

LEAP 2025: NEOM, DataVolt Announce US\$5 Billion Deal to Establish First Sustainable AI Data Centre in Saudi

RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA, February 11, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The second day of LEAP 2025, Saudi Arabia's award-winning global tech event, produced further announcements totalling US\$6.13 billion of investments in technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Leading the roll call of mega investments to continue the evolution of the Kingdom's technology ecosystem, DataVolt and Saudi Arabian giga-project NEOM announced a US\$5 billion partnership to establish the first fully sustainable AI data centre with a capacity of 1.5 gigawatts in Oxagon – the floating industrial city being developed in the Red Sea.

Meanwhile, Mobily, the Saudi Arabian telecommunications services company, announced an investment of US\$911 million in strategic projects to develop digital infrastructure, including submarine cable projects and the development of data centres across the Kingdom.

Elsewhere, Zoom announced a US\$75m investment to boost AI and innovation, and establish new data centres to support technology companies and government entities; Saudi Arabia Railways (SAR)



LEAP'S all-new Tech Arena, a dedicated space for advanced multi-sector technology demonstration



LEAP's new Tech Arena spotlights gamut of future tech solutions and products, including revolutionary smart contact lens prototype

announced a US\$51m investment in private fibre-optic networks; while SKYFive, the leading telecommunications and internet services provider for aircraft, revealed a US\$100m investment in non-terrestrial communications services focused on championing the advanced air mobility sector.

“As we enter the halfway mark of LEAP 2025, we have already surpassed confirmed investments of previous editions and have surpassed US\$40 billion in total confirmed investments since we launched LEAP four years ago,” said Michael Champion, CEO of Tahaluf, which co-organises LEAP with the Saudi Ministry for Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) and the Saudi Federation for Cybersecurity, Programming, and Drones (SAFCSP).



More than 1,800 tech brands and 680 start-ups are exhibiting at LEAP 2025 this week, alongside a stellar lineup of 1,000-plus expert speakers across 15 stages

“What we’re seeing this year is commitments being made across sectors, with AI and data centres taking the lead and larger collaborations between local and international businesses, which is at the heart of what LEAP is offering as a platform.”

Smart Contact Lens Advances Offer Unique Vision of Future

At LEAP’S all-new Tech Arena, a dedicated space for advanced multi-sector technology demonstrations, Dr Valentyn Volkov, Co-Founder of XPANCEO, explained how an evolution in technology, materials, and AI-based machine-learning is fast-tracking rapid advances in smart contact lenses.

“At LEAP, we see the future happening in front of our eyes; today, we see that future literally on our eyes with revolutionary technology that will completely evolve the way we interact with real and digital worlds,” Dr Volkov told enthralled spectators during a packed session entitled Beyond Silicon: How Smart Contact Lenses Are Shaping the Next Generation of Computing.

With XPANCEO planning to deliver the first working prototype by the end of 2026, Dr Volkov said the company is developing soft and rigid contact lens versions with a goal of producing a final product no more than one millimetre in thickness despite housing an ultra-compact integrated projector, biosensors, camera, adaptive prescription lens, batteries, and data and power antenna.

The invisible and almost weightless device prototype has thousands of potential uses, added Dr Volkov: “We believe the next step is not about making smart devices smaller; it is more about ensuring seamless integration of those devices into our everyday life – and that’s where the smart contact lens comes in. The product can deliver a full-screen, full-colour, augmented reality experience, with potential for private health monitoring, or even superpowers, such as increased

night-time visibility, or zooming into objects far in the distance. The device gives the user ultimate control over everything in their field of vision. This is no longer science fiction; it is almost ready-made reality."

Describing the XPANCEO team as "modern day alchemists", Dr Volkov outlined a future where smart contact lens users will be able to control their ophthalmic devices through advanced neural interfacing. He added: "They say the eyes are the mirror of the soul, which is very true, but from a genetic point of view, the eyes are part of the brain. Therefore, if we can connect our neural interfaces onto the lens, users will be able to communicate with the device via their brain," concluded Dr Volkov.

Saudi Gaming Ecosystem Witnessing Unprecedented Growth

In an opening keynote session on LEAP's CODE Stage, which is highlighting speakers and companies empowering digital national capacities to accelerate the process of digital transformation, Mohammed Robayan, Deputy Minister for Technology at MCIT, reiterated Saudi Arabia's aim to leverage the US\$220bn global gaming market to drive job creation and GDP growth.

"As the Kingdom tries to diversify from oil as part of Vision 2030, gaming and esports hold massive potential and are being driven through projects and initiatives such as the Ignite Digital Content Programme, and the Saudi Digital Academy, which has so far trained more than 1,500 people in the field," said Deputy Minister Robayan.

When it comes to investment, Robayan also highlighted Ignite's 'Gaming Sector Financing Programme', which is seeking to support growth in the private sector through gaming and esports with an investment budget of SAR300 million, increasing the amount of funding and options available to small and medium enterprises operating in the digital content sector.

Accenture Technology Vision 2025 Report Predicts AI Will Unleash Unprecedented Business Autonomy in Future Workplaces

New research from Accenture, announced on the second day of LEAP 2025, has pointed to a new era of digitisation -- where AI continuously learns and drives new levels of autonomy across organisations. The Accenture study suggests trust in AI's performance is the single most important measure organisations need for the technology to achieve its promise.

The Accenture Technology Vision 2025 report explores how the future is being shaped by AI-powered autonomy. As diffusion of AI accelerates across the enterprise sphere and wider society faster than any prior technology, 65 per cent of Saudi-based executives believe it brings new urgency to reinvention and how technology systems and the processes they enable are designed, built, and operated. The research also predicts the technology will increasingly act as a development partner, power robotic bodies in the physical world, and foster a new symbiotic relationship with people to bring out the best in each other.

"The Accenture Technology Vision 2025 gives leaders a look into what's ahead when AI

continuously learns, acts autonomously with, and on behalf of, people, and pushes enterprises and people into new and exciting ways to continuously reinvent," said Julie Sweet, chair and CEO, Accenture. "But unlocking the benefits of AI will only be possible if leaders seize the opportunity to inject and develop trust in its performance and outcomes in a systematic manner, so businesses and people can unlock AI's incredible possibilities."

More than 1,800 tech brands and 680 start-ups are exhibiting at LEAP 2025 this week, alongside a stellar lineup of 1,000-plus expert speakers across 15 stages, highlighting the tech that is shaping tomorrow. For more information on the event and ticket options, visit onegiantleap.com

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