest in automation and generative AI applications across sectors such as finance, healthcare, retail, and public services. The UAE's approach combines infrastructure investment with regulatory support, talent development, and public-private partnerships aimed at accelerating AI integration across the economy. The ranking also reflects broader regional momentum around AI adoption, though

the UAE continues to distinguish itself through speed of implementation and ecosystem coordination. As AI deployment expands, attention is increasingly shifting toward governance, workforce readiness, cybersecurity, and the ability

to generate measurable economic value from widespread adoption. The long-term challenge will be sustaining leadership as global competition intensifies and AI ecosystems become more mature worldwide.



Jordan Conference Highlights Growing Role of AI in Transforming Healthcare Delivery

Jordan is accelerating its focus on artificial intelligence in healthcare, with a national conference highlighting how AI-driven technologies are reshaping service delivery, diagnostics, and operational efficiency across the sector. The discussions emphasized the integration of AI into healthcare systems to improve patient outcomes, streamline hospital operations, and enhance decision-making through data analytics. Applications such as predictive diagnostics, automated

workflows, and AI-assisted treatment planning are becoming increasingly relevant as healthcare systems face rising demand and resource constraints. Stakeholders at the conference pointed to the need for stronger collaboration between government, healthcare providers, and technology companies to ensure successful implementation. Building the necessary infrastructure, regulatory frameworks, and skilled workforce remains critical to scaling AI adoption in healthcare.

Jordan's push reflects a broader regional trend, where countries are leveraging AI to modernize healthcare systems, improve access, and increase efficiency. As digital health ecosystems evolve, AI is emerging as a key enabler of more responsive and data-driven care models. The long-term impact will depend on execution, integration into existing systems, and the ability to translate technological potential into measurable improvements in patient care and operational performance.

Kuwait Fund Joins NVIDIA, KKR and Vistra to Launch US\$10 Billion AI Infrastructure Firm

The Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) has announced that it has joined forces with artificial intelligence (AI) chip giant NVIDIA, private equity firm KKR and leading integrated power generation and electricity company Vistra to launch Helix Digital Infrastructure, at a total investment of over \$10 billion in long-duration capital commitments. The new company, Helix has been designed to deliver integrated infrastructure at the speed and scale required for hyperscalers to meet accelerating AI demand. As building AI infrastructure becomes increasingly complex, Helix will serve as a single coordination point for hyperscalers' data centers, power, connectivity and related needs. The company is led by Adam Selipsky, former CEO of Amazon Web Services, who brings first-hand experience scaling the world's largest cloud business, and deep insight into hyperscaler infrastructure priorities. He is joined by a dedicated management team and Board. Waldemar Szlezak, KKR's Global Head of Digital Infrastructure, will serve as Helix's Chief Investment Officer. Helix will seek to invest in and manage assets critical to enabling AI, including hyperscale data center development and operations; baseload and flexible power generation; transmission and distribution infrastructure; and fiber and connectivity infrastructure, among other assets. Founded with anchor investments from investors including KKR, KIA, NVIDIA and Vistra, the Helix strategy has more than \$10 billion in total long-duration capital commitments to date. On the new launch, KIA, one of the world's largest sovereign wealth funds, said it adds long-term capital and global investment reach. NVIDIA will serve as a strategic partner to support the deployment of NVIDIA DSX AI factory-aligned infrastructure with a view to maximizing tokens per watt, achieving lowest total cost of ownership and accelerating time to first token for investments pursued by Helix. Vistra, a leading integrated power generation and electricity company with operations across 18 states and Washington, D.C., will be the preferred power provider for Helix investments. Following the closing of the founding commitments, Helix is open to additional

eligible institutional investors. According to KKR, the AI sector is driving the largest infrastructure buildout in modern history, requiring trillions of dollars in investment across data centers, power generation and transmission, connectivity and related infrastructure over the coming decade. The scale and complexity of financing and coordinating this buildout represents a key industry bottleneck, ultimately slowing hyperscalers from delivering the models, services and applications their customers demand. Delivering AI infrastructure requires credible, long-term financial underwriters capable of committing capital consistently. Hyperscalers are also seeking more integrated and repeatable infrastructure solutions that meaningfully reduce the complexity they face in building at unprecedented scale, it stated. KKR launched Helix in response to these challenges. Helix will be positioned as a single, trusted strategic partner to hyperscalers, armed with a long-duration, multi-billion-dollar capital base, and with integrated development capabilities and coordinated execution across AI infrastructure. On the new entity, Selipsky said: "Large users of digital infrastructure have an urgent need to reduce complexity and unlock new capacity. Helix combines significant long-term capital with the capabilities and expertise to deliver holistic AI infrastructure solutions with speed and scale," said Adam Selipsky, Co-Founder and CEO of Helix Digital Infrastructure. "Helix is further strengthened by strategic partnerships with NVIDIA and Vistra across technology and power, which we believe will enable the company to deliver the infrastructure that will underpin hyperscalers' AI strategies for years to come," he stated. Sheikh Saoud Salem Abdulaziz Al Sabah, the Managing Director of Kuwait Investment Authority, said: "We view AI infrastructure as one of the defining long-term investment opportunities globally, and Helix is purpose-built to address it." "Helix reflects a differentiated model that combines proven leadership, integrated capabilities and long-term capital required to deliver the next generation of critical digital infrastructure at scale," he noted. Jensen Huang, founder and CEO of NVIDIA,

said: "Useful AI has arrived, and demand for AI factories is extraordinary. AI is driving the largest infrastructure buildout in modern history." "With the NVIDIA DSX platform and the Helix strategic partnership, we are bringing together a proven AI factory blueprint, world-class infrastructure expertise from KKR, and long-term capital to help AI cloud providers build the next generation of intelligence infrastructure," stated Huang. "Power generation and grid interconnections are critical gating factors for AI infrastructure deployments," said Jim Burke, the President and CEO of Vistra, said: "Helix brings together data center development, infrastructure and power capabilities under a single umbrella, providing a one-stop shop for large load customers. By utilizing Vistra's existing fleet to deliver near-term power, Helix will accelerate delivery of power solutions through the use of existing assets while also bringing additionality with Vistra's best-in-class capabilities, including power generation development and power grid expertise." "Vistra has a proven track record in executing more than 5,000 megawatts of power purchase agreements with hyperscalers and looks forward to leveraging our leading and diverse generation fleet and operational expertise as Helix's preferred power partner to help deliver the reliable, affordable energy these customers require," he added. Joe Bae and Scott Nuttall, the Co-Chief Executive Officers at KKR said: "Like a DNA helix, Helix Digital Infrastructure is built on a double strand of complementary strengths - KKR's institutional capital and infrastructure expertise intertwined with Helix's hyperscaler leadership and execution engine." "Together, with our strategic partners, we are positioned to meet the financial and operational demands of the AI era," they added. Helix is supported by KKR's leading global infrastructure platform, which includes over \$100 billion in infrastructure assets under management and more than \$70 billion invested across digital and power assets. KKR's experience across data centers, renewable and conventional power generation and transmission, fiber and related sectors provides the foundation for Helix's integrated model.

UAE Establishes New Federal Authority to Lead AI and Digital Government Strategy

The United Arab Emirates has established a new federal authority dedicated to overseeing artificial intelligence, digital government, and advanced technology initiatives, reinforcing the country's commitment to maintaining a leadership position in global digital transformation and AI adoption. The new entity will play a central role in coordinating national efforts related to artificial intelligence, digital services, data governance, emerging technologies, and government modernization. The move reflects the UAE's ongoing strategy of embedding advanced technologies into public administration, economic development, and national competitiveness initiatives. The creation of a dedicated federal authority comes as governments worldwide increasingly recognize the strategic importance of AI and digital governance. As artificial intelligence becomes more deeply integrated into public services, regulatory frameworks, economic planning, and citizen engagement, centralized oversight is becoming critical to ensuring effective

implementation and coordination. The UAE has been one of the most proactive countries globally in adopting AI and digital government technologies. Over the past decade, the country has launched numerous initiatives focused on smart services, digital identity, cloud infrastructure, data-driven governance, and AI innovation. The establishment of a specialized authority is expected to further strengthen these efforts by providing a unified framework for policy development and execution. Digital government has become a cornerstone of the UAE's modernization strategy. Government agencies increasingly rely on digital platforms to deliver services, streamline administrative processes, improve citizen experiences, and enhance operational efficiency. Artificial intelligence is expected to be a major area of focus for the new authority. AI technologies are increasingly being applied across sectors including healthcare, education, transportation, public safety, finance, and government administration. Coordinated governance will

be essential to maximizing benefits while addressing issues related to ethics, security, transparency, and accountability. The establishment of the authority also reflects the growing importance of data as a strategic national asset. Effective digital government systems depend on the ability to manage, share, and analyze data securely across multiple institutions. Strong governance frameworks can help improve service delivery while protecting privacy and maintaining public trust. For the UAE, the move supports broader ambitions to position itself as a global center for innovation, technology investment, and digital excellence. The country has consistently sought to attract technology companies, develop advanced digital infrastructure, and create an environment conducive to innovation and entrepreneurship. The authority is expected to contribute to ongoing efforts aimed at strengthening the UAE's digital economy while supporting the adoption of emerging technologies across both public and private sectors.

Saudi Minister Calls for Responsible AI Adoption to Shape the Future of Work

Saudi Arabia has emphasized the importance of responsible artificial intelligence adoption as a critical factor in shaping the future workforce, highlighting the need to balance technological advancement with human development, ethical governance, and sustainable economic growth. Speaking on the evolving role of AI in the workplace, Saudi officials stressed that artificial intelligence has the potential to transform industries, improve productivity, and create new economic opportunities. However, they also underscored the importance of ensuring that AI deployment remains aligned with human values, workforce development goals, and responsible governance principles. AI is increasingly being integrated into business operations, public services, manufacturing, healthcare, education, finance, and other sectors, reshaping traditional job functions and creating

demand for new skills. Saudi Arabia has positioned artificial intelligence as a central pillar of its Vision 2030 transformation agenda, investing heavily in AI infrastructure, data centers, digital innovation ecosystems, and talent development initiatives. The Kingdom has launched multiple programs aimed at building AI capabilities while preparing the workforce for emerging technology-driven opportunities. Officials highlighted the importance of equipping individuals with future-ready skills that complement AI technologies rather than compete with them. Areas such as critical thinking, creativity, digital literacy, data analysis, and advanced technical expertise are increasingly viewed as essential for workforce resilience in an AI-enabled economy. The emphasis on responsible AI also reflects growing international discussions around transparency, account-

ability, fairness, privacy, and ethical use of artificial intelligence. Governments, regulators, and industry leaders are working to establish frameworks that encourage innovation while addressing potential risks associated with widespread AI adoption. Saudi Arabia has been actively participating in global conversations around AI governance and digital policy, seeking to balance technological leadership with responsible implementation. The Kingdom's approach includes investments in education, research, innovation, and workforce development designed to ensure that AI contributes positively to economic and social progress. As organizations continue integrating AI into daily operations, the future of work is expected to evolve significantly, with technology increasingly augmenting human capabilities rather than simply automating existing processes.

Saudi Arabia Invests SAR 13.3 Billion in AI and Digital Health to Transform Healthcare Delivery

Saudi Arabia is accelerating its healthcare transformation through investments exceeding SAR 13.3 billion, leveraging artificial intelligence, digital technologies, and advanced medical innovation to enhance healthcare outcomes and strengthen the Kingdom's position as a regional and global health technology leader. The investment forms part of broader efforts to modernize the healthcare sector under Vision 2030, where digital transformation, AI adoption, and innovation are playing increasingly central roles in improving patient care, operational efficiency, and healthcare accessibility. Artificial intelligence is emerging as a key pillar of the Kingdom's healthcare strategy. AI-powered solutions are being deployed across a range of applications, including medical diagnostics, predictive analytics, clinical decision support, disease detection, patient monitoring, and healthcare administration.



These technologies are helping healthcare providers improve accuracy, reduce response times, and optimize resource utilization. Saudi Arabia has also been expanding its digital health ecosystem through investments in electronic health records, telemedicine platforms, smart hospitals, connected healthcare infrastructure, and advanced medical research initiatives. The integration of digital technologies is enabling healthcare services to become more data-driven, personalized, and accessible. The Kingdom's healthcare transformation is supported by collaboration between government agencies, healthcare institutions, technology companies, and research organizations. These partnerships aim to accelerate innovation while developing local expertise in health technology and AI-enabled healthcare services. Digital health has become a strategic priority globally as healthcare systems face increasing pressure to improve efficiency, manage growing demand, and address workforce challenges. Countries are investing heavily in AI and digital tools to support early diagnosis, preventive care, and more effective treatment pathways. Saudi Arabia's investments also align with wider efforts to diversify the economy through knowledge-based industries and emerging technologies. The healthcare sector is increasingly viewed as an important area for innovation, investment, and economic development, creating opportunities for technology providers, startups, and research institutions. As AI capabilities continue to advance, healthcare systems are expected to benefit from improved clinical insights, enhanced patient experiences, and more proactive approaches to disease management. Saudi Arabia's focus on digital health positions the Kingdom to play a growing role in shaping the future of healthcare innovation in the region.

Algeria Reviews National AI Strategy Progress

Algeria has reviewed progress on its national artificial intelligence strategy and approved the launch of the Dzair Digital Services Portal, reinforcing the country's efforts to accelerate digital transformation and modernize public service delivery. The developments were discussed during a government review of ongoing digital initiatives aimed at strengthening Algeria's digital economy, enhancing public sector efficiency, and expanding the adoption of emerging technologies across key sectors. The review focused on advancements in the implementation of Algeria's national AI strategy, which seeks to integrate artificial intelligence into government operations, economic development programs, research initiatives, and public services. The strategy forms part of broader efforts to position the country for the next phase of digital transformation while building domestic capabilities in advanced technologies. As part of these efforts, authorities approved the launch of the Dzair Digital Services Portal, a new platform designed to provide citizens and businesses with streamlined access to government services through a unified digital interface. The initiative is expected to simplify administrative procedures, improve service accessibility, and support the government's objective of

expanding digital interactions between public institutions and users. The portal aligns with a growing regional trend toward digital government platforms that consolidate services into centralized online environments, reducing paperwork and enhancing operational efficiency. Algeria has increasingly prioritized digitalization as a driver of economic modernization, with investments spanning telecommunications infrastructure, e-government services, digital entrepreneurship, and technology innovation. The country has also intensified efforts to develop local expertise in emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and data analytics. Government officials view AI as a key enabler of future economic growth, with potential applications across sectors such as healthcare, education, agriculture, energy, transportation, and public administration. By advancing both digital service delivery and AI adoption, Algeria aims to improve public sector performance while fostering a more competitive and innovation-driven economy. The latest developments underscore the government's commitment to building a modern digital ecosystem capable of supporting citizens, businesses, and public institutions in an increasingly technology-driven environment.

Pakistan Expands AI Skills Development and Digital Employment Initiatives

Pakistan is accelerating efforts to develop artificial intelligence capabilities and expand digital employment opportunities as part of a broader strategy to strengthen the country's participation in the global digital economy. The latest initiatives focus on equipping young professionals, students, and job seekers with AI-related competencies and digital skills that are increasingly in demand across industries. As governments worldwide seek to prepare their workforces for technology-driven economic transformation, Pakistan is positioning digital talent development as a key pillar of its long-term growth strategy. The push comes at a time when artificial intelligence is reshaping labor markets, creating demand for new technical skills while transforming traditional job roles. Organizations across sectors including financial services, healthcare, telecommunications, manufacturing, education, and government are increasingly adopting AI technologies, driving demand for professionals capable of developing, managing, and applying these systems. Pakistan's growing emphasis on AI training reflects recognition that workforce readiness will be a critical factor in determining the

country's competitiveness in the digital era. While investments in connectivity, cloud infrastructure, and digital platforms remain important, the availability of skilled talent is increasingly becoming the defining factor in attracting investment and fostering innovation. The country has emerged as a significant source of digital talent in South Asia, supported by a large youth population and an expanding technology sector. Initiatives focused on AI education and digital employment aim to build on this foundation by creating pathways for participation in higher-value segments of the global technology economy. Digital jobs are becoming an increasingly important source of economic opportunity. Remote work platforms, software development services, AI-related roles, digital marketing, cybersecurity, data analytics, and technology consulting are enabling professionals to access international markets and generate income beyond traditional geographic constraints. The expansion of AI skills programs also aligns with broader efforts to strengthen Pakistan's technology ecosystem. Startups, technology firms, educational institutions, and public sector organizations are increasingly

collaborating to develop training programs that address emerging workforce requirements and close digital skills gaps. Artificial intelligence is expected to play a particularly important role in this transformation. Demand is growing for expertise in machine learning, data science, AI operations, automation, natural language processing, and AI-assisted software development. Developing local capabilities in these areas can help position Pakistan as a competitive participant in the global AI economy. Beyond employment creation, digital skills development supports entrepreneurship and innovation. Access to advanced technical knowledge enables individuals to build technology startups, develop digital products, and create solutions tailored to local and international market needs. As countries compete to attract technology investment and expand digital industries, workforce development is becoming a central component of national digital transformation strategies. Pakistan's focus on AI skills and digital employment reflects the increasing importance of human capital in driving long-term economic growth and technological advancement.

National Implementation of the EU AI Act: A Snapshot of AI laws, Regulatory Bodies and Penalties

Only a few EU countries have designated competent authorities to enforce the AI Act.

Key takeaways

- Only Denmark, Finland and Italy have a national AI law in place, while proposals for AI laws were tabled in another nine EU countries
- Most of the surveyed countries with proposed or designated market surveillance authorities would implement a decentralized model, distributing enforcement tasks among several authorities
- Belgium, the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the

Netherlands, Romania and Sweden have tasked their telecoms regulators with enforcement powers

Why it matters

The AI Act entrusts key implementation choices to national supervisory authorities, and differences across countries can significantly affect how consistently and effectively the rules are enforced across the EU.

Background

The Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act) is the EU's pioneering legislation on the use of AI which entered into force on 1 August 2024. While some core provisions have not started applying yet (e.g rules on high-risk

AI systems), by 2 August 2025 member states should have designated national competent authorities and laid down rules on penalties and fines. If adopted, the AI Omnibus will delay the AI rulebook implementation timeline for high-risk AI systems.

Cullen International's latest benchmark provides an overview of the national laws (proposed or adopted) to implement the AI Act, including measures such as the designation of competent authorities, the set-up of regulatory sandboxes and the establishment of a framework on penalties.

EU and Japan Accelerate Cooperation on AI, Data, Quantum and Chips

At the fourth meeting of the EU-Japan Digital Partnership Council in Brussels, the European Union and Japan agreed on new steps to deepen regulatory, research and industry cooperation on data, AI, quantum, semiconductors, digital infrastructure and online platforms. These steps will improve cross-border data flows, advance interoperable digital identities and strengthen cooperation on research, platform regulation and digital infrastructure while delivering tangible benefits for citizens and businesses. The meeting brought together Executive Vice-President for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy, Henna Virkkunen and Japanese ministers Hisashi Matsumoto, Minister for Digital Transformation, Yoshimasa Hayashi, Minister for Internal Affairs and Communication, and Toshiyuki Ochi, Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry. To improve data sharing, the EU and Japan deepened discussions on the joint development and interoperability of data spaces. They agreed to launch a Data Strategy Working Group to improve the interoperability of data policy frameworks, helping to boost competitiveness and innovation. They also welcomed the successful conclusion of talks to expand the scope of the EU adequacy decision on Japan to academia and research, helping to facilitate joint research and innovation. A successful pilot on interoperable digital identities showed that cross-border use is technically possible, even where governance frameworks and technical architectures differ. Using prototypes of digital identity wallets, the project demonstrated how interoperability can be achieved in practice

between different systems. As global leaders in frontier AI, the EU and Japan are working together to ensure that emerging technologies serve the public good while maintaining their competitive edge. They welcomed the agreement on the future association of Japan to Horizon Europe, which will accelerate joint research, including in digital areas such as AI. They also committed to conclude a Cooperation Arrangement to deepen collaboration on AI research and innovation, as well as AI safety. The Letter of Intent, signed in 2025, has enabled deeper cooperation in quantum science and technology. The EU and Japan welcomed the launch of the joint research project Q-Neko. This project brings together European and Japanese partners to advance hybrid computing environments and explore quantum-enabled solutions in areas such as material science, CO2 reduction, communication networks, fluid dynamics, satellite image analysis and beyond. Partners also agreed to explore further cooperation possibilities in quantum, including with industry players. From submarine cables to semiconductors, critical global digital infrastructure is essential for a resilient digital backbone and economic security. The EU and Japan welcomed the meetings of the joint working group on policy issues for global connectivity, where the security and resilience of submarine cables, connectivity projects in the Indo-Pacific and Arctic connectivity were discussed, and they confirmed that these discussions will continue. The EU and Japan also welcomed progress of the joint research project on 6G, which contributes to reinforced European and Japanese

leadership in 6G network technologies. On standardization, they welcomed closer links between respective standardization bodies. On semiconductors, the EU and Japan confirmed their intention to address challenges posed by non-market policies and practices, as well as supply chain dependencies in critical sectors. They also encouraged further exploration of collaborative research opportunities in next-generation semiconductor technologies. Cooperation on online platforms will be strengthened through a Cooperation Arrangement between the Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications and the European Commission's Directorate-General for Communications, Networks, Content and Technology. It will deepen cooperation on the transparency of content moderation systems and the effectiveness of reporting systems for illegal content and rights-infringing information. They also welcomed the Cooperation Arrangement signed in 2025 between the Japan Fair Trade Commission and the European Commission to promote fair and contestable digital markets. As part of discussions, the EU and Japan agreed to begin working in new areas, including video games and audiovisual strategies. The fifth meeting of the Digital Partnership Council will take place in Tokyo in 2027. The EU and Japan are among the world's leading digital economies. Since launching their Digital Partnership at the 29th Japan-EU summit in Tokyo in 2022, they have advanced their collaboration in many digital and tech areas.



Kenya Launches AI for Disability Project with Huawei and Local Partners to Advance Inclusive Digital Transformation

The Ministry of Information, Communications and the Digital Economy officially launched the Kenya AI for Disability Project during the Connected Africa Summit 2026 in Nairobi. This project is designed to bridge the digital divide for hundreds of citizens with disability. Announced during the closing ceremony of the Connected Africa Summit 2026, it is in collaboration with Kenya Institute for Special Education (KISE), Qhala, Assistive Technologies for Disability Trust, InABLE, and Huawei, and will develop AI-driven hardware and software solutions. The initiative marks a significant milestone in advancing inclusive digital transformation by leveraging Artificial Intelligence to empower persons with disabilities across Kenya and the wider African region. This multi-stakeholder collaboration brings together policy makers, disability experts, innovation leaders and global technology partners to use AI and other technologies to build scalable, relevant local solutions that will solve real, lived challenges that hold the disabled back from learning, working and achieving their full potential. As Mary Kerema who leads on AI and Emerging Technologies in the Government eloquently said during the announcement: "Together, we are not merely identifying barriers we are co-creating practical, scalable hardware and software solutions that expand access, restore dignity, and unlock opportunity." Dr. Norman Kiogora, Director of KISE, emphasized that technology is a lifeline for the disability community. "To most people, technology makes things easy; but for persons with disabilities, it makes things possible," he noted. Dr. Kiogora highlighted the strategic importance of the partnership. He reiterated that having a global tech leader like Huawei involved is a "game changer" that will accelerate the development of AI-driven assistive tools and inclusive education. Adam Lane, Huawei Kenya's Director for Policy and Partnerships, highlighted the transformative power of Artificial Intelligence in driving accessibility. "The advent of AI has made it significantly more cost-effective to develop hardware and software that is responsive to the unique



needs of persons with disabilities," Lane explained. "Through this project, we are leveraging AI to empower persons with disabilities, their families and caregivers, by helping develop tech solutions using AI. This would go a long way in enabling them to secure employment and thrive in society." On the other hand, Qhala CEO Dr. Shikoh Gitau emphasized that: "this initiative is about resolving a long-standing challenge, that for too long, inclusion has been an afterthought in technology design; this project changes that narrative". She continued that: "By uniting government, global tech leaders, and disability experts, we are building an ecosystem where AI works for everyone from the outset. As Africa strides toward a digital future, we have a collective duty to ensure that the future leaves no one behind. Bernard Chiira, Founder and CEO of AT4D emphasized that "technology, if designed for inclusion can be the greatest equalizer. Building upon the AI for Special Needs Innovation Challenge in 2024, AT4D is proud to be part of this public private partnership to advance AI and assistive technology innovation for a more equitable Kenya". Stakeholders representing 12 African countries were present at the launch, during the Closing Ceremony of the Connected Africa Summit, highlighting a growing continental commitment to

ensuring that Artificial Intelligence is accessible, inclusive, and capable of unlocking opportunities for all particularly persons with disabilities. At the launch were the students who participated in the AI for Disability Hackathon in 2024. They were commended for their creativity and dedication to solving real-world challenges through technology. Continued support will be provided to help refine and scale these innovations into impactful, real-world solutions. The Kenya AI for Disability Project underscores a shared vision of leaving no one behind in the digital era. The initiative will focus on enhancing digital skills, supporting innovation ecosystems, and enabling meaningful participation in the digital economy for underserved communities. The project will serve as an incubator to scale the student led innovations into sustainable market ready solutions. Ultimately, this launch underscores a collective partner commitment to ensuring that Africa's digital transformation is a blue print for inclusive innovation and a more equitable digital future. Through sustained collaboration between government, private sector, and development partners, the initiative sets a strong foundation for inclusive innovation and a more equitable digital future across Africa. 🌍

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WHOLESALE NEWS

Swoop Holdings Signs Mobile Wholesale Partnership with TPG Telecom to Support Margin and Subscriber Growth

Swoop Holdings Ltd has entered into a mobile wholesale partnership with TPG Telecom Ltd (ASX:TPM), strengthening the company's mobile offering through its Moose Mobile subsidiary. The Mobile Virtual Network Operator (MVNO) wholesale agreement, effective June 16, 2026, gives Moose Mobile access to TPG's national mobile network on a wholesale basis. The agreement is expected to deliver a gross margin percentage improvement of 50% across FY27, FY28 and FY29, while supporting its target to grow its mobile subscriber base to more than 180,000 net subscribers over the next 3 years. The deal gives Swoop access to tier-1 network infrastructure while improving the economics of its mobile business. Moose Mobile is focused on value-seeking customers, a large segment of the Australian mobile market, and the new wholesale terms are expected to reduce average cost per user (ACPU). Swoop said this would expand gross margins while allowing the company to keep its existing customer proposition in place across residential, business and wholesale markets. The partnership also broadens Moose Mobile's addressable market through TPG's expanded network coverage and capability. The agreement

is expected to support growth in Swoop's mobile subscriber base from about 135,000 subscribers to more than 180,000 services in operation over the next three years. The company is also deploying a new billing

platform and launching eSIM at the same time, initiatives it says will improve the customer experience and support deeper relationships with households. 📶

MOOSE MOBILE & TPG TELECOM

MAJOR PARTNERSHIP ANNOUNCED

Swoop Subsidiary Moose Mobile Signs MVNO Wholesale Agreement with TPG Telecom

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ARTICLE

In the GCC, National AI Sovereignty Is Reshaping the Operator Investment Equation



Sylwia Kechiche
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OPENSIGNAL

This first Opensignal article for SAMENA Trends focuses on the GCC markets. Subsequent editions may carry analysis across the broader SA-ME-NA regional geography and beyond.

Operators everywhere are deploying AI. The use cases repeat across regions: autonomous fault detection, closed-loop remediation, predictive maintenance – and so do the obstacles: fragmented data, the long road from pilot to production, the gap between what gets announced and what users eventually feel.

In most markets, operators are making AI decisions largely on their own: they own the use case, they fund it, they absorb the risk, and they negotiate with technology vendors from that position. In the Gulf in particular, unlike in Europe where sovereignty debates are primarily about risk mitigation and regulatory autonomy – a distinction that was visible at GITEX Europe in Berlin, where conversations on spectrum strategy and sovereign cloud centered on constraint management and compliance rather than growth architecture – the framing starts from national economic ambition. Who controls AI infrastructure, and at what level of governance, are questions that have been answered as part of long-term growth strategy integrated with programs like Saudi Vision 2030 and UAE's national AI agenda.

Sovereignty is often framed as a constraint: a compliance burden, a requirement that slows things down. For the GCC frontrunners – principally KSA and the UAE, though Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman are pursuing national AI strategies of their own – it has functioned differently. The development of national AI strategies has settled many of the strategic questions around infrastructure control and investment direction, which changes the risk calculus for operators building on top of it. Across the wider SAMENA region, however, these questions are far from settled.

Why the investment equation is different

At DTW Ignite in June, TIM's CEO Pietro Labriola put the industry's position plainly: "Without connectivity you have zero cloud, and with zero cloud you have zero AI. But connectivity is no longer enough." His argument was that operators need to position themselves as trusted digital infrastructure rather than connectivity providers.

We see this shift already happening in the Middle East region where AI infrastructure investment and national AI strategy are structurally integrated. The conditions have been actively constructed at the policy level. The UAE established the UAE Artificial Intelligence and Data Authority - consolidating three government portfolios, as its centralized institution overseeing AI, data and digital government. It is central to the UAE's target of running 50% of federal government operations running on agentic AI within two years. In Saudi Arabia, the Saudi Authority for Data and Artificial Intelligence (SDAIA) is the institutional backbone behind sovereign AI data centers, Arabic-first language models, and national workforce programs.

At Opensignal, we provide insights on what users actually experience: consistency, availability, network speeds in real-world conditions. Our data shows that users with the worst network consistency are more likely to churn than those with the best experience.

That dynamic underpins operators' strategies:

- When stc agreed to form a joint venture with Humain – the Public Investment Fund's AI entity – to develop up to 1GW of AI-dedicated data center capacity, it wasn't just making an infrastructure bet. It was positioning itself as the designated carrier-neutral host for sovereign AI workloads in the Kingdom, directly aligned with Saudi Vision 2030. The risk profile on that investment is fundamentally different from a decision stc would make alone. Co-investment from national strategy changes what gets built, how fast, and on what timeline.

- e& UAE's Sovereign AI Platform, co-developed with the UAE Cyber Security Council and Open Innovation AI (OI), was built with the explicit requirement that regulated and high-priority workloads, data, and operational controls remain within UAE-controlled infrastructure.

From strategy to deployment: what's actually being built

Roadmaps matter only when they connect to operational commitments. Several operators in the region are now at that stage.

- e& UAE's autonomous network blueprint, built with TM Forum and targeting Level 4 autonomy by 2030, establishes vendor and partner expectations for years.
- Zain Group's 2026 roadmap puts concrete numbers on AI's operational impact: 2,268 fewer hours of outage annually in Kuwait, LLM-powered complaint classification across 14 categories in real time in Jordan.
- stc's case illustrates the underlying driver. Its core network elements have grown 2.5x in five years. Service categories are up 75%. The technology stack has doubled. At that level of complexity, manual oversight isn't just inefficient, it's inadequate. To address this challenge the operator built ICNMaster, the intelligent operations platform built to enable real-time topology visualization, cross-domain data correlation, anomaly detection, and closed-loop automation.

The harder problem

The data reality is well-documented: 75% of time in AI operations projects goes on data work, not AI. Level 3 or 4 autonomy cannot exist without governed, real-time, interoperable data – a point that anchored discussions at both MWC in March and DTW in June. Waiting for perfect data before deploying anything is slowing progress more than any technical gap. But deploying on fragmented data produces systems nobody trusts to act on, which defeats the purpose.

This is the gap that sovereign AI frameworks do not automatically solve. They determine where infrastructure sits and who governs it at the national level. They do not automatically resolve the internal data fragmentation that most operators are still working through. Omantel's AI Centre of Excellence which was built explicitly to provide integrated data environments is a clear acknowledgment that data federation, not just data collection, is what actually unlocks the use cases. Data federation (keeping data where it lives but aggregating on demand) is emerging as the architecture answer across the industry, partly because full centralization is proving too slow and too expensive. The operators who treat data as strategic infrastructure will move faster than those still treating it as exhaust.

At Opensignal, we provide insights on what users actually experience: consistency, availability, network speeds in real-world conditions. Our data shows that users with the worst network consistency are more likely to churn than those with the best experience. Operators are sitting on the information and data to close that gap. The question is whether AI in network operations actually translates into something users feel, or remains an efficiency improvement that never reaches the experience layer.

In the MENA 5G analysis we published last year, the GCC led clearly on 5G maturity – speed uplift from 4G to 5G was 7.3x in Saudi Arabia, 6.8x in the UAE. But our Global Network Excellence Index captures a more complete picture: infrastructure quality and consistent user experience don't move at the same pace.

The GCC operators who are furthest ahead share recognizable characteristics: data governance sorted early, people invested in before tools deployed, use cases chosen for clear ROI over headline value. The region's nationally-backed infrastructure gives operators a head start, but the discipline to build on it is what will make the difference. 📍

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TECHNOLOGY NEWS

Grameenphone Becomes First Bangladeshi Operator to Deploy 700 MHz Spectrum Nationwide

Grameenphone has become the first mobile operator in Bangladesh to deploy 700 MHz spectrum nationwide, marking a significant milestone in the country's telecommunications sector and strengthening the foundation for improved mobile broadband coverage and digital inclusion. The deployment enables the operator to enhance network reach, improve indoor connectivity, and deliver more efficient mobile broadband services across both urban and rural areas. Low-band spectrum such as 700 MHz is widely regarded as one of the most valuable frequency assets for mobile operators due to its superior propagation characteristics and ability to cover larger geographic areas with fewer network sites. The rollout comes as demand for mobile data continues to grow across Bangladesh, driven by rising smartphone adoption, digital services usage, online education, e-commerce, fintech applications, and streaming consumption. Expanding network capacity and improving coverage remain critical priorities as operators seek to support the country's growing digital economy. The 700 MHz band is particularly important

for extending connectivity into underserved and remote regions. Signals in this frequency range travel longer distances and penetrate buildings more effectively than higher-frequency spectrum bands, making them ideal for expanding mobile broadband availability while improving user experiences. For Grameenphone, the nationwide deployment strengthens its network infrastructure and supports ongoing efforts to enhance service quality. Operators globally are increasingly leveraging low-band spectrum to improve coverage and create stronger foundations for future network evolution, including next-generation mobile technologies. The development also aligns with Bangladesh's broader digital transformation ambitions. Reliable broadband connectivity is viewed as a key enabler of economic growth, financial inclusion, digital government services, and technology adoption. Expanding access to high-quality mobile networks remains an important component of national digital development strategies. Spectrum has become one of the most valuable resources within the telecommunications industry. As mobile data traffic

continues to rise, operators require access to a balanced mix of low-, mid-, and high-band frequencies to meet performance, coverage, and capacity requirements. The 700 MHz band plays a particularly strategic role because of its ability to efficiently extend network reach. The deployment is expected to support improved customer experiences across a range of applications, including video streaming, mobile commerce, digital payments, remote work, and cloud-based services. Better coverage can also contribute to narrowing digital divides by improving access to online opportunities in rural communities. For Bangladesh's telecommunications sector, the rollout highlights continued investment in network modernization and infrastructure expansion. Operators are increasingly focused on strengthening network quality as digital services become more deeply integrated into daily life and economic activity. As connectivity requirements continue to evolve, spectrum deployment strategies are expected to remain central to the country's efforts to expand digital access and support long-term technology growth.



Recycle Your Device: Over 400K Devices Collected by 2025

The Communications, Space and Technology Commission (CST) announced the results of the "Recycle Your Device" initiative since its launch until the end of 2025. The initiative has collected more than 400K devices, with a market value exceeding 120 Million SAR, driven by wide participation from public and private sector entities and over 40K individuals. This has helped expand the initiative's reach and strengthen its environmental and social impact. Through the initiative, more than 960 tons of devices have been recycled or repaired, and over 120 educational institutions and charities have benefited from the donated devices. This comes as part of CST's ongoing efforts to promote environmental sustainability and the circular economy, enhance digital inclusion and social responsibility, reduce e-waste in the Kingdom, and enable wider access to electronic devices to our community. "Recycle Your Device" is one of the notable programs launched by CST in 2022, in collaboration with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), the National Center for Waste Management (MWAN), and several public and private sector partners. The initiative aims to reduce the environmental impact of electronic devices, promote sustainable practices, and raise community awareness about the importance of recycling.



Iraq Joins WorldLink Transit Cable Project to Strengthen Regional Connectivity

Iraq is set to become part of the WorldLink transit cable project, reinforcing the country's ambitions to strengthen digital infrastructure, expand international connectivity capacity, and position itself more strategically within regional telecommunications networks. The project reflects growing investment across the Middle East in subsea and terrestrial cable infrastructure as countries seek to support rising demand for cloud services, AI ecosystems, enterprise connectivity, and high-capacity internet traffic. Participation in major transit cable projects is increasingly viewed as strategically important for strengthening digital economy readiness and improving long-term connectivity resilience. Global internet traffic growth, cloud computing expansion, streaming services, and AI-driven data demand are accelerating investments in international telecommunications infrastructure. Transit cable systems

play a central role in supporting cross-border connectivity, data transmission, cloud platform access, and digital service reliability. For Iraq, participation in the WorldLink project is expected to improve connectivity capabilities while strengthening integration into regional and global digital infrastructure ecosystems. Countries across the Gulf and wider Middle East are increasingly competing to position themselves as strategic digital transit and connectivity hubs linking Asia, Europe, and Africa. Iraq has been steadily increasing focus on telecommunications modernization and broadband infrastructure development as part of broader digital transformation initiatives. The country's digital economy ambitions depend heavily on improving network resilience, internet quality, and access to scalable international bandwidth infrastructure. Connectivity infrastructure projects are also becoming

important for attracting technology investment and supporting future cloud, fintech, enterprise, and public sector digital ecosystems. The expansion of international cable infrastructure helps improve redundancy, reduce latency, and strengthen operational resilience within national telecommunications environments. The Middle East remains a strategically important geography for global internet infrastructure due to its position between major international digital markets. Governments and telecom operators across the region are expanding investments in subsea cables, terrestrial fiber routes, data centers, and cloud infrastructure to strengthen regional digital competitiveness. Transit infrastructure is increasingly tied not only to telecommunications growth, but also to broader goals around digital sovereignty, economic diversification, and AI readiness.

TP-Link Announces Archer 8, Its First Wi-Fi 8 Router Platform Designed for Real-World Reliability

TP-Link Systems Inc., a global provider of consumer networking products, announced Archer 8, the company's first Wi-Fi 8 router platform built around the emerging IEEE 802.11bn specification focused on ultra-high reliability. Scheduled for launch in October 2026, Archer 8 represents TP-Link's next step toward delivering more stable, lower-latency connectivity designed for increasingly dense and demanding home environments. As the number of connected devices inside the home continues to grow, TP-Link believes the next generation of Wi-Fi must move beyond peak theoretical speed and focus on improving reliability under real-world conditions. Archer 8 is designed to address common frustrations users experience, including inconsistent speeds across rooms, congestion from multiple connected devices, unstable mesh roaming, and latency spikes during gaming, video calls, and streaming. "For years, Wi-Fi innovation has been measured by peak theoretical speeds," said Jeff Barney, President of TP-Link Systems Inc. "But what users actually care about is consistency. Archer 8 is designed to deliver exactly that: lower latency, better performance under interference, and more stable connectivity in real world environments. "TP-Link conducted controlled internal lab testing comparing early Wi-Fi 8 implementations against Wi-Fi 7 under simulated real-world home conditions. The company believes these early results demonstrate one of the clearest examples yet of how Wi-Fi 8 is designed to improve actual user experience beyond theoretical peak speeds*.



HUMAIN and Accenture Partner to Accelerate Large-Scale AI Adoption Across Saudi Arabia



Saudi Arabia's AI-focused company HUMAIN has partnered with Accenture to accelerate artificial intelligence adoption at scale across the Kingdom, reinforcing Saudi Arabia's growing push to position itself as a regional and global AI powerhouse. The collaboration is expected to support enterprise AI deployment, digital transformation initiatives, and the expansion of advanced technology ecosystems aligned with the Kingdom's Vision 2030 strategy. The partnership reflects rising momentum across the Gulf as governments and enterprises rapidly invest in AI infrastructure, cloud ecosystems, and large-scale digital modernization programs. The partnership between HUMAIN and

Accenture is aimed at helping organizations scale AI integration across operations, services, and industry environments. Enterprises worldwide are increasingly adopting AI technologies to improve operational efficiency, automate workflows, enhance analytics capabilities, and strengthen customer experience ecosystems. Saudi Arabia has emerged as one of the region's most aggressive investors in AI development, digital infrastructure, cloud computing, and smart economy initiatives. The Kingdom continues expanding efforts to build sovereign AI capabilities while attracting global technology expertise and strategic partnerships. Governments across the Gulf increasingly view AI as a foundational driver of economic diversification, productivity growth, and future competitiveness. Large-scale AI adoption requires significant investment in compute infrastructure, cloud platforms, talent development, cybersecurity, and enterprise modernization frameworks. Accenture's involvement highlights the growing role of global consulting and technology firms in supporting national AI transformation agendas across emerging markets. The expansion of enterprise AI ecosystems is also expected to accelerate demand for advanced digital infrastructure, data platforms, and intelligent operational systems.

UAE Launches Cyber Factory to Strengthen National Digital Defence and Sovereignty

The UAE has launched a new Cyber Factory initiative aimed at strengthening the country's cyber resilience, accelerating local cybersecurity capability development, and reinforcing digital sovereignty as cyber threats grow increasingly sophisticated across critical sectors. The initiative was unveiled during the Gulf Information Security Expo and Conference (GISEC) Global 2026 and is designed to support the UAE's long-term ambitions around secure digital infrastructure, sovereign technology capabilities, and advanced cyber defence readiness. According to officials, the Cyber Factory will focus on developing cybersecurity products, supporting local innovation, training national talent, and enabling collaboration between public institutions and private sector technology players. The platform is expected to contribute to the UAE's wider digital economy strategy while reducing dependence on external cybersecurity ecosystems. The launch comes as governments across the Middle East accelerate investments in cyber resilience amid rising concerns around ransomware, AI-enabled attacks, critical infrastructure protection, and geopolitical cyber risk. The UAE has increasingly positioned cybersecurity as a national security and economic priority alongside its broader push into AI, cloud computing, smart cities, fintech, and digital government services. Industry

stakeholders at GISEC highlighted that cyber defence is becoming foundational to the region's next phase of digital transformation, particularly as telecom operators, hyperscalers, banks, and government entities expand digital infrastructure footprints across the Gulf. The Cyber Factory initiative is also expected to support startup development and local cybersecurity intellectual property creation, aligning with broader regional efforts to cultivate sovereign technology ecosystems rather than relying exclusively on imported cyber technologies. The UAE has emerged as

one of the Middle East's most active markets for cybersecurity investment, driven by rapid digitization, expanding attack surfaces, and increasing enterprise adoption of AI-enabled platforms and connected infrastructure. Analysts note that sovereign cyber capability development is becoming strategically important not only for national defence but also for protecting critical digital assets tied to energy, telecoms, financial services, transportation, and smart infrastructure initiatives.



Pakistan's OTT Platforms Shift Toward Ecosystem Advertising as Competition Intensifies

Over-the-top (OTT) streaming platforms in Pakistan are increasingly adopting ecosystem advertising strategies to expand audience reach, improve user engagement, and create new revenue streams as competition in the digital entertainment market continues to intensify. The shift reflects a broader transformation in digital media consumption, where streaming services are moving beyond content distribution to become integrated advertising and engagement ecosystems. As subscriber acquisition costs rise

and audience attention becomes more fragmented, OTT platforms are exploring new ways to monetize content and strengthen relationships with both viewers and advertisers. Pakistan's digital entertainment sector has experienced rapid growth in recent years, driven by expanding smartphone adoption, affordable mobile data packages, improved broadband connectivity, and a growing appetite for on-demand video content. Local and international streaming platforms are competing for increasingly digital-first

audiences, creating pressure to diversify revenue models beyond subscriptions alone. Ecosystem advertising involves integrating advertising opportunities across multiple digital touchpoints, including streaming content, connected applications, social channels, audience data platforms, loyalty programs, and partner networks. This approach enables advertisers to reach consumers through more personalized and measurable campaigns while allowing platforms to maximize the value of their user base. For

OTT providers, first-party audience data has become a strategic asset. As privacy regulations evolve and third-party tracking becomes less effective, streaming platforms are increasingly leveraging user insights to deliver targeted advertising experiences and improve campaign performance. This data-driven approach is helping advertisers reach audiences more efficiently while supporting platform monetization efforts. Brands are seeking alternatives to traditional digital advertising channels and are increasingly allocating budgets toward connected TV, streaming services, and digital video platforms. These environments often provide higher engagement levels and more premium content experiences than conventional online advertising formats. Pakistan's growing digital population is making the market increasingly attractive to advertisers. Consumers are spending

more time on streaming platforms, mobile applications, and digital entertainment services, creating new opportunities for brands to connect with audiences through content-driven experiences. The evolution of OTT advertising is also being supported by advances in analytics, artificial intelligence, and audience segmentation technologies. These tools enable platforms to better understand viewer behavior, optimize advertising placements, and deliver more relevant experiences to users. Platforms are increasingly positioning themselves not just as content providers but as broader digital engagement environments capable of supporting commerce, advertising, and audience interaction. The trend is expected to accelerate as digital video consumption continues to rise and advertisers seek more effective ways to engage consumers in an increasingly connected media environment.

New Splunk Research Reveals Downtime is a Systemic Business Crisis

Cisco announced the release of Splunk's latest research, *The Hidden Costs of Downtime*, revealing the aggregate cost of unplanned downtime for Global 2000 companies has surged to \$600 billion annually – a 50% increase in just two years. In partnership with Oxford Economics, the Splunk study shows that the financial toll of an outage is immediate, severe, and potentially long-lasting. Downtime has become a systemic business crisis that threatens revenue, brand equity and shareholder value, costing an organization \$95 million in lost revenue annually. This is nearly twice the level seen in 2024. "Downtime is inevitable; prolonged disruption is not," said Kamal Hathi, SVP and GM, Splunk, a Cisco company. "The most resilient organizations are not the ones with the most tools or the biggest vision for AI. They are the ones that align technology with business outcomes, empower people with context, and design systems that bend, but do not break, under pressure." Technology executives increasingly view the consequences of an outage as more severe. Publicly disclosing a data breach is now considered the most severe hidden cost, with 71% of technology executives rating it as very or prohibitively disruptive, up from 23% in 2024. Furthermore, downtime triggers a chain reaction of hidden costs, including:

- **Financial and Market Erosion:** The study found that the average cost of downtime has reached \$15,000 per minute. In addition, organizations see an average 3.4% drop in stock price following a downtime event.
- **Customer Churn:** Eighty-one percent of technology leaders cite the loss of customers as a consequence of downtime, with 47% admitting customers are often or very often the first to detect service degradation or outages.
- **Escalating Ransomware Costs:** Ransomware payouts have nearly tripled since 2024, now reaching \$40 million on average, making them one of the most significant direct financial burdens.
- **Regulatory Exposure:** Regulatory fines have reached an average of \$51 million per organization, with 57% of technology executives now viewing these penalties as very or prohibitively disruptive.
- **Operational Drag:** A staggering 89% of tech leaders cite the



need for large numbers of personnel to fix issues. Nearly all (90%) tech leaders report increased demand for customer support with 76% of finance and 74% of marketing executives feeling the pressure as well.

- **Brand Recovery:** Nearly 20% of marketing professionals report that it takes an entire quarter to recover brand health following remediation.

About one-third (36%) of security leaders admit that downtime is often or very often misclassified as an IT issue, which can give attackers a critical head start. A lack of shared context complicates resolution, as only 38% of technology executives report consistently identifying the root cause of a downtime incident. The perceived frequency of cybersecurity-related downtime caused by SaaS and other third-party application issues has nearly tripled since 2024, with 56% of security leaders now experiencing these issues often or very often. Maintaining basic cyber hygiene and modernizing legacy infrastructure to replace outdated, unpatchable technology remain foundational to preventing unplanned downtime. 📌



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SAMENA Regulatory Snapshot

Policy & Regulatory Reading from This Edition

Operationalizing Strategic Autonomy: The Mid-2026 Shift Toward Intelligence Systems and Outcome-driven Oversight

This edition observes a regulatory environment shaped by AI infrastructure, data control, subsea capacity, satellite connectivity, network automation, and service reliability. GSR-26 in Ankara placed emphasis on evidence-based regulation, cross-sector coordination, responsible experimentation, regional and international cooperation, and practical regulation that supports public-interest delivery. Across this edition, the main regulatory issue is practical: how markets govern digital infrastructure that supports connectivity, compute, security, public services, and economic activity.

The SAMENA Council's Regulatory Dashboard provides a concise reading of selected developments over the last several weeks and

their policy relevance for the SA-ME-NA region. It is intended to support common understanding among policymakers, regulators, operators, technology providers, infrastructure players, and wider ecosystem stakeholders.

The May-June 2026 edition points to a regulatory environment where digital infrastructure is being judged by performance, resilience, security, and readiness for AI-enabled services.

Dashboard Overview		
Regulatory Area	What This Edition Shows	Policy Relevance
Governance frameworks	GSR-26 emphasizes evidence-based regulation, cross-sector coordination, responsible experimentation, and public-interest outcomes.	Frameworks need clear expectations, proportionate supervision, practical compliance routes, and institutional coordination.
AI readiness	AI services are increasing the importance of latency, data location, compute access, cybersecurity, and network quality.	Broadband and service-quality measures may need to reflect application performance, infrastructure readiness, and trusted data handling.
Sovereign infrastructure	AI platforms, data centers, subsea cables, private networks, and secure cloud environments are receiving stronger policy attention.	Investment policy, security requirements, and infrastructure planning need to remain predictable, evidence-based, and coordinated.
Hybrid connectivity	Satellite, NTN, D2D, terrestrial networks, and private networks are becoming more relevant to national connectivity planning.	Licensing, spectrum coexistence, emergency access, service continuity, and operator partnerships require closer policy alignment.
Legal modernization	Licensing reforms, long-term operating rights, digital identity, cloud privacy, and data rules are being updated in several markets.	Modern legal frameworks can support investment certainty, consumer protection, market readiness, and cross-border service confidence.
Infrastructure resilience	Network outages, cyber threats, subsea exposure, power dependency, and operational complexity are receiving greater attention.	Resilience is a shared concern across telecom, cloud, energy, cybersecurity, industry, emergency planning, and public services.

1. Top Regulatory Indicators

AI readiness is entering digital-inclusion policy. AI-based services depend on network responsiveness, local data capability, compute access, cybersecurity, and reliable connectivity. Coverage remains important, while regulators and operators are also paying closer attention to latency, service quality, and the ability of networks to support real-time applications. Regulatory reading: digital-inclusion frameworks may need practical measures of service performance, trusted data capability, and infrastructure readiness.

Sovereign infrastructure is receiving stronger policy attention. This edition covers national AI platforms, data-center investment, subsea cable systems, private 5G deployments, and satellite initiatives. These assets support digital services, public-sector operations, industrial activity, and economic continuity. Regulatory reading: security and investment rules need to protect national interests while allowing cross-border financing, technology participation, and regional scale.

Outcome-based regulation is gaining practical relevance. The GSR-26 Best Practice Guidelines place emphasis on evidence-based regulation, coordination across sectors, responsible experimentation, and public-interest outcomes. This reflects the growing complexity of digital markets. Regulatory reading: supervision should remain clear, proportionate, and practical so operators and technology providers understand expectations, evidence requirements, and compliance routes.

Network stability is an economic and regulatory issue. Unplanned downtime, cyber incidents, and network complexity can affect businesses, public services, customers, and industrial operations. This places more attention on automation, monitoring, resilience planning, and service-quality oversight. Regulatory reading: reliability and continuity should be treated as infrastructure-policy concerns as well as provider-operational responsibilities.

Satellite and direct-to-device services require early regulatory preparation. NTN, D2D, satellite IoT, and MSS developments are creating questions around licensing, spectrum coexistence, emergency access, consumer protection, lawful presence, and terrestrial-satellite integration. Regulatory reading: regulators may need clearer approaches before services scale across borders and across existing mobile markets.

Regulatory capability is becoming part of market readiness. AI, cloud, cybersecurity, spectrum, infrastructure resilience, and data governance are placing new demands on public-sector and operator teams. Regulatory academies, sandboxes, testing environments, and cross-agency working processes can help markets prepare. Regulatory reading: rules alone will not be sufficient unless institutions and industry teams can apply them consistently.

2. Policy Implications

Policy Theme	Implication
Integrated infrastructure planning	Spectrum, AI, cloud, data centers, cybersecurity, satellite connectivity, private networks, and resilience planning need closer coordination.
Predictable supervision	Clear rules, proportionate enforcement, transparent evidence requirements, and practical compliance processes can support investor confidence and industry readiness.
AI governance	AI policy needs to account for data control, compute availability, model use, cybersecurity, auditability, energy readiness, and infrastructure capability.
Hybrid connectivity	Terrestrial, satellite, and direct-to-device connectivity require coordination on licensing, spectrum use, interoperability, emergency access, and service continuity.
Technical consumer protection	Digital identity, cloud privacy, device integrity, online safety, fraud prevention, messaging controls, and service reliability are technical regulatory issues.
Resilience planning	Networks, subsea cables, data centers, energy supply, satellite systems, cyber protection, and operational recovery need to be assessed together.
Regulatory capacity	Authorities and operators need stronger technical capability to evaluate AI-enabled networks, data use, automation, cloud dependencies, and resilience claims.

The main policy reading from this edition is that digital infrastructure requires stronger coordination across policy, technology, investment, and operational domains. Spectrum planning affects network investment and device ecosystems. AI ambitions affect data, compute, cloud, energy, and cybersecurity requirements. Satellite connectivity affects licensing, coverage, emergency access, and operator partnerships. Data-center growth affects energy planning, investment frameworks, and sovereign infrastructure capability.

3. Questions for Regulators and Policymakers

Area	Practical Question
Infrastructure	Do national plans account for the latency, data capability, compute access, energy readiness, and service reliability needed to support AI-enabled services?
Supervision	Do regulatory frameworks provide clear expectations, proportionate enforcement, transparent evidence requirements, and practical routes for correcting compliance gaps?
Spectrum	Are spectrum roadmaps aligned with WRC-27 preparation, device ecosystems, operator deployment plans, and satellite-to-device studies?
Institutional coordination	Is there a working process to align telecom, data, AI, cybersecurity, cloud, energy, emergency planning, and infrastructure authorities?
Consumer protection	Are consumer-protection measures technically enforceable across devices, cloud services, digital identity, messaging, online safety, fraud prevention, and service reliability?
Resilience	Are resilience assessments covering terrestrial networks, subsea cables, satellite systems, data centers, distributed compute, energy dependency, cybersecurity, and recovery readiness?
Market readiness	Are licensing, investment-screening, sandbox, and data-governance processes clear enough to support deployment while protecting national priorities?

4. Operator Implications

Readiness Area	Why It Matters
AI-enabled operations	Automation, monitoring, analytics, and faster fault resolution are becoming important as networks become larger and more complex.
Industrial 5G and private networks	Managed private 5G deployments, including port and industrial use cases, show the role of operators in enterprise and critical-infrastructure services.
Digital resilience	Service reliability, cybersecurity readiness, redundancy, recovery processes, and continuity planning are increasingly tied to business confidence and public-service continuity.
Sovereign infrastructure role	Operator networks intersect with AI workloads, cloud environments, local data requirements, government platforms, satellite systems, and critical infrastructure.
Regulatory evidence	Operators may need stronger evidence on service quality, outage management, cybersecurity readiness, resilience investment, data handling, and consumer safeguards.
Regulatory capability	Teams need stronger understanding of AI, data, cybersecurity, spectrum, infrastructure, consumer protection, and cross-border service obligations.
Customer trust	Reliable service, clear safeguards, secure access, and responsive operations are becoming part of market confidence.

Operators remain central to the developments covered in this edition. Their role continues to expand across connectivity provision, enterprise digital capability, AI-supported operations, infrastructure resilience, customer protection, and national digital readiness. The practical implication is readiness: operators will need stronger operational evidence, clearer resilience plans, and better coordination with regulators and technology partners.

5. Regional Coordination Watch

Coordination Area	Regional Relevance
WRC-27 alignment	Regional coordination can support clearer positions on spectrum for mobile satellite-to-device connectivity, future capacity needs, and service coexistence.
Subsea and terrestrial resilience	Cross-border cable systems and terrestrial networks require coordination on protection, redundancy, repair readiness, restoration procedures, and investment planning.
Sovereign AI and data	AI platforms, data policies, cloud privacy, cybersecurity, and compute availability increasingly affect regional trust and digital-service growth.
Hybrid connectivity	Satellite, NTN, D2D, and terrestrial networks raise shared questions around licensing, coverage, interoperability, emergency access, and operator partnership models.
Legal modernization	Licensing reform, long-term operating rights, digital-government cooperation, and data-policy clarity can support market readiness and infrastructure investment.
Consumer safety	Fraud, device integrity, identity systems, messaging governance, cloud privacy, and online safety require technical and regulatory cooperation.

The SA-ME-NA region is diverse, but many of its infrastructure dependencies are shared. Coordinated approaches can support scale, interoperability, investment confidence, and stronger participation in global standards and spectrum processes. Coordination is especially relevant where services, traffic, cyber risks, satellite coverage, cables, and data flows cross national borders.

6. WRC / ITU / Spectrum Watch

U6GHz execution: The UAE's commercial U6GHz milestone provides a regional reference point for 5G-Advanced capacity and wider ecosystem readiness.

WRC-27 Agenda Item 1.13: ITU-R studies are considering possible new MSS allocations for direct connectivity between space stations and IMT user equipment.

European 2 GHz MSS process: The European Commission has proposed a new

EU-level selection and authorization process for use of the harmonized 2 GHz MSS band after current rights expire in 2027.

Low-band expansion: Bangladesh's 700 MHz deployment by Grameenphone highlights the continued importance of low-band spectrum for indoor coverage and rural connectivity.

V2X spectrum: India's licensing waiver for vehicle communication systems in

the 5.9 GHz band shows how spectrum policy can support vehicle communication, road-safety applications, and intelligent transport development.

Future spectrum planning: AI traffic, uplink demand, enterprise services, network responsiveness, satellite integration, service continuity, and device ecosystems are becoming more relevant to spectrum discussions.

Closing Reading

The May-June 2026 edition points to a regulatory environment where digital infrastructure is being judged by performance, resilience, security, and readiness for AI-enabled services. The main issue for the SA-ME-NA region is coordination: spectrum planning, AI governance, satellite integration, subsea

resilience, data policy, cybersecurity, and operator readiness now affect one another more directly.

For regulators and policymakers, the priority is to keep frameworks practical, evidence-based, and predictable while allowing infrastructure investment and

technology deployment to move forward. For operators and infrastructure players, the priority is to show stronger operational evidence around reliability, resilience, cybersecurity, service quality, and readiness to support AI, cloud, enterprise, satellite, and public-sector requirements. 📡

REGULATORY NEWS

Establishment of a Dedicated Telecom CSIRT in Jordan

The Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC) has convened industry stakeholders to discuss the establishment of a dedicated Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT) for the telecommunications sector, marking a significant step toward strengthening cybersecurity resilience across the country's critical communications infrastructure. The proposed telecom-specific CSIRT would enhance the sector's ability to detect, coordinate and respond to cyber threats affecting mobile networks, internet services and other

critical telecommunications infrastructure. The initiative reflects the growing recognition that telecom operators are central to national cybersecurity as digital transformation accelerates across both public and private sectors. The discussions align with global efforts to strengthen cyber resilience by establishing specialized incident response capabilities for critical infrastructure industries. Telecommunications networks form the backbone of modern digital economies, supporting government services, financial systems, healthcare, transportation and

enterprise operations. As dependence on digital connectivity grows, telecom operators are increasingly targeted by cyberattacks ranging from ransomware and distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks to supply chain compromises and network intrusions. Establishing a dedicated CSIRT enables faster detection, coordinated response and improved information sharing across the industry. Sector-specific cybersecurity capabilities are becoming an essential component of national digital resilience strategies.



Iraq Advances Telecom Infrastructure to Become a Regional Digital Connectivity Gateway

Iraq is accelerating investment in telecommunications infrastructure with a series of strategic projects aimed at transforming the country into a regional digital gateway linking the Gulf, the

Middle East, Europe and Asia through high-capacity fiber and international data transit networks. The initiatives include expanding cross-border fiber connectivity, strengthening international internet

transit routes and modernizing national telecommunications infrastructure to position Iraq as a key hub for regional digital traffic.

5G Technology Pilot Launch in Afghanistan

The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology says it has launched fifth-generation (5G) internet services in Kabul for the first time on a pilot basis, marking a major step in the country's telecommunications development. The ministry announced that the capacity of 74 telecommunications antennas in Kabul has been upgraded to 5G technology as part of a trial project. Officials said the initiative is currently in its experimental

phase and will be expanded to other parts of the country once infrastructure development is completed and the pilot phase is successfully concluded. The development was discussed during a meeting between Hamdullah Naumani and Aliullah Sarwari, head of Afghan Wireless Communication Company (AWCC), one of Afghanistan's major telecom operators. According to Afghan Wireless officials, 46 new telecom sites have been

constructed and put into operation since the beginning of 2026, while 186 additional sites are currently under construction to further strengthen network coverage. Company representatives also expressed appreciation for what they described as continued support from the ministry's leadership in facilitating operations and improving telecommunications services nationwide.

Algeria's Engagement in Global AI Governance in Geneva

Algeria participated in the Global Dialogue on Artificial Intelligence Governance in Geneva, with Minister of Post and Telecommunications Sid Ali Zerrouki reaffirming the country's commitment to responsible AI development, international cooperation and inclusive digital transformation. Held alongside the AI for Good Global Summit and other international discussions in Geneva, the dialogue brought together government leaders, international organizations, industry experts and policymakers to examine the governance frameworks needed to ensure artificial intelligence is developed and deployed responsibly. Algeria's participation reflects its growing engagement in global AI policymaking as the country advances its national digital transformation strategy and expands investments in AI, digital infrastructure and technology innovation. As AI adoption accelerates across governments

and industries, establishing effective governance frameworks has become a strategic priority. International discussions are increasingly focused on developing

policies that promote innovation while addressing issues such as transparency, accountability, cybersecurity, privacy and ethical AI deployment.



FCC Greenlights EchoStar's \$40bn Spectrum Sale to SpaceX, AT&T

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC)'s Wireless Telecommunications Bureau and Space Bureau have granted approval to EchoStar to sell its spectrum to SpaceX and AT&T. EchoStar agreed to sell 50MHz of spectrum in the 3.45GHz and 600MHz bands to AT&T for around \$23 billion in August last year. This was followed in a month later by a \$17 billion

sale of 65MHz of AWS-4 and H-block spectrum licenses to SpaceX. AT&T, which is already using the spectrum in question to improve its network performance for mobile and fixed wireless access (FWA) customers under a licensing deal with EchoStar, will be required to accelerate its 600MHz network deployment. SpaceX, on the other hand, has received FCC waivers

that would allow it to use the spectrum for terrestrial, space-based, or hybrid services. EchoStar's spectrum saga, perhaps confusingly, has its origins in the 2020 merger of T-Mobile and Sprint. As part of the deal's regulatory conditions, EchoStar's sister company Dish Mobile agreed to buy Sprint's mobile virtual network operator Boost Mobile, pledging

to become the fourth national mobile operator (MVNO). It soon became clear, however, that this was merely a pipe dream, with Dish failing to build the required network infrastructure and struggling under substantial debt. Ultimately, this led to EchoStar merging with Dish in 2023,

with the move largely seen as an attempt to balance the books for both companies. EchoStar was thus left with a large tranche of spectrum that it would struggle to use. The spectrum sale, therefore, represents a significant financial lifeline for EchoStar. In September, EchoStar said it expects

to hold around \$24.1 billion in total cash after the deal, which it will use to repay debt. Following the deal, EchoStar will still offer mobile services to customers via a mobile virtual network operator (MVNO) agreement with AT&T.

Argentina Orders Telecom to Divest Customers and Spectrum to Secure Telefónica Deal



Argentina's competition watchdog the Autoridad Nacional de la Competencia (ANC) has ordered Telecom Argentina and Telefónica to surrender customers and spectrum to a third party in order to gain approval for their proposed merger. Telefónica announced its US\$1.3 billion sale of its Argentine unit to Telecom in February 2025, drawing criticism from rivals and prompting President Javier Milei to order a detailed review into whether the deal would create an overly concentrated market. The transaction would combine Telefónica's Movistar brand with Telecom's Personal business, creating the country's largest mobile operator. According to ANC figures, market leader Claro currently holds a 41.8% share of Argentina's mobile market, followed by Personal with 33.8% and Movistar with 24.4%. Combined, Personal and Movistar would control 58.2% of subscribers nationwide. The ANC

said the transaction would reduce the number of independent mobile network operators from three to two and, without remedies, create a duopoly in mobile services. To preserve competition, the authority has ordered Telecom to transfer six million active mobile customers to an independent buyer – four million in the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area and two million elsewhere in the country. The transfer must include contracts, numbering resources and call history records, with no cost imposed on customers. Spectrum required to continue serving those subscribers must also be transferred, with the ANC treating the customer and spectrum divestments as inseparable. Telecommunications regulator ENACOM will be responsible for designing the technical framework for the transfer. The regulator also imposed measures intended to help establish a viable third mobile

operator. Telecom must provide network-sharing arrangements including roaming, co-location and radio access network (RAN) sharing, enabling the new entrant to use existing infrastructure while building out its own network. These arrangements will remain in place for a minimum of three years and can be extended until the new operator has a fully operational network. The entrant will also have the option to acquire mobile infrastructure assets, including sites, antennas and associated equipment. Competition concerns were also identified in fixed broadband markets where Telecom and Telefónica operate overlapping networks. As a result, the ANC ordered the divestment of Movistar's residential broadband customer base in 28 locations across Buenos Aires City, Buenos Aires Province, Mendoza, Neuquén and Río Negro, affecting approximately 211,400 subscribers. In Buenos Aires City, the transfer must include Telefónica's fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) network. In areas where structural remedies were deemed impractical, the regulator imposed behavioral measures including bans on service degradation, mandatory bundling and discriminatory pricing practices. The ANC also introduced safeguards in corporate and wholesale telecommunications markets, including non-discrimination obligations, restrictions on exclusivity agreements and guarantees that existing wholesale contracts and internet exchange arrangements will continue. Telecom will have 18 months to complete the required divestments and comply with the conditions. An independent monitoring agent, working alongside the ANC, will oversee implementation.

Global Regulators Chart Course for Resilient and Inclusive Digital Future

Telecommunications regulators from around the world endorsed a comprehensive set of guidelines to navigate digital challenges and opportunities at the Global Symposium for Regulators 2026 (GSR-26). The new guidelines, 2026 Best Practice Guidelines: Regulatory Governance Essentials, are a digital regulation toolkit to address emerging technologies, infrastructure resilience, youth safety, disaster management and the persistent global digital divide. Organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and held this year in Türkiye, the annual symposium issues guidelines to help regulators govern the complex digital market with clarity, evidence and coherence. "Regulators today must do more than oversee markets – they must shape the conditions for innovation, investment and meaningful connectivity," said ITU Secretary-General Doreen Bogdan-Martin. "At GSR-26, regulators rose to the challenge of navigating these new, fast-moving digital frontiers with confidence, agility and trust."

A blueprint for digital transformation

The regulatory guidelines endorsed at GSR-26 outline innovative approaches to advance evidence-based regulation, stronger cross-sector coordination, responsible experimentation, and regional

and international cooperation. In support of the guidelines, ITU also presented new tools to support sustainable digital development for all:

- Connectivity Planning Platform – for governments to plan, prioritize and accelerate the deployment of digital infrastructure.
- Global Economic Model and Study Tool – to help regulators assess the socio-economic impact of connectivity investments.
- Digital Readiness Framework – to evaluate the maturity of legal, policy and governance frameworks for digital transformation.
- "Regulatory perspectives for satellite communications to connect underserved communities" – a report identifying mechanisms to leverage satellite technology for universal and meaningful connectivity, particularly for vulnerable populations and public facilities.

"The 2026 Best Practice Guidelines reflect our shared commitment to fostering resilient, inclusive and future-ready digital ecosystems," said Ömer Abdullah Karagözoğlu, Chair of GSR-26 and President of Türkiye's Information and Communication Technologies Authority

(BTK). "In a world shaped by rapid technological transformation, it is essential to have international cooperation, adaptive regulation and shared responsibility to ensure that digital innovation benefits all societies."

A legacy of global collaboration

Since its inception in 2000, the Global Symposium for Regulators series has provided an annual platform to guide countries toward harmonized, forward-looking regulation in the rapidly evolving digital era. "GSR-26 has delivered vital guidance for regulators navigating the complexities of today's digital landscape," said Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director of ITU's Telecommunication Development Bureau. "The discussions held will allow regulators to address emerging challenges in a manner that is constructive, forward-looking and collaborative. I thank the Government of Türkiye for their generous support and partnership in making this Symposium a platform for global progress." Over 1,000 participants took part in the four-day GSR-26 event, including Ministers, Heads of Regulatory Authorities, industry leaders and other key digital stakeholders.



ETSI Launches First EU Digital Identity Wallet Standards to Enhance Security and Privacy

ETSI announced the release of the first standards supporting the European Digital Identity Wallet (EUDIW), marking a major transformation in Europe's digital identity infrastructure. The future EU Digital Identity Wallet enables EU citizens and residents to prove their identity and share attributes (such as age, diplomas, or authorizations) in a secure and privacy-preserving manner. It can be used across governmental services, healthcare, banking, travel, education, and beyond. Each EU Member State will offer at least one wallet to its users, enabling seamless access to both public and private services across borders. The wallets will allow users to access online services securely without multiple passwords, store and manage official digital documents, share verified information such as diplomas or licenses and sign documents with legally binding electronic signatures. These wallets will ensure interoperability across Europe while preserving user privacy through strong cryptography and data minimization principles. The new ETSI standards cover the full EU Digital Wallet ecosystem: from wallet-specific attestation profiles, certificate policies, and trust list formats, through to remote signing protocols, identity proofing, and long-term data preservation. They will ensure that the wallets protect personal data using strong security features, respect citizens privacy by minimizing unnecessary data sharing and work seamlessly across borders and services. As Nick Pope, Chair of ETSI's Electronic Signatures and trust Infrastructures committee explains. This first set of +24 technical specifications marks an important milestone in a broader European effort supported by the European Commission and the European Economic Area (EEA). The ETSI Technical Committee ESI will continue its work through 2026 and 2027, focusing on converting technical specifications into full European Standards, integrating feedback from large-scale pilots and early deployments, developing interoperability and conformance testing frameworks and expanding the standards portfolio to cover additional wallet components. The EUDIW is already being trialed for a range of large-scale pilot applications for governmental services businesses, banking, vehicle registration and travel. To support ongoing collaboration, ETSI and CEN will host a joint workshop on the EU Digital Identity Framework, taking place from 29 September to 1 October 2026, bringing together



stakeholders from across the ecosystem. The workshop will be of direct interest to all those concerned with ensuring a secure digital infrastructure across Europe. Nick Pope, Chair of ETSI's Electronic Signatures and trust Infrastructures committee, Our goal is to make digital interactions across Europe as easy and trustworthy as possible, whether you're travelling, studying, working, or accessing services online. ETSI has a long expertise in electronic signatures, cybersecurity and trust data management. The digital wallets are at the crossroad of these technologies and benefit from our experience.

Safaricom Gets Major Boost with Award Of 25-Year Operating License

Kenyan operator Safaricom has secured what is described as a landmark 25-year operating license from Kenya's Communications Authority (CA). It's certainly unusual; the CA has historically issued licenses only lasting ten years. The license, granted under the regulator's Unified Licensing Framework, replaces a

temporary two-year permit that Safaricom had been operating under while regulators and telecoms operators negotiated spectrum allocation, licensing fees and penalties linked to service outages. The new framework consolidates multiple authorizations, including spectrum usage rights, into a single license instrument. The

long-term regulatory certainty this license gives Kenya's leading service provider will be a definite plus as it accelerates network investment and regional expansion and expands into Ethiopia. The company serves more than 46 million subscribers and processes the majority of the country's mobile money transactions through the

M-Pesa service. However, there may be a downside to its present market situation. According to the ITWeb Africa news service, Safaricom's regulatory costs have been climbing sharply. It says that, according to disclosures in the company's FY2026 financial results, direct license-related costs rose to approximately US\$126.7 million for the year ended March 2026, up from around US\$113.4 million the previous year. This does not include the amount paid for the new 25-year license, which has not yet been revealed. Safaricom's interim two-year license alone cost around US\$12.6 million, highlighting a sharp rise in the value of spectrum and operating rights in Kenya's increasingly competitive telecoms market. Kenya's Unified Licensing Frame



India's Telcos Want a Tight Grip on V2X Spectrum

India's mobile operators are clashing with technology and automotive groups over the handling of the wireless spectrum crucial to delivering V2X services. V2X technology – encompassing the wireless exchange of real-time data with other vehicles (V2V), road infrastructure (V2I), pedestrians (V2P), and mobile networks (V2N) – is expected to have a major impact on road safety, but its technical deployment is contentious. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) initiated a consultation on a new V2X framework, hoping to create an environment supporting the rapid rollout of V2X technology. The regulators proposal includes the allocation of 30 MHz of 5.9GHz-band spectrum for initial Cellular

Vehicle-to-Everything (C-V2X) deployments, with an additional 20 MHz reserved for future Intelligent Transportation Systems. The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), representing mobile operators Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, and Vodafone Idea, has submitted a response to the consultation, arguing that the spectrum should be auctioned commercially, like traditional mobile spectrum, rather than specially allocated. The operators broadly claim that the V2X services of the future will fundamentally rely on 4G and 5G, and so should be treated as typical mobile spectrum under the "same service, same rules" principle. They also claim that the creation of a separate authorization

would result in the needless duplication of telecoms infrastructure, a process which is both expensive and inefficient. However, this view runs contrary to those held by organizations like the Broadband India Forum (BIF) and the 5G Automotive Association (5GAA), which argue that V2X technology is primarily focused on public safety and thus warrants being allocated on a shared, non-exclusive basis. This, they claim, will allow for a faster rollout of the technology in key areas. Indeed, the Indian government is highly motivated to clear the way for V2X's deployment as soon as possible. India's roads are some of the most dangerous in the world, seeing the equivalent of roughly one death every three minutes in 2023. As TRAI weighs the competing arguments, the outcome of the consultation will help determine not only how V2X services are deployed, but also who captures value from the emerging connected mobility ecosystem. With operators pushing for a commercial spectrum model and automotive and technology stakeholders prioritizing rapid, safety-driven deployment, regulators face a delicate balancing act between fostering innovation, ensuring efficient spectrum use, and addressing an urgent road safety challenge. The decisions taken in the coming months will likely shape India's intelligent transport landscape for years to come.



Cyprus and Georgia Strengthen Regulatory Cooperation through New Bilateral Agreement

On the sidelines of GSR-26, the Office of the Commissioner of Electronic Communications and Postal Regulation of Cyprus (OCECPR) and the Georgian National Communications Commission (ComCom) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at strengthening bilateral cooperation in the field of digital regulation. The agreement reflects the shared commitment of both authorities to closer collaboration in areas including:

- Cybersecurity
- Artificial Intelligence governance
- Infrastructure resilience
- Consumer protection
- Regulatory best practices
- Digital transformation

Deputy Commissioner of Communications Petros Galides stated: "Strong digital ecosystems are built not only through infrastructure, but through trusted partnerships."

Mr. Galides further emphasized that reg-

ulators best positioned for future success are those capable of cooperating and adapting faster than technology evolves. The MoU marks an important step in ex-

panding Cyprus' international regulatory partnerships and enhancing practical cooperation across Europe and neighboring regions.



Banglalink Proposes Teletalk Merger and BTCL Partnership as Bangladesh Explores Telecom Sector Consolidation

Banglalink has expressed interest in merging with state-owned mobile operator Teletalk and forming a strategic partnership with Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited (BTCL), signaling a potentially significant shift in the structure of Bangladesh's telecommunications sector. The proposal comes amid growing discussions about how operators can improve network efficiency, expand digital infrastructure, and strengthen the long-term sustainability of telecommunications investments in an increasingly competitive market. According to reports, Banglalink has proposed exploring a merger with Teletalk while also pursuing closer collaboration with BTCL, the country's state-owned telecommunications infrastructure provider. While the proposal remains at an exploratory stage, it highlights broader industry trends



toward consolidation, infrastructure sharing, and strategic partnerships as operators seek to optimize resources and improve service delivery. Bangladesh's telecommunications sector is currently served by four mobile operators: Grameenphone, Robi Axiata, Banglalink, and Teletalk. The market has achieved high levels of subscriber penetration, resulting in intense competition for

revenue growth, customer retention, and network investment returns. In mature and highly competitive telecommunications markets, operators increasingly look toward consolidation, network-sharing arrangements, and infrastructure partnerships to improve efficiency. Such strategies can reduce duplication of investments, improve spectrum utilization, and support broader network expansion

initiatives. For Teletalk, a potential partnership or merger could provide access to additional resources, operational expertise, and investment capacity. As the country's sole state-owned mobile operator, Teletalk has historically played an important role in expanding connectivity but faces competitive pressures from larger private-sector operators with extensive infrastructure and customer bases. The inclusion of BTCL in the proposal is also noteworthy. BTCL controls significant telecommunications infrastructure assets, including fiber networks and backbone connectivity resources. Partnerships involving fixed and mobile infrastructure can create opportunities for

improved network integration, enhanced broadband services, and more efficient deployment of next-generation digital services. The proposal emerges at a time when demand for digital connectivity continues to grow across Bangladesh. Rising data consumption, increasing smartphone adoption, expanding digital financial services, and growing demand for cloud-based applications are placing additional pressure on operators to invest in network modernization and capacity expansion. Telecommunications infrastructure remains a foundational component of Bangladesh's digital transformation agenda. Investments in broadband, mobile connectivity, and digital

services are supporting growth across sectors including fintech, e-commerce, education, healthcare, and government services. Any merger or partnership involving major telecommunications assets would likely require extensive regulatory review and evaluation of market competition, consumer impact, spectrum considerations, and long-term industry implications. Such transactions often involve complex assessments aimed at balancing efficiency gains with market competitiveness. While discussions remain preliminary, the proposal highlights ongoing efforts within the sector to explore new models for sustaining investment and supporting future digital growth.

€475 Billion Required for Europe to Complete its 5G Journey and Regain Digital Leadership, New GSMA Study Finds

Europe's mobile operators need to invest almost half a trillion euros over the next decade to upgrade networks to levels comparable with the world's best, according to new analysis from the GSMA. The report, *Mobile investment needs in Europe*, conducted by GSMA Intelligence, found that while €475 billion is needed to bring best-in-class connectivity to the continent, only around €270 billion is expected to be accessible to operators – leaving an investment gap of around €205 billion. It comes as Europe's digital capabilities continue to lag leading

global standards. While 5G standalone – essentially “full” 5G, with faster speeds, lower latency, and innovative services and features deriving from network slicing – is already available to 80% of the population in Greater China and almost 50% in India, in Europe it reaches only 2% of citizens. Much of this is due to the more favorable investment conditions in these non-European markets. Capex per connection in Europe is just €35 compared to €70 for global connectivity leaders, meaning the bloc remains unable to keep pace and compete. While mobile internet usage

has increased every year since 2018 by an average of 27%, operator revenues have fallen by an average of 3% per year over the same period, further restricting available investment capital. And the financial burden currently sits with the industry itself – operators themselves put up 85% of the investment into network infrastructure. The new analysis is a timely update on the European Commission's own 2023 research into the likely cost of achieving the Digital Decade targets. This estimated around €174 billion, rising to more than €200 billion, of digital investment was needed by 2030. However, operators have already invested €141 billion since 2021 and Europe has not yet met those targets, while trailing further behind global 5G leaders. The report finds that of the current €475 billion investment need to 2035, only 57% is currently forecast to materialize. Of the €205 billion, or 43%, deficit, around half is needed to provide 5G coverage across Europe's main transport routes (road, rail and waterways). A further €35 billion is required to extend 5G coverage to the entire European population, while €38 billion will build greater network resilience and €28 billion will underpin AI-based services and innovation.



Ghana and Zambia Strengthen Ties on Digital Connectivity and Telecom Policy

The National Communication Authority (NCA) recently hosted a high-level delegation led by the Special Envoy of Hakainde Hichilema. The delegation, which also included representatives from Zambia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, was received by Hon. Rizig Dominic Samuel during an official courtesy visit. The engagement focused on strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries, with particular emphasis on advancing collaboration in the telecommunications sector across Africa. Discussions also highlighted preparations for the upcoming African Telecommunications Union elections, alongside Zambia's broader strategic vision for improving continental digital connectivity. According to the NCA, the meeting forms part of ongoing efforts to deepen regional partnerships that support digital transformation initiatives. Key priorities include enhancing cross-border telecommunications infrastructure and developing harmonized reg-

ulatory frameworks to improve efficiency and coordination across African markets. The Authority reaffirmed its commitment to fostering cooperation that drives inno-

vation, strengthens connectivity, and supports the growth of a resilient and integrated African digital ecosystem.



Bangladesh to Auction Additional 8.4 MHz of eGSM Spectrum to Strengthen Mobile Network Capacity

Bangladesh is preparing to auction an additional 8.4 MHz of Extended GSM (eGSM) spectrum, a move aimed at enhancing mobile network capacity, improving service quality, and supporting the country's growing demand for digital connectivity. The planned auction forms part of broader efforts by the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) to optimize spectrum utilization and ensure operators have sufficient resources to support expanding voice and data traffic across the country. Spectrum remains one of the most critical assets in the telecommunications sector, providing the radio frequencies required for mobile operators to deliver voice, messaging, and broadband services. As smartphone adoption, mobile internet usage, and digital service consumption continue to rise, operators require

additional spectrum resources to maintain network performance and accommodate growing traffic volumes. The eGSM band is particularly valuable because of its propagation characteristics, allowing operators to provide wider coverage and improved indoor connectivity compared to higher-frequency spectrum bands. This makes it especially useful for extending network reach and improving service quality in both urban and rural areas. Bangladesh's telecommunications market continues to experience increasing demand for mobile broadband services, driven by expanding digital adoption, e-commerce growth, fintech usage, streaming services, and digital government initiatives. Mobile networks remain the primary means of internet access for the majority of the population, making efficient spectrum management a key national priority. The

auction comes as regulators globally seek to maximize the value of spectrum resources while ensuring that operators can continue investing in network expansion and modernization. Effective spectrum allocation plays a critical role in improving connectivity, encouraging competition, and supporting long-term digital economy growth. Industry observers note that additional spectrum can help operators improve network efficiency, increase capacity, and enhance customer experiences, particularly in areas experiencing high traffic demand. The availability of additional frequencies may also support future technology upgrades and more efficient utilization of existing network infrastructure. Bangladesh has been actively pursuing policies aimed at strengthening digital infrastructure and expanding access to connectivity as part of

its broader digital transformation agenda. Spectrum auctions remain an important mechanism for enabling operators to meet rising demand while supporting

national connectivity objectives. As data consumption continues to increase, the availability of additional spectrum resources will play an increasingly

important role in ensuring network quality, supporting innovation, and enabling the next phase of digital growth.

Bahrain, Comoros Sign Deal to Boost Digital Co-Operation

Bahrain's Information & eGovernment Authority (iGA) has announced that it has signed a MoU with the National Digital Development Agency (Anaden) of the Union of the Comoros during a virtual meeting between the two parties. It is part of the Global Digital Twinning Initiative for eGovernment excellence, initiated by the Kingdom of Bahrain in December 2024. One of the kingdom's strategic initiatives, The Global Digital Government Twinning is designed to provide a comprehensive platform for the exchange of digital expertise and knowledge as well as to support the implementation of joint projects, and offer advisory tools, practical labs, and government service simulations, said IGA in a statement. These efforts contribute to enhancing government performance and ensuring the sustainability of digital development, it stated. This initiative comes in line with the directives of General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Minister of Interior and Chairman of the Ministerial Committee for Information and Communication Technology (MCICT), in bid to strengthening bilateral and multilateral digital cooperation with friendly countries and supporting their efforts in advancing eGovernment and digital transformation, it added. The MoU was signed by Mohammed Ali Al Qaed, the Chief Executive of iGA, representing Bahrain, while the



Union of the Comoros was represented by Said Moinou Ahmed, Director General of the National Digital Development Agency. Speaking on the occasion, Al Qaed said the MoU reflects the significant progress achieved by the Kingdom of Bahrain in the fields of eGovernment and digital transformation, as well as the expertise and successful experiences that have reinforced its position as a leading regional and international role model. Bahrain's global partnership initiatives reflect its firm belief in the importance of knowledge and expertise exchange in advancing government performance and enhancing service efficiency on an international scale, it stated. Al Qaed said the MoU encompasses several areas of co-operation, most notably Bahrain's support for the Union of the Comoros in

improving its performance in the United Nations eGovernment Development Index (EGDI), as well as collaboration in the development and implementation of more efficient and effective digital government services. The agreement also provides for the exchange of technical and advisory expertise, and capacity-building initiatives in the fields of eGovernment and digital transformation, he noted. Furthermore, the areas of cooperation include the exchange of official visits, the organization of training programs, workshops, and specialized sessions, in addition to sharing relevant information, studies, and statistics. These efforts aim to strengthen knowledge integration and facilitate the exchange of successful experiences and best practices between both parties, he added.

Greece Joins ITU Spectrum Monitoring Network

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has expanded its global network of space radio monitoring stations through a cooperation agreement with Greece's regulator, the Hellenic Telecommunications and Post Commission (EETT). The agreement strengthens international cooperation to help investigate and resolve harmful

interference cases affecting space services. EETT's recently inaugurated Satellite Communications Spectrum Monitoring Station meets the latest technical standards for satellite spectrum monitoring and transmitter geolocation. The fixed monitoring station, located in Greece's Attica region, is equipped with antenna systems operating across the L, S,

C, Ku and Ka frequency bands, specialized transmitter geolocation equipment, and advanced systems for recording and analyzing the data collected. Two control centers – one on site and another at EETT's central offices – feature autonomous power supply, secure telecommunications links, and integrated security systems that enable fully remote operation. The station

strengthens Greece's satellite spectrum monitoring capacity at the national and wider Euro-Mediterranean levels. It will help detect unlicensed or technically non

compliant radio emissions, locate their sources, and support the investigation and resolution of harmful interference cases in a timely manner. Monitoring

capabilities around the globe contribute to the efficient and transparent use of satellite frequencies, a limited and valuable shared resource, in line with international regulations. "Expanding ITU's international network of space monitoring stations is essential to safeguarding the efficient and interference free use of satellite frequencies," said Mario Maniewicz, Director of the ITU Radiocommunication Bureau. "Cooperation with Greece strengthens our collective capacity to support countries and administrations worldwide in identifying and resolving harmful interference affecting space services." EETT will conduct measurements under the memorandum of understanding signed in May, helping the organization safeguard space services worldwide. The new station is also included in ITU's List of International Monitoring Stations (List VIII).



US Telecom Sector Launches Its Own Private ISAC

Major U.S. telecommunications companies launched a new information sharing group in a bid to redouble their collective efforts to combat AI-powered cyberattacks, state-sponsored espionage and other increasing threats to communications networks. The Communications Cybersecurity Information Sharing and Analysis Center, or C2 ISAC, will give telecoms a private venue for exchanging sensitive information such as newly discovered vulnerabilities and tips about threat actor behavior. The eight founding members are AT&T, Charter, Comcast, Cox, Lumen, T-Mobile, Verizon and Zayo. Their chief information security officers will sit on the C2 ISAC's board, while Valerie Moon, a former top official at the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and the FBI's Cyber Division, will serve as the group's executive director. The group's formation comes as major cyberattacks like China's Salt Typhoon espionage operation highlight the growing risks facing the U.S. telecom sector – and as the Trump administration's pullback from key cybersecurity partnerships forces the private sector to take a leading role. "The main driver for us is our recognition that the threat environment has evolved, and we as a sector and private entities need



to evolve and really keep up with the pace and velocity [at which] that's happening," Mark Clancy, T-Mobile's chief security officer and a C2 ISAC board member, told Cybersecurity Dive in an interview. As telecoms scrambled to respond to Salt Typhoon, Clancy added, "the need for us to collaborate on a private-to-private basis really became amplified." The telecom industry already shares threat intelligence and best practices under the auspices of the Communications ISAC, also known as the National Coordinating Center for Communications. But that group, created in 1984, is unique among ISACs in that it sits within the federal government, at

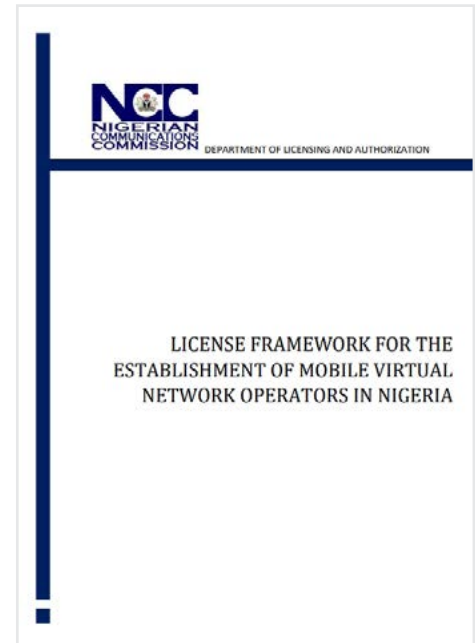
CISA, rather than being a private entity. That arrangement has discouraged some companies from sharing sensitive data through the group, according to Clancy. "There's been concerns and hesitations about it," he said. By excluding government agencies from discussion channels, Clancy said, the C2 ISAC hopes to encourage more candid and sensitive discussions. "When you have public-sector entities involved, there's more review and deliberation about what gets put into that channel," he said, "where[as] we can be a little more raw and early in sharing information."

Nigerian Regulator Drafts New Rules for Mobile Virtual Network Operators

The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) published the proposed "Business Rules for Mobile Virtual Network Operations in Nigeria" and opened a consultation process for industry stakeholders. Comments can be submitted until June 29, while a public consultation is scheduled for July 9. According to the NCC, the proposed rules define the obligations and responsibilities of both MVNOs and host network operators (HNOs). The framework also sets conditions for licensing, compliance, interconnection, numbering resources, SIM and eSIM management, and network hosting agreements. Regulators also seek to guarantee fair access to telecom infrastructure and reduce delays tied to the integration of MVNOs into existing mobile networks. The text further includes provisions related to service quality, customer protection, network reliability, and data security. Violations could lead

to administrative sanctions or corrective measures under existing telecom laws. Nigeria officially opened the MVNO market in 2023. That year, the NCC awarded licenses to 25 operators for a combined 5.9 billion naira, or about \$4.3 million. Since then, around 40 licenses have been issued, with operators such as Vitel and Visafone already launching services. Authorities see MVNOs as a way to improve competition in the telecom sector while helping extend services to underserved and unserved populations. As of March 2026, Nigeria counted 185.7 million mobile subscribers and 153.8 million internet subscribers, according to NCC data. Despite the size of the market, digital access remains uneven across the country. Government estimates show that nearly 20 million Nigerians still remain outside the digital ecosystem. The GSMA estimated that about 120 million Nigerians did not use mobile internet in 2023. High service costs and inconsistent

service quality also remain major concerns in the telecom sector.



European Commission Proposes New Authorization for Mobile Satellite Services for EU's Resilience and Competitiveness

The Commission adopted a proposal for the selection of mobile satellite services (MSS) providers who will be authorized to use the harmonized 2 GHz frequency band beyond 2027, when the current licenses expire. Spectrum for mobile satellite services is a strategic asset for enabling innovative commercial use, and

for security and defence. The 2 GHz MSS band is ideal for Direct-to-Device (D2D) services, providing critical communication capabilities and ensuring access to high-speed internet in areas without terrestrial coverage. The Commission proposes to establish an EU-level selection procedure for the assignment of this spectrum.

Granting an EU level authorization for the use of the 2 GHz frequency band for mobile satellite services in all EU Member States will ensure regulatory consistency across the EU and allow operators to develop and provide services across borders.

The spectrum would be divided accordingly: One third of the 2 GHz MSS band would be

HOW THE SPECTRUM WILL BE ALLOCATED

The 2 GHz MSS band will be divided into four paired blocks of 5 MHz each (Earth-to-space and space-to-Earth).

10 MHz (2 x 5 MHz)
PRIORITY FOR SECURE MSS/HYBRID SYSTEM



For secure governmental communications (e.g. crisis management, public safety, protection of critical infrastructure). Must integrate with the EU's IRIS² infrastructure and support EUCCS.

5 MHz
UNION NEW ENTRANT



Reserved for Union owned or controlled operators to foster strategic diversification and competition.

5 MHz
OPEN TO ALL APPLICANTS



Open to operators from the EU and third countries – ensuring competition and choice for users.

5 MHz
OPEN TO ALL APPLICANTS



Open to operators from the EU and third countries – ensuring competition and choice for users.



OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Secure governmental communications
- ✓ Boost EU competitiveness and innovation
- ✓ Promote the Single Market
- ✓ Ensure strategic autonomy and resilience

dedicated to governmental use, such as for critical communications, security and military to be provided by an EU operator. The operator will ensure integration with the current and future capabilities of the infrastructure of the Union Secure Connectivity program IRIS.

Two thirds of the 2 GHz MSS band would be dedicated to commercial use, such as D2D services to mobile devices, ensuring

mobile coverage where terrestrial networks are unavailable. It can also be used for Internet of Things, such as personal fitness trackers, energy monitoring, and emergency response devices. The spectrum in this band would be divided equally for: the use of the band by EU operators entering the market, to encourage the diversification of suppliers and incentivize the entry into the market of EU suppliers;

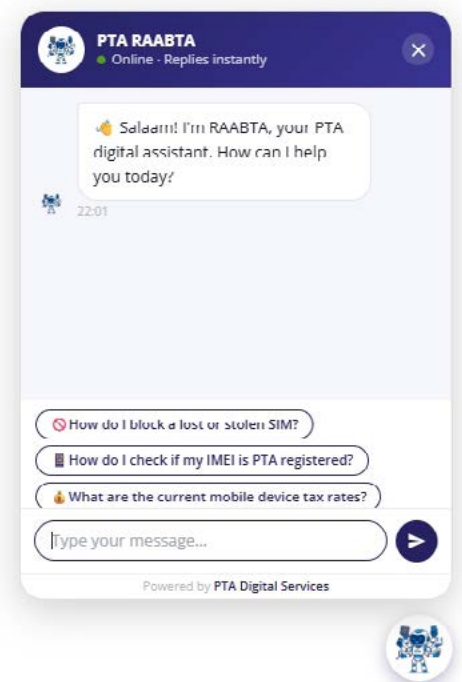
the use of the band by EU and non-EU operators.

The timely availability of secure, resilient, performant and innovative satellite services will strengthen the EU's competitiveness and critical communications capabilities. Satellite connectivity is a key piece of our technological sovereignty, our security, and our defence.

Pakistan Telecommunication Authority Launches AI-Powered Chatbot to Enhance Digital Public Services

The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has launched an artificial intelligence-powered chatbot on its official website, marking another step in the modernization of digital public services and the adoption of AI technologies within government institutions. The new chatbot is designed to provide users with faster access to information, improve service delivery, and enhance engagement with citizens seeking guidance on telecommunications-related services, regulations, complaints, and administrative procedures. The initiative reflects a broader trend among government agencies worldwide that are increasingly deploying AI-powered virtual assistants to improve responsiveness, reduce service bottlenecks, and deliver more accessible digital experiences. As public demand for online services continues to grow, conversational AI is becoming an important tool for supporting citizen engagement and streamlining routine interactions. For the PTA, the chatbot provides an automated channel capable of handling common inquiries and directing users to relevant information without requiring manual intervention. Such systems can improve efficiency by reducing response times while enabling human resources to focus on more complex issues requiring direct assistance. The launch comes as Pakistan accelerates efforts to expand digital government services and improve citizen access to public-sector information

through technology-enabled platforms. Government agencies are increasingly exploring digital solutions that can improve service delivery while supporting broader digital transformation objectives. Artificial intelligence is emerging as a key enabler of these efforts. Advances in natural language processing and machine learning have made it possible for virtual assistants to understand user queries, provide contextual responses, and support a growing range of public service functions. These capabilities are helping governments improve accessibility while delivering services more efficiently. The telecommunications sector is particularly well suited for AI-driven customer engagement tools due to the volume of inquiries related to licensing, consumer rights, service quality, complaints, mobile device registration, and regulatory information. AI-powered assistants can help simplify access to this information while improving user experiences. The initiative also aligns with wider efforts across South Asia and the Middle East to integrate artificial intelligence into public administration. Governments are increasingly using AI technologies to support service delivery, automate processes, improve operational efficiency, and strengthen citizen engagement. As digital adoption increases, public expectations regarding government services are also evolving. Citizens increasingly expect online interactions to



be available around the clock and delivered with the same speed and convenience offered by private-sector digital platforms. AI-powered assistants can help public institutions meet these expectations while managing growing demand. The PTA's deployment demonstrates how regulatory agencies are beginning to incorporate emerging technologies into everyday service delivery as part of broader efforts to modernize public-sector operations.

MCMC Intensifies Digital Literacy Efforts for Social Media Users

The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) will continue intensifying digital literacy efforts to enhance social media users' understanding of ethics and responsibilities when sharing content online. Communications Minister Datuk Fahmi Fadzil said the move is important to ensure the public is more aware of the implications of sharing content, especially matters involving investigations by authorities or the dignity of victims and their families. Fahmi, who is also the MADANI government spokesman, said social media users need to understand that not all content should be shared openly, especially recordings depicting tragic incidents or sensitive elements, as they have the potential to disrupt investigations and affect the sensitivities of victims and their families. "Sometimes in the sharing of horrific videos, there are elements that may offend the victim's family, and we need to be sensitive to that. "On the media side, media practitioners usually understand that there are certain limits when it comes to protecting the dignity of victims, for example. But among the public, perhaps there is still a lack of awareness on this

matter," he told the media after officiating the closing ceremony of the Federal Territories' Youth Festival @ National Youth Day 2026. Fahmi also urged the public to be more responsible when uploading or sharing content on social media and to cooperate with authorities if a case is still under investigation. "If there is an ongoing investigation, we do not want it to be disrupted. If there is an element that may bring shame to the victim's family, especially when the family has asked for their privacy to be respected, I hope the public can cooperate," he said. The Royal Malaysia Police reminded the public to act responsibly before uploading video recordings related to criminal incidents or misconduct on social media, as such actions could affect investigations and carry legal implications. Bukit Aman Crime Prevention and Community Safety Department director Datuk Noor Hisam Nordin said that some parties are overly eager to seek attention on social media without understanding the impact on police investigations. Meanwhile, in another development, Fahmi said the Communications Ministry has detected an increase in the use of fake social media accounts to spread content touching on religion, race, and royalty (3R), including impersonation of rulers and royal family members. "After the content is produced and disseminated, the accounts are closed. So there are criminal elements involved, elements of throwing rocks and hiding their hands, and we will closely monitor the response from social media platforms. "Some platforms, such as TikTok, have been issued notices by the MCMC, while others, such as Meta, have cooperated. However, we believe several of these platforms need to clearly state the measures they will take to reduce incidents involving 3R content," he said. Commenting on possible actions that can be taken, the minister said the existing provisions under the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission Act 1998 remain sufficient, but emphasized that social media platforms need to strengthen efforts to curb the abuse of fake accounts and the spread of 3R content. 🟩





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INTERNATIONAL

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



Afghanistan

The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology says it has launched fifth-generation (5G) internet services in Kabul for the first time on a pilot basis, marking a major step in the country's telecommunications development. The ministry announced that the capacity of 74 telecommunications antennas in Kabul has been upgraded to 5G technology as part of a trial project. Officials said the initiative is currently in its experimental phase and will be expanded to other parts of the country once infrastructure development is completed and the pilot phase is successfully concluded. The development was discussed during a meeting between Hamdullah Naumani and Aliullah Sarwari,

head of Afghan Wireless Communication Company (AWCC), one of Afghanistan's major telecom operators. According to Afghan Wireless officials, 46 new telecom sites have been constructed and put into operation since the beginning of 2026, while 186 additional sites are currently under construction to further strengthen network coverage. Company representatives also expressed appreciation for what they described as continued support from the ministry's leadership in facilitating operations and improving telecommunications services nationwide.

(May 1, 2026) www.thekabultribune.com



Algeria

Algeria's Centre for Research on Scientific and Technical Information (CERIST) has launched a new DeepTech Innovation Hub aimed at transforming research into scalable ventures focused on artificial intelligence and cybersecurity. The initiative is designed to bridge the gap between academic research and commercial deployment by supporting the development of startups, applied technologies, and innovation-driven businesses emerging from Algeria's research ecosystem. The hub will focus on advanced sectors such as AI, cybersecurity, and digital infrastructure technologies, providing entrepreneurs and researchers with technical support, mentorship, and commercialization pathways. As countries

across the region seek to strengthen sovereign technology capabilities, converting research into deployable products is becoming a growing strategic priority. The launch reflects broader efforts to build local innovation ecosystems capable of generating high-value intellectual property and reducing dependence on imported technologies. Deep technology sectors such as AI and cybersecurity require strong integration between research institutions, industry, and investment ecosystems, making commercialization hubs increasingly important components of national digital strategies.

(May 11, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com



Bahrain

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) of Bahrain is actively modernizing digital infrastructure, currently focusing on the licensing framework for satellite-to-device (S2D) communications and updating the National Frequency Plan. Major regulatory actions and market developments include:

- **Satellite-to-Device (S2D) Framework:** The TRA finalized a regulatory framework designed to integrate non-terrestrial satellite networks with ground-based devices, paving the way for seamless coverage across the Kingdom.
- **Zain Bahrain – Infonias Acquisition:** The TRA is evaluating a proposed merger and acquisition transaction wherein Zain

Bahrain intends to acquire 100% of the shares of Infonias W.L.L. Public consultations are open to assess the impact of this deal on market competition.

- **Wholesale Broadband Services (WBS):** The TRA extended the deadline for the public consultation regarding proposed pricing and reference offers for Wholesale Broadband Services to foster a more competitive and transparent internet market for consumers.
- **Submarine Cable Resilience:** TRA representatives are engaging with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and international task forces to strengthen the resilience of

Bahrain's global submarine communication cable networks.

- Frequency and Global Tech Initiatives: The TRA is actively collaborating with global bodies and Gulf Cooperation

Council (GCC) regulators to prepare for the 2027 World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-27).

(January 19, 2026) AI Overview



Bangladesh

Bangladesh is moving forward with plans to introduce a national digital identity wallet system, a step that could significantly reshape how citizens access public and private sector services across the country. The proposed system aims to consolidate multiple forms of identification into a single digital wallet, enabling users to securely store and share credentials such as national ID, licenses, and other official documents. By digitizing identity management, authorities are looking to streamline service delivery, reduce administrative friction, and improve access to digital services. Digital identity wallets are increasingly becoming a foundational layer of modern digital economies. They enable secure authentication, support e-government services, and facilitate access to financial platforms, healthcare systems, and education services. For Bangladesh, where digital adoption is rising rapidly, such a system could act as a key enabler of broader digital transformation. The initiative is expected to improve efficiency across government services by reducing paperwork,

minimizing fraud, and enabling real-time verification. It could also support financial inclusion by simplifying onboarding processes for banking and fintech services, particularly for underserved populations. However, the success of a digital identity system will depend heavily on implementation. Key considerations include data security, privacy protection, interoperability across platforms, and user trust. Without strong governance frameworks, digital identity systems can face resistance or create new risks around data misuse. Globally, countries implementing digital ID ecosystems are increasingly focusing on decentralized models and user-controlled data to balance convenience with privacy. Bangladesh's approach will likely need to align with these evolving best practices to ensure long-term adoption. The move reflects a broader trend across emerging markets, where governments are investing in digital identity infrastructure as a critical enabler of economic growth, service delivery, and digital inclusion.

(May 1, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com



Egypt

The National Telecom Regulatory Authority (NTRA) has organized digital safety awareness sessions in Matrouh as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen cybersecurity awareness and promote safer internet usage across the country. The initiative reflects growing regional focus on digital literacy and online safety as internet adoption, smartphone usage, and digital platform engagement continue rising rapidly across emerging markets. Governments and regulators across the Middle East and Africa are increasingly investing in public awareness programs aimed at improving cybersecurity readiness and reducing risks tied to online fraud, cybercrime, and digital misuse. The awareness sessions focused on promoting safe digital practices, responsible internet usage, and cybersecurity awareness among community members.

As digital participation expands across education, commerce, communication, and financial services, regulators are placing greater emphasis on strengthening public understanding of online risks and digital protection measures. Cybersecurity awareness initiatives are becoming increasingly important as phishing attacks, social engineering schemes, account compromise attempts, and online fraud incidents continue growing globally. The expansion of mobile internet access and digital services has made digital literacy a critical component of broader digital transformation strategies. Egypt has been accelerating investments in telecommunications infrastructure, digital public

services, fintech ecosystems, and internet accessibility as part of wider national modernization plans. The country's digital economy growth has increased the importance of secure online participation and public trust in digital platforms. Regulators and public institutions are increasingly integrating cybersecurity awareness into education, community outreach, and national digital inclusion programs. The NTRA has continued supporting initiatives tied to digital skills, telecommunications development, and safe technology adoption across different regions of the country.

(May 20, 2026). www.meatechwatch.com

Egypt's information and communications technology (ICT) sector is increasingly positioning itself as a central pillar of the country's economic growth, supported by sustained investment, rising digital adoption, and expanding technology capabilities. The sector has seen consistent growth driven by demand for digital services, outsourcing, software development, and infrastructure expansion. As global demand for IT services and digital solutions continues to rise, Egypt is leveraging its talent pool and cost advantages to strengthen its position in regional and international markets. Government initiatives aimed at digital transformation, infrastructure development, and skills training are playing a key role in accelerating the sector's growth. Investments in broadband

connectivity, data centers, and technology parks are helping create an environment conducive to innovation and business expansion. The sector is also contributing to job creation and export growth, particularly in areas such as business process outsourcing and software services. As the digital economy expands, the sector is becoming a significant source of foreign exchange and economic

diversification. The country's strategic location and growing ecosystem of startups and technology companies further enhance its attractiveness as a regional hub. The long-term trajectory of the ICT sector will depend on continued investment, talent development, and the ability to compete in an increasingly globalized digital market. (May 6, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com



Iraq

The newly appointed Minister of Communications, Mustafa Sanad, announced a comprehensive infrastructure initiative on Wednesday, May 20, 2026, pledging to deliver high-quality internet services at affordable rates across Iraq by the beginning of 2027. In a statement published on his official X platform account, Sanad addressed widespread public dissatisfaction regarding local telecommunications services. He clarified the regulatory boundaries of his ministry, noting that complaints regarding mobile operators—specifically issues involving balance recharging, subscription validity periods, data bundles,

and overall network coverage—fall under the jurisdiction of the Communications and Media Commission (CMC), which operates as an independent regulatory body separate from the ministry. The minister emphasized that the core mandate of the Ministry of Communications focuses on developing and maintaining national internet infrastructure. Additional ministerial responsibilities include overseeing postal networks, developing the prospective fourth mobile license, implementing data encryption protocols, and expanding digital governance services.

(May 21, 2026) www.iraqinews.com



Jordan

Jordan completed 13 projects across the digital economy, telecommunications and cybersecurity sectors during May, highlighting the Kingdom's continued efforts to strengthen digital infrastructure, expand technology adoption and enhance national cyber resilience. The projects were implemented as part of Jordan's broader digital transformation agenda, which seeks to accelerate the development of digital services, modernize telecommunications infrastructure and strengthen cybersecurity capabilities across both public and private sectors. The latest progress reflects the growing importance of digital technologies in Jordan's economic development strategy. Policymakers continue to prioritize investments in connectivity, digital government services, technology innovation and cybersecurity as key enablers of long-term competitiveness and economic growth. Among the completed initiatives were projects aimed at improving digital service delivery, enhancing telecommunications capabilities and strengthening cyber defense mechanisms.

The developments form part of a wider national effort to build a more resilient and technology-driven economy capable of supporting growing demand for digital services. Cybersecurity remains a central component of these efforts. As digital adoption accelerates across government agencies, enterprises and consumers, protecting critical systems and sensitive data has become increasingly important. Investments in cybersecurity infrastructure and governance are helping Jordan improve preparedness against evolving cyber threats while supporting the secure delivery of digital services. Jordan has made significant progress in recent years through initiatives focused on digital government modernization, fintech development, startup ecosystem growth and ICT sector expansion. Continued project implementation demonstrates the government's commitment to translating strategic plans into measurable outcomes.

(June 19, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com



Kuwait

Kuwait has signed a landmark agreement aimed at upgrading the country's national telecommunications infrastructure, reinforcing growing regional investment in next-generation connectivity, digital transformation, and network modernization. The agreement reflects Kuwait's broader ambitions to strengthen

digital infrastructure capabilities and improve the resilience, performance, and scalability of national telecommunications networks. As Gulf countries accelerate digital economy initiatives, telecommunications modernization is increasingly being treated as a strategic national priority tied to economic diversification

and future competitiveness. The upgrade initiative is expected to support improved connectivity services, higher network efficiency, and greater readiness for future digital technologies and high-capacity communication demands. Governments worldwide are investing heavily in telecommunications modernization as rising data consumption, cloud adoption, AI integration, and digital public services place growing pressure on network infrastructure. Kuwait has steadily expanded investments in digital transformation, smart government initiatives, and advanced connectivity ecosystems as part of wider national modernization plans. Telecommunications infrastructure now plays a foundational role in supporting financial services, healthcare systems, education platforms, enterprise digitization, and public administration. The Gulf region continues witnessing rapid investment in fiber

networks, mobile broadband expansion, cloud ecosystems, and 5G infrastructure as governments compete to strengthen digital economy readiness. Advanced telecom infrastructure is increasingly viewed as critical for enabling AI adoption, smart city development, industrial automation, and next-generation digital services. Kuwait's agreement aligns with broader regional trends where countries are modernizing core communications infrastructure to support long-term technology-driven growth strategies. Telecom modernization projects are also becoming increasingly important for improving cybersecurity resilience and national digital sovereignty capabilities. The agreement further demonstrates how telecommunications infrastructure is evolving into one of the most strategically important layers of national economic development. (May 22, 2026) meatechwatch.com



Morocco

Morocco is strengthening its regional engagement around digital governance and public sector innovation as governments across Africa accelerate efforts to modernize state services, improve digital inclusion, and build more efficient citizen-centric government ecosystems. The latest initiative highlights Morocco's growing role in regional digital cooperation and reflects broader continental momentum toward technology-enabled governance models designed to improve administrative efficiency, transparency, and public service delivery. According to the announcement, Morocco is advancing collaboration efforts focused on digital transformation, governance frameworks, public sector innovation, and the exchange of expertise around modern government technologies and digital policy implementation.

The move comes as African governments increasingly prioritize digital infrastructure, e-government services, digital identity systems, AI readiness, and cybersecurity as part of wider socio-economic development strategies. Machine Learning & Artificial Intelligence Public sector digitization has emerged as a major strategic priority across Africa, with governments seeking to improve citizen access to services while reducing operational inefficiencies and accelerating administrative processes. Morocco has continued investing heavily in digital transformation initiatives in recent years, including smart government programs, connectivity expansion, startup ecosystem development, and technology-driven public administration reforms.

(May 15, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com



Nepal

Nepal's 4G subscriber base has exceeded 26 million users, underscoring the continued growth of mobile broadband adoption and the increasing importance of high-speed connectivity in supporting the country's digital economy. According to the latest telecommunications data, 4G services now account for the majority of mobile internet usage across Nepal, reflecting growing consumer demand for faster data services, digital applications and online platforms. The milestone highlights the significant progress made by operators in expanding network coverage and improving access to mobile broadband services nationwide. The rapid adoption of 4G has transformed how consumers access digital services, enabling greater use of video streaming, social media, digital payments, e-learning and e-commerce applications. Mobile broadband has become a critical enabler of economic activity, particularly in markets where fixed broadband penetration remains relatively limited. Nepal's telecom sector has witnessed steady growth in data consumption over recent years as operators

continue investing in network modernization and coverage expansion. Increased smartphone adoption and the availability of more affordable data services have further accelerated the shift toward mobile-first internet usage. The growth of 4G connectivity is also supporting broader government objectives around digital transformation and digital inclusion. Improved access to reliable internet services helps connect underserved communities to education, healthcare, financial services and government platforms, contributing to socio-economic development. While 4G adoption continues to rise, attention is gradually shifting toward the next phase of network evolution. Telecommunications stakeholders are increasingly evaluating future investments in 5G infrastructure as demand for advanced digital services, cloud applications and emerging technologies continues to grow. The milestone also reflects broader trends across South Asia, where mobile broadband networks are serving as the primary gateway to the internet for millions of users. As smartphone penetration rises

and digital ecosystems mature, operators are seeing sustained demand for high-capacity mobile networks capable of supporting increasingly data-intensive applications.

(June 16, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com

Nepal is accelerating mobile network expansion in underserved areas through the use of its Rural Telecommunications Development Fund (RTDF), targeting improved connectivity in remote and hard-to-reach regions. The initiative is focused on extending mobile infrastructure to communities that remain outside reliable coverage, addressing long-standing gaps in access to basic communication services. By channeling RTDF resources into network rollout, the government aims to reduce the digital divide and enable broader participation in the digital economy. Expanding connectivity in rural areas remains a critical

challenge due to geographic constraints, high deployment costs, and limited commercial incentives for operators. Public funding mechanisms like the RTDF are designed to offset these barriers and support infrastructure development where private investment alone is not viable. Improved mobile coverage is expected to unlock access to essential services including digital payments, e-government platforms, education, and healthcare, particularly for populations that have historically been excluded from digital access. The move reflects a broader trend across emerging markets, where universal service funds are being actively deployed to drive inclusive connectivity and support national digital transformation goals. The long-term success of the initiative will depend on effective implementation, operator participation, and the sustainability of network operations in low-density areas.

(May 4, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com



Oman

Oman's Ministry of Information has called on digital media platforms operating in the Sultanate to obtain the necessary licenses required under the country's media regulations, reinforcing efforts to strengthen governance, accountability, and compliance within the evolving digital media landscape. The ministry urged all eligible digital media entities, including online publishing platforms and digital content providers, to regularize their status and secure the appropriate approvals to continue operating in accordance with national laws and regulations. The move comes as digital media consumption continues to grow across Oman and the wider Gulf region, with online news platforms, social media channels, digital publications, and content creators playing an increasingly influential role in shaping public discourse and information consumption. Across the Middle East, governments are increasingly updating media regulations to reflect the rapid growth of digital publishing, online content distribution, and social media-driven information

ecosystems. Regulators are seeking to balance innovation and freedom of expression with responsibilities related to content standards, consumer protection, intellectual property rights, and information integrity. Oman has been advancing a broader digital transformation agenda encompassing e-government services, digital infrastructure, innovation, and technology adoption. Industry observers note that clear regulatory frameworks can help create greater certainty for digital media operators, advertisers, investors, and content creators by defining operational requirements and compliance expectations. The ministry's announcement serves as a reminder that digital media businesses are becoming an increasingly important component of the country's digital economy and are expected to operate within established regulatory structures as the sector continues to mature.

(June 5, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com



Pakistan

The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has issued a public advisory urging citizens to adopt stronger digital security practices to protect themselves from cyber fraud and online threats. In its advisory, the PTA emphasized the importance of using strong and unique passwords for online accounts, encouraging users to develop secure password habits to safeguard their personal information. The authority advised internet users to enable two-factor authentication (2FA) wherever possible, describing it as a key step in enhancing online security. It also warned against using the same password across multiple accounts, noting that such practices can increase vulnerability to cyberattacks. According to the advisory, users should avoid

creating simple or easily guessable passwords and refrain from using personal information such as names, dates of birth, or common number combinations as passwords. The PTA further urged citizens not to share passwords with others and to update them regularly to reduce security risks. The advisory also recommended the use of biometric security features, including fingerprint and facial recognition technologies, to provide an additional layer of protection for digital accounts and devices. The telecom regulator stressed that strong passwords are essential for a secure digital future and encouraged citizens to follow its guidelines to improve their online safety and protect themselves from cybercrime. (June 19, 2026) www.dunyanews.tv/en



Qatar

Qatar has launched a National Digital Safety Index, a new initiative designed to measure and enhance digital safety across the country while promoting responsible technology use, cybersecurity awareness, and online wellbeing. The index aims to provide a comprehensive framework for assessing digital safety indicators across different segments of society, helping policymakers, institutions, and stakeholders better understand emerging risks and develop targeted strategies to improve online protection. The initiative reflects Qatar's growing focus on creating a secure and trusted digital environment as internet usage, digital services, social media engagement, and online transactions continue to expand across the country. By establishing measurable benchmarks, the index is expected to support evidence-based policymaking and strengthen national efforts to promote digital resilience. Officials stated that the National Digital Safety Index will help evaluate factors related to cybersecurity awareness, digital literacy, online behavior, privacy protection, and the safe use of digital platforms. The insights generated through the

framework will assist in identifying gaps, tracking progress, and guiding future awareness campaigns and policy interventions. The launch aligns with Qatar's broader digital transformation agenda, which places strong emphasis on secure digital infrastructure, technology adoption, and citizen empowerment. As digital technologies become increasingly integrated into daily life, governments are paying greater attention to issues such as online safety, cyber hygiene, misinformation, digital wellbeing, and the protection of vulnerable users. Globally, digital safety has become an increasingly important policy area as societies navigate the challenges associated with expanding digital ecosystems. Governments, technology companies, educational institutions, and civil society organizations are working together to develop frameworks that balance innovation with user protection. Qatar's National Digital Safety Index is expected to serve as a valuable tool for monitoring digital wellbeing trends while supporting the country's ambition to foster a secure, inclusive, and resilient digital society. (June 5, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com



Saudi Arabia

The Communications, Space and Technology Commission (CST) held a specialized workshop on international trends, technical developments in quantum computing, and their applications across the communications, Space, and technology sectors. Organized in partnership with Huawei, the workshop aimed to raise awareness of the risks associated with quantum computing and foster a shared vision to strengthen the readiness of digital infrastructure in the ICT sector, and adopt quantum-safe encryption technologies to protect sensitive data. The workshop brought together cybersecurity leaders and specialists from telecommunications and technology companies to discuss global trends in addressing quantum computing possible risks, and international operators' experiences in deploying quantum communication networks and related services. Participants also examined approaches to adopting quantum-safe cryptographic algorithms to safeguard networks and ensure secure and reliable continuity of critical services. The workshop is part of CST's ongoing efforts to enable emerging technologies and keep pace with rapid developments across the Communications, Space, and Technology sectors. It also reflects CST's commitment to strengthening collaboration and knowledge exchange with global technology partners and service providers, supporting the protection of Saudi Arabia's digital infrastructure and ensuring the highest standards of security, resilience, and reliability in the sector.

(June 18, 2026) www.cst.gov.sa/en

The Communications, Space and Technology Commission (CST) renewed its call for individuals and entities wishing to register Saudi domain names through its licensed registrars, coinciding with the launch of the "Saudi Domain" campaign aimed at raising awareness about the importance and advantages of Saudi domain names and their role in enhancing digital identity in the Kingdom. CST explained that Saudi domain name services rely on a trusted infrastructure that includes more than 300 distributed server copies, making it one of the largest infrastructures globally according to international standards and best practices. The authority also reaffirmed its regulatory and supervisory role in Saudi domain registration services to ensure the protection of registrants' rights and improve the quality of services provided through licensed registrars. CST confirmed that the campaign targets government entities, the private sector, and individuals. The domain name is considered the primary resource of the Domain Name System (DNS) and one of the most critical components of internet infrastructure, enabling access to digital services, applications, and content. This initiative reflects CST's ongoing role in supporting Saudi Arabia's communications and technology ecosystem through regulatory and guidance tools that strengthen the reliability and trustworthiness of the digital environment while promoting the adoption of national digital resources.

(May 19, 2026) www.cst.gov.sa



Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has launched a new public sector digital transformation network aimed at accelerating government modernization and improving digital service delivery across state institutions. The initiative is designed to strengthen coordination between public sector entities while supporting the country's broader digital governance and administrative transformation objectives. Authorities said the network will help drive collaboration around digital infrastructure, data sharing, service integration, and technology adoption across government departments as Sri Lanka continues efforts to modernize public administration systems. The launch reflects increasing momentum across South Asia toward government digitization programs focused on improving operational efficiency, citizen access to services, and institutional transparency through digital platforms. Governments across the region are investing more heavily in digital identity systems, cloud infrastructure, interoperable government platforms, cybersecurity

capabilities, and AI-enabled public services as part of long-term digital economy strategies. Sri Lanka has been working to expand digital transformation initiatives across multiple sectors, including public administration, financial services, education, and citizen-facing digital services. The newly launched network is expected to support knowledge exchange, policy coordination, and implementation alignment among public institutions involved in digital transformation projects. Across emerging markets, governments are increasingly prioritizing integrated digital ecosystems capable of supporting secure data exchange, digital identity management, and scalable public service delivery. Sri Lanka's move aligns with broader regional efforts to strengthen digital governance frameworks while building more connected and technology-enabled public sector environments.

(May 14, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com



Syria

Syria's Minister of Communications and Information Technology Abdul Salam Haykal visited Idlib governorate to review plans aimed at improving telecommunications services and expanding technical infrastructure across the region. During meetings with Idlib Governor Mohammad Abdulrahman, discussions focused on upgrading communications networks, improving service coverage, and identifying operational requirements needed to strengthen telecom infrastructure within the governorate. Officials also reviewed key challenges affecting connectivity and technical service delivery as part of broader national efforts to modernize Syria's communications and information technology sector. The initiative reflects increasing recognition of telecom infrastructure as a critical component of economic recovery, public services, and digital access. Expanding connectivity remains essential

for enabling communication, digital services, and broader participation in emerging digital ecosystems. Improving telecom infrastructure in underserved and operationally challenged regions presents significant technical and logistical complexities, particularly in environments where infrastructure resilience and investment capacity remain constrained. The government's focus on expanding technical infrastructure also aligns with broader regional trends where connectivity is increasingly viewed as foundational infrastructure supporting economic activity, education, and public administration. The long-term impact will depend on implementation capacity, infrastructure investment, operational continuity, and the ability to sustain network improvements over time.

(May 12, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com



Tunisia

Tunisia's telecommunications sector recorded revenues exceeding TND 1.07 billion (\$345.2 million) during the first quarter of 2026, reflecting the continued importance of digital services and connectivity in the country's economy. According to data released by the National Telecommunications Observatory (ONT), the sector maintained steady growth as demand for mobile communications, broadband services, and digital connectivity continued to expand across both consumer and enterprise segments. Mobile services remained the primary revenue driver, supported by widespread smartphone adoption

and increasing consumption of mobile data services. Internet usage and digital service adoption also continued to contribute to sector performance as businesses and consumers rely more heavily on online platforms, cloud-based applications, and digital communications. Tunisia's telecom market is served by a mix of mobile and fixed-line operators that continue to invest in network upgrades, service quality improvements, and digital infrastructure expansion. The sector has played a critical role in supporting the country's broader digital transformation efforts, including e-government services, digital commerce, financial

technology adoption, and online education initiatives. The latest figures highlight the resilience of Tunisia's telecommunications industry amid growing demand for high-speed connectivity and

digital services. Operators are increasingly focused on enhancing network capacity and improving customer experiences as data consumption continues to rise. (June 1, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com



Turkey

Turk Telecom Regulator and Senegal's telecommunications regulator signed a memorandum of understanding to strengthen cooperation in telecommunications, digital services and postal regulation. The agreement was signed on the sidelines of the World Regulators Symposium 2026, held in Ankara from May 12 to May 15. The event was organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in partnership with the Turkish government. Under the deal, Senegal's Telecommunications and Postal Regulatory Authority (ARTP) and Turkey's Information and Communication Technologies Authority (BTK) will cooperate on regulatory best practices, technical training, consumer protection and support for digital innovation and startups. The partnership

will also focus on sharing expertise and developing joint initiatives aimed at accelerating digital transformation and promoting inclusive and sustainable development. In a statement, the ARTP said the agreement reflected the need for stronger international cooperation as the telecommunications sector undergoes major technological and regulatory changes. The regulator pointed to the emergence of new technologies, the expansion of satellite services, the rapid growth of e-commerce and the increasing strategic importance of data in policymaking. It also highlighted rising risks linked to innovation, particularly in cybersecurity and cybercrime.

(May 18, 2026) www.ecofinagency.com



United Arab Emirates

The UAE Cyber Security Council has partnered with Honeywell to strengthen national cyber resilience, with a focus on protecting critical infrastructure and advancing industrial cybersecurity capabilities. The collaboration is expected to support the development of cybersecurity frameworks, threat monitoring capabilities, and operational technology (OT) protection across strategic sectors. As industrial systems become increasingly connected, securing critical infrastructure such as energy, transportation, and manufacturing has become a national priority. Honeywell's expertise in industrial automation and cybersecurity will support efforts to improve resilience against evolving cyber threats targeting operational environments. The partnership reflects growing recognition that traditional

IT security approaches are no longer sufficient for protecting digitally connected industrial systems. The initiative aligns with the UAE's broader strategy to strengthen digital infrastructure security while supporting the rapid adoption of smart technologies and connected systems across the economy. As cyber threats targeting critical infrastructure continue to grow globally, governments are increasingly investing in partnerships that combine local policy leadership with international technical expertise. The effectiveness of the collaboration will depend on implementation, sector adoption, and the ability to translate strategy into measurable improvements in cyber readiness and incident response.

(May 7, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com



Yemen

Yemen is moving to expand its telecommunications infrastructure as part of broader efforts to improve connectivity and support digital services across the country. The initiative focuses on enhancing network coverage and upgrading existing infrastructure to meet growing demand for communication services. Expanding telecom access is seen as a critical step in enabling access to information, supporting economic activity, and improving service delivery in a market facing significant structural challenges. Improved connectivity is expected to facilitate greater access to digital platforms, including financial services, education, and

government services, particularly in underserved areas. As mobile networks remain the primary access point for most users, strengthening telecom infrastructure is central to broader digital development efforts. Telecom expansion in such contexts plays a key role in supporting resilience, enabling communication, and maintaining links between communities and essential services. The long-term impact will depend on implementation, stability, and the ability to sustain operations under challenging conditions.



(May 5, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com

REGULATORY ACTIVITIES BEYOND THE SA-ME-NA REGION



Argentina

Argentina's competition watchdog the Autoridad Nacional de la Competencia (ANC) has ordered Telecom Argentina and Telefónica to surrender customers and spectrum to a third party in order to gain approval for their proposed merger. Telefónica announced its US\$1.3 billion sale of its Argentine unit to Telecom in February 2025, drawing criticism from rivals and prompting President Javier Milei to order a detailed review into whether the deal would create an overly concentrated market. The transaction would combine Telefónica's Movistar brand with Telecom's Personal business, creating the country's largest mobile operator. According to ANC figures, market leader Claro currently holds a 41.8% share of Argentina's mobile market, followed by Personal with 33.8% and Movistar with 24.4%. Combined, Personal and Movistar would control 58.2% of subscribers nationwide. The ANC said the transaction would reduce the number of independent mobile network operators from three to two and, without remedies, create a duopoly in mobile

services. To preserve competition, the authority has ordered Telecom to transfer six million active mobile customers to an independent buyer – four million in the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area and two million elsewhere in the country. The transfer must include contracts, numbering resources and call history records, with no cost imposed on customers. Spectrum required to continue serving those subscribers must also be transferred, with the ANC treating the customer and spectrum divestments as inseparable. Telecommunications regulator ENACOM will be responsible for designing the technical framework for the transfer. The regulator also imposed measures intended to help establish a viable third mobile operator. Telecom must provide network-sharing arrangements including roaming, co-location and radio access network (RAN) sharing, enabling the new entrant to use existing infrastructure while building out its own network. (June 19, 2026) www.developingtelecoms.com



Australia

Telco regulator ACMA has confirmed that Telstra, Optus, TPG Telecom and NBN Co will have to collectively pay \$7.32 billion to renew their licenses to use the airwaves underpinning mobile services. The total market value determined by ACMA relates to spectrum licenses, expiring between 2028 and 2032, for fixed wireless broadband and more than 30 million mobile services. The final valuation is adjusted from the \$7.34 billion preliminary estimate released in December 2025 and was reached following further public consultation, expert review and "refinements to the ACMA's benchmarking methodology, including additional datasets". This included further independent advice from UK-based economic consultant DotEcon

and commissioned advice from Ian Martin Advisory which found that "mobile network operators have a strong capacity to fund their licenses under the ACMA's pricing valuation". Telcos had been warning that ACMA's price level put investments at risk and could force them to raise prices, but ACMA chair Nerida O'Loughlin said "our advice is that spectrum pricing alone should not lead operators to increase prices for consumers, as their aggregate costs for this spectrum will be lower than what they currently incur". The regulator also expects the mobile operators' revenue to increase over the medium term, which should enable continued infrastructure investment.

(May 20, 2026) www.capitalbrief.com



Austria

The Telekom-Control-Kommission (TKK), which operates under Austria's telecom regulator Rundfunk und Telekom Regulierungs-GmbH (RTR), has concluded a spectrum auction for the 2300 MHz and 2600 MHz bands, awarding long-term licenses to the country's three main mobile operators. The 2300 MHz band has been assigned for the first time, while the 2600 MHz band replaces existing usage rights that were due to expire at the end of 2026. These frequencies are mainly used to add mobile network capacity in busy areas and support 4G and 5G services. Under the auction results,

T-Mobile Austria, A1 Telekom Austria, and Hutchison Drei Austria secured spectrum in both TDD and FDD segments of the 2600 MHz band, along with new allocations in the 2300 MHz band. The total auction value is around €39 million, with licenses valid for up to 30 years. RTR also confirmed that the licenses come with rollout obligations to improve network coverage, especially in high-demand regions. The allocation is part of Austria's plan to expand mobile capacity and support next-generation connectivity using mid-band spectrum efficiently. (June 11, 2026) www.nanotechsol.com



Brazil

Brazil's telecommunications regulator, Anatel, has approved a new AI governance policy aimed at ensuring the ethical, secure, and transparent use of AI across its regulatory and administrative activities. The framework positions the agency among public institutions in Brazil, proactively addressing the challenges and opportunities of AI-driven transformation. Developed by the agency's IA.lab research group, the policy establishes principles including human oversight, transparency, data security and the protection of fundamental rights. It also creates a permanent forum to monitor AI use, assess risks, and support decision-making, ensuring AI complements rather than replaces human judgment in regulation. A key objective of the

policy is to strengthen technological sovereignty by encouraging the development and adoption of AI solutions built in Brazil and, where appropriate, trained on local data and optimized for Portuguese-language use cases. The policy also lays the groundwork for a broader national AI strategy within the agency, designed to expand responsible innovation across telecommunications regulation and public service delivery. Anatel said the governance model is intended to balance innovation and accountability, enabling the use of AI to improve efficiency while maintaining security, trust and regulatory integrity.

(June 5, 2026) www.dig.watch/updates



Canada

Telecom regulator warns Bell, Telus over fees that appear to violate new rules. New rules for cellphone providers came into effect, banning fees to activate, change or cancel cellphone plans. Canada's telecom

regulator sent letters to Bell and Telus, warning them that new fees introduced by the companies appear to violate those rules.

(June 16, 2026) www.cbc.ca



China

China is steadily expanding the opening up of the telecom sector, with 166 foreign-funded enterprises having received approvals for pilot operations in value-added telecom services since the first batch of such approvals was issued in February 2025, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology said. These enterprises can legally provide value-added telecom services throughout China, including internet data center services, internet access services, and information services. Building on existing policies including China's WTO commitments, pilot free trade zone regulations and policies for further opening up of the service sector, the ministry has proactively aligned with high-standard international economic and trade rules,

and launched trials in four localities – Beijing, Shanghai, Hainan and Shenzhen – to remove the foreign equity caps on value-added telecom services such as internet data centers. More than 3,100 foreign-invested telecom enterprises operate across China. These enterprises will provide Chinese consumers with more diversified telecom services and products, further fostering an open and dynamic market ecosystem, the ministry noted. More policies will be introduced to promote the opening up of the telecom sector and encourage eligible foreign-funded enterprises to enter China's telecom market, the ministry said.

(June 4, 2026) www.chinadailyhk.com



Colombia

Colombia's Ministry of ICT (MinTIC) has fined operator Telecall Colombia COP7.42 billion (US\$1.8 million) for failing to meet obligations attached to its 5G spectrum license. Telecall Colombia is a subsidiary of Brazilian telecommunications company Telecall, which provides enterprise connectivity, cloud, data center and mobile services in Brazil. The company was one of four operators to secure spectrum in Colombia's landmark 5G auction in 2023, alongside established mobile players, marking its entry into the country's mobile market. However, its participation attracted scrutiny due to questions over its financial capacity and ability to deliver on the substantial investment and coverage commitments attached to the license. Telecall was awarded an 80MHz block in the 3.5GHz band during Colombia's

5G auction in December 2023 after submitting a bid worth COP318.3 billion (US\$77 million). The company subsequently received a 20-year spectrum permit covering access, use and exploitation of the frequencies. The license included a series of connectivity commitments designed to help close the country's digital divide. These included expanding mobile coverage along transport corridors, providing fiber connectivity to 343 educational institutions, and deploying infrastructure in major cities and municipalities with populations exceeding 200,000. According to MinTIC, Telecall failed to make the first scheduled payment associated with the spectrum permit and did not provide the required performance and civil liability guarantees needed to support the project. (June 18, 2026) www.developingtelecoms.com



France

French telecoms groups Bouygues BOUY.PA, opens new tab, Orange ORAN.PA, opens new tab and Iliad-owned Free face a complex antitrust review of their planned \$23.5 billion takeover of SFR, executives said, in what will be a test of regulators' willingness to support consolidation in the sector. The trio of bidders said they had agreed to buy for €20.35 billion (\$23.45 billion), including debt, in what would be one of the biggest European telecoms deals in recent years if approved. Under the deal, the companies will share out SFR's assets, with Bouygues taking the largest, or about 52% of the carved-out revenue, Iliad taking 27% and Orange 21%.

But the buyers now face a complicated review by regulators, which is set to get underway in coming days and could last for more than a year. Each suitor must notify competition authorities in its jurisdiction. Orange and Bouygues will file in France, where they generate more than two-thirds of their EU-wide turnover. That makes them exempt from mandatory notification to the European Commission under EU merger rules. Iliad, on the other hand, does not meet that threshold and will file in Brussels with the European Commission. Both regulators will then agree who will lead the merger review.

(June 8, 2026) www.reuters.com



Greece

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has expanded its global network of space radio monitoring stations through a cooperation agreement with Greece's regulator, the Hellenic Telecommunications and Post Commission (EETT). The agreement strengthens international cooperation to help investigate and resolve harmful interference cases affecting space services. EETT's recently inaugurated Satellite Communications Spectrum Monitoring Station meets the latest technical standards for satellite spectrum monitoring and transmitter geolocation. The fixed monitoring station, located in Greece's Attica region, is equipped with antenna systems operating across the L, S, C, Ku and Ka frequency bands, specialized transmitter geolocation equipment, and advanced systems for recording and analyzing the data collected. Two control centers – one on site and another at EETT's central offices – feature autonomous power supply, secure telecommunications links, and integrated security systems that enable fully remote operation. The station strengthens Greece's satellite spectrum monitoring capacity at the national and wider Euro-Mediterranean

levels. It will help detect unlicensed or technically non compliant radio emissions, locate their sources, and support the investigation and resolution of harmful interference cases in a timely manner. Monitoring capabilities around the globe contribute to the efficient and transparent use of satellite frequencies, a limited and valuable shared resource, in line with international regulations. "Expanding ITU's international network of space monitoring stations is essential to safeguarding the efficient and interference free use of satellite frequencies," said Mario Maniewicz, Director of the ITU Radiocommunication Bureau. "Cooperation with Greece strengthens our collective capacity to support countries and administrations worldwide in identifying and resolving harmful interference affecting space services." EETT will conduct measurements under the memorandum of understanding signed in May, helping the organization safeguard space services worldwide. The new station is also included in ITU's List of International Monitoring Stations (List VIII).

(June 4, 2026) www.itu.int



India

Telecom operators in India are navigating significant compliance challenges following the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India's (TRAI) latest regulation, issued on January 20, 2026. This regulation mandates enhanced performance metrics for data and voice services, requiring operators to achieve a minimum average data download speed of 25 Mbps and maintain voice quality standards across both urban and rural areas. This regulatory overhaul responds to increasing consumer dissatisfaction with service quality, as highlighted in TRAI's December 2025 drive test results. The report identified Reliance Jio as the leading operator, achieving the highest average mobile data download speeds in Delhi. However, the new regulation insists that all operators must upgrade their infrastructure to avoid penalties. Major telecom service providers, including Bharti Airtel, Vodafone

Idea, and new market entrants, are affected. These operators must submit detailed compliance reports quarterly, beginning in April 2026, to demonstrate adherence to the new benchmarks. Previously, the regulatory framework allowed for greater variance in service quality. The updated guidelines establish stricter standards, compelling operators to invest in network improvements. Non-compliance could result in fines of up to 5 crore, underscoring the urgency for companies to align with TRAI's expectations. Industry analysts predict these regulations will reshape competitive dynamics within the sector. "Operators that quickly adapt to these standards will likely gain market share, while those lagging could face significant customer loss," stated Rajesh Kumar, a telecom expert at a leading consultancy. As the compliance deadline looms, operators must not only

enhance service quality but also brace for increased regulatory scrutiny. The telecom sector is on the brink of significant transformation as companies rush to meet these new standards. The focus on performance

metrics underscores TRAI's commitment to consumer protection and sets a precedent for future regulations aimed at ensuring quality in telecommunications.

(June 20, 2026) www.lekhanews.in



Jamaica

Jamaican operator Flow has claimed to launch the country's first commercial 5G network, providing coverage to around 70% of the population. According to BN Americas, parent company Liberty Latin America (LLA) invested US\$74 million in the rollout, comprising US\$50 million for network equipment and systems and US\$24 million for spectrum licenses. The initial deployment brings 5G services to roughly seven in 10 Jamaicans. Jamaica's Minister of Energy, Transport and Telecommunications, Daryl Vaz, described the launch as a "national development moment", highlighting the role of next-generation connectivity in supporting

economic growth and digital transformation. Flow executives also revealed that the operator has invested a further US\$85 million in rebuilding and upgrading its network following damage caused by Hurricane Melissa in October, according to LLA. The launch expands LLA's growing 5G footprint across the Caribbean and Latin America. The group has already introduced 5G services in Puerto Rico, Panama, Costa Rica, the Cayman Islands and Barbados. LLA serves 6.8 million mobile subscribers across its markets and generates annual revenues of more than US\$4 billion.

(June 17, 2026) www.developingtelecoms.com



Kenya

Kenya's ICT Authority is engaging with Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) to strengthen artificial intelligence and digital skills training, as the country looks to build a workforce capable of supporting its growing digital economy. The discussions focus on developing training programs that equip professionals and students with capabilities in AI, cloud computing, and data-driven technologies. As demand for advanced digital skills rises, partnerships with global technology providers are becoming essential to bridge talent gaps and accelerate capability building. Kenya has been actively positioning itself as a regional technology hub, with increasing investment in digital infrastructure, startups, and innovation ecosystems. However, talent

availability remains a critical factor in sustaining growth and enabling the adoption of emerging technologies. Collaborations with companies like HPE can provide access to global expertise, training frameworks, and resources that support workforce development at scale. Such initiatives are particularly important in ensuring that digital transformation efforts are matched by human capital readiness. The move reflects a broader trend across Africa, where governments are prioritizing skills development as a foundational component of digital strategy. The long-term success of the initiative will depend on program execution, accessibility, and the ability to translate training into employment and industry impact. (May 5, 2026) www.meatechwatch.com



Moldova

According to the National Communications Regulatory Agency (ANRC), revenues from mobile services amounted to approximately 185.6 million lei. On the contrary, fixed telephony continues to lose ground at an accelerated pace. The revenues in this segment fell by 18.3%, while the number of subscribers decreased significantly – by more than 111,000 compared to the previous year. Specialists explain this trend by a change in the behavior of users, who are increasingly switching to mobile services, preferring their flexibility and constant access to the Internet. In the mobile segment, the total number of active SIM cards reached approximately 3.6 million, showing a slight decrease of 2.1%. At the same time, the number of subscribers continues to grow, supported by more attractive packages that include additional services such as roaming or enhanced mobile internet access.

The penetration rate of mobile services has reached approximately 150 SIM cards per 100 inhabitants, indicating that many users are using multiple cards at the same time, either to benefit from different offers or to separate personal and professional activities. Despite the decrease in the total number of SIM cards, voice traffic remained stable, recording a slight increase of 0.5%, indicating a steady utilization of basic services. Overall, the electronic communications market continued to grow in 2025, reaching a total revenue of LE 6.63 billion, up 4.2% year-on-year. At the same time, the number of active providers decreased to 315, 20 fewer than in 2024. This indicates a consolidation of the market, with fewer players managing larger volumes of services.

(May 3, 2026) www.logos-pres.md



Mozambique

Mozambique will assume the presidency of the Association of Regulators of Communications and Telecommunications of Portuguese-speaking Countries (ARCTEL-CPLP) for the next two years, succeeding Cape Verde. The transition of leadership took place during the XVIII General Assembly of the Association, which takes place on June 15 and 16, in Praia, Cape Verde. During the handover ceremony, the outgoing President of ARCTEL-CPLP and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Multisectoral Regulatory Agency for the Economy (ARME), Leonilde Santos, highlighted the progress achieved during her mandate, underlining the importance of cooperation between Portuguese-speaking regulators. According to Leonilde Santos, the last two years have allowed us to witness

the strength of cooperation within the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP), based on joint work, technical competence and the commitment of regulators, factors that have contributed to raising ARCTEL-CPLP to new levels of institutional affirmation. The head of the Cape Verdean regulator, who took over the leadership of the Association in 2024, becoming the first woman to hold the position, said that the presidency of ARME was guided by clear priorities, namely the strengthening of proximity communication between members, the promotion of gender equality and female leadership in the digital sector, as well as the strengthening of international cooperation as a strategic axis for the consolidation of the Association.

(June 17, 2026) www.techafrikanews.com



Nigeria

The Association of Licensed Telecommunications Operators of Nigeria (ALTON) has pledged full support for the planned review of the Mobile Termination Rates (MTR) by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC). Speaking at the NCC Stakeholders' Consultative Forum on the determination of Mobile Termination Rates in Nigeria, Gbenga Adebayo, ALTON Chairman, said that the operators would cooperate fully with the Commission and its consultants throughout the data collection and stakeholder engagement process. According to him, mobile termination rates remain a fundamental component of the telecommunications ecosystem because they directly affect industry sustainability, competition and investment. "We are aware that the next phase of the exercise will involve data collection and information gathering. On behalf of our members, I assure the Commission that operators will provide all the necessary information to facilitate the work," he said. The ALTON chairman also

commended the NCC for approving a tariff adjustment for telecommunications operators, saying the decision provided the much-needed relief at a time when operators were grappling with rising operating costs. He recalled concerns raised by industry stakeholders in 2024 about the financial health of the sector and the possibility of service disruptions if urgent interventions were not implemented. According to him, the tariff adjustment helped stabilize the industry and created room for renewed investment in network infrastructure. Adebayo disclosed that telecommunications operators and other industry players invested about N2.18 trillion in capital expenditure in 2025, while an additional N1.8 trillion has been projected for investment in 2026. He said that the investments were directed at network expansion, technology upgrades, cybersecurity improvements, energy infrastructure, rural connectivity and other strategic projects needed to support Nigeria's digital economy. (June 17, 2026) www.apanews.net



Philippines

Mobile services revenue in the Philippines is expected to expand at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.6%, increasing from approximately USD 4 billion in 2025 to more than USD 5 billion by 2030. This growth is largely driven by rising mobile data consumption, with 5G networks serving as the key enabler. Based on GlobalData's Philippines Mobile Broadband Forecast (Q1 2026), mobile voice service revenue is projected to decline at a CAGR of 9.7% from 2025 to 2030, reflecting continued pressure on mobile voice average revenue per user (ARPU). In contrast, mobile data revenues are forecast to grow at a CAGR of 6% over the same period, supported by increasing adoption of higher-ARPU 5G services as operators continue to expand their network coverage nationwide. 5G penetration is expected to reach 77% by 2030, further accelerating the uptake of machine-to-machine (M2M) and Internet of Things (IoT) services across industries. The average monthly mobile data usage is forecast to increase from 8.9 GB

in 2025 to about 15.3 GB in 2030, driven by the growing consumption of high-bandwidth online video services and data-intensive mobile gaming over smartphones, which encourages longer play time and more frequent content updates over cellular networks. While 4G is projected to remain the dominant mobile technology in terms of subscriptions until 2028, 5G is expected to overtake it thereafter, accounting for approximately 61% of total mobile subscriptions by 2030. This shift is underpinned by sustained 5G investments from mobile operators. In terms of network expansion, Globe Telecom significantly broadened its 5G footprint in May 2025, covering 97.9% of cities in Mindanao and the Visayas, and 98.7% of Metro Manila. By March 2026, the company further strengthened its presence in Tarlac province, extending 5G coverage across 18 municipalities to deliver faster, more reliable connectivity nationwide.

(June 5, 2026) www.telecomreviewasia.com



Somalia

Somali authorities leverage digital transformation to boost the country's socio-economic development. Government agencies are aggressively strengthening infrastructure networks to support the rapid growth of digital services across the nation. To achieve these long-term goals, Somalia is intensifying its structural transition to the new generation of internet addresses (IPv6). This strategic initiative expands the capacity of the country's digital infrastructure and anticipates the future growth of online applications. The National Communications Authority (NCA) and the National IPv6 Center advanced this agenda on Wednesday, June 10, by hosting a specialized technical workshop. This strategic meeting united internet service providers, academic institutions, telecommunications experts, and diverse digital sector stakeholders. According to the national news agency, this collaborative gathering provided a vital platform to raise institutional awareness about IPv6 adoption. The workshop strengthened technical collaboration among key stakeholders, supported the national digital transformation roadmap, deployed next-generation internet technologies, and upgraded existing network infrastructures. "Today, we do not plan only for the current needs of the internet, but also

for those of future generations, ensuring that they have access to modern technologies and remain prepared for the continuous growth of the digital economy," said Mustafa Yasiin Sheikh, Director General of the telecom regulator. Prior to this workshop, Somalia adopted a dedicated national IPv6 strategy in February 2025 to create a unified implementation framework. This policy framework enabled the successful creation of the National IPv6 Center. Located inside Jamhuriya University, this research hub serves as a specialized center for research and training to prepare a new generation of experts in IPv6 deployment and network management. These domestic infrastructure initiatives match critical global realities, as the previous generation protocol (IPv4) reached its maximum allocation limits in 2011 despite its continued widespread use across Africa. Launched originally in 1981, IPv4 provides a maximum capacity of approximately 4.3 billion unique IP addresses. Conversely, IPv6 generates up to 340 undecillion addresses, which delivers a permanent solution for the rising connectivity demands of traditional web users and connected Internet of Things (IoT) devices.

(June 15, 2026) www.wearotech.africa/en



Thailand

Thailand is continuing to harden its telecom anti-fraud regime by combining the 2025 emergency-decree amendments with more prescriptive National Broadcasting and Telecommunication Commission (NBTC) Compliance measures. Published additional commentary in the second quarter of 2026 indicates that the latest notification increases operational obligations for telecom licensees in areas including foreign SIM registration, activation controls, blacklist screening, device blocking, IP-use restrictions and retention of user data. For operators and MVNOs, the practical burden is likely to fall on customer onboarding, identity verification, fraud-system integration, dealer controls and lawful data-governance design. Any assessment

of the new retention requirements should also be tested against Thailand's broader personal-data framework, including lawful-basis, necessity and governance questions under the PDPA. The latest measures stem from the NBTC Notification on Measures for Prevention and Suppression of Technology Crime No. 2, published in the Government Gazette on 15 May 2026 and effective from 16 May 2026. The notification builds on the Emergency Decree on Measures for the Prevention and Suppression of Technology Crime, first introduced in 2023 and amended in 2025, which expanded the obligations on telecom, financial and digital service providers to cooperate with authorities in tackling fraud and cybercrime. (June 4, 2026) www.mobileecosystemforum.com



United Kingdom

The difficulties of rapidly moderating harmful content during sensitive and fast-moving UK public disorder events came into sharp focus during the summer of 2025 and again in recent weeks. Following consultation last year, Ofcom has now published amendments to its Illegal Content and Children's Safety Codes of Practice requiring user-to-user services to implement formal crisis response protocols to address viral illegal content. These will take effect following the Parliamentary process. Ofcom defines a crisis as 'an extraordinary situation in which there is a serious threat to public safety in the UK' resulting from a significant increase in illegal content or content harmful to

children. The crisis need not affect the whole of the UK, nor originate here. Local or regional events are sufficient. Unlike the EU's Digital Services Act, the UK framework does not extend to environmental disasters, pandemics, or misinformation campaigns. User-to-user services of any size may be required to implement a crisis response protocol if they pose a high risk of terrorism, hate, harassment, stalking, threats, abuse or foreign interference, or if they are likely to be accessed by children. Large services (those with over 700,000 UK users) face an additional requirement to establish dedicated communication channels with law enforcement. Crisis indicators to identify when a crisis

is occurring or imminent. These indicators should be continuously monitored using a combination of external sources (law enforcement, media reports) and internal data (content moderation, user complaints) and should be regularly updated to reflect the rapidly changing online environment. A designated crisis response team with sufficient seniority to enable timely decision-making. Defined systems and processes for response deployment, recognizing that existing content moderation processes and capacity may need to be supplemented. Platforms operating under both the Online Safety Act and the EU Digital Services Act should note that the two regimes' crisis

response frameworks differ in scope and procedural requirements. A single global crisis protocol may not adequately address both. One practical question the framework leaves open is who determines when a crisis has begun. Platforms are responsible for monitoring their own indicators and making that call, but calibrating the threshold carries risk in both directions. Too slow to act, and there is regulatory and reputational exposure; too quick to activate, and there is a risk of restricting legitimate content. A clear, documented decision-making process around the trigger point is as important as the response plan itself.

(June 15, 2026) www.fieldfisher.com



United States

The Federal Communications Commission's (FCC or Commission) Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau (PSHSB or Bureau) maintains a list of equipment and services (Covered List) that have been determined to "pose an unacceptable risk to the national security of the United States or the security and safety of United States persons." Pursuant to section 2 of the Secure

and Trusted Communications Networks Act of 2019 (Secure Networks Act) and sections 1.50002(a) and 1.50003 of the Commission's rules, PSHSB announces that the Department of War (DoW) has granted Conditional Approvals for certain un-crewed aircraft systems (UAS) and routers. Therefore, such devices are exempt from the Covered List. 🇺🇸 (June 12, 2026) www.fcc.gov

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

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

