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Intel and Airtel Collaborate to Accelerate 5G

The collaboration is part of Airtel's 5G roadmap as it transforms India's networks to provide the full possibilities of a hyperconnected world.

SANTA CLARA, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- **What's New:** Intel and Bharti Airtel ("Airtel"), India's premier communications solutions provider, today announced a collaboration to drive network development of 4G and 5G virtualized radio access network (vRAN) and open radio access network (RAN) technology to transform Airtel's networks to reap the full possibilities of 5G for its customers. Work by Intel and Airtel will evolve communications networks from fixed-function equipment to virtualized cloud-native deployments and enable edge-to-cloud communications to power our hyperconnected world.

> *"Being able to digitally power the vibrant population of India's connected users requires scalable and agile networks that can evolve to address the growing demands of its users. Airtel is delivering their next-generation enhanced network with a breadth of Intel technology, including Intel® Xeon® Scalable processors and FlexRAN software to optimize RAN workloads with embedded intelligence, to scale their infrastructure and deliver on the promise of a connected India."*
> -- Dan Rodriguez, Intel corporate vice president, Network Platforms Group

How It Works: Airtel's network will be powered by a collection of Intel technology: the latest Xeon Scalable processors, FPGAs and eASICs, Ethernet 800 Series, and FlexRAN reference architecture. Transforming its network to meet the growing needs of its more than 345 million subscribers with flexible, software-defined infrastructure will allow Airtel to rapidly respond to varying customer requirements for bandwidth and latency. By providing the foundation for wide-scale enhanced mobile broadband, mobile edge computing and network slicing, Airtel can offer new services for consumers while programming its network to yield long-term cost optimizations.

Why It Matters: Led by affordable smartphones and the lowest data tariffs globally, India has the world's second-largest internet population at over 620 million.[1] The country's active internet user base is expected to grow to 900 million by 2025.[1] The advent of 5G will further deepen the digital adoption through a range of industrial and customer use cases.

"Airtel is delighted to have Intel as a part of its rapidly expanding partner ecosystem for 5G," said Randeep Sekhon, Bharti Airtel CTO. "Intel's cutting-edge technologies and experience will contribute immensely to Airtel's mission of serving India with world-class 5G services. We also look forward to working with Intel and home-grown companies to unlock India's potential as a global 5G hub."

The collaboration is part of Airtel's 5G roadmap for India as it transforms networks to allow

its customers to reap the full possibilities of a hyperconnected world where Industry 4.0, cloud gaming and virtual/augmented reality become everyday experiences. Airtel is the first telecom operator in India to demonstrate 5G over a live network and is conducting 5G trials in major cities.

What's Next: As members of the O-RAN Alliance, both companies will work closely to develop a range of "Make in India" 5G solutions and enable world-class telecom infrastructure in India through local partners. Open RAN will be a future area of tremendous innovation and creativity, leveraging Intel FlexRAN, a reference architecture with both software and hardware components, and enabling software-based radio base stations that can run on general-purpose servers located at the network edge.

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[1] https://cms.iamai.in/Content/MediaFiles/7d9fac50-7cac-43df-93c9-0cf34fb52403.pdf

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