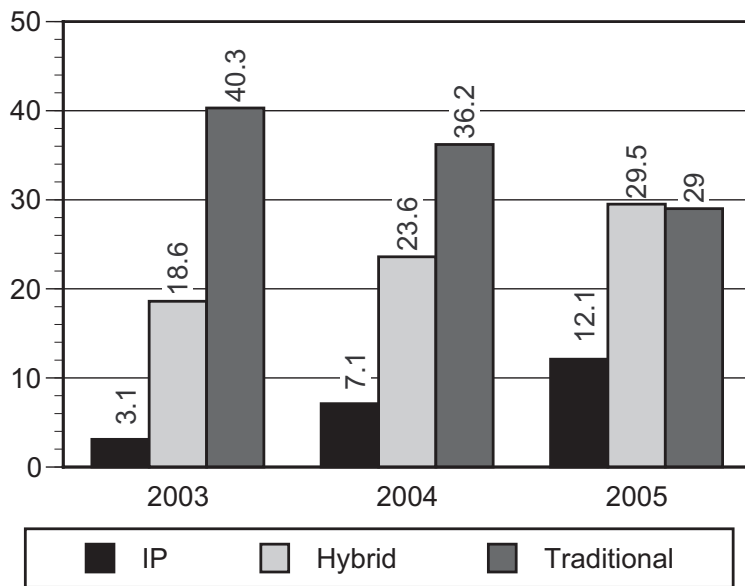


**UAE PABX line shipments
(thousands)**



Source: Gordon Feller

IRAQ

ITPC to improve communications across Iraq with Nortel optical solution

Iraq Telecommunications & Post Corporation (ITPC), Iraq's sole fixed-line operator, has awarded Nortel a US\$20 million contract to build a nationwide optical backbone to

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deliver high-quality high-bandwidth data, video, and multimedia services for personal and business communications. Nortel was selected by ITPC as the prime contractor for the Iraq national optical backbone following a public tender process.

“This national project is vitally important to the many telecommunications projects underway that will help rebuild the capabilities of the Iraqi society and economy,” said H.E. Mohamed Allawi, Iraq minister of communications.

“We selected Nortel’s advanced networking technology as the right foundation for Iraqi telecommunications and are confident that the improved communications made possible by this network will help accelerate the reconstruction of our country.”

“Restoring and improving countrywide communications is vital for the reconstruction of Iraq,” said Simon Beard, director of Middle East business development, Nortel EMEA. “This contract is testament to Nortel’s successful record of DWDM transmission projects in Iraq since 2004 and our continuing commitment to proactively partner with ITPC in its efforts to rebuild Iraqi communications.”

The new network will link to the ITPC Iraq South Ring DWDM network — built by Nortel in 2004 as part of the US aid-funded Iraq reconstruction program. The network delivers broadband optical services between Baghdad and Basra.

Under the terms of the contract, Nortel will supply a national optical backbone network that covers a distance of 5000 kilometers and includes 35 major cities.

The network will be constructed using Nortel’s next-generation DWDM (Dense Wavelength Division Multiplexing) solution including Common Photonic Layer (CPL), Optical Multiservice Edge (OME) 6500 terminals with electronic dispersion management technology, and Optical Network Manager for simplifying field operations. The resilient network

comprises seven interlocking rings providing a bandwidth capacity of up to 160Gbps per ring.

IRAQTEL selects Redline to establish Iraq’s first WiMAX network

Redline Communications, a provider of standards-based broadband wireless equipment, and IRAQTEL, the telecom subsidiary of Al Emaar Holding Group — Iraq, announced that it will deploy the first WiMAX network in Iraq using Redline’s WiMAX Forum Certified RedMAX products. Vision Valley, a specialist in systems integration, network design, and implementation, will provide its regional expertise to ensure that the network is effectively established. IRAQTEL will deliver advanced voice and broadband services to thousands of businesses and residents throughout its region via the Redline network.

IRAQTEL will begin its RedMAX deployment in Basrah, and will expand its WiMAX network to include additional regions across Iraq. The Redline solution will enable IRAQTEL to quickly and cost-effectively establish broadband wireless network to deliver the voice and broadband services its enterprise and government customers need and extend its network to reach more businesses, residents, and municipal organizations.

“IRAQTEL has been searching for a WiMAX solution that would provide a cost-effectively alternative to VSAT networks, which have been the only available solution for establishing broadband connections because of the lack of copper line infrastructure,” said Sheikh Fawzi Al Lami, chairman of IRAQTEL. “We chose Redline’s RedMAX products to establish a carrier-class telecommunications backbone capable of supporting a scalable, high-performance network.”

As the first to bring WiMAX technologies to Iraq, IRAQTEL joins a growing roster of leading telecommunications carriers that have chosen Redline’s RedMAX products. The most widely deployed WiMAX Forum Certified

system, RedMAX enables carriers to establish WiMAX networks that will deliver the performance and features they need to deliver increasingly advanced communications services and expand their subscriber base over time.

“In choosing RedMAX, IRAQTEL has demonstrated its commitment to meeting the communications requirements of its growing customer base,” said Majed Sifri, president and CEO, Redline Communications. “IRAQTEL will deploy one of the world’s most advanced WiMAX networks to address the lack of existing communications infrastructure with a vision to serve the people of Iraq with innovative and affordable wireless communications services.”

“We have worked closely with Redline to design and deploy the WiMAX network for Iraqtel and other major telecommunications companies throughout the GCC,” said Mahir Elfadil, chief executive officer, Vision Valley. “RedMAX products enable operators to position themselves at the forefront of the telecommunications industry, by delivering the most advanced wireless communications technologies available today.”

ACROSS THE REGION

Operators sign MoU for I-ME-WE submarine cable

Leading telecom operators Telekom Egypt, Etisalat, Saudi Telecom, VSNL, and Telecom Italia Sparkle have signed an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to work jointly on the construction of a new submarine cable (I-ME-WE) linking India, the Middle East, and Western Europe.

The signing of the MoU marks the first major milestone in the commissioning of the I-ME-WE cable project. The rapid progress made by the five telecom carriers in moving from conceptualization to signing of MoU reflects the strong alignment and commitment among the parties towards the I-ME-WE project.

The cable project will connect the major countries in the region, including India, UAE, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Italy, and France. The cable will leverage the strength of these major carriers and provide interconnection facilities with several existing and emerging systems in the regions.

All the I-ME-WE member parties are committed to keep up the rapid pace of progress to enable the Ready for Service (RFS) by mid 2008, with expectation of construction contracts being awarded by the end of 2006.

I-ME-WE cable system will be built using DWDM (Dense Wavelength Division Multiplexing) technology, with a proposed design capacity of at least 2.56 Terabits per second (Tbps). The network, upon its commissioning, will provide high-speed connectivity to the Asian, Middle East, North and East Africa, and Western Europe regions, to meet their exponentially growing bandwidth requirements.

NavLink and Trendium partner to deliver managed services to enterprises and NSPs throughout the Middle East

Trendium Inc., a global provider of service assurance and performance management software and services, and NavLink, a managed service provider delivering datacenter managed hosting, enterprise networking, and Internet technology solutions, announced that NavLink will market and deliver services from the Trendium Service Bureau to companies, enterprises, and network service providers throughout the Middle East.

The NavLink/Trendium partnership melds technological innovation with a proven, extensive distribution channel. Businesses throughout the Middle East will now have access to Trendium’s award-winning technology inherent in InfraSight, BroadSight, and SLA Manager, services that comprise the Trendium Service Bureau. NavLink, whose customers include MTC-Vodafone Bahrain, Batelco Bahrain, Qatar Telecom, and Etisalat U.A.E., is

extremely well positioned to deliver these services as a result of its deep local presence, reach, and reputation.

Also of note is that this partnership addresses regional demand for managed services. According to industry analysts such as Gartner, IT service markets in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa returned to growth in 2004, with the latest forecast indicating that IT services in EMEA will grow from EUR165.4 billion in 2004 to EUR195.8 euros in 2009.

“With broadband proliferation increasing throughout the Middle East, coupled with the growing organizational dependence on information technology, it is imperative that companies take every possible step to protect their business, and ensure the highest-level customer experience. By partnering with a regionally established distribution powerhouse, integrator and service provider such as NavLink, we are able to provide this growing market with the advanced services they need at a fraction of the overall cost of ownership,” said Hanafy Meleis, president and CEO Trendium Inc.

“The Trendium Service Bureau represents the natural progression of our business,” said Laurent Delifer, co-president and COO, NavLink. “For years, Fortune 500 companies worldwide have looked to Trendium to optimize and assure service objectives for DSL (and other) providers, monitor the user experience, and meet SLA expectations. Through our Service Bureau, we can offer specific functionality inherent in our existing solutions, in addition to advanced security information monitoring resources, packaged as extremely cost-effective services.

“Trendium’s Service Bureau addresses today’s business climate, in which spending indicates a growing confidence in managed services’ security, reliability and effectiveness. With Trendium as our partner, we are able to deliver on the promise of accelerated deployment and potential cost savings; our decision was based on InfraSight’s and

BroadSight’s unique ability to deliver powerful IT infrastructure health and traffic forensics for the enterprise, and enable service providers to achieve maximum service revenue, respectively.”

A state-of-the-art management service, InfraSight offers a blend of proven, real-time data collection and trend performance analysis, in addition to security insights, event monitoring and network traffic predictive alerts — solutions critical to maintaining a healthy enterprise. BroadSight is an end-to-end assurance management service for DSL broadband service providers that detects and corrects DSL-related service quality issues impacting every aspect of the customer experience. The SLA Manager will provide a portfolio of business-related SLA/SLO service assurance for Ethernet, triple-play, MPLS, WIMAX, and other managed services.

Nokia navigates the Middle East market with first ever Arabic GPS system for mobile devices from Navicore

Nokia, Navicore, and NAVTEQ announced a joint collaboration to produce mobile navigation abilities for Nokia’s communication devices. “Navicore Personal” will work in close conjunction with the Nokia LD-3W GPS receivers, which can be connected to many of Nokia’s handheld devices, and will make use of NAVTEQ’s mapping efforts for the GCC. Among its many unique features, Navicore Personal is also the first Arabic-speaking navigator for mobile devices. Never before has the Arabic market for handset navigation devices been so directly served.

“Our agreement with Navicore allows us to continue to be at the forefront of mobile technology as well as serve the linguistic needs of the Arabic market,” said Zsolt Menesi, director, Multimedia Experiences, Middle East Africa, Nokia. “Navicore Personal’s navigation application is compatible with over 30 Nokia phones and devices is a further demonstration of Nokia’s commitment towards consumers in

this region and reflects that company's understanding of consumers' needs and requirements. Now Middle East users of our GPS systems can get directions in the language they are most comfortable with, be it English or Arabic," added Menesi.

Besides having the ability to communicate to the user in Arabic, the new application is designed specifically to be an easy-to-use mobile navigation system. Guidance is clear and concise both vocally and visually. Navicore Personal will run on Nokia's connected devices using S60, S80, and Nokia LD-3W GPS receiver.

"The navigation application will give to people the ability to know where they are wherever they may be," added Menesi. "It's a reflection of the growing sophistication of this market and its consumers that this application is now readily available."

Navicore Personal also features extremely fast routing capabilities with either the fastest or the shortest route displayed for a user, and automatic re-routing in case the user strays from the route or the road is blocked ahead. Pedestrian, cycling, and car navigation modes are also available. An extensive point-of-interest directory includes thousands of gas stations, hotels, restaurants, parking facilities, and many more, together with phone numbers, Web pages, and direct dialing support. There is also on-line support for downloadable points-of-interest databases.

Navicore Personal and Navteq mapping is compatible with most of Nokia's devices, including N70, N73, N80, and E61. In addition, the Nokia Multimedia Car Kit CK-20W allows the Navicore Personal with NAVTEQ mapping to have GPS continuity whether users are walking or driving. Customers who use the Nokia Multimedia Car Kit can simply connect their phone to it, and immediately have a GPS system for their car. The entire kit makes for hands-free GPS navigation that can guide a traveler to any destination as he or she drives. Navicore

Personal's voice instructions enable drivers to reach a destination without having to take their hands off the wheel.

Navicore Ltd. is one of the premier suppliers of solutions for the booming navigation industry, and is a member of the Forum Nokia PRO and PRO Enterprise Zone premium developer programs for Nokia.

NAVTEQ map coverage for the region gives Nokia GPS systems unparalleled accuracy of the streets and highways of Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Oman. NAVTEQ databases powered more map-enabled devices than any other solution in Europe and North America, making it the leading map developer for the world's consumer GPS systems. NAVTEQ maps span 58 countries and six continents, all with the same consistent high level of support and quality, making the company's Middle East mapping efforts the logical choice for Nokia devices in the region.

Samsung unveils first Mobile TV phone in the Middle East

Samsung Electronics announced its global leadership in the mobile TV category by unveiling the SGH-P910, the first DVB-H (Digital Video Broadcasting) phone in the region, to lead mobile broadcasting service through the Doha Asian Games. SGH-P910 has many multimedia features, such as TV capabilities, a 1.3-megapixel camera, and an MP3 player.

The P910 will bring large-volume multimedia and television content directly to consumers via their mobile handsets.

To receive TV signals, users can easily flip the 2.2" TFT LCD screen to a horizontal position for optimal viewing. With a high-resolution QVGA (240x320 pixels) screen with 262,144 colors. TV images are clear, crisp, and flicker-free. The display shows up to 30 pictures per second, allowing users to enjoy a vivid live broadcast as if they were at home.

The SGH-P910 comes in a compact size of 97x50x27.4mm. Seamless connection with

personal computers is guaranteed by a built-in USB port and Bluetooth functionality. It also supports online browser, personal information manager, and a series of office functions. The SGH-P910 also features all of the classic functions of a high-quality GSM/GPRS mobile.

Moreover, the 20MB user memory and the external memory let this innovative multimedia phone not just play, but also record and save, TV broadcasts, videos, and games. All of these add up to a whole lot of fun for sports fans, who can print out their favorite moments or relive athletic highlights in video format, even when they are late for the game.

Mr. J H Park, president Samsung Gulf Electronics, said, "Samsung continues to develop the premium mobile handsets that give consumers the ultimate multimedia experience and allow them to fully realize the power of mobile broadcasting.

"Mobile television will radically change TV viewing behavior in Qatar," says Mr. Park. "Samsung has successfully introduced the world's first DMB phones to the Korean market last year, where the T-DMB and S-DMB standard are already deployed. At the IFA in Berlin last summer, we joined with TSystems in demonstrating the interactive capabilities of this system. Now, we want this phone to be another milestone along the road to mobile television in the region."

AFGHANISTAN

Afghan Wireless to expand GSM in Afghanistan

Afghan Wireless plans to expand its network in many places in Afghanistan. Additional 50 Siemens BTSs are to be shipped soon. Several shipments of BTSs, BSCs, and MSCs would be executed in the near future. The cost of the equipment is likely to be \$30 million. The new BTSs will enhance coverage in all cities covered by AWCC, including Kabul, Gazni, Kunduz, Kandhar, and many more. The firm

intends to increase the number of cell sites by 100 percent by next year.

BAHRAIN

Kalaam Telecom first to bring wireless Internet services to Bahrain

Kalaam Telecom and Green Packet, a global developer of next-generation mobile broadband networking solutions, have announced a strategic partnership paving the way to provide wireless broadband solutions in Bahrain. The partnership will bring value-added services to cater to corporate and residential customers and offer a real alternative to other operators in the market.

Kalaam will be the first in the market, using Green Packet's SONmetro technology, to provide wireless broadband Internet access, VoIP telephony, and other applications and services at rapid speed and high quality to customers. These innovative services will allow Kalaam to compete in the highly open telecom market of the kingdom.

Commenting on the partnership with Green Packet, Carlos Riera, CEO of Kalaam Telecom, said, "We are proud to be the first in Bahrain to provide wireless broadband solutions using the most advanced technology from Green Packet. This partnership not only positions us as leaders in the market but also helps our mission to offer innovative offerings and services to our customers at cost-effective prices with superior quality and value in addition to ending the monopoly over important services including broadband.

"It is the strong feedback from the market which stresses the need for alternative providers alongside our continuous study and research into customers' telecoms needs that drives Kalaam Telecom to be first in the market to offer such innovative services such as this one." Riera added.

Elaborating more on the new services' benefits for customers, Andy Hanna, chief of

sales and marketing at Kalaam Telecom, said, "Through the new wireless broadband network, our customers will now be able to enjoy the freedom and flexibility of fast Internet services in Bahrain in addition to innovative and lower cost structures that includes better download limits. Customer can also take advantage of other products in conjunction with the wireless service including Net-Talk VoIP telephony which allows any customer to utilize their broadband connections to make and receive telephone calls over the Internet at substantially reduced costs."

Kalaam's SONmetro Wireless Broadband Solutions will be available in selected Bahrain areas to customers starting January 2007.

Batelco trade-in deal: Change your old mobile for the latest model

Batelco, Bahrain's leading mobile operator, is once again offering mobile customers the opportunity to trade in their old mobile phones for brand new ones through the relaunch of "Trade-in Offer," which previously proved to be a very popular campaign.

This is the third year that Batelco is helping its mobile customers to celebrate the festive season by offering them a great value-for-money deal, which will continue until the end of the Eid Al-Adha holiday.

Customers are invited to bring their old mobile phones to the Batelco shop at Seef Mall or Bahrain Mall, where a neutral evaluator will assess the condition of each mobile. If the customer accepts the price offered, he or she will receive vouchers which can be used towards the purchase of any other phone from Batelco.

"By giving our mobile customers the opportunity to trade in their old mobile for a new one, they can enjoy the latest in mobile technology at a reasonable price," said Batelco's corporate affairs general manager, Ahmed Al Janahi. "

The re-introduction of this offer comes in response to customer demand, indicating that

Batelco is once again addressing their needs and is always committed to giving choices and more value to them."

Batelco and Etisalat sign partnership agreement

Batelco and Emirates Telecommunications Corporation (Etisalat) have announced the signing of an agreement during the tech showcase GITEX in Dubai. Under the terms of the agreement, the two Gulf telcos will provide a range of data communication services to their customers and enhance the geographical reach of their operations.

This partnership deal covers a range of data services for global connectivity targeted at multinational companies, which will enable both companies to use IP-VPN technology to transfer voice, video, and data between geographically remote locations just as if they were in the same building.

"Meeting customers' requirements through strategic partnerships with leading international providers is aligned with our overall strategy to deliver better value and enhanced customer experience," said Batelco's director international operations and senior manager, product portfolio and marketing, Adel Daylami.

"Providing this new data communication service is entirely aimed at giving our customers what they want and moreover exceeding their expectations. The interconnection will also empower our future joint venture operations in the Gulf region to provide more competitive services to our customers," he said.

Etisalat's chief operating officer, Ahmed Abdulkarim Julfar, said that Etisalat is committed to making a difference in the workplace, and this partnership for regional seamless IP-VPN connectivity will address the needs of regional businesses in the most effective way.

"With this service, our business customers can increase their productivity and efficiency by removing the limitations of distance. This service, due to its major positive

impact on the business, brings excellent returns on investment, freeing up resources for core business activities,” Mr. Julfar noted.

“A solution such as the IP-VPN service is a smart investment for a business, with returns seen in a short time,” he added.

The service, which will be implemented over a regional MPLS (multiprotocol label switching) network, will provide customers with superior-quality services to meet different networking requirements like voice- and videoconferencing, high-bandwidth data transfers, real-time applications, and other services.

“The Batelco-Etisalat agreement interconnects our regional networks with that of other global service providers to ensure that customers receive the best quality of service and global coverage,” concluded Mr. Daylami.

Ericsson to supply HSDPA network in Bahrain

The largest operator in the Kingdom of Bahrain, Batelco, has chosen Ericsson for upgrading its network with HSDPA technology. Batelco will deploy a 3G/HSDPA network that would support Batelco in its Broadband Bahrain initiative.

The process of rolling out the network has already started. The deal also includes technology consultancy services to help Batelco with optimization of the network performance. Ericsson will also offer business consultation in a go-to-market program for advanced 3G services. Batelco chief executive Peter Kaliaropoulos said that the deployment of services from Ericsson would serve and entertain the company’s customers.

EGYPT

OT’s Q3 revenue increases, but its bid to acquire 100 percent of HTIL fails

Egypt’s Orascom Telecom reported a 37 percent rise in Q3 EBITDA as its group mobile

user base increased by 83 percent year-on-year to over 46 million. Revenues in the quarter ending September 30 rose 35 percent to \$3.216 billion, increasing EBITDA to \$1.4 billion and net income by 12 percent to \$0.55 million.

OT’s stakes in cellular operators include Pakistan, Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, Iraq, Bangladesh, the Republic of Congo, and Africa.

By the end of September, OT’s total user base rose to 46.52 million from 25.49 million a year ago. But OT has apparently failed in a bid to acquire 100 percent of Hong Kong-based Hutchison Telecommunications International Ltd. (HTIL) due to disagreement on the terms. Orascom claimed 19.3 percent stake in HTIL for \$1.3 billion in December 2005.

This pair engages in wireless operations in 15 nations and covers two billion people. OT is presently interested in increasing its stake in HTIL by 3.7 percent to around 23 percent.

KUWAIT

Wataniya Telecom announces third-quarter result; revenues increase 40 percent year-on-year

Kuwait-based operator Wataniya Telecom announced its result for the Q3 ending in September. Revenues increased by 40 percent year-on-year to \$1.06 billion.

EBITDA also increased by 67 percent to \$463 million. Wataniya has contributed to growth in almost every network it participated in; Iraq and Tunisia (+11 percent) and Algeria (+16 percent) added the highest number of customers.

The business in its home market increased by just 3.5 percent, though it helped the firm to reach the 1 million mark.

The increase in year-on-year subscriber base was just below 70 percent from 5.2 million to 8.8 million. Wataniya also improved the average revenue per user in each of its six territories; in Maldives, the ARPU increased from \$14 to \$15.

INX wins army contract to supply VoIP infrastructure upgrades in Kuwait

INX Inc. announced that it has been awarded an infrastructure upgrade contract for the 160th Signal Brigade, US Army, Kuwait. The 160th Signal Brigade, US Army, Kuwait, is the permanently assigned unit responsible for all Army communications for locations in Southwest Asia for Kuwait, Qatar, and Afghanistan. With Voice over IP (VoIP) taking hold in the region as a result of the Voice over Secure IP (VoSIP) initiative implemented by the Defense Information Systems Agency and the certification of Cisco Systems VoIP products by the Joint Interoperability Test Command lab, the Army is now moving forward with infrastructure upgrades that are required in preparation for VoSIP communications implementation. The infrastructure upgrade project is for the network headquartered in Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, and will replace existing Local Area Network equipment that has reached an end-of-life status. The contract award represents approximately \$628,000 in products and services revenue for INX, including Cisco network switches, routers, VoIP upgrades, and implementation services. Regarding the award, Roger Haney, vice president of sales, Federal Division for INX, commented, "Beginning with the initial VoSIP system that we installed in Iraq for CENTCOM in 2004 that continues to operate effectively and expand under our supervision, we continue to broaden our presence in Southwest Asia and we anticipate further expansion in this market as the need for network upgrades and voice/data convergence solutions increases with the Army's Voice over Secure IP initiative."

LEBANON**Cedarcom deploys MOBI, the first true mobile broadband wireless access network in the Middle East**

Cedarcom, the leading Lebanese telecommunications provider, and Kyocera

Corporation, the Japanese high-tech manufacturer, announced that Cedarcom has deployed MOBI, the first true mobile broadband wireless access network in Lebanon and the Middle East, using Kyocera's iBurst technology. Cedarcom has extensive fixed wireless experience and through this move will harness the personal mobile broadband market.

MOBI, in partnership with major ISPs in Lebanon, offers users connectivity to a high-speed data communication network within a wireless broadband Internet environment. Its data downlink speed of up to 1Mbps enables users to enjoy high-speed data communications including all IP-based applications, browsing, email, streaming video, e-CRM, etc., within the service areas. The MOBI service is available initially within Greater Beirut and Jounieh and all their surrounding mountains. MOBI service will reach Tripoli, Faqra, and Faraya within two weeks.

"Lebanon is about to experience magic! With MOBI, the true mobile broadband or mobile ADSL, Lebanese business executives and Internet aficionados will enjoy the liberty and freedom at true broadband speeds at affordable accessible prices for the first time in their lives. Our network infrastructure provides the performance, scalability and reliability to accommodate the needs of all corporate executives in need of mission-critical connectivity at all times and in all places. It also provides facility and ease of use for students and web surfers, and for that we have catered a wide range of business and residential service packages that suit the needs of our clients. The MOBI service area covers almost 1.5 million inhabitants and we will continue its expansion in the coming months," said Imad M. Tarabay, chairman and CEO at Cedarcom.

"MOBI service appeals to a vast sector among the Internet users in Lebanon, including executives in various vertical sectors, sales forces, consultants, reporters, site engineers, school and university students, etc. Several

service plans are available from 256Kbps, 512Kbps and 1Mbps – all at affordable fixed prices,” continued Tarabay.

“Prior to launching we did studies and tested several MBWA technologies and we found out that Kyocera’s iBurst technology, which is considered the pre-802.20 standard, is superior to all offerings out there, including WiMAX 802.16e, which has not seen light yet. iBurst offered us a comprehensive, high-performance IP-based wireless mobile broadband network and combines the reliability and scalability that we will need in the future to address our customers’ service needs,” continued Tarabay “We would like to express our respect and appreciation for Cedarcom, who has been taking great efforts to launch the country-first mobile wireless broadband service against all difficulties. Kyocera will support Cedarcom and contribute to Lebanon’s development in communications environment with our technology,” said Junichi Jinno, general manager of Kyocera’s Corporate Communication Systems Equipment Group.

“Cedarcom has obtained exclusive rights to Kyocera iBurst for Lebanon, Kingdom of Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Sierra Leone and Liberia and we look forward to additional rollouts soon,” continued Junichi Jinno. In the near future, Cedarcom will extend and scale IP connectivity to provide its customers throughout Lebanon a diverse range of services, including IPTV and other advanced data services. Cedarcom is rolling out the MOBI service in partnership with leading ISPs Cyberia, IDM, Sotel, LYNX, and Broadband Plus, among others.

Ericsson setting up new Global Service Delivery Center in Lebanon

Ericsson announced a new Global Service Delivery Center to be opened next year in Beirut, Lebanon. The new center will initially employ about 100 people and will serve regional and global customers.

Its location in the Middle East means Lebanon offers a central position and cultural capabilities to Ericsson’s global organization.

Its 17 universities delivering technical diplomas provide highly skilled, multilingual professionals who work across the whole region. The country also offers a very good climate for new company investments and establishments.

“I am impressed of the business growth of the region Middle East and Africa,” said Fredrik T. Strand, vice president and head of Service Delivery within Ericsson.

“We are a global company and our service delivery organization provides a global structure that includes local capabilities in order to meet our customer’s demands.”

Initially about 100 persons will be employed during 2007, mainly engineers to deliver services in the areas of systems integration and of network and technology consulting.

The new Global Service Delivery Center (GSDC) in Beirut is a consequence of the expansion of Ericsson’s services business, and is in line with Ericsson’s plans to continue to develop global and local services and delivery capabilities.

The current Ericsson services organization employs about 23,000 professionals worldwide. About 6,500 of these employees work in Global Service Delivery Centers.

Ericsson has 18 GSDCs, which are designed to ensure business readiness for the global market.

They support global and regional demand by providing global expertise cost-efficiently, supporting the expansion of Ericsson’s services business.

Ericsson has activities and operations in all 14 countries in Middle East and offices in 11 of them (Iraq, Yemen, and Afghanistan are exceptions) employing around 1,800 persons. Today, Ericsson does business with more than 20 operators in the region.

OMAN**Belgacom and Omantel sign MoU**

Belgacom and Omantel have signed an MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) to carry out international carrier services in the Middle East. This deal will allow Belgacom International Carrier Services (ICS) to utilize Omantel's networks to maximize its connectivity in the region and enhance its growth. Also, Omantel will improve its bilateral voice relations to boost the service for retail and wholesale users signed up for a two-year deal with Belgacom.

PAKISTAN**UTStarcom sings deal with Maxim Telecom of Pakistan**

Telecommunication equipment manufacturer UTStarcom Inc. has signed a distribution deal with Pakistan-based Maxim Telecom. No financial details were provided by the company. The deal will include offering the whole range of UTStarcom's handsets and also Internet protocol (IP)-based broadband technology. The vice president of the Europe, Middle East, and Africa region at UTStarcom, Youssef Kassissia, said that since foreign investments in Pakistan account for 29 percent of all investments, this deal would help the company to enter an expanding market in the country.

MIC planning to exit the Pakistani mobile market

Millicom International Cellular (MIC) could exit the Pakistan mobile market because of concerns regarding the profitability of its wireless unit there, Paktel Ltd. Millicom stated that the returns on the investments could be threatened by harsh business conditions in Pakistan mobile telephony and some frequency interference matters. Paktel was granted an additional 1800MHz spectrum to settle the frequency interference issues, but this grant was

temporary. Paktel had requested a deferral of the newest installment of its \$29.1 million license fee. However, this was not granted by the PTA. In August 2004, Paktel had filed a case against the PTA, and refused to pay a fee of \$38.8 million it supposedly owed to the regulator for the GSM-1800 spectrum. The appeal was rejected by the High Court in Lahore after a few days.

QATAR**Q-Tel plans major global expansion including Indonesia**

CommsMEA reports that Qatar Telecom (Q-Tel) plans a push in its global investments, including the identification of proper investment opportunities in telecom sector in various countries. To support this plan, the company is recruiting additional staff from across the globe. Q-Tel will not restrict itself in Africa and the Middle East and plans a new investment in Indonesia. The company aims at a potential process for acquisition and is not just interested in Greenfield licenses.

SAUDI ARABIA**Mobily assigns EMC for Data Protection and Business Continuity Solutions**

EMC Corporation, a provider of information management and storage, announced that Etihad Etisalat (Mobily), the Saudi mobile operator, has assigned EMC to provide business continuity services that help Mobily in protecting its customers' data. EMC plans to provide Mobily with high-end business continuity and information management solutions that will offer reliable and continuous access to its data and applications in order to maintain the highest level of services for customers.

Mr. Ahmed Hassan, CIO of Mobily, said, "Mobily already has a solid customer base, and we are now in the process of expanding our network to reach more customers in the

Kingdom. To attract and retain those customers, we rely upon various elements and one of them is a solid information system, enabling us to provide the highest level of services, so it is essential that those systems and data are available to us at all times.”

The Saudi GSM operator will deploy systems from the EMC Symmetrix DMX-3 series of enterprise-level networked storage systems at two sites in the Kingdom. More than 120 terabytes (1 terabyte is approximately equal to 1,000GB) of data will be managed by the system. Symmetrix DMX-3 systems also provide Mobily with full replication capabilities and failover protection to ensure high availability for all of its applications and information, assuring fast access to vital data such as call records, customer details, and emails.

“We have selected EMC’s integrated storage solutions because they are able to meet and exceed the very demanding requirements that we have for business continuity and disaster recovery,” said Hassan.

“Telecoms operators have to have an ‘always-on’ service, and by deploying these solutions at two main sites, we will be able to duplicate all of our essential systems, to ensure constant availability for our systems.”

The project with Mobily will include EMC’s industry-standard storage platform, advanced business continuity software, and direct support and consultancy from EMC’s personnel in the Kingdom.

Mohammed Amin, general manager of EMC Middle East, said, “Telecoms operators have many requirements for their information systems – they create large volumes of data and they need constant access from those systems.

EMC solutions are in use with many of the largest telecoms companies worldwide, and we have a depth of experience in this sector that helps us to develop products and solutions that address the specific, high-end challenges of telecoms operators.”

Habib Mahakian, country manager of EMC KSA, added, “EMC has a very strong presence in Saudi Arabia, and this, coupled with the experience we have gained working with almost all of the key operators in the Middle East, gives us a unique strength in the regional telecoms sector that we bring to our relationship with Mobily. We are very pleased that they have chosen our business continuity solutions to support them as they continue to build services for the Kingdom.”

TURKEY

Turkcell deploys RMSC

Turkcell, a Turkey-based network operator, has deployed the Rich Media Service Center (RMSC) of Moxibell. This RMSC will improve Turkcell’s multimedia content services and deliver a centralized solution for its Service Delivery Platforms (SDP). Cenk Bayrakdar, chief service and product development officer, Turkcell, said that the operator can now provide customers with high-quality multimedia content by deploying the RMSC.

Turkcell selected Moxibell because the operator needed a proven solution that would lend support to its service delivery platform and meet all the optimization needs. The operator has deployed the RMSC with Content Management System (CMS), MMSC, and a Multimedia Push Application.

Garanti Bank selects Cisco Systems for new Turkish datacenter backbone

Cisco Systems announced that Garanti Bank, the leading Turkish retail, commercial, and corporate bank, has selected Cisco to provide a new backbone network infrastructure for its datacenter operations comprising storage area networking, datacenter switching, and integrated security.

The new datacenter infrastructure will help the bank support the data security requirements of its mainframe applications.

Garanti Bank's datacenter houses all its banking data. The new datacenter network infrastructure will also help allow the company to take advantage of improved capacity to handle expanding requirements stemming from areas such as multichannel banking and the need to comply with banking regulations.

"We have been very impressed by Cisco's Data Centre Network Architecture and the integrated systems approach to providing interoperability between data centre components," said Mrs. Eser Unal, business unit manager, network services for Garanti Teknoloji. "As we develop our strategy, we are looking to achieve further cost efficiencies by deploying Cisco SAN technologies and Cisco's virtualized Firewall Services Modules (FWSM) to help support high levels of reliability and security within our data centre environment. One key advantage of the Cisco technology is that there is a consistent integrated networking approach across its data centre switching and storage networking portfolios."

The new storage area network infrastructure is based around Cisco MDS 9509 Multilayer SAN directors, with Cisco MDS Multi-Protocol Services Modules.

In addition to redundant Cisco Catalyst 6500 Series switches with the Cisco Supervisor Engine 720, Garanti Bank's network upgrade features a number of other Cisco network components, including integrated security with Cisco Firewall Services Modules.

The Catalyst 6500 Series switches will also help allow Garanti Bank to boost switching rates in the datacenter from 140Gbps to 720Gbps, and interconnect to Cisco Catalyst 4510R series switches at the network edge.

"The Cisco Data Centre Network Architecture represents the practical realization of our intelligent networking vision for the data centre.

An important benefit of Cisco's data centre strategy lies in helping enterprises to plan for future growth through a tight integration of

intelligent architectures including switching, optical, storage area networking, integrated security and server load balancing," commented Kaan Terzioglu, VP for Central and Eastern Europe for Cisco Systems.

"We are working to provide the building blocks for a phased evolution of our data centre strategy as organizations move to consolidate, virtualize and ultimately build automation into their data centre environments."

The approach to using Firewall Service Modules in the datacenter is to help give fully controlled access to host systems from different regions on the Garanti Bank network. FWSM modules operate in multiple context modes using a stateful failover approach.

Using different contexts for each segment, the traffic from all parties can also be isolated. Contexts can be used either in routed or transparent mode; by using a context in transparent mode, Garanti Bank is able to pass Open Shortest Path First (OSPF) traffic through the context, eliminating the need for static routes.

The advantage is that this approach is more reliable, more secure, and more practical.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Etisalat selects Huawei for UTMS/HSPA network provision

Emirates Telecommunications (Etisalat) has chosen Huawei as its national UMTS/HSPA network supplier. Huawei would provide above 1,000 Node-B base stations for constructing this UTMS/HSPA network.

It would be the first HSPA network based on lub/IP transmission in North Africa and the Middle East. Huawei's association with Etisalat can be traced back to December 2003, when commercial 3G services were launched in the UAE.

The general manager of Etisalat Network Planning, Naseer Salim, said that the HSPA network in the UAE will set the foundation for

the global expansion of 3G technology. The two companies are also working on various other projects in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

Etisalat, SingTel to provide IP-VPN services

Singapore Telecommunications (SingTel) and Etisalat will provide Internet Protocol Virtual Private Network (IP-VPN) to users in the Middle East and the UAE. SingTel will now be able to provide seamless network connectivity and IP services in the Middle East through Etisalat's IP-VPN solutions.

The Emirates Telecommunications Corporation will have a wider reach in Asia Pacific via the network coverage and ConnectPlus IP-VPN services of SingTel. The firm's ConnectPlus suite serves important business cities in Asia-Pacific and other areas. The global data services of SingTel's partners like Etisalat (in the UAE) will help in extended coverage. Etisalat provides service to 5.3 million mobile users in the UAE, with penetration rate of 125 percent. SingTel has 37 offices in 19 nations and territories in Europe, Asia-Pacific, and the US.

Dubai Silicon Oasis selects Nortel to create innovation-driven technology institution (

((Dubai Silicon Oasis (DSO), the region's Number 1 integrated innovations hub for high-tech industries, has selected Nortel to supply a next-generation, highly resilient IP network for its headquarters opening in early 2007. The new infrastructure will be deployed by Nortel's partner, Beta Information Technology. Dubai Silicon Oasis is a wholly owned entity of the government of Dubai, operating as a free zone technology park for semiconductors, microelectronics, and other electronic-based companies looking to set up their regional headquarters and R&D divisions. The network from Nortel will give DSO a scalable, mobile, and truly unified communications network, supporting DSO's staff, tenants, and affiliate companies' business growth while providing a

flexible foundation for future advanced communications services. "Deploying Nortel converged IP solutions was a logical choice because they perfectly combine network intelligence, resiliency, scalability, and security while controlling total costs of ownership," said Mrs. Shahla Ahmed Abdul Razak, deputy CEO, DSO. "Dubai Silicon Oasis aims to create a knowledge-based economy and this partnership reflects how an organization can implement best IT services to achieve greater efficiencies and offer competitive advantages for the corporations that decide to participate in our project." "Nortel's technology will provide DSO with a highly secure and reliable, high-speed network based on the latest technologies for current and next-generation multimedia applications," said Ramin Attari, Middle East leader, Nortel. "The flexibility to easily expand to meet future demand while maintaining a highly secure and 'always on' business critical network will be crucial to meeting DSO's business plan for higher service and efficiency." On the infrastructure side, the solution consists of a resilient terabit cluster of two Nortel Ethernet Routing Switch 8600s at the core and Nortel Ethernet Routing Switch 5520 at the edge providing power over LAN, and 10/100/1000 connectivity. In addition, the solution includes Nortel's WLAN 2300 for secure Wi-Fi coverage and seamless mobility throughout the HQ buildings.

YEMEN

Motorola inks deal with SabaFon to expand network in Yemen

An agreement has been inked between Motorola and SabaFon to expand the capacity and coverage of their GSM network using the Motorola Reach GSM solution. The agreement will allow Sabafon, which already covers 85 percent of the Yemini populace, to extend its services to the northern and the southern regions.

Yemen's SabaFon to boost mobile subscriber base with Motorola GSM network expansion contract

Motorola Inc. announced that it has signed an agreement with SabaFon to increase the coverage range and capacity of the operator's GSM network to serve a greater number of subscribers in Yemen. The network expansion initiative, using a Motorola Reach GSM solution, will widen the scope of SabaFon's reach in both the northern and southern regions of Yemen and boost SabaFon's customer reach as a growing number of residents opt for GSM connectivity.

Penetration of telecommunications in Yemen is on the rise as the modernization programs implemented by the government come to fruition, and international connectivity connections show the vast improvement in the state of the industry. Mobile subscription rates are also growing dramatically, albeit from a small base, which leads to exciting opportunities for companies such as SabaFon with strong local and regional knowledge, complimented by strategic relationships with global leaders such as Motorola.

"We are extremely satisfied with Motorola's professional performance since 2003 that reflects our solid and fundamental strategic relationship. The network expansion is an ongoing process and Sabafon is committed to continuous investment in technology and people in order that we can continue to provide the very best service to our growing customer base," said H.E. Sheikh Hameed Al Ahmar, chairman of SabaFon.

"SabaFon is not content to stand still. Under the leadership of H.E. Sheikh Hameed Al Ahmar, we are committed to grow the company in a cohesive and structured manner. This required significant investment in network infrastructure this year and we have clearly demonstrated our commitment to achieve our goal to remain the leading provider of GSM services to our growing customer base in

Yemen. We are enormously proud of our achievements to date and are delighted by the support provided by our key suppliers such as Motorola; however, our biggest sense of pride is directed towards the professionalism and dedication of all SabaFon people and the continued loyalty of our customers," said Mr. Tarik Al-Haidary, CEO of SabaFon.

SabaFon has been operating in Yemen since 2001 and has been working with Motorola since its launch. SabaFon is now able to provide GSM coverage for 85 percent of Yemen's population.

"Yemen is a strategic market for Motorola in terms of our regional and global strategy to 'connect the unconnected' and boost economic development in emerging geographies. Research has shown that increasing the number of mobile subscribers in developing markets can have a measurable impact on a country's GDP, and GSM network expansions projects like SabaFon's directly benefit consumers through enhanced connectivity," said Ali Amer, senior director of sales, Motorola Networks & Enterprise, Middle East, North Africa and Pakistan (MENAPAK).

A portion of the revenue on this contract was recognized by Motorola in the third quarter of 2006.

MARKET INTELLIGENCE**Middle East anticipates video mobile services as standard by 2008, LogicaCMG survey shows**

More than a third of the early adopters of new mobile services in the region are ready to subscribe to video calling and video mail mobile technologies, results from a new regional LogicaCMG survey show. Their top consideration is quality, followed by price.

The LogicaCMG poll, conducted at the recently concluded GITEX 2006 trade show in Dubai and online at Bayt.com, also witnessed high levels of interest in Mobile TV (24 percent),

SMS Auto Reply or Out of Office Notification (19 percent) and Instant Messaging (18 percent).

Almost 80 percent of those surveyed at GITEX said they expect Instant Messaging Service and video mail to fully replace existing messaging delivery methods in the next two years. Close to a third of those expect it will take less than a year for the switch.

Nabil Y. Khalil, director of telecoms at LogicaCMG in the Middle East and North Africa, feels that the survey results are in line with patterns emerging across various markets around the world. Khalil said, "These numbers are very encouraging for everyone in the industry, from service providers to manufacturers and retailers. Every society has its share of early adopters, the people who will pick up and implement a new technology rapidly, but these numbers suggest a far more widespread interest in technology development. The survey results show that the Middle East region is clearly at the forefront of technology adoption."

Of the 200 trade delegates and exhibitors surveyed at GITEX, 40 percent said video calling/video mail would be the most popular messaging application in the next two years.

The popularity of video calling/video mail was twice that of its closest competitor, instant messaging, a Web-enabled step above the existing short message service (SMS) system, voice, and text.

DSL equipment markets in the GCC set for strong year, says IDC

The DSL equipment market in the six states of the GCC (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE) is set to have an impressive year. According to three new IDC studies, the first of their kind analyzing and forecasting the markets for DSL equipment, shipments of DSL ports will more than double by the end of 2006 while shipments of customer premises equipment (CPE) will shoot up by over

72 percent. Having reached \$31.8 million in 2005, total market revenue is expected to expand more than 88 percent in 2006.

"This region has an advantage over other parts of the world in that operators did not spend large amounts of money in the early days on cable and DSL networks," said Mark Rotter, IDC MEA program manager, telecommunications. "Operators are leapfrogging to more advanced technologies, such as ADSL 2+, that most European operators have just started moving to now. In addition, operators are able to take advantage of economies of scale and focus their broadband rollout only on DSL since there is only a very small installed base of cable – this ability to focus almost exclusively on DSL technologies makes rollout far more cost-effective than in other parts the world."

The UAE was the largest single country market for DSL equipment in 2005 and has the largest installed base. In terms of vendor share, according to IDC, Siemens led in the CPE market, having landed a substantial contract to provide DSL/WLAN routers for the broadband Internet Al Shamil promotion. Their position is not guaranteed, as both second-ranked D-Link and third-ranked USRobotics have solid channel and retail strategies. In terms of DSL network ports, Zhong had the largest vendor share in the Emirates.

Going forward, Saudi Arabia will become the largest market in terms of equipment sales this year, according to IDC, as it has both the population and economic environment to support a large number of broadband users. In contrast to the UAE, Thomson had the largest vendor share for CPE shipments in Saudi Arabia (and in the Rest of the GCC) last year, with Linksys taking second and USRobotics third. Meanwhile, Alcatel took the top spot for network port shipments.

"While the markets were hot the last couple of years, things are going to start slowing down in 2007 and maintaining market share is by no means guaranteed," said Rotter. "For CPE

manufacturers, success will depend on winning big deals with operators to bundle CPE with DSL service subscriptions. Vendors need to build and maintain relationships with strong buyers such as Etisalat, as personal relationships are key to winning projects.

That being said, vendors must also be firm in ensuring contracts are feasible, and be willing to walk away from deals that would be unprofitable.”

IDC's recent studies on the DSL Equipment markets include:

- UAE DSL Equipment 2006-2010 Forecast and 2005 Analysis (IDC#ZN06P)
- Saudi Arabia DSL Equipment 2006-2010 Forecast and 2005 Analysis (IDC#ZN05P)
- Rest of Persian Gulf DSL Equipment 2006-2010 Forecast and 2005 Analysis (IDC#ZN07P)

These IDC studies contain in-depth analyses of the DSL network equipment and CPE markets in the GCC. Key vendors analyzed include, among others, Alcatel, Cisco, D-Link, Linksys, Siemens, Thomson, and Zhone. The studies provide data on the current market size, vendor rankings, and projected market growth over the coming five years.

The studies answer questions such as the following: What are the main drivers for DSL equipment growth in the region? How important are enhanced features and functionality in terms of the actual revenue generated in the DSL equipment market? How will the pricing decline in the industry affect revenue in the DSL equipment market? What channel strategies can vendors look at to maximize sales? What DSL technologies should operators be deploying in their networks at which stage?

For more information about acquiring IDC research, please contact Mark Walker (mdwalker@idc.com; +971 4 391 2741) or Tatiana Hinova (thinova@idc.com; +420 221 423 140).

According to the TA, revenues from public telecommunications services in Turkey totaled US\$12.73 billion in 2005, up from US\$11.5 billion in 2004

Research and Markets has announced the addition of “Turkey Telecommunications Market Intelligence Report” to their offering.

Although Turkey's incumbent state-owned telecommunications operator Türk Telekomünikasyon AS (Türk Telekom) had its monopoly on domestic and international voice telephony and network services removed at the end of 2003, very few alternative operators have been able to make headway in the market, largely due to a general reluctance on the part of Telekom to sign interconnection agreements with competitors and to open its network to new players, as well as a seeming inability of the national regulator, the Telecommunications Authority (TA), to put important new legislation into effect that will assist new players in competing with the incumbent.

After more than a decade of discussion and political prevarication, Türk Telekom was finally privatized in the summer of 2005, with its new owners (a group led by Saudi Oger, backed up by Telecom Italia) taking control of the company in November that year. The new owners seem to have put an increased emphasis on the development of the nascent broadband network, increasing the reach of digital subscriber line (DSL) services to a large number of Turkish cities by the summer of 2006. The company has also bought Telecom Italia's stake in cellular operator Avea, taking its ownership to 81 percent and clarifying the third-placed operator's future direction (although Avea has some way to go before it can match second-placed Telsim (now owned by Vodafone) and seemingly will never draw close to the market leader, Turkcell).

At the time of writing, there were 45 companies licensed to provide long-distance telephony services, most of which appear to be targeting the large business and corporate

sectors of the market. In addition, the first three operators charged with competing with Telekom in the fixed-line infrastructure market (including local services) were only licensed in March 2006; tellingly, one of these is a subsidiary of Turkcell, indicating that the market-leading cellular operator also has hopes of exploiting the fixed-line field.

At the time of writing, the regulator is working to introduce a blanket Electronic Communications Law, similar to that adopted in all European Union states.

The new law should clarify the regulatory regime in favor of new entrants and give the authority greater powers to force Telekom to open up its network and services. It is generally expected that the law will be adopted at the end of 2006, although it remains in draft form and could yet be diluted significantly. (The government retains a 45 percent stake in Telekom, so has a vested interest in delaying liberalization where possible.)

According to the TA, revenues from public telecommunications services totaled US\$12.73 billion in 2005, up from US\$11.5 billion in 2004 and US\$8.02 billion in 2003.

The greatest proportion of revenues was generated by the mobile communications sector in 2005: at US\$6.43 billion, this represented an annual increase of US\$1.66 billion and marked the first time that mobile revenues had overtaken fixed-line revenues.

For more information, please visit <http://www.researchandmarkets.com/reports/c46059>.

Gain comprehensive information on Pakistan's telecoms market

Research and Markets has announced the addition of "Pakistan — Telecom Country Profile" to their offering.

This 33-page report is a complete snapshot of Pakistan's telecom environment, providing all the information needed to be successful in this market. It defines the country's economic and political environment, keeping readers abreast of events that could impact the business environment in the future. It then provides an overview of the regulatory environment, with information on regulators, ministries and the liberalization status of each telecom market. This section also comes across the country's WTO commitments and the latest regulatory events. The telecom statistics and forecast section for 2001-2011 is filled with valuable data on telecom revenues and investments, as well as number of subscribers, penetration, and growth for the fixed, mobile, Internet, and broadband markets. It also contains international traffic and rates information. This report then provides an analysis of the country's competitive environment, analyzing the fixed, mobile, and Internet markets in terms of players, number of subscribers, and market share. It also covers the trends and key events in each sector. Last but not least, it also provides a detailed profile of Pakistan Telecom, Mobilink, and Worldcall, giving information on their latest activities, key contacts, service offerings, financials, and market shares. For more information, please visit <http://www.researchandmarkets.com/reports/c46554>.

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