

Elon Musk launches Starlink satellite internet service in Indonesia, world's largest archipelago

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Indonesian Minister of Health Budi Gunadi Sadikin, second from left, and Elon Musk, second from right, sign an agreement on enhancing connectivity at a public health center in Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia on Sunday, May 19, 2024. Elon Musk arrived in Indonesia's resort island of Bali to launch Starlink satellite internet service in the world's largest archipelago nation. Credit: AP Photo/Firdia Lisnawati

Elon Musk traveled to Indonesia's resort island of Bali on Sunday to launch Starlink satellite internet service in the world's largest archipelago nation.

Wearing a green Batik shirt, Musk was greeted with a garland of flower petals at a community health clinic in Denpasar, the provincial capital of Bali, where he launched the Starlink service alongside Indonesian ministers.

Indonesia, a vast archipelago of 17,000 islands sprawled across three time zones with a population of more than 270 million, has been trying for years to secure deals with Musk's Tesla on battery investment and for Musk's SpaceX to provide fast internet for the country's remote regions.

During the ceremony, Musk took a speed test of the Starlink internet service with several health workers in Indonesia's remote regions, including in Aru, one of Indonesia's unserved and outermost islands in Maluku province.

"This can make it really a lifesaver for remote medical clinics, and I think it could be a possibility for education as well," Musk told reporters.

"If you can access the internet and then you can learn anything and you can also sell your business services worldwide. So, I think it's going to be incredibly beneficial," he said.

He also signed an agreement on enhancing connectivity in the country's health and education sectors. Details about the agreement between the Indonesian government and Musk's SpaceX, the aerospace company that operates Starlink services, were not provided.

Launching the service at a health clinic aligns with Starlink's broader mission of providing affordable access to high-speed internet services,

particularly in underserved and remote regions, said Coordinating Minister of Maritime and Investment Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan.



Elon Musk gesture upon his arrival at a public health center at Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia, on Sunday, May 19, 2024. Elon Musk arrived in Indonesia's resort island of Bali to launch Starlink satellite internet service in the world's largest archipelago nation. Credit: AP Photo/Firdia Lisnawati

"Our remote regions need Starlink to expand high-speed internet services, especially to help with problems in the health, education and maritime sectors," Pandjaitan, a close ally of Indonesia's President Joko Widodo, told reporters. He held separate talks with Musk on Sunday.

Communication and Informatics Minister Budi Arie Setiadi said earlier that local internet providers, which rely on base transceiver stations to transmit signals, are unable to reach outer islands because they have limited coverage. Starlink's satellites, which remain in low orbit, will help them deliver faster internet with nationwide coverage.

Health Minister Budi Gunadi Sadikin said of the more than 10,000 clinics across the country, there are still around 2,700 without internet access.

"The internet can open up better access to health services as communication between regions is said to be easier, so that reporting from health service facilities can be done in real time or up to date," he said.

During his first in-person visit to Bali, Musk is also scheduled to participate in the 10th World Water Forum, which seeks to address global water and sanitation challenges.

Musk spoke in 2022 at the B-20 business forum ahead of a summit of the Group of 20 leading economies that took place in Bali. He joined the conference by video link weeks after completing his heavily scrutinized takeover of Twitter.

Musk's visit comes just weeks after Apple CEO Tim Cook met Widodo on April 17 and said the company would "look at" manufacturing in Indonesia. [Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella](#) visited on April 30 and said the company would invest \$1.7 billion over the next four years in new cloud and artificial intelligence infrastructure in Indonesia.

Indonesia under Widodo has promoted development of the digital technology and information sectors, aiming to achieve the government's Golden Indonesia 2045 Vision. The country hopes to become one of the

world's top five economies with a GDP of up to \$9 trillion, exactly a century after it won independence from Dutch colonizers.

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