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SAMENA TRENDS

CONTEXT FOR DIGITAL-ECOSYSTEM DECISIONS

BUILDING DIGITAL ECONOMIES



PP-26: ITU's Reset for 2027-2031
Qatar
Global Decisions for a Connected Digital Future

Advancing 6G Readiness
UAE
Building on Achievements in 5G to Lead in 6G

SAMENA Council Leaders' AXIS 2026
Oman
Oman's New Geography of Digital Investment

Global WLAN Industry Forum 2026
China
Accelerating AI-Enabled WLAN Ecosystems

AI-Native Network Leap
Saudi Arabia
stc Group's Vision for AI-Native Core Network by 2030

Emerging Market Representation
Côte d'Ivoire
Advancing Global Telecom Governance

International Digital Cooperation
Kazakhstan
Digital Development for the Global Future

THIS MONTH

AGENTIC AI AND THE FUTURE OF TELECOMS

VOLUME 17 | OCTOBER 2026

SAMENA TRENDS

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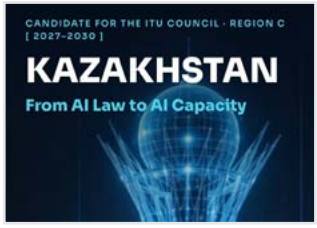
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Kazakhstan at ITU PP-26

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Agentic AI and the Future of Telecoms

The ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-26) in Doha arrives at a time when the telecommunications sector is addressing important technological, commercial, and regulatory matters. Investment in connectivity, computing infrastructure, satellite systems, and network modernization continues across markets with different economic circumstances and development priorities. Alongside these developments, advances in artificial intelligence are raising questions about how digital systems will operate, who will exercise authority over them, and how responsibility for their actions will be maintained.

Agentic AI is already becoming relevant to government and enterprise operations. Initiatives in Kuwait and Dubai have drawn attention to practical issues involving human oversight, privacy, security, and legal responsibility. Dubai's government accelerator, for example, is examining more than 300 potential applications involving 33 government entities. As systems gain the ability to carry out more complex tasks with limited direct intervention, organizations will need to determine what activities can be delegated, what information can be accessed, and when human involvement remains necessary.

For telecommunications operators, these questions have particular importance because network reliability, security, and service continuity remain their responsibility, regardless of how much operational activity becomes automated. AI may assist with increasingly complex network and service requirements, but its use must be supported by clear permissions, appropriate safeguards, and the ability to intervene when necessary. Automation must account for the operational requirements and risks associated with the services being managed.

Infrastructure investment is also important to the wider adoption of advanced AI applications. Saudi Arabia's planned large-scale AI computing campus at Oxagon, the UAE's advances in high-capacity mobile networks, and Oman's development of satellite communications capabilities illustrate different aspects of ongoing digital infrastructure expansion. Computing facilities require reliable energy and connectivity, while advanced applications place additional demands on data handling and network performance. These requirements must be considered alongside the commercial and technical conditions that determine whether infrastructure can be deployed and operated effectively.

National development priorities remain varied. Some markets are investing in advanced computing and satellite capabilities, while others are extending broadband coverage, modernizing existing networks, or improving investment conditions. Regulatory measures concerning spectrum, subscriber identification, internet routing security, and universal service remain important to the functioning of telecommunications markets. As autonomous applications become more widely considered, regulators and service providers will retain their existing responsibilities, with additional attention needed where automated activities affect sensitive information or essential services.

Regional cooperation provides opportunities to address some of these matters. The SAMENA Council Leaders' AXIS 2026 conference in Oman examined connectivity, computing, energy, investment, and local capability. Discussions in the UAE concerning future networks emphasized commercial viability, operational continuity, and lessons from 5G deployment. Cooperation between the SAMENA Council and the World WLAN Application Alliance, including engagement in China, has also supported dialogue on WLAN development and implementation.

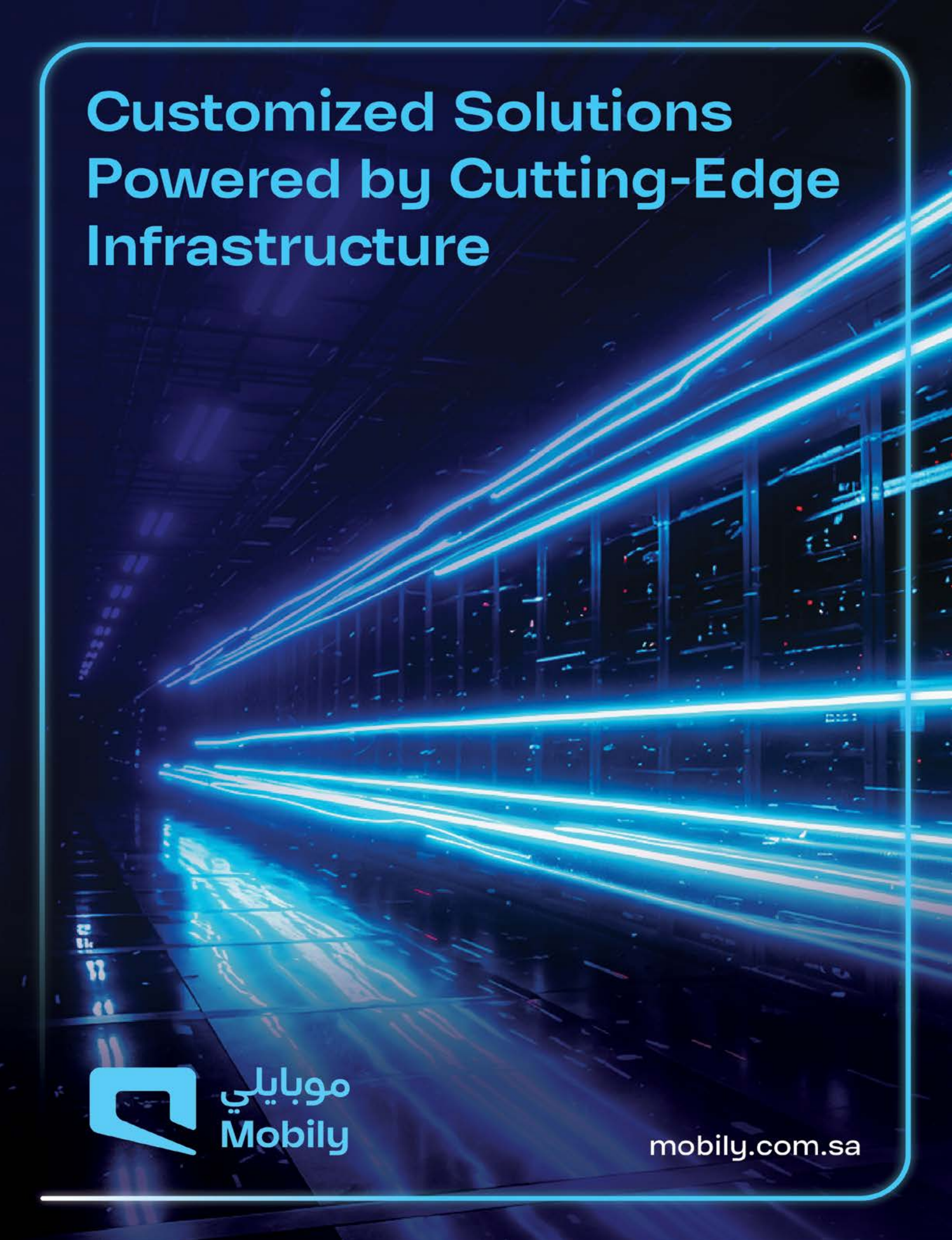
At the international level, PP-26 provides an opportunity for Member States to determine institutional priorities and representation within the ITU. The candidatures of Kazakhstan and Côte d'Ivoire for election to the ITU Council bring attention to the participation of countries from Central



Bocar A. BA
Chief Executive Officer
& Board Member
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Asia and Africa in international telecommunications governance. Their respective regions have different development circumstances, with connectivity, digital inclusion, infrastructure investment, and international cooperation remaining relevant considerations. The participation of countries from different regions is important to the ITU's work, given the varying needs of established and emerging digital markets and the international nature of many telecommunications issues.

As telecommunications networks become more capable, the adoption of agentic AI will depend on more than the ability of software to perform tasks independently. Operators and other organizations will need to establish where automation is appropriate, what decisions remain subject to human control, and how responsibilities will be fulfilled when automated systems are used. Reliable infrastructure and workable regulatory arrangements will remain essential. The practical value of agentic AI will depend on what it enables organizations to accomplish while maintaining the security, dependability, and accountability expected of telecommunications services.


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ITU PP-26

Beyond Technical Coordination and Global Digital Governance

When the International Telecommunication Union's 194 Member States meet in Doha for the Plenipotentiary Conference 2026 (PP-26), their decisions will concern more than the organization's leadership for the next four years. They will determine the policies, institutional mandates and financial arrangements through which the ITU conducts international telecommunications cooperation at a time of changing technological requirements and persistent development differences. The conference, held from 9 to 27 November, is the Union's highest policy-making body and its principal forum for decisions on the organization's overall direction.

The ITU's longstanding responsibilities in radio-frequency and satellite-orbit coordination, telecommunication standardization and development remain indispensable. Yet the issues affecting these functions increasingly extend into artificial intelligence, internet-based services, infrastructure resilience, satellite expansion and digital inclusion. These subjects already feature in the ITU's work. The question for PP-26 is how Member States will define the extent of that work, clarify its relationship with other institutions and ensure that any additional commitments can be implemented.

This is what makes PP-26 important beyond its formal proceedings. Elections and resolutions receive immediate attention, but their lasting effect depends on the priorities, resources and practical responsibilities that emerge from Doha. The conference cannot itself settle all questions concerning AI governance, spectrum demand or the digital divide. It can determine how the ITU is organized and authorized to address the parts of those questions falling within its remit.



Leadership, representation and the next institutional cycle

PP-26 will elect the Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General and the Directors of the Radiocommunication, Telecommunication Standardization and Telecommunication Development Bureaux. Member States will also elect the 48 countries serving on the ITU Council and the 12 members of the Radio Regulations Board. The elected term covers 2027–2030, while the strategic and financial plans to be approved cover 2028–2031. These two periods should be distinguished when considering the conference's expected effects.

The functions of these offices and bodies differ. The elected officials lead the Union and its three sectors. The Council guides the organization between Plenipotentiary Conferences and helps oversee the implementation of agreed plans and decisions. The Radio Regulations Board performs specific functions connected with application of the Radio Regulations, frequency-assignment matters and harmful interference. Decisions on leadership and representation therefore affect both governance and the continuity of specialized international work.

For countries seeking stronger participation in ITU decisions, Council representation is important because it offers a continuing role in discussions that extend beyond the three weeks in Doha. The value of such representation depends on sustained engagement with the Union's work, the ability to communicate national and regional priorities and the willingness to contribute to collective decisions. Elections can alter the composition of the governing bodies, but they do not predetermine the policy positions subsequently adopted.

Strategic priorities must be supported by resources

The ITU's 2024–2027 Strategic Plan identifies universal connectivity and sustainable digital transformation as overarching goals. The 2028–2031 plan will set the next framework for pursuing these objectives and other priorities agreed by Member States. It will be considered alongside the financial arrangements that make implementation possible.

Connectivity investment remains a substantial challenge. The ITU's Connecting Humanity Action Blueprint estimates that achieving meaningful universal connectivity by 2030 would require investment of approximately USD 2.6 trillion to USD 2.8 trillion, including about USD 1.6 trillion in physical infrastructure. These figures illustrate the scale of the requirement; they are not a funding commitment that PP-26 can make. Deployment in underserved areas depends on regulatory conditions, financing, infrastructure economics, public-private cooperation and the ability to sustain services after construction.

> *PP-26 will not undertake the spectrum-allocation and Radio Regulations revision work of a World Radiocommunication Conference. Those specialized matters will be handled through the applicable ITU-R processes and WRC-27. Doha nevertheless matters because it will elect the relevant leadership and Radio Regulations Board and consider resolutions concerning the institutional environment in which radiocommunication work proceeds.*

Development also extends beyond network availability. Affordability, skills, accessible services, local capabilities and institutional readiness determine how effectively people and businesses use connectivity. The Telecommunication Development Sector supports countries through technical assistance, capacity building and cooperation. Its impact depends on programmes suited to national needs and backed by sufficient resources. A meaningful strategic plan must therefore do more than list priorities: it must establish which work the ITU can undertake, where cooperation with other organizations is appropriate and how progress can be assessed.

The financial dimension matters equally for the Union's radiocommunication and standardization functions. Member States must balance demands for additional activity against continuing technical obligations, specialist staffing and administrative capacity. Debates concerning strategic prioritization, financial transparency and institutional efficiency belong in this context. They are questions about the practical use of a shared international institution, not merely internal management matters.

Spectrum, satellites and the relationship with WRC-27

International coordination of radio-frequency spectrum and associated satellite-orbit resources is among the ITU's most established responsibilities. It is becoming more complex as non-geostationary satellite networks expand, terrestrial and non-terrestrial communications become more closely integrated and competition for usable resources increases. These developments can extend connectivity and provide alternative communications paths, but they also require effective coordination, interference management and attention to space sustainability.

PP-26 will not undertake the spectrum-allocation and Radio Regulations revision work of a World Radiocommunication Conference. Those specialized matters will be handled through the applicable ITU-R processes and WRC-27. Doha nevertheless matters because it will elect the relevant leadership and Radio Regulations Board and consider resolutions concerning the institutional environment in which radiocommunication work proceeds.

For governments, operators and satellite providers, predictable coordination procedures are an investment and operating concern. Uncertainty over technical compatibility, interference or access to shared resources can complicate network planning. The discussion of space sustainability and the efficiency of radiocommunication processes is therefore connected to the functioning of communications systems, including services intended for remote communities and emergency use.

> *Proposals under consideration at PP-26 address the Union's work on AI, including possible revisions to Resolution 214 on artificial intelligence technologies and telecommunications/ICTs.*

AI, internet policy and the limits of institutional authority

Artificial intelligence is already relevant to telecommunications operations, service management, standards and development programmes. The ITU's existing activities include technical standardization, capacity building and international cooperation. Proposals under consideration at PP-26 address the Union's work on AI, including possible revisions to Resolution 214 on artificial intelligence technologies and telecommunications/ICTs.

The institutional question is where the ITU can make a defined contribution. Standards, interoperability, network-related applications and technical assistance have direct connections with its established functions. Wider AI governance raises questions involving many national and international bodies. Member States must therefore consider the scope of any proposed ITU role, the risk of duplicating existing work and the resources that further commitments would require. A proposal for a revised mandate should not be mistaken for an agreed enlargement of authority.

Internet governance and the International Telecommunication Regulations present a related but distinct set of issues. The preparatory material identifies existing resolutions on international internet-related public policy, the ITRs, over-the-

top services, IP-based networks and misuse of international numbering resources. Such matters touch national regulatory jurisdiction, the relationship between telecommunications infrastructure and internet-based services, security, market developments and different approaches to international governance.

These subjects have a history of differing Member State positions and cannot be reduced to a single question of technological modernization. For example, the economic effects of OTT services on operators, users and investment do not themselves establish agreement on whether or how international rules should change. The ITRs are an international treaty instrument with a specific history and legal function; consideration of related resolutions at PP-26 does not mean the conference will necessarily renegotiate that treaty. The useful outcome would be carefully defined decisions that respect established responsibilities and the limits of consensus.

Critical infrastructure resilience and emergency communications

As communications networks support finance, transport, government administration, commerce and public safety, the consequences of disruption increasingly reach beyond the sector itself. International submarine cables, terrestrial routes, satellite networks and essential national systems face risks including physical damage, harmful interference, cyber incidents and natural disasters. Network dependencies frequently cross-national borders, while the ability to recover varies among countries.

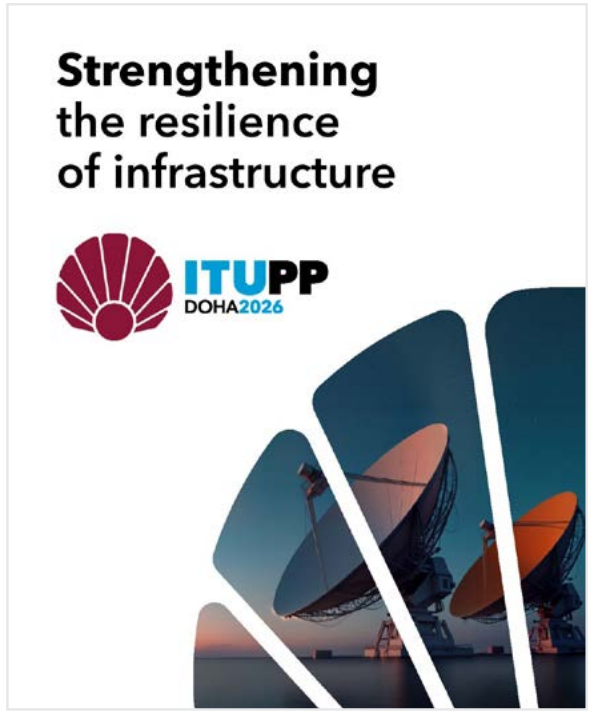
The ITU has identified infrastructure resilience and reliable emergency and humanitarian communications as relevant PP-26 themes. A draft resolution on submarine-cable resilience has been submitted for consideration. The policy questions include whether existing cooperation is sufficient, what shared technical assistance may be useful and how countries can strengthen preparedness, diversity of routes, continuity and recovery arrangements.

Early-warning capabilities and communications during disasters create additional needs for international coordination, particularly where affected areas have weak connectivity or limited backup systems. The ITU can support cooperation and technical capacity in these areas, but infrastructure protection and operational recovery also depend on national authorities, network operators and other infrastructure owners. Any new resolution will matter to the extent that it specifies feasible responsibilities and helps those actors work together.

Development differences and the relevance to the SAMENA region

The ITU must serve countries at substantially different stages of telecommunications development. While some markets are deploying advanced systems and exploring new network architectures, others face continuing gaps in basic access, affordability, skills and institutional resources. These differences affect the priorities Member States bring to international negotiations and the forms of assistance they require.

Across South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, common areas of interest include international connectivity, spectrum coordination, investment conditions, cross-border resilience and the ability to adopt emerging technologies. The circumstances of individual countries nevertheless differ considerably. Policy support that is useful in one market may have limited relevance in another, particularly where investment economics and public-sector capacity are not comparable.



The ITU has identified infrastructure resilience and reliable emergency and humanitarian communications as relevant PP-26 themes. A draft resolution on submarine-cable resilience has been submitted for consideration. The policy questions include whether existing cooperation is sufficient, what shared technical assistance may be useful and how countries can strengthen preparedness, diversity of routes, continuity and recovery arrangements.

For this reason, the development agenda should be judged by its ability to accommodate different national requirements without losing coherence. Member State participation, cooperation among ITU sectors, regional engagement and effective technical assistance can help connect broad international objectives with implementation on the ground. PP-26 will influence the mandate and resource framework for that work, although the eventual results will depend on action after the conference.

Expected Effects of PP-26

New leadership mandate for 2027–2030

2028–2031 strategic and financial plan

Revised resolution

ITU role in responsible AI and digital governance, standards, capacity building, and cross-sector cooperation

A stronger space, satellite, NTN agenda

Focus on critical-infrastructure threats and WRC-27

The principal outcomes of PP-26 will shape the ITU's leadership, priorities, institutional responsibilities, and work over the coming years:

Leadership and governance. Elections will establish the five senior office holders, 48 Council members and 12 Radio Regulations Board members for 2027–2030, influencing oversight, representation and continuity of ITU work.

Strategy and finances. Approval of the 2028–2031 plans will set priorities and financial parameters, determining which activities have an agreed institutional basis and available resources.

Resolutions and institutional mandates. Member States may amend existing texts or adopt new decisions. Any revised responsibilities will need to be interpreted through the final negotiated wording, not through proposals alone.

AI and wider digital-policy work. Negotiations may clarify the Union's contribution to relevant technical standards, digital development and cooperation, including how it relates to other institutions.

Space, satellite systems and radiocommunication. Elected bodies and policy decisions will influence coordination work, space-sustainability discussions and the institutional setting ahead of WRC-27, without replacing WRC functions.

Infrastructure resilience and emergency communications. Agreed measures may strengthen technical cooperation, preparedness and capacity development concerning submarine cables, continuity and emergency services; their effects will depend on implementation.

Institutional reform and the discipline of prioritization

The accumulation of technology-policy questions increases pressure on the ITU to respond across a wider range of activities. Proposals concerning reform, prioritization, transparency and sectoral efficiency reflect the need to examine how the Union organizes its work. Those discussions may also expose differences among Member States over the weight assigned to particular programmes and the distribution of available resources.

The principal trade-off is practical. Broadening a mandate can be justified where it closes a genuine gap in international cooperation. It can also reduce attention and resources available for existing duties if responsibilities are unclear or funding is insufficient. Effective reform would make institutional assignments and priorities clearer, preserve the quality of technical functions and provide a credible basis for assessing the value of additional activities.

What will matter after Doha

The conference will produce elections, plans, resolutions and other decisions, but their significance will vary. Some will have immediate institutional effects; others will require further decisions, sectoral work, technical cooperation and sustained financing. A lengthy list of resolutions is therefore not in itself evidence of a stronger international framework.

The central issue raised by PP-26 is how the ITU can continue to perform its established responsibilities while responding selectively and effectively to changing telecommunications and digital-development needs. That will require Member States to agree not only on what the organization should address, but also on the boundaries of its work and the means available to carry it out. The practical value of Doha will become evident in the quality of coordination, the continuity of technical processes and the support delivered to countries over the years that follow.



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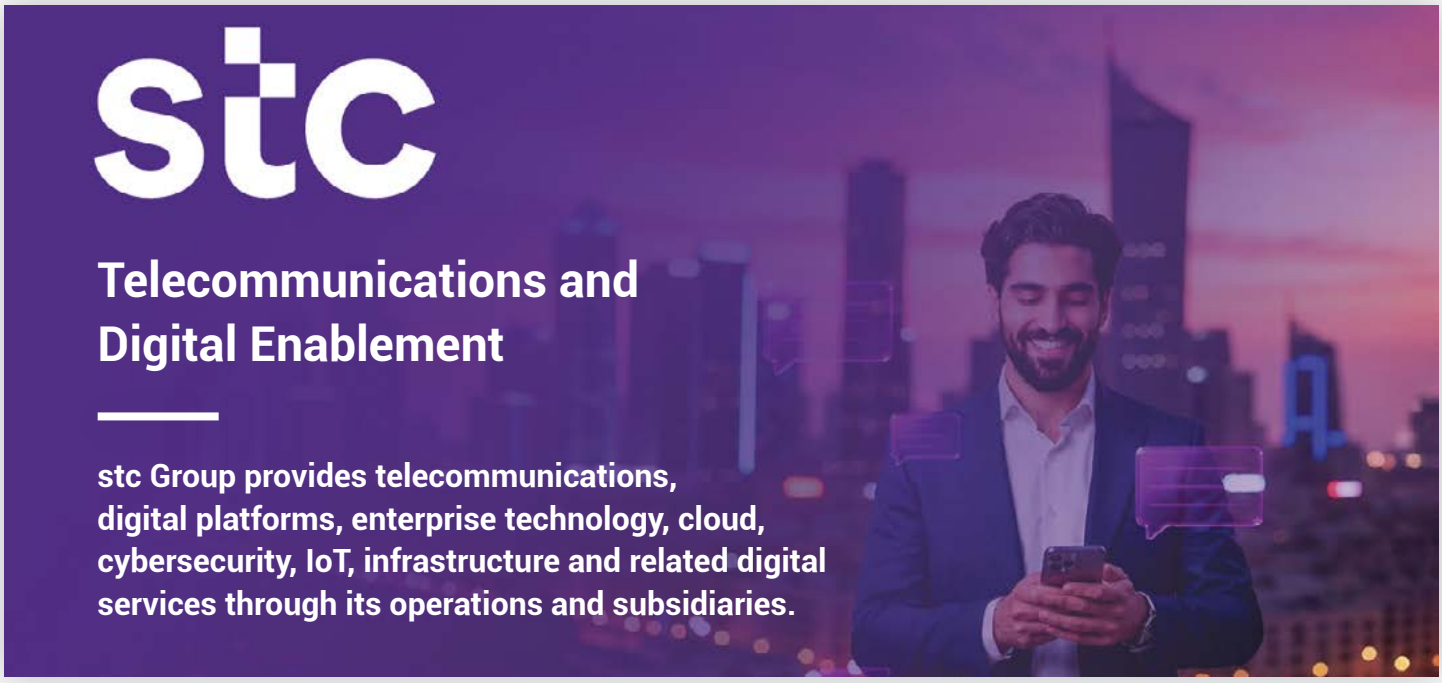
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FEATURED CAPABILITIES IN CONTEXT

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.

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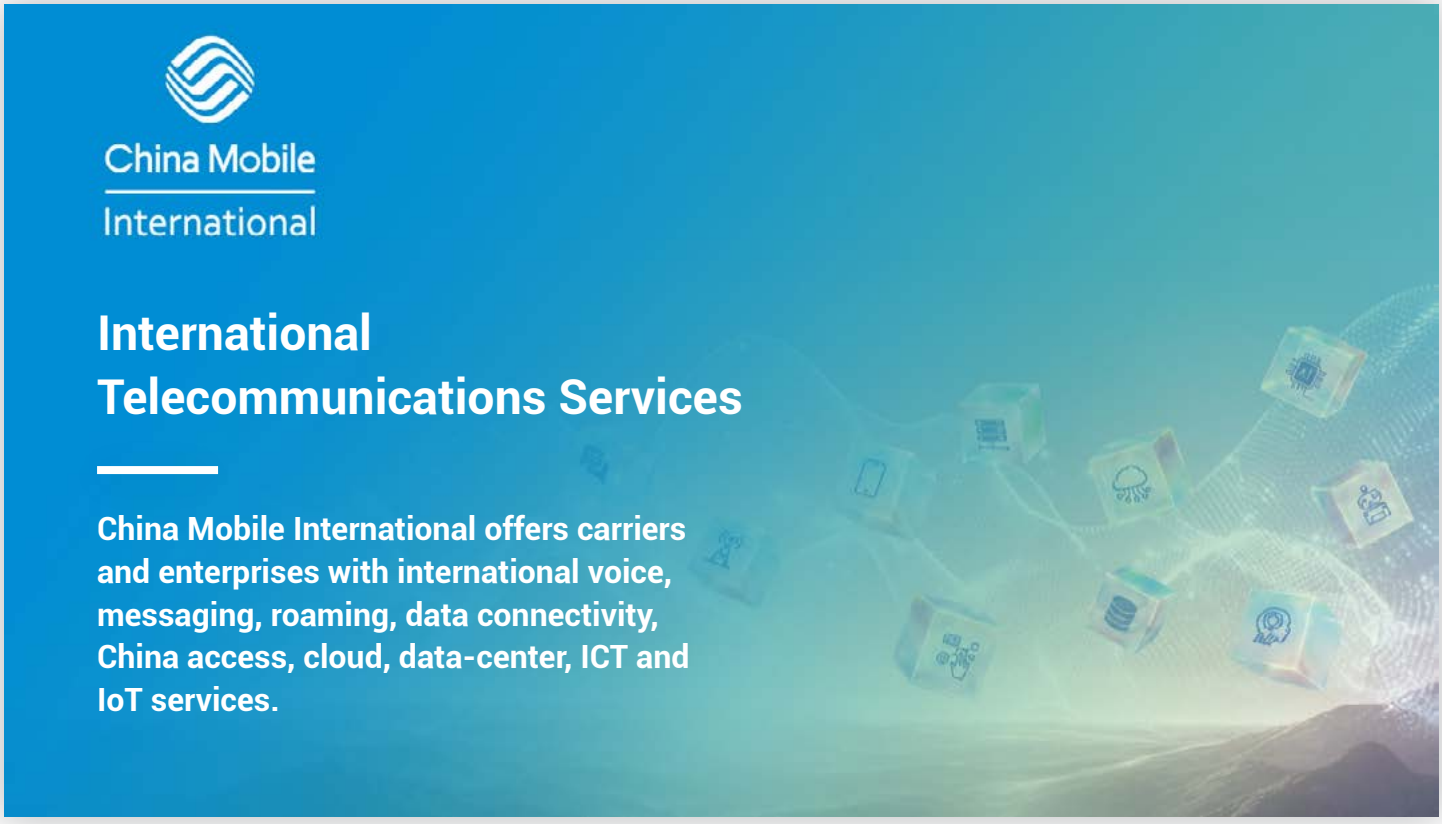
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TDRA Building on Achievements in 5G Era

UAE Advances 6G Readiness Through Forward-Looking Roadmap

The UAE is advancing its preparations for sixth-generation (6G) telecommunications through a forward-looking roadmap that builds on its achievements in 5G and reflects its commitment to contributing to the development of future communications technologies. This approach combines continued investment in digital infrastructure with active participation in shaping the technologies, frequencies, standards and applications that will define the next generation of telecommunications.

HE Eng. Majed Sultan Al Mesmar, Director-General of the Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA), affirmed that the future of telecommunications will be shaped by entities that prepare for technological developments, invest in them and contribute to defining their direction, rather than waiting for such developments to take place. In his keynote address at 6G MENA 2026, held in Abu Dhabi, he noted that the UAE is pursuing this approach as part of its digital journey through an integrated vision for the future of telecommunications and digital infrastructure.

He highlighted that the UAE does not view 6G as a standalone technology, but as part of a broader transformation aimed at developing smart, flexible and secure digital infrastructure capable of supporting the economy, society and government. The UAE enters this new phase from an advanced position, having been the first country to launch 5G networks in 2018. These networks now cover more than 99.5% of populated areas, supported by over 23,000 5G base stations and more than 10 million subscribers.



Building on these achievements, the country has moved beyond the commercial deployment phase of 5G networks, conducting advanced trials over five years in the upper frequency range of the 6 GHz band. These trials achieved speeds of up to 10 gigabits per second, demonstrating the potential of advanced communications to support the next generation of smart cities, autonomous mobility, healthcare and other critical applications.

The true potential of 6G extends beyond faster connectivity to the development of more advanced, intelligent, secure and flexible communications capable of meeting the evolving needs of individuals and economies. As reaffirmed by the TDRA, the UAE's objective is not merely to adopt future technologies, but also to contribute to their development and help shape their direction. Building 6G networks will be a global endeavor requiring active participation from different regions, including the Middle East and North Africa, to ensure they have a meaningful role in shaping the technologies, frequencies, standards and use cases associated with these networks.

This emphasis on technological preparedness and international participation was also reflected in 6G MENA 2026, organised by TDRA in Abu Dhabi on 19 and 20 October. The first dedicated 6G conference in the Middle East and North Africa brought together over 40 leading figures from regulatory authorities, the technology sector, and academic and research institutions from around the world.

The conference took place as preparations for 6G continued to accelerate internationally, with artificial intelligence playing an increasingly significant role in the design, operation and management of future networks. It also reflected ongoing international efforts to develop the standards and technical specifications for the next generation of telecommunications.

For the UAE, these discussions built on its leadership in 5G and 5G-Advanced networks, including achievements in coverage, performance and technological trials, which provide a strong foundation for the transition towards 6G. At the regional level, the conference provided an opportunity to examine the technological and regulatory considerations associated with future network development and to strengthen cooperation among relevant stakeholders.

Under the theme "Laying the Foundations for an AI-Enabled 6G Future," the two-day conference convened policymakers, regulators, operators, technology providers, industry bodies and academia around eight foundational policy and technology pillars:

1. **6G Leadership & Regional Influence:** Strengthening regional participation in shaping international 6G directions and standards, with attention to local market needs and future priorities.
2. **AI-Native Networks & Intelligent Infrastructure:** Examining the growing role of artificial intelligence in the design, operation and management of future communications networks.
3. **Satellite, NTNs & Future Connectivity:** Addressing the integration of terrestrial and non-terrestrial networks, including satellite technologies and direct-to-device connectivity.
4. **AI, Compute, and the Future Connectivity Ecosystem:** Considering artificial intelligence, computing and connectivity as areas of focus in the development of future communications infrastructure.
5. **Spectrum, Standards & Policy:** Examining future spectrum requirements, preparations for the World Radiocommunication Conference 2027 (WRC-27), international standards and regulatory coordination.
6. **Trust, Security & Digital Resilience:** Addressing the security and resilience requirements of next-generation communications networks.
7. **Sustainability, Inclusion & Societal Impact:** Considering sustainability, inclusion and societal impact in the context of future telecommunications development.
8. **6G Innovation, Applications & Future Technologies:** Exploring technological developments, research models and future applications associated with 6G.

> *As reaffirmed by the TDRA, the UAE's objective is not merely to adopt future technologies, but also to contribute to their development and help shape their direction. Building 6G networks will be a global endeavor requiring active participation from different regions, including the Middle East and North Africa, to ensure they have a meaningful role in shaping the technologies, frequencies, standards and use cases associated with these networks.*

For the UAE, this direction remains closely connected to its forward-looking 6G roadmap and its experience in deploying and advancing telecommunications infrastructure. The country's preparations, together with its emphasis on regional and international participation, reflect the approach highlighted by HE Al Mesmar: preparing for future technological developments while contributing to the decisions and standards that will shape their evolution.

Across these areas, discussions addressed ways to strengthen the participation of countries throughout the region in shaping international 6G directions and standards, ensuring that future developments reflect local market needs and priorities. Through its focus on technological preparedness, international standards, spectrum coordination and emerging network capabilities, 6G MENA 2026 provided a platform for knowledge exchange among regulatory authorities, the telecommunications industry, and academic and research communities. The areas addressed at the conference also identified priorities for future cooperation to support the region's readiness for the technological and regulatory transformations associated with 6G.



SAMENA Council On

TDRA's 6G Vision

The SAMENA Council Highlights Trust, Commercial Viability and Regulatory-Industry Coordination at 6G MENA Summit 2026, Supporting TDRA's 6G Vision



The SAMENA Telecommunications Council participated in the 6G MENA Summit 2026, organized by the UAE Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA) in Abu Dhabi, contributing an operator perspective on 6G readiness, with emphasis on connectivity, intelligence, digital continuity and trust. Addressing the Summit, Bocar A. BA, CEO of the SAMENA Council, emphasized that the lessons of 5G must inform preparations for 6G, particularly the need to translate infrastructure advancement into economic value. Future network development must be supported by technology maturity, spectrum certainty, commercial demand and sustainable investment. The SAMENA Council expressed its support for TDRA's 6G vision and the work undertaken through its national roadmap, 6G Initiative and engagement with industry and research institutions. The Council emphasized that continued coordination between regulatory priorities and private-sector decisions will be essential to ensuring that future network capabilities respond to commercial requirements, investment conditions and national digital development objectives. Trust was a central consideration in the Council's message. As networks become increasingly AI-native and autonomous, their ability to operate intelligently must be matched by clear responsibility, defined authority, human oversight and dependable service continuity. The transition from AI-assisted operations toward systems capable of taking action and verifying outcomes makes trust in network decisions, governance and operational performance increasingly important. These priorities also connect with the SAMENA Council's Digital Continuity Forum 2026, held in Dubai on September 23 with the Chief Patronage of TDRA. The Forum examined the continuity of essential digital services, infrastructure dependencies, operational preparedness and recovery capabilities, all of which are relevant to the development of increasingly intelligent and autonomous networks. At the 6G MENA Summit, the Council identified four priorities for regional 6G readiness: investment confidence, AI governance, digital resilience and regional cooperation, including research, trials and standards development. Progress in these areas will require sustained coordination among regulators, operators, technology providers and research institutions, with greater alignment between technological possibilities, regulatory planning and commercial requirements. The SAMENA Council will continue supporting industry dialogue and cooperation with TDRA and other regional stakeholders, connecting operator priorities with policy, research and future network development. 6G readiness requires technological capability, commercial viability, operational dependability and trust, supported by coordinated regulatory and private-sector efforts to prepare for the next generation of resilient communications networks.

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e& Changes Its Name Back to Etisalat

In a short statement to the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange, the United Arab Emirates-based telecoms group announced that it is marking its 50th anniversary by adopting the Etisalat name. "Etisalat is the name we are taking forward – a name that reflects our heritage, our strategy and our ambition for the AI era," the company said. It made no mention of its dalliance with the e& moniker that took us all by surprise when it arrived in the industry in 2022. But a new – yet familiar – logo and brand identity suggest that e& is gone. That said, the group's website still shows the e& brand alongside its handful of operating subsidiaries: e& International and e& Capital, for example. So there may be life in the old ampersand yet. While Etisalat is keeping the group rebrand fairly low key, make no mistake, this is a U-turn. The ethos behind the e& name was all about the 'and.' While the 'e' represented the company's roots as a connectivity provider, the 'and' stood for digital transformation: next-generation technologies, digital experiences, financial services, the cloud, IoT, AI and so on. And somehow now 'Etisalat' is the name that best encapsulates the group's plans for an AI-powered world, as well as carrying its legacy. "Etisalat means connection. For fifty years, that purpose has guided what we build and the role we play," the firm said. "Today, it carries even greater significance as we bring connectivity, digital capabilities and infrastructure together to enable new opportunities." That is not significantly different from the rationale behind e&...but something is clearly afoot.

Omantel Delivers a Record Network Performance During Khareef Dhofar Season 2026

Omantel, Oman's leading integrated Telecommunications and technology company, delivered a record network performance during the Khareef Dhofar 2026 season, reflecting continued progress in digital connectivity and customer experience. As more than 1 million visitors flocked to Dhofar during the Khareef season this year, Omantel's network accommodated the increase in demand for telecommunications and data services while maintaining network efficiency and service quality. Omantel also achieved the highest overall Average for service quality and user experience at Tourist sites and events during Dhofar Season in a survey conducted by the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA), scoring 79%, reflecting the strength of its network and continued investment in infrastructure and capacity. Compared with Khareef 2025, the number of users increased by 21% during the 2026 season. Data traffic reached a record 650 TB, up 25%, while the number of unique roaming users during the month increased by 45%. 5G user throughput rose



by 24%, reflecting the network's ability to accommodate growing consumer and tourist demand while maintaining performance. The increase was also reflected in roaming activity, with daily data usage reaching 11,4212 GB and the number of unique roaming users in Dhofar reaching 292,000. Despite the significant increase in traffic, network performance continued to improve. Higher 5G user throughput supported faster and more reliable connectivity, while 4G speeds increased by 20%. Dr. Ali Al Hashmi, Vice President of Network Infrastructure at Omantel, said: "Khareef

Dhofar is an important season in which we translate our continued investments in infrastructure and network capacity into a reliable and integrated connectivity experience for residents and visitors. The performance achieved by Omantel's network this season demonstrates its readiness to accommodate rapid growth in data usage while maintaining service quality and efficiency. "This performance also builds on the strong results Omantel continues to achieve in the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority's assessments of telecommunications service quality and user experience. We will continue investing in advanced technologies, expanding our 5G network and improving network efficiency to meet customers' evolving expectations and support Oman's digital transformation and the objectives of Oman Vision 2040." The performance reflects the scale of seasonal demand and the network's readiness to accommodate substantial increases in traffic, helping residents and visitors stay connected throughout one of Oman's busiest tourism season. It is underpinned by Omantel's continued strategic investment in infrastructure expansion, intelligent traffic management and customer-centric innovation. Fiber upgrades, 5G densification and AI-powered network optimization have strengthened the network's capacity to respond to growing demand efficiently and reliably, while enhancing its readiness for future growth in Dhofar.

Omantel Launches R&D Initiative with MIT CSAIL and Leading Omani Academic Institutions to Advance Technology Development in Oman

Omantel has launched a strategic Research and Development (R&D) Initiative, marking the establishment of its first centralized and structured R&D function. The initiative will place research at the heart of Omantel's technology development model, creating a clear pathway from promising ideas to market-relevant solutions and commercially viable opportunities, while strengthening the company's ability to anticipate and respond to global technological advances. As Generative AI, computing, connectivity and cybersecurity continue to advance rapidly, Omantel is strengthening its capacity to explore, test and develop emerging technologies. Through the initiative, the company aims to build local capabilities and accelerate early-stage experimentation in areas that address Oman's specific needs and future opportunities. In doing so, Omantel will contribute to the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 and the development of a knowledge, technology- and innovation-driven economy. Omantel's R&D agenda focuses on four key areas: Networking/ Connectivity, Enterprise & IoT, Generative AI, and AI Infrastructure. These strategic areas will guide Omantel's research activities, enable exploration of emerging technologies and identify future business opportunities. As part of the initiative, Omantel is strengthening its research and innovation ecosystem through strategic partnerships with MIT Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (MIT CSAIL), Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), Oman College of Health Sciences (OCHS), and Modern College of Business and Science (MCBS). These partnerships aim to enhance research collaboration, knowledge



exchange and technology capabilities, while strengthening the connection between academic research and industry needs. Global trends underscore the growing strategic importance of sustained investment in research and development. According to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), global R&D expenditure is projected to grow by 3.6% in 2026, reaching approximately USD 3.4 trillion. This growth reflects the continued global commitment to advancing research, accelerating innovation and strengthening technological capabilities. Eng. Aladdin Baitfadhil, Chief Executive Officer of Omantel, said: "Oman's talent has the capability, ambition and potential to contribute more actively to the development of future technologies. Through this R&D Initiative, we aim to connect that talent with research, industry expertise and advanced technological capabilities, creating new pathways to explore promising ideas and translate them into solutions with practical and commercial value." He added: "The initiative builds on the work of Omantel Innovation Labs and our engagement with Oman's startup ecosystem. By expanding our collaboration with leading local and international academic institutions, we aim to forge stronger connections between research, talent and industry, creating an environment where technology is not only adopted, but increasingly developed in Oman, with relevance for the wider region." As part of this strategic collaboration and building on Omantel's leadership in digital and critical infrastructure across the region, the company plans to publish an R&D whitepaper on Generative AI infrastructure. Scheduled for release by the end of 2026, the whitepaper will examine how Oman's strategic location and digital capabilities could support the development of next-generation AI and cloud infrastructure, creating value for the country and the wider region. The publication further reflects Omantel's focus on strategic emerging technologies.

Zain Group Scoops Four Prestigious Awards at 20th Telecom Review Leaders' Summit in Dubai

Zain Group, a leading regional TechCo, has added four prestigious accolades to its growing record of regional and international industry recognition at the Telecom Review Excellence Awards, held alongside the recent 20th Telecom Review Leaders' Summit in Dubai. Leading the Group's achievements was Zain Kuwait, its flagship operation, which further strengthened its position at the forefront of next-generation connectivity by securing the Best 5G Advanced Business Innovation and Best 5G Advanced Network Experience awards, recognizing its success in translating advanced network capabilities into exceptional customer experiences and tangible value for businesses. The Group's success also extended to Zain Jordan, which received the Best Digital Transformation Deployment award, and Zain Omantel International (ZOI), which earned the Best Subsea Cable Innovations/ Solutions award. Together, these achievements underscore the breadth of innovation across Zain Group's operations and investments, from accelerating digital transformation and elevating customer experiences to advancing international connectivity and strengthening the region's digital infrastructure.



Zain Kuwait - Best 5G Advanced Network Experience in the Middle East

Zain Kuwait earned this award in recognition of its sustained efforts to translate advanced network technologies into a superior, reliable, and consistent customer experience. Following its commercial, nationwide launch of 5G-Advanced in 2025, the company continued enhancing its network through intelligent capacity management, advanced carrier aggregation, and AI-powered optimization. These efforts include Kuwait's first successful six-carrier 5G-Advanced verification, achieving peak speeds of 3 Gbps while demonstrating greater spectrum efficiency, improved indoor coverage capabilities, and enhanced uplink performance.

Zain Kuwait - Best 5G Advanced Business Innovation in the Middle East

This award recognized Zain Kuwait's success in extending the value of next-generation connectivity beyond traditional telecom services to enable business transformation across multiple sectors. Its advanced network infrastructure supports enterprise-grade connectivity, IoT, cloud-based applications, and emerging AI-driven solutions, with a regional-first 31 Gbps verification demonstrating the potential of ultra-high-capacity networks for demanding business environments.

Zain Jordan - Best Digital Transformation Deployment – Middle East

This award reflects Zain Jordan's continued commitment to accelerating digital transformation and enhancing the customer experience through innovative technologies and digital solutions. The recognition highlights the company's focus on modernizing its digital capabilities, streamlining operations, and delivering seamless, customer-centric services, while strengthening its role as a key enabler of the Kingdom's growing digital economy.

ZOI - Best Subsea Cable Innovations/ Solutions – Middle East

The award recognized Zain Omantel International (ZOI)'s contributions to advancing international connectivity and strengthening the region's digital infrastructure. The accolade reflects ZOI's focus on developing innovative subsea connectivity solutions that enhance network capacity, resilience, and reliability, supporting the growing demand for high-performance international data transmission.

These capabilities were recently demonstrated through ZOI's collaboration with Zain Kuwait in enabling a Guinness World Record-breaking remote robotic surgery between Kuwait and Brazil in 2025, spanning over 12,000 km, with ZOI providing the ultra-low-latency international connectivity essential to the procedure's success. The Telecom Review Leaders' Summit is a prominent gathering for the regional and international telecommunications and ICT industry, bringing together senior executives, technology leaders, regulators, and innovators to explore emerging technologies and the future of digital connectivity.

Zain Group Earns Inaugural MEIRA Gold Standard Certification for Investor Relations Excellence



Zain Group, a leading regional TechCo, has earned the 2026 MEIRA Gold Standard Certification, a new recognition introduced by the Middle East Investor Relations Association (MEIRA) to benchmark excellence in investor relations across the MENA region. Introduced in 2026, the MEIRA Gold Standard Certification assesses the maturity and effectiveness of corporate investor relations programs and their alignment with international best practice. This year's assessment covered companies' investor relations activities between January 1 and December 31, 2025. The certification follows an independent assessment of Zain's investor relations practices in Kuwait where it is headquartered as well as its listed operations in KSA, Iraq and Bahrain, that include professional standards covering transparency, disclosure and capital markets communication, that reflected the Group's focus on maintaining high standards of corporate governance and investor engagement. The Group's approach is supported by an established governance framework, including Zain's Investor Relations Policy, Shareholders' Protection Policy and Disclosure Policy, which institutionalize its commitment to transparency, disciplined market communication, fair and timely disclosure, and the protection of shareholder interests. These frameworks complement Zain's broader efforts to align its investor relations practices with international best practice. For Zain, the recognition reinforces the importance it places on clear, consistent and timely communication with shareholders, investors, analysts and the wider financial community. As investor expectations continue to evolve, the Group sees strong investor relations as an important part of building market confidence, supporting informed investment decisions and creating sustainable long-term value. Zain's approach to investor relations has evolved alongside the Group's business and the changing expectations of global capital markets. In recent years, Zain has strengthened its digital investor communications, expanded direct engagement with investors, increased its participation in international investment conferences, and continued to enhance the quality and clarity of its financial reporting and results presentations. The Group has also introduced a dedicated Investor Relations app, giving investors convenient, on-the-go access to disclosures, share price information, financial results, press releases, financial news and other key market updates. These efforts are designed to give the market a clear view of the Group's financial and operational performance, strategic priorities and long-term growth prospects, while ensuring investors have timely and equitable access to relevant information. Reinforcing investor confidence in Zain's long-term value creation agenda has strengthened relationships with the investment community and contributed meaningfully to Zain's shareholder base. The recognition also reflects the continued support of Zain's Board of Directors and executive management for the strategic role of investor relations, as well as the work of the Group's Investor Relations team and its close coordination with functions across the organization. Zain has built an active dialogue with regional and international investors as its business has expanded beyond traditional telecommunications into technology, digital infrastructure and digital financial services. This evolution has made transparent and effective market communication increasingly important in helping investors understand the Group's performance, strategy and future direction. In line with this, Zain continues to strengthen the link between business performance and investor communication, with a focus on providing high-quality information that gives investors a clear understanding of the Group's strategy, priorities and outlook. The MEIRA recognition also reflects a wider corporate culture at Zain built around transparency, accountability and responsible business practices. The Group views effective investor communication not simply as a regulatory requirement, but as an important contributor to sustainable growth, shareholder value and long-term access to capital.

Zain and Ooredoo Launch Regional Tower Platform with First Closing in Qatar and Kuwait



Mobile Telecommunications Company K.S.P.C. "Zain Group and Ooredoo Q.P.S.C. ("Ooredoo"; ticker: ORDS) announced the first closing of their regional tower transaction, bringing together the initial tower portfolios within a regional tower platform jointly owned by Zain Group and Ooredoo Group , each holding a 50% stake. The first closing combines the tower assets of Zain Kuwait (ITK) and Ooredoo Qatar (Al Abraj) within the platform. Together, these portfolios comprise approximately 4,000 towers.

The transaction is expected to create significant value through greater scale, capital efficiencies and a dedicated operating model focused on passive telecommunications infrastructure. As it expands, the tower platform will support the delivery of infrastructure-as-a-service, creating opportunities for operators to access infrastructure in a more capital-efficient manner while supporting the continued development of the region's digital infrastructure. Additional tower portfolios are expected to be integrated progressively into the platform, subject to applicable closing conditions and required regulatory and other approvals. Bader Al-Kharafi, Zain Vice-Chairman & Group CEO, said: "This first closing of the tower platform marks a defining step in the evolution of digital infrastructure for both Zain and Ooredoo. It reflects our shared strategy of creating focused, scalable and sustainable platforms that unlock greater value from our assets while supporting the reduction of the region's carbon footprint." "We believe this tower platform will play an increasingly important role in strengthening our respective digital foundations and enabling the next wave of connectivity, innovation and economic growth for the communities we proudly serve. We thank the regulatory authorities in Kuwait for their visionary support in the approval process." Aziz Aluthman Fakhroo, Group Chief Executive Officer of Ooredoo Group, said: "Completing this first closing marks an important milestone in building a regional tower platform designed to create significant value, with a clear path to expansion through additional market contributions." "With this milestone, we are now executing across every digital infrastructure segment identified in our strategy as we continue building a leading regional portfolio." "We thank the State of Qatar's Communications Regulatory Authority and the Ministry of Municipality for their support and for contributing to a conducive regulatory environment throughout the approval process." Ooredoo and Zain will retain their respective active telecommunications infrastructure, including the technology, software and intellectual property required to operate and manage their telecommunications networks.

AT&T Sells Mexican Unit to Televisa and Fintech Holdings For $2 Billion

AT&T has agreed to sell its Mexican wireless operations to Grupo Televisa SAB (NYSE:TV) and Fintech Holdings Inc. in a deal valued at $2 billion in cash, marking the American telecom giant's exit from a market where it spent over a decade trying to challenge billionaire Carlos Slim's dominance. The transaction, which includes additional contractual and contingent benefits, will allow Dallas-based AT&T to sharpen its capital allocation and focus entirely on expanding its core fiber and 5G networks within the United States. The buyer consortium will operate as a 50-50 joint venture between Mexican media giant Televisa and Fintech Holdings, the investment firm led by billionaire David Martinez. The acquisition positions Televisa as the first telecom provider in Mexico capable of offering a full suite of services, combining mobile connectivity

with its existing fixed-line broadband, pay-TV, and landline phone offerings. Televisa's U.S.-traded ADRs rose 3.2% in after-hours trading following the announcement. AT&T originally entered the country in 2014 by acquiring Iusacell and Nextel Mexico for a combined $4.4 billion, lured by sweeping regulatory reforms intended to curb monopolistic behavior in the domestic telecom market. Despite deploying more than $10 billion in capital to build out its infrastructure, AT&T struggled to gain significant market share against Slim's América Móvil SAB and consistently clashed with the market leader over regulatory and spectrum access. The sale reflects a broader retreat from non-core international assets as the U.S. carrier shifts its long-term strategy toward domestic advanced connectivity and AI-enabled infrastructure. AT&T plans to classify the Mexican unit as held-for-sale in continuing operations starting in its third-quarter 2026 financial report, with the transaction expected to close in the first quarter of 2027 subject to regulatory approvals.

AT&T, Global Infrastructure Partners, and CPP Investments to Form New Fiber Joint Venture

AT&T affiliates and affiliates of Global Infrastructure Partners ("GIP"), a part of BlackRock, and Canada Pension Plan Investment Board ("CPP Investments") have agreed to form a new U.S. fiber joint venture (the "JV") to bring fiber to more homes across the country. The JV will operate as a leading wholesale fiber commercial open access company and will include Forged Fiber 37 – the newly created subsidiary holding the fiber build engine, network assets, and operations that AT&T recently acquired from Lumen, and Gigapower – AT&T's existing wholesale fiber joint venture with GIP. The investments by AT&T – America's largest fiber provider – and GIP and CPP Investments will enable the planned acceleration of fiber builds in more communities across the country. The JV will help accelerate delivery of critical infrastructure needed to help meet America's growing demand for high-performance advanced connectivity as AI begins to reshape network traffic. This supports AT&T's plans to reach more than 60 million fiber locations by the end of 2030. "Fiber is the definitive connectivity technology for an AI-driven world," said John Stankey, Chairman and CEO of AT&T. "Demand for symmetrical, high-capacity, low-latency connectivity is only increasing, and this JV will bring the unmatched benefits of high-speed, reliable fiber connectivity to more Americans. By partnering with leading digital infrastructure investors, we see significant opportunity to strengthen our scale advantage in fiber, broaden availability of our award-winning services and grow our leadership in converged fiber and 5G connectivity." "Reliable, high-speed connectivity is becoming increasingly essential to how Americans work, learn and access services," added Mark Florian, Head of GIP Mid-Markets Funds. "By bringing Gigapower and Forged Fiber 37 together, this joint venture with AT&T and CPP Investments aims to help meet growing demand for high-capacity broadband, while providing our clients with exposure to a scaled infrastructure business positioned to benefit from the long-term digitalization of the global economy." "Demand for reliable, high-capacity connectivity continues to grow, making fiber infrastructure an increasingly important part of the digital economy," said James Bryce, Managing Director and Head of Infrastructure at CPP Investments. "By combining AT&T's extensive fiber expertise with strategic capital, this joint venture is well positioned to expand critical connectivity across the United States and to generate long-term investment value for the CPP Fund." The JV's well-established fiber construction capabilities from Forged Fiber 37 and Gigapower will help AT&T continue to efficiently expand its fiber service beyond its traditional service areas. Partnering with GIP and CPP Investments underscores market confidence in AT&T's strategy



and ongoing fiber build while providing AT&T with a capital-light path to further expand its fiber service in major metro areas across 16 states, including Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Oregon, and Washington. Pairing the JV's fiber build capabilities with AT&T's extensive distribution will enable AT&T to continue offering more customers fiber internet and 5G wireless connectivity and grow its base of high-value converged customers. Formation of the JV aligns with AT&T's previously stated plan to bring on an equity partner for Forged Fiber 37. Under the agreement, AT&T will have 50% ownership of the JV, with GIP and CPP Investments collectively owning 50%. AT&T expects to receive proceeds at closing of the transaction which it intends to use in a manner consistent with its capital allocation priorities, including helping the Company achieve its net-debt-to-adjusted EBITDA ratio target in the 2.5x range within approximately three years, funding continued investment in the business, and returning capital to shareholders. The transaction is expected to close in the first half of 2027, subject to customary closing conditions and regulatory approvals. Until close, AT&T expects to continue to report Forged Fiber 37 as held-for-sale and discontinued operations, with the results of operations and direct cash flows excluded from the Company's continuing operations. After close, AT&T does not expect to consolidate the JV's financial results but plans to report its share of the equity income (loss) in earnings, including adjusted EPS from continuing operations. AT&T reiterates the financial outlook and capital allocation plan provided in its second-quarter 2026 earnings release.

AT&T to Form Fiber Joint Venture with BlackRock's GIP, CPP Investments

AT&T said it would form a fiber joint venture with BlackRock's Global Infrastructure Partners and Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, as America's largest fiber provider looks to expand faster across more US communities.

Here are more details:

The joint venture will combine Forged Fiber 37 and Gigapower. Forged Fiber 37 is the AT&T unit holding the fiber assets and operations it bought from Lumen Technologies. Gigapower is AT&T's existing wholesale fiber venture with GIP.

AT&T will own 50% of the venture, and GIP and CPP Investments will together own the other 50%.

The venture gives AT&T a "capital-light" path to expand fiber beyond its traditional service areas, into major metro areas across 16 states.

AT&T expects to receive proceeds when the deal closes but did not say how much. It plans to use the money to help bring its net-debt-to-adjusted EBITDA ratio to about 2.5 times within roughly three years, fund investment in the business and return capital to shareholders.

The deal is expected to close in the first half of 2027, subject to regulatory approvals and customary closing conditions.

From Cloud Connectivity to AI, AT&T Proof of Concept Labs™ Has Spent 30 Years Validating Technology for Customers

AT&T Proof of Concept (PoC) Labs celebrates its 30th anniversary as the first-of-its-kind enabler of next-level networking technology and innovation. In a hands-on lab, customers and AT&T teams test and validate emerging technologies before they are deployed in the real world, helping ensure new services, experiences, and technologies work reliably at scale. Established in 1996, the program began as a practical way to help customers understand how new networking technologies would perform in their own environments. What started with a small lab spun off from AT&T Bell Laboratories grew into an important driver of customer satisfaction for AT&T Business, supporting more than 500 enterprise businesses each year across a variety of industries. "We start with the customer first. For three decades, the AT&T PoC Labs have been a critical vehicle for helping customers move from possibility to execution," said Zee Hussain, SVP, Global Enterprise Solutions, AT&T Business. "As one of the industry's first customer-focused innovation labs, this program is a proof point for AT&T's role as the right collaborator who understands and solves connectivity needs. The customer leads the way, and we work alongside them to test what's possible and connect them to greater possibility." As businesses began moving from legacy networking technologies to more flexible Internet Protocol (IP)-based environments, the original vision was simple: bring customers, AT&T experts, and emerging technologies together to validate solutions and make decisions faster. Over time, the labs evolved into a proving ground where customers could see new technology in action, test their own applications, assess network designs, and reduce risk before deploying at scale.



Cisco Unveils New Agentic Collaboration Experiences

Cisco introduced agentic collaboration innovations that transform how people and agents work together. This approach addresses three connected dimensions of work for the AI era: how people work, how the workplace adapts, and how businesses engage with customers. Organizations face a critical challenge: as the workforce evolves, teams need a way to unlock the potential of digital teammates, while maximizing the impact of work that requires the human touch. Cisco is uniting conversations, physical workspaces, and customer touchpoints into shared context. This transforms AI from reactive chatbots into digital teammates that drive complex work forward. “The next era of work isn't about bolting chatbots onto 's tools," said Jeetu Patel, President and Chief Product Officer, Cisco. “It's about AI agents working alongside people and teams, being deeply embedded in their workspaces, and collaborating on a secure, trusted foundation. When people and agents share the same context, work keeps moving and every customer relationship gets stronger." Cisco is moving enterprise AI beyond reactive, prompt-based assistants into proactive digital teammates that participate directly in the flow of work. New capabilities include: Claude Managed Agents | intelligent teammates and multi-step actions in Webex: Soon, turn shared

team context into deeper analysis, strategic recommendations, and coordinated action across approved agents. New AI agents that work alongside teams: Collaborative AI agents can be invited directly into spaces, meetings, and calls to execute complex, multi-step work across Webex and third-party applications. For example, a team member can @mention an analytics agent in a Webex space to pull usage statistics, then ask a presentation agent to update a PowerPoint deck to reflect those numbers. OpenAI dots | rich context and personal intelligence: The Webex Suite Model Context Protocol (MCP) integration brings Webex context directly into dots. In the future, dots will also be available within Webex as an always-on personal agent. Built for enterprise trust: Cisco brings identity, security, governance and visibility together so organizations can control what AI can access, what it can do and how it acts. To support the vital moments of the agentic era that require the human touch—critical judgment, strategic alignment, and relationship-building—today's workplace must become an intelligent ecosystem that senses, reasons, and acts. Through Intelligent Workplace Experiences, Cisco is unifying secure networking, collaboration devices, digital experience assurance and physical spaces into a single architecture. Managed through Cisco Cloud Control, this foundation enables organizations to create flawless in-office environments, streamline IT operations, and unlock actionable insights to drive efficiency across physical spaces and technology. New innovations include: Visual planning for IT and facilities: Workplace Designer extends Cisco's visual planning experience from individual rooms to the entire workplace, spanning networking, collaboration and workplace intelligence. It can, for example, turn a street address into a tailored blueprint to help teams align decisions and prepare for deployment, resulting in a simpler and better employee experience. Extending Experience Metrics into the workplace helps IT move beyond simple connectivity alerts to reveal exactly where issues occur and how they affect employees. By correlating network and device assurance with floor plans, Wi-Fi coverage, and occupancy, IT teams can prioritize and troubleshoot issues based on business impact, remediate problems faster, and ensure reliable workplace



experiences. Optimize space and capacity planning: Workplace Insights in Cisco Cloud Control delivers a clear, unified view of how physical offices are utilized across locations and floors. By tracking activity patterns over time and comparing booked spaces against real-world occupancy, it empowers workplace leaders to move beyond isolated snapshots, right-size real estate investments, and adapt environments to how people collaborate every day. Cisco is also introducing RoomOS 27, the operating system for Collaboration Devices. Built for a new era of AI in physical spaces, RoomOS 27 advances the workplace experience across AI, platform choice, and intelligent management—helping spaces understand context, adapt to what's happening and increasingly take action, including: Comprehensive interoperability: Through a new partnership with Google, Cisco devices now offer support for fully featured Google Meet natively, joining Webex, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom — making Cisco the most open collaboration hardware on the market. This gives customers complete freedom to choose their preferred meeting and AI environments, while retaining Cisco device intelligence and management. The new Cisco AI Assistant on Collaboration Devices brings natural-language interaction to the room. With greater intelligence, AI Assistant can now engage in 32 languages. A prompt that the room is too warm, for example, automatically results in adjusting the temperature and lowering the blinds. Optimize workspaces with new intelligence in RoomOS 27 and Cisco Cloud Control. Workspace Advisor, Smart Room Assurance, Divisible Rooms, Splunk and agent integrations give IT greater visibility into how spaces are used with new ways to investigate, operate and continuously improve them at scale.

Eutelsat Renews with Télédiffusion d'Algérie on EUTELSAT 7 West A

Eutelsat has announced the renewal of its strategic partnership with Télédiffusion d'Algérie (TDA), Algeria's national broadcasting network operator. The partnership covers the continued distribution of television channels across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) via the EUTELSAT 7 West A satellite. Under the new agreement, TDA will continue to use Eutelsat's satellite capacity at the 7/8° West orbital position to deliver Algerian television channels to audiences throughout the region. Reaching 70 million homes, 7/8° West is the leading orbital position for satellite television across MENA, bringing together major public and private broadcasters and an extensive portfolio of Arabic and international content. The renewal extends a long-standing collaboration between the two organizations and ensures the long-term continuity of TDA's satellite broadcasting services. As the single broadcaster in the Algerian market, TDA plays a central role in bringing the country's television channels to viewers at home and across the region. Eutelsat's extensive coverage across MENA gives TDA the reach, reliability and broadcast quality it needs to connect Algerian content with the largest TV audience in the region. Sandy Saade, Sales Director MENA at Eutelsat, commented: "TDA is a strategic partner for Eutelsat in Algeria, and this renewal reflects the strength of a relationship built over many years. We are proud to keep supporting the distribution of Algerian television to audiences across MENA from 7/8° West, the region's reference position for satellite TV."

Eutelsat, Antik Telecom and A1 extend long-term partnership at 16° East

Eutelsat announced the renewal of its long-standing partnership with Antik Sat, the direct-to-home (DTH) television platform operated by Antik Telecom, and A1, one of Central and Eastern Europe's leading communications provider. The new multi-transponder agreement reinforces the companies' commitment to delivering high-quality television services to households across Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Under the renewed partnership, Eutelsat will continue to provide satellite capacity at its flagship 16° East orbital position, the leading satellite neighborhood for Central and Eastern Europe. A1 will deliver headend hosting, uplink and associated broadcast services, while Antik Sat will leverage the platform to serve its growing subscriber base with a comprehensive line-up of television content.

Home to hundreds of television channels, and reaching more than 80 million DTH, cable and IPTV homes across the region, Eutelsat's 16° East video neighborhood remains a premier destination for broadcasters and pay-TV operators targeting Central and Eastern European markets. The renewal underscores the continued importance of satellite distribution as a reliable and scalable platform for premium television delivery. Jakub Brzeczkowski, RVP Sales Video Europe at Eutelsat, said: "We are pleased to build on our long-standing relationship with Antik Telecom and A1 through this new agreement. Our leading 16° East neighborhood provides the resilience, coverage and performance needed to support established and growing video platforms. We are proud to remain a trusted partner in Antik Telecom's long-term growth journey." Ing. Vlastimil Lakatoš, Chief Product Officer, Antik Telecom, said: "This agreement secures the foundation of our Antik Sat television platform and ensures continuity for our customers across Slovakia. By combining Eutelsat's proven satellite infrastructure with A1's technical expertise and service capabilities, we can continue to provide a compelling television offering and a high-quality viewing experience." Elena Petrova, Head of Content, Broadcasting & Media Solutions, A1 International Business, added: "We are pleased to continue supporting Antik Sat through our headend, uplink and managed broadcast services. This renewal highlights the strength of the partnership between A1, Antik Telecom and Eutelsat and our shared commitment to delivering reliable, high-quality television services to viewers across the region."

Eutelsat's OneWeb Renewal Moves Toward Launch as First New Satellites Ship

Eutelsat announced that Airbus Defence and Space has completed the first 32 new OneWeb Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellites for Eutelsat at its facility in Toulouse, France. The satellites are now preparing to be shipped for an upcoming launch with SpaceX, marking a major milestone in Eutelsat's program to renew and enhance the OneWeb constellation. They are the first in Eutelsat's planned program of 669 new OneWeb satellites. As the new spacecraft progressively replace those reaching the end of their operational lives, they will assure continuity of service for customers and enhance the network's capabilities. The program will enable Eutelsat to continue delivering secure, resilient LEO connectivity to businesses, governments and institutions around the world. The completion of these satellites brings together two European strengths: Eutelsat's experience operating a global LEO network and Airbus's manufacturing expertise in Toulouse. It demonstrates Europe's ability to build infrastructure supporting a service used by customers worldwide. Jean-François Fallacher, Chief Executive Officer of Eutelsat, said: "This is an exciting moment for Eutelsat as our first new OneWeb satellites leave the production line and head towards launch. For our customers, it shows our commitment to keep delivering the connectivity they rely on as we renew the network. For Europe, it demonstrates our ability to build and sustain a global LEO capability." Alain Fauré, Head of Space Systems at Airbus Defence and Space, said: "This moment is twice important for us: a symbol of our industrial delocalization as well as the confirmation of our high volume, high cadence satellite delivery capability and credibility to empower our customers for the increasingly critical constellation market



Huawei Unveils Upgraded Stellar AI Network to Power the Agentic World with Secure, Intelligent Connectivity

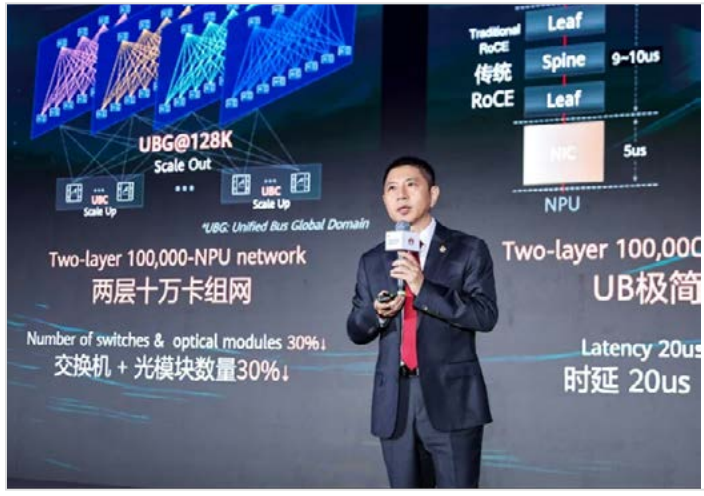
At HUAWEI CONNECT 2026, Huawei unveiled its upgraded Stellar AI Network Solution under the philosophy of secure, intelligent connectivity. With features such as efficient computing production, lossless delivery, and superfast application, this future-ready solution unleashes computing productivity while safeguarding services in the AI era. Driven by explosive AI adoption, daily token consumption has surged 260-fold in a year. The upgraded Stellar AI Network—spanning AI Fabric, AI WAN, and AI Campus—responds to this by focusing on intelligent connectivity and security.

Stellar AI Fabric 2.0

Intelligent connectivity: To tackle challenges like surging networking costs, slow protocol conversion, and traffic retransmissions caused by link flapping, Huawei has introduced the UBG switch SF9300 series. Paired with Ascend A5/A6, it forms a full-series UBG compute-network integrated solution. Specifically, two-layer multi-plane architecture eliminates the core layer, cutting network deployment costs by 30%. The unified protocol reduces end-to-end latency from 20 µs to 11 µs. Link-Layer Retransmission (LLR) achieves zero packet loss during link flaps, reducing annual cluster service downtime by 100 hours. Huawei also unveiled its fully in-house CloudEngine XH9300-EN series NPO switches, delivering three major breakthroughs. First, centralized light-source design lowers interconnect power consumption from 1,000 W to 600 W. Second, near-packaged architecture reduces optical-electrical conversion latency by 180 ns, optimizing single-node latency by 26%. Third, pluggable snap-fit structure enables on-site replacement, shortening fault recovery time from days to hours. Security: Huawei's Three-Layer Security Guardrail Solution defends against hashrate theft, prompt injection, and model poisoning. Specifically, Network Guardrail features an integrated cryptojacking detection model delivering a 95% detection rate with millisecond-level malicious traffic blocking. Agent Guardrail guards against prompt injection attacks with 95% accuracy at under 150 ms latency. Host Guardrail performs real-time monitoring of malicious processes while keeping CPU usage below 1%. At a real-world customer site, the solution identified 415 high-risk vulnerabilities and 322 threat events in its first seven days—leveraging AI to safeguard AI and ensure secure token production.

Stellar AI WAN

Intelligent connectivity: Cross-region computing faces issues like severe efficiency loss, high on-premises costs, and expensive private lines. To address these, Huawei's Stellar AI WAN Solution enables lossless delivery of computing power over 1,000 km: The Starnet lossless algorithm eliminates long-distance packet loss, boosting remote computing efficiency to over 95%. The XH computing-network appliance uses the layerwise model partitioning algorithm to run initial and final layers locally, transmitting only high-dimensional vectors over the network. This ensures raw data remains strictly on-premises and reduces initial branch xPU costs fourfold. Furthermore, computation-communication overlapping cuts bandwidth idle time by over 80% and reduces required bandwidth fivefold. Security: Huawei's multi-



dimensional WAN defense technology counters novel vectors like APTs and HNDL attacks. At the device layer, intrinsic security boards block intrusions in real time, trace threats within minutes at over 95% accuracy, and visualize up to 100-hop attack paths. At the link layer, built-in QKD delivers robust quantum security without extra devices, cutting construction costs by over 60% while extending transmission distance to 80 km. At the network layer, APN6-based data fencing enables network-wide control over traffic paths, ensuring secure circulation of sensitive data.

Stellar AI Campus Network

Intelligent connectivity: With enterprise agent adoption expected to approach 50% this year, manual O&M falls short of 24/7 demands, making minute-level fault recovery a must. Huawei meets this by upgrading all-scenario network autonomy across data, models, and tools. Specifically, proprietary network awareness technology supports the collection of over 25 exclusive data types with a 100 ms sampling cycle to precisely detect subtle anomalies. The Deep Causal Pruning (DCP) algorithm optimizes AI models, cutting inference errors by over 20% while boosting troubleshooting accuracy to 95%. iFlow 2.0 distributed simulation technology ensures 24/7 continuous verification of inference paths. This enables network-wide AI-powered operations, slashing MTTR to under 5 minutes and ensuring mission-critical service experience. Security: Today's enterprises struggle with the rapid compromise of dumb terminals and hidden malicious interactions by agents. Huawei's Stellar AI Campus Network Asset Security 2.0 solution addresses these through endpoint-network collaborative protection. By embedding AI micro-models into switches, the solution cuts dumb-terminal threat detection time from 5 minutes to under 10 seconds. Powered by proprietary AI Core small models and NPU semantic large models, it fully reconstructs agent interaction scenarios, boosting the malicious command detection rate to 95%. This eliminates hidden risks and safeguards campus networks and services. Looking ahead, Huawei will continue to innovate its Stellar AI Network products and solutions in line with the "AI for All, All on Secure IP" vision, maximizing the value of every connection together with customers and partners in the AI era.

Huawei Commits to Advancing an Intelligent, Green Europe with Customers and Partners

The 11th Huawei Connect Europe was held in Florence, Italy. Adolfo Urso, the Italian Minister of Enterprises and Made in Italy, Eugenio Giani, President of the Tuscany Region, Italy, and Sara Funaro, Mayor of Florence, delivered remarks at the event. Thousands of attendees, including industry leaders, technology experts, and partners from around the globe, gathered at the event to explore how digital technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) will accelerate Europe's twin digital and green transition under the theme "Advancing Intelligent & Green Europe". David Wang, Deputy Chairman of the Board and Rotating Chairman at Huawei, said in his opening keynote: "As Europe's digital and green transitions continue to progress, Huawei is working with over 5,000 partners to solve real customer challenges through technological innovation. The intelligent world is coming, faster than ever, and industries across Europe are preparing for a major leap in productivity, powered by AI and other advanced technologies. Huawei has been and will remain in Europe, for Europe. Working alongside customers and partners, we are committed to open collaboration to seize opportunities, driving shared success and helping build a more intelligent, greener Europe." Leo Chen, Huawei's Senior Vice President and President of Enterprise Sales, also spoke at the event, explaining the company's strategy for the European market: "Huawei is in Europe, for Europe. We dive into local customer needs and turn technology into action to drive Europe's twin green and digital transition."

Chen went on to explain that Huawei has two focuses in the region, developing innovative products and solutions tailored to local industry scenarios, and empowering local partners to better serve European customers. Building on the company's existing "Huawei + Partners" collaboration system, Huawei additionally launched the SCALE framework for Europe at this event. This framework covers five key initiatives: Scenario-based Solutions, Co-Innovation, Aligned Marketing, Local Service, Consistent Quality, and Efficient Collaboration. These initiatives are aimed at helping local partners innovate around customer needs, integrate Huawei solutions into their offerings more easily, and improve their service



capabilities. Other guests who spoke at the event on their own insights into Europe's twin transition strategy and intelligent industry practices included: Pierre Francois Rudant, Head of Technology, Auchan Retail; Federico Ascoli, Head of Platforms, Extended Group Management Board, Also; Sergio Grassi, a Country Manager of Zeliatech and Chief Revenue Officer for Value, Green and Services of Esprinet Group Italy; and Marcel Poser, Co-founder, Screening Eagle Technologies.

Huawei Egypt, NTI Renew Collaboration to Strengthen Egypt's Digital Skills

Huawei Egypt and the National Telecommunication Institute (NTI) have renewed their collaboration to strengthen Egypt's digital ecosystem, develop ICT capabilities and support the development of the country's next generation of digital talent. The renewed partnership will support capacity building through specialized Train the Trainers (TTT) programs and Huawei certifications covering emerging technologies including AI, Cloud Computing, Big Data, 5G, Datacom and Cybersecurity. The collaboration is aimed at equipping trainers and ICT professionals with skills in key technology areas while expanding opportunities for digital talent development in Egypt. Ibrahim Ahmed, Business Development Executive at Huawei Enterprise, Government & Media Sectors and Business Developer at Huawei ICT Academy, said the renewed partnership reflects the shared commitment of Huawei and NTI to supporting Egypt's digital ecosystem and empowering the next generation of digital talent. The collaboration forms part of efforts by Huawei and NTI to contribute to building a skilled and future-ready workforce in Egypt as demand for advanced ICT capabilities continues to grow. The partnership will continue through its next chapter with a focus on capacity building, professional certification and skills development in emerging technologies. Huawei Egypt and the National Telecommunication Institute (NTI) have renewed their collaboration to strengthen Egypt's digital ecosystem, develop ICT capabilities and support the development of the country's next generation of digital talent. The renewed partnership will support capacity building through specialized Train the Trainers (TTT) programs and Huawei certifications covering emerging technologies including AI, Cloud Computing, Big Data, 5G, Datacom and Cybersecurity.

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MTN Group Presents 2026 Y'ello Care Awards to Teams Bringing Healthcare Closer to Communities

MTN Group hosted its annual Ambassadors' Appreciation Dinner in Sandton, welcoming South Africa's Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies, Solly Malatsi, together with ambassadors, high commissioners and representatives of development institutions and international organizations from across MTN's markets. During the evening, MTN presented the 2026 Y'ello Care Awards, honoring the colleagues and teams who worked alongside health ministries, health workers and communities during this year's 21 Days of Y'ello Care. Welcoming guests, MTN Group President and CEO Ralph Mupita said the Group's success has always been intertwined with that of the countries and communities it serves. "A year ago, I said the time was now for Africa to take charge of its own socioeconomic progress. I believe that more firmly today," said Mupita. "Progress is built through partnership. For your partnership, we sincerely thank you." Since 2007, Y'ello Care has seen MTNers lend their time, hands, skills and care to communities in each of their markets. This year, from 1 to 21 June, they turned their focus to health, under the theme "Expanding Equitable Health for Every Community". According to Africa CDC and McKinsey, Africa carries about a quarter of the global disease burden but only 3% of the world's health workforce, and the gaps are widest in rural and underserved communities. A total of 6,384 MTNers from MTN's operating companies, MoMo and Bayobab, MTN's digital infrastructure business, gave more than 50,000 volunteer hours to healthcare initiatives that reached more than 400,000 people. MTN Eswatini was named overall winner for the fifth time. Working with the Luke Commission, it extended a medical drone network to a remote clinic, cutting the delivery of medicine from up to four hours by road to as little as 30 minutes. MTN Benin received the Francophone Region Award for a campaign built with the Ministry of Health, which included a national blood donation drive, surgery for children awaiting care and the renovation of a hospital dispensary. MTN Uganda received the SEAGHA Region Award for maternal and child health work in four districts, including smartphones and digital skills for community health workers. Bayobab won the Platform Business Award for a campaign across eight markets that used connectivity to strengthen health facilities, including a telehealth network linking a hospital and two primary healthcare centers in Nigeria. Winning teams were joined on stage by representatives of their diplomatic missions, in recognition of the partnerships that made the work possible. Fourteen awards were presented in all, and every operating company and platform business that took part was recognized. MTN Group Chief Sustainability and Corporate Affairs Officer Nompilo Morafo said the strongest initiatives went beyond once-off support: they listened first, worked alongside governments and development partners, and strengthened existing health systems. "Expanding access to healthcare is not only a health imperative; it is essential to education, skills development, inclusion and sustainable growth," said Morafo. "I am deeply grateful to every MTNer who gave their time and skills, and to the health workers, governments and communities who made this work possible. These awards recognize what they achieved together."



MTN Group President and CEO Ralph Mupita Re-elected to GSMA Board



MTN Group announced that Ralph Mupita, MTN Group President and CEO, has been elected to the GSMA Board of Directors for the 2027–2028 term. The GSMA Board comprises 26 senior representatives from global mobile operators, including both multinational groups and smaller independent operators. It provides strategic direction to the GSMA as it works to advance the mobile industry and unlock the full power of connectivity for people, businesses and society. "It is a privilege to continue serving on the GSMA Board, and I am grateful for the confidence placed in me. This term comes as AI begins to reshape our industry, while many people across Africa and the rest of the Global South are still to come online. Mobile remains the most powerful means we have of widening access to opportunity, and our task is to ensure that its benefits, and those of AI, reach everyone,"Mupita said. "I remain committed to supporting the strategic direction of the GSMA. It brings operators, the wider mobile ecosystem and policymakers to the same table, and that collaboration is what will sustain investment and make access more affordable for the people we serve," he added. Mupita joined the GSMA Board for the 2025-2026 term and has served as Deputy Chair since April 2025. He will continue to drive the African agenda on the Board, with a focus on closing the usage and coverage gaps, increasing investment and securing a climate-smart future. He has been Group President and CEO of MTN Group since September 2020, having served as Group Chief Financial Officer from April 2017, and previously led Old Mutual Emerging Markets across 19 countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia. MTN's contribution during the term will be guided by its Ambition 2030 strategy of leading digital solutions for Africa's progress. The new GSMA Board will serve from 1 January 2027 to 31 December 2028.

Forbes Ranks MTN Group the World's 3rd Best Telecoms Employer for Second Year Running



MTN Group has been ranked the third best telecommunications employer in the world on the Forbes World's Best Employers 2026 list, holding the position for a second consecutive year and marking its sixth straight appearance on the list. Over the last three years, MTN has climbed 261 places in the overall ranking, rising from 394th in 2023 to 133rd in 2026. This year alone, the Group moved up 33 places to rank 133rd out of 900 companies globally, making MTN the fifth-highest-ranked African company and the highest-ranked African company outside financial services. The recognition comes at an important point in MTN's journey as the Group begins delivering its Ambition 2030 strategy, with its people at the center of the work to lead digital solutions for Africa's progress. The Forbes list is drawn from an independent, anonymous survey in which more than 300,000 employees in over 50 countries are asked how likely they are to recommend their employer to family and friends. "Our ambition for Africa is ultimately powered by people. Technology will continue to change what is possible, but it is the ingenuity, resilience and commitment of our people that turn that possibility into progress," said Ralph Mupita, MTN Group President and CEO. "Being recognized among the world's best employers for a sixth consecutive year is something we are proud of, particularly because the list is informed by the voices and experiences of employees." The Forbes result echoes what MTN hears from its own people. In the 2025 Group Culture Audit, independently assessed by Willis Towers Watson, the score for recommending MTN as a place to work reached +63, up 16 points since 2023, while voluntary turnover fell from 5.7% to 4.0% over the same period. Between 95% and 97% of

employees take part in the Group's surveys, which gives MTN a clear and regular view of how its people experience their work. "This recognition is a reflection of the energy, passion and resilience our people bring to MTN every day – in how they serve our customers, support one another, shape our culture and help move our business forward," said Mitwa Ngambi, MTN Group Chief People and Culture Officer. "Our people continue to tell us what is working, where we can do better and what matters most to them, and that feedback helps shape how we lead, grow and support one another. We celebrate this achievement with pride, gratitude and humility, knowing that building a great place to work is an ongoing journey." The ranking is also a sign of the progress MTN has made in bringing its Live Inspired Employee Value Promise and Live Y'ello values to life. MTN's workforce spans more than 70 nationalities across its footprint, bringing together people working across Connectivity, Fintech and Digital Infrastructure. The Group's Live Inspired employee promise and Live Y'ello values underpin its approach to creating a workplace where people can contribute meaningfully, continue learning and feel included.

Nokia and L&T Technology Services Ink Strategic 5-Year R&D Partnership



L&T Technology Services (LTTS) has secured a five year agreement with Nokia to support and scale the telecommunications leader's engineering and R&D activities in India. The multi-year deal will unite LTTS's deep-tech engineering capabilities with Nokia's advanced global telecom operations. Under the agreement, LTTS will establish a dedicated Offshore Development Center in India to combine data-center-grade compute and AI-infrastructure engineering with next-generation telecom solutions, directly aligning with LTTS's Lakshya 31 strategy. Operating through an integrated delivery model with Nokia's global R&D teams, LTTS will deploy dedicated India-based engineering teams to drive end-to-end product lifecycles, spanning new product development, embedded systems, system integration, and ongoing support. The collaboration focuses on advancing critical next-generation technologies, including 5G networks, intelligent automation, AI-driven operations, and AI infrastructure.

Nokia and ICEYE Partner with The Ministry of Defence Of Ukraine to Develop Sovereign Satcom Capability

ICEYE, the European leader in sovereign intelligence from space, and Nokia, a global leader in connectivity infrastructure, signed a Letter of Intent with the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, to explore cooperation in space. The partnership aims to support Ukraine's defense capabilities, particularly in building sovereign satellite communications. The shared intent was announced on 22 October 2026 during the visit of the Prime Minister of Finland to Ukraine. Earlier this month, ICEYE and Nokia announced a partnership to develop secure, sovereign and high-performance broadband low Earth orbit (LEO) satellite communications systems for governments, supporting missions from defense and border security to emergency services and disaster response. Built on trusted European technology, the jointly developed satellite communications systems will give nations ownership and control of satellites, ground segment and terminals. Ukraine needs secure, sovereign and high-performance satellite communications systems that it controls. We have a proven track record of delivering sovereign missions at speed to help build that capability. ICEYE has proudly supported Ukraine since 2022, and we remain committed to continuing that support, said Rafal Modrzewski, CEO and Co-founder of ICEYE. Nations need communications they can rely on in every situation. Satellite networks extend and protect connectivity when networks on the ground are disrupted. This makes them a key part of any secure communications system. Through this Letter of Intent, together with Ukraine and ICEYE, we will explore how trusted, sovereign satellite communications can strengthen Ukraine's resilience and give it control over the connectivity it depends on said Mikko Hautala, Chief Geopolitical & Government Relations Officer, and Chairman, Nokia Defense.

stc Bahrain Wins Two Awards for Leadership Development and Workplace Technology at the HRM Summit Awards 2026



stc Bahrain, a digital enabler, has won Leadership Development Program of the Year for its e³ Leadership Academy and Best Use of Technology for its stc HUB platform at the HRM Summit Awards 2026. The accolades recognize the company's investment in developing its leaders and using technology to improve the employee experience. The two initiatives reinforce stc Bahrain's commitment to organizational excellence by developing effective leaders and creating a connected workplace that strengthens collaboration, productivity and overall business performance. The e³ Leadership Academy was recognized for its structured approach to building leadership capabilities across the organization. Co-designed with executive management, the academy offers three progressive journeys: Evolve for emerging talent, empower for managers and directors, and Elevate for senior executives. Through collaborations with Columbia, Kellogg, MIT Sloan, MIT xPRO and Tuck, it has delivered more than 7,000 development hours, supporting the development of leaders at different stages of their careers. The stc HUB platform earned the Best Use of Technology award for bringing everyday employee services into a single digital workspace. By streamlining attendance, leave requests and approvals, it simplifies routine processes and makes essential services easier to access. Eng. Fahad Alowaini, Chief Human Resources Officer of stc Bahrain, said: "This recognition reflects our commitment to strengthening leadership and placing the employee experience at the center of our HR priorities. Through the e³ Leadership Academy and stc HUB, we are building a stronger leadership pipeline and improving how our people connect with the organization. Both initiatives demonstrate how HR can contribute to a more engaged workforce and stronger organizational performance." Together, the awards reinforce stc Bahrain's focus on building organizational capabilities that support long-term growth, combining leadership development with practical improvements to everyday working life.

stc Bahrain wins Best Data Service Innovation at Global Connectivity Awards 2026 for Pioneering SmartVenue Insights Platform

stc Bahrain, a digital enabler, has won the prestigious Best Data Service Innovation award for its pioneering enterprise solution, SmartVenue Insights, at the Global Connectivity Awards 2026, held during Capacity Europe in London. The recognition endorses stc business's leadership and innovation, reinforcing its credibility among clients, partners and industry peers worldwide. Eng. Khalid Al Osaimi, Chief Executive Officer of stc Bahrain, commented: "Winning Best Data Service Innovation at the Global Connectivity Awards reinforces stc Bahrain's role in advancing the Kingdom's digital transformation and economic diversification. SmartVenue Insights demonstrates how telecommunications infrastructure can create new opportunities across the digital economy, delivering tangible commercial value for diverse industries while maintaining robust data governance." Celebrating 25 years in 2026, Capacity Europe brings together more than 4,000 senior decision-makers from over 90 countries, making it an influential platform for global connectivity, digital infrastructure and investment. Recognition at its associated Global Connectivity Awards strengthens stc Bahrain's standing among international industry leaders and partners. Supported by a global panel of 35 industry experts, the awards follow an independent, criteria-based judging process. Entries are assessed by specialists, with the highest aggregate score determining the

winner in each category. SmartVenue Insights is an AI-powered analytics service that converts consented mobile telemetry into real-time footfall and dwell-time data for retail, tourism and real estate operators. Designed to support compliance with Bahrain's Personal Data Protection Law (PDPL), the solution provides insights into visitor behavior, helping businesses make informed decisions while creating diverse opportunities for revenue growth in support of Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030. By combining AI-driven spatial intelligence with accessible enterprise tools, stc Bahrain continues to demonstrate how telecommunications infrastructure can support business competitiveness, operational efficiency and the Kingdom's long-term economic development.



ZainTECH Designs and Operationalizes Al Liwan Group's Cloud Transformation Journey



ZainTECH, the digital solutions arm of Zain Group, has been selected by Al Liwan Group, a next-generation financial services firm anchored in the Gulf, to design, deploy, and operationalize a secure Microsoft Azure Landing Zone that will accelerate the group's cloud transformation journey. As part of the strategic collaboration, ZainTECH will establish a scalable and compliant Microsoft Azure environment aligned with Microsoft's Cloud Adoption Framework (CAF) and Azure Enterprise-Scale Landing Zone architecture. The implementation will provide Al Liwan Group with a standardized cloud operating model designed to support current and future digital initiatives while strengthening security, governance, and operational resilience. The project will include the deployment of a multi-subscription Azure environment with centralized governance, hub-and-spoke networking, identity and access management, security controls, monitoring capabilities, and disaster recovery foundations. This approach will enable Al Liwan Group to adopt cloud services with greater agility while maintaining the governance and compliance standards required for modern digital operations. Shafik Khashouf, Chief Technology and Delivery Officer (CTDO) of ZainTECH, said: "Cloud transformation requires more than technology adoption; it requires a secure, governed, and scalable foundation that enables organizations to innovate with confidence. Through our collaboration with Al Liwan Group, we are helping establish a modern Azure environment that supports operational resilience, strengthens security, and provides the flexibility needed to support future digital initiatives." As organizations continue to accelerate cloud adoption, establishing a secure and well-governed cloud foundation has become essential to unlocking innovation, improving operational efficiency, and ensuring business continuity. Through its cloud expertise, cybersecurity capabilities, and regional delivery experience, ZainTECH supports organizations in building resilient cloud environments tailored to their business and regulatory requirements. Samson Giwa, Head of Technology at Al Liwan Group, said: "As organizations continue to embrace cloud technologies, having a secure and scalable foundation is essential to driving innovation while maintaining operational excellence. Our collaboration with ZainTECH enables us to strengthen our cloud capabilities through a well-governed Microsoft Azure environment that supports our evolving business needs, enhances resilience, and provides the flexibility required for future growth." The collaboration further strengthens ZainTECH's position as a trusted cloud transformation partner in the region, demonstrating its ability to deliver enterprise-scale Microsoft Azure solutions that combine cloud governance, cybersecurity, managed services, and industry-focused expertise. By enabling organizations to build secure and compliant cloud foundations, ZainTECH continues to support the region's digital transformation ambitions.

Digital. Intelligent. Resilient.: ZainTECH Evolves Brand Promise 'What's Next is Now' as it Unifies Operations and Accelerates Regional Expansion.

To accelerate the next phase of its growth, ZainTECH, the integrated digital solutions arm of Zain Group, has evolved its brand promise to 'What's next is now,' reflecting the meaningful business outcomes it delivers to more than 1,600 organizations and government customers through its Digital. Intelligent. Resilient. framework. This evolution follows the unification of all acquired entities, namely STS Arabia, BIOS Middle East, and Adfolks under ZainTECH. This milestone marks the next stage in the company's evolution as a regional ICT partner for enterprises and governments, following a period of strategic growth and continued regional expansion, which has recently seen the launch of ZainTECH operations in Egypt. Furthermore, ZainTECH has invested in scaling up its UAE, KSA, Kuwait, Jordan, Iraq, and Bahrain regional offices to support the growing demand for its growth-enhancing and business-critical services. ZainTECH's presence spans eight countries offering a unified and managed delivery model spanning cloud, cybersecurity, data and AI, digital solutions, modern infrastructure, and drones and robotics. The company enables organizations across the region to modernize with confidence, turn data and AI into actionable intelligence, and remain secure and resilient as change accelerates. "For years, organizations have talked about preparing for what comes next. Today, the technologies shaping that future are already transforming the way businesses operate," said Andrew Hanna, CEO of ZainTECH. "The evolution of ZainTECH brings together the capabilities, expertise and regional presence needed to help our customers act on those opportunities.



Digital. Intelligent. Resilient. reflects the strategy we have been building and the outcomes we are focused on delivering for our customers. 'What's next is now' reflects our commitment to helping organizations move forward with confidence, turning technology into meaningful business outcomes." Mr. Hanna concluded, "Our expansion into Egypt is an important part of our growth journey, reflecting our confidence in the significant opportunities we see in the market across the enterprise and government sectors." At the heart of this proposition is ZainTECH's Digital. Intelligent. Resilient. framework, which brings its capabilities together around three core customer outcomes:

Digital: helping organizations modernize through cloud, infrastructure, connectivity, applications and automation.

Intelligent: using AI, data and analytics to convert information into actionable insights and enable better decision-making.

Resilient: strengthening business continuity and operational confidence through cybersecurity, managed services and resilient digital infrastructure.

Together, these capabilities enable ZainTECH to deliver an integrated approach to digital modernization, combining technology, intelligence, and resilience to address the demands of an increasingly complex and always-on business environment. The ZainTECH website and channels bring this integrated proposition together in one digital experience. As it enters this next phase, ZainTECH remains focused on the outcomes it enables for customers, helping organizations across the region become more Digital, Intelligent, and Resilient – because what's next is Digital. What's next is Intelligent. What's next is Resilient. And what's next is now.

SAMENA Council On
WLAN Development

SAMENA Council and WAA Strengthen Cross-Regional WLAN Industry Cooperation Through Engagements in Dubai, Oman, and China

The SAMENA Telecommunications Council and the World WLAN Application Alliance (WAA) are closely engaged in building institutional cooperation through a series of industry engagements in Dubai, Muscat, and Shenzhen, bringing global WLAN technology development into closer contact with telecommunications infrastructure requirements, operator priorities, and investment opportunities across the South Asia, Middle East, and North Africa (SA-ME-NA) region.

The latest engagement took place in Shenzhen, China, where the SAMENA Council participated in the Third Meeting of the Second Council of WAA and the Global WLAN Industry Forum, held in conjunction with CEIC2026, the Consumer Electronics Innovation Conference & Exhibition, taking place from October 22 to 24. These engagements provided opportunities for institutional dialogue on WLAN industry development, emerging technologies, international cooperation, and the different market conditions affecting technology adoption and investment.

The Shenzhen meetings brought together representatives of the WLAN and wider technology industry, providing a setting to examine emerging technical and market requirements, industry development challenges, interoperability, and the role of global standards in supporting future connectivity. For WAA and the SAMENA Council, such exchanges are particularly relevant to connecting international technology development with the operational, commercial, and regulatory requirements of telecommunications markets across the SA-ME-NA region.

At the Global WLAN Industry Forum, Bocar A. BA, CEO of the SAMENA Council, delivered a featured presentation titled "The SA-ME-NA Connectivity Market: Opportunities Behind the Numbers," offering "An operator and industry perspective on investment, adoption and market priorities." The presentation examined the different infrastructure, investment, and commercial conditions shaping technology adoption

> *These engagements provided opportunities for institutional dialogue on WLAN industry development, emerging technologies, international cooperation, and the different market conditions affecting technology adoption and investment.*



> *The continuing cooperation between the SAMENA Council and WAA reflects a shared interest in strengthening international industry engagement while recognizing the different conditions under which technology is deployed.*

across the Gulf, South Asia, and North Africa. Its starting point was "One Region, Three Different Market Realities," reflecting the different conditions facing technology suppliers and network investors.

A central message was that advanced telecommunications infrastructure and large market size do not automatically translate into demand for every new technology. As the presentation stated, "High connectivity does not mean automatic demand for every new technology." Across the SA-ME-NA region, investment decisions are shaped by different combinations of network maturity, purchasing capacity, regulatory requirements, operating costs, and enterprise demand. Technology manufacturers and solution providers therefore need to understand both market scale and the conditions under which new technologies can be introduced successfully.

The Gulf represents an advanced connectivity environment, supported by substantial investments in fiber, 5G, cloud infrastructure, data centers, and major digital development projects. The presentation identified "Airports," "Hospitality," "Healthcare," "Campuses," "Industry," and "Large developments" as important settings for advanced WLAN solutions, emphasizing that "Demand is shaped by the operating environment." Operators and enterprises must determine where new solutions fit within existing infrastructure and whether additional investment can deliver measurable improvements.

In this context, AI-assisted WLAN capabilities, including interference management, fault identification, service consistency, network security, and operating efficiency, offer areas for practical consideration. Their commercial relevance depends on actual operational requirements, integration costs, and demonstrable improvements in performance and service quality. For operators that have already committed substantial capital to existing infrastructure, technology adoption must be supported by clear operational or commercial benefits. The keynote also referred to the limited share of Wi-Fi 7 in Middle East Speedtest samples during the first half of 2025, noting that this sample-based indicator does not represent the installed equipment base.



Different conditions apply across South Asia and North Africa. In South Asian markets such as Pakistan and Bangladesh, population scale creates substantial connectivity requirements, while affordability, deployment costs, energy consumption, and maintenance remain important factors in technology adoption. The presentation described this as "South Asia: The Discipline of Scale," noting that "Large markets reward solutions that can be deployed and operated economically." In North Africa, "Broadband modernisation," "Regulatory choices," and "Investment cycles" influence the timing and commercial viability of new connectivity solutions. These differences reinforce the importance of adapting technology offerings and deployment models to individual market conditions.

Spectrum policy is another important consideration for WLAN development. As reflected in the slide message, "Regulation and spectrum decisions influence the conditions for investment." National approaches concerning the 6 GHz band, including different developments in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Egypt, illustrate how regulatory conditions affect technology deployment and investment planning. At the same time, global WLAN standards, interoperability, common measurements, and compatibility between network-management systems are becoming increasingly important as artificial intelligence is applied to WLAN operations. These regional considerations have direct implications for cooperation between WAA and the SAMENA Council. The presentation captured three operator questions: "What problem does it solve?", "What does it cost to operate?", and "Who will pay for it?" For telecommunications operators, closer engagement with the international WLAN industry can provide opportunities to examine new technologies against practical network requirements, assess

integration and operating costs, and communicate the performance, security, and service expectations that should inform future solutions. For technology manufacturers and solution providers, closer contact with operators and other regional stakeholders can improve understanding of market demand, procurement considerations, spectrum conditions, and investment priorities.

The cooperation also carries particular relevance for exchanges between China's technology industry and telecommunications markets across the Middle East and wider SA-ME-NA region. Chinese telecommunications and equipment manufacturers have substantial experience in network development, manufacturing, and technology deployment. The presentation identified "Market intelligence," "Operator requirements," "Deployment experience," and "Regional relationships" as areas where closer engagement could be useful. Experience from the Middle East's high-density venues, enterprise environments, industrial facilities, and major infrastructure developments can also contribute to future product development, interoperability, and international industry discussions.

The Shenzhen engagement builds on cooperation already undertaken by both associations during 2026. At the Digital Continuity Forum in Dubai in September, WAA participated and hosted a dedicated roundtable addressing WLAN development, intelligent connectivity, and their relevance to digital infrastructure and network continuity. This provided an opportunity to introduce WLAN-related considerations into wider regional discussions involving telecommunications operators, regulators, and technology stakeholders.

The cooperation continued at the SAMENA Council Leaders' AXIS 2026 in Muscat, Oman, where WAA actively participated, presented its mission and industry work, and highlighted the



relevance of WLAN innovation, standards, and industry cooperation to regional telecommunications operators. With AXIS focused on infrastructure development, investment, connectivity, and emerging technologies, WAA's participation helped connect WLAN industry interests with wider national and regional digital development priorities.

Together, these engagements have established a continuing basis for cooperation between the two associations. WAA brings an international WLAN industry perspective, including engagement with technology developers, manufacturers, and the wider standards and innovation community. The SAMENA Council contributes its regional relationships with telecommunications operators, regulators, infrastructure providers, and other industry stakeholders, helping connect international technology discussions with market requirements and policy considerations.

This association-to-association cooperation can support more informed engagement on WLAN deployment requirements, spectrum availability, interoperability, intelligent network management, and the business conditions affecting technology adoption. It also provides opportunities for regional operating experience to inform wider industry discussions, including the technical and commercial requirements emerging from high-density environments, enterprise networks, industrial facilities, and large infrastructure developments.

For telecommunications operators, the wider significance lies in ensuring that advanced WLAN solutions respond to actual network and service requirements, remain compatible with existing infrastructure, and offer commercially justified improvements. For WAA and its industry participants, access to regional perspectives can help identify where technology development, product adaptation, and industry cooperation are most relevant. For regulators and other public authorities, continuing dialogue can improve understanding of evolving WLAN requirements and the relationship between spectrum decisions, infrastructure development, and market demand.

The continuing cooperation between the SAMENA Council and WAA reflects a shared interest in strengthening international industry engagement while recognizing the different conditions under which technology is deployed. In the words of the keynote's closing slide, "Closer industry engagement can create better outcomes." By connecting the experience and capabilities of China's WLAN industry with the priorities of telecommunications markets across the Middle East and wider SA-ME-NA region, both associations can contribute to more relevant technology development, better-informed investment decisions, and greater alignment between international standards and practical deployment requirements.

SAMENA Macro-View
Market Analysis from This Edition

Agentic AI and the Future of Telecoms: Governing Autonomous Systems and Sovereign Infrastructure

The October 2026 edition of SAMENA TRENDS examines developments in telecommunications infrastructure, artificial intelligence, satellite communications, computing capacity, and regulatory governance across the SA-ME-NA region and related markets. Network expansion and international connectivity remain important priorities, alongside growing investment in domestic computing and satellite capabilities. At the same time, the introduction of increasingly autonomous AI applications is raising questions about operational authority, security, accountability, and the systems required to support them.

Although these developments have different commercial, technical, and national motivations, their relationships are becoming more apparent. Higher-capacity access networks require corresponding improvements in transport infrastructure, while AI applications increase demand for computing resources, energy, and secure data handling. Satellite investments are extending connectivity options and strengthening national participation in communications systems. Regulatory authorities, meanwhile, are examining how increasingly capable technologies can be introduced while maintaining oversight and established responsibilities. The edition presents a sector addressing infrastructure growth, technological advancement, and operational governance simultaneously, with greater attention to how these priorities influence one another.

Expanding Network Capacity, Transport Infrastructure, and Operational Security

Terrestrial telecommunications infrastructure continues to advance through improvements in spectrum utilization, transmission capacity, international routing, and service performance. In the UAE, TDRA's commercialization of Upper 6GHz spectrum has enabled mobile operators to deploy 256TRX Giga-MIMO technology on 5.5G networks, supporting peak single-user download speeds of 10 Gbps and cell capacity exceeding 50 Gbps. Complementing these radio access developments, du and Huawei completed the world's first live integration of a 50 Gbps E-band Full Duplex microwave backhaul solution, allowing simultaneous transmission and reception on identical frequencies and doubling spectral efficiency through interference cancellation. Both advances address the need to accommodate increasing data traffic across different parts of mobile networks.

International transport capacity is being strengthened in parallel. Ooredoo Group's international connectivity arm, OFN, signed a dark-fiber agreement with Iraq's iQ Networks to secure multiple fiber pairs across a terrestrial corridor linking the Gulf with Türkiye and European interconnection hubs. The corridor connects with the 720 Tbps Fiber in Gulf subsea system, a 24-fiber-pair loop linking seven Gulf markets. By allowing customers to deploy their own transmission equipment, the dark-fiber arrangement provides flexibility for cloud platforms, hyperscalers, and enterprises requiring substantial international bandwidth. Iraq's separate memorandum of understanding with Huawei concerning sovereign enterprise data centers also demonstrates attention to domestic computing facilities alongside cross-border connectivity.

Beyond additional capacity, operational security and measurable service quality remain essential. Saudi Arabia achieved a reported 99.8 percent activation rate for Resource Public Key Infrastructure Route Origin Validation, according to APNIC measurements, placing the Kingdom first globally on this measure of routing security. Its cybersecurity market reached SAR 16.3 billion in 2025, according to the National Cybersecurity Authority, comprising SAR 5.1 billion in public-sector spending and SAR 11.2 billion in private-sector expenditure. Separately, CST's Q2 2026 GameMode report awarded STC the Platinum Gaming Operator Award for local server hosting

In the UAE, TDRA's commercialization of Upper 6GHz spectrum has enabled mobile operators to deploy 256TRX Giga-MIMO technology on 5.5G networks, supporting peak single-user download speeds of 10 Gbps and cell capacity exceeding 50 Gbps.

and network optimization, while reporting game download performance ranging from 98 to 100 percent across STC, Mobily, and Salam. These measures address different concerns, but each contributes to assessing whether network investment delivers secure and dependable services.

Access modernization remains equally relevant in markets experiencing subscriber growth and technology migration. Algeria has exceeded four million fiber-to-the-home subscriptions, a 75-fold increase since 2020, while Bangladesh recorded 121.92 million active

4G connections as operators including Robi Axiata decommissioned legacy 3G networks. These developments reflect continued investment in service reach and network efficiency. They also illustrate how preparations for more demanding applications must proceed alongside improvements in the availability and performance of established connectivity services.

> *Satellite expansion is also prompting regulatory arrangements adapted to local connectivity needs. Pakistan is advancing its Fixed Satellite Services and LEO broadband framework, including a model under which local entrepreneurs could distribute satellite connectivity through Wi-Fi networks as micro-Internet Service Providers.*

Satellite Infrastructure, Connectivity Options, and National Control

Alongside terrestrial expansion, governments and companies are investing in satellite communications through orbital assets, ground infrastructure, and integrated connectivity services. In Oman, Durri Space agreed with Cailabs to establish three optical ground stations by 2028, incorporating TILBA-OGS L10 laser communications technology for high-throughput links with low-Earth-orbit satellites. Separately, Mohammed Al Barwani Satellite Company partnered with ST Engineering iDirect to provide a software-defined ground system using the Intuition platform for MB Sat-1, a sovereign MicroGEO satellite scheduled for service launch in 2027. The arrangement is intended to support dedicated payload control and dynamic spectrum management, increasing Oman's ability to manage satellite communications operations.

The UAE is also pursuing space-sector development through national policy objectives and commercial investment. Its National Space Strategy 2031 targets a 60 percent increase in the sector's economic added value, a doubling of space exports, and growth in national space entities beyond 170 companies. Space42 has expanded its Foresight Earth Observation constellation to five fully operational satellites, incorporating 25-centimeter high-resolution imaging and its GIQ analytics platform. It is also participating in a US$1 billion consortium investment with Marlan Space and Loft Orbital for the planned 50-satellite Altair-Next Gen constellation to be manufactured in Abu Dhabi. Its agreement with Viasat to establish Equatys, supported by up to US$1 billion in combined equity commitments, extends these activities into shared space-ground infrastructure. The initiatives illustrate the different commercial and technological functions being developed within the space sector, from observation and analytics to manufacturing and communications.

Satellite expansion is also prompting regulatory arrangements adapted to local connectivity needs. Pakistan is advancing its Fixed Satellite Services and LEO broadband framework, including a model under which local entrepreneurs could distribute satellite connectivity through Wi-Fi networks as micro-Internet Service Providers. This is particularly relevant to Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where difficult terrain constrains terrestrial deployment. The framework also prepares the market for international providers including Starlink and OneWeb. In Europe, Eutelsat's partnership with MEO in Portugal to integrate OneWeb LEO connectivity with fiber and 5G networks addresses critical infrastructure backup, illustrating another application of satellite services within existing communications arrangements.

The motivations behind these investments range from geographic coverage and network resilience to national operational control and commercial development. Their significance for telecommunications lies in the need to determine how terrestrial and satellite capabilities will function together, what regulatory provisions are appropriate, and where responsibility for essential communications services will reside. As satellite connectivity becomes more closely integrated with national infrastructure, the effectiveness of these arrangements will depend on both technical implementation and clear institutional responsibilities.

> *Solutions+ and Inception42 signed an agreement to deploy Catalyst, a platform intended to consolidate fragmented enterprise AI initiatives within a common architecture incorporating security controls. Zetrix AI introduced its Zetrix Avatar platform, combining verified digital identity with agentic capabilities for commercial task execution across multiple channels.*

Agentic AI, Computing Capacity, and the Governance of Autonomous Operations

While communications infrastructure continues to expand, agentic AI is introducing new operational considerations. Systems capable of executing multi-step tasks across enterprise databases and service environments require defined permissions, security controls, and mechanisms for monitoring their actions. Their deployment therefore depends partly on how organizations establish the limits of autonomous execution and retain responsibility for its consequences.

This concern is evident in Kuwait, where CITRA's Agentic AI Experience 2026,

> *Omantel's establishment of its first centralized research and development function, involving MIT CSAIL, Sultan Qaboos University, and local academic institutions, reflects an effort to develop expertise in generative AI infrastructure, networking, and enterprise IoT.*

organized with Zain Kuwait, ETLAQ, and the Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity, emphasized human oversight, auditable privacy limits, and legal responsibility for autonomous AI agents. Dubai's Agentic AI for Government Services Accelerator, involving the Dubai Centre for Artificial Intelligence, Digital Dubai, and the Dubai Electronic Security Centre, approaches the subject through applied experimentation, bringing together 33 government entities to evaluate more than 300 potential public-facing use cases. Although the initiatives have different objectives, both recognize that autonomous applications must operate within defined institutional arrangements.

Enterprise deployments are progressing in parallel. Solutions+ and Inception42 signed an agreement to deploy Catalyst, a platform intended to consolidate fragmented enterprise AI initiatives within a common architecture incorporating security controls. Zetrix AI introduced its Zetrix Avatar platform, combining verified digital identity with agentic capabilities for commercial task execution across multiple channels. These examples bring identity verification, access permissions, and the management of automated activity into the practical considerations surrounding enterprise AI adoption.

The computing facilities required to support advanced AI applications are also attracting substantial investment. In Saudi Arabia, Humain, DataVolt, and Nebius concluded a framework agreement for a 360 MW AI Giga Campus at Oxagon in NEOM, with Nebius serving as the anchor customer and taking up to 50 MW of capacity from the initial 100 MW phase for NVIDIA-accelerated computing infrastructure. Separately, Submer and ACES agreed to pursue high-density data center deployment incorporating liquid and immersion cooling. Bangladesh's announced plan to establish sovereign AI infrastructure within 12 months, including domestic computing resources for localized Bangla language models, reflects another priority: building facilities capable of supporting nationally relevant AI applications.

> *Regulatory cooperation is another part of preparing for emerging technologies. At the 6G MENA Summit 2026 in Abu Dhabi, SAMENA Council CEO Bocar BA emphasized applying lessons from 5G to future network development, including human oversight, defined operational authority, and digital continuity in increasingly autonomous networks.*

The relationship between these developments extends beyond computing capacity. AI deployment requires suitable power, cooling, networking, and data-management arrangements, while autonomous applications introduce questions of identity, permissions, and accountability. The growing use of agentic AI consequently places greater importance on how infrastructure is operated and how organizations maintain authority over systems capable of performing tasks with limited direct intervention.

National Capability, Infrastructure Sustainability, and Regulatory Coordination

The relationship between infrastructure investment and national development was particularly evident at the SAMENA Council Leaders' AXIS 2026 conference in Muscat, held with the chief patronage of TRA Oman and with Omantel as Host Sponsor. The conference addressed international connectivity, technology investment, and local capabilities, providing a national context for considering how digital infrastructure can support economic priorities and market requirements.

Omantel's establishment of its first centralized research and development function, involving MIT CSAIL, Sultan Qaboos University, and local academic institutions, reflects an effort to develop expertise in generative AI infrastructure, networking, and enterprise IoT. Its performance during the Khareef Dhofar 2026 season provides a separate example of the demands placed on existing networks. During that period, Omantel accommodated a 25 percent increase in data traffic, reaching 650 TB, and a 45 percent rise in unique roaming users while achieving a reported TRA user-experience score of 79 percent. Together, these examples demonstrate the importance of developing future technical expertise while sustaining performance under changing operating conditions.

Computing expansion also brings energy provision more directly into investment planning. An analysis from the Oman Net Zero Centre called for closer alignment between renewable energy development and data center requirements, including the potential relevance of O-Green's 2.7 GW solar and wind project. Reliable electricity supply and suitable cooling arrangements are material considerations for high-density computing facilities, making coordination between energy and digital infrastructure increasingly important. The connection is particularly relevant where national strategies seek to accommodate substantial computing investment alongside sustainability objectives.

Regulatory cooperation is another part

of preparing for emerging technologies. At the 6G MENA Summit 2026 in Abu Dhabi, SAMENA Council CEO Bocar BA emphasized applying lessons from 5G to future network development, including human oversight, defined operational authority, and digital continuity in increasingly autonomous networks. In Colombo, SATRC-27 brought South Asian telecommunications regulators together to address spectrum policy, direct-to-device satellite frameworks, and digital inclusion. These discussions reflect the need for regulatory approaches to accommodate technological advances while preserving commercial, operational, and public-interest responsibilities.

> *National digital development also involves supporting economic participation and access to essential services. Qatar's initiatives, including TASMU Accelerator and the Digital Incubation Center, have supported 130 technology startups generating more than QR 178 million in revenue.*

National digital development also involves supporting economic participation and access to essential services. Qatar's initiatives, including TASMU Accelerator and the Digital Incubation Center, have supported 130 technology startups generating more than QR 178 million in revenue. Meanwhile, the country's Communications Regulatory Authority initiated a consultation on a Universal Service Policy intended to establish baseline digital access across permanent residences and business sites. These initiatives address different national objectives, but they demonstrate why technology entrepreneurship and service accessibility remain relevant alongside investment in more advanced infrastructure.

> *In the SAMENA Council's view, the SA-ME-NA region must continue advancing connectivity and computing capabilities while ensuring that the technologies built upon them remain secure, manageable, and responsive to national and commercial requirements. The growing relationship between physical infrastructure, autonomous systems, and institutional oversight calls for investment decisions and regulatory approaches that recognize their interdependence.*

Across these activities, the value of national investment is reflected in the capabilities and outcomes it enables. Research, network performance, computing resources, energy provision, regulatory cooperation, and service access each address particular needs. Their relationship becomes more consequential as governments and operators seek to accommodate emerging technologies while meeting existing national and market obligations.

Conclusion

The developments covered in this edition show a telecommunications sector addressing several interconnected priorities. Operators continue to expand network capacity, strengthen international transport, modernize access infrastructure, and improve security and service performance. Satellite investments are adding connectivity options and greater national participation in communications systems. At the same time, AI deployment is increasing demand for computing resources while introducing additional responsibilities concerning autonomous execution and operational accountability.

These developments bring questions of capability and control into closer consideration. Infrastructure investment must be supported by dependable transmission, energy provision, and operational management, while satellite systems require appropriate integration and regulatory arrangements. Autonomous applications add another dimension, requiring clear limits on execution, human oversight, and responsibility for their actions. Although national priorities and commercial motivations differ, the ability to govern increasingly complex technologies is becoming closely related to the ability to deploy and operate them effectively.

In the SAMENA Council's view, the SA-ME-NA region must continue advancing connectivity and computing capabilities while ensuring that the technologies built upon them remain secure, manageable, and responsive to national and commercial requirements. The growing relationship between physical infrastructure, autonomous systems, and institutional oversight calls for investment decisions and regulatory approaches that recognize their interdependence. Ultimately, progress will be measured by dependable services, meaningful economic outcomes, and the ability to maintain effective operational control as telecommunications systems become more capable and increasingly autonomous.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Qatar Launches 2026 Digital Inclusion Survey to Assess Access to Technology and Online Services

Qatar's Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) has launched the 2026 Digital Inclusion Survey to assess how citizens and residents access and use digital technologies and services, with the findings set to inform the second edition of the Qatar Digital Inclusion Index Report. The nationwide initiative follows the publication of the first Digital Inclusion Index Report in 2024 and aims to gather public feedback on digital accessibility and usage across different segments of society. The ministry is using official social media channels, SMS invitations and campaigns involving government entities to encourage participation, alongside targeted face-to-face interviews with community representatives. The 2026 Digital Inclusion Survey will provide information for the next edition of Qatar's Digital Inclusion Index Report, building on the initial assessment published in 2024. The survey focuses on understanding how citizens and residents interact with digital tools and services, including their ability to access and use available technologies. By gathering responses directly from the public, MCIT aims to develop an updated picture of digital participation across the country. The findings could help identify differences in technology access and usage among population groups, providing an evidence base for future digital inclusion initiatives. The available announcement does not disclose the survey's full questionnaire, sample size or the indicators that will be used to calculate the updated index. It also does not specify when the second report will be published. MCIT is promoting the survey through several communication channels to encourage participation from citizens and residents. These include official social media platforms, SMS invitations and awareness campaigns conducted in cooperation with government entities. The ministry also plans to conduct targeted face-to-face interviews with key community representatives.



Using both digital outreach and in-person engagement can help collect perspectives from people with different levels of access to, and familiarity with, digital services. This is particularly relevant for a digital inclusion assessment, where relying exclusively on online responses could make it more difficult to capture the experiences of people who face barriers to digital participation. However, the announcement does not specify the number of interviews planned or identify the community groups that will be prioritized. The survey is intended to collect public feedback on the accessibility and use of digital tools and services. These are related but distinct dimensions of digital inclusion. Accessibility concerns whether individuals can obtain and interact with digital technologies and services, while usage provides insight into how those resources are incorporated into everyday activities. Understanding both can help policymakers distinguish between the availability of digital services and the extent to which people can effectively use them. For example, a digital service may be available to the public without necessarily being equally accessible or widely used across all population groups. The survey is designed to gather information relevant to these issues, although the source does not identify specific barriers or service categories being examined. The 2026 initiative follows Qatar's first Digital Inclusion Index Report, released in 2024. Producing a second edition creates an opportunity to update the country's assessment of digital inclusion and examine developments since the original report. Repeated assessments can help governments evaluate whether digital services are reaching intended users and identify areas requiring further attention. The new survey also provides a mechanism for incorporating public experiences into the assessment process rather than relying solely on administrative or infrastructure indicators. The available information does not include findings from the 2024 report, making it premature to draw conclusions about whether digital inclusion has improved or declined since the initial assessment. Any comparison will depend on the methodology and results of the forthcoming report.

Omani TRA Runs Telecom User Satisfaction Survey

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) has launched a public consultation on the Spatial Environment Guidelines for Telecommunications Sector Organizations. The consultation aims to contribute to the development of the guidelines and ensure their suitability for the nature of work in telecommunications sector organizations, taking into account the requirements of the physical work environment, given their importance and the potential impact of their implementation on organizations across the sector. The guidelines aim to improve the spatial environment in telecommunications sector organizations in line with their operational needs, enhance quality standards, and promote better workplace practices. They also provide a reference framework to help organizations improve their spatial environments and strengthen their internal practices. The draft guidelines include a set of criteria designed to assess organizational readiness through a mechanism for calculating relevant indicators and results, enabling organizations to implement the guidelines in a clear and systematic manner. This consultation reflects TRA's commitment to engaging stakeholders in developing regulatory frameworks and guidelines, promoting transparency, and strengthening cooperation with relevant entities. TRA invites interested entities, specialists, and other stakeholders to participate in the consultation questionnaire available on its official website.



MCIT, Qatar Launches 2026 Digital Inclusion Survey

The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), Qatar has launched the 2026 Digital Inclusion Survey for citizens and residents as part of its national efforts to assess the level of digital inclusion in the State of Qatar and support the development of the second edition of the Qatar Digital Inclusion Index Report, following the inaugural report released in 2024. The survey aims to gather the views and experiences of citizens and residents regarding their access to and use of digital services and technologies. The findings will contribute to building an updated national picture of digital inclusion in Qatar and identifying opportunities to further enhance the accessibility, quality, and inclusiveness of digital services. MCIT reaffirms its commitment to protecting participants' privacy. All responses will be treated with strict confidentiality and analyzed anonymously. The information collected will be used solely to support efforts to enhance digital services and advance digital inclusion in the State of Qatar, as well as to inform the Qatar Digital Inclusion Index Report 2026, which is expected to be published later this year. Citizens and residents are invited to participate in the survey through the following link: Digital Inclusion Survey The survey will be promoted through MCIT's official communication channels, SMS invitations, and approved awareness campaigns coordinated with relevant government entities. To complement the survey findings, MCIT will also conduct targeted face-to-face interviews with selected community groups and stakeholders to gather qualitative insights that reflect the experiences and needs of different segments of society. Together, these contributions will support the development of a comprehensive report informed by both public experiences and stakeholder perspectives. The findings will help guide future policies and initiatives aimed at strengthening digital inclusion and ensuring that digital services continue to meet the evolving needs of society. MCIT extends its appreciation to all citizens and residents who participate in the Digital Inclusion Survey. Their contribution plays an important role in supporting national efforts to advance digital inclusion and enhance the digital experience for everyone in Qatar



Pact to Establish Satellite Optical Ground Network in Oman



Oman is set to establish a network of three advanced optical ground stations by 2028 under a strategic partnership between Omani space communications company Durri Space and French photonics specialist Cailabs, marking a significant step towards developing the Sultanate as a regional hub for high-capacity satellite communications. The agreement, signed recently under the auspices of Dr Ali bin Amer al Shidhani, Under-Secretary for Communications and Information Technology at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, will support Oman's national space ambitions while creating infrastructure capable of serving international satellite operators. Under the contract, Durri Space, a subsidiary of Enjaaz Group, will own the three-station network, which will incorporate Cailabs' TILBA-OGS L10 optical communications technology. Unlike conventional satellite communications that rely on radio frequencies, optical ground stations use laser beams to transmit and receive large volumes of data between satellites and Earth, offering the potential for substantially higher transmission speeds. The planned facilities will support high-capacity communications with low-Earth-orbit satellites, including those involved in Earth observation and other data-intensive applications. Their geographical distribution across Oman will also provide greater operational flexibility for satellite data reception. Ahmed al Fahdi, CEO of Durri Space, said the initiative would establish the foundations for a new national capability. "Oman has the geography and the ambition to play a meaningful role in the next generation of satellite communications. This network is the first step in building that capability in the Sultanate, and in developing the Omani talent who will lead it," he stated. The initiative aligns with Oman Vision 2040 objectives to diversify the economy, develop advanced technology industries and strengthen national capabilities in strategically important sectors. It also complements the Sultanate of Oman's broader efforts to develop a domestic space ecosystem encompassing satellite infrastructure, Earth observation, specialized engineering services and technology-driven employment. Durri Space, established under Enjaaz Group, is pursuing capabilities in optical satellite communications, high-resolution Earth observation and potentially satellite assembly and integration within Oman. Cailabs, headquartered in Rennes, France, was founded in 2013 and specializes in advanced photonic technologies serving the space, telecommunications, industrial and defence sectors. Its optical ground station systems incorporate proprietary technology designed to mitigate atmospheric turbulence, a major challenge for laser communications. Jean-François Morizur, CEO of Cailabs, said: "Optical communications are moving from demonstrations to operational infrastructure. Durri Space's decision to build a three-station network shows the scale of that transition." Both companies also plan to support the development of Omani technical expertise, potentially strengthening the country's participation in the rapidly expanding global satellite communications industry.

Iraq Caps SIM Cards at Seven Per Person Under New Registration Rules

Iraq's telecoms regulator has approved rules that limit each citizen to seven regular SIM cards and seven data SIM cards, and require phone companies to check subscribers' identities electronically. Baligh Abu Kalal, head of the executive body of the Communications and Media Commission (CMC), announced the rules. The commission's board approved them in decision No. 116 on September 29. Under the new system, companies must read data from the chip and machine-readable zone of national ID cards and passports. They must also take a live photo of each subscriber's face and match it against official records. Abu Kalal said the aim was to stop SIM cards being registered with false details and to protect users from fraud and identity theft. Companies must store subscriber data in secured databases inside Baghdad. They will be legally responsible for any breach or leak of data under their control. Companies that break the rules face fines of up to 3 million dinars for each SIM card that violates them, Abu Kalal said. The rules also cover cards for visitors and foreign residents, transfers of number ownership and updates to subscriber details. The rules take effect after 90 days. Companies will have 720 days to re-register existing subscribers under the new system. The rules come as the CMC moves to suspend Korek Telecom, the Erbil-based operator, in a dispute over its license and debts. The commission has set November 1 as the final deadline for Korek users to move their accounts to Asiacell or Zain, Iraq's two other licensed mobile operators.

Saudi Cybersecurity Market Reaches US$4.34 Billion in 2025

Saudi Arabia's cybersecurity sector posted a robust growth with the value of the market reaching SR16.3 billion in 2025. The market recorded a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10.7 percent between 2023 and 2025. This was revealed in the report on "Key Economic Indicators in the Cybersecurity Sector 2026," published by the National Cybersecurity Authority (NCA). The report covered a number of indicators including the size of the cybersecurity market, the sector's contribution to GDP, key workforce metrics, and other metrics tracking the sector's performance and development in the Kingdom. The report revealed continued growth in government entities' spending on cybersecurity products and services amounted to approximately SR5.1 billion, accounting for 31percent of the market, while private-sector spending reached SR11.2 billion, representing 69 percent of the Kingdom's cybersecurity market. Meanwhile, the contribution of the cybersecurity sector to the Kingdom's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at current prices reached approximately SR20 billion in 2025, with a CAGR of 13.2 percent between 2023 and 2025. Of this total, cybersecurity product and service providers contributed SR9.7 billion directly, while indirect contributions amounted to SR10.3 billion. These contributions account for 0.42 percent of the Kingdom's total GDP and 0.71percent of the GDP of non-oil activities. Regarding the cybersecurity workforce, the report showed that the number of cybersecurity professionals in the Kingdom exceeded 22,000 in 2025, recording an approximate CAGR of 5.9 percent between 2023 and 2025, reflecting the expanding pool of specialized professionals in the sector. Women accounted for 33 percent of the Kingdom's cybersecurity workforce, exceeding the global average of approximately 22 percent. The report further examined the breakdown of the cybersecurity market by product and service categories. Expenditure on cybersecurity products reached SR8.3 billion, accounting for 51 percent of the market, while spending on cybersecurity services amounted to SR7.9 billion, representing 49 percent. Additionally, the report highlighted the most in-demand cybersecurity products and services, which included endpoint security and management, network security, cybersecurity operations solutions, cybersecurity system integration, and data security. The report highlighted that the growth of the cybersecurity market in the Kingdom is driven by efforts and initiatives aimed at enhancing competitiveness, encouraging investment, and fostering innovation in the cybersecurity sector. This includes integration between the public and private sectors to contribute to the development of the cybersecurity sector within the Kingdom. The report is a result of a comprehensive study, with inputs from stakeholders across the public and private sectors, academic institutions, and cybersecurity professionals. It leveraged a three-level classification of cybersecurity products and services across five main categories and 25 activities spanning over 100 cybersecurity products and services, in alignment with global methodologies and best practices. NCA is the national entity in charge of cybersecurity in Saudi Arabia and the national reference in all its affairs. It aims to enhance the Kingdom's cybersecurity posture to safeguard its vital interests, national security, critical infrastructure, priority sectors, and government services and activities. NCA undertakes several key responsibilities, including promoting the growth of the cybersecurity sector within the Kingdom and establishing policies, governance mechanisms, frameworks, standards, regulations, and guidelines related to cybersecurity. These efforts are designed to cultivate a resilient, secure, and trusted Saudi cyberspace that enables growth and prosperity.

Pakistan Fast-Tracks Satellite Broadband Rollout

Pakistan has entered the final stages of establishing its regulatory framework for Fixed Satellite Services, clearing the runway for Low Earth Orbit operators like Starlink to bridge deep connectivity divides across remote regions. Pakistan is standing on the precipice of a telecom transformation as the government moves into the final stages of codifying its comprehensive regulatory framework for Fixed Satellite Services (FSS) and Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite broadband. The policy breakthrough, confirmed by Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja, represents a decisive pivot in Pakistan's National Connectivity Plan. Under the direct fortnightly oversight of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the framework aims to decouple internet access from conventional terrestrial backbones and unlock satellite broadband across rugged frontiers where laying optical fiber remains economically and logistically unfeasible. Rather than relying solely on multi-million-dollar cellular towers, the forthcoming satellite framework will open regulatory pathways for international satellite mega-constellations—such as SpaceX's Starlink and Eutelsat OneWeb—subject to final cabinet ratification and institutional clearance from the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA). Crucially, the government is tackling the historic obstacle of satellite equipment costs through a novel, grassroots distribution model. Alongside enterprise and mobile backhaul licenses, regulators are drafting provisions that allow rural entrepreneurs to act as localized micro-Internet Service Providers (ISPs). Under this framework, a single satellite terminal can be legally redistributed via local Wi-Fi meshes, turning remote community heads into digital operators while dramatically lowering the per-household cost of high-speed connectivity. The strategic push arrives as Pakistan accelerates digital equity across the terrain of Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and interior Sindh. With satellite coverage eliminating physical geography as a barrier, the policy is poised to deliver low-latency connectivity to remote schools, basic health units, disaster-vulnerable valleys, and agrarian enterprises. As Islamabad prepares to officially ratify the satellite regime, Pakistan is repositioning satellite bandwidth not as an elite luxury, but as the foundational digital bedrock required to bring its most isolated citizens into the national digital economy.

On the Platform of the Global Space Connectivity & Sustainability Events 2026 CST and SSA Announce the Qualifying Companies in the Conclusion of the Global SpaceUp Competition

The Communications, Space and Technology Commission (CST) and the Saudi Space Agency (SSA), in partnership with the NeoSpace Group, announced the qualifying companies at the end of the SpaceUp global competition, held on the sidelines of the Global Space Connectivity & Sustainability Events 2026. The competition aims to promote space entrepreneurship, support companies specialized in space technology solutions, and encourage the adoption of space technology solutions that support various vital sectors. The competition attracted more than 690 participations from more than 50 countries, and contributed to localizing more than 40 companies by directly connecting entrepreneurs and companies with relevant stakeholders, localizing the technical product, and linking participants with stakeholders to implement the proposed technical product. SARSATX, from Saudi Arabia, qualified in the "Greening Saudi Arabia" track, run by the National Center for Vegetation Cover Development and Combating Desertification, to present solutions that help improve the speed and efficiency of invasive plant monitoring, support the protection of native plants and vegetation cover, reduce the need for field monitoring work, and enhance the sustainability of rangelands, water resources, and ecosystems. It also qualified in the "Diagnosing Date Palm Pest Infestations" track, run by the Waqaya Center, to present solutions that improve early detection of pests and diseases, enhance the efficiency of inspection and follow-up work, improve the monitoring of date palm health, and support the protection of agricultural wealth. In the "Monitoring the Impact of Infrastructure Development" track, run by the Riyadh Infrastructure Projects Center, Orbital Universe from Australia qualified to present solutions that improve the efficiency of infrastructure project planning, improve the estimation of traffic impact from closures, enhance road quality after work is completed, and support smoother traffic flow. The proposed solutions center on using the latest Earth observation technologies from space, combined with artificial intelligence, to address challenges related to infrastructure and agriculture, monitoring changes, supporting decision-making, and enabling future forecasting, reflecting a move toward employing space technologies and AI to develop practical, high-impact solutions. The announcement also included recognition of strategic partner NeoSpace Group (NSG), as well as recognition of the challenge tracks' success partners: the Ministry of Municipalities and Housing, the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture, the Quality of Life Program (one of Saudi Vision 2030's programs), the Riyadh Infrastructure Projects Center (RIPC), the National Center for Plant Pest and Animal Disease Prevention and Control (Waqaya Center), and the Saudi Green Initiative (MGI), all of which contributed to adopting innovative solutions and strengthening their application and enablement in the Kingdom, as well as encouraging research and innovation within it.



Qatar Expands Digital Access to Business and Investment Opportunities

Entrepreneurs and investors from Qatar and abroad can access market information, business data and location-based insights through the Qatar Business Map Platform, a digital initiative of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) designed to support market research and informed business decisions. The platform provides data and insights to help users explore commercial activities, analyze markets, identify suitable business locations and discover investment opportunities across the country, according to MoCI. Designed for those considering establishing a business or exploring investment opportunities, it brings together information to help users understand Qatar's commercial landscape. Available information includes the number of businesses and shops in specific areas, demographic composition and existing commercial activities, allowing entrepreneurs and investors to assess potential markets and identify locations aligned with their target audiences. The platform also maps the geographic distribution of businesses and commercial activities, highlighting areas of concentrated activity. According to an infographic shared by the Ministry, the Business Map Platform includes six services to help users study the market. AI Map Analysis allows users to explore and analyze data for a clearer understanding of market conditions, while Find the Best Location helps identify suitable locations based on business type and target audience. Monitor Business Closures enables users to track closures and monitor market changes and opportunities. Discover New Businesses helps users follow market developments and identify emerging commercial opportunities. Explore Business Types allows users to examine commercial activities by business type, sector and geographic location, helping them understand how different business categories are distributed across Qatar. The sixth service, Attract Foreign Investment, provides information to support the exploration of foreign investment and its distribution across the country. Together, these services provide a digital resource for entrepreneurs, investors and others conducting preliminary market research.

Jordan Mobile Subscriptions at 8.4 Million, 5G Services Grow 121.6%

Mobile telecommunications subscriptions in Jordan rose 2.4 percent year-on-year to 8.4 million in the second quarter of 2026, while fifth-generation (5G) subscriptions surged 121.6 percent, according to a report released by the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC). The statistics showed that mobile subscriptions increased from 8.2 million in the second quarter of 2025, and fixed broadband internet subscriptions rose to 830,000 from 819,000 during the same period. Mobile Telecommunications and 5G Services: Mobile broadband subscriptions totaled 8.4 million, up 2.4 percent from 8.2 million a year earlier. Prepaid subscriptions accounted for 61 percent of the total, while postpaid subscriptions represented 39 percent. Voice and data subscriptions made up 79 percent of mobile subscriptions, compared with 21 percent for data-only services. Mobile voice traffic reached approximately 7 billion minutes during the quarter, with domestic calls accounting for 97 percent and international calls for 3 percent. The number of text messages sent declined 47.6 percent to approximately 180 million, compared with 344 million in the second quarter of 2025. Mobile subscription penetration stood at 69 percent of Jordan's total population at the end of the second quarter, compared with 69.7 percent a year earlier. The penetration rate reached 106.2 percent among people aged over 15. Mobile broadband data consumption increased 29 percent to approximately 936 million gigabytes, up from 724 million gigabytes in the corresponding period of 2025. Meanwhile, 5G subscriptions reached 533,000, an increase of 23 percent from 433,000 in the first quarter of 2026. The figure marked a 121.6 percent year-on-year increase from 240,500 subscriptions in the second quarter of 2025. Fixed Broadband and Fiber-Optic Services: Fixed broadband internet subscriptions reached approximately 830,000 in the second quarter of 2026, compared with 819,000 a year earlier, representing growth of 1.3 percent. Household broadband penetration stood at 33 percent. Fiber-optic connections accounted for 81 percent of fixed broadband subscriptions, reaching 672,000 by the end of the quarter. Fixed broadband wireless access (FBWA) represented 14.4 percent of subscriptions, while digital subscriber line (xDSL) services accounted for 4.2 percent. The remaining subscriptions were distributed among Wi-Fi broadband and satellite communications services, with satellite internet subscriptions reaching approximately 1,200 by the end of the quarter. Fixed broadband data consumption rose 28.5 percent to approximately 1.8 billion gigabytes, compared with 1.4 billion gigabytes in the second quarter of 2025. Average monthly fixed internet consumption per subscription increased 23.8 percent to 749 gigabytes, up from 605 gigabytes a year earlier. Fixed-Line Telecommunications: Fixed voice subscriptions declined 1.2 percent to approximately 478,000 in the second quarter of 2026, compared with 484,000 in the corresponding period of 2025. Residential subscriptions accounted for 67 percent of the total, while business subscriptions represented 33 percent. Fixed-line voice traffic fell 17 percent to approximately 8.3 million minutes, down from 10 million minutes in the second quarter of 2025. The report also showed that leased-line service subscriptions increased 4.8 percent to 26,000 at the end of the second quarter of 2026, compared with 24,800 a year earlier.

Oman Hosts 4th Meeting of ITU Digital Innovation Board

The Sultanate of Oman is hosting the 4th meeting of the Digital Innovation Board, an affiliate of the "Innovation and Entrepreneurship Alliance for Digital Development" of the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) at the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). The three-day meeting kicked off in Muscat. Dr. Ali bin Amer Al Shidhani, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology for Communications and Information Technology, said that the Sultanate of Oman has embarked on a drive to develop its own digital economy roadmap. Speaking at the opening ceremony, Al Shidhani expressed the hope that the event would help generate new opportunities for digital innovation, establish new partnerships and pave the way for new projects of interest to all stakeholders in the digital innovation and digital economy sectors. For his part, Eng. Omar Hamdan Al Ismaili, CEO of the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA), said that hosting this meeting reflects the Sultanate of Oman's keenness to consolidate its presence in international dialogues with a view to the future of innovation and digital transformation. He added that the meeting also serves to showcase national experiences and initiatives and expand cooperation with international partners in field of developing innovation and entrepreneurship systems—a step forward in the realization of digital economy objectives and Oman Vision 2040. Al Ismaili highlighted the TRA's investment in telecommunications, digital infrastructure, emerging technologies and national capacity building. Meanwhile, Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT) at the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), said that the ITU lays emphasis on bridging the digital divide and accelerating digital transformation, with innovation serving as a cross-cutting theme across all related sectors.



DRA, Saudi Arabia and ITU Held a Space Communications & Satellite Regulation Masterclass

The Digital Regulations Academy (DRA) in partnership with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) held a Space Communications & Satellite Regulation Masterclass. It aims to strengthen the technical, regulatory, and policy capabilities of Member States and stakeholders in space communications, spectrum and orbital management, and Non-Terrestrial Networks (NTN), supporting the development of effective regulatory policies and sustainable, agile digital connectivity. The masterclass was attended by 44 participants from 19 countries and focused on equipping participants with the knowledge and skills to design and implement regulatory frameworks for space communications. It aims to enhance their understanding of satellite, spectrum, and orbital regulation, while building capabilities in licensing, market access, universal connectivity, security, and resilience. It also explored emerging trends in NTNs, including Low Earth Orbit (LEO), Medium Earth Orbit (MEO), and Geostationary Earth Orbit (GEO) satellites, as well as Direct-to-Device (D2D) connectivity, satellite-based Internet of Things (IoT), High-Altitude Platform Stations (HAPS), and sixth-generation (6G) networks. The masterclass covered six topics: the ITU Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R) role; Space radiocommunications basics; Space infrastructure and technologies; policies, regulations, licensing, market access, and competition; sustainability, resilience, interference management, and responsible use of space resources; and the space economy, innovation, and partnership models. It concluded with a practical regulatory exercise, during which participants provided recommendations and action plans to strengthen their readiness to address regulatory challenges related to satellites, spectrum, and orbital resources. The partnership between DRA and ITU serves as a cornerstone of its specialized programs and reflects Saudi Arabia's ongoing commitment to international cooperation in building capabilities in public policy and digital regulation. It also supports the Kingdom's efforts to share its expertise and regulatory experience with ITU Member States.

OFN Signs Dark Fiber Agreement with iQ Networks to Advance Iraq Transit Corridor FIG Landing Partnership with ITPC



Ooredoo Group's international connectivity arm, OFN, has reached a dark-fiber purchase deal with Iraqi infrastructure provider iQ Networks. Disclosed on October 7, the transaction gives OFN multiple fiber pairs on a cross-Iraq terrestrial path intended to continue north toward Türkiye and Europe. It is distinct from OFN's agreement with the Iraqi Telecommunications and Post Company covering the planned Fiber in Gulf (FIG) landing in Iraq, although the two projects are meant to operate together. FIG is designed as a high-capacity loop around seven Gulf markets, including Iraq, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Ooredoo places the system's planned ceiling at 720 Tbps over 24 fiber pairs. The landing agreement addresses the subsea system's arrival in Iraq; the iQ Networks deal supplies the overland segment needed to carry traffic onward through the country. That distinction makes the new signing a terrestrial-transit milestone rather than another announcement of the landing partnership. Commercially, the proposed corridor would give international wholesale customers another geographic option between Asian markets, the Gulf and Europe. Dark fiber allows a customer to install and control its own transmission equipment, making capacity easier to tailor as requirements grow. Ooredoo expects the route to be relevant to carriers and large digital-infrastructure users, including hyperscale, cloud, artificial-intelligence, content and data-center operators. The company has not described the agreement as an operational service launch. For Iraq, the route could turn the country's existing terrestrial network and location into a larger role in international data transit. For OFN, combining a Gulf subsea system with cross-country fiber may improve route diversity and create additional wholesale business from assets on both sides of the landing point. Those benefits remain prospective, but the signed purchase establishes a commercial basis for integrating iQ Networks' infrastructure with FIG once the necessary implementation steps are completed. The current milestone is the executed dark-fiber agreement, not construction completion or ready-for-service. Ooredoo says implementation will follow the parties' plan and still requires regulatory, governmental and any other applicable approvals. The release provides no dated construction start, approval deadline, service date or operational-launch target. The next confirmed step is therefore the approvals and implementation process itself, with the timetable and delivery sequence still undisclosed.

Global Telecom Operator VEON Raises Pakistan Investment Plan to US$1.5 Billion

VEON, a global digital operator that provides mobile connectivity and services, has increased its planned investment in Pakistan over the next three years to $1.5 billion from $1 billion, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said, signaling continued interest from international investors in the country. “This is a significant jump,” Aurangzeb said in a virtual address at SDGs Investment Fair 2026: Investing in Pakistan's Sustainable Future, organized by UNDP Pakistan in Karachi. The increase comes as Pakistan seeks to attract foreign investment and expand private-sector activity amid efforts to stabilize the economy. Earlier this year, VEON unveiled an ambitious $1 billion investment plan in a high-level meeting with the finance minister to expand connectivity, modernize infrastructure, and accelerate digital innovation across the country. Meanwhile, in his address, the finance minister also pointed to growing interest from foreign investors in Pakistan's privatization program, saying three Turkish companies had expressed interest in the first distribution company (DISCO) being offered for privatization. “We have the basic hygiene, which is being recognized at the local and international level.” Talking about the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX), the finance minister said that following 11 initial public offerings (IPOs) in the previous fiscal year, five IPOs were completed in the last quarter. “As you know, Khaadi is coming in with their IPO, and there are about 22 REITS, which are expected to list over the next couple of years,” said Aurangzeb. “It's again a data point because when someone is raising equity on the stock exchange, they're obviously looking to either invest, expand their local commercial operations or set up new units.”

Agentic AI Opens New Horizons for Innovation and the Development of Technological Solutions



The Chairman of the Board of the Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA), Kuwait Dr. Khaled Al-Zamel, emphasized the importance of the responsible adoption of agentic artificial intelligence technologies, which can support innovation, develop technological solutions that serve society, and enhance the capabilities of national talent. Dr. Al-Zamel made the remarks in his speech during the launch of The Agentic AI Experience 2026, organized by ETLAQ, focusing on practical applications of agentic AI, with the participation of Zain Kuwait and the Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity. He said that artificial intelligence has become capable of assisting with tasks that require multiple steps, starting with searching for and analyzing information and extending to using applications and completing specific functions. He explained that agentic AI is based on systems that are given a specific objective and provided with the necessary tools and permissions to carry out tasks, while their results remain subject to human oversight. He noted that major global companies announced tools last September that enable users to build applications and connect them to organizational data, creating broader opportunities for entrepreneurs and innovators to experiment with and develop their ideas and solutions. Dr. Al-Zamel said that CITRA's role in this field involves regulating information technology services, protecting users, and safeguarding their privacy and data. He pointed out that agentic AI may gain access to user information and perform actions on their behalf, making it essential to clearly define its permissions and establish responsibility for its actions. He added that CITRA contributes through data protection frameworks and AI ethics guidelines to promote the responsible adoption of these technologies, in coordination with relevant authorities. He expressed his hope of seeing local talent develop solutions that serve society and carry Kuwait's name to broader horizons of global competitiveness. For his part, U.S. Chargé d'Affaires to Kuwait Stephen Butler affirmed the U.S. Embassy's support for the program, describing it as a direct investment in the capabilities of Kuwaiti youth and the future of the national economy. Butler said that modern AI systems are no longer limited to answering questions; they are now capable of planning, making decisions, taking actions, and completing tasks. This is opening new areas for creativity in science, medicine, and various other sectors. He explained that the five-week program will equip Kuwaiti youth with the skills needed to understand and use these tools, describing it as an investment in the next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs who will help shape Kuwait's digital future. He also emphasized that the United States seeks to be a partner to Kuwait in technology, contributing to skills development and strengthening ties that support the growth of the digital economy and the objectives of New Kuwait Vision 2035. He highlighted the importance of investing in human capital to support economic diversification. Meanwhile, Zain Kuwait CEO Nawaf Al-Ghrabally said in his speech that AI technologies offer companies opportunities to increase efficiency, reduce costs, and streamline procedures, while stressing the need to preserve the human element and corporate culture as essential factors for success. Al-Ghrabally added that Zain views AI as a tool that supports people rather than replaces them. He called on participants to start with real-world challenges, develop solutions using the skills acquired through the program, and measure the value those solutions create. He emphasized the importance of data as the foundation of AI applications, explaining that organizations must protect their data, maintain data sovereignty, and prepare it for effective use. Zain's role, he said, is to provide the infrastructure, technology platforms, and data platforms required for this purpose. He also stressed the importance of observing ethical standards and defining clear boundaries for AI use, as well as considering its impact on organizational culture, emphasizing that values and ethical principles should come before the use of technological tools. For his part, Nida Al-Deihani, Director General of the Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity, said that the center, one of the centers of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, launched a strategy this year focused on supporting talent through technological capacity building and strengthening innovation pathways. Al-Deihani added that the program brings these two areas together by enabling participants to use AI tools while supporting promising young entrepreneurs and innovators. He explained that the center provides services including idea development, acceleration of existing projects, legal support, and prototype development. Meanwhile, Engineer Khaled Al-Zanki, the initiative's founder, said that agentic AI is not limited to chatbots but is based on a system of specialized agents that work together to achieve specific goals and tasks. Al-Zanki explained that the effectiveness of such systems depends on the skills and data used to train the agents. He noted that the program aims to empower people from non-technical backgrounds with the skills necessary to build and use these systems. He added that AI was also used in the program's application process to evaluate and classify applications, followed by personal interviews to select 40 participants to join the program.

UAE Cyber Security Council, SCC Partner to Create CoE

The UAE Cyber Security Council and SCC Middle East have announced plans to develop a new Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Cyber Resilience and Trusted Technology in the UAE. The Centre will provide an environment where government, enterprises, technology partners and specialists can explore emerging technologies, test real use cases, and understand how new solutions can be adopted securely and at scale. The initiative follows a three-phase approach:

Phase 1 – Building national capability: Executive learning, practical labs and specialist development across AI, cloud, data, cybersecurity and critical national infrastructure, helping organizations move from experimentation toward secure, practical adoption.

Phase 2 – Incubate innovation made in the UAE: A startup incubator program to develop and scale UAE cyber innovation, testing and validating locally developed technologies against real-world requirements.

Phase 3 – Creating pathways to international markets: Helping selected UAE-developed technologies connect with international customers, ecosystems and commercial opportunities.



Under the innovation center, both parties will lead integration and delivery, bringing together the expertise and resources required according to each program's needs. Dr. Mohamed Al Kuwaiti, Head of Cyber Security for the UAE Government said: "The UAE has set ambitious goals around artificial intelligence, cybersecurity and the development of a secure and resilient digital economy. The Centre of Excellence will create an environment for government, industry and technology partners to turn that ambition into practical capability." Daniel Valle, CEO, SCC Middle East, said: "There is no shortage of technology today. The harder question is how you bring the right technologies together, prove they work for the environment you are putting them into and then turn that into a real outcome. That is what we want this Centre to be about. Not a showroom, but somewhere we can bring customers, partners and specialists together around real problems, test ideas and build solutions that can actually be deployed. Our role at SCC is to connect those pieces. We start with what the customer is trying to achieve, bring together the right people, technology and expertise, and remain accountable for making it work."

CST Holds a Webinar Titled "Shaping Tomorrow's Radio Spectrum Ecosystem"

The Communications, Space and Technology Commission (CST) held an international webinar titled "Shaping Tomorrow's Radio Spectrum Ecosystem," bringing together a distinguished group of global experts in the field of radio spectrum management. The webinar aimed to highlight key trends and developments in spectrum management, explore the development and implementation of radio spectrum strategies, the role of research and development in the field, and share Saudi Arabia's approach to radio spectrum management at the national level. The webinar featured the participation of Eng. Mohammad Al-Janoobi, the Radio Spectrum Deputy Governor at CST; CST Deputy Governor for Strategy and Digitalization Mr. Naif Sheshah; Deputy to the BR Director at the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Ms. Diana Tomimura; Group Director, Radio Spectrum at Ofcom Mr. David Willis; Associate Administrator of the Office of Spectrum Management at the U.S. National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Mr. Charles Cooper; Radio Spectrum Advisory Group President at CST Dr. Sami Alhamidi and President and CEO of Federated Wireless Mr. Iyad Tarazi. The discussion was moderated by Mr. Faisal Hamady, Partner at Boston Consulting Group (BCG). It provided a comprehensive overview of the spectrum management landscape, covering global trends, the latest innovations in research and development, and the building and implementation of national strategies and the global dimension of spectrum management. The webinar also addressed the role of regulatory frameworks in accelerating digital transformation and stimulating economic growth, while highlighting the launch of Radio Spectrum Strategy of Saudi Arabia 2030. The webinar coincided with CST's launch of Radio Spectrum Strategy of Saudi Arabia 2030, building on its ongoing efforts to manage radio spectrum as a national resource and reflecting its continued commitment to regulating and optimizing its use.

UAE Cybersecurity Council and Veeam Tie Up

The UAE Cybersecurity Council and Veeam Software have announced a partnership to strengthen cyber resilience, support capacity building, and accelerate the adoption of trusted data and AI-ready security practices across the UAE. The partnership supports the Council's vision of advancing national cyber readiness, knowledge sharing, skills development and operational resilience. It establishes a framework for cooperation across cybersecurity training, technical exercises, resilience preparedness, research and development, and strategic stakeholder engagement. It supports initiatives focused on professional development, cyber awareness, knowledge transfer and practical capability development to help organizations prepare for, respond to and recover from cyber incidents. Areas of cooperation include joint workshops, training programs, technical working sessions, exercises and the exchange of expertise and best practices in information security and resilience. "The UAE remains committed to building a secure, resilient and future-ready digital ecosystem," said Dr. Mohamed Al Kuwaiti, Head of Cybersecurity for the UAE Government. "Our partnership with Veeam reflects the importance of trusted public-private collaboration in strengthening national cyber resilience, advancing cyber recovery capabilities and supporting the secure adoption of AI and digital technologies. Together, we will contribute to practical skills development, stronger organizational readiness and a more resilient digital future for the UAE." "The UAE continues to set the standard for cybersecurity leadership and innovation across the region," said Amin Hanafieh, Regional Director, Middle East & CIS at Veeam. "We are honored to establish a partnership with the UAE Cybersecurity Council to help strengthen cyber resilience, advance cybersecurity skills development and support organizations in building secure, recoverable and resilient digital environments. Together, we can help organizations strengthen their recovery readiness and establish the trusted foundation needed to embrace emerging technologies and AI with confidence." "Across the Middle East, organizations are accelerating digital transformation, cloud adoption and AI initiatives at unprecedented speed," said Mena Migally, Regional Vice President, for EMEA East at Veeam. "As AI adoption increases, cyber resilience and trusted data become foundational requirements for sustainable innovation. This partnership reflects our long-term commitment to supporting the UAE's cybersecurity ambitions while helping organizations build the governance, resilience and recovery capabilities required to innovate with confidence." As part of the Centre of Excellence, Veeam will contribute training and certification programs, executive briefings, technical workshops and recovery exercises to the Council's national capability development priorities. Specific areas include role-based learning pathways, simulation environments, practitioner enablement programs and initiatives to advance trusted, governed data practices across public and private sector organizations, drawing on Veeam's expertise in cyber recovery, data resilience and AI-ready security.



Qatar's CRA Seeks Public Feedback on Draft Universal Service Policy

Qatar's Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA) has opened a public consultation on a proposed 'Universal Service Policy' aimed at expanding access to essential telecommunications services across the country. A CRA statement said the proposed policy seeks to ensure that essential telecommunications services are available at permanent residences and permanent locations of business in Qatar, supporting digital inclusion and enabling consumers to participate fully in the digital society. The consultation gives stakeholders and interested parties an opportunity to submit comments and feedback on the draft policy. The consultation period will close on Oct. 20, 2026. The services covered would include broadband internet data services, as well as basic incoming voice calls and SMS messages, as defined by the policy. The draft sets out the scope of universal service, mechanisms for its provision and obligations for telecommunications service providers. It also establishes service quality requirements and regulatory oversight measures. The policy includes provisions to help eligible consumers access the services while considering the affordability needs of low-income users. It also sets minimum speed and service-quality requirements. The CRA said the draft policy forms part of its efforts to develop regulatory frameworks that support an advanced and sustainable telecommunications sector, in line with economic, social and technological developments and the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030.

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Answer enquiries, make bookings, take orders, and close sales. Multiple conversations all at the same time.



ONE AVATAR. DIFFERENT JOBS.

Avatar adapts to your business needs and becomes the digital assistant your customers love.

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AI waiter, reservations, orders & promotions

Healthcare
Patient enquiries, appointments & service information

Hotels
Bookings, concierge, requests & upselling

Airbnb & Rentals
Property search, availability & booking assistant

E-commerce
Personal shopper, product discovery & checkout

Automotive
Vehicle info, test drives & sales assistant

Travel
Travel planning, package & itinerary help

Property
Sales assistant, tenant support & maintenance help

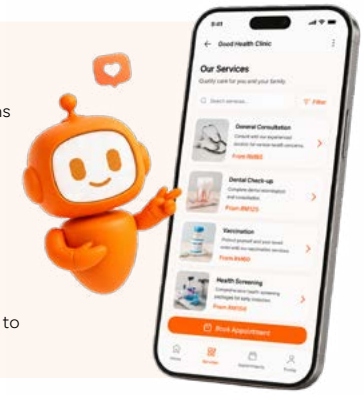
WHATSAPP + CATALOGUE + AVATAR

The perfect combination for conversation that convert.

WhatsApp
Where the conversation happens

Catalogue
What your business offers

Avatar
The intelligence that connects customers to the right outcome



READY TO GIVE YOUR BUSINESS AN AI WORKFORCE ?

- Increase sales opportunities
- Improve customer experience
- Reduce response time
- Automate repetitive tasks
- Grow your business

HOW AVATAR WORKS?

Customer Reaches Out
On WhatsApp or other channels

Avatar Understands
Understands intent and asks the right questions

Recommends & Guides
Provides options, answers questions, and improves the sales journey

Action Taken
Book, order, enquire or buy with ease

Human Handoff
Avatar connects with your team when needed

Business Outcomes

Never miss an enquiry	Capture & qualify more leads	Boost conversions and revenue	Save time and reduce workload

INTEGRATIONS THAT POWER YOUR BUSINESS

Messaging
WhatsApp · Telegram

CRM
HubSpot · ZOHO · pipedrive

Payments
PayPal · stripe · curlec by Razorpay

POS / Commerce
shopify · cuscapi · STOREHUB

SAMENA Council Observations

From Connectivity to Trust-Driven Customer Services: The Revenue Potential of Agentic AI in Telecoms

Telecom operators already bring digital services to market through established customer relationships, billing systems, distribution networks and enterprise sales channels. Agentic AI creates an opportunity to extend these activities into services that perform defined tasks for subscribers and businesses. The commercial question is which functions customers will pay for, and how operators can deliver them at a sustainable cost.

The opportunity is relevant to operators seeking additional revenue from their existing customer bases. It also requires choices about where they will participate: distributing third-party services, providing managed solutions, or working more closely with technology providers to develop offerings for particular customer segments. Each option places different demands on the operator and offers a different share of the resulting revenue.

> *An operator could offer a service that responds to inquiries, records requirements, qualifies sales leads, arranges appointments or follows up with suppliers. A small business would purchase the service to extend its capacity to respond and follow through without hiring staff for every routine interaction.*

Where operator revenue could come from
For consumers, operators could offer subscriptions for personal agents that handle selected administrative activities, organize communications or interact with participating service providers. Such services would need to demonstrate recurring usefulness to justify an additional monthly charge, particularly when customers already have access to general-purpose AI applications.

SMEs present a more immediate and measurable opportunity. An operator could offer a service that responds to inquiries, records requirements, qualifies sales leads, arranges appointments or follows up with suppliers. A small business would purchase the service to extend its capacity to respond and follow through without hiring staff for every routine interaction. In this market, the commercial case can be tested against completed tasks, response times, customer conversion and administrative effort saved.

Enterprise offerings may cover procurement, recruitment, customer engagement and defined internal workflows. Operators with existing enterprise and managed-services businesses could combine agent functions with configuration, integration, access controls and support. These services may support higher-value contracts, although they involve longer deployment cycles and greater responsibility for performance and security.

What operators can contribute
Operators offer more than a sales channel. Their established billing and subscription processes can make services easier to purchase and manage. Their relationships with SMEs and enterprises provide opportunities to identify practical uses, deliver support and expand accounts over time. In markets where they provide identity-related services, they may also contribute authentication capabilities, subject to relevant laws and technical arrangements.
These advantages are not automatic. Operators would need to establish the boundaries of the services they sell, the information and permissions agents may use, and the division of responsibility when a task is performed through external applications. Commercial terms must also account for technology charges, customer acquisition, support, integration and ongoing usage. A recurring subscription is attractive only when the value retained after these costs is worthwhile.

> *A business needs to know whether an agent genuinely represents a customer or supplier, what it has permission to do, and when human approval remains necessary. These requirements are especially important for services involving sensitive information, financial commitments and third-party systems.*

Identity and permission as service requirements
As agents move from producing information to contacting customers, engaging suppliers and carrying out transactions, their authority becomes a practical consideration. A business needs to know whether an agent genuinely represents a customer or supplier, what it has permission to do, and when human approval remains necessary. These requirements are especially important for services involving sensitive information, financial commitments and third-party systems.

For telecom operators, the issue is closely connected with the viability of customer-facing services. A reliable agent must do the assigned job, but it must also

operate within recognizable limits. Verified representation, revocable permissions, traceable activity and clear escalation procedures can therefore influence service design and customer acceptance. They should be evaluated alongside task performance and cost, rather than treated as a guarantee supplied by any single technology.

How partnership models may develop

One approach is straightforward distribution: an operator sells an externally developed service and manages the customer subscription. Another is a managed offering in which the operator configures and supports agents for business customers. More extensive partnerships may involve product integration, jointly defined service packages and commercial arrangements based on subscriptions, usage or revenue sharing.

Operators need not adopt the same model across all customer segments. Standardized consumer and SME packages may suit existing digital channels, while enterprise deployments could require more direct involvement. Before broad rollout, limited commercial trials should establish customer demand, service reliability, actual utilization, support costs and willingness to renew.

Zetrix AI and AVATAR: a trust technology example

Zetrix AI's AVATAR is one example of technology intended to support agents acting on behalf of identifiable individuals and organizations. Introduced in April 2026, the platform combines a personal knowledge model with verifiable identity, delegated authority and the ability to interact with external systems. Its publicly described applications include customer engagement, marketing, recruitment, procurement and interactions between agents.

Zetrix AI's AVATAR

Verified representation
An agent linked to an identifiable person or organization through blockchain-based identity and verifiable credentials.

Delegated authority
Tasks performed within the permissions assigned by the person or organization represented.

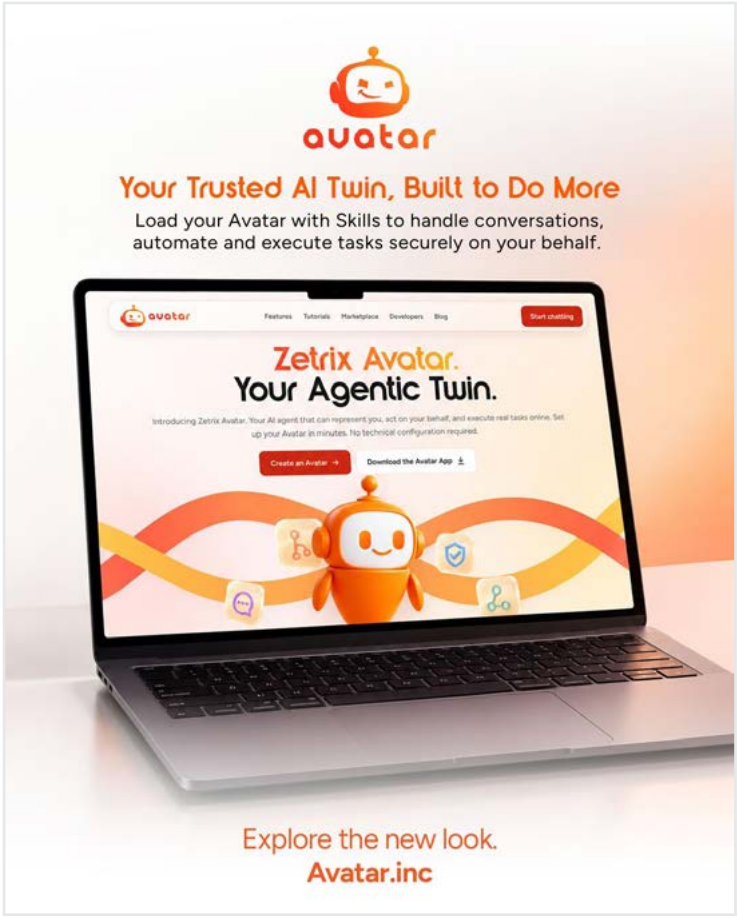
Personal knowledge model
An agent configured around supplied and verified information, with the aim of reflecting the user's knowledge and preferences.

Task execution
Functions intended to support conversations, customer engagement and selected business processes, including recruitment and procurement.

Agent-to-agent interaction
Direct exchanges between agents for information gathering, coordination and potentially commercial activities.

Developer participation
A proposed task store for specialized agents supplied by third-party developers.

Source: Zetrix AI's public Avatar product description and April 2026 launch materials. The features above describe stated design and intended functions, not independently verified deployment performance.



For an operator exploring these business opportunities, AVATAR illustrates the type of capability that could be assessed for use in consumer, SME and enterprise offerings. The fit would depend on integration with operator systems, permission management, performance, service costs and the commercial terms agreed with Zetrix. Public descriptions of the platform establish its intended capabilities, but do not by themselves demonstrate operator deployment scale or commercial results.

The operator decision

Agentic AI offers telecom operators a possible new category of paid digital services, but the opportunity will be established through customer demand and execution rather than technology announcements. Operators should concentrate first on functions that solve recognizable problems, select an appropriate partnership model, and measure whether the resulting service provides sustained value to both customer and provider.

Against the wider industry backdrop of ITU PP-26, the subject also illustrates the growing importance of practical cooperation around digital services and their supporting technologies. For operators, however, the immediate decisions are commercial and operational: what to offer, who will supply it, how responsibility will be managed and what revenue can realistically be retained.

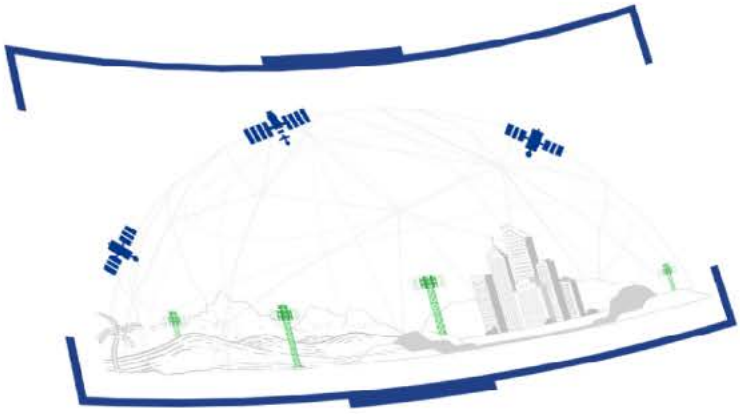
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April 2026



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SATELLITE DEVELOPMENTS

ST Engineering, MBSat to Build Next-Gen Connectivity

ST Engineering iDirect announced a strategic partnership with Mohammed Al Barwani Satellite Company (MBSat), part of Mohammed Al Barwani Group, to provide the ground system technology foundation for MBSat's next-generation satellite gateway and network operations across Oman and the wider Middle East region. Intuition will provide a flexible, software-defined foundation to support sovereign connectivity services, enabling efficient service deployment, dynamic resource management and scalable network operations. Intuition will deliver a turnkey ground segment solution that accelerates deployment, simplifies operations and gives MBSat the flexibility to scale services as demand grows. The software-defined platform enables dynamic resource management, service automation and seamless integration with existing and future operational systems. The solution also includes Ka-band gateway infrastructure, service provisioning and management capabilities, open API integration frameworks, training and full-lifecycle support. Together, these capabilities will help MBSat launch and operate services efficiently while adapting to evolving market requirements. The network will leverage capacity from MB Sat-1, a sovereign MicroGEO satellite, with planned service launch in 2027, to support flexible, scalable connectivity services across the region. The partnership reflects growing investment in sovereign communications infrastructure across the Middle East as operators seek greater control over service delivery, network expansion and long-term technology evolution. "This partnership represents an important milestone in our efforts to build an advanced satellite communications platform in Oman and the region," said Ammar Al Rawahi, General Manager, MBSat. "Through our collaboration with ST Engineering iDirect, we are establishing the technical infrastructure required to launch services efficiently, respond to evolving customer needs and expand into new markets, supporting the sustainable long-term growth of our business." "We are providing MBSat with a flexible, software-defined ground platform that integrates with its existing operational environment," said Sridhar Kuppanna, Chief Executive Officer, ST Engineering iDirect. "This enables more efficient service deployment and operations, with the flexibility to scale, introduce new capabilities and evolve as requirements change."



Eutelsat and Euroskypark Expand Satellite Connectivity for Critical Energy Infrastructure

Eutelsat announced an expansion of its capacity agreement with EuroSkyPark, a German specialist in secure communications for critical infrastructure, to support Amprion, one of Germany's largest electricity transmission system operators. The expansion extends satellite connectivity from Amprion's onshore substations across Germany to its North Sea offshore infrastructure, highlighting the demand for resilient communications across critical energy networks. EUTELSAT 10B's flexible, scalable GEO capacity enables EuroSkyPark to connect additional sites while providing redundancy independent of terrestrial infrastructure. Combining Eutelsat's satellite capacity with EuroSkyPark's expertise in dedicated communications networks, the solution supports essential links between energy assets and grid control operations. It builds on the companies' established relationship spanning GEO and OneWeb LEO connectivity, enabling EuroSkyPark to address both primary and backup communications needs. Pascal Fallet, Vice President for Connectivity, Europe commented: “Our expanded partnership with EuroSkyPark demonstrates the essential role of satellite in connecting and supporting critical infrastructure. For energy operators, an independent communications link provides vital redundancy when terrestrial connections are disrupted. EUTELSAT 10B brings the reliability, coverage and flexibility to support these requirements and scale as their networks develop." Thomas Maul, CEO of EuroSkyPark, added: “Energy operators need reliable communications tailored to the demands of their infrastructure. Our partnership with Eutelsat enables us to design and operate dedicated networks that meet these requirements, providing an independent connection between critical sites and control centers."

Spacex Eyes 80,000 Cell Sites

SpaceX is reportedly targeting at least 80,000 US cell sites for Starlink Mobile, signaling a costly push into terrestrial telecoms that could reshape competition with AT&T, T-Mobile and Verizon, even before it wins significant market share. On the heels of terrestrial spectrum deals and regulatory satellite approvals, plus big talk on its latest quarterly call about a "clear path" to "several hundred billion dollars" of telco revenue, SpaceX is reportedly negotiating with US tower companies to secure access to at least 80,000 cell sites to build out its terrestrial network for Starlink Mobile to become the fourth US mobile operator. It follows, and shows Starlink is becoming a conventional telco. Bloomberg quotes Crown Castle on its mid-week earnings call, when asked whether it is discussing leasing deals with SpaceX, or Amazon (Leo) or other satellite firms. "Assume we're talking to all parties," it responded. So that's a 'yes', then. American Tower declined to comment to Bloomberg; Vertical Bridge hadn't responded. Reuters, reporting on the Bloomberg story, puts 80,000 at half the 158,500 purpose-built cell towers operating in the US last year. TD Cowen has estimated that a nationwide terrestrial network could cost more than $80 billion, said Reuters. BNP Paribas has previously put the cost of a US build at $100 billion, based on 50,000-70,000 sites – rising to 120,000 with the C-band holdings, should SpaceX collect from the upper C-band auction next April. As reported in these pages. Bernstein Research puts the cost between $50 billion and $130 billion for a competitive US network. Such a figure – 80,000 sites, "minimum", say well-placed sources – would give Starlink a substantial terrestrial footprint, clearly. Crown Castle and American Tower each have around 40,000 sites in the US; Vertical Bridge has about 20,000. Interestingly, RCR columnist Vish Nandlall has done some math, based on the low-end $50 billion estimation: recovering that sum across 20 million customers over 10 years requires an ARPU of $21 per month. Nandlall writes: "That's a difficult starting point for a low-price competitor." But as everyone has noted, SpaceX might also do plenty of damage to the likes of AT&T, T-Mobile, and Verizon in the meantime. "SpaceX doesn't have to take many customers to damage the incumbents' economics… For every 100 million subscribers, a $1 reduction in the monthly bill removes $1.2 billion in annual revenue [from the market]."



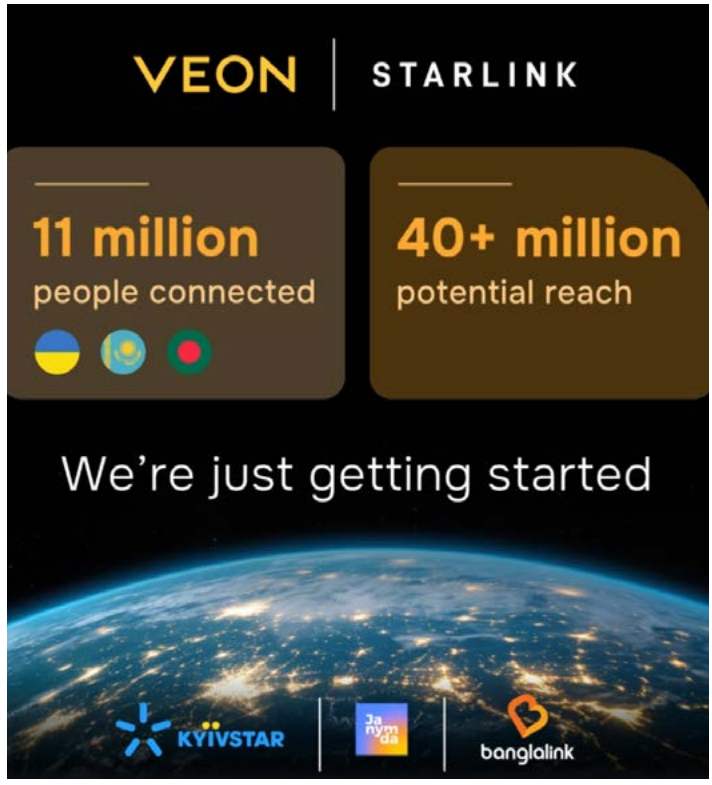
Starlink Launches Satellite Internet in Bosnia and Herzegovina

SpaceX's Starlink satellite internet service is now available to order in Bosnia and Herzegovina, offering residential broadband speeds ranging from 100 Mbps to more than 400 Mbps, with monthly packages starting at BAM 68 (€35). The launch introduces a satellite-based broadband option for households, businesses and mobile users, with self-installation equipment, portable connectivity plans and a 30-day trial. According to local news outlet Klix.ba, Starlink is offering several subscription categories, including residential internet, portable Roam packages and business services with different priority data allowances.mStarlink's residential packages in Bosnia and Herzegovina start at BAM 68 (€35) per month for speeds of 100 Mbps.mHigher-tier residential plans cost up to BAM 108 per month, offering advertised speeds exceeding 400 Mbps. The service uses Starlink's satellite network to provide broadband connectivity through a customer-installed terminal, allowing subscribers to access the internet without relying on a conventional fixed-line connection to their premises. This makes satellite broadband an alternative for households in locations where fiber or other terrestrial broadband infrastructure may be limited. However, the reported speeds are associated with advertised service packages and should not be interpreted as guaranteed performance at every location. Actual speeds may vary depending on network conditions, equipment placement and other factors. Alongside residential broadband, Starlink has introduced portable Roam subscriptions starting at BAM 88 per month. These packages are designed for customers who need connectivity beyond a single fixed residential location. The availability of Roam services extends Starlink's offering to users requiring greater flexibility in where they access satellite broadband. For business customers, monthly packages range from BAM 59 to BAM 572, depending on the priority data allowances included. Priority data packages are intended to address different commercial connectivity requirements, although the available announcement does not specify the individual data allocations, performance commitments or service-level terms. The range of subscriptions gives Starlink access to multiple customer segments, from households seeking an alternative broadband connection to businesses evaluating satellite connectivity for operational use.



VEON and Starlink Mobile Connect Over 11 Million Customers Through Satellite-To-Phone Service

VEON and Starlink Mobile have announced that more than 11 million unique VEON customers have connected to Starlink's direct-to-device satellite service at least once, enabling mobile communications in locations beyond the reach of conventional cellular networks. The service allows customers to send messages, share their location and access compatible satellite-ready applications using existing LTE-compatible smartphones. The milestone highlights the growing role of satellite-to-device technology in extending mobile connectivity beyond terrestrial network coverage. According to VEON and Starlink Mobile, more than 11 million unique VEON customers have successfully connected to the satellite service at least once. The figure represents customers who have accessed the service rather than the number of people continuously connected or actively using it on a daily basis. The technology is designed to provide connectivity in locations where conventional cellular signals are unavailable, allowing compatible smartphones to communicate through satellites. This approach extends the potential reach of mobile services without requiring users to depend exclusively on nearby terrestrial base stations. The announcement does not disclose the distribution of connected customers across VEON's operating markets, the total number of satellite sessions or the volume of messages transmitted. A central feature of the service is its compatibility with existing LTE-capable smartphones. VEON customers can use supported satellite-ready applications, share their location and send messages through applications and SMS when outside conventional cellular coverage. The ability to use existing devices is significant because it reduces the need for dedicated satellite phones or separate satellite communications hardware. Direct-to-device technology enables compatible mobile devices to communicate with satellites equipped to support cellular connectivity. For customers travelling through remote areas or operating in locations with limited terrestrial infrastructure, the service offers an additional communications option. However, the available announcement does not establish that all LTE smartphones are supported or that every application available over conventional mobile networks can operate through the satellite connection. It also does not specify supported data rates, device requirements or service pricing. The collaboration between VEON and Starlink Mobile illustrates how satellite connectivity can supplement conventional mobile infrastructure. Terrestrial networks remain the primary means of delivering mobile broadband, particularly in populated areas where base stations provide extensive capacity and coverage. Satellite-to-device services address a different requirement by extending basic connectivity into locations where cellular networks cannot provide a usable signal. This complementary model can be relevant to

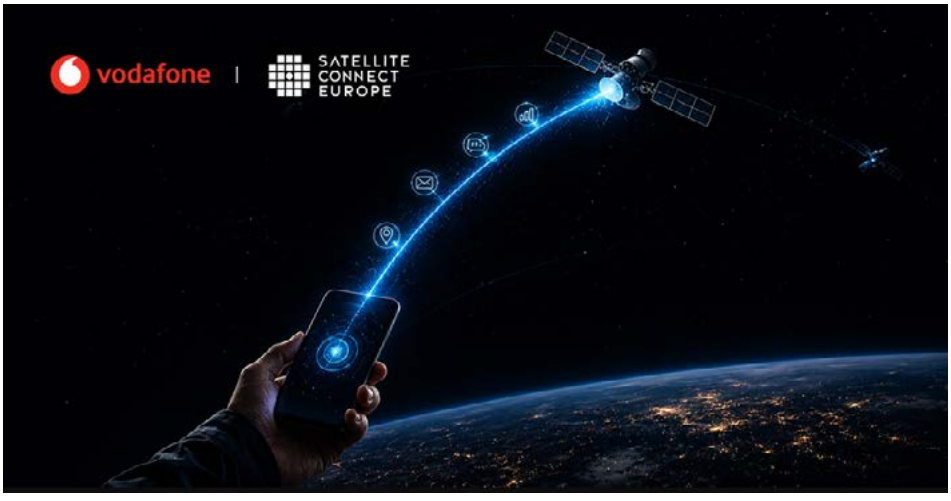


remote communities, travelers and users who need to communicate while outside established network coverage. Location sharing and messaging are particularly useful capabilities because they can support basic communications when conventional mobile services are unavailable. The announcement does not indicate that the service provides a full replacement for terrestrial mobile broadband or supports unrestricted internet access. The reported milestone provides an indication of the number of individual customers who have successfully accessed the satellite service. With more than 11 million unique customers having connected at least once, the deployment demonstrates the reach of satellite-to-device functionality within VEON's participating customer base. The achievement is distinct from conventional mobile subscriber growth because it measures access to an additional connectivity layer rather than new mobile subscriptions. It also differs from continuous service usage, since the reported figure includes customers who may have connected only once. The announcement does not provide comparative adoption figures, a measurement period or a breakdown of usage by country. These details would help establish how frequently customers depend on satellite connectivity and where the service is delivering the greatest practical benefit.

Viasat Expands JetXP Capacity Across the United States for Business Aviation

Viasat, a global leader in satellite communications, announced that its JetXP in-flight connectivity solution now delivers five times more capacity in the United States for business aviation customers using Honeywell Aerospace's JetWave terminals, unlocking an even greater experience across the world's largest private jet market. This delivers a more consistent, reliable and high-performance service for data-hungry applications, such as HD video conferencing, content streaming, AI tools and bulk file transfers, used simultaneously on multiple devices. The latest enhancement is delivered through a software update that further optimizes network management globally. To start benefiting from the additional US capacity, existing JetXP customers should contact their service provider – Collins Aerospace, Gogo, or Honeywell Aerospace – to confirm eligibility and arrange the update. Viasat will showcase JetXP, its most advanced business aviation in-flight connectivity solution, at the National Business Aviation Association Business Aviation Convention and Exhibition (NBAA-BACE) in Las Vegas, October 20-22, 2026. Activated on more than 2,100 aircraft worldwide, JetXP brings together the legacy Jet ConneX and Viasat Ka services under one unified brand, unleashing the full power of Viasat's Ka-band network. It includes extensive regulatory approvals, including strategic markets such as India and China, and concierge customer service and 24/7 support through Viasat's distribution partners. Representatives will be on hand at NBAA-BACE to discuss the capacity boost and the recent introduction of simplified service plans and suggested retail pricing. Claudio D'Amico, Vice President of OEMs, Partners and Fleets, Business Aviation at Viasat said. Our customers want to do more in the air, whether that's a board call, streaming for the family, or sending large files, all at the same time and on every device. We recognize that capacity demand continues to increase and Viasat is focused on supporting our long-standing customers with the consistent experience they expect. We'll keep investing in JetXP, so it stays one step ahead of what they need.

Satellite Broadband Connections Surge Tenfold in Spain



Satellite broadband connections in Spain have increased almost tenfold in three years, driven by the arrival of low Earth orbit services led by Elon Musk's Starlink. A new report from Spain's National Commission on Markets and Competition (CNMC) says the number of satellite internet connections increased from just over 10,000 at the end of 2022 to almost 100,000 at the end of 2025. Despite the rapid increase, satellite represents only around 0.5% of Spain's fixed broadband connections, reflecting the country's extensive fiber-to-the-home coverage. However, the CNMC says satellite has an important role in providing connectivity in rural and remote locations. The growth has coincided with the emergence of low Earth orbit (LEO) constellations. Their substantially lower altitude compared with traditional geostationary satellites reduces latency and has helped improve the performance of satellite broadband. According to the regulator, almost 90% of satellite connections now provide speeds between 100 and 300 Mbps. Starlink, operated by SpaceX, has been the principal driver of recent growth. The CNMC also identifies Eutelsat's OneWeb, Amazon LEO, Viasat, Hispasat and Iridium among companies operating or planning satellite services in Spain. The regulator says the market is also developing beyond residential broadband. Satellite networks are increasingly being used for maritime and aeronautical communications, enterprise connectivity, IoT, government applications and emergency services. One emerging area is direct-to-device (D2D) connectivity, in which conventional mobile devices communicate directly with satellites when terrestrial mobile coverage is unavailable. The technology received a high-profile demonstration in Spain during wildfires affecting parts of Madrid, Ávila and Toledo in July. Following emergency authorization from the Secretary of State for Telecommunications and Digital Infrastructures, a satellite-to-mobile service involving Starlink, Orange and Telefónica was used for the first time in the country. The CNMC expects satellite communications to continue growing as LEO constellations expand and satellite networks become more closely integrated with 5G and eventually 6G networks. However, it does not expect satellite to displace Spain's terrestrial broadband infrastructure. Instead, the regulator sees the technology principally as a complement to fiber and mobile networks, providing coverage and resilience in locations where terrestrial infrastructure is unavailable or inadequate.

Indosat And F5 Launch AI Services Suite for Southeast Asian Enterprises



Indonesian telco Indosat Ooredoo Hutchison said that it has launched its Indosat Intelligence Suite in partnership with F5 to give enterprises across Southeast Asia expanded access to AI models. The suite builds on Indosat's full-stack AI ecosystem in Indonesia, which includes energy, data centers, compute, connectivity, and AI models. The partnership with F5 extends that foundation into an enterprise-ready platform that connects AI infrastructure and models with businesses across the region. Indosat said the new Intelligence Suite brings over 300 open and closed AI models and infrastructure capabilities together through a single interface, giving businesses greater visibility and control over how they use AI. The suite is designed to help organizations select and deploy the intelligence suited to their specific workloads in a trusted and governed environment, said François Locoh-Donou, chairman, president and CEO at F5. "Businesses can access, route, measure and manage AI consumption across multiple models without having to build and manage every underlying layer themselves," he said in a statement. For organizations with data residency requirements, Sahabat-AI (Indosat's localized LLM that supports multiple Indonesian languages) and Indosat-hosted tiers can process workloads in-market, while policies determine which workloads may be routed to global models. Requests can also be authenticated, metered and logged through an auditable ledger. The Intelligence Suite incorporates the F5 AI Security platform capabilities to support protection against OWASP Top 10 LLM threats, data leakage and other emerging AI-specific threats. Indosat said it's launching the suite in response to enterprises across Southeast Asia that are increasingly moving beyond the AI experimentation stage. According to a 2026 study by McKinsey, the Singapore Economic Development Board, and Tech in Asia, 81% of companies across six Southeast Asian markets have moved beyond AI experimentation into piloting or scaling. As AI adoption advances, businesses face a new challenge: deploying and managing AI across different workloads while balancing performance, cost, security, and governance, said Indosat president director and CEO Vikram Sinha. "As AI moves from experimentation into everyday business, companies need more than access to models – they need a trusted way to put intelligence into production," he said in a statement. "With the full stack AI as the foundation, Indosat Intelligence Suite will become an intelligence factory for businesses, helping businesses access the right intelligence for their needs and scale it securely across the region."

SpaceX Moves to Acquire Nationwide Low-Band Spectrum for Starlink Mobile

SpaceX announced a deal to acquire nationwide, low-band spectrum from Grain Management to improve service for Starlink Mobile and enable the service to operate indoors. SpaceX and Grain Management said SpaceX will acquire 14 megahertz of paired spectrum in the 800 MHz band. The deal is subject to FCC approval. Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed. This comes just after the FCC approved SpaceX to deploy 15,000 satellites for its Starlink Mobile direct-to-device constellation. SpaceX explained how this spectrum will complement the service in a statement: "While Starlink Mobile's global 2 GHz mid-band spectrum will provide high-bandwidth capacity in the United States, this new low-band spectrum will provide a coverage layer that ensures Starlink Mobile's signal penetrates through obstacles, such as walls, and can provide service to customers' devices even when they are in buildings," SpaceX said. Grain is a private investment firm that acquired the block of spectrum from T-Mobile in a deal announced in early 2025 and just completed in August for $2.9 billion in cash and additional spectrum licenses. The spectrum's "propagation characteristics make it well-suited for a broad range of mission-critical applications, including private wireless networks



for electric utilities and other critical infrastructure operators, enterprise communications, and next-generation direct-to-device (D2D) satellite services," Grain said in a recent statement. SpaceX also stated that most existing mobile devices already support this spectrum band. With this spectrum and the second-generation of Starlink Mobile satellites, SpaceX said Starlink Mobile will be "the first network operator to deploy both satellite and terrestrial spectrum," and the network will provide "reliable service indoors, outdoors, in cellular dead zones, and everywhere in between." Starlink Mobile, the direct-to-device constellation, is separate from SpaceX's broadband internet constellation.

Starlink Opens Beta for Community Internet Hosts

SpaceX has opened a waitlist for its Starlink Community Host Beta Program, inviting applicants to propose locations where a single Starlink kit could connect several users. Hosts would help bring connectivity to their communities while earning additional income, according to the company's application page. The program, called Starlink Communities, is designed for situations where individual household subscriptions may not be practical or affordable. Potential host sites could include apartment buildings, campgrounds, rural communities, venues and small businesses. A single Starlink dish and router would provide the connection, while nearby users could purchase access for an hour, a day, a week or a month. Shorter passes would connect one device, while the monthly option would support up to four devices, according to reporting on the new program. Starlink says it would manage payments, user access and connectivity. Hosts would be responsible for choosing and setting up a site, supplying power and performing basic upkeep. The company's application asks prospective hosts about their networking experience, proposed location, expected number of monthly users and the price they believe customers would pay for each type of pass. The initiative could create a new model for satellite internet access in rural or underserved areas, allowing residents or visitors to buy service only when they need it rather than signing up for a full monthly household plan. However, some details remain unclear. Starlink has not publicly announced a launch date, the countries where the beta will initially operate, pass prices or the share of revenue hosts would receive from each paid connection. Applying through the form does not guarantee acceptance into the beta. For now, the "Starlink Community Beta Interest Form" appears to be accepting applications from dozens of countries, including the U.S., Mexico, and Canada, where Starlink is already available.



Es'hailSat Showcases Sovereign Capabilities at CABSAT 2026



The Qatar Satellite Company, is exhibiting at the annual CABSAT SAT Expo exhibition in Dubai the premier platform for the communications, broadcast, and satellite technology industry. Es'hailSat has been strengthening its position as a cornerstone in regional connectivity digital media, and satellite sectors across the Middle East, and North Africa (MENA) region while preparing to expand beyond into Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) with its upcoming Es'hail-3 satellite program. This year at CABSAT SAT Expo, the company is demonstrating its end-to-end sovereign satellite telecommunications capabilities by spotlighting the Tier-4 certified Teleport in Doha, advanced Playout and Media Services, and exceptional uptake of it co-located Es'hail-1 and Es'hail-2 satellites at the prime 25.5°/26° East video hotspot. Mr. Ali Al Kuwari, President and CEO of Es'hailSat, commented: "CABSAT has always been a cornerstone regional event for us and an invaluable platform to connect with our partners, prospective clients, and technology innovators. We are thrilled to demonstrate how our Tier-4 Certified Teleport and advanced Playout and Media Services seamlessly integrate with our high-powered satellites to deliver exceptional value across the broadcast, telecommunications, and enterprise sectors. This year, we are especially proud to spotlight our mission-critical solutions, purpose-built to guarantee sovereign communications and ensure rapid disaster recovery for our government and maritime partners. This is in addition to our new Es'hail-3 satellite program which was announced earlier this year and will take us closer to our global vision." Es'hailSat provides satellite, broadcast, telecom, teleport and managed services from Doha, Qatar and brings to this relationship more than 16 years of being in the business of catering to broadcasters, telecommunication companies, enterprises, mobility applications and governments across the Middle East, and North Africa. Es'hailSat's infrastructure, including two satellites at 25.5°/26° East together with our 50,000 sqm Tier-4 certified teleport facility, provides reliable and robust connectivity services.

KSAT, Xoople Partner on Ground Network for Satellite Constellation

Kongsberg Satellite Services (KSAT) and Xoople have entered into a partnership under which Xoople has selected KSATlite, KSAT's fully automated Ground Segment-as-a-Service, to support the deployment and operation of its pioneering constellation of satellites. The Norwegian Minister of Trade and Industry, Cecilie Myrseth was present during the ceremony in Madrid where KSAT CCO Arild Jose Jensen and XOOPLE CEO Fabrizio Pirondini signed the partnership agreement. KSATlite was launched in 2016 to give satellite operators standardized, scalable access to the ground. Ten years on, it supports missions ranging from single satellites to large constellations with an average contact success rate above 99.8%. Xoople is building Earth's System of Record™, a continuously updated representation of physical change across the planet. By combining trusted Earth data, scalable cloud infrastructure and advanced AI, Xoople's end-to-end system creates a foundation for organizations to understand, monitor and respond to change across the natural and built environment. The platform is designed to integrate seamlessly into government and enterprise systems, workflows and AI applications, transforming complex geospatial data into operational intelligence at global scale. Through the partnership, Xoople will use the global KSATlite network, including new sites, to support the downlink of large volumes of Earth observation data and enable rapid delivery of information from space to users on the ground. The collaboration will also drive the continued development of the KSATlite service. To support the requirements of Xoople's program, KSAT is adding new ground station sites and developing two key capabilities together with



Xoople: faster delivery of data from the ground station to the cloud, and new service endpoints that let operators further automate their own operations. These capabilities will become part of the standard KSATlite service and benefit future customers across the network. The partnership represents an important milestone for both organizations, bringing together Xoople's ambition to build Earth's System of Record ™with KSAT's global ground segment expertise. Together, they are helping establish the infrastructure needed to transform Earth data into a trusted enterprise asset, powering operational intelligence, automation and AI-driven decision-making around the world. For KSAT, the partnership extends both the reach and the capabilities of the KSATlite network, strengthening its ability to support high-volume Earth observation missions in the years ahead.

GomSpace Launches GOMX-5 to Demo Next-Gen Satellite Communications Technologies

GomSpace announced the upcoming launch of GOMX-5, an ESA-supported 8U CubeSat technology demonstration mission designed to validate advanced satellite communications technologies, operational concepts and mission procedures in orbit. Built on GomSpace's modular platform, GOMX-5 showcases the company's ability to deliver complete mission solutions across the full mission lifecycle, from spacecraft design and integration to in-orbit operations. The mission demonstrates technologies with potential for future customer programs while generating valuable flight heritage, operational experience, and performance data that support the development of next-generation satellite and communications systems. The mission further supports sustainable space operations by demonstrating key capabilities for collision avoidance and responsible end-of-life disposal, helping advance ESA's Zero Debris initiative. Morten Bisgaard, GomSpace Co-Founder and Chief Technology Officer said. GOMX-5 is more than a technology demonstration mission. It builds on the legacy of pioneering missions such as GOMX-4A and GOMX-4B launched in 2018, where GomSpace demonstrated how small satellites could deliver valuable operational services, including maritime and air traffic surveillance across the Arctic and over Greenland. With GOMX-5, we are taking the next step by validating advanced communications and sensing technologies that will enable future satellite systems and customer missions.



Sateliot Successfully Launches Five New Satellites into Its 5G NTN IoT Constellation

During the international Industry Space Days 2026 event at the European Space Agency's ESTEC facility in Noordwijk, the Netherlands, the Latvian Mobile Telephone (LMT) Group and the globally leading space consultancy Novaspace signed a cooperation agreement on the development of a concept for telecommunications innovation platform for Latvia to link the national connectivity sector with the international satellite industry. The initiative follows the successful ESA 5G/6G Non-Terrestrial Network Hub model and will explore Latvia's potential role within this network. Signing the agreement marks a pivotal step toward creating a hub for developing an internationally competitive telecommunications sector in Latvia. The hub will strategically bring LMT into the space industry and impact the emergence of a wider Latvia's space innovation ecosystem in next-generation satellite technologies, products, and services tailored to commercial applications, resilient critical infrastructure, security, digitalization and green transition. Essentially, the hub will attract national and international cooperation, funding and talent. The next generation of mobile communications is closely linked to the rapid growth of the space economy globally. The space infrastructure is already gradually enhancing terrestrial networks, and the 6G era of telecommunications will seamlessly link terrestrial and non-terrestrial networks. The rationale for such development is efficient and resilient connectivity, especially essential in scenarios involving severe weather, power outages or physical infrastructure disruptions. This initiative builds upon LMT Group's strategic expansion of its track record in connectivity innovation. LMT is already collaborating with ESA and satellite operator Sateliot to pioneer energy efficient dual-mode satellite Internet of Things (IoT) connectivity, enabled by Latvia's associate



membership in ESA. The hardware and software to be developed will cover the current market gap in devices that can seamlessly switch between terrestrial and satellite networks. The planned 5G/6G NTN hub is a natural next step in scaling LMT's technological footprint within Europe's space ecosystem. "LMT has long evolved beyond traditional mobile operations into a full-scale technology innovator. As we prepare for the 6G era, integrating satellite communications into our infrastructure and service portfolio is essential. Our goal is to ensure resilient, secure communications for new commercial services and for critical infrastructure under any circumstances, to produce exportable space technologies and develop services that contribute to digitalization and green transition. Partnering with Novaspace will allow us to define Latvia's unique value proposition within the European space ecosystem and expand local high-tech expertise," Ingmārs Pūķis, VP & Member of the Management Board at LMT. The agreement was signed under the EU-funded FIERCE Ecosystem Building Program, in which LMT participates as an innovation intermediary and Novaspace provides strategic support and space-market expertise. Through the program, Novaspace will work directly with LMT to define and validate the concept, guiding LMT towards a Latvian 5G/6G terrestrial and non-terrestrial network (TN/NTN) hub. The joint effort will focus on identifying Latvia's distinctive regional value proposition and connecting the future hub with the wider European 5G/6G and NTN ecosystem, rather than replicating existing European initiatives. "At Novaspace, we are delighted to partner with LMT Group through the FIERCE project. The strength of Europe's space sector depends on active participation across all Member States, and Latvia is well positioned both to benefit from and contribute to Europe's growing space economy. Flagship European programs such as Copernicus, Galileo, EGNOS and IRIS² are creating new opportunities for innovation, resilient connectivity and commercial growth. Drawing on Novaspace's global market expertise, we look forward to supporting LMT in defining a distinctive role for Latvia within Europe's 5G/6G and non-terrestrial network ecosystem," Gabrielle Brophy, Senior Manager at Novaspace. The planned hub will be developed together with research and industry partners in the region. This collaborative framework will help retain and grow specialized engineering and scientific competencies in the Baltic region.

ICEYE and Nokia Partner to Launch Secure and Sovereign Satellite Communications for Governments and Defense Customers

ICEYE, the European leader in sovereign intelligence from space, and Nokia, a global leader in connectivity infrastructure, announced a partnership to develop secure, sovereign and high-performance broadband low Earth orbit (LEO) satellite communications systems for governments, supporting missions from defense and border security to emergency services and disaster response. Built on trusted European technology, the jointly developed satellite communications systems will give nations ownership and control of the satellites, ground segment and terminals. The first communications satellites are expected to be launched in 2028. When terrestrial networks are disrupted or compromised, defense forces, first responders and civil authorities risk losing access to the information and command systems they depend on. Governments therefore need resilient communications infrastructure that remains available under the most demanding conditions, and that they can fully own and control. The jointly developed sovereign systems will deliver targeted, high-throughput, low-latency connectivity over priority mission areas. Designed to complement military and commercial networks rather than replace them, it will add reach, resilience and capacity, helping governments and defense organizations maintain critical connections wherever operations take place. The partnership brings together ICEYE's track record delivering sovereign satellite missions with Nokia's extensive experience in secure networking technologies and growing defense portfolio. Together, the companies will integrate satellites, ground infrastructure and ruggedized end-user terminals to extend ICEYE's sovereign intelligence from space business model to satellite communications. Together with Nokia, we are building on our proven space intelligence expertise and delivering sovereign, high-performance satellite communications. Nations must be able to fully own and control their communications, without dependency on a foreign commercial operator's terms of service. We delivered Poland its own radar satellite system in under a year. Partnering with Nokia lets us move at a similar speed for satellite communications, on the timelines nations need," said Rafal Modrzewski, CEO and Co-founder of ICEYE. Sovereign operations depend on the ability to sense, decide and act in real time. Physical AI makes that possible, but only with secure, resilient connectivity across land, sea, air and space. By bringing together Nokia's trusted networks with ICEYE's proven sovereign space capabilities, we will deliver a satellite communications capability—complementing existing terrestrial networks, and giving nations the situational awareness, connectivity, and control they need to operate with confidence in contested environments across all domains said Justin Hotard, President and CEO of Nokia. Modrzewski and Hotard will take the stage at the Helsinki Security Forum on October 2 for a session titled "How to Salvage Europe's Technological Sovereignty."

Vodacom Lesotho Launches Starlink-Powered Satellite internet for Businesses

Vodacom Lesotho has launched an Enterprise Satellite Connectivity Solution powered by Starlink's Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite technology, aiming to strengthen connectivity resilience for businesses and public institutions across the country. The service was launched in Maseru and is designed for enterprises and organizations operating in remote, underserved or challenging environments. It offers primary satellite connectivity, backup internet access and an "Unbreakable Internet" model that combines satellite and terrestrial networks to help maintain service continuity during disruptions. By integrating satellite broadband with existing connectivity infrastructure, Vodacom Lesotho aims to support organizations across sectors including financial services, agriculture, healthcare, logistics, education, tourism and public service delivery. Vodacom Lesotho Chief Executive Officer Mohale Ralebitso said the country's geography requires practical and resilient connectivity solutions capable of reaching people and organizations wherever they operate. Navindran Naidoo, Executive Head of Department for Non-Terrestrial Networks at Vodacom Group, said the partnership with Starlink combines satellite technology with Vodacom's local support, installation expertise and managed-service capabilities to help organizations maintain connectivity during disruptions. Meanwhile, Nthati Moorosi, Lesotho's Minister of Information, Communications, Science, Technology and Innovation, described the launch as a contribution to the country's development agenda and its efforts to build a connected, resilient, productive and inclusive digital society. The launch expands Vodacom Lesotho's enterprise connectivity offerings by adding satellite broadband as another option for organizations seeking reliable internet access, particularly in areas where terrestrial infrastructure may be limited or vulnerable to disruption.



World Internet Conference

Interoperability Among AI Agents

WIC 2026 Highlights Open-Source AI, Intelligent Systems and International Cooperation

The 2026 World Internet Conference (WIC) Wuzhen Summit, held from November 2 to 5 in Wuzhen, Zhejiang Province, China, brought together government officials, representatives of international organizations, technology executives, researchers, and developers to address developments in the internet, artificial intelligence, digital innovation, security governance, and international cooperation.



> *Open-source AI and international cooperation on AI development and governance were central to the Summit's agenda. With its theme emphasizing openness, inclusiveness, joint contribution, and shared benefits in building a community with a shared future in cyberspace, Wuzhen 2026 focused on wider participation in technological development, access to AI resources, common standards, and cooperation among countries and industries.*

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A dedicated dialogue at the main forum was designed to bring together executives from leading technology companies and developers of open-source large models to examine the development of a global open-source AI ecosystem. The discussion was particularly relevant to efforts to make AI models, development tools, research, and technical resources more widely available, enabling more countries, enterprises, researchers, and developers to participate in AI development and its applications.



This emphasis was consistent with China's broader efforts to encourage international cooperation in artificial intelligence. An action plan issued at the World Artificial Intelligence Conference in Shanghai in July 2026 called for sharing open-source ecosystems, jointly developing rules and standards, and strengthening cooperation on AI safety governance. These priorities provided additional context for Wuzhen's discussions on technological openness, international participation, and the governance of AI development.

The Summit's 27 sub-forums covered subjects including trust, connectivity, and interoperability among AI agents, robotics, embodied AI, and spatiotemporal intelligence. These areas reflected the increasing capabilities of intelligent

systems to exchange information, interact with other systems, and perform tasks across digital and physical environments.

The emphasis on interoperability among AI agents was particularly relevant to the future development of intelligent services. As AI systems become capable of more independent interaction and execution, their ability to communicate across platforms, exchange information securely, and work with technologies developed by different providers becomes increasingly important. These developments raise practical questions concerning technical compatibility, common standards, trusted interaction, security, and accountability.

> *International cooperation on cyberspace governance also formed part of the agenda, including discussions under China's Global Governance Initiative. The program addressed AI safety, digital security, inclusive development, and international approaches to governance alongside technological innovation.*

For the wider telecommunications and ICT industry, these considerations have implications for the development of networks, connected devices, digital platforms, and services that increasingly incorporate AI capabilities. Reliable connectivity and interoperability are important requirements for the operation of intelligent systems across different technical environments, while common standards and security practices can support their wider adoption.

International cooperation on cyberspace governance also formed part of the agenda, including discussions under China's Global Governance Initiative. The program addressed AI safety, digital security, inclusive development, and international approaches to governance alongside technological innovation. These issues reflected continuing international concerns over how AI technologies should be developed, deployed, and governed as their capabilities and applications expand. Beyond the main forum and thematic discussions, Wuzhen 2026 featured the WIC Awards for Pioneering Science and Technology, the WIC Distinguished Contribution Award, the Light of Internet Expo, and presentations of outstanding cases of jointly building a community with a shared future in cyberspace. These activities complemented the conference program through recognition of technological achievements, demonstrations of innovation, and examples of international cooperation.

First held in 2014, the Wuzhen Summit has served as a recurring international forum for discussion of the internet's development and governance. The establishment of the World Internet Conference as an international organization headquartered in Beijing in 2022 further developed its institutional role. The 2026 Summit was organized by the WIC, with the Zhejiang provincial government responsible for local arrangements.

Wuzhen 2026 brought attention to three closely related priorities: expanding participation in AI development through open-source cooperation, addressing the technical requirements of increasingly intelligent and interconnected systems, and strengthening international dialogue on safety, standards, and governance. These priorities carry significance beyond individual technologies, particularly as AI capabilities become more widely integrated into digital infrastructure, industrial applications, and services.

The Summit's agenda reflected the importance of considering technological progress alongside the conditions necessary for its broader adoption, including access to development resources, interoperability, security, and cooperation across national and organizational boundaries. How these issues are addressed will remain important to the future development of the internet and the increasingly intelligent systems operating through it.



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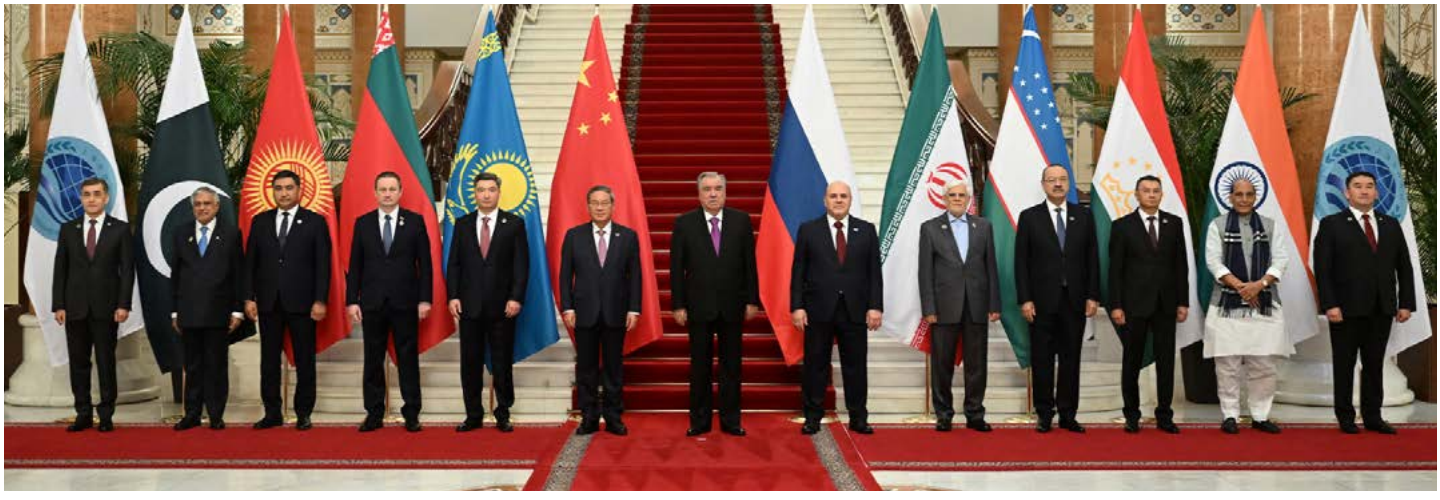
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AI DEVELOPMENTS

Kazakhstan Proposes AI Network, Transport Integration at SCO Meeting in Dushanbe

Kazakhstan has proposed establishing a network of artificial intelligence centers under the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and integrating regional transport corridors under a unified strategy through 2035, Prime Minister Olzhas Bektenov said at an Oct. 20 meeting of SCO heads of government in Dushanbe. Bektenov attended a collective meeting hosted by Tajik President Emomali Rahmon and SCO Council of Heads of Government sessions in narrow and expanded formats, bringing together representatives of member states and partner countries, the Prime Minister's press service reported.

Welcoming the participants, Rahmon highlighted the SCO's role as a platform for constructive dialogue, peace and stability amid changing global conditions. He called for expanding trade and investment, strengthening transport links, deepening industrial and agricultural cooperation, advancing digitalization and green technologies, and reinforcing energy and food security. Rahmon also emphasized joint efforts to combat terrorism, extremism, cyber threats, drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. He highlighted the importance of establishing an SCO Anti-Drug Center in Dushanbe and called for greater cooperation in artificial intelligence, innovation and workforce development, reported Kazinform. He also noted Tajikistan's initiative, supported by the UN General Assembly, to declare 2027-2036 the International Decade for Strengthening Peace for Future Generations. Other priorities included climate change adaptation, environmental protection, glacier preservation and the sustainable use of water resources. Addressing the expanded session, Bektenov outlined Kazakhstan's priorities for strengthening trade, transport connectivity, digital cooperation and regional energy and water security. Trade and transport connectivity Kazakhstan called for removing trade barriers, simplifying customs procedures and expanding the use of national currencies in cross-border settlements. National currencies already account for nearly 70% of Kazakhstan's cross-border payments with SCO member states, according to Bektenov. To improve regional connectivity, Kazakhstan proposed integrating China's Belt and Road Initiative with existing and planned transport corridors and incorporating common priorities into an SCO Transport Connectivity Strategy through 2035. Bektenov also called for accelerating the modernization of maritime and dry ports under the SCO Action Plan for the Development of Ports and Logistics Centers through 2030. The Trans-Caspian International Transport Route was identified as a platform for practical cooperation, with annual freight volumes targeted at 10 million tons. Kazakhstan proposed establishing an SCO network of artificial intelligence centers to pool technological expertise and support member states in exchanging and scaling AI solutions. Bektenov also highlighted the potential of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific's Asia-Pacific Center for Digital Solutions in Almaty to facilitate technology transfer and cooperation. "Only over the past five years, our IT services exports have grown 34-fold, reaching $1.1 billion," Bektenov said, adding that Kazakhstan aims to strengthen its position as a regional digital hub under its Digital Qazaqstan strategy. Kazakhstan raised energy and water security as priorities for regional cooperation, including implementing the SCO Strategy for Energy Cooperation through 2030 and establishing an SCO Center for Water Issues Analysis. Bektenov said the economic scale, geographic proximity and complementary production capacities of SCO member states created opportunities for more ambitious joint initiatives, including stronger production chains and industrial projects. The meeting also reviewed reports on the activities of the SCO Business Council and Interbank Consortium for 2025-2026. Following the sessions, participants signed documents covering multilateral trade and economic cooperation, transport connectivity and investment projects in industrial cooperation. Among them was a decision to establish an SCO digital platform to facilitate international multimodal freight transportation.



Humain, DataVolt Join Forces with Nebius for Giga AI Campus in NEOM



Humain, a company of Saudi sovereign wealth fund PIF delivering full-stack artificial intelligence capabilities globally, and DataVolt, the developer, owner and operator of sustainable digital infrastructure, announced a preliminary framework agreement with Nebius, a leading AI cloud company, for a giga campus facility at Oxagon located within Saudi Arabia's mega futuristic city NEOM on Red Sea coast. Under the proposed framework, Nebius would become an anchor customer for the planned AI giga campus, with the contemplated offtake representing up to 50MW (half of the initial 100 MW currently under construction as part of the first phase's planned 360 MW), said a statement from Humain. The preliminary framework marks a significant milestone for the development, outlining a proposed international customer allocation just six weeks after announcing the commencement of construction. The proposed capacity allocation is expected to become operational in phases from Q4 2027, it stated. The framework brings together Humain's full-stack AI capabilities and ambition to build a globally competitive AI ecosystem, DataVolt's infrastructure development and delivery expertise, and Nebius's demand for data-center capacity to serve a global customer base with high technical needs. This campus is designed to support next-generation AI workloads, with Nebius expected to deploy NVIDIA-powered computing infrastructure under the agreement to meet growing demand for its AI cloud, it added. On the new venture, CEO Tareq Amin said: "The real measure of AI infrastructure is not how much capacity you build, but the demand you can secure and the value you can deliver. Advancing our commercial relationship with Nebius as our first customer is a significant milestone for Humain and a clear demonstration of the international demand for the infrastructure we are developing." "We are building more than data centers. We are creating a globally competitive, full-stack AI ecosystem that connects infrastructure, compute, models and applications to serve customers around the world," he noted. By combining NVIDIA accelerated computing infrastructure and the local competitive energy and time-to-market advantages available in NEOM's Oxagon, the commercial milestone demonstrates the project's ability to attract major international customers by translating growing market demand into long-term infrastructure commitments. As demand for AI compute accelerates, the ability to bring together power, land, connectivity, advanced infrastructure and execution at scale is becoming increasingly important to the economics of AI. Rajit Nanda, Chief Executive Officer of DataVolt, said: "Speed to market and infrastructure cost competitiveness will define the winners in the global AI compute race. Reaching this advanced stage of commercial engagement with Nebius within six weeks of commencing construction is a powerful demonstration of our ability to execute at pace and convert development into commercial commitments." "At Oxagon, we are building at scale, with a clear focus on delivering highly competitive infrastructure costs. By combining Saudi Arabia's energy advantages with disciplined execution, we are helping create a platform for the Kingdom to compete globally in AI compute - not just as an energy powerhouse, but as an exporter of digital capacity," he stated. Oxagon's proposition as an advanced industrial platform offers the potential to combine low-latency digital connectivity, developed land and scalable energy within a purpose-built environment, positioning it to support large-scale AI infrastructure serving customers across global markets, he added. Eng. Aiman Al Mudaifer, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of NEOM said: "The agreement between Humain, DataVolt and Nebius reflects growing global demand for AI-ready infrastructure and NEOM's role in enabling advanced industries." "Through Oxagon, we are creating an integrated ecosystem that brings together the key elements global technology companies need to accelerate capacity deployment and scale. This partnership demonstrates how NEOM is translating its strategic priorities into tangible opportunities that deliver lasting economic impact," he noted. The Nebius agreement, signed on the sidelines of NVIDIA's GTC Berlin conference, represents a commercial milestone for the development, demonstrating the potential to attract international AI customers and deploy capacity at significant scale. For Humain, the agreement supports its ambition to build an integrated AI ecosystem spanning infrastructure, computing platforms, AI models and applications. For DataVolt, it reinforces an execution-led approach to developing large-scale digital infrastructure aligned with identified customer demand. For Nebius, it represents an expansion of the infrastructure capacity available to support the continued growth of its AI cloud business.

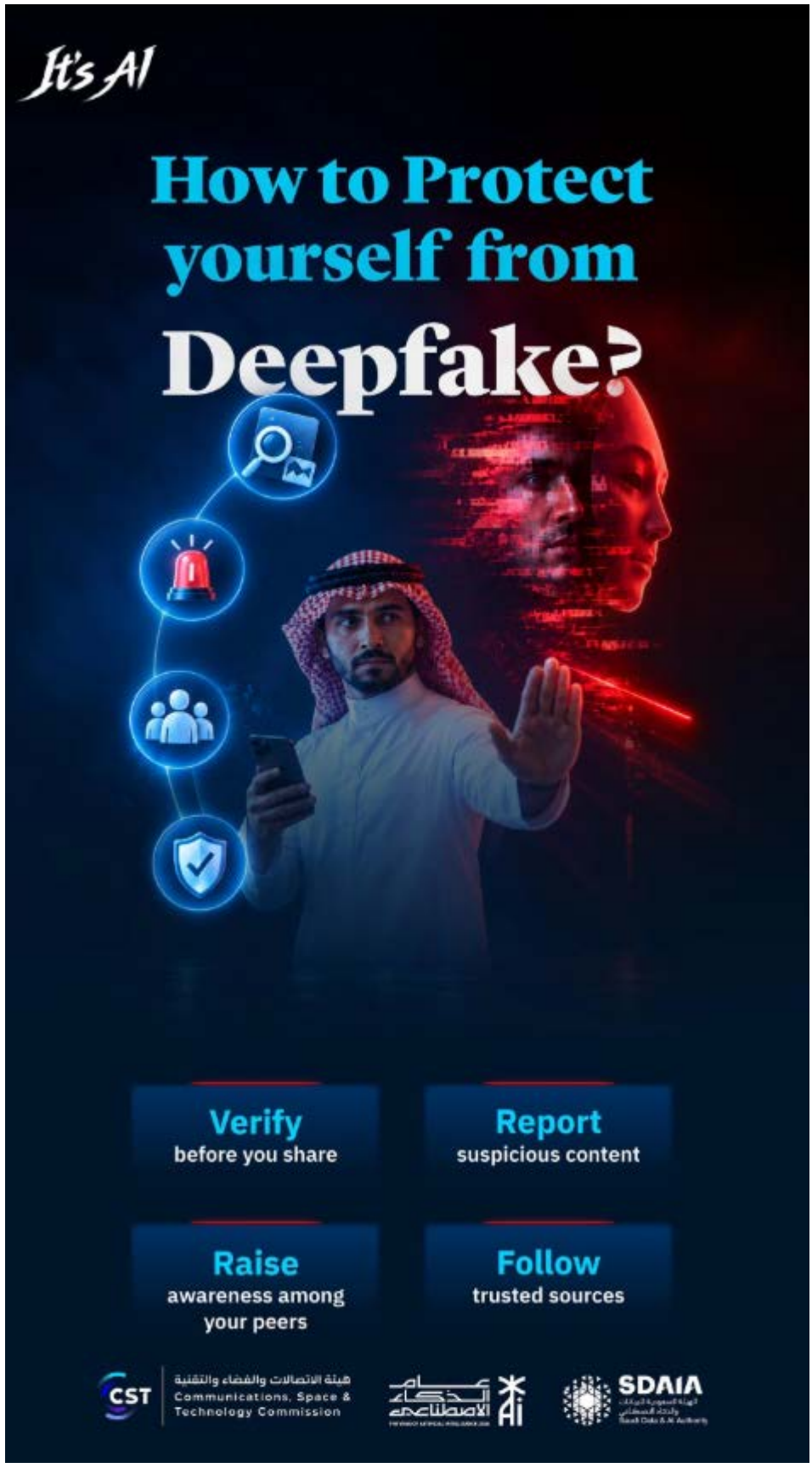
GENIE.AI: Empowering Countries to Shape Their AI Future



Artificial intelligence (AI) is already one of the most transformative technologies of our time – but can it also transform the field of human social and economic development? There are significant barriers to overcome before public institutions in many countries can even begin adopting AI. These include limited resources, technical capacity and infrastructure, as well as a lack of access to expertise. Beyond the technology itself, countries need practical, adaptable solutions tailored to specific needs and sustainable and scalable over time. In 2024, we began devising an open-source framework for governments and public institutions to train, build and test custom AI solutions with limited resources. A series of consultations shaped our high-level architecture for a generic reference implementation, which was adopted in January 2025, followed by technical development. And what we achieved with this is our modular, open-source, model-agnostic way to build and run AI-powered public services fitting each country's priorities. GENIE.AI empowers countries with AI while strengthening their local capacities, technological independence, and influence over their respective digital futures. The Global GenAI for Good Challenge – launched last year in partnership with IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) – invited humanitarian-minded AI innovators to put this approach into practice. Competing AI developers tackled real public-sector use cases in Bangladesh, The Gambia, and Lesotho, with three winning teams selected to take on one-year pilot projects that are now approaching completion. This experience has helped turn our GENIE.AI technical framework into the foundation of a broader ecosystem linked to digital public infrastructure, digital public goods, and open-source projects. All these approaches can give countries opportunities to build up their public-sector AI capabilities. Technology alone cannot create sustainable capacity. Our Open Source Ecosystem Enabler (OSEE) program – in place since 2023 and now enhanced by GENIE.AI – helps countries build up key skills, institutions and local tech ecosystems. In Kenya, for instance, we have equipped government agencies and the local developer community with expertise in open-source AI, with a functional service set for release within months. In El Salvador, our platform provided the foundation for AgroGenio, an AI-powered agricultural advisory prototype drawing on more than 150 national and international agricultural guidelines and manuals. Developed under the MERIAN project, the solution demonstrates how trusted knowledge can be transformed into practical, accessible assistance for agricultural professionals, while providing a foundation for potential national-scale deployment. For countries seeking transformative solutions, the growing network around GENIE.AI is as important as AI technology itself. From one side, countries contribute real-world challenges and local knowledge. From the other, our fellow United Nations agencies – like the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) – bring domain expertise. IEEE, as the world's largest association of engineering and technology professionals, connects our initiative with the AI innovators and solution developers. And corporate technology partners, such as Intel and IBM, contribute open-source technologies and expertise. The growing involvement of local technical teams means the resulting solutions can be adapted, maintained and sustained. Officially launched in July, our GENIE.AI platform answers a call for the support of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in strengthening AI infrastructure, readiness and capacities. Developing countries, particularly, had requested this in a resolution on AI technologies in telecommunication development adopted at ITU's latest World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-25). Our longer-term vision is to foster GENIE.AI implementation locally and knowledge-sharing internationally, encouraging countries to exchange insights, replicate valuable innovations, and accelerate sustainable AI development together. GENIE.AI is our mechanism for countries to move from AI experimentation towards their own practical public-sector applications. Our aim is to empower government service providers to use AI, build lasting capacity, and improve people's lives. Ultimately, this is about countries becoming active shapers of their AI future.

SDAIA and CST Launch the "Its AI" Campaign to Raise Awareness in Fake Clips and Deepfake Risks

The Saudi Data and Artificial Intelligence Authority (SDAIA) and the Communications, Space and Technology Commission (CST) have launched an awareness campaign titled "Its AI" to raise awareness of the risks associated with AI-powered deepfake technologies and enhance public awareness of how to navigate digital content responsibly. The campaign highlights the growing prevalence of fake videos and other fabricated content that may appear authentic, potentially leading to the spread of misinformation that can negatively impact society. Launched in coincidence with the Year of Artificial Intelligence 2026, the campaign aims to enable individuals to protect their personal data and strengthen their ability to verify digital content before believing, publishing, or sharing it. This comes amid rapid developments in technologies capable of generating images, videos, and audio recordings that closely replicate individuals' appearances and voices, making it increasingly difficult to determine authenticity through sight or sound alone. The campaign introduces the concept of Deepfakes in their various forms and highlights associated risks, including the spread of misinformation, fraud, identity theft, and reputational damage. It also provides practical guidance on protecting individuals' visual and voice identities and personal data, recognizing signs of content manipulation, and checking original and trusted sources to verify the authenticity of digital content. The campaign emphasizes that viral videos should not be treated as conclusive evidence simply because an individual appears in them or their voice can be heard. It also encourages individuals to avoid hastily sharing controversial content, as sharing content without verifying its authenticity may contribute to the spread of misinformation and reinforce false narratives. The campaign is part of SDAIA's and CST's ongoing efforts to promote public awareness of the safe and responsible use of AI tools and foster a culture of verification and critical thinking as the first line of defense against deepfake risks, contributing to a safer and more reliable digital environment.



Abu Dhabi Launches TAMM Global to Take Government AI Platform Worldwide

Abu Dhabi has launched TAMM Global, a private technology company that will offer its award-winning, AI-powered government services platform to governments worldwide for the first time. The move opens the way for international licensing and deployment of TAMM, which currently serves 4.7 million users and is recognized as one of the world's most advanced digital government platforms. The launch marks a significant step in Abu Dhabi's ambition to become the world's first AI-native government, while positioning its homegrown technology for expansion into international markets. It also comes amid growing global demand for proven digital government solutions that can accelerate transformation while safeguarding national sovereignty, regulatory compliance and public trust. Ahmed Tamim Hisham Al Kuttab, Chairman of the Department of Government Enablement – Abu Dhabi, said: "TAMM was created in Abu Dhabi for one reason: to improve lives. Today, it serves millions of users and has become an integral part of how people and businesses interact with government. Through TAMM Global, we are building on that success by making capabilities developed and proven in Abu Dhabi available to governments seeking to deliver better outcomes for their people." Since launching in 2005, TAMM has evolved into the digital gateway to government services in Abu Dhabi. It combines more than 1,200 public and private sector services and saves each user approximately nine visits to government service centers per year – returning an estimated 12 hours to every person and business annually. TAMM currently achieves a customer satisfaction score of 94.5% – up from 78% in 2022, before AI was integrated into the app. It has also cut the cost of providing services by 30%, with most savings coming within the first year. Services available through TAMM include setting up a business entirely through the app, including opening a business bank account, managing investment portfolios, renewing identity documents, completing vehicle registrations and accessing a wide range of everyday government services. TAMM AutoGov, announced in 2025 as the world's first AI public servant, can proactively renew licenses, settle payments and book routine healthcare appointments without requiring users to initiate the process themselves. Through TAMM Global, governments will gain access to the technology, operating model and implementation expertise behind one of the world's most advanced digital government platforms. The platform includes a library of pre-built government services, journeys and digital capabilities that can be adapted to local laws, regulations and operating requirements, helping governments deploy faster and with less implementation complexity. AI is embedded throughout the platform, including service discovery, automation, decision support, service delivery and AI-enabled service rendering. This allows governments to offer more proactive, personalized and efficient experiences. Each deployment can be configured for adopting governments' own languages, laws and institutions. TAMM Global supports multilingual and sovereign deployment models, allowing governments to retain full control over their data, infrastructure, policies and citizen services while benefiting from proven technology already deployed at scale. The company will license the platform architecture, implementation methodologies and operational expertise that enabled Abu Dhabi to build and operate TAMM at scale. By combining pre-built capabilities with proven implementation methods and operating practices refined through millions of real-world interactions, TAMM Global can help governments accelerate deployment without having to build an equivalent platform from scratch, the company said.



Submer, ACES to Boost AI-Ready Data Center Capacity in Saudi Arabia

Submer, a full-stack AI infrastructure provider, has signed an MoU with Saudi digital infrastructure company ACES to accelerate the rollout of high-density, AI-ready data centers across the kingdom. The two companies will jointly pursue projects serving growing demand for AI and high-performance computing workloads, combining Submer's engineering and technology expertise with ACES' local delivery, infrastructure services and investment capabilities.The agreement covers facility planning and consultancy, the design and construction of new and retrofitted sites, IT integration, advanced thermal and power systems, including liquid and immersion cooling, and potential co-investment in Saudi data center capacity. As Saudi Arabia advances its Vision 2030 digital and AI agenda, rising rack densities are reshaping requirements for power, cooling, facility design and IT integration. The partnership aims to support customers from initial planning through deployment and long-term operations. "The kingdom's AI ambitions are moving faster than the infrastructure models supporting them," said Khalid Aljamed, General Manager for the Middle East, Turkey and Africa at Submer. He added that the partnership would reduce the need for customers to coordinate multiple providers and deliver facilities engineered for dense AI workloads. ACES Group CEO Dr. Akram Aburas said the agreement combines Submer's engineering and technology expertise with ACES' local execution, market presence and investment strength to expand AI-ready capacity and support Saudi Arabia's digital infrastructure ecosystem.

Reshaping Network Value for New Growth in the AI Era



During Network X 2026, the World Broadband Association (WBBA) hosted the Broadband Development Congress (BDC) in Vienna. At the congress, Bob Chen, President of Huawei Optical Business Product Line, delivered a keynote speech titled " Reshaping Network Value for New Growth in the AI Era." He emphasized the necessity of shifting network construction concepts in the AI era based on three "R"s—Rebuilding network architecture, Reshaping business model, and Redefining network O&M—to reshape network value and achieve new growth. Bob Chen mentioned that, looking back over the past three decades, every boom in services—from voice and the Internet to video—has relied on network support. Today, AI is developing at a rapid pace. Large AI models now feature nearly 10 trillion parameters, and token consumption has surged nearly 50-fold over the past year. In the AI era, the objects, frequency, and quality of network connections have all undergone dramatic shifts. The entire industry must rethink how to reshape network value. Chen pointed out that the most crucial element in reshaping network value is shifting network construction philosophy: network planning and building must center around AI service demands and AIDC layouts, while AI technology should be adopted to elevate O&M capabilities. This can be summarized into three "R"s. Rebuild network architecture: transitioning from traditional administrative region-centered networks to AIDC-centered networks. Reshape business model: for enterprise, upgrading from selling bandwidth alone to selling "bandwidth + latency + reliability", along with integrated computing-network services; and for home broadband: evolving from providing pure broadband connectivity to whole-home networking, and ultimately smart home experiences. Redefine network O&M: evolving from traditional semi-automated operations toward full-lifecycle intelligence. In the past, networks were structured around administrative regions, divided into national backbone, provincial backbone, and metro networks. With the rise of AI, the number of AIDCs has grown nearly 10-fold, and traffic volume is no longer determined by population, but by computing power. Take Zhongwei, China as an example: in the past, its traffic accounted for only about 0.1% of China's total. Today, Zhongwei has become one of China's eight national computing hubs, with its intelligent computing traffic accounting for over 10% of the country's total bandwidth, making it a core node in the AIDC interconnect network. Similar cases are taking place worldwide. Therefore, network architecture must shift from being administrative region-centered to AIDC-centered. Networks should be organized into hierarchical layers around Core DCs, Regional DCs, and Edge DCs. Direct one-hop mesh connections between DCs enable deterministic 1-5-20 ms latency circles and rapid time-to-market. For enterprise segment, as AI accelerates, enterprise production models are transforming. For instance, an AI industrial design firm in China uses AI rendering to drastically shorten production cycles, but real-time AI rendering demands latency below 2 milliseconds. To capitalize on such opportunities, operators can upgrade private lines from a single dimension of bandwidth to multi-dimensional offerings: "Bandwidth + Latency + Reliability." Powered by OXC, ASON, and Quantum Encryption, networks can deliver deterministic latency, high reliability, and top security, significantly boosting private line value. Furthermore, leveraging their own computing platforms, operators can evolve from selling networks to selling "Network + Computing + Model/Application", delivering integrated computing-network services. For home broadband segment, operators can upgrade from providing basic broadband connections to the "One Fiber, One Network, One Home" strategy: One Network refers to delivering high-quality whole-home Wi-Fi with FTTR or Wi-Fi Mesh. One Home means providing rich smart applications powered by home AI terminals and AI agents. In addition, home AI agents are reshaping home broadband interaction models—allowing users to interact in real time, control home networks, and manage IoT devices through simple voice commands. In the AI era, end-to-end intelligence across planning, construction, maintenance, optimization, and operation must be realized through network element intelligence, network intelligence, and service intelligence. For example, most home network complaints stem from Wi-Fi issues that previously required home visits. Today, AI Wi-Fi tuning automatically identifies interference sources and types, making real-time adjustments to transmit power and other parameters—boosting Wi-Fi speeds by approximately 20% in interference environments. Second, for AI energy saving, previously, network

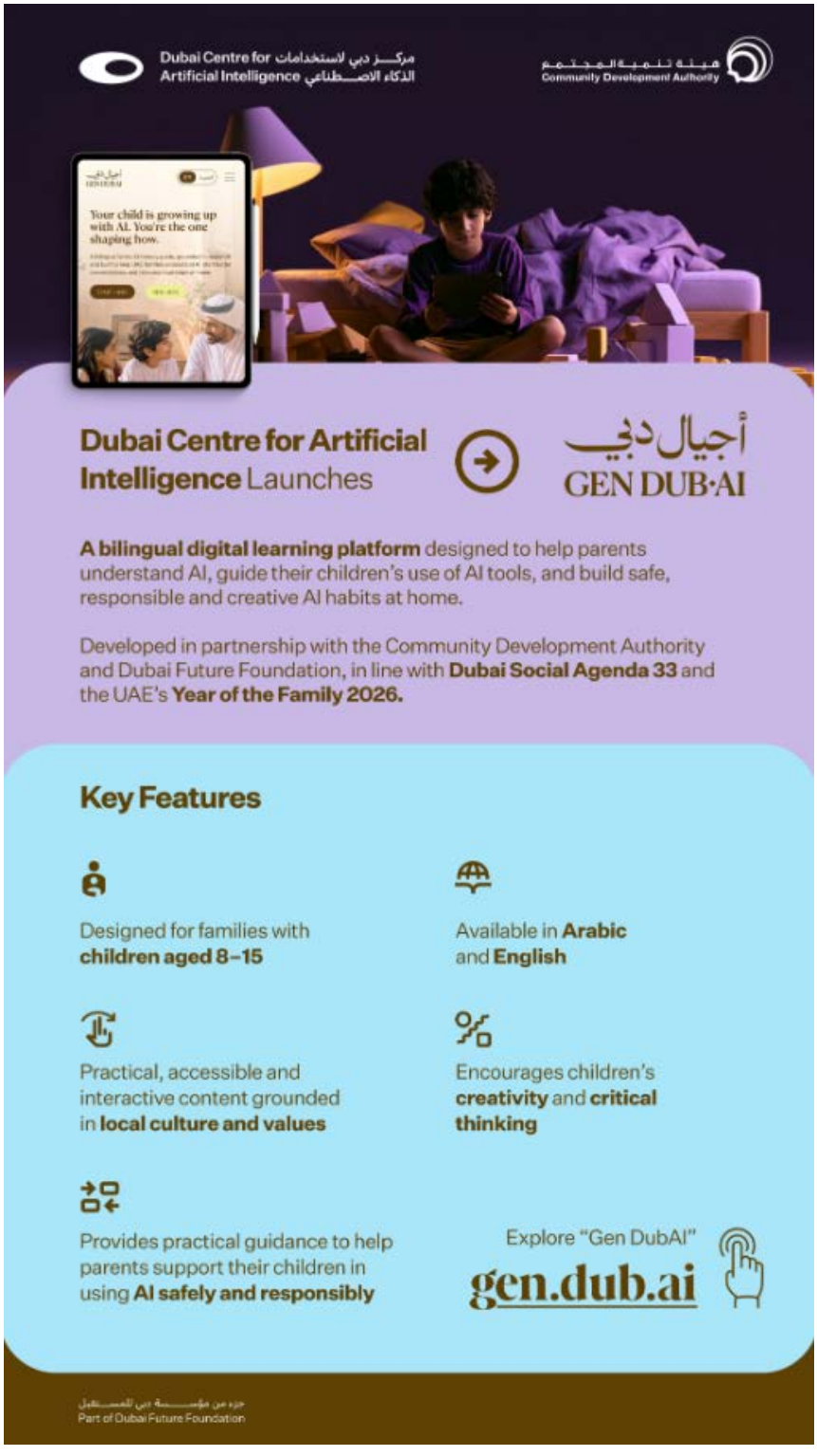
equipment ran at full capacity regardless of traffic levels, consuming unnecessary substantial power. Now, intelligent traffic analysis enables smart dynamic power adjustments for OLT chassis and line cards, reducing total device energy consumption by over 20%. Last, for intelligent fault self-healing, home broadband troubleshooting is categorized into three tiers. Self-Healing: Air-interface issues like roaming failures are automatically fixed by O&M AI agents. Remote O&M: Configuration parameter issues are processed remotely at the NOC with AI agent assistance. On-Site Visits: Physical fiber connection issues are precisely localized with O&M Copilot assistance. "Facing the AI era, we must shift our philosophy to Rebuild network architecture, Reshape business model, and Redefine network O&M," Bob Chen concluded. "Through these three 'R's, we can reshape UBB network value and jointly move towards new growth in the AI era!"

Bangladesh Internet Governance Forum Begins, Stresses Connectivity, Inclusion, Responsible AI

The three-day 21st Bangladesh Internet Governance Forum 2026 has begun to discuss new challenges and prospects of internet governance in the age of artificial intelligence (AI). Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) Chairman Major General (Retd) Md Emdad Ul Bari attended the inaugural ceremony of the forum as chief guest at the BTRC Bhaban in Agargaon here, said a BTRC press release. Jointly organized by the BTRC and the Bangladesh Internet Governance Forum (BIGF), the three-day seminar will see the participation of over 200representatives, including policymakers, telecom experts, academics, technologists, entrepreneurs and students, in a total of 12 sessions. Addressing the inaugural ceremony, Emdad Ul Bari said the main goal at the beginning was to ensure voice call connectivity in Bangladesh. With the passage of time, moving from voice to data, we have now entered the age of AI, he said. He said effective application of AI requires reorganization of existing workflows and operational structures. Noting that the telecommunications sector of Bangladesh has made notable progress over the past three decades, he said although our network and infrastructure are comparatively strong, using that infrastructure effectively to bring people online and enable them to use the internet remains a big challenge. He also said there are about 7,500 languages in the world, and Bangla is the seventh largest among them. But looking at the presence of Bangla on the internet, he said, the share of Bangla in the total online content is about 0.1 percent. To overcome the shortage of Bangla content on the internet, more quality Bangla content, digital services and AI-based applications must be created, he said. He commented that meaningful connectivity and inclusive digital development will be ensured only when the rural population, in particular, can use the internet and AI effectively in their education, professions and economic activities. At the forum, Brigadier General (retd) Mohammad Khalil Ur Rahman, former director general of the Systems and Services Division of the BTRC, highlighted the growing importance of national cyber security in protecting national critical infrastructure, sensitive information and essential services. He mentioned six key pillars of the national cyber security strategy: critical infrastructure protection, cyber security incident response and coordination, public-private partnership, legal and regulatory framework, skilled workforce development and education, and international cooperation. He also warned about AI-driven cyber threats, including deep fakes and automated phishing. Joining virtually from Singapore, Joyce Chen, senior adviser of the Asia Pacific Network Information Centre (APNIC), highlighted the far-reaching impact of AI and stressed coordinated initiatives by governments and various stakeholders to address challenges related to online safety, human rights and environmental sustainability. Joining online from Geneva, Switzerland, Anja Gengo, digital policy and regulation expert of the UN Internet Governance Forum Secretariat, put emphasis on ensuring children's online safety, preventing cyberbullying and increasing women's participation in the digital space. Dr. Md Munjur E Khoda Tarafder, acting vice-chancellor and treasurer of Far East International University, discussed online fraud, the social impact of digital platforms on young people, and the disparity in internet use between urban and rural areas. He called for inclusive policymaking to ensure that the benefits of digital transformation reach people of all classes and professions in society. In his welcome speech, A H M Bazlur Rahman, member of the Multi-stakeholder Consultation Group of the UN Group on the Information Society, put emphasis on increasing cooperation and knowledge sharing among all stakeholders concerned to build a safe, inclusive and human-centric digital future. He said upholding human rights, ensuring gender equality and delivering the benefits of technological advancement to all are essential for effective internet governance. The forum, which will continue until October 17, will discuss various issues, including AI policy, digital public infrastructure, data governance, cyber security, digital inclusion, sustainable development and digital democracy. One of the key objectives of the event is to build an inclusive, safe and resilient digital environment for Bangladesh by strengthening cooperation among the government, industry, educational institutions and civil society.

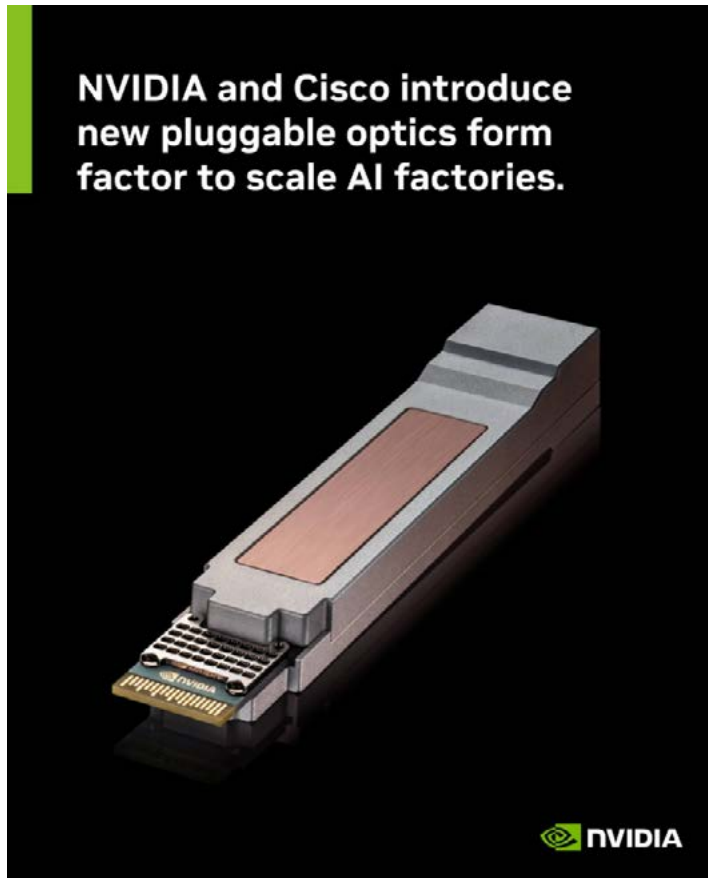
Dubai Launches First Family AI Literacy Platform

Dubai Centre for Artificial Intelligence (DCAI) has launched GenDubAI, a digital platform designed to help parents better understand how children use artificial intelligence. Developed in collaboration with the Community Development Authority (CDA) and Dubai Future Foundation, the first-of-its-kind educational platform aims to nurture creativity, protect privacy and strengthen family engagement. The initiative supports the objectives of the Dubai Social Agenda 33 and the UAE's Year of the Family by providing an interactive family experience that encourages the constructive use of AI while helping parents remain involved in their children's learning and development. GenDubAI offers practical, easy-to-use and interactive content that reflects UAE values and culture. It addresses key questions around the use of AI, provides guidance to help children use such technologies effectively, and supports the development of critical thinking and creativity. The platform also introduces parents to the fundamentals, principles and tools of AI, while highlighting both its opportunities and challenges. Available in Arabic and English, the platform is designed for families with children aged 8 to 15 and is accessible through a dedicated mobile-friendly version. Hessa bint Essa Buhumaid, Director General of the Community Development Authority (CDA) in Dubai, said artificial intelligence has become an integral part of the lives of younger generations, placing responsibility on families and society to raise awareness, instil values, and prepare children to interact with these technologies confidently and responsibly. She said: "In Dubai, we believe that preparing for the future begins with people, and that empowering future generations with the tools of tomorrow must go hand in hand with awareness, values, and responsibility. With this in mind, the GenDubAI platform places families at the heart of the AI learning journey, transforming technology into a shared space for learning, dialogue, and creativity within the family." She added: "This initiative reflects Dubai's commitment to preparing future-ready generations, in line with the Dubai Social Agenda 33, by empowering young people to embrace technology with confidence and responsibility while preserving their values and identity. Dubai's leadership in AI is measured not only by technological advancements, but by their positive impact on individuals and families, and their ability to inspire future generations to learn, innovate, and shape their own future." Khalfan Belhoul, CEO of Dubai Future Foundation, said: "The UAE is among the world's leading countries in the adoption of artificial intelligence, in parallel with growing levels of smart-device use among children in and outside schools. Through this initiative, we aim to help parents confidently guide their children in benefiting from the opportunities offered by AI while also understanding its challenges. Knowledge of safe and responsible AI use is one of the greatest gifts parents can give their children to help them thrive in the age of artificial intelligence."



Cisco and NVIDIA introduce New Pluggable Optics form Factor to Scale AI Factories

Cisco and NVIDIA have announced plans for Ultra-Dense Small Form Factor Pluggable (USFP), a new high-density 400Gb/s-per-lane optical module designed to equip the hardware ecosystem for the next generation of AI factories using pluggable transceivers. As AI models grow and inference demand expands, AI factories must connect more computing systems while managing network complexity, power and costs. Moving more data per watt and per switch helps operators make better use of their infrastructure investments. Scaling AI factories requires more bandwidth per connection and more connections per switch. When a switch reaches its capacity, further network expansion can require additional switch layers and optical links, increasing latency, power consumption and costs. USFP is designed to enable AI factory builders to scale from 200 Gb/s per lane to 400Gb/s-per-lane Ethernet AI fabrics, while extending a deployment model proven at scale across multiple generations of data center networks. With USFP, customers can embrace next-generation optical technology and meet the performance demand of AI workloads without overhauling their data center infrastructure. The first planned USFP-based transceivers will pack 16 full-duplex lanes in an octal small form factor (OSFP)-sized footprint supporting both switches and SuperNICs, with the ability to expand to 32 and more lanes in the future. By doubling both the lane count and bandwidth per lane, USFP enables AI fabrics to connect more 1.6Tb/s endpoints without adding network tiers. Customers will be able to achieve 12.8Tb/s of overall capacity with USFP. Comparable with an OSFP-sized module, it delivers 4x the bandwidth and front-panel bandwidth density, with approximately 1.3x the power efficiency, versus 200Gb/s-per-lane pluggable modules. This means AI builders can increase their compute scale within the same network footprint, while decreasing networking's share of the overall AI factory power budget. “Building the world's largest AI factories starts with rethinking the smallest of connections,” said Gilad Shainer, senior vice president NVIDIA. “With USFP, NVIDIA and Cisco are building an ecosystem to reinvent pluggable optics — connecting more computing with greater efficiency to power the next generation of AI factories.” “AI builders need an interconnect architecture that can scale performance without locking them into a more complex operating model,” said Bill Gartner, senior vice president and general manager of optical systems and optics at Cisco. “Cisco and NVIDIA recognized that scaling pluggable optics to 400Gb/s per lane would require more than another incremental extension of today's module designs. Through our collaboration, USFP is designed to deliver a new level of bandwidth density while preserving the serviceability, deployment flexibility and operational simplicity of pluggable optics. By taking a full-stack approach — from silicon and systems to optics and the network operating system — we can optimize every layer to deliver the performance and scale the next generation of AI networks will require.” Designed for electrical signals of 400Gb/s per lane, USFP uses a new two-dimensional array connector with a two-step insertion design that engages high-speed contacts after the module is inserted, reducing contact wear, improving signal integrity and making insertion force more predictable. The connector technology allows



for further scaling of lane count to 32 full duplex lanes and more in the future. Because the connector is designed for 400Gb/s performance, it also offers improved performance at 200Gb/s per lane. USFP supports power dissipation of up to 100 watts without needing a separate, dedicated embedded cooling circuit within the transceiver, reducing switch design complexity and improving reliability. Together, these capabilities enable higher-bandwidth fabrics while preserving the mature deployment, serviceability and manufacturability of existing pluggable transceivers. All USFP configurations support optical designs that reduce latency and power consumption by simplifying signal processing. Support for a broad range of optical technologies and connection distances gives system designers the flexibility to meet unique AI factory deployment needs. NVIDIA and Cisco are collaborating with TE Connectivity and Amphenol to build USFP cages, connectors and modules, with additional partners expected to join. The shared form factor gives suppliers a common foundation for developing high-density pluggable infrastructure for 400Gb/s-per-lane fabrics to build a robust ecosystem for AI factory builders. The collaboration builds on NVIDIA and Cisco's existing work to ensure NVIDIA Spectrum-X Ethernet networking and Cisco Silicon One-based Ethernet networks work together seamlessly, simplifying AI infrastructure deployment for enterprises, neoclouds and sovereign clouds. NVIDIA and Cisco plan to create an open industry specification for USFP through an upcoming community-led multi-source project.

Dubai Future Foundation Launches Agentic AI for Government Services Accelerator

Dubai Future Foundation (DFF) has announced the launch of the "Agentic AI for Government Services Accelerator" under Dubai Future Accelerators (DFA). The program will support Dubai Government entities in rapidly prototyping and deploying government services powered by agentic AI, in line with the UAE's ambition to deliver the world's most advanced government services for the AI era. Organized by Dubai Centre for Artificial Intelligence (DCAI), an initiative overseen by DFF, in collaboration with Digital Dubai and the Dubai Electronic Security Centre (DESC), the Accelerator will enable government entities to develop agentic AI-powered services faster while maintaining high standards of quality and digital compliance. The program aims to simplify customer journeys, improve people's lives and strengthen Dubai's position among the world's most future-ready cities. In its first phase, the Accelerator will bring together 33 Dubai Government entities and assess more than 300 public-facing use cases to identify those with the greatest potential for development using agentic AI. Participating entities will work with technology companies certified under the Dubai AI Seal, an initiative launched by DCAI to recognize trusted AI companies and accelerate the growth of Dubai's AI sector. Hamad Obaid Al Mansoori, Director-General of Digital Dubai, said the continuous development of government services is guided by the leadership's vision to enhance people's experiences and reinforce a government model that anticipates future needs and technological advancements. "Excellence in government services goes beyond meeting customers' current needs. It requires understanding how their lives are changing, anticipating what they will need next, and designing services around those needs. The Agentic AI for Government Services Accelerator represents an important step in this direction, harnessing data and artificial intelligence to move from responding to customers' needs to anticipating them, and to create experiences that are smarter, more seamless and more personalized," he said. He added that Digital Dubai is supporting the ecosystem through integrated digital infrastructure, trusted data and governance frameworks for the safe and responsible use of AI, helping transform promising ideas into scalable solutions. Khalfan Juma Belhoul, CEO of Dubai Future Foundation, said the Accelerator aligns with the directives of His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Chairman of DFF's Board of Trustees, to position Dubai as the world's leading city in adopting agentic AI across government services. "Artificial intelligence has opened new horizons for governments to imagine the future, design next-generation solutions and services, and bring them to life. Government entities can now significantly shorten traditional development cycles, enabling them to enhance service quality and effectiveness within much shorter timeframes," Belhoul said. Yousuf Hamad Al Shaibani, CEO of the Dubai Electronic Security Centre, said AI is reshaping how government services are designed and delivered, stressing



that security, governance and trust must be embedded from the outset. "Cybersecurity cannot be an afterthought in the adoption of AI. It must be embedded at every stage, from planning and design to operation and monitoring," he said. He added that DESC's regulatory frameworks, including the Information Security Regulation in Dubai and the AI Security Policy, provide guidance for adopting agentic AI responsibly without compromising compliance, data protection or digital resilience. The Agentic AI for Government Services Accelerator adopts the operating model of Dubai Future Accelerators, focusing on speed and precision in the design, development and deployment of government services.

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SAMENA Council Leaders' AXIS in Oman

Advancing Cross-Infrastructure Sustainability with Local Capability and Regional Relevance

The SAMENA Telecommunications Council convened Leaders' AXIS 2026 in Muscat on 13 October 2026, with the Chief Patronage of the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) of Oman and Omantel as Host Sponsor. Held under the theme "Oman: The New Geography of Digital Investment," AXIS brought Omani investment and development institutions into discussion with telecommunications operators, technology businesses, infrastructure providers, and selected international organizations.

The conference followed the Fourth Meeting of the ITU Digital Innovation Board in Muscat. Dr. Cosmas Zavazava, Director of the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau, contributed an international development perspective to an agenda focused on Oman's own infrastructure, market, investment and technology requirements.

Oman's opportunity increasingly concerns the value that can be developed around its connectivity and technology capabilities. AXIS 2026 examined the commercial requirements, institutional arrangements and local capabilities needed to convert these assets into greater economic activity within Oman and across the region.

Oman's National Programme for Artificial Intelligence and Advanced Digital Technologies (2024–2026) provides the national context for questions raised at AXIS about enterprise adoption, domestic technical capability, AI governance and the economics of computing investment.

Omantel's domestic and international networks, ZOI wholesale operations and technology ventures featured in discussions of infrastructure, enterprise services and local capability. Its Host Sponsorship placed these activities alongside perspectives from Omani investment institutions and external industry participants.









KEY FINDINGS FROM AXIS 2026

1. **INTERNATIONAL TRANSIT AND DOMESTIC ECONOMIC VALUE FOLLOW DIFFERENT LOGICS** International traffic can generate wholesale revenue without establishing businesses or services locally. The additional economic opportunity depends on which customers, facilities and activities have a reason to operate within Oman.
2. **INVESTMENT READINESS DEPENDS ON CONDITIONS CONVERGING AT PROJECT LEVEL** Facilitation and approvals address only part of the investment process. Power, transmission, facilities, regulatory arrangements and credible customers may have to be secured together before a particular project can proceed.
3. **SATELLITE GROUND INFRASTRUCTURE COULD EXTEND THE ROLE OF DIGITAL CORRIDORS** Connecting ground stations with terrestrial and submarine networks could create additional international service arrangements. Its feasibility depends on data-routing rules, ground infrastructure, operating partners and identifiable customer requirements.
4. **ENTERPRISE DATA MAY CONSTRAIN AI ADOPTION BEFORE COMPUTING SUPPLY DOES** Poorly structured or inaccessible data can delay deployment even where cloud and computing resources exist. Data integration, security and implementation services may therefore be more immediate requirements than additional capacity.
5. **DOMESTIC COMPUTING CONTROL AND CLOUD ACCESS INVOLVE DIFFERENT TRADE-OFFS** Data sovereignty and infrastructure independence need to be weighed against the economics and flexibility of private, public and hybrid services. The appropriate mix varies with workloads, data sensitivity, customer demand and operating costs.
6. **THE COMMERCIAL BENEFITS OF CONNECTIVITY DEPEND ON WHAT USERS CAN DO WITH IT** Greater network reach does not itself establish local economic activity. Applications, service providers and platforms determine whether available connectivity becomes useful to enterprises and creates new markets.
7. **LOCAL TECHNOLOGY CAPABILITY REQUIRES COMMERCIAL INVESTMENT BEYOND PHYSICAL ASSETS** Research, specialist skills, testing and entrepreneurship need sustained resources and connections to customers. Their contribution is measured in usable applications, capable firms and technical expertise rather than infrastructure deployment alone.
8. **DIFFERENT TECHNOLOGY ACTIVITIES REQUIRE DIFFERENT INVESTMENT LOCATIONS** Export-oriented facilities, domestic enterprise services and technology manufacturing do not have identical needs. Customer proximity, utilities, logistics, specialist labor and operating arrangements affect where each can be viable.
9. **ROUTE DIVERSITY AND SERVICE CONTINUITY ARE NOT THE SAME OUTCOME** Additional terrestrial or submarine paths offer routing options, but continuity also depends on switching, system architecture, supporting facilities, recovery arrangements and control of critical data.
10. **SPACE-ENABLED SERVICES HAVE MORE IMMEDIATE APPLICATIONS IN EXISTING INDUSTRIES** Maritime operations, logistics and remote energy assets offer identifiable service problems for satellite connectivity and monitoring. Commercial viability varies by application, coverage, service integration and customer willingness to pay.

Institutional and Industry Participation

The discussion centered on Oman. TRA Oman provided Chief Patronage, while InvestOman, OPAZ and Oman Investment Authority contributed national investment and economic-development perspectives. Omantel and ZOI addressed operating infrastructure and commercial services. The ITU and its Digital Innovation Board, GSMA, WAA, ZainTECH and Yango Group contributed perspectives on development planning, regulation, adoption, standards, enterprise demand and platforms. Mediafon, Otech and Electron Pulsar were also represented; MTCIT Oman, Stellar Kinetics and UTAS Muscat participated in the space and research discussions.







International Connectivity and Economic Value within Oman

Oman has substantial international connectivity built around submarine cable systems, terrestrial links and domestic telecommunications networks. Omantel's investments and ZOI's international wholesale business demonstrate how those assets support communications and services across multiple markets. The AXIS discussions distinguished the value generated through this activity from the additional economic activity that might be developed inside Oman.

ZOI described a model based on consolidating wholesale capacity and services across the Zain and Omantel operating environments. Traffic aggregation, network scale and coordinated commercial arrangements allow a provider to serve regional and international customers. These activities have their own revenue and operational logic; they do not require every customer or service to be located inside Oman.

The Corridors Panel examined what would enable Oman to attract interconnection, data centers, cloud-related activity, enterprise services and technology businesses alongside its international connectivity. Oman Investment Authority described a progression from infrastructure to digital services, commercial adoption and wider economic impact. Each stage requires its own customers, capabilities and investment conditions.

A route may support wholesale traffic and resilience while producing a different level of local economic activity from a facility or enterprise established to use it. The latter has additional requirements: commercially relevant customers, power and facilities, technical capabilities, appropriate regulation, and access to supporting partners. For Oman, the question is therefore not simply how much international capacity is available but which businesses and services can plausibly operate around it.

Omantel operates across both dimensions: ZOI supports international wholesale activity, while its domestic networks, enterprise technology activities and innovation initiatives connect that international infrastructure position with customers and technology businesses in Oman. The relevant investment question is which additional facilities and services have sufficiently clear demand and operating conditions to establish themselves locally.





Investment Readiness and Project-Level Requirements

InvestOman and OPAZ gave AXIS a practical account of how Oman facilitates investment. InvestOman described coordinated engagement with government and private entities, structured investment opportunities and tailored arrangements for larger projects. OPAZ explained the role of economic zones, free zones and industrial areas, including settings designated for digital and technology investment and their different domestic or export-market orientations.



The investment presentations identified mechanisms for dealing with permits, approvals, utilities and the wider business lifecycle. OPAZ's single-window services and developing Zone Services platform are particularly relevant where a project depends on several authorities or service providers. These arrangements establish a basis for facilitation, but readiness for a particular technology investment must still be judged against its specific operating requirements.

The infrastructure discussions illustrated why that distinction matters. Large connectivity and computing customers may need high-capacity routes, reliable power, data facilities, cross-border service arrangements and commercial commitments from several organizations. Land, permitting or general incentives alone cannot settle those dependencies. Equally, available infrastructure does not by itself establish a viable customer or revenue case. The CEO Dialogue added a financing distinction: Omantel's CEO described obtaining capital as less difficult than constructing a coherent business plan for AI investments where returns are still being tested. ZainTECH likewise emphasized that predictable regulation matters to long-term deployment even when technologies and financing are available.

The ITU introduced economic and connectivity-planning assessments alongside collaborative regulatory approaches. For Oman, cloud, cross-border services, AI and non-terrestrial networks raise questions across investment authorities, infrastructure providers and regulators. The CEO Dialogue called for transparent, predictable rules and raised questions about AI controls and satellite market access. These discussions identify areas for regulatory and institutional engagement; they do not establish a new TRA Oman policy.

For individual projects, the immediate task is to identify required permits, site preparation, facilities, utility connections and service arrangements, the parties responsible for them, and the customers and revenues on which investment depends.



Digital Corridors, Integrated Services and Resilience

The Corridors Panel and ZOI presentation showed why the commercial function of an international route is changing. Major carriers and technology customers may require dedicated capacity, fiber access, interconnection, data-center connectivity and delivery across multiple jurisdictions. Meeting those requirements involves more than individual cable assets; it requires coordinated networks, facilities and commercial arrangements.

ZOI's regional wholesale integration and Pan-Middle East terrestrial network illustrated how submarine and overland infrastructure can complement one another. Different paths give customers more routing choices, and integrated delivery can allow infrastructure providers to serve requirements spanning multiple markets. Such systems also create operational dependencies across owners, interconnection points and regulatory environments.

Route diversity contributes to resilience, but the presence of a second route does not determine whether a critical application remains usable during disruption. Available capacity, switching arrangements, supporting infrastructure and recovery procedures also matter. The GSMA perspective added issues around distributed systems, critical data and data sovereignty. These introduce concerns about service continuity, jurisdiction and operational control that should remain distinct from physical network diversity.

For Oman, integrated corridors can provide regional transit and interconnection services, subject to capacity and delivery arrangements across the full route. The SAT Panel raised a further possibility: satellite ground stations transferring data through Oman's terrestrial and submarine networks. Such services would require ground facilities, customers, transmission agreements, permission to operate and clear data-transfer rules. This presents a specific area for examination alongside Oman's existing international network business.

Connectivity, Compute and Energy: The Demand Question

Oman's national AI programme gives this infrastructure discussion a concrete national context. The CEO Dialogue raised a choice within that ambition: which data and computing functions require domestic capacity for sovereignty or operational control, and which can be obtained through private, public or hybrid cloud services? Omantel's emphasis on national data sovereignty and infrastructure independence, considered alongside ZainTECH's account of mixed enterprise cloud arrangements, makes the answer dependent on workload, customer requirements, governance, performance and cost rather than a single preferred architecture.

The AXIS Flagship Roundtable used the Connectivity–Compute–Energy triangle to examine investment dependencies among networks, computing facilities and electricity supply. Additional computing capacity needs customers, suitable facilities and reliable power; its use also generates demand for networks. Sequencing those investments requires evidence of workloads, utilization and operating cost.

ZainTECH introduced a further variable: enterprise adoption. Its CEO Dialogue contribution identified fragmented or inaccessible enterprise data as a practical obstacle that can precede cloud or AI deployment. Data preparation, systems integration, migration assistance and cybersecurity in managed services may constitute immediate enterprise requirements even where computing capacity exists. Relevant applications, implementation capability and paying customers remain necessary for sustained demand; major enterprises, government organizations and industrial clusters may provide anchor customers that affect the scale and viability of investment.

OPAZ's economic-zone perspective connects potential enterprise and industrial customers with the networks, computing services and utilities they would need at specific locations. WAA addressed WLAN applications, standards and user experience; Yango Group described platform-enabled commercial activity. Their perspectives identified uses for infrastructure that could be examined alongside prospective investments.



Energy received limited treatment in the roundtable, and the scheduled Energy Perspectives panel did not take place. Omantel's CEO identified renewable energy as a potential advantage for computing infrastructure. The specific availability, reliability and cost of power remain project-level considerations.

Oman GPT and Oman AI Studio demonstrate domestic work on AI applications and capability; the 2025 policy on safe and ethical AI use adds a governance dimension. Neither programme, by itself, determines the scale or location of commercially viable computing facilities.

Technology Adoption, Innovation and Domestic Capability

GSMA addressed device affordability and relevant applications; the ITU emphasized entrepreneurship and skills. ZainTECH and WAA added the enterprise and WLAN adoption perspectives. Together, these discussions concerned the practical ability to deploy, use and commercialize technology. In the CEO Dialogue, Omantel treated R&D, innovation and talent development as commercial investments directed toward domestic applications and capabilities.

The roundtable questioned whether private-sector spending on skills, research, innovation and related programmes is keeping pace with physical infrastructure deployment. That observation was not supported by a comparative expenditure measure. It nevertheless identifies a subject for examination when assessing how Omani firms develop services and products around existing assets.

Omantel's post-event release reports that its Innovation Labs have supported more than 80 technology startups since 2021, including businesses working in AI, enterprise solutions, cybersecurity and data analytics. The CEO Dialogue placed these activities within Omantel's commercial approach to developing local applications and expertise. Evidence of customers and sustainable business activity will determine their longer-term contribution.

OPAZ also identified opportunities in technology-related zones and advanced manufacturing, while Oman Investment Authority connected digital services and adoption with wider economic outcomes. These activities differ in their markets, infrastructure needs and operating models. For Oman, locally developed products and services must be considered alongside the investment case for hosting infrastructure. The practical test is whether training, research and innovation programmes produce marketable products, specialist employment and viable firms, including through applied research adopted by operators and other businesses.

Space and Satellite Capabilities within Oman's Digital Development

The SAT Panel identified several distinct activities. Omantel's representative described involvement with Itlaq in launch-site infrastructure, Starlink-related ground connectivity and backhaul for remote sites, and Oman Lens in Earth observation and applications. Launch facilities, satellite communications and downstream data services serve different customers and require different capabilities and commercial arrangements. The reported relationships are described here as presented in the discussion, without assigning an unverified ownership or investment structure.

Commercial applications give these activities a more concrete setting. The panel identified remote-asset tracking, maritime connectivity and monitoring of energy operations, alongside coverage





for remote locations and resilience needs. Each requires a different combination of service reliability, coverage, data handling, pricing and customer integration. Ground stations and integrated terrestrial–non-terrestrial networks may connect those users to other services, while ground-station permissions and international data-transfer arrangements can affect what operators are able to offer.

The SAT Panel also examined a practical role for universities and operators in joint testbeds, specialist facilities and research addressing radio planning, terrestrial–satellite integration, cybersecurity and satellite-enabled IoT. This would allow academic institutions to contribute to technical testing and operating problems as well as graduate training. Relevant projects will depend on the participation of operators, researchers and customers.

From Industry Perspectives to Practical Cooperation

The discussions linked Oman's investment institutions with operators and technology businesses able to specify the customers, facilities, operating arrangements and capabilities that individual projects would require.

For Omantel, this connected ZOI's international wholesale business with domestic enterprise services, innovation and satellite-related opportunities. For Omani institutions, it brought the technical and commercial requirements of prospective activities into more direct consideration.

The SAMENA Council has invited participants to review the roundtable observations and identify opportunities and constraints related to their businesses and interests in Oman. The CEO Dialogue and SAT Panel add possible subjects for subsequent engagement, including enterprise data preparation, domestic computing choices, satellite-ground connectivity and applied industry research. These were contributions from separate sessions, not roundtable agreements.

For TRA Oman, relevant questions include interconnection, licensing, cross-border services, the regulatory treatment of satellite operations and the conditions for innovation. Further engagement would benefit from specific customer needs, proposed operating models and identification of the authorities and businesses involved.

AXIS FLAGSHIP ROUNDTABLE: *CONNECTIVITY–COMPUTE–ENERGY*

1. **FRAMEWORK** Connectivity, compute and energy were considered as linked investment conditions, not as proof of an already integrated market.
2. **CUSTOMER DEMAND** ZainTECH emphasized enterprise adoption and utilization. Major enterprises and economic zones were considered possible sources of anchor demand.
3. **VALUE BEYOND INFRASTRUCTURE** WAA addressed WLAN usage and applications; Yango raised platform-enabled activity; ITU and OPAZ connected innovation and operating conditions to the investment discussion.
4. **AREAS TO QUALIFY** Energy supply and cost, commercial demand, infrastructure coordination, R&D, skills, entrepreneurship, regulatory requirements and viable partnerships require more specific examination. Energy received limited treatment.
5. **PROPOSED FOLLOW-UP** The SAMENA Council has invited participant corrections and interests toward an Oman-centric, regionally relevant output identifying concrete opportunities, constraints and possible cooperation in relation to each participant's area of business and prospective interest in Oman. No collective investment commitments were established.

The next stage depends on testing specific opportunities against demonstrable customer demand, available facilities and utilities, required permissions, viable operating models and the capacity of Omani organizations to participate commercially. AXIS established subjects for further industry and institutional examination; it did not establish collective project commitments. Practical progress will depend on the participating organizations determining which opportunities merit further work and the conditions they would need to address.



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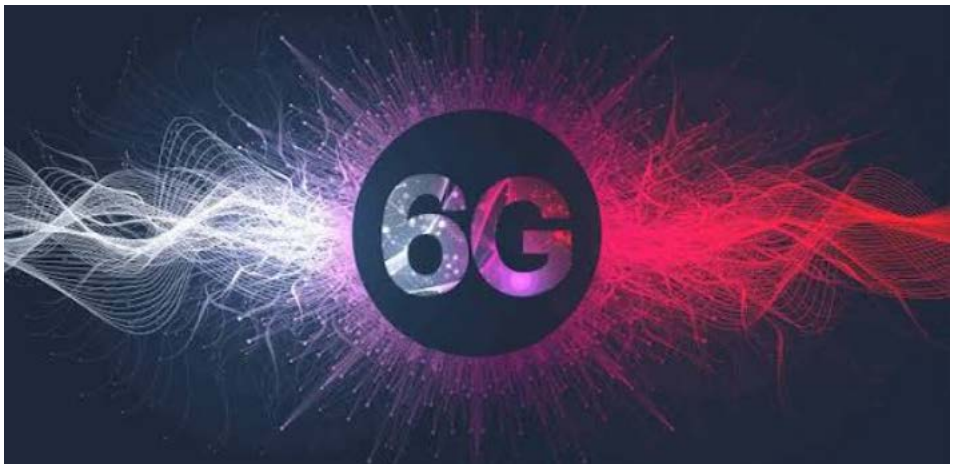


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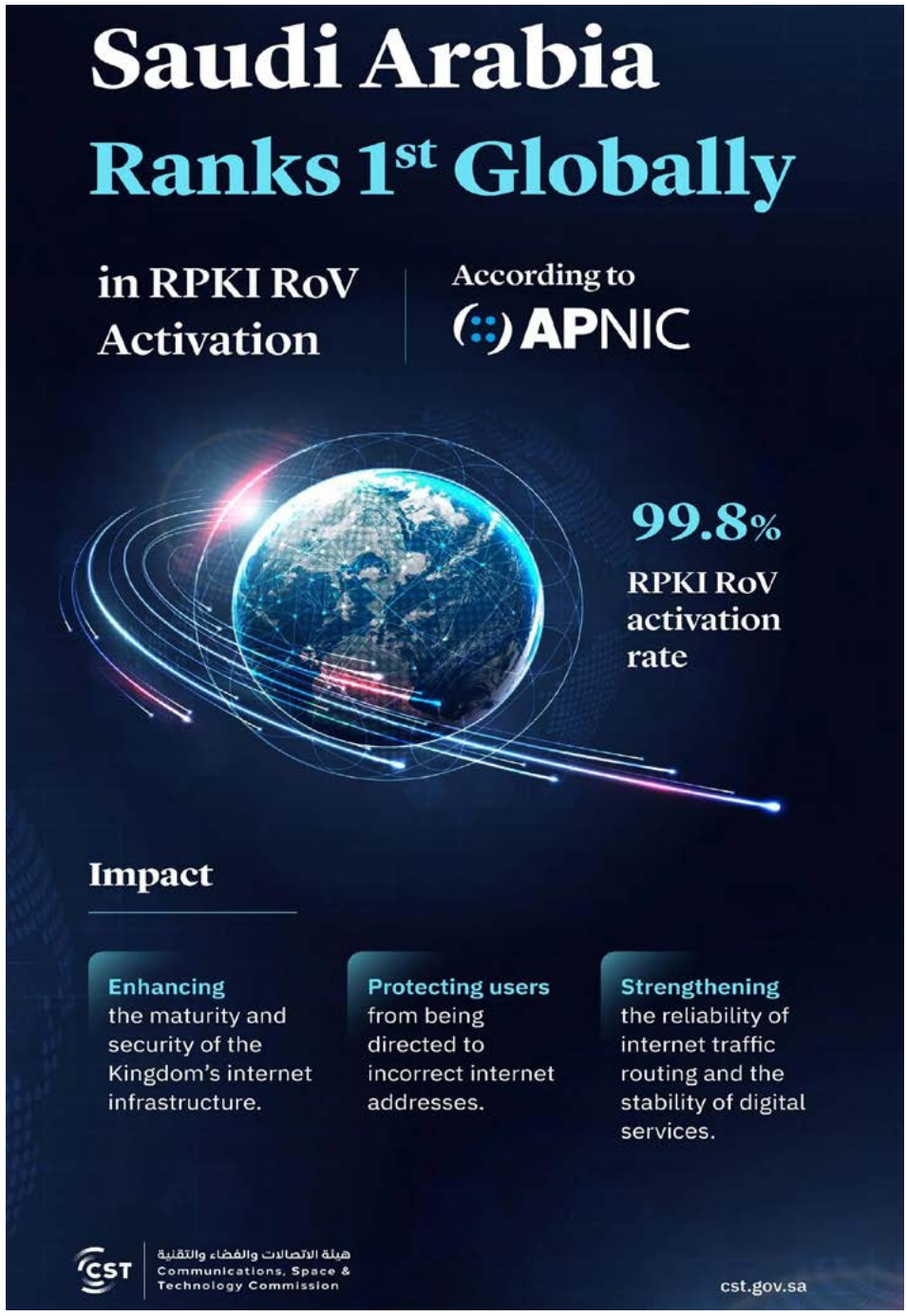
6G Spectrum Sharing Gains Importance as Testing Complexity Rises



During a session at RCR's 6G Forum, Derek Khlopin, deputy associate administrator of NTIA's Office of Spectrum, said the U.S. is pursuing a significant pipeline of spectrum for future wireless broadband, including work on bands that could support 5G and 6G Martha Suarez, head of the Dynamic Spectrum Alliance said it is becoming harder to find exclusive spectrum bands, making sharing an increasingly important part of the 6G concept. AT&T's Milap Majmundar said 5G/6G MRSS could be more efficient than 4G/5G DSS and could give operators more migration flexibility. LitePoint's Khushboo Kalyani said new bands, sharing mechanisms and other 6G capabilities could significantly increase the RF test matrix and development time. Spectrum sharing is expected to play an increasingly important role in future 6G technology as the industry looks for additional bandwidth, while new sharing mechanisms and radio capabilities could significantly increase the complexity of device testing, according to panelists at the RCR Wireless News' 6G Forum 2026. The panel brought together Martha Suarez, president of the Dynamic Spectrum Alliance; Khushboo Kalyani, product marketing manager at LitePoint; Milap Majmundar, AVP of emerging network, spectrum technologies and standards at AT&T Labs; and Derek Khlopin, deputy associate administrator of NTIA's Office of Spectrum. During a session at the forum, Khlopin said the U.S. is pursuing a significant pipeline of spectrum for future wireless broadband, including work on bands that could support 5G and 6G. "The current spectrum pipeline is not only significant, it's really unprecedented," Khlopin said. He said NTIA is working with federal agencies on spectrum studies while also considering international harmonization through the International Telecommunication Union. Suarez said identifying additional spectrum is only part of the challenge as demand for large bandwidth increases. "I agree with the concept that 6G should have sharing as part of the concept itself," she said. "I think it's harder now to find exclusive bands for everything." She said the industry is seeing increasing interest in spectrum sharing between different applications, in addition to approaches that allow different generations of mobile technology to share spectrum. Suarez also pointed to the possibility of more localized 6G deployments and application-specific spectrum use. Majmundar said multi-RAT spectrum sharing, or MRSS, could address some of the limitations associated with 4G/5G dynamic spectrum sharing. He said 4G/5G DSS involved overhead from control channels and fixed LTE common reference signals. Looking ahead to 5G/6G MRSS, he said the situation could be more efficient. "It was already agreed at the last 3GPP meeting that the overhead of the downlink control channel for any shared control channel resources would be limited to less than 3.5%," Majmundar said. "So that in itself gives a very good indication that MRSS for 5G, 6G would be much more efficient than what we had with 4G, 5G, DSS," he added. Majmundar also said 3GPP is examining whether some existing 5G radios with sufficient hardware capabilities could support a 6G interface through a software upgrade. "So the question is, if you had capable 5G radios, which have sufficient amount of hardware compute capability to support a 6G interface, can you actually do a software upgrade of existing hardware to upgrade to a 6G waveform or a 6G air interface?" he said. He stressed that the possibility depends on the underlying hardware. "This is about having the baseline ability for an operator to be able to upgrade existing capable 5G hardware to support a 6G interface where and when it makes sense," Majmundar said. The increased use of spectrum sharing and the addition of new radio capabilities will also affect device testing, according to Kalyani. "Historically, if you see like every time you add a new band, a new bandwidth, a new modulation scheme, you essentially increase the test matrix and it kind of increases linearly," she said. "But with 6G, I anticipate it to be multiplying a lot," Kalyani added. She pointed to new modulation schemes, spectrum-sharing mechanisms, and the possibility of dynamically sharing spectrum between 5G and 6G as factors that could increase the number of test combinations. "So that's going to multiply the test combinations. You're essentially now going to be testing a combination of combinations," she said. For Khlopin, the U.S. spectrum process will continue to involve decisions about clearing federal users and sharing. "We know there's going to be some of these bands, you know, remaining federal assets, at least for a significant amount of time," he said. "So you may have indefinite sharing or you may have more traditional methods like more static exclusion zones," Khlopin added. He said the spectrum studies and transition plans would determine how those approaches develop.

Saudi Arabia Ranks First Globally in Activating 'RPKI RoV' Technology

Saudi Arabia has ranked first globally in the activation of Resource Public Key Infrastructure Route Origin Validation (RPKI RoV), a technology that helps verify that an internet router is sending network traffic through the correct and authorized networks and reduces the risk of traffic being directed to untrusted websites or online services. The Kingdom achieved an activation rate of 99.8 percent, according to the latest measurements by APNIC, the regional internet registry administering IP addresses for the Asia Pacific. The Communications, Space and Technology Commission (CST) stated that the Kingdom's leading position in this indicator emphasizes the effectiveness of the communications sector's efforts to adopt best global practices. It also reflects the Kingdom's advanced competitive standing in international indicators, contributing to greater maturity, reliability, and security of its internet infrastructure. This achievement builds on the sector's ongoing efforts to advance the maturity of the Kingdom's internet ecosystem. Saudi Arabia ranks among the top five countries globally in the Internet Protocol Version 6 (IPv6) implementation indicator and first among G20 countries in the Domain Name System Security Extensions (DNSSEC) validation indicator. These achievements highlight the comprehensive advancement of the Kingdom's internet ecosystem, the integration of efforts across the sector, and the efficiency, security, and reliability of its infrastructure.



6GHz Wi-Fi Update – Steady Adoption and an Inflection Point

US 6GHz Wi-Fi adoption is accelerating, with Ookla showing six-fold growth since 2024 and Cisco reporting 48% usage at BottleRock. More power, AFC and simpler access could push adoption further. Five years ago, not a single consumer Wi-Fi device anywhere in the US was able to use the just-opened 6GHz spectrum band. Ever since, US 6GHz Wi-Fi policy has mostly been argued in the future tense. Will the market actually use the band? Will Wi-Fi 6E and Wi-Fi 7/8 devices arrive quickly enough? Would enterprises and service providers deploy 6GHz radios at scale, or would the band remain a regulatory highlight but with limited real-world utilization?

Two recent data points, from Ookla and Cisco, give a clear answer: the US and North American market is now moving from early adoption into a fast diffusion and uptake phase. Furthermore, the addition of extra features – and especially extra power – allows 6GHz usage to flourish and contribute to user experience and economic value to businesses. Firstly, according to Ookla's "Global State of Wi-Fi 2026" analysis from Android smartphones,

US usage of the 6GHz band rose more than 600% from just 2% of Speedtest users in Q1 2024 to 14% in Q1 2026. This is a good nationwide snapshot, primarily relating to Wi-Fi adoption and use within home broadband and some public venue locations. This explosive rise in adoption needs to be seen against a backdrop of a relatively modest pace of upgrades of home gateways and routers by certain major ISPs – often the limiting factor has been the access points, not the devices. Nevertheless, the six-fold growth over a two-year period is exactly what a rapid diffusion curve looks like at the "inflection point" stage in any adoption of new technologies or new spectrum bands. First comes regulatory authorization, then premium devices, then ISP CPE (consumer premises equipment), then mass replacement cycles. This type of adoption pattern is never linear. It starts slowly, then accelerates and compounds as residential routers, consumer smartphones, laptops and enterprise APs all begin to overlap and align in capability. The Ookla figures imply that the US is now entering that compounding phase. This timing also coincides with the rise of AI, robotics and video-based applications such as augmented reality, all of which will require additional network performance and reliability. Thus, even on its own, the Ookla data shows that 6GHz is rapidly becoming a standard part of the Wi-Fi landscape, with the trajectory pointing upward towards further growth and enhanced value. But an even more emphatic illustration of 6GHz's capabilities and potential comes from a real-world example – the BottleRock Napa Valley 2026 music festival. Its Wi-Fi deployment is described in a case study from Cisco. Over the three-day event, 48% of connections used 6GHz to connect tens of thousands of fans the moment they entered the venue, spanning not just smartphones (Android and Apple iOS) but also laptops, payment terminals, staff radios, and point-of-sale systems.

11 Dubai-based Companies Pledge to Integrate Agentic AI into Their Operations

In the presence of H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, a total of 11 Dubai-based companies representing diverse sectors have pledged to integrate Agentic AI technologies into their operations, with the support of Dubai Chambers. The pledge reflects the private sector's commitment to advancing the adoption of Agentic AI under Dubai's private sector Agentic AI transformation program, launched in May this year by H.H. Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the UAE, and Chairman of the Executive Council of Dubai. Overseen by Dubai Chambers, the program aims to enable businesses to harness the potential of these advanced technologies. The 11 companies that signed the pledge launched by Dubai Chambers are Emirates, DP World, AW Rostamani Group, Al Ansari Exchange, Dubai Islamic Bank, Kitopi, Dutco Group, Aster DM Healthcare, Innovo, Independent Food Company and HSA Group. Mohammad Ali Rashed Lootah, President and CEO of Dubai Chambers, said: "Agentic AI represents a new phase in the evolution of business models, offering significant opportunities for companies to transform their operations, improve service quality and make faster, more informed decisions. These capabilities can drive



greater operational efficiency, productivity and innovation. Agentic AI also provides businesses with a strategic tool to support growth, adapt to rapid changes in the global business environment, turn challenges into opportunities for expansion and create sustainable value." He added: "The pledge reflects growing recognition among businesses that Agentic AI is no longer a technology of the future, but an essential driver of efficiency, innovation and competitiveness. Its adoption will also enable companies to develop more agile operating models that can respond effectively to evolving business needs." The pledge marks a practical step towards enabling companies to move beyond exploring the potential of Agentic AI to adopting intelligent solutions across their operations, including service development, internal processes and decision-making. The aim is to enhance productivity and operational efficiency while encouraging investment in technologies that support long-term growth and enable businesses to respond to rapidly changing market conditions. The participation of companies from diverse sectors reflects growing

interest in adopting advanced technologies and reinforces collaboration between Dubai Chambers and the private sector to accelerate digital transformation. The initiative also contributes to developing a more innovative business environment that harnesses technology to create new economic opportunities and strengthen Dubai's global competitiveness. Dubai's private sector Agentic AI transformation program, includes specialized training tracks recently launched by Dubai Chambers to support the adoption of these technologies. The training aims to equip more than 14,000 companies represented within Dubai Chamber of Commerce's Business Groups and Business Councils with the knowledge and capabilities needed to integrate Agentic AI into their administrative and operational activities. The program also includes the establishment of specialized incubators for Agentic AI companies, alongside initiatives to support the development and adoption of Agentic AI solutions. Other areas of focus include developing young talent, expanding access to funding, facilitating knowledge sharing and strengthening capabilities across Dubai's business community.

Pakistan Deploys 1,782 5G Sites in 24 Cities Pakistan Deploys 1,782 5G Sites in 24 Cities

Pakistan has deployed 1,782 5G sites across 24 cities, with Jazz accounting for more than half of the total infrastructure, while the cheapest locally available 5G-compatible handset costs around Rs36,000, highlighting the affordability challenge for wider adoption of next-generation mobile services. According to details shared by Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Jazz has deployed 1,015 sites, China Mobile Pakistan (Zong) 640 and Ufone 127. The minister said 5G technology was introduced in the country following a multiband spectrum auction, with licenses signed on March 19, 2026. The rollout obligations, incorporated into the new Next Generation Mobile Services (NGMS) licenses, aim to improve existing 4G services alongside the phased introduction of 5G. The rollout began on March 20, 2026, under a four-phase plan approved by the federal government. The 24 cities where 5G services have been launched or are being consolidated include Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Faisalabad, Peshawar, Quetta, Multan, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Sheikhupura, Hyderabad, Abbottabad, Attock, Jhelum, Kasur, Kohat, Mardan, Rahim Yar Khan, Sahiwal, Sukkur, Swabi, Chitral and Gujrat. Karachi has the highest number of deployed 5G sites at 385, followed by Lahore with 373 and Islamabad with 276. Faisalabad has 144 sites, Peshawar 122, Rawalpindi 108, Multan 103, Sialkot 87, Quetta 65 and Sheikhupura 55. Jazz leads deployment in Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad and Multan, while Zong has a stronger presence in Peshawar, Quetta, Sheikhupura and Sialkot. Ufone's deployment remains comparatively limited, with 127 sites across the 24 cities. The minister said all cellular mobile operators had conducted technical 5G trials nationwide between 2020 and 2025. Under the rollout obligations, deployment in federal and provincial capitals is mandatory during the first phase, while operators may expand services to other cities according to their respective business models. The government has not specified a definitive timeline in the reply for making 5G services affordable for ordinary consumers. However, it pointed to the increasing availability of locally assembled 5G-compatible smartphones as a factor that could help reduce the cost of access. According to the minister, 607,093 5G-capable handsets were locally assembled between January and August 2026, while the cheapest currently available compatible handset was priced at approximately Rs36,000. The minister clarified that users with existing 4G-capable SIM cards do not need to replace their SIMs to use 5G services. However, consumers must have compatible handsets and access to deployed 5G network coverage to benefit from the technology. The growing local handset assembly ecosystem is expected to improve the availability of compatible devices and support affordability over time. The rollout represents a significant step in Pakistan's transition towards faster mobile broadband connectivity. However, the limited geographical footprint and cost of compatible smartphones remain key considerations for expanding access beyond major urban centers and making the technology accessible to a broader segment of the population.



Huawei and du Debut World's 1st Application of 50 Gbps E-Band Full Duplex for U6GHz Backhaul

Milestone strengthens du's transport network to support high-capacity U6GHz connectivity and the UAE's 10 Giga Vision du, the leading telecom and digital service provider, has achieved a network milestone with the integration of 50 Gbps E-band Full Duplex microwave backhaul into its U6GHz trial, in collaboration with Huawei. The world-first application successfully verifies high-capacity microwave backhaul capabilities to support du's upcoming nationwide U6GHz rollout. This follows the Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority's (TDRA) announcement of the world's first commercial launch of U6GHz networks in the UAE. du plans to leverage U6GHz technology to deliver peak rates of 10 Gbps downlink and 1 Gbps uplink, addressing growing data traffic and the increasing connectivity demands of AI-driven services. Delivering these capabilities at scale will require continued advancement across both radio access and wireless backhaul infrastructure. Through its collaboration with Huawei, du has deployed 50 Gbps E-band Full Duplex technology to address the backhaul capacity requirements of its upcoming U6GHz networks, mainly in areas where fiber availability is constrained and rapid deployment is required. Using advanced interference cancellation techniques, the technology enables data to be transmitted and received simultaneously on the same frequency, doubling spectral efficiency and helping address E-band spectrum constraints as network density and utilization increase. The milestone builds on du's large-scale deployment of 25 Gbps microwave technology across its transport network. As it prepares for the wider rollout of U6GHz, du is accelerating the introduction of 50 Gbps transmission capabilities to strengthen the network foundation needed for higher-capacity connectivity. The advancement will support scalable nationwide connectivity and contribute to the UAE's 10 Giga Vision. Saleem AlBlooshi, Chief Technology Officer at du, said: "This marks an important step in preparing our transport network for the capacity demands of U6GHz and the next generation of connectivity. As we move towards delivering 10 Gbps experiences, the evolution of the backhaul network is just as important as advances in radio access. Working with Huawei, we are increasing capacity and spectrum efficiency to support our U6GHz rollout and continued evolution from 5G-Advanced towards 6G. This milestone underlines our commitment to advancing the UAE's 10 Giga vision through network innovation that can scale with the country's digital ambitions." Jason Wang, President of Huawei Microwave Product Line, said: "Huawei is committed to innovation in E-band capacity and spectral efficiency to provide simplified, high-Capacity, and evolving microwave solutions that help customers build leading networks for business success. Huawei's E-band full duplex has achieved mature commercial deployment, and is the optimal choice for U6G Backhaul." du will continue to invest in advanced network technologies that strengthen the UAE's digital infrastructure and support the country's ambitions for the next generation of connectivity.



Hanoi Ranks Among World's Five Fastest Cities for Mobile Internet

Vietnam's capital has climbed five places in global mobile internet rankings, with median download speeds approaching 500 Mbps, while the country rose to ninth worldwide in August 2026. According to Ookla's August 2026 Speedtest Global Index, Hanoi recorded a median mobile internet download speed of 493.37 Mbps. The result propelled the Vietnamese capital five places higher in the global rankings, making it the world's fifth-fastest city for mobile internet. Alongside its impressive download performance, Hanoi recorded a median mobile upload speed of 93.98 Mbps and latency of just 19 milliseconds. Four cities ranked ahead of Hanoi: Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), with 702.28 Mbps; Al-Rayyan in Qatar, with 625.63 Mbps; Doha in Qatar, with 532.09 Mbps; and Dubai in the UAE, with 522.64 Mbps. The Vietnamese capital outperformed several major international cities, including Stockholm, Sweden, at 411.79 Mbps; Kuwait City, Kuwait, at 376.36 Mbps; and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, at 366.96 Mbps. Meanwhile, Ho Chi Minh City climbed four places to 54th globally, recording a median mobile download speed of 175.91 Mbps. In the fixed broadband rankings, Hanoi slipped two places to 30th worldwide, with a median download speed of 251.94 Mbps, an upload speed of 199.35 Mbps and latency of 4 milliseconds. Ho Chi Minh City moved up one position to 14th in the fixed broadband category, achieving a median download speed of 298.38 Mbps.

Vietnam climbs in global internet speed rankings

At the national level, Vietnam continued its strong performance in global telecommunications rankings in August 2026. For mobile internet, the country

recorded a median download speed of 219.93 Mbps, climbing one place to ninth worldwide. That figure was more than double the global median of 109.05 Mbps. The UAE remained the world's fastest country for mobile internet, with a median download speed of 675.51 Mbps, followed by Qatar at 535.94 Mbps and Kuwait at 399.92 Mbps. In fixed broadband, Vietnam ranked eighth globally, recording a median download speed of 301.48 Mbps, significantly higher than the global median of 129.68 Mbps. Singapore topped the fixed broadband rankings with a median download speed of 462.50 Mbps. Vietnam's rapid improvement in mobile internet performance, particularly in Hanoi, has been driven largely by the commercialization of 5G services and the continued expansion of network coverage. According to data from Vietnam's Ministry of Science and Technology, 4G networks now cover 99.8% of the population, while 5G coverage has reached approximately 91.9%.

Iraq Inks Data Center MoU with Huawei as Tech Giant Employs 10,000 Across Country

The Iraqi Ministry of Communications formalized a strategic partnership with global telecommunications giant Huawei, signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to construct modern enterprise data centers across the country. Finalized during the 5th Iraq International Information and Communications Technology Exhibition and Conference (ITEX 2026) in Baghdad, the agreement was concluded under the sponsorship and in the presence of Minister of Communications Mustafa Sanad between the state-owned General Company for Communications and Informatics and Huawei's executive leadership. The initiative is aimed at bolstering Iraq's sovereign cloud hosting, elevating service quality, and broadening international technical cooperation. On the sidelines of the expo, Huawei confirmed the extensive scope of its commercial footprint in Iraq, revealing that it actively partners with more than 240 domestic Iraqi enterprises across diverse sectors. Rafid Abbas Al-Khafaji, Vice President and Board Member of Huawei Iraq, told the Iraqi News Agency (INA) that this marked the company's inaugural participation as an exhibitor at ITEX, expressing admiration for the high caliber of domestic and multinational engagement. Al-Khafaji noted that Huawei presented specialized end-to-end solutions spanning oil and gas digitalization, telecommunications, smart transportation, healthcare systems,



artificial intelligence, and modular data center architecture. Reviewing the company's continuous commercial presence in Iraq since 2003, Al-Khafaji emphasized that Huawei remained fully operational through all domestic security and economic challenges, including uninterrupted on-site work by its Chinese engineering teams during the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, the corporation operates four major regional branches in Baghdad, Basra, Erbil, and Sulaymaniyah, supporting a wider ecosystem of over 10,000 employees. Addressing public misconceptions, Al-Khafaji clarified that while Huawei is widely recognized among consumers for consumer smartphones, handset sales represent the smallest segment of its business portfolio by volume. The firm's enterprise and carrier operations form the backbone of its Iraqi footprint, servicing major mobile network operators alongside key sovereign institutions, including the Ministries of Oil, Transport, Interior, and Defense, as well as the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers. Beyond central government networks, Huawei is driving provincial smart security solutions—such as Babylon Governorate's integrated municipal surveillance network—while advancing intelligent electric vehicle systems and cloud infrastructures designed to anchor Iraq's next-generation digital economy.

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SAMENA Regulatory Dashboard
Policy & Regulatory Reading from This Edition

The October 2026 edition covers regulatory developments involving spectrum utilization, advanced network infrastructure, satellite communications, internet security, consumer safeguards, and investment conditions. Preparations for the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-26) in Doha provide an international setting for discussions on infrastructure investment, resilience, and emerging connectivity requirements. At the national level, regulators are addressing different stages of network deployment, security implementation, and regulatory reform.

The UAE's Upper 6GHz developments, Oman's planned optical satellite ground stations, and Saudi Arabia's routing-security performance illustrate advances in infrastructure capability. Meanwhile, Bangladesh is reviewing spectrum renewal pricing, Pakistan is expanding 5G deployment, Iraq has strengthened subscriber verification requirements, and Qatar is consulting on universal service obligations. These developments reflect different national priorities, with regulatory attention extending from advanced connectivity to fundamental service and security requirements.

The October 2026 edition illustrates the range of responsibilities facing telecommunications regulators as markets pursue advanced connectivity while continuing to address infrastructure security, investment conditions, and consumer obligations.

The SAMENA Council's Regulatory Dashboard provides a concise reading of these developments and their policy relevance for the SA-ME-NA region, supporting common understanding among policymakers, regulators, operators, technology providers, infrastructure players, and wider ecosystem stakeholders.

Dashboard Overview

Regulatory Area	What This Edition Shows	Policy Relevance
International governance	Qatar signed the Host Country Agreement for PP-26 in Doha.	International engagement on telecommunications development, infrastructure investment, and institutional priorities.
Spectrum and backhaul	The UAE is advancing Upper 6GHz utilization and 50 Gbps E-band microwave backhaul.	Alignment of radio access capacity with supporting transmission infrastructure.
Space communications	Oman plans three optical ground stations by 2028; MicroGEO ground-segment technology is also advancing.	Authorization, technical requirements, and satellite-terrestrial coordination.
Network and subscriber security	Saudi Arabia reported 99.8% RPKI RoV activation; Iraq introduced SIM ownership limits and electronic ID verification.	Routing integrity, subscriber identification, and technical safeguards.
Spectrum economics and access	Bangladesh proposed renewal price reductions; Pakistan expanded 5G deployment; Qatar initiated a universal service consultation.	Investment conditions, deployment readiness, and access obligations.
Infrastructure resilience	Alternative terrestrial routing and proposed subsea protection measures feature in the edition.	Infrastructure protection, route diversity, and cross-border continuity.

1. Top Regulatory Indicators

High-capacity backhaul is becoming more relevant to spectrum execution. The UAE's Upper 6GHz developments, supported by du and Huawei's 50 Gbps E-band full-duplex microwave backhaul deployment, illustrate the relationship between radio access capacity and transmission infrastructure. Associated with the UAE's 10 Giga Vision, the development highlights the need to consider supporting backhaul arrangements when planning higher-capacity mobile networks, particularly where fiber availability is constrained.

Optical satellite infrastructure raises additional regulatory considerations. Durri Space's partnership with Cailabs provides for three laser optical ground stations in Oman by 2028, using TILBA-OGS technology. Separately, ST Engineering iDirect and MBSat introduced ground-segment technology for the MB Sat-1 MicroGEO satellite. These developments raise questions about how existing authorization and technical frameworks address optical links and satellite ground infrastructure.

Spectrum renewal economics remain relevant to investment capacity. Bangladesh's BTRC proposed 10%–30% reductions in renewal prices for the 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, and 2100 MHz bands, with estimated operator savings of Tk 3,744.7 crore over 12 years. The proposal illustrates how renewal pricing may affect network continuity and the financial capacity for further deployment.

Internet routing security offers measurable indicators of technical readiness. Saudi Arabia achieved first place globally in RPKI Route Origin Validation activation at 99.8%, according to the APNIC figures cited in the source, and first place among G20 countries in DNSSEC validation. These results demonstrate adoption of routing-security mechanisms, although broader security outcomes require separate assessment.

Subscriber verification and universal service remain active regulatory areas. Iraq's Communications and Media Commission introduced limits of seven regular and seven data SIMs per individual, supported by mandatory electronic ID reading. Qatar's Communications Regulatory Authority separately initiated a Universal Service Policy consultation covering broadband and voice. The measures address distinct regulatory responsibilities concerning subscriber safeguards and service availability.

Infrastructure protection and route diversity warrant continued attention. Ooredoo's OFN dark-fiber agreement with iQ Networks provides a terrestrial route through Iraq toward Türkiye, complementing the Fiber in Gulf subsea system. In the United Kingdom, White Paper CP 1683 proposes stronger subsea protection measures and penalties relating to sabotage. The developments highlight different aspects of infrastructure resilience, including alternative routing and physical protection.

2. Policy Implications

Policy Theme	Implication
Spectrum and transport planning	Higher-capacity mobile access requires adequate backhaul capability and corresponding spectrum arrangements.
Spectrum economics	Renewal pricing influences operator expenditure and investment capacity.
Satellite authorization	Optical ground infrastructure, D2D connectivity, and NTN coexistence raise licensing and technical coordination questions.
Security oversight	Routing-security adoption and subscriber identity verification require appropriate implementation and monitoring.
Infrastructure resilience	Subsea protection and alternative terrestrial routing merit consideration in network planning and cross-border arrangements.
Universal access	Qatar's consultation and Australia's Universal Outdoor Mobile Obligation illustrate different approaches to connectivity obligations.
Network modernization	Existing spectrum efficiency, 5G deployment, and technical upgrades remain important alongside 6G preparation.

The principal policy consideration is implementation readiness. Spectrum allocation, authorization processes, security requirements, and service obligations influence how infrastructure is deployed and operated, with appropriate measures varying according to national circumstances.

3. Questions for Regulators and Policymakers

Area	Practical Question
Spectrum planning	Are access-spectrum assignments supported by adequate backhaul arrangements?
Spectrum economics	How do renewal charges affect network continuity and future investment?
Satellite and NTN	Do existing frameworks adequately address optical ground infrastructure, D2D connectivity, and satellite-terrestrial coexistence?
Internet security	How are RPKI RoV and DNSSEC adoption being measured?
Subscriber safeguards	Are electronic ID verification and SIM ownership controls supported by workable compliance procedures?
Infrastructure resilience	Do regulatory arrangements account for subsea protection and alternative cross-border routing?
Universal service	How should broadband, voice, and satellite-assisted coverage obligations be defined?

4. Operator Implications

Readiness Area	Why It Matters
Spectrum efficiency	Zain Kuwait's six-carrier 5G-Advanced aggregation, achieving 3 Gbps peak rates, illustrates additional performance potential from existing spectrum resources.
5G deployment	Pakistan reported 1,782 deployed sites across 24 cities following its multiband auction, including 1,015 attributed to Jazz and 640 to Zong.
Voice and indoor coverage	Pakistan's PTA has advised consumers on VoLTE and Wi-Fi Calling to address service-quality and coverage limitations.
Fixed-network modernization	Algeria's expansion beyond four million FTTH subscriptions illustrates continued fiber deployment and copper-to-fiber migration.
WLAN operations	Cooperation involving the World WLAN Application Alliance highlights interference management and fault identification for enterprise and venue connectivity.
Security compliance	Routing-security practices and subscriber verification measures have practical implications for network administration and customer registration.

For operators, the emphasis is on efficient use of existing network resources, technical safeguards, deployment capability, and service quality. These operational requirements remain relevant as markets prepare for more advanced technologies.

5. Regional Coordination Watch

Coordination Area	Regional Relevance
ITU PP-26	The forthcoming Doha conference provides a setting for international engagement on telecommunications development and institutional governance.
SATRC-27	Regulatory discussions in Sri Lanka provide opportunities for cooperation among South Asian markets.
Satellite and D2D	Saudi Arabia's DRA and ITU masterclasses address licensing, market access, and spectrum coexistence considerations.
WLAN and 6GHz	Cooperation between the SAMENA Council and the World WLAN Application Alliance across Dubai, Muscat, and Shenzhen provides opportunities for dialogue on WLAN development and 6GHz utilization.
Cross-border infrastructure	Terrestrial connectivity through Iraq toward Türkiye, alongside Gulf subsea development, highlights shared infrastructure and route-diversity considerations.

Regional coordination has particular relevance where technical requirements, infrastructure, and services cross national boundaries. These activities provide practical opportunities for cooperation without implying uniform national regulatory approaches.

6. WRC / ITU / Spectrum Watch

UAE Upper 6GHz: TDRA updated the National Frequency Plan to prioritize Upper 6GHz for IMT. Etisalat's commercial U6GHz development complements the country's progress in high-capacity backhaul.

Bangladesh Spectrum Renewal: BTRC's proposed pricing reductions cover the 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, and 2100 MHz bands, with an estimated 12-year financial impact on operators.

Pakistan 5G Rollout: Deployment across 24 cities following the multiband auction provides an indication of implementation progress.

6GHz Wi-Fi Adoption: The cited Ookla analysis reported growth exceeding 600% in US 6GHz Wi-Fi adoption, reaching 14% of Speedtest users in Q1 2026.

Satellite and NTN Preparation: Saudi Arabia's DRA–ITU masterclasses addressed market access, satellite licensing, and D2D spectrum coexistence.

ITU PP-26: Qatar's Host Country Agreement establishes arrangements for the November 2026 Plenipotentiary Conference in Doha.

Closing Reading

The October 2026 edition illustrates the range of responsibilities facing telecommunications regulators as markets pursue advanced connectivity while continuing to address infrastructure security, investment conditions, and consumer obligations. The developments differ in regulatory status and technical scope, but they demonstrate how established requirements and emerging infrastructure considerations must be managed concurrently.

For policymakers and industry participants, the immediate value lies in clear authorization processes, proportionate safeguards, workable investment conditions, and demonstrable technical readiness. Regional cooperation can support these objectives where spectrum considerations, infrastructure dependencies, or cross-border services create shared regulatory requirements.

Saudi Arabia

stc Group's AI Network Leap

Saudi Arabia's stc Group is working toward an AI-native telecommunications network, with emphasis on core network intelligence, autonomous operations and support for future digital services.

The evolution of telecommunications networks toward greater intelligence and automation is central to stc Group's vision for 2030. With artificial intelligence becoming increasingly important to network performance and emerging digital services, the Saudi telecommunications group is working toward an AI-native network by 2030, with AI intended to form part of network design, functions and operations. This direction is presented in its AI Native Core Network White Paper, introduced at Network X 2026 on October 19, 2026.

At the centre of this vision is the telecommunications core network, which manages user connections and communications services. stc's approach focuses on integrating AI into this environment to improve reliability, allocate resources more efficiently and reduce manual intervention in network operations. The development responds to increasing network complexity associated with advances in artificial intelligence and 5G-Advanced.
The requirements of emerging digital services are an important consideration. AI-enabled calling and immersive communications require responsive connectivity, while AI agents introduce the need for closer coordination between communications and computing resources. Such applications place additional demands on networks to accommodate different service requirements and changing conditions.

> *The AI Native Core Network White Paper establishes a 2030 direction built around intelligent infrastructure, network functions and increasingly autonomous operations.*

The AI Native Core Network White Paper identifies three areas of development: AI-native infrastructure, AI-native network functions and autonomous operations. The first concerns the infrastructure needed to support AI workloads within the network environment. The second focuses on incorporating intelligence into core network functions, while the third addresses greater automation of network operations, including resource allocation and fault recovery.

Through these developments, stc expects to improve the efficiency of network operations and accelerate responses to technical problems. Greater automation is also intended to reduce the engineering effort devoted to routine maintenance and fault handling, allowing network teams to concentrate more on service improvement and operational oversight.



> *The 2030 vision extends to preparations for 5G-Advanced and future 6G applications. stc aims to establish a scalable network foundation capable of supporting AI services, intelligent interactions and new communications requirements.*

The 2030 vision extends to preparations for 5G-Advanced and future 6G applications. stc aims to establish a scalable network foundation capable of supporting AI services, intelligent interactions and new communications requirements. Its approach reflects the transition from cloud-native networks, which rely on flexible software-based infrastructure, toward architectures that incorporate AI directly into network functions and operations.

The initiative is also relevant to stc Group's wider digital activities. Beyond telecommunications, its portfolio includes digital infrastructure, cloud computing, cybersecurity, the Internet of Things, digital payments, digital media and digital entertainment. The group reports having 13 subsidiaries with operations across Saudi Arabia, the Middle East, North Africa and Europe.

The AI Native Core Network White Paper establishes a 2030 direction built around intelligent infrastructure, network functions and increasingly autonomous operations. The October 19 public announcement identifies the intended capabilities and operational benefits, but does not specify detailed deployment phases, investment figures or measurable interim milestones.

For stc Group, the 2030 vision places AI at the centre of its planned core network evolution, with the objective of improving operational performance and preparing its telecommunications infrastructure for future digital services.

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REGULATORY DEVELOPMENTS

What the Middle East's Leadership in U6GHz development Means for Operators Globally

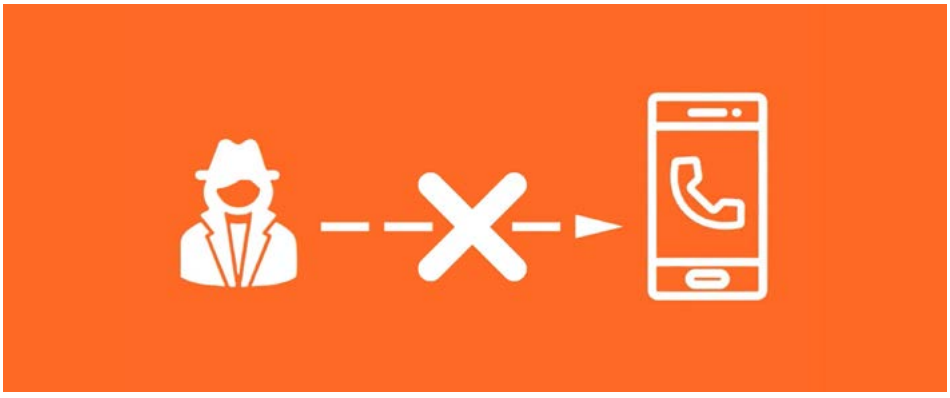


UAE regulator TDRA is helping the region to take the lead on upper 6GHz (U6GHz) development through regulatory frameworks. In November 2024, TDRA updated the UAE's National Frequency Plan, emphasizing the key role that U6GHz can play in International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT). This stance has been echoed by industry bodies such as the GSMA, which has advised governments and regulators to make the full U6GHz band available for macro-cell mobile use. With its ultra-wide bandwidth and low-latency characteristics, U6GHz can help meet the growing connectivity demands driven by AI, 5G-Advanced and eventually 6G. China, Europe and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries are among many regions worldwide that have expressed support for using the upper 6GHz band for IMT. At the same time, commercialization of the band is moving forward. U6GHz spectrum has been allocated in the UAE, Hong Kong and Macao, while mainland China, Europe, and many emerging markets are preparing their own allocation processes. The ecosystem around U6GHz is therefore rapidly forming; customer premises equipment already has been deployed, while in 2027 the technology is expected to expand into the device ecosystem through the launch of compatible flagship devices. The UAE is a major driver of the push towards U6GHz, having conducted early verification of prototypes of the technology and then becoming the first country to allocate U6GHz spectrum to operators in 2024. This has helped to develop the ecosystem; it was the first market to commence commercial CPE testing which later expanded to Oman, Uzbekistan and China. The country has also led the way in terms of U6GHz commercialization, with operator Etisalat signing the world's first U6GHz contract in June 2026. Just three months later, the operator announced the world's first commercial U6GHz deployment. TRDA's U6GHz policy will have an impact beyond operators in the UAE, and indeed the Middle East region, by demonstrating the role of regulation in readying nascent technologies for commercial deployment. This requires a foundation of academic research and technical expertise, as well as coordination over spectrum identification and investment from the operator side. As Artificial Intelligence advances, the Middle East is preparing to lead the transformation. Across the GCC, operators are spearheading 5G-Advanced deployment, accelerating U6GHz adoption, and building highly resilient digital infrastructure. Backed by strong government support and its strategic geographic position linking Asia, Europe, and Africa, the region is not merely following the AI revolution - it is helping to define it. Powered by national digital strategies, hyperscale AI investments, and world-class digital infrastructure, the region is fast developing into a global hub for artificial intelligence.

ITU Advances Global Efforts to Combat Fraudulent Communications

Fraudulent communications like number spoofing are now becoming more concerning with the rise of robocalls and the fast-growing ability of artificial intelligence (AI) to impersonate people's voices. New standards from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) aim to change this. An ITU roundtable co-organized with India's Department of Telecommunications alongside India Mobile Congress on 9 October will discuss the practical dimensions of implementing the standards and the potential for a supporting proof-of-concept initiative. The roundtable is open to everyone interested and will also be available online. New standards developed by ITU-T Study Group 11 (Protocols, testing and combating counterfeiting) provide a set of tools to resolve this problem with digital public-key certificates to authenticate calling-

line identification (CLI). ITU standard Q.3057 specifies the architecture and the trust anchor model; Q.3062 specifies the signaling procedures and the structure of protected messages; and Q.3063 specifies the procedures for CLI authentication. Associated amendments to ITU standards Q.763 and Q.931 (both for Signaling System 7) and Q.1902.3 (Bearer Independent Call Control) specify the protocol extensions that carry the certificate, the signature and the authentication result. Two upcoming ITU standards now in their approval process will further enhance this new ITU toolset for CLI authentication using digital signatures. The upcoming Q.3070 specifies new requirements for issuing the certificates, together with the mechanism for sharing anchor information to ensure trust across national borders. The associated governance framework and operational requirements will be provided by another upcoming ITU standard, E.1122, developed by ITU-T Study Group 2 (Operational aspects). As the new standards near completion, the roundtable in India will pave the way for governments and telecom companies to gain and share advance experience in implementing the required technical mechanisms. It will also explore how an ITU proof-of-concept initiative could help test solutions built to the new standards and gather lessons learnt to inform future standards work.



Malaysia Reveals Timeline for SALAM Subsea Cable Project

A plan by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) to build a new subsea cable connecting peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak is reportedly moving forward, with construction scheduled to begin early next year. According to the government's Bernama news agency, the Communications Ministry submitted a written reply to a question from Parliament, saying work on the SALAM project – which is being developed under the Universal Service Provision (USP) framework – is scheduled to start sometime in Q1 2027, and will be completed in the fourth quarter of 2029. That said, the MCMC is still evaluating submissions for the Sambungan Kabel Dasar Laut MADANI (SALAM) cable following the publication of the invitation document for the project this past July, the report said. The SALAM project aims to build a 5,582-km subsea cable comprising four segments interconnected by ten landing stations – three in Sarawak, five in Sabah and two in peninsular Malaysia.

The MCMC says the cable system will enhance network redundancy, reduce the risk of service disruptions and strengthen Malaysia's overall communications resilience.



ITU Outlines Protocols for Quantum Key Distribution

One of the latest additions to quantum communications standards from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) provides guidance on protocols for quantum key distribution (QKD), a means of enabling secure encryption as quantum technologies outstrip the capabilities of earlier cryptography. The ITU standard X.1711 (Framework of QKD protocols in QKD networks) is the first-ever international standard on QKD protocols, coming more than four decades after the first QKD protocol was proposed in 1984. It adds to ITU's standards for QKD networking and security, which support quantum-safe communications across the large-scale networks that underpin today's global communications. Rather than defining one specific protocol, the X.1711 standard specifies what all QKD protocols share, the common architecture they need, and the operational workflow to keep information safe from quantum-level attacks. It also explains theoretical security proofs, new security models, and related concepts. Developed by ITU-T Study Group 17 (Security), X.1711 provides a primary reference for QKD security certification as countries and organizations consider various modules. It also aims to guide future standards. Ultimately, the standard can help select a certified QKD module and keep information and transactions secure in the quantum age. ITU's standards work is closely linked to testbeds where QKD is being put into practice around the globe. Singapore's National Quantum-Safe Network (NQSN) Testbed, for example, works closely with ITU-T Study Group 17 on QKD-related standardization issues. In a nod to this contribution, the NQSN team was recently named a runner up in the Digital Frontiers category of the Digital@ UNGA 2026 Awards organized by ITU and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). ITU has worked on standards for QKD networks since 2018, with protocol aspects addressed by ITU-T Study Group 11 (Protocols, testing and combating counterfeiting) and architecture-related aspects by ITU-T Study Group 13 (Future networks), while core security aspects remain with ITU-T Study Group 17. Building on X.1711, future ITU standards could specify particular QKD protocols in detail. ITU's work on certification complements guidance from other bodies, such as the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI), with a widely recognized protection profile for QKD modules, and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), with their joint ISO/IEC standard on security requirements and testing and evaluation methods for QKD. A growing field for ITU is satellite-based QKD, which can extend secure key distribution over long distances. Study Group 13 is devising the necessary network architecture while Study Group 17 prepares a technical report on security considerations. Many organizations are either establishing quantum standards or contributing to related processes. To help coordinate all these streams, ITU maintains a public database of quantum standards. The global database forms part of ITU's online standards landscape tool.



PTA Inspects 115 Telecom Sites in One Week to Improve Mobile Service Quality

The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) continues to strengthen field monitoring and inspections of mobile network infrastructure across the country to improve service quality, coverage, and availability. During the week from 30th September to 7th October, 2026, PTA's zonal offices' teams inspected total 115 telecom sites across various regions of Pakistan. The inspections covered 39 sites in Lahore, 17 in Karachi, 16 in Sukkur, 14 each in Multan and Rawalpindi, 8 in Quetta, 4 in Abbottabad, and 3 in Gilgit. The field teams assessed network performance, voice and data services quality, coverage, and the availability of backup power arrangements. Improvements in mobile service quality have also been observed in several of the areas covered by these inspections. The monitoring exercise focused on identifying issues affecting consumers, including call connection failures, dropped calls, slow mobile internet speeds, and network coverage gaps. Field teams also reviewed consumer feedback and complaints to better understand service-related challenges. Engagement with local administrations, elected representatives, and community members were undertaken to facilitate identification and resolution of issues affecting mobile services in different areas. Where deficiencies or technical issues are identified at telecom sites and towers, the relevant mobile operators are directed to undertake necessary corrective measures. These interventions are aimed at addressing service-related shortcomings and ensuring sustained improvements in network performance. PTA remains committed to strengthening regulatory oversight, monitoring mobile operators' performance, and ensuring timely identification and resolution of consumer concerns. These ongoing efforts aim to improve the quality, reliability, and availability of mobile telecommunications services and enhance the overall experience of consumers across Pakistan.

BTRC Proposes Spectrum Price Cuts of Up To 30%

The telecom regulator has proposed cutting spectrum prices by 10 percent to 30 percent for the renewal of airwaves held by the country's three mobile operators, reducing the government's potential revenue by Tk 3,744.7 crore over 12 years and four months. The Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) sent the proposal to the Posts and Telecommunications Division on October 15 for approval. The proposal covers 79.2 megahertz (MHz) of spectrum held by Grameenphone (32.4MHz), Banglalink (24.4MHz) and Robi (22.4MHz) across three bands used for voice calls and internet services. The 900MHz band provides wider coverage and better indoor connectivity, the 1800MHz band balances coverage and capacity, while the 2100MHz band supports higher data traffic. The operators' current spectrum licenses expire on November 10. Renewal is essential to maintain existing services, meet growing data demand and improve network quality. The proposed prices would fall by 10 percent to 30 percent across the three bands. The 900MHz rate would match the price paid for 700MHz spectrum at an auction in January 2026. At the proposed rates, spectrum renewal would cost around Tk 13,100.5 crore, compared with Tk 16,845.2 crore at current rates. The final cost would depend on the approved prices and calculation period, with taxes, VAT and other fees charged separately. According to its proposal, the BTRC based the new prices on a dedicated study approved by the ministry. Following a recommendation from a research steering committee, it appointed a development economist as a special consultant under public procurement rules. The consultant used four methods to assess spectrum prices. An income-based model projected future cash flows, excluded earnings from other assets and ran thousands of simulations to account for uncertainty. An engineering model estimated the tower-building costs operators could avoid by holding more spectrum, treating this as the maximum they would rationally pay. A third method compared international spectrum prices after adjusting for purchasing power, income levels and license duration. The fourth, a socio-economic model, assessed wider economic benefits beyond government revenue, including better service quality and economic growth enabled by faster mobile data. The consultant recommended a price range rather than a single figure because the risks were unequal. Overpricing could leave spectrum unsold and waste its economic potential, while slightly lower prices could still generate government revenue through taxes on increased economic activity. Prices for other bands were calculated using 1800MHz as the base, with multipliers reflecting coverage, the equipment ecosystem and cost. The study warned that high spectrum prices could discourage operators from buying airwaves, reducing government revenue and investment in network expansion. Citing international research that a 10 percent increase in broadband penetration raises per capita income by 0.73 percent, the study estimated that a 1 percent increase would generate Tk 6,549 crore in annual economic benefits, based on Bangladesh's $455 billion GDP. At Tk 170 crore per MHz, assuming operators pass on 75 percent of the cost, the annual net economic gain would be Tk 1,674 crore. After accounting for corporate tax and revenue from increased economic activity, the government's net loss would be around Tk 25 crore. The proposal was endorsed at the Spectrum Management Committee's 110th meeting and the commission's 312th meeting. The renewal is part of the BTRC's spectrum roadmap through 2035, which includes allocating more frequencies for 5G and renewing other bands. The proposal is awaiting final government approval. Mobile operators have questioned the proposed renewal prices, warning that arbitrary pricing and high costs could weaken competition and discourage investment. Shahed Alam, chief corporate and regulatory affairs officer at Robi Axiata, said the company had not received official information about the proposed rates but was concerned by media reports. "What we have learned from media reports raises serious concerns that the pricing basis is arbitrary and discriminatory, undermining transparency and equal treatment," he said. Shahed said the decision would determine whether the



market remained competitive or moved towards a single-player market. "We urge the government and regulator to adopt a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory pricing framework that ensures a level playing field, protects consumer choice, sustains competition and encourages long-term investment," he said. Tanveer Mohammad, chief corporate affairs officer at Grameenphone, also said the company had received no official information from the BTRC. He added that spectrum prices in Bangladesh were much higher than in other countries. "We believe the prices and terms set by the BTRC will be customer-friendly and supportive of the country's digital progress," he said. BTRC Chairman Md Emdad Ul Bari said the proposed renewal prices were the first to be based on a study using specific methods. "We have set the price suggested by a study that used certain methods," he said. Addressing concerns that lower prices would reduce government revenue, he said the regulator aimed to sell at least 80 percent of the spectrum available for renewal. If prices were too high, some spectrum could remain unsold, further reducing revenue. Responding to operators' criticism that the proposed rates were high and arbitrary, he said, "If you reduce the fee, they will not be satisfied either." Asked why 900MHz spectrum was priced at Tk 237 crore per MHz, matching the price of 700MHz spectrum, Bari said lower-band frequencies such as 900MHz were highly valuable and had been priced accordingly.

UAE Space Sector Expands Economic Footprint Through Innovation, Investment: Report

The UAE's space sector has evolved beyond scientific and exploration missions and satellite launches into an integrated economic ecosystem spanning infrastructure, manufacturing, data, artificial intelligence, research and development, investment, international partnerships and talent development. Developments in 2026 point to a shift from building space capabilities to expanding their use and translating them into economic and technological value. This transformation is driven by a national vision aimed at doubling space economy revenues, increasing the sector's economic added value by 60 percent, doubling national companies and start-ups, increasing investment in space assets and infrastructure, and expanding UAE space exports. The National Space Strategy 2031, approved by the UAE Cabinet on March 29, 2026, places the economy at the heart of the sector's next phase. It seeks to build a resilient, investment-attractive ecosystem, strengthen global leadership in space partnerships and market access, and develop competitive infrastructure. The previous strategy resulted in the development of 30 satellites, while the number of entities operating in the UAE space economy has exceeded 170. Space42 illustrates the shift in value creation from satellites to the data and services they generate. In June, Foresight-3, Foresight-4 and Foresight-5 entered full operation, expanding the Foresight Earth Observation constellation to five satellites providing high-resolution geospatial intelligence. Integration and testing were completed in Abu Dhabi, while cooperation with ICEYE supports technology transfer and supply-chain localization. Imaging resolution reaches 25 centimeters, while the AI-powered GIQ platform transforms raw data into actionable intelligence within minutes, potentially reducing emergency response times by up to 90 percent and predictive maintenance costs by up to 30 percent. In May, the UAE launched the International Space Cooperation Program, allocating AED1 billion to support international cooperation in space research and development. The program aims to connect UAE research institutions with global counterparts, accelerate technology development and knowledge transfer, and turn R&D outcomes into commercially valuable applications and industries. It also supports technology localization, patents and talent development. The expansion of space manufacturing became evident in September, when Marlan Space and Loft Orbital announced a consortium investing US$1 billion in France to develop Altair-Next Gen, with the constellation to be manufactured in Abu Dhabi. The initial phase comprises 50 satellites equipped with radar, optical and other sensors and onboard computing capabilities, with the first 10 already in production. The project combines UAE capital and manufacturing capabilities with European supply chains. In parallel, Space42 and Viasat signed a binding agreement to establish Equatys, a shared space and ground infrastructure platform, with initial equity commitments of up to US$1 billion. The platform aims to extend mobile coverage to areas beyond the reach of terrestrial networks. The space economy's reach is not confined to orbit. In January, Space42 and the International Fund for Houbara Conservation agreed to deploy artificial intelligence and unmanned aerial systems for Houbara conservation. In



September, Space42 subsidiary Mira Aerospace used a High Altitude Platform System to monitor wildfires in Spain, while Leonav-1 demonstrated its ability to receive and process navigation signals from orbit, opening potential applications in intelligent transport, aviation and autonomous vehicles. On the scientific front, the Emirates Mars Mission's Hope Probe had its mission extended by another three years to continue collecting data on the Martian atmosphere. The mission has made available more than 10 terabytes of scientific data, contributed to more than 35 peer-reviewed papers and helped develop the capabilities of more than 58 Emirati students. The Emirates Mission to the Asteroid Belt (EMA) continues to advance. Spanning 13 years, including six years of spacecraft development and a seven-year flight phase, the mission will study seven asteroids. It has allocated 50 percent of its work to UAE-based private-sector companies and is supported by the UAE Space Fund of around US$1 billion. In September, the Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) completed integration of the RTx payload onto Rashid Rover 2 as preparations continued for its mission to the far side of the Moon. The ground-penetrating radar transmitter will study the lunar subsurface, probing up to 100 meters below the surface. MBRSC and NASA are also discussing its potential use in future cooperation on a sustainable Moon base. Investment in human capital continues through initiatives such as the Arab Youth Space Hackathon, National Space Academy and Space42's Future Spacers Program. The number of entities operating in the sector tripled between 2020 and 2025, while the number of UAE universities offering specialized space programs doubled

between 2015 and 2025. The UAE has also strengthened its role in space governance and international cooperation, expanding partnerships with international institutions and agencies. It signed a memorandum of understanding with the African Space Agency covering Earth observation, disaster management, food security and capacity development. The UAE space sector's progress in 2026 reflects a fundamental shift — from launching missions to developing integrated value chains spanning manufacturing, assembly and testing, operations, data analytics and services.

FCC Seeks Comment on Direct-To-Device Satellite Use of Unlicensed Spectrum

On August 6, 2026, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission) adopted a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) seeking comment on enabling, for the first time, a generally applicable regulatory framework to permit direct-to-device (D2D) communications between satellites and devices operating under the FCC's Part 15 rules. Specifically, the NPRM proposes new Earth-to-space (uplink) allocations in certain spectrum bands used by unlicensed devices and proposes to allow the use of devices certified under Part 15 of the Commission's rules within authorized "spacecraft" (including "space stations" and "satellites"). The NPRM also seeks comment on whether and how satellite space-to-Earth (downlink) operations could be authorized in designated bands in the future and on a wide range of technical, legal, and policy issues to facilitate the development and deployment of uplink and downlink operations in unlicensed spectrum bands. Comments are due on or before November 9, 2026, and reply comments are due on or before December 7, 2026.

Key Takeaways

The NPRM proposes new mobile-satellite service (MSS) Earth-to-space allocations in the 2.400-2.4835 GHz (2.4 GHz) and 5.725-5.850 GHz (5.8 GHz) bands for operations on an unprotected, non-interference basis, while generally relying on existing Part 15 technical limits for user devices.

The NPRM seeks comment on whether satellite downlinks should be authorized in the 5.8 GHz band or other bands currently available for Part 15 operations and, if so, what technical safeguards would be required.

The Commission is considering multiple approaches, including license-by-rule and blanket licensing models to authorize D2D operations.

The FCC proposes to clarify that Part 15 devices may be used aboard authorized spacecraft and seeks comment on broader space-based applications, including extravehicular activities (EVA), communications between spacecraft, and in-space servicing, assembly, and manufacturing (ISAM) operations.

Companies with interests in D2D operations, emergent space industries, Wi-Fi, internet of things (IoT), or other unlicensed technologies should consider whether to participate in this proceeding.

ETSI Launches First of Its Kind Standards to Measure Environmental Impact of Smartphone

ETSI announces the publication of ETSI EN 304 132: Product Specific Requirements for Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) of Smartphones, the first standard of its kind for the ICT industry that enables the environmental impact of smartphone models to be assessed consistently and comparably. The standard is derived from the international recognized and widely adopted ETSI EN 203 199 which defines a methodology for environmental Life Cycle Assessment of ICT goods, networks and services. It will help the ICT industry demonstrate environmental improvements over time. 1.3 billion smartphones were sold globally in 2023. Of all smartphones in use, around 580 million tons of greenhouse gases (GHG) are emitted annually—around 1% of all worldwide emissions. Although smartphone manufacturers regularly publish sustainability reports, differences in methodologies, assumptions and data used make it increasingly difficult to compare results between devices. A standardized format is required to not only fairly compare players in the industry, but to ensure the credible tracking of environmental reductions. ETSI's new standard establishes this common framework, covering the full life cycle of a smartphone—including raw materials, manufacturing, distribution, use, and end of life. Environmental performance is becoming an increasingly important factor in product design, procurement and corporate sustainability reporting. Until now, differences in LCA methodologies have created difficulties, and limited the value of environmental data for manufacturers, operators, customers and other stakeholders. By making it easier to distinguish genuine environmental improvements, manufacturers have a more credible way to demonstrate progress; operators and other buyers can compare devices and multi-vendor portfolios consistently; and customers have greater confidence in the environmental information published about smartphones.

"Smartphone manufacturers are working to reduce the environmental impact of their products, but those efforts need a credible and consistent way to be measured," said Anders Andrae, Chair of the working group Mobile ICT devices within the ETSI Technical Committee Environmental Engineering. "Our standard, which is a first for the industry, gives a common benchmark for everyone to adhere to, and ensures that all players are making genuine progress towards sustainability goals."

Côte d'Ivoire at ITU PP-26

Advancing Emerging Market Representation in Global Telecommunications Governance

As the ITU prepares to elect its Council for 2027–2030, Côte d'Ivoire's candidature illustrates the relevance of emerging-market experience to international telecommunications cooperation.

The International Telecommunication Union's Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-26), scheduled for 9–27 November 2026 in Doha, will elect the ITU Council for 2027–2030. The election comes at a time when telecommunications development increasingly involves interconnected questions of infrastructure investment, spectrum management, technical standards, affordability and the adoption of emerging technologies. How these matters are addressed internationally has practical implications for countries operating under different economic, regulatory and technological conditions.

For telecommunications markets across South Asia, the Middle East, North Africa and beyond, participation in international decision-making is particularly relevant. Operators and policymakers face continuing demands to expand connectivity, sustain network investment and improve infrastructure resilience while responding to technological change. Their experiences can contribute to international discussions concerning the economic and technical conditions necessary to achieve common telecommunications objectives.

Connecting International Decisions with Market Realities

The ITU Council oversees the Union's activities between Plenipotentiary Conferences, examines strategic and financial matters, and supports the implementation of decisions adopted by Member States. Its responsibilities require an understanding of the relationship between international priorities and the circumstances in which countries pursue them.

> *In September 2026, Côte d'Ivoire hosted the fourth and final African Preparatory Meeting for PP-26 in Abidjan, providing a setting for African administrations to examine shared priorities ahead of the Conference.*



This relationship is especially important in telecommunications development and standardization. Technical coordination supports network interoperability and international communications, while economic and policy considerations influence investment conditions, service affordability and connectivity expansion. These issues are closely connected for telecommunications operators and regulators across emerging markets, including those represented within the SA-ME-NA region.

Côte d'Ivoire's candidature for the 2027–2030 Council term provides a relevant example of participation in these areas. Having previously served on the Council during 1999–2002 and 2019–2022, the country has maintained involvement across the ITU's three Sectors: Telecommunication Development (ITU-D), Telecommunication Standardization (ITU-T) and Radiocommunication (ITU-R). Its representatives have also held specific responsibilities within the Union. Regina Fleur Assoumou Bessou chaired ITU-D Study Group 1 from 2017 to 2025 and was subsequently elected Chair of the Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG) in November 2025. In ITU-T, Lanciné Fofana serves as a Vice-Chair of Study Group 3 for the 2025–2028 study period, addressing economic and policy issues relating to international telecommunications.

These responsibilities demonstrate experience in areas where international telecommunications policies, development programmes and economic considerations intersect. Such participation is relevant to the Council's work because the Union must consider both the objectives agreed upon internationally and the conditions affecting their implementation.

> *Côte d'Ivoire's commitments for the forthcoming ITU Council term include contributing to the priorities of the ITU Strategic Plan 2027–2030, promoting universal, inclusive and affordable connectivity, strengthening South–South digital cooperation, fostering innovation, green digital technologies and digital skills development, and promoting the leadership of women and young people in the digital sector.*

Regional Cooperation and the Next Council Term

Regional consultation also contributes to the preparation of international telecommunications decisions. In September 2026, Côte d'Ivoire hosted the fourth and final African Preparatory Meeting for PP-26 in Abidjan, providing a setting for African administrations to examine shared priorities ahead of the Conference.

Across emerging markets, regional cooperation helps countries address common challenges while recognizing differences in national circumstances. These include the economics of extending connectivity into underserved areas, technical capacity development, spectrum coordination and the need for sustainable telecommunications investment. Experience gained through regional processes can consequently inform participation in the ITU's wider institutional activities.



ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP ACROSS THE THREE SECTORS OF THE UNION

ITU-D - Development

Chair	Vice-Chair
Telecommunication Development Advisory Group (TDAG)	Council Expert Group on the Information Trends Report (RTI)

ITU-T - Standardization

Vice-Chair	Vice-Chair
Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group (TSAG)	ITU-T Study Group 3 (SG3)

ITU-R - Radiocommunications

Vice-Chair	Vice-Chair
ITU-R Study Group 4 (SG4)	ITU-R Study Group 5 (SG5)

Côte d'Ivoire's commitments for the forthcoming ITU Council term include contributing to the priorities of the ITU Strategic Plan 2027–2030, promoting universal, inclusive and affordable connectivity, strengthening South–South digital cooperation, fostering innovation, green digital technologies and digital skills development, and promoting the leadership of women and young people in the digital sector.

These commitments accompany a candidature supported by previous Council membership, continued participation in technical and development activities, and experience in regional consultation. They indicate the areas in which Côte d'Ivoire intends to contribute if elected.

At PP-26, Member States will elect 48 countries to the ITU Council, including 13 from Africa. The composition of the next Council will matter to the Union's ability to oversee its responsibilities while taking account of the differing conditions facing its membership.

For emerging telecommunications markets, meaningful international participation offers an opportunity to bring practical development experience into discussions that influence telecommunications priorities worldwide. Côte d'Ivoire's candidature illustrates this relationship between national experience, regional cooperation and institutional responsibility, as Member States prepare to determine the Council's membership for 2027–2030.

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Algeria

Algeria has surpassed four million fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) subscriptions, marking a sharp acceleration in the country's broadband rollout as authorities push to expand high-speed connectivity and modernize digital infrastructure. The milestone was marked at Algérie Télécom's headquarters in a ceremony attended by senior company officials, technical staff and media representatives, with the Minister of Post and Telecommunications Sid Ali Zerrouki highlighting the scale of the expansion and the government's next targets. The number of fiber-optic subscriptions has risen more than 75-fold from approximately 53,000 in the summer of 2020 to four million in early October 2026. Growth has accelerated in recent years, from around one million subscriptions at the end of 2023 to 1.7 million a year later and 2.6 million by December 2025. A further 1.4 million households were connected during the first nine months of 2026, underscoring the pace of deployment. The government aims to exceed 4.4 million FTTH subscriptions by the end of 2026 and connect another 300,000 households in the first quarter of 2027. The longer-term objective is to complete the transition from copper-based networks to fiber, strengthening network capacity and improving the reliability of digital services.

(October 12, 2026) www.dzair-tube.dz



Bahrain

Bahrain's telecom sector continues to dominate as the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority reported a BD15.4 million surpluses for 2025, while mobile subscriptions surged to a record 2.387 million. That's 150 mobile subscriptions for every 100 people in the kingdom.

Key figures: Mobile subscriptions: 2.387 million (2% increase from end of 2024) Broadband subscriptions: 2.595 million (163 per 100 people) Fiber connections: 182,000 (covering 63% of households) TRA surplus: BD15.4 million. Transferred to Finance Ministry: BD15.95 million Annual telecom license fees remained the authority's biggest revenue source at BD8.433 million, accounting for 39.9% of operating income. The numbers reflect Bahrain's continued digital growth and the sector's strength as a key contributor to the national economy.

(October 23, 2026) www.instagram.com



Bangladesh

Bangladesh plans to launch its own sovereign artificial intelligence infrastructure within the next 12 months, aiming to develop and operate AI capabilities using the country's own data, workforce and computing resources rather than relying primarily on foreign technology providers or models. Prime Minister's Adviser for Posts, Telecommunications, Information Technology and Science and Technology Rehan Asif Asad made the announcement at the "AI and Innovation Dialogue" held in Dhaka on Thursday (October 8). The event was jointly organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Governance Innovation Unit (GIU) of the Prime Minister's Office. Sovereign AI refers to a country's ability to develop and run artificial intelligence systems using its own infrastructure, data, talent and computing capacity, reducing dependence on external technology providers. "We will launch our sovereign AI infrastructure within the next 12 months," Rehan Asif Asad said at the dialogue. He also said Bangladesh had secured the sourcing of computing chips and that major technology partnerships were already at an advanced stage. The planned infrastructure is expected to be opened to the private sector, startups, universities and students, allowing them to develop large language models in Bangla and build AI-based services and applications, the adviser said. (October 12, 2026) www.viewsbangladesh.com



Egypt

Egypt's Minister of Communications and Information Technology Raafat Hendy has met with members of the Telecom Industry Committee of the National Telecom Regulatory Authority (NTRA) to discuss strategic priorities, opportunities and challenges facing the country's telecommunications industry. The meeting followed the recent reconstitution of the committee, which brings together leaders and experts from across Egypt's ICT sector, and focused on strengthening the domestic telecom industry's productive capacity and competitiveness in line with the Digital Egypt strategy. Hendy said Egypt's ICT sector had undergone rapid transformation in recent years and had become a key driver of economic growth, extending beyond technology services to areas including digital infrastructure, data centers, cloud computing, artificial intelligence (AI), local manufacturing, digital identity and online safety. He noted that the sector recorded a growth rate of 19.3% in fiscal year 2025/2026, making it one of the country's fastest-growing sectors. The Minister highlighted the launch of Egypt Mobile Spectrum Roadmap 2026–2030 and the expansion of 5G networks as key developments supporting high-speed, high-performance telecommunications networks, while creating opportunities for Internet of Things (IoT) applications and smart cities. He also said work was under way to develop the national strategy for data centers. Hendy said AI tools would play a pivotal role in economic growth and transformation by boosting productivity, enabling new business models and creating opportunities for Egyptian startups, investors and developers to expand into local, regional and international markets. On digital services, Hendy said the Digital Egypt platform had reached nearly 250 services in September, with plans to increase the number to 270 by the end of the year and 400 by 2030. (October 9, 2026) www.techreviewafrica.com



India

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has released Recommendations on 'Authorization Framework for Application-based Linear Television Distribution (ALTD) Services'. In view of the evolving broadcasting landscape, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) has sent a reference to TRAI, under Section 11(1)(a) of the TRAI Act 1997, on 15th December 2025, to examine and recommend a regulatory framework for Free Ad-Supported Streaming Television (FAST) Services ensuring parity, content accountability and consumer protection. TRAI has examined such services and observed that several applications aggregate and distribute scheduled linear TV channels to consumers, either as pre-installed applications on TV sets and other devices; or as downloadable mobile/smart TV applications; or as web-based applications accessible through web browsers. Considering such wider scope of service provisioning through connected TVs, the services have been broadly referred to as 'Application-based Linear Television Distribution (ALTD) Services' including FAST Services. Accordingly, the Authority on 6th April 2026, had issued a Consultation Paper titled 'Formulation of a Regulatory Framework for Application-based Linear Television Distribution (ALTD) Services (Including Free Ad-Supported Streaming Television (FAST) Services)' and solicited comments from stakeholders. In response, 207 comments and 11 counter-comments were received and uploaded on TRAI's website. As part of the consultation process, an Open House Discussion (OHD) was held on 10th June 2026, providing stakeholders an opportunity to present their views on the issues under consultation.

(October 26, 2026) www.pib.gov.in



Iraq

Iraq's Communications and Media Commission (CMC) has extended the deadline for Korek Telecom subscribers to use their numbers until November 1, giving them an additional month to secure banking accounts and digital services linked to their mobile numbers. The commission said that the extension followed a request from the Transport and Communications Committee of the Iraqi Parliament and was intended to give subscribers more time to update account information and transfer services associated with their Korek numbers. The CMC had previously set the end of September as the deadline before beginning the shutdown of Korek's network exchanges. The new extension is aimed particularly at users whose Korek numbers are used for verification codes, authentication and account recovery, including for banking and other digital platforms. The commission urged subscribers to add numbers from other licensed operators, Asiacell or Zain Iraq, to applications that allow multiple phone numbers. For services that permit only one registered number, users are advised to replace their Korek number for verification and account recovery while retaining the Korek number where possible. The CMC's decision comes amid broader regulatory action against Korek. The commission has said it is proceeding with measures to halt the company's operations after terminating its settlement agreement over alleged breaches of contractual obligations.

(October 7, 2026) www.basnews.com



Kuwait

The Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) held a meeting chaired by its Chairman, Dr. Khaled Al-Zamel, with the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the State of Kuwait, Yang Xin, to discuss ways to strengthen cooperation and exchange expertise in the fields of telecommunications and information technology. In a press statement following the meeting, CITRA said discussions covered encouraging the exchange of expertise and developing data centers and 5G infrastructure in ways that serve the mutual interests of both friendly countries. CITRA emphasized that developing the information technology sector is a fundamental pillar for supporting digital transformation, enhancing the efficiency of digital services, and keeping pace with rapid technological advancements. These efforts will contribute to building advanced digital infrastructure, promoting innovation, and deploying modern technologies across various sectors. (October 21, 2026) www.citra.gov.kw



Nepal

The Nepal Telecommunication Authority has issued a warning to internet service providers, stating that companies charging prices above their approved rates will face legal action. The regulator took this step following complaints that several companies have been increasing prices and altering service packages without prior official approval. Assistant Spokesperson Dr. Pradip Poudel issued a notice reminding providers of the provisions under Section 42 of the Telecommunications Act 2053. According to the regulation, service providers must obtain approval from the authority for their tariff rates and are required to publicly disclose these rates for consumer awareness. The authority noted that some internet companies have failed to publish their approved rates and packages. Furthermore, these providers have been changing existing packages and increasing costs without regulatory consent, causing significant inconvenience to consumers. The regulator emphasized that consumers have the right to choose their preferred packages voluntarily. To ensure transparency, the authority has directed all service providers to clearly publish full details of their approved internet packages and terms on their websites, mobile applications, and at customer service centers. The regulator warned that any company found violating these legal requirements will be subject to action under existing laws. (October 12, 2026) www.english.nepalnews.com

Minister for Information and Communication Dr. Bikram Timilsina and Communication Secretary Rajendra Kumar Paudel signed performance agreement for the fiscal year 2026/27. On the occasion, heads of various divisions of the Ministry and subordinate agencies also signed performance agreements with Secretary Paudel. Those signing the agreements included Nepal Telecommunication Authority Chairman Arjun Ghimire, Nepal Telecom Managing Director Sangita Pahadi (Aryal), Security Printing Centre Executive Director Devraj Dhungana, RSS General Manager Sandip Rai, Public Service Broadcasting Nepal Acting Chairperson Urbashi Basnyat, Gorkhapatra Corporation General Manager Hikmat Bahadur Rawal and Advertising Board Chairman Santosh Shrestha. The agreements were signed in line with the provisions of the Financial Procedures and Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2019 and the Financial Procedures and Fiscal Responsibility Regulations, 2020, with the aim of making the Ministry's programs more accountable, result-oriented and measurable.
(October 7, 2026) www.risingnepaldaily.com



Oman

The total number of mobile phone subscriptions in the Sultanate of Oman rose to 8.51 million by the end of August 2026, registering a growth of 2.5 percent compared to the same period in 2025. Data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) showed that active postpaid mobile phone subscriptions grew by 6.9 percent to reach 1.33 million subscriptions, while prepaid subscriptions decreased by 0.4 percent to reach 5.46 million subscriptions. Subscriptions to Internet of Things (machine-to-machine) services also continued to grow, recording an increase of 9.4 percent to reach 1.71 million subscriptions by the end of August 2026. In the internet services sector, the total number of active mobile broadband internet subscriptions rose to 5.68 million while the total number of active fixed broadband internet subscriptions reached 595,604. Regarding fixed internet technologies, subscriptions to fiber optic technology for homes and facilities (FTTH/B) continued to grow, recording an increase of 6.5 percent to reach 369,766 subscriptions by the end of August 2026, while the number of fixed fifth-generation subscriptions reached 209,519 subscriptions. In contrast, satellite subscriptions recorded the highest growth rate among fixed internet tech-

nologies, rising by 152.6 percent to reach 2,084 subscriptions. As for other technologies, they continued to record a decline in fixed 4G subscriptions by 67.9 percent to record 5,107 subscriptions, and ADSL subscriptions also decreased by 23.1 percent to reach 8,411 subscriptions. Other subscriptions (which include internet via power lines, Ethernet, and leased internet lines) decreased by 4.5 percent to 717 subscriptions by the end of August 2026 compared to the same period last year. (October 13, 2026) www.timesofoman.com



Pakistan

The Pak¬i¬stan Telecommu¬nica¬tion Authority (PTA) adv¬ised mobile phone users to adjust their network settings and adopt newer technologies, including Voice over Long-Term Evolution (VoLTE), Wi-Fi Calling, and VoWiFi, to improve their calling and mobile internet experience. Responding to consumer complaints regarding unclear voice quality and connection delays on 4G and LTE calls, the telecom regulator recommended that users verify their handset network settings and activate the 4G/LTE option if it is not already switched on. The authority urged consumers to enable VoLTE, Wi-Fi Calling and VoWiFi options on their phones, noting that the availability and use of these facilities depend on compatibility between the handset and the relevant mobile operator. The guidance is primarily relevant to regions where 4G service is expanding following a recent spectrum auction. According to the regulator, VoLTE enables voice calls over a 4G network, which improves voice quality and speeds up call connections. To benefit from the facility, however, the handset, the SIM card and the mobile operator must all support the technology. For areas where mobile signals are weak, such as inside homes or in basements, the authority said Wi-Fi Calling and VoWiFi could be particularly useful. VoWiFi technology makes Wi-Fi Calling work, allowing users to place calls over a Wi-Fi connection provided their handset and operator support the feature.

(October 15, 2026) www.dawn.com



Qatar

The State of Qatar, represented by the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA), is preparing to host the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Plenipotentiary Conference 2026 (PP-26), which will be hosted by Doha at the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre (DECC), from 9 to 27 November 2026. Around 3,000 participants are expected to attend the conference, including high-level figures from the 194-member states of the Union, as well as representatives from the ICT sector and academia. As part of the preparations to host the conference, the State of Qatar and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) signed the conference host country agreement, as a key step in the preparations for the conference in Doha. The agreement sets out the framework and arrangements necessary to host the conference, in order to ensure the creation of the appropriate conditions for the holding of its work with the participation of Member States and stakeholders from around the world, and to support its organization according to the highest standards commensurate with its status and importance. In this context, Eng. Ahmed bin Abdullah Al Maslamani, Chairman of the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) and President-Designate of the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2026, stressed that the signing of the host country agreement is a milestone in the State of Qatar's preparations to host the conference, which embodies the country's unwavering commitment to provide the necessary capabilities for the success of this prominent global event. The Plenipotentiary Conference is the highest policy-making body of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and meets every four years to define the strategic directions and policies of the Union, adopt its strategic and financial plans, and elect its senior leadership, members of the ITU Council and members of the Radio Regulations Board. (October 8, 2026) www.thepeninsulaqatar.com



Saudi Arabia

The Communications, Space and Technology Commission (CST) announced the winners of the third edition of the Non-Terrestrial Networks Global Research Competition (Non-Terrestrial Networks 2026), launched in collaboration with the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). The competition aims to support research and innovation in non-terrestrial networks and to attract researchers and academics to develop innovative ideas and solutions that advance next-generation connectivity technologies and strengthen the integration of terrestrial and non-terrestrial networks. The announcement was made

during the Global Space Connectivity and Sustainability Events. The competition drew 81 research papers submitted by 280 researchers and academics, with the participation of more than 40 judges. The paper "Affordable Connectivity from the Skies: A Subsidy-Aware Pricing Framework for Satellite Services Under Public Budget Constraints" won first place, the paper "Commercial Aircraft as Sustainable Relays for Satellite Direct-to-Device Access" took second place, and the paper "AI-Enabled Multi-Layer NTN for Rapid Target Acquisition in Desert Search and Rescue" came in third place. The papers covered diverse topics spanning economic and technical aspects. The first paper presented a new framework for pricing satellite services in a way that supports government consumption and helps deliver inclusive services for everyone. The second paper offered an innovative idea for investing in commercial aircraft that operate around the clock, turning them into transmission and reception stations that help improve satellite coverage. The third paper presented an innovative idea for running AI algorithms on board high-altitude platform stations (HAPS) and using them to speed up search and rescue operations in remote areas. The competition, which saw strong participation across its three previous editions, has drawn more than 160 research papers from more than 440 researchers, with over 60 judges from more than 110 universities and research centers taking part. (October 12, 2026) www.spa.gov.sa



Sri Lanka

The 27th Meeting of the South Asian Telecommunication Regulators' Council (SATRC-27) was held from 20 to 22 October 2026 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The meeting was organized by the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) and hosted by the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka (TRCSL). This event was conducted as a hybrid event, enabling both physical and remote participation. SATRC-27 brought together Heads of Regulatory Authorities, senior officials, industry representatives, and other stakeholders from the South Asian region to discuss key policy and regulatory developments in the telecommunications and ICT sectors, strengthen regional cooperation, and exchange knowledge and experiences. The meeting focused on key policy and regulatory issues of common interest to SATRC member countries and reviewed the progress of implementation of the SATRC Action Plan Phase X, adopted at SATRC-26. The program featured a Regulators' Roundtable, Regulator-Industry Dialogue, Industry Session, and sessions on sharing regulatory experiences. The Regulators' Roundtable provided an exclusive platform for Heads of Regulatory Authorities to exchange views on significant regulatory matters requiring regional collaboration. The other sessions facilitated discussions on emerging technologies, evolving regulatory frameworks, industry developments, and opportunities to strengthen connectivity and digital transformation across the region. Sri Lanka is one of the founding members of the South Asian Telecommunication Regulators' Council, which was established in 1997 through a joint initiative of the APT and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. Operating under the APT, SATRC serves as an important regional platform for cooperation among telecommunications and ICT regulatory authorities from nine South Asian member countries, with the active participation of affiliate members. Through its meetings, working groups, workshops, training programs, and other collaborative activities, SATRC facilitates the exchange of regulatory experiences and best practices, addresses common challenges, and promotes the development of the telecommunications and ICT sectors.

(October 22, 2026) www.trc.gov.lk



United Arab Emirates

The UAE ranks first in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and sixth globally on the new AI-Human Skills Synergy Index featured in Coursera's Global Skills Report 2026. The country is thus ahead of the US, Singapore, the UK, China and India. The Index, the first of its kind, measures the extent to which learners across 98 countries are developing AI skills alongside the human skills needed to apply them, while accounting for each country's broader AI readiness. The report found that UAE's AI security enrollments grew 243% and generative AI 117%, alongside increases of 56% in complex problem-solving and 39% in critical thinking. The report identifies the UAE as a country where skills development and the conditions for putting AI into practice reinforce each other. Stanford's 2026 AI Index Report estimates generative AI adoption in the UAE at 64%, among the highest country rates reported. The UAE has also approved the establishment of a federal Artificial Intelligence and Data Authority to coordinate AI, data, and digital government. On skills development, the AI for All initiative, launched in collaboration with Google, aims to broaden access to foundational AI skills and support responsible use across age groups and professional backgrounds. Across the UAE, enrollments in AI courses increased by 75% year over year. Trending AI learning themes include AI and machine learning foundations, as well as data and analytics. Generative AI and agentic AI are also prominent themes, with enrollments in generative AI rising 117% and agentic workflows growing 100%. AI security enrollments increased 243%. (October 2, 2026) www.tradearabia.com

Kazakhstan at ITU PP-26

Digital Development and International Cooperation for the Global Future

As ITU Member States prepare for the Doha Plenipotentiary Conference, Kazakhstan's telecommunications investments, experience in digital public services and participation in international cooperation provide context for its candidatures to the ITU Council and Radio Regulations Board.



Kazakhstan is approaching the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2026 in Doha with two distinct candidatures and a developing record of international digital cooperation. The country is seeking election to the ITU Council for 2027–2030, while an incumbent Radio Regulations Board (RRB) member from Kazakhstan is seeking re-election to the Board for the same term. The Council seat concerns representation of a Member State in the Union's governance; the RRB position is held by an individual serving independently in a technical capacity.

Kazakhstan's engagement is informed by the practical demands of digital development in a large, landlocked country with dispersed communities. Extending rural access, maintaining reliable international communications and creating economic opportunities from telecommunications investment are continuing national priorities. These issues also concern many ITU Member States, giving Kazakhstan's development experience relevance beyond its borders.

In a recent interview, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Development Zhaslan Madiyev described economic growth and improvements in people's lives as the main measures of successful digitalization. President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has designated 2026 the Year of Digitalization and Artificial Intelligence, while the government is pursuing new technology industries, greater domestic technical capacity and stronger participation in export markets.

Digital government experience shared internationally

Kazakhstan ranked 24th among 193 countries in the United Nations E-Government Development Index 2024. According to Madiyev, more than 90% of government services are available online, and the number offered digitally has grown from 657 in 2021 to more than 1,300. The government is also deploying eGov GPT to help citizens locate and use public services. These developments offer a substantial domestic record, but their international relevance is demonstrated more directly through the sharing of technical experience.

Kazakhstan's National Information Technologies JSC provides technical support to the ITU regional initiative on digital government cooperation for Central Asia and the Caucasus, implemented during 2025–2026 with financial support from the Eurasian Development Bank. The initiative encourages participating administrations to exchange experience and examine technical components that can be adapted to their own digital public infrastructure.

In September 2026, the ITU reported that specifications for an Analytics Building Block informed by Kazakhstan's Smart Data Ukimet experience had entered its global GovStack repository. The published material includes technical specifications, a reference implementation, a household-welfare-related use case and documentation of the Kazakhstan experience. Consultations with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have examined possible applications in their own environments.

This contribution is meaningful because interoperable government systems require more than software procurement. Administrations must address data protection, legal authority, technical compatibility and the ability of institutions to operate services consistently. Reusable specifications can reduce duplicated effort while leaving national authorities responsible for determining how, and whether, an approach fits their circumstances. Kazakhstan's experience has thereby become part of an international resource available for technical examination and adaptation.

Connectivity and the challenge of inclusion

Telecommunications infrastructure remains central to Kazakhstan's national agenda. Madiyev reports that sector investment exceeded KZT 1 trillion over the past three years, while average mobile internet speeds increased by 75% and internet traffic rose by 67%. The government is extending fiber-optic networks, improving mobile coverage and using satellite connections for especially remote communities.

Under the Accessible Internet national project, Kazakhstan aims to make fiber-optic internet available in up to 90% of villages by the end of 2027. Its plans also include extending 4G to villages with at least 250 residents and deploying 5G in more than 20 cities, with targets extending through 2029. These are stated program objectives rather than completed coverage outcomes.



The cost of serving widely separated settlements remains a challenge, as the Minister acknowledges. For the ITU's development work, the pertinent lesson concerns the combination of infrastructure financing, service availability and public demand. Digital services and suitable skills are needed if network expansion is to yield useful economic and social outcomes. Kazakhstan's AI-Sana education initiative, under which more than one million people reportedly completed basic AI training in 2025, addresses part of this human-capacity requirement.

An additional route between Asia and Europe

On 15 October 2026, the presidents of Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan inaugurated a 380-kilometre fiber-optic cable across the Caspian Sea between Aktau and Sumgayit. Developed by Kazakhtelecom and AzerTelecom through their joint venture CaspiLink, the line has a stated design capacity of more than 400 Tbps. It adds a communications route between Central Asia and the Caucasus, with potential onward connections to European networks.

For landlocked countries, access to international communications depends on cross-border infrastructure and coordination among operators. Route diversity can create alternative paths for traffic and additional commercial options, although the resilience of a corridor depends on its terrestrial connections, operational arrangements and integration with other networks. The Trans-Caspian line is thus significant for the international connectivity options it creates, not simply for its headline capacity.

Madiyev expects data transit through Kazakhstan to grow substantially in coming years. The extent of that increase will depend on customers, interconnection agreements and reliable end-to-end service. The cable also complements economic activity along the broader Middle Corridor linking Central Asia, the Caucasus, Türkiye and Europe.

From telecommunications investment to technology exports

Kazakhstan is seeking economic returns from connectivity through software, digital services and computing. According to figures presented by Madiyev, IT services exports rose from US$33.5 million in 2020 to US$1.142 billion in 2025. Export earnings were more than 2.6 times spending on imported IT services. Astana Hub, which he says includes more than 2,500 companies and has supported over 32,000 jobs, has contributed through entrepreneurship programs and international business engagement.

The country is also investing in computing capability. Madiyev reports that more than 90% of the national Alem.Cloud cluster's capacity has been allocated to over 50 organizations, including research institutions, universities and businesses. The proposed Data Center Valley in Ekibastuz targets at least 1 GW of capacity as an initial objective, with a larger long-term ambition. Actual economic value will depend on power, equipment availability, construction, customer demand and operating costs.

New legislation on AI, cybersecurity and digital governance is another part of Kazakhstan's program. The Minister describes provisions concerning personal data, human rights and disclosure of synthetic content. Implementation will matter as public services, commercial applications and computing facilities process larger volumes of sensitive information. These questions connect domestic policy choices to international discussions about trustworthy digital systems, though national regulatory approaches remain distinct.

Two candidatures, different ITU responsibilities

Kazakhstan participated as an observer at the ITU Council session in Geneva from 28 April to 8 May 2026, through a delegation led by Vice Minister Doszhan Mussaliyev. Its engagement addressed digital infrastructure, artificial intelligence and international cooperation, while bilateral discussions also covered preparations for the forthcoming elections.

The ITU Council comprises 48 elected Member States and governs the Union between Plenipotentiary Conferences. It oversees the implementation of conference decisions and addresses strategic, financial, administrative and operational questions. Kazakhstan is a candidate in Region C, Eastern Europe and Northern Asia, for which five Council seats are allocated. Its domestic experience and international technical activities provide context for the country's participation in discussions of shared ITU priorities, but do not by themselves determine the positions it would take as a Council member.

The Radio Regulations Board has a separate, technical mandate. Its 12 members serve independently in their personal capacities rather than as national representatives. The Board deals with the application of the Radio Regulations, including procedural matters concerning frequency assignments and unresolved interference. These functions are important to international terrestrial and satellite radiocommunications and the orderly use of spectrum and associated orbital resources.

Looking toward Doha

At PP-26, to be held in Doha from 9 to 27 November 2026, ITU Member States will elect the Union's leadership, Council and Radio Regulations Board and consider its strategic and financial plans for 2028–2031. The decisions take place amid persistent connectivity gaps, demands for investment, expanding satellite activity, cybersecurity concerns and the increasing importance of AI and computing infrastructure.



Kazakhstan enters this process with identifiable experience in extending networks across difficult geography, exporting digital services, cooperating on a transnational communications route and contributing a domestic digital-government approach to an ITU-supported technical repository. It also faces ongoing questions concerning rural access, cybersecurity and the commercial sustainability of ambitious infrastructure plans. These practical accomplishments and unresolved tasks provide a grounded basis for international exchange.

The significance of the forthcoming ITU cycle will be measured in how Member States advance the Union's responsibilities through decisions, technical work and sustained cooperation. Kazakhstan's two candidatures place the country within that institutional process: one concerns participation by a Member State in the Council's collective governance, and the other the independent regulatory responsibilities of an experienced RRB member.

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REGULATORY ACTIVITIES BEYOND THE SA-ME-NA REGION



Australia

The Government has passed landmark laws that will expand basic mobile coverage across Australia and ensure no one is left behind when it comes to connectivity. The law, which has now passed Parliament, implements the Universal Outdoor Mobile Obligation (UOMO), which will require national mobile carriers Telstra, Optus and TPG to provide access to SMS and voice coverage for Australians, almost everywhere you can see the sky. This significant reform will be transformative for Australians, particularly those in regional and remote communities - delivering better connectivity to some of the country's hardest to reach places. The changes will keep Australians more connected, making them safer, and ensuring they are able to call for help in times of emergency. The improved coverage will be made possible by a combination of existing land-based towers and new Low Earth Orbit Satellite technology, which allows for mobile signals to connect Direct to Device. For the first time, the law allows the Minister for Communications to determine standards, benchmarks and rules mobile service operators must meet to ensure they deliver quality and reliable services to Australians. The UOMO will start on 1 December 2027, subject to market developments, with the Government working closely with industry and stakeholders on the rollout.

(October 16, 2026) www.miragenews.com



Cote d'Ivoire

Côte d'Ivoire's Telecommunications and ICT Regulatory Authority (ARTCI) has held discussions with Meta on content monetization, digital services regulation and artificial intelligence, as the regulator works to strengthen the framework governing the country's digital ecosystem. The meeting was led by Roger Felix Adom, President of ARTCI's Regulatory Council, who received a Meta delegation accompanied by Isaac Gnamba-Yao, a member of the Regulatory Council, and Fabienne Kone, Director of the Council President's Cabinet. Meta's delegation comprised Balisa Ide Sido, Director of Public Relations for Sub-Saharan Africa; Thys Kazad, Head of Public Policy for Connectivity and Innovation in Francophone Africa; and Judith Mongala, Head of Governments and Partners for Sub-Saharan Africa. The discussions covered the growing presence of Meta's platforms in Côte d'Ivoire, content monetization on Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and Threads, the regulation of digital services and AI, and the contribution of technology companies to the Ivorian economy. The meeting also provided an opportunity to present progress made on content monetization and discuss next steps, including the finalization of the regulatory framework, the development of training initiatives and stronger collaboration between ARTCI and Meta on digital transformation.

(October 12, 2026) www.techreviewafrica.com



Ghana

The Government of Ghana is stepping up efforts to improve telecommunications infrastructure in rural communities, aiming to expand network coverage, support businesses, strengthen investor confidence and promote economic growth. Minister of Communication, Digital Technology and Innovation Samuel Nartey George announced the commitment during a two-day working visit to the Volta Region to assess progress on rural telephony projects and inspect digital training centers under the One Million Coders Program. The initiative seeks to equip Ghanaians with digital skills for the evolving economy. According to the minister, telecommunications infrastructure investment in 2026 had exceeded the provision made over the preceding five years, during which 600 new cell sites were established nationwide. He reported that 800 new cell sites had been built in 2026, alongside upgrades to 2,000 existing sites. The minister identified fiber-optic cable damage during road construction as a major challenge affecting network reliability. He said his ministry would work with the Ministry of Roads to ensure that fiber-optic lines are relocated and reinstalled where necessary during roadworks and that damaged infrastructure is replaced promptly to minimize service disruptions.

(October 20, 2026) www.africantradechamber.org



Greece

Greece's parliament passed a law banning children under 15 from social media, joining a growing number of countries imposing curbs on young people's use of the apps. After a heated debate in a parliamentary session, Mitsotakis's conservative New Democracy party used its majority to pass the bill, which no other parties backed, the Ana news agency reported. The opposition socialist Pasok party abstained after seeking an alternative bill that would have banned social media for under-13s and parental controls for 13- and 14-year-olds. Other left-wing and nationalist parties voted against. The bill, set to take effect on January 1, will require age verification on social networks and impose harsh penalties if companies fail to comply.

(October 23, 2026) www.dawn.com



Iceland

The telecoms regulator commenced a process which could boost local and private 5G network deployments by a host of industries and align the nation with broader global rollouts. Fjarskiptastofa opened a consultation into allocating spectrum in the 3800MHz to 4200MHz frequency band, one which is widely regarded as ideal for local area networks where capacity matters. The regulator listed factories, ports and utilities among businesses which could benefit from access to all or some of the spectrum, which it noted is also suitable for delivering fixed wireless access services. It proposes providing two tiers of licenses, one for low-power deployments and another for medium. Fjarskiptastofa explained low-power settings would be confined within a 50-metre radius, with multiple transmitters allowed. Medium-range deployments would be "limited to a specific transmission location". The regulator proposes licenses spanning 20MHz, 40MHz, 60MHz, 80MHz and 100MHz of bandwidth, with the latter the maximum for each permit. Licenses would be valid for a decade and holders would be required to launch services within a year of receiving clearance.

(October 23, 2026) www.mobileworldlive.com



Italy

Italy's infrastructure agency Infratel has initiated a public consultation for a EUR 28 million tender under the "Collegamento Isole Minori" (Minor Islands Connection) project to deliver high-speed broadband and 5G services to small island communities.

(October 5, 2026) AI Overview



Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan plans to connect up to 1,600 villages to the internet in 2026, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Development Zhaslan Madiyev said at a government meeting in Astana. According to the government's press service, Madiyev said that 370 villages have been connected to the internet so far this year, while the total length of communication lines laid has reached 11,819 kilometers. "Internet access has been provided to 370 villages against the plan of 1,600 villages for the current year, with a total of 11,819 kilometers of communication lines laid. In 2027, it is planned to provide communications coverage along 40,000 kilometers of regional and national roads, with more than 500 antenna-mast structures to be installed," Madiyev reported. More than 4,000 5G base stations have also been installed in over 20 cities. Together with Beeline and Starlink Mobile, the Direct-to-Cell technology has been launched, providing messaging and basic internet access from anywhere in the country via satellite connectivity directly to smartphones.

(October 7, 2026) www.trend.az



Malaysia

CelcomDigi and Maxis have both accepted spectrum assignments from the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), with each operator bolstering its position in the 2600MHz band.

CelcomDigi, through its wholly owned subsidiary CelcomDigi Telecommunications Sdn Bhd (CDTel), secured 2x20MHz in the 2600MHz band and 2x5MHz in the 900MHz band for a combined MYR381.75 million (US$94m), Bernama reported. The 2600MHz assignment runs for four years, while the 900MHz assignment runs for five. The 2600MHz award gives CelcomDigi a contiguous 2x40MHz holding in the band. The 900MHz assignment also improves its position in that band, which the operator said would support wider and deeper coverage nationwide. In a statement, CelcomDigi said the new spectrum would improve its capital expenditure efficiency and boost network capacity and service quality to meet growing customer demand for quality and reliability. Maxis, meanwhile, picked up an additional 2x10MHz of

2600MHz spectrum. The operator will pay an upfront fee of MYR203 million, plus annual fees totaling MYR84 million over the assignment period, which also runs for four years, according to a filing with Bursa Malaysia. (October 19, 2026) www.developingtelecoms.com

Digital Nasional Bhd (DNB) has completed a RM5.2bil syndicated Islamic term financing, strengthening its long-term funding position as Malaysia moves into the next phase of its dual 5G network framework. In a statement, DNB said the financing will facilitate the planned exit of Minister of Finance Inc (MOF Inc) as an ordinary shareholder and the transition to equal ownership among its mobile network operator shareholders, namely CelcomDigi Bhd, Maxis Broadband Sdn Bhd and YTL Power International Bhd. The ownership transition is expected in the early fourth quarter of 2026, while MOF Inc will retain a special share in DNB to safeguard national interests. The syndicated financing also includes the refinancing of DNB's government-guaranteed revolving credit facility, which expired on Sept 29, and establishes a longer-term funding structure to support the company's growth. (October 1, 2026) www.thestar.com.my



Mexico

Mexico's Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (CRT) has announced plans for an auction of upper 2.3GHz spectrum that will apparently be reserved for private 5G and auctioned to industrial players. There will be 60 MHz auctioned; this is a significant revision of original plans to reserve 40 MHz suggested when an earlier plan was submitted to public consultation between 18 June and 15 July this year. The tender will be in two phases. The first targets 72 strategic regions identified for regional projects. If spectrum remains available, it may be assigned to what are described as specific and delimited areas, according to the needs of the participants. The aim is to promote automation, advanced robotics, artificial intelligence, remote monitoring and real-time data analysis in sectors such as manufacturing, logistics, mining, ports, energy, agro-industry and industrial parks. The tender also seeks to accelerate the adoption of Industry 4.0 technologies and contribute to making productive activities more efficient and safer, in addition to strengthening the competitiveness of companies. The CRT has called on interested parties to express their intention to participate between October 19 and 23, 2026. However, there is little further information available at the moment. No pricing systems or auction timetable seem to have been specified, even though such considerations that may affect the cost of entry for the future operators of these networks. (October 8, 2026) www.developingtelecoms.com



Philippine

The Philippines' National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) has fined Globe Telecom, Smart Communications and DITO Telecommunity PHP100,000 (US$1,600) each per day until they meet required mobile broadband quality-of-service standards. The penalties were issued through separate show-cause orders following repeated concerns over poor or unavailable mobile broadband services in affected areas, reported ABS-CBN. The NTC said it had previously instructed the three operators to improve services in areas with weak or no signal through memoranda issued in May, August and November 2025. The regulator has also ordered the operators to submit corrective action plans setting out the technical measures they will take, planned infrastructure upgrades and implementation timelines. The NTC said it will conduct testing every two weeks in affected areas to verify network improvements, while continuing to monitor mobile broadband quality and availability elsewhere. The companies have indicated they are reviewing the orders. Smart parent PLDT said on September 28 that it had not yet received the show-cause order, while DITO said it was discussing the contents of its order with the NTC. Globe said it was studying the matter and would respond within the specified period.

(October 1, 2026) www.developingtelecoms.com



Singapore

Telecommunications operator Simba could face fines, suspension or cancellation of its license over alleged unauthorized spectrum use and other regulatory breaches, according to new details of an ongoing investigation disclosed by its Australian parent company Tuas. In a filing to the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX), Tuas said the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA) had issued Simba a notice to show cause, setting out six allegations involving unauthorized spectrum use, breaches of telecommunications regulations and concerns about the company's governance and compliance practices. These include allegations that Simba's unauthorized use of radio frequency bands was intentional and approved by its senior management, and that the telco deliberately failed to fully comply with an order to produce documents. The filing also outlined potential regulatory actions being considered by IMDA, including financial penalties and the suspension or cancellation of Simba's spectrum rights or telecommunications

license. IMDA previously disclosed in May that it was investigating Simba over possible unauthorized spectrum use, prompting it to suspend its review of the telco's proposed S$1.43 billion (US$1.11 billion) acquisition of rival operator M1.

(October 26, 2026) www.channelnewsasia.com



South Africa

Aweh Mobile has launched in South Africa as a new mobile virtual network operator (MVNO), targeting households with a service that allows multiple SIMs to be managed through a single account. The new provider's family-focused offering allows customers to manage multiple SIMs from one dashboard, including sharing voice, SMS and data between users. Customers can also monitor usage, receive balance alerts and set up automatic top-ups. The service includes parental controls, giving parents the ability to manage aspects of their children's mobile usage. Aweh Mobile managing director Nokuthula Mkhwane said the company was created with South African families in mind, with a focus on simplifying the management of multiple mobile services. "Affordability is important, but affordability should never mean compromising on the quality, convenience or value of the service a family receives," Mkhwane said. (October 8, 2026) www.zawya.com



Sweden

The Swedish Post and Telecom Authority (PTS) has decided to grant the Swedish Civil Defence and Resilience Agency MCF authorization to use radio transmitters in the 703–713 MHz and 758–768 MHz frequency ranges. MCF will use these frequencies to establish the SWEN (Swedish Emergency Network) communications system. The Swedish Civil Defence and Resilience Agency (MCF) has applied for authorization to use spectrum in the 700 MHz band to establish SWEN, a new communications system for organizations responsible for essential public services, which is being developed to replace the existing Rakel system. The frequencies concerned were previously reserved for terrestrial television broadcasting. As part of its assessment, PTS determined that demand for the spectrum exceeds its availability and therefore decided to limit the number of authorizations to one. The authority conducted a market consultation on the decision to limit the number of authorizations, during which it received one response. PTS also sought input on the spectrum allocation from the Swedish Security Service and the Swedish Armed Forces.

(October 15, 2026) www.mcxtend.com



United Kingdom

the UK Government published a comprehensive legislative White Paper and statutory consultation, Critical Undersea Infrastructure Security and Resilience: Proposals for modernizing the UK's legislation (Command Paper CP 1683). Jointly presented by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) and the Cabinet Office, the paper launches a 12-week public consultation running through January 14, 2027. The initiative formally repeals and replaces the 141-year-old Submarine Telegraph Act 1885, creating a modernized statutory regime with enhanced criminal penalties for seabed sabotage, mandatory security and resilience obligations for subsea cable landing licensees, ministerial direction powers, and regulatory controls on subsea fiber-optic sensing technologies.

(October 22, 2026) www.submarinenetworks.com



United States

FCC Commissioner Anna M. Gomez sent a letter to National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) President and CEO Curtis LeGeyt sounding the alarm on the FCC's recent suggestion that broadcasters who air polls this Administration dislikes could face a news distortion or broadcast hoax investigation. With the midterms less than two weeks away, the letter urges NAB to make sure every station understands what the law actually requires before that threat has its intended chilling effect. "This Administration is running a coordinated, government-wide effort to reshape the media into its sanctioned messenger, and the Federal Communications Commission has become one of its most active instruments," wrote Commissioner Gomez. The letter explains that news distortion and broadcast hoax cases require proof of deliberate distortion of a factual report or knowingly false information about a crime or catastrophe. (October 23, 2026) www.fcc.gov

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