

Airtel, Space X to launch Starlink direct to cell connectivity across Africa

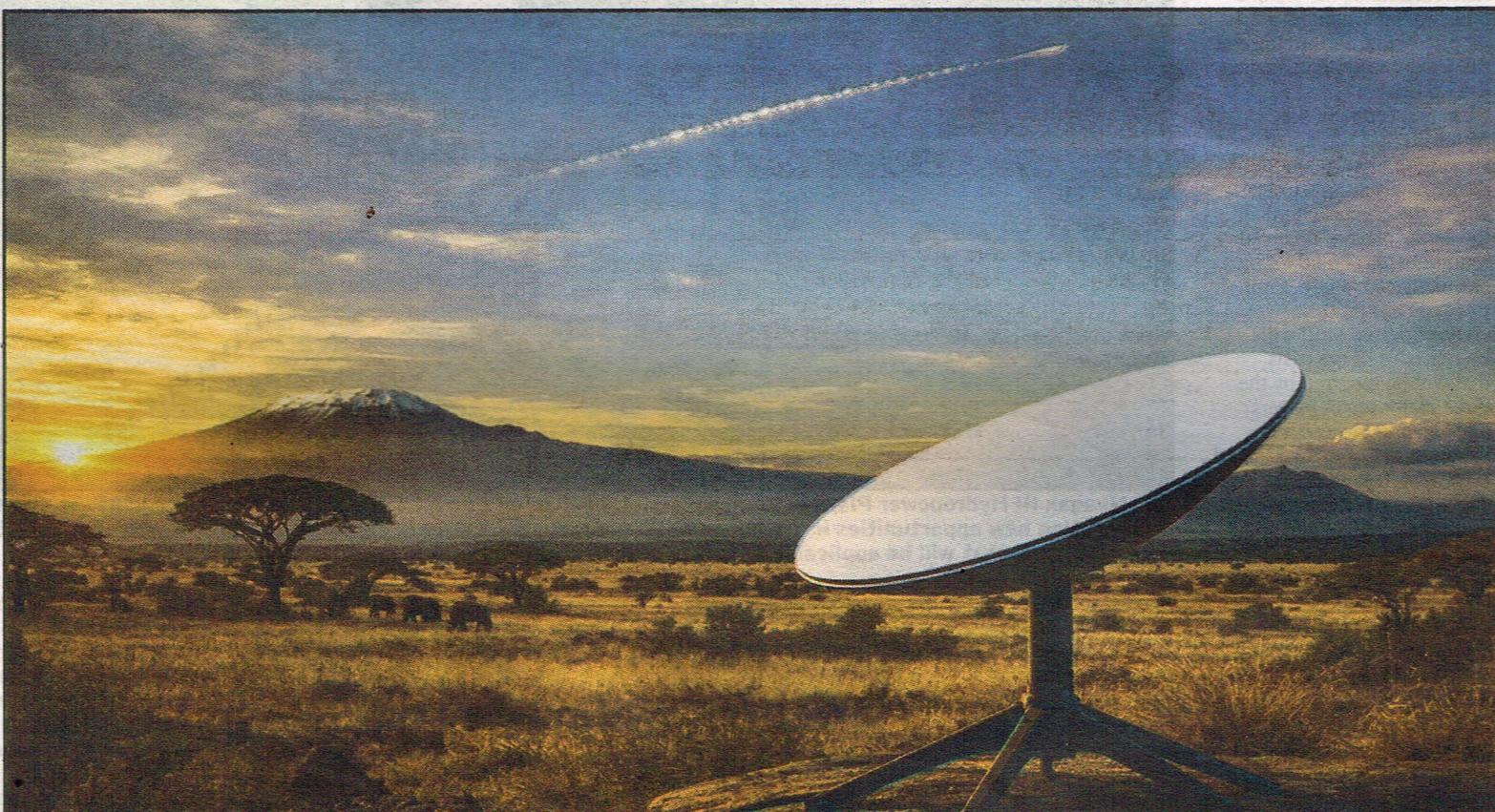
By Vision Reporter

Airtel Africa last week announced an agreement with SpaceX to introduce Starlink direct-to-cell satellite connectivity across all its 14 markets that serve 174 million customers. Through this partnership, Airtel Africa customers with compatible smartphones in regions without terrestrial coverage can have network connectivity through Starlink, which is the world's largest 4G connectivity provider (by geographic reach).

The satellite-to-mobile service will begin in 2026 with data for select applications and text messaging. This agreement also includes support for Starlink's first broadband direct-to-cell system, with next-generation satellites that will be capable of providing high-speed connectivity to smartphones with 20x improved data speed. The rollout will proceed in line with country-specific regulatory approvals.

Airtel Africa is the first mobile network operator in Africa to offer Starlink direct-to-cell service, powered by 650 satellites to provide seamless connectivity to its customers in remote areas. The partnership reinforces Airtel Africa's commitment to bridge digital divide and offer seamless connectivity to its customers. Airtel Africa and Starlink will continue to explore additional collaboration opportunities to further advance digital inclusion across the continent.

"Airtel Africa remains committed to delivering great experience to our customers by improving



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access to reliable and contiguous mobile connectivity solutions. Starlink's direct-to-cell technology complements the terrestrial infrastructure and even reaches areas where deploying terrestrial network solutions are challenging.

We are very excited about the collaboration with Starlink, which will establish a new standard for service availability across all our 14 markets," Sunil Taldar, Airtel Africa managing director and chief executive officer said.

Starlink sales vice-president, Stephanie Bednarek said: "For the first time, people across Africa will stay connected in remote areas where terrestrial coverage cannot reach and we are so thrilled that Starlink direct-to-cell can power this life-changing

service. Through this agreement with Airtel Africa, we will also deliver our next-generation technology to offer high-speed broadband connectivity, which will offer faster access to many essential services."