

Regulatory Insider



Recent Regulatory Developments

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SAMENA COUNTRIES

Afghanistan

Chairman: Mr. Zakria Hassan
[Afghanistan Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (ATRA)]

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- ◆ The Ministry of Communications and IT has appointed three new board members for Afghanistan Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (ATRA). The new board members include Eng. Farahudin as Member Technical, Mr. Abdul Basir as Member Legal and Eng. Abdul Wakil Shirgul as Director General of ATRA. Eng. Ata Mohammad Yari and Eng. Khair Mohammad shall remain working as board members on their current positions. (May 02, 2010)

Algeria

Chairperson: Ms. Zohra Derdouri
[Regulatory Authority for Post & Telecommunication (RAPT)]

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- ◆ The Algerian government is reportedly prepared to buy 100 percent of Orascom Telecom's Algerian unit. However, the transaction must conform to national laws. Egypt's Orascom Telecom is in negotiations to sell some or all of its assets to South African firm MTN, a deal which could make MTN the world's third largest mobile phone operator if all Orascom's assets were included. But Algeria is blocking the sale of the Algerian unit, which trades under the name Djezzy, citing a law which it says gives it the right of first refusal on a 51 percent stake in the unit if it comes up for sale. (May 07, 2010)

Bahrain

Chairman & Acting General Director: Dr. Mohammed Al Amer
[Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA)]

www.tra.org.bh

- ◆ The Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA) has concluded its two days conference titled "Bahrain Campaign for Online Safety (Surf Safe)". Over 200 Policy makers, telecoms professionals and consultants from more than 10 countries attended the two-day conference that was hosted in association with Family Online Safety Institute (FOSI). The regulatory body believes that the conference has provided a significant resource of information that will assist the Kingdom of Bahrain to formulate more informed decisions, which would ultimately lead to the achievement of safe internet for all users. At the closing of the conference, nine internet service providers and TRA jointly signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) committing to facilitate the implementation of the conference's recommendations and to foster a new era in ICT and Internet safety in Bahrain. (May 08, 2010)

Bangladesh

Chairman: Brig Gen Zia Ahmed
[Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC)]

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- ◆ The Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) has decided to revoke the licenses of five fixed-line telephony operators, RanksTel, Dhaka Phone, National TeleCom, PeoplesTel and WorldTel, whose services it suspended in March for their alleged involvement in illegal international call termination through VoIP technology. (May 12, 2010)
- ◆ Four Bangladesh operators, Grameenphone, Banglalink, Warid Telecom, and Citycell have joined a Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) operated system to automatically detect illegal international call terminations. Nearly 60 million minutes of international calls are made to and from Bangladesh per day, with about 30 percent accounting for illegal VoIP calls. The system only detects illegal calls generated through a SIM Box. However, illegal VoIP operators can also use E1 lines. (May 06, 2010)

Egypt

Executive President: Dr. Amr Badawi
[National Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (NTRA)]

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- ◆ Egypt being the most populous country in the Middle East region, with 83 million people, boasts one of the fastest-growing mobile telecom markets in the region. With the impact of gradual liberalization and magnifying competition amongst service providers and manufacturers, the mobile market is seeing tariff reductions and the introduction of more innovative service packages, such as free e-mailing or free access to Web, which are increasingly attracting Egyptians to adopt mobile telephony services. As a result, the number of mobile subscribers in the country is projected to grow at a CAGR of more than 13% between 2010 and 2013 to reach 100 Million by the end of 2013, says new research report "Middle East ICT Market Analysis". (May 06, 2010)
- ◆ The Egyptian Financial Supervisory Authority (EFSA) has given a week to Orascom Telecom to provide further details of the recently announced deal with France Telecom (FT) related to the ownership dispute of mobile operator Egyptian Company for Mobile Services (MobiNil). The EFSA has called on Orascom to clarify how it calculated the US\$300 million settlement fee that FT will pay to Orascom as part of the agreement, while it is also seeking further information about the option price that formed part of the deal. Further, the financial watchdog has asked for more details on how the management structure of MobiNil will be affected by the accord between Orascom and FT, alongside requesting clarification of how earnings will be accounted. Last month, it was revealed that the long-running battle for control of MobiNil had all but been resolved, with the French giant and Egyptian group reaching a tentative agreement, under the terms of which MobiNil's current corporate structure will remain unchanged, as will the existing voting rights in the cellco. (May 03, 2010)

Iran

President & Deputy Minister: H. E. Khusravi Mahmoud
[Communication Regulatory Authority (CRA)]

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No recent developments, including regulatory actions, issuance of licenses or policy frameworks, have been made public in the news/newsletters or on the regulator's website.

Iraq

CEO: Dr. Siyamend Zeid Othman
[Communication & Media Commission (CMC)]

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No recent developments, including regulatory actions, issuance of licenses or policy frameworks, have been made public in the news/newsletters or on the regulator's website.

Jordan

Chairman & CEO: Mr. Fadi Kawar
[Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (TRC)]

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- ◆ The Ministry of Information Technology (MoICT) is in the process of revising the country's ICT strategy to update it for the next five years. The process entails measuring progress made in the three aspects of the strategy and developing working mechanisms in light of the developments already made. The government believes that much progress has already been made in terms of increasing the number of Internet users, and boosting employment in the sector and its revenues. Internet penetration currently stands at 30 percent, up from 7 percent in 2007 when the strategy was launched. (May 07, 2010)

Kuwait

Director of International Relations & Information: Mr. Walid Hamad El Giran
[Ministry of Communication(MOC)]

www.moc.kw

No recent developments, including regulatory actions, issuance of licenses or policy frameworks, have been made public in the news/newsletters or on the regulator's website.

Lebanon

Chairman & CEO: Imad Hoballah
[Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA)]

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- ◆ The Telecommunication Regulatory Authority's efforts to protect telecom consumers have proven to be fruitful. The TRA has been working for the past three years on building a solid framework to protect consumers by defining clear regulatory guidelines such as the Consumer Affairs Regulation (CAR), the Code of Practice for Value Added Services, the Human EMF Exposure Limit Regulation and the Quality of Service Regulation. The Authority has now been concentrating its efforts on efficiently and rapidly resolving complaints. Recently, the TRA required from the Mobile Network Managers to block international SMS spammers and requested from a major VAS provider to abide by the Code of practice for VAS. (May 12, 2010)

Libya

[General Department of Communication (GCD)]

www.gcd.ly

No recent developments, including regulatory actions, issuance of licenses or policy frameworks, have been made public in the news/newsletters or on the regulator's website.

Morocco

Director General: M. Azdine El Moutassir Billah
[Agence Nationale de Reglementation des Telecommunications (ANRT)]

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- ◆ A new report from the Arab Advisors Group analyzes the cellular tariffs for 53 cellular operators in 19 Arab countries. Morocco has the highest average cost of prepaid and postpaid cellular minutes in the Arab World. Egypt offers the lowest average cellular minute costs for prepaid and postpaid. (May 04, 2010)

Nepal

Chairman: Mr. Bhesh Raj Kanel
[Nepal Telecommunication Authority (NTR)]

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No recent developments, including regulatory actions, issuance of licenses or policy frameworks, have been made public in the news/newsletters or on the regulator's website.

Oman

Chairman: Mr. Mohammad Al Khasibi
[Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA)]

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- ◆ The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) and Yemen Ministry of Telecommunication & Information Technology (MTIT) are focusing radio interferences and the overlapping of GSM and 3G networks across the two countries' borders. Both countries are reviewing the procedures adopted by the operators on either side on limiting radio interferences and cross-border telecom overlap. The meetings also discuss the mechanism proposed by TRA to reduce the scale of the problem. These include proposals to distribute frequency fields of 3G and GSM networks, as well as mechanisms of coordinating services utilizing fields of 450-470 MHz and 824-834/869-897 MHz. (May 02, 2010)

Pakistan

Chairman: Dr. Muhammad Yaseen
[Pakistan Telecommunications Authority (PTA)]

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- ◆ The Pakistan telecom authority is focusing on Value-Added Services (VAS) through mobile 2.0 applications in the high penetration mobile telephony services. The regulatory body has also observed that the market has experienced liberalization, greater private sector participation and competition. PTA has sent the draft of Third Party Regulation for branchless banking to the State Bank of Pakistan and has proposed to promote mobile banking in the country as well as to encourage multiple branches and multiple mobile companies. (May 11, 2010)
- ◆ Cellular phone operators are likely to be penalized for their poor quality of services according to standards set by the regulatory body, Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA). The authority is likely to conclude its proceedings very soon in this regard. PTA conducted QoS surveys and found cellular telephony services offered with substandard quality. In 2009, the Regulator received 9,539 complaints against cellular operators in which 3,732 grievances were reported for obnoxious and fraudulent cases, 1,105 complaints were made for issuance of illegal connections, 829 complaints were reported for bad quality of services by operators and 627 complaints for overcharging and unjustified billing were registered, the PTA statistics showed. The authority claimed that it had resolved more than 95 percent of the complaints with the collaboration of cellular phone companies within a short span of time. (May 11, 2010)
- ◆ The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has revised Mobile Number Portability (MNP) code of practices for all cellular companies for the implementation of MNP. The Mobile Number Portability Regulations were passed back in 2005; however, code of practices is revised whenever authority deems it necessary. Version 9 of code of practices for MNP emphasizes on timely processing of MNP requests due to the fact that MNP requests have increased notably over the recent months. (May 04, 2010)

Palestine

Minister: Dr. Youssef Mahmoud Hamid
[Ministry of Telecom & Information Technology (MTIT)]

www.mtit.gov.ps

No recent developments, including regulatory actions, issuance of licenses or policy frameworks, have been made public in the news/newsletters or on the regulator's website.

Qatar

Executive Director: Mr. William Fagan
[ICT Qatar]

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- ◆ The Executive Director of the Supreme Council of Information & Communication Technology (ictQatar) has confirmed that there is no third telecommunications service provider licensed to provide fixed or mobile networks and services in Qatar and the recent media reports of a third mobile operator launching services in Qatar are not accurate. ictQatar has licensed only QTel and Vodafone Qatar to provide telecommunications networks and services to the public. Additionally, there is no licensed mobile virtual network operator (MVNO) as well. (May 13, 2010)
- ◆ The Supreme Council of Information & Communication Technology (ictQatar) has announced that it has issued the country's second fixed-line network operating license to Vodafone Qatar, allowing the company to provide fixed access services nationwide, effective 29 April 2010. The UK-backed firm, which broke the mobile telephony monopoly of Qatar Telecom last year, was originally announced as the winner of the second national operator (SNO) license in September 2008. Vodafone Qatar will be able to provide fixed telephony and data services to consumers, businesses and government in Qatar as well as other services such as leased lines, international connectivity and VSAT services. ictQatar announced that issuing of the second fixed license concludes the first major phase of liberalization of the telecommunications sector in Qatar. The license award remains contingent on the company completing necessary changes to its articles of association within the next three months, a company official confirmed. May 01, 2010)

Saudi Arabia

Governor: Dr. Abdulrahman Bin Ahmed Al-Jaafari
[Communication & Information Technology Commission (CITC)]

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No recent developments, including regulatory actions, issuance of licenses or policy frameworks, have been made public in the news/newsletters or on the regulator's website.

Sri Lanka

Director General: Mr. Anusha Palpita
[Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (TRC)]

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- ◆ The implementation of Mobile Number Portability (MNP) in Sri Lanka, as proposed by the local Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC), could further pressure industry profitability, says Fitch Ratings. Severe price competition in the Sri Lankan mobile space since mid-2005 has significantly eroded the telecom operators' profitability. However, price-based competition has eased since 2009, given the operators' weakened financial profiles, and an unofficial tariff floor implemented by the regulator. While the present unofficial tariff floor should help curb the continued deterioration in the mobile operators' financial profiles, the implementation of MNP could increase subscriber acquisition and retention costs within the industry. This would exert further pressure on the operators' balance sheet quality. (May 07, 2010)

Sudan

Director General: Abbas Arabi Abdalla
[National Telecommunication Commission (NTC)]

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No recent developments, including regulatory actions, issuance of licenses or policy frameworks, have been made public in the news/newsletters or on the regulator's website.

Syria

Minister: H. E. Dr. Imad Sabouni
[Ministry of Communication & Technology (MoCT)]

www.moct.gov.sy

No recent developments, including regulatory actions, issuance of licenses or policy frameworks, have been made public in the news/newsletters or on the regulator's website.

Tunisia

[National Telecommunication Commission (INTT)]

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- ◆ The Tunisian unit of privately-held Mabrouk group Investec and France Telecom's Orange have announced the launch of Orange Tunisia. The company will start offering mobile, fixed and internet services in Tunisia in May. The company will invest around EUR500 million to launch operations and install Tunisia's first third-generation mobile network. France Telecom holds 49% of Orange Tunisia. The French group and its local partner Divona Telecom, which is owned by Investec, last year were awarded a fixed and mobile telephone license in Tunisia. Orange Tunisia will employ 1,500 people by the end of the year and its offers will be sold from more than 400 distribution outlets. Orange Tunisia is placing a particular focus on mobile broadband offers and attractive international tariffs. (May 04, 2010)

Turkey

Chairman & CEO: Dr. Tayfun Acarer
[Information & Communication Technologies Authority]

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- ◆ According to a recent research report issued by Pyramid Research on Turkish Telecommunication Sector, increasing competition, key regulatory changes, and the arrival of number portability for mobile services will all help to drive telecom revenue in Turkey over the next five years. Other findings include:
 - With new 3G networks rolled out in 2009, demand for mobile data services has increased. With connectivity playing a central role, data services may grow beyond 20% of mobile ARPS by 2014.
 - Demand for fixed broadband Internet access will prompt an expansion of xDSL subscriptions at a CAGR of 7.8%, with revenue reaching US\$1.7 billion by 2014. PC penetration will greatly increase (nearly 40% over the next three years).
 - Fiber-optic lines and WiMAX access are still potential areas of growth, conditional on the regulator's stance. (May 04, 2010)

UAE

Director General: Mr. Mohamed Naseer Al Ghanim
[Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA)]

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No recent developments, including regulatory actions, issuance of licenses or policy frameworks, have been made public in the news/newsletters or on the regulator's website.

Yemen

Minister: Eng. Kamal Hussain Al-Jabry
[Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology (MOT&IT)]

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- ◆ The government of Yemen has finished installing a CDMA-based wireless in the local loop (WiLL) network to provide coverage to the rural governorates of Hadhramout, Shabwa and al-Ghaitha. The project was funded by Chinese equipment manufacturer ZTE at a cost of US\$1.6 million. (May 11, 2010)

Sources: MOJ News Agency, Dow Jones News, Arabian Business News, Zawya.com, Algeria.com, Emirates News Agency, Propakistan.com, The New Vision, The National, tradingmarket.com, Thedailystar.net, Lebanon, MENA News Agency, Daily Al Anbaa, Daily Star, Republica Nepal, Reuters.com, Al Qabas, Telegeography.com, bdnews24.com, Gulf Times, Commsday, SAMENA's news archives, Industry News and Newsletters, Regulatory Bodies' websites and Press Releases.



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