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The latest in Telecom, ICT and SatCom sectors of the Middle East, Asia and Africa



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Editor's Note



Dear Reader,

Welcome to the latest edition of Teletimes International.

This month we look forward to SAMENA Telecom Council's annual flagship event, the Telecom Leaders Summit. All key policy makers, stakeholders and industry leaders from the regional telecom industry will gather together to deliberate on policy in the ICT space and its impact on digital economic growth.

This edition features an exclusive interview with Charles Yang, President of Huawei ME, where he talks about a post-pandemic world and how an innovative approach towards economic recovery and improving quality of life is the need of the moment. Charles sheds light on some important aspects to consider for the future and the interview is definitely the top of my recommendation list. You will also find inside an interview with Bocar BA, the CEO of SAMENA Telecommunications Council, titled "Operating in the 5G Business Environment" which is definitely worth a read.

Another item I would most definitely recommend is the interview with Sheikh Mohammed Bin Abdulla Al Thani Deputy Group CEO and CEO of Ooredoo Qatar who gives an overview of Ooredoo's recent operations and its strategy focus on four main pillars including Core, Digital, Infrastructure and Portfolio.

As always, you will find the latest news and updates from all major players in the industry in this edition. Your feedback is welcome on info@teletimesinternational.com

Enjoy Reading Teletimes!

Khalid Athar
Chief Editor



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Milipol Qatar summit

Huawei reaffirms cybersecurity commitment and agreements on data openness and transparency

Charles Yang, President of Huawei ME details the company's efforts to support governments and enterprises in the region to tackle cybersecurity challenges

On the sidelines of this week's Milipol Qatar summit, the President of Huawei Middle East reaffirmed the company's commitment to supporting digital transformation across the Middle East by building stronger ICT ecosystems supported by cooperative cybersecurity mitigation programs. This ecosystem will ultimately contribute to the realization of national development visions over the coming years.

When it comes to 5G in particular, Huawei has noted that the GCC countries have been among the world's first wave of 5G deployments, now becoming a reference point for global commercial use. These investments will demonstrate their value once again during mega-events like the upcoming FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar, Hajj season and similar events enabling brand-new experiences such as 8K live broadcasts and exciting in-home viewer experiences through augmented and virtual reality.

"The use cases of 5G are almost unlimited in terms of healthcare, education, entertainment, transportation, energy, and more," said Charles Yang, President of Huawei Middle East. "Nonetheless, with the rapid development of 5G together with AI and cloud industries, countries in the region are rightfully attaching great importance to data sovereignty and cybersecurity.

"The use cases of 5G are almost unlimited in terms of healthcare, education, entertainment, transportation, energy, and more."

Huawei is committed to cooperative cybersecurity mitigation programs while never putting commercial interests ahead of cybersecurity policies. I reiterate that Huawei welcomes signing cyber security agreement with governments to ensure openness, transparency, and trust."

Over recent days, Huawei has been working closely with other global manufacturers, security and safety experts, governments, and enterprises at Milipol to help establish a more secure digital ecosystem in the region. Building and fully implementing an end-to-end global cybersecurity assurance and privacy protection system is one of Huawei's most crucial strategies for the region, according to Yang.

In 2020 alone, Huawei supported the stable operations of over 300 networks internationally, and helped operators to provide online services and minimize the impact of the pandemic on their business. Huawei has also signed more than 1,000 contracts for industrial 5G applications in more than 20 industries, demonstrating the trust that governments and its customers have in Huawei.

"Our responsibility has always been to make secure, trustworthy, and high-quality products," noted Yang. "Huawei has not had any major cybersecurity incidents while working with more than 500 telecom providers for nearly 20 years in 170 countries. No other vendor can claim this level of cybersecurity success."

In parallel with its cybersecurity emphasis, Huawei is doubling down on its research efforts in the region and internationally. The company is already one of the largest patent holders in the world. In 2020, Huawei was the top filer of patents for the fourth consecutive year, according to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). The company has also been leading in areas like 5G patents for some time, and has in turn been featured on rankings such as the EU Industrial R&D Investment Scoreboard in 2020.



"In the post-pandemic era, local governments and enterprises are all actively pushing for industrial digitalization, upgrading smart systems and solutions to enhance the level of public services,"

"In the post-pandemic era, local governments and enterprises are all actively pushing for industrial digitalization, upgrading smart systems and solutions to enhance the level of public services," said Yang. "As a consequence, they are looking at enhanced cybersecurity and privacy frameworks to guide how that transformation can happen. New policies, organizational structures, and processes will need to be determined, and will ultimately nurture a vibrant ecosystem that promotes innovation in the Middle East."

That future will also require bolstering local ICT talent, added Yang. Huawei's talent ecosystem currently consists of four parts: a Seeds for the Future program, the Huawei ICT Competitions, an internship program, and various ICT Academies.

Yang also cited how in 2020, the LearnOn online learning platform was launched in the Middle East. Over the last five years, this talent ecosystem has included work with 440 universities in the region, more than 20 ministries and commissions, with

more than 35,000 people being trained and over 9,000 being certified by Huawei in areas like 5G, AI, and cloud.

Yang stressed that the company will continue to work with local universities, partners, governments, and enterprise customers to cultivate more qualified ICT talent.

"With powerful technologies, a local talent ecosystem, and well-established cybersecurity frameworks, we are confident that advanced digital applications across all industries can become more widespread in the region," concluded Yang.

Huawei's cybersecurity practices have already gained the trust of global value chain partners and industry-leading organizations. To date, more than 700 cities and 228 Fortune 500 companies—among which 58 are from the Fortune 100—have selected Huawei as a digital transformation partner. ■

Teletimes Exclusive Interview

Operating in the 5G Business Environment

Bocar BA, CEO - SAMENA Telecommunications Council



Teletimes: How do you view the post-2020 world, and what are some of the key considerations for the new era?

Bocar BA: More than half of the world is now fully connected online and has begun to participate in the global digital economy. This is a transformative change.

Within the Digital Communications Industry, as well as other sectors--especially Healthcare, Education, and Finance, this change is now actively in play and has set forth a foundation for the enablement of new capabilities as well as possibilities, for not only managing future challenges of pandemic scale, but also for accelerating digital cooperation. To this effect, we are witnessing a greater urgency for the world's Private and Public sectors to co-operate, to help synergize new collaboration in digital transformation, and to collectively realize greater social and business value-addition.

Nonetheless, there is a tremendous need to formulate effective regulatory approaches in order to achieve more "meaningful connectivity" and "digital inclusion" across the society and the Digital Economy. This requires promoting relevance of digital connectivity and conducting capacity-building of those using the Internet only to a limited scale, or not using at all. Global benefits of digital infrastructure and broadband availability and access have been proven beyond doubt and well-recognized in the wake of the 2020 health crisis. We are truly operating in an era that is both challenging and abundant with new opportunities, and it offers a great

"We are truly operating in an era that is both challenging and abundant with new opportunities, and it offers a great chance for businesses and governments to deliver well together at greater scales."

chance for businesses and governments to deliver well together at greater scales.

TT: How have the new changes within the industry and the society transformed SAMENA Council's role?

BB: In addition to being an industry voice for the Private Sector and an advocate for sustainability at large and greater cooperation between Operators and Government bodies, SAMENA Council, despite the challenges the world has faced over the past year, continues to call for and assist in materializing collaboration among stakeholders in the new 5G ecosystem. In many instances, SAMENA Council's intervention and efforts to fill communication gaps have been instrumental in bringing stakeholders together on unifying platforms--including the Council's own. SAMENA Council has also had the privilege to carry out strategic messaging to help drive implementation of important recommendations by various global bodies.

SAMENA Council has also been involved in providing Operator-representative feedback to international consultations, to position its Operator Members' viewpoints and needs in both regional and international discussions and forums, centered on framing new ICT policies to drive innovation and sustainability within the Digital Communications Industry. On an ongoing basis, SAMENA Council is engaged in catalyzing regulatory reforms, encouraging agility, and undertaking collaborative initiatives with likeminded industry bodies and regional governments. The Council looks forward to contributing to leading global initiatives that aim to promote the benefits of mobile communication technologies to help increase digitization and accelerate the attainment of the 17 SDGs.

TT: In your observation, what are some key profitability hurdles for Telecom Operators, and how may these be overcome?

BB: Telecom Operators are operating in complex environs and this, in part, is a major reason why various Policymakers and Regulators have also demonstrated a progressive mindset and temporarily relaxed, for example, spectrum licensing and management rules in view of the sudden and significant increase in data traffic and demand for connectivity.

Overall, however, profitability hurdles are many, with most falling in the categories of Operations,

Market Conditions, non-traditional Competition, Regulatory, Spectrum Resources, too many Financial Obligations, challenges in Innovation, and, in some cases, Revenue Degradation. And it is not at all easy to overcome all of these, at once.

Times are calling for revamping cost structures, engaging in smart partnerships, and embracing new technologies such as cloud communications, AI, IoT, Big Data



analytics, new mobile applications, and, importantly, enabling sustainable investment in the fifth-generation of mobile technologies. New operating models that make effective use of cross-industry collaboration and help realize cost-savings are becoming among the top business transformation priorities, and Operators are broadening their B2B ICT offerings, taking a leading role in creating a digital ecosystem of solutions across various other sectors, including Education, Healthcare, and Financial Services.

TT: What are Operators doing to make networks more relevant and resilient?

BB: Operators are in the process of enhancing their attractiveness and availability to their customers via new digital services and applications that enrich their trust on Operators and offer a great digital experience. Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning are being explored and implemented to enable advanced condition-based maintenance capabilities across the networks, for instance. The latter is particularly important for ensuring that the networks are made resilient. In this age of digital transformation, data-based decision-making in real-time by concerned stakeholders is absolutely critical for reducing opex and increasing network asset health, among other requirements.

The Industry acknowledges that Telecom Operators have a crucial role to play in the worldwide efforts toward economic recovery, and that increased network capacity and resilience are a pre-requisite for building a sustainable Digital Economy. Key enabling factors, such as public-private collaboration, improved policy and regulatory enablement steps, aligned well with digital transformation goals set by Operators, and sustainable influx in investment in both infrastructure and incubation of innovation and ICT talent, will play a central role in the Industry's endeavors to put the economy back on

track.

TT: How has Cybersecurity become such an important area of industry collaboration, lately?

BB: Ultimately, all data usage trends and data protection measures to make data access and use efficient and meaningful, will have a direct impact on our collective ability to make progress on the UN's Connect 2030 Agenda, to fulfill the expectations long-ago defined through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These are matters of importance to companies, governments, and institutions alike.

"Telecom Operators have a crucial role to play in the worldwide efforts toward economic recovery, and that increased network capacity and resilience are a pre-requisite for building a sustainable Digital Economy."

Through state-level incentivization of data protection and Cybersecurity implementation, many co-related issues can be addressed, such as ensuring online safety of young citizens and children, and proliferation of digital services in the financial, education, and medical sectors, and sustainability issues for the enterprise sector.

If taken coherently, Cybersecurity measures have the power to sustain positivity and hope, and both curtain

and fight false information that feeds negativity and hopelessness. With our ripening 5G capabilities and technologies, we now have sufficient means and tools available to us but we need to work toward speedily implementing (and not just discussing) identifiable and practicable Cybersecurity measures.

TT: Given SAMENA Council's collaboration and presence in multiple global thought-leadership circles, and your own involvement on multiple industry-leadership fronts, what do you consider to be one major challenge in advancing the world's connectivity drive to ensure digital inclusion for all citizens of the world?

BB: There are well-pronounced gaps that need to be filled when it comes to providing connectivity at affordable prices and at reasonable internet speeds. Undeniably, gaps in funding and financing communication infrastructure development need to be filled, first. Traditional business models for providing telecoms services no longer apply as they once did, and this is one of the reasons why connecting the next billion will be substantially more difficult than it was earlier on when the telecom/ICT landscape was comparatively simpler. Historically, service provisioning has also been driven by revenue and quick return-on-investment approaches, due to which it has not been practical and financially viable for Operators to reach into far-flung areas. Even where USF models have been implemented to bring connectivity to hard-to-reach areas, these have not been issue-free, both in terms of transparency and efficient utilization. Governments, by themselves, lack revenues, models, expertise or even structures to substantially fund development of networks that are required to connect everyone. Even international financial bodies known for funding development projects are also unable to fund every major ICT project across every needy



"The complexities of the 5G ecosystem necessitate cross-industry collaboration and it is crucial that we exploit advanced technologies."

areas. Consequently, insufficiency of digital communication infrastructure funding has come to clear surface.

In short, my opinion is that lack of new funding mechanisms that are attentive to each stakeholder group in our complex digital environment are a major challenge in advancing digital inclusion and achieving universal digital access. But, at the same time, I am also pleased to inform you that we are in the process of developing consensus-driven recommendations to rectify this challenge at a global level.

TT: The Leaders' Summit 2020 was considered to be among the world's very first successfully conducted

virtual events in 2020, with very powerful messages communicated by Leaders to the Summit's audience. What are SAMENA Council's plans for holding the Leaders' Summit this year?

BB: The complexities of the 5G ecosystem necessitate cross-industry collaboration and it is crucial that we exploit advanced technologies such as AI, cloud and big data analytics, in order to overcome challenges to revitalize socio-economic development and catalyze new investments both within the ICT industries as well as in those sectors that are leveraging advanced mobile broadband technologies and ICTs, in

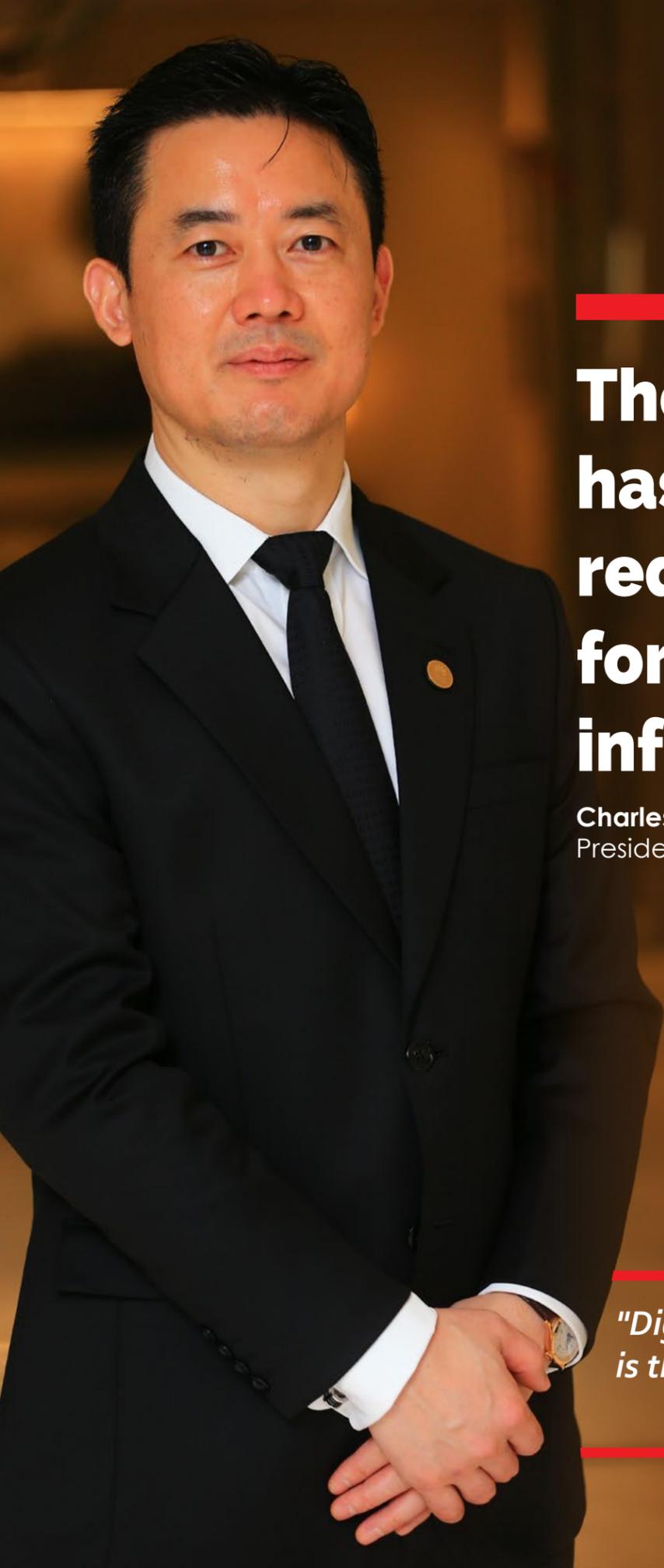
general.

In Leaders' Summit 2021, which follows the theme "Championing Digital Economic Growth from Policy to Reality", we will take the discussion forward from Leaders' Summit 2020.

Leaders' Summit 2021 will welcome Chairmen and CEOs from the private sector, and top decision-makers from various regulatory authorities, spanning multiple geographies. It will also include participation of global leaders and entities focused on institutionalizing and fostering cross-sector collaboration, making the Leaders' Summit 2021 the year's premier virtual destination for leadership, dialogue, demonstration, and for defining future policy actions, as the world embraces new norms in socialization and business conduct. To this effect, the Summit may help support new socio-economic growth through dialogue on policy adaptation and prompt business-enabling regulatory measures that reduce gaps between investment and business profits.

This year, anticipating the process of various Policymakers, including globally-renowned personalities, we have two main objectives: One, to contribute toward propelling digital-led economic growth to put life back on track after the pandemic, by identifying growth opportunities for businesses across industries/sectors, in-line with actual B2C & B2B technology requirements, and, two, driven by policy adaptation and prompt business-enabling regulatory measures, sharing insights on how the gap between investment in new technological innovations to support socio-economic growth and business profits can be reduced.

Teletimes is a Media Partner to SAMENA Council and, with pleasure, we look forward to its presence in Leaders' Summit this year as well. **T**



Teletimes Exclusive Interview

The pandemic has created new requirements for digital infrastructure

Charles Yang,
President of Huawei Middle East

"Digital is clearly here to stay and is the way forward for enterprises and governments alike."

Teletimes: The SAMENA Leader's Summit has been a focal point for ICT industry and policy development for some time, and the issues being tackled in 2021 are all the more pressing due to the disruptions of the last year. What is the key focus of Huawei's participation in 2021, and what do you expect from the Summit?

Charles Yang: While COVID-19 is our priority for today, the post-pandemic world will need an innovative approach towards economic recovery and improving quality of life; making businesses smarter and creating a more inclusive world in which everyone has the opportunity to thrive. To create the most value in a society empowered by connectivity, it is essential that innovation is developed not only as a means of achieving economic strength, but fosters digital inclusion. Closing the digital divide thus remains pivotal in the Middle East and around the world.

It is with this in mind that Huawei is proud to host this year's SAMENA Council Leaders' Summit in partnership with SAMENA Telecommunications Council for the eight-consecutive year. Held under the theme "Championing Digital Economic Growth from Policy to Reality", it remains an unparalleled platform to spark dialogue between all players within the ICT field. The summit also serves as a platform for decision-makers in the industry who are focused on institutionalizing and fostering cross-sector collaboration. It is our hope that the summit supports the development of an ICT ecosystem that enables us as Huawei to bring digital to every person, home, and organization for a fully connected, intelligent world. Through our collaboration with the SAMENA Telecommunications Council, we can achieve this vision faster and usher in a revival of the digital economy in 2021.

TT: As the world continues to fight the battle against COVID-19, how do you see technological innovation and digitization helping to solve the challenges ahead of us?



CY: It's impossible to deny that COVID-19 has had a massive impact on individuals, businesses, and countries across the world. However, the past year has emphasized just how important a solid ICT foundation can be on a national level. Following accelerated digitalization initiatives in 2020, technology has played a significant role in enabling the continuity of business and public services. Our work in the ICT field has also been paramount to combatting the disease itself, especially through innovations in scientific R&D, data analytics, e-healthcare, and more.

In turn, the pandemic has created new requirements for digital infrastructure. In one recent study by IDC, for example, the COVID-19 pandemic has led three in four manufacturers in the Middle East, Turkey, and Africa (META) region to engage in or soon start a formal digital transformation (DX) program. In another study, IDC has suggested that direct DX investment is still growing at a compound annual growth rate of 15.5% from 2020 to 2023.

Digital is clearly here to stay and is the way forward for enterprises and governments alike. At Huawei, we have seen how technologies such as 5G, AI, and cloud are more in demand than ever before. When combined, these technologies create immense productivity gains, especially during the unprecedented circumstances of a pandemic. They form the bedrock of a digital economy by enabling intelligent and flexible operations.

Furthermore, digitalization on this level creates additional opportunities. By 2025, for example, Huawei predicts that 97% of all large companies will use AI, and approximately 60% of global carrier revenue will be derived from industry customers. Can the use of these technologies boost economic recovery and establish a solid footing for sustainable growth in the future? We believe that it can, and it will. But industries now need to focus on improving their digital capabilities, building the ICT ecosystem, and creating real value with digital technology.

TT: Huawei has long been a company

centered on innovation. Last year, it remained the top patent applicant globally for the fourth straight year, while also leading on the 5G patent race. What has been your motivation, and how are those investments now being applied in the business world?

CY: Huawei is focused on innovation in the three key areas of technology, products, and applications. We believe this will help to break through ICT-related challenges at a company and industry level.

If you look at 5G, the forecasts about 5G network deployment that were made one year ago have all become a reality. The number of 5G users globally has reached 200 million, and 800,000 5G sites have been constructed worldwide.

"At Huawei, we have seen how technologies such as 5G, AI, and cloud are more in demand than ever before."

Technology is becoming part of core production processes in industries. 5G applications have already been deployed in more than 20 industries, including manufacturing, healthcare, education, and logistics. Through joint innovation and strategic partnerships with our customers in areas like 5G, we now aim to drive the expansion of 5G applications for businesses while working to develop devices targeted to meet specific industry needs.

Moreover, 5G makes possible the convergence of networks, devices, and technologies such as augmented reality (AR) that lead to new immersive virtual experiences that elevate our interactions with the world. Over the last year in particular, we have seen that there

are almost limitless ways in which the high precision integration of virtual and physical realities can create new growth opportunities. In addition to the more traditional academic uses, industries such as entertainment, tourism, transportation, and navigation – amongst others – will benefit from the harmony of the virtual and physical worlds.

At Huawei, we believe this is only made possible by focusing on open innovation and inclusive development.

TT: That strategy has served Huawei well, especially in the Middle East, where the business has moved from strength to strength. What kinds of projects are you now focusing on in the region, particularly in the area of 5G?

CY: In the Middle East, Huawei continues to work closely with governments, telecom authorities, industry partners, academics, and many other entities across the technology value chain to enter into a more connected, digitally-enabled future. Now more than ever, next-generation connectivity has a vital role to play in society.

Since 2018, we have been helping countries in the Middle East to speed up the deployment of 5G networks. Huawei is now the main 5G solution provider and innovation partner in the region, and we cooperate with all the countries that have launched 5G services in the GCC. We are also constantly pioneering new 5G applications for businesses and consumers. We have done this recently working with partners like Saudi Aramco, ADNOC, Dubai International Airport, and many others. Expanding the value of 5G to more people—and more businesses—is a key focus for us this year.

TT: To serve more communities in the region, talent development seems a critical issue for the sector overall. Has that been a priority for Huawei this year, and do you believe we are one step closer to closing the talent gap?

CY: Talent development in the ICT sector is vital to the success of countries' long-term plans of becoming knowledge-



"Huawei is focused on innovation in the three key areas of technology, products, and applications."

based economies that are globally competitive. It is our aim to support these national visions and create new value in the digital economy by nurturing the region's aspiring talent within a strong ICT talent ecosystem.

As such, a collaborative approach to ICT ecosystem development is something that Huawei truly believes in. We feel that promoting the development of local talent is best done in cooperation between the public and private sectors. In the past two decades, for example, we've helped the Middle East cultivate at least 100,000 ICT talents. Just last year, Huawei announced a new five-year plan in which we will help develop two million ICT professionals internationally by collaborating with academic partners. We will also continue investing heavily in supporting local developers in the Middle East, working extensively with local partners to help them deliver the most innovative experiences to users.

This will ultimately benefit society as a whole.

TT: In closing, are there any final thoughts you have about what lays ahead for the region's ICT sector?

CY: The pandemic closed many doors. Nonetheless, innovation has opened new windows of opportunity and hope. Through joint industry innovation, open partnerships, and collaborative forums like the SAMENA Leaders' Summit, I am confident that throughout 2021 we can help make life better, businesses smarter, and the world more inclusive. **T**



Etisalat participates in 5G MENA 2021 Digital Symposium

S.A. Burney

Etisalat has successfully participated in 5G MENA 2021 Digital Symposium headlining eminent speakers sharing insights on the transforming communication landscape and immense opportunities in the 5G landscape.

The digital symposium took place virtually bringing together telecom representatives, operators, manufacturers and regulators in an effort to address all the stakeholders of the 5G ecosystem.

Hatem Bamatraf, Chief Technology Officer, Etisalat Group gave a keynote address on transforming communications in the MENA region. The main discussion points focused on the changing role of a telco in

becoming an enabler of digital transformation.

“Telcos have played a critical role in accelerating growth in the country and across sectors, bringing an advanced network and ground breaking advanced connectivity solutions. During the pandemic and in the new normal the pressing need for vital digital infrastructure and connectivity has increased the necessity to build resilient societies allowing millions of people to work and study from home. With the support of the government and regulators it’s possible to create an ecosystem where telco innovation can be unleashed.”

The other speakers from Etisalat Group included Hani Mohammad

Yassin, Senior Director, Technology Strategy; Ayman Magdy Abousenna, Director, 5G networks & Digital Enablers Planning, and Fadi Shannah, Senior Director, Enterprise Sales.

Yassin took part in a panel discussion focusing on ‘Consumer 5G: from devices to FWA and beyond’ while Abousenna headlined a debate on ‘5G and edge unlocking new possibilities in MENA’. Shannah focused on MNO, vertical market and regulatory perspective on the 5G enterprise uptake and timelines in his session.

Etisalat’s successful 5G projects such as Expo 2020, Dubai Police, DMCC smart district services and remote autonomous operation in ports and oil fields were also discussed in detail. **T**

capacity

MIDDLE EAST 2021 RECONNECT

23 March - 19 May | Online
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REUNITING THE MIDDLE EASTERN TELECOMS AND ICT INFRASTRUCTURE COMMUNITIES





“Win Together”

Huawei hosts its Annual Middle East Virtual Partner Summit 2021

Huawei held its Middle East Virtual Partner Summit 2021 under the theme of “Win Together”. The annual event offered a collaborative platform for Huawei’s Middle East partners, fostering an exchange of best practices and successes from the past year. Huawei announced its 2021 channel strategy, policies, programs and promotions for regional partners during the event. Outstanding partners were also felicitated during the Partner Awards 2020. During the summit, Huawei customers and partners also shared key insights of their business enablement success through their collaboration with Huawei.

The goal for Huawei’s new channel strategy embraces a collaborative, win-win approach for distributors, resellers, system integrators and alliances. This new direction stems from the belief that the company’s long-term success is dependent on the success of the ecosystem it operates in. The company’s channel architecture and channel policies are based on four key measures –

profitability, simplicity, enablement, and ecosystem.

Huawei’s ecosystem partners grow from 500 to 28,000 worldwide, and particularly in the Middle East region, the company has added 521 registered partners, 131 Huawei-certified service partners and set up 93 Huawei ICT Academies. More than half of the global companies featured in the Fortune 500 list have chosen Huawei as their digital transformation partner.

David Shi, President of Enterprise Business Group, Huawei Middle East, delivered the welcome address to the partners which revolved around digital acceleration in the Middle East and implications for ecosystem partners. He said: “ Digital transformation is the biggest trend at present and will continue for the foreseeable future. In fact, the COVID-19 pandemic has only accelerated the process. The ICT ecosystem has never been more in the spotlight as a result of this, and at Huawei, we recognize

that our achievements are made possible only by the hard work and dedication from ecosystem partners across all industries and domains.”

“In this era of rapid digitalization, we aspire to create the most value for our customers and partners, and we are committed to delivering the best-in-class ICT solutions that help them create more value for their businesses in a fully integrated ecosystem,” Shi added.

During the Virtual Summit, Huawei also conducted a virtual exhibition tour for Huawei and partners’ offerings. In the second half of the summit, on-demand technology breakout sessions were held on enterprise networking, cloud & AI and Datacenters. Gulf Applications (GAPP), Mindware and Redington were the diamond sponsors of the Huawei Middle East Virtual Partner Summit, while Enterprise Systems, G2K Group and 4Sight Technologies were gold sponsors. ■

Huawei joins global cyber security platform to provide expertise in cyber crisis management



Huawei has officially joined the Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation – Computer Emergency Response Team (OIC-CERT), a leading international cyber security platform. Huawei is the first global ICT player to join the organisation, which is currently the third-largest national CERT organisation in the world.

The OIC-CERT is dedicated to providing expertise in cyber crisis management and develops capabilities to mitigate cyber threats by leveraging global collaboration. Being a commercial member of OIC-CERT allows Huawei to collaborate in an open and transparent platform with all stakeholders of the cyberspace to ensure end-to-end cyber security for member states. Huawei’s OIC-CERT membership is sponsored by the UAE Computer Emergency Response Team (aeCERT), a department under the country’s Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA), and CyberSecurity Malaysia, an agency under country’s the Ministry of Communications and Multimedia.

Mr. Jiawei Liu, CEO of Huawei UAE,

commented: “We are honoured to join the OIC-CERT organization, and our membership further cements Huawei’s credentials as a trusted partner of the global ICT ecosystem. It is also a testimonial to our strong cyber security capabilities. Through this membership, Huawei will actively contribute to the global cyber intelligence ecosystem and leverage its expertise to bolster cyber defence for more than 1.8 billion people living in the OIC-CERT’s member states. This will enable us to fulfil our vision of building a fully connected, intelligent world.”

Dato’ Ts. Dr. Haji Amirudin Bin Abdul Wahab, CEO of CyberSecurity Malaysia, and Permanent Secretariat of the OIC-CERT, said: “We would like to extend a warm welcome Huawei to the OIC-CERT. The organisation provides an unparalleled platform to 27 OIC-CERT member states to collaborate and mitigate the cyber threats that we face in today’s digitally connected world. With Huawei joining the OIC-CERT, the organisation will greatly benefit from its long-standing and deep sector ICT and cyber security expertise.”

Mr. Adel Almehairi, Director of the UAE Computer Emergency Response Team (aeCERT), stated: “Our cyber-threat landscape is constantly evolving with bad actors engineering high sophisticated attacks that can immobilize consumers’ day-to-day lives and derail business operations. As a global ICT leader, Huawei has an excellent track record of empowering secure and resilient digital transformations in the UAE and the rest of the world.”

Founded in 1969, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the second-largest organization after the United Nations with a membership of 57 states, covering approximately 1.8 billion people across four continents. The OIC has approved and accepted the Resolution on “Collaboration of Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) Among the OIC Member Countries”, and OIC-CERT has been granted an Affiliated Institution Status. It partners with member states and their respective national CERT to support and respond to computer security incidents. ■



Etisalat Group CEO Hatem Dowidar visits Pakistan

Meets Federal Minister of IT and key government stakeholders on Telecom Sector & national economic growth

A high-powered delegation of Etisalat Group, led by Group CEO Hatem Dowidar, visited Pakistan to meet with Federal Minister for IT & Telecommunication, Syed Amin ul Haque here on Thursday. During the meeting, Federal Minister for IT & Telecommunication welcomed the delegation from Etisalat and discussed matters related to the Telecom Sector in Pakistan. Secretary IT and Chairman PTCL Board, Shoab Ahmad Siddiqui, along with senior officials from the Ministry

and PTCL management, attended the meeting. Both sides stressed the need for digitalization in the country and agreed to enhance cooperation towards this vision. Syed Amin ul Haque, Minister for IT & Telecommunication, said, "For the first time in the history of Pakistan, after the formulation of the Right of Way Policy, the MoITT also credited with taking the revolutionary step of getting its approval from all forums. The policy sets out a fee structure for working



in the required areas. Similarly, telecom facilities will be considered as 'Critical Infrastructure' and no obstruction or unnecessary problems will be allowed for this purpose. Other important issues, including 'Common Services Corridor', Security of Telecom infrastructure, Safety measures on Health principles, have been included in the Right of Way policy, which will be binding on all concerned agencies and administrations, and it is a kind of 'One Window Operation'."

Federal Minister also said that on recommendations from the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication, the Federal Cabinet has unanimously approved

the recent developments on the Rights of Way (ROW), and for championing the need for a healthy and sustainable telecom market. He further added that the IT & Telecommunication sector in Pakistan has huge potential and it is heartening to see the government's drive towards the vision of a Digital Pakistan. "The Tax reduction on Telecom sector will benefit both consumers and Telecom operators as it will reduce tax burden on consumers while supporting Telecom Operators in expanding their infrastructure and services," he added.

The delegation was also thankful to the Federal Minister for his support on

with a focus especially on Telecom Sector and its significance on the national economic growth.

Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh commended the efforts of Etisalat and PTCL for their tremendous coordination and support in developing a strong infrastructure that would surely transform Pakistan into a digitalized economy. The Minister elaborated Prime Minister of Pakistan's vision for a Digital Pakistan and highlighted its role in today's digital world.

Federal Minister for Privatization, Muhammad Mian Soomro, during his meeting, appreciated their interest in



a gradual reduction in various heavy taxes imposed on the Telecom Sector and mobile phone users. This is a major achievement that will directly benefit, not only consumers but will also help spread the spirit of digital Pakistan, i.e. connectivity, to remote areas of the country. Moreover, FBR agrees to the implementation of the Cabinet's decision to classify the Telecom Sector including cellular operations as an industry.

Hatem Dowidar, Etisalat Group CEO, acknowledged and appreciated H.E. Minister IT and his team for taking positive, pro-active steps for the progress of the telecom market in Pakistan. He commended their role on

various successful projects that were executed in collaboration with the government. The meeting concluded on a positive note, along with a renewed commitment from PTCL and Etisalat to serve the people of Pakistan.

The delegation also met with the Federal Minister for Finance, Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh, Federal Minister for Privatization, Muhammad Mian Soomro and Chairman of Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), Maj Gen. (R) Amir Azeem Bajwa. During the meeting, Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh welcomed the delegation from Etisalat to Pakistan. Matters of mutual interest were discussed

Pakistan and contribution in the Telecom Sector. He emphasized that there are tremendous opportunities that should be availed. The per capita ratio of cellular phones in Pakistan is amongst the highest globally. Etisalat and Privatization teams resolved to expedite the pending issues and to have continued sittings.

Hatem Dowidar, Group CEO, Etisalat, commended the efforts of the Government of Pakistan including Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Privatization. He further emphasized on their role in re-shaping Pakistan's Telecom Sector on the pattern of leading economies of the world. **T**

Etisalat AGM approves a record total dividend per share for the year 2020

At Etisalat's Annual General Meeting (AGM), shareholders have backed the board's recommendation to pay full-year 2020 dividends of 80 fils per share, approved the cancellation of the share buyback program and instead agreed to a one-time special dividend of 40 fils per share, bringing the total dividend per share for 2020 to AED 1.20. The AGM backed the board's recommendation to increase the non-UAE nationals share ownership limit to 49 percent.

The AGM also elected four board members to fill the seats of Etisalat Group's Board of Directors that are not reserved for the Government Shareholder. The elected members are:

- *Sheikh Ahmed Mohamed Sultan Al Dhahiri*
- *Mr. Abdelmonem Bin Eisa Alserkal*
- *Mr. Khalid Abdulwahid Hassan Alrustamani*
- *Mr. Otaiba Khalaf Ahmed Al Otaiba*

Etisalat Group also announced that the Emirates Investment Authority, as the government shareholder in the company, has appointed its representatives in the Etisalat board as the following:

- *H.E. Jassem Mohamed Alzaabi, Chairman*
- *Mr. Essa Abdulfattah Kazim Al Mulla*
- *Mr. Hesham Abdulla Qassim Al Qassim*
- *Ms. Mariam Saeed Ahmed Ghobash*
- *Mr. Saleh Abdulla Ahmed Al Abdooli*
- *Mr. Mansoor Ibrahim Ahmed Almansoori*
- *Mr. Michel Combes*

The new board of directors will begin their duties with the start of the new term of the board scheduled to begin on 21 March 2021.

H.E. Obaid Humaid Al Tayer, Chairman, Etisalat Group said: "I am pleased to announce that our shareholders approved the recommendation of the Board of Directors to proceed with a record high full

year dividend payout. Another historical milestone was the approval of 49 percent ownership limit of non-UAE nationals that will help diversify the investor base and add further value to our current shareholders as well as bring liquidity and depth in Etisalat's financial capabilities.

Thanks to the Group's talented workforce and investment acumen, Etisalat was able to deliver on its vision in the current macro-economic climate. The unprecedented economic headwinds caused by COVID-19 have certainly demanded agility across our operations and we have demonstrated capabilities to quickly adapt to the present market conditions. Etisalat continued its focus on enhancing the core business and exploring new growth opportunities, while being well geared for the future with its digital capabilities and solutions. Etisalat's dedication to continue to build a robust, agile and transformative business enabled us to meet customer demands for quality services during the lockdown, while generating shareholder value and returns.

I would like to express my gratitude to the visionary UAE leadership for their continuous support, the loyalty of our customers and the trust of our shareholders. I also want to extend my appreciation to Etisalat's management team for their contribution to the company's success and commitment during a challenging year while working towards achieving our vision and strategic goals."

Eng. Hatem Dowidar CEO, Etisalat Group said: "In 2020 we have delivered robust financial performance with consolidated revenues reaching AED 51.7 billion while consolidated net profit after federal royalty amounted to AED 9.0 billion, an increase of 3.8 percent compared to the previous year. Despite the challenges, a strong execution, an agile and resilient business model led to EBITDA reaching AED 26.4 billion with a growth rate of 0.3 percent and a margin of 51.1 percent.

During these challenging times, we advanced our efforts to digitally transform our business both internally within the company and externally to all our customers, this led to increasing our subscriber base by 3.6 percent reaching a total of 154 million subscribers. This growth is central to our belief that the network and infrastructure has played a key role in empowering millions of customers during the pandemic. In the new normal, telecoms and digital technologies have become the anchor of our lives - be it remote working or virtual classrooms, our networks ensured that the world did not come to a standstill. Innovations in telecom and digital technologies have altered the fabric of life, becoming a necessity and a human right in a digitally connected world.

2020 has been a defining year for Etisalat with intensive transformation and agile delivery of services, ensuring a strong performance while making Etisalat well positioned for the future. An outstanding outcome considering the stagnant global economy and challenges caused by the pandemic across our footprint. We witnessed a step change in customers' adoption of digital solutions and affirmed our technological leadership in this rapidly evolving ecosystem, ensuring value creation for our customers and shareholders.

Thanks to the sheer determination of our teams, Etisalat delivered on the ambitions and aspirations of its customers, continued to support the communities it serves and added value to the markets in which it operates. I would like to extend my appreciation to the UAE leadership for their enduring support and inspiration by driving us to always aim higher to widen our horizon. Moreover, I am thankful to our loyal customers and shareholders who motivate us to innovate and push boundaries, and to our employees who are the cornerstone of our success." **■**

Huawei Cloud launches an open cloud strategy for its partners in the ME



Huawei through its Cloud and AI division, held its first training conference in Dubai on March 8-11, 2021. The conference highlighted and introduced Huawei's new Cloud Partner Network Program with the participation of 300 partners, introducing new capabilities that help bring them a better digital life.

Through this conference, Huawei Cloud aims to raise awareness on the key role in which Cloud plays, as well as sharing Huawei's global knowledge and expertise with Huawei's partners. As part of the company's commitment to collaboration and openness with its partners and customers, Huawei introduced the Huawei Cloud Partner Network Program in which it aims to welcome all partners to join and create service experiences by utilising Huawei's global capabilities. The program also aims to ultimately contribute towards achieving a digital economy and smart society of countries across the Middle East.



Omar Akar, Managing Director and VP of Cloud and AI Business Group, Huawei Middle East, said: "Building stronger computing power in the Middle East will require that the ICT industry deliver ubiquitous cloud and pervasive intelligence in the years ahead. At Huawei Cloud and AI, we are continuously working on providing our local customers and partners with various technologies and the necessary tools and skills to benefit from our extensive knowledge and expertise in order to grow together."

Akar added: "Our ultimate objective is to provide our technologies, preferential policies, and use Huawei's Cloud proven

global practices to train and empower our local partners to innovate through this new program. In the future, Huawei Cloud will work effortlessly with partners to open the market and go global to strengthen their influence and success."

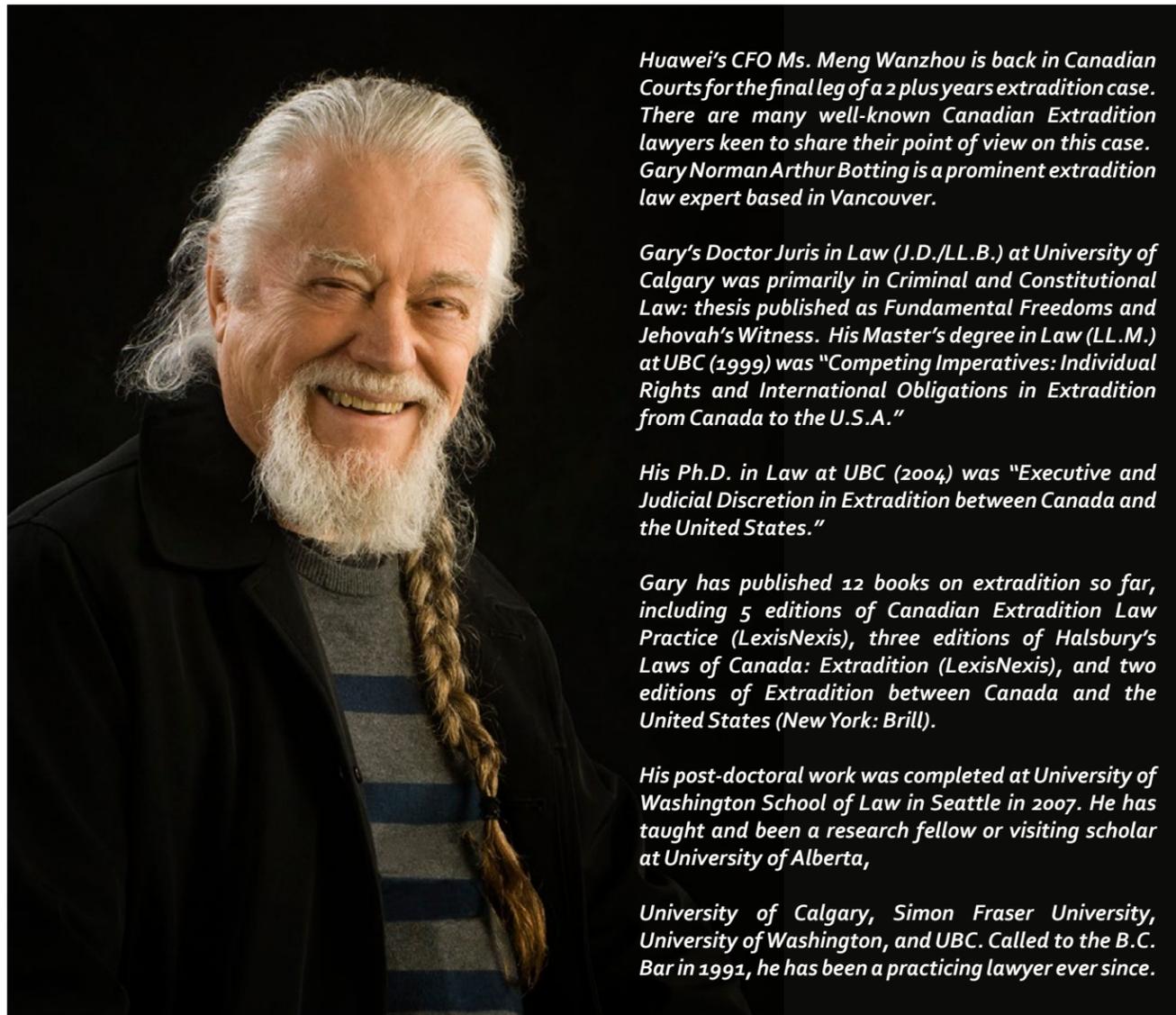
In 2020, Huawei launched its Cloud and AI Business Group in the Middle East Region to concentrate specifically on the most in-demand technologies in today's increasingly connected world. The Business Group strengthens Huawei's position as a partner of choice in enabling enterprises' digital transformation

journeys, by offering focused products which enable cost reduction and increased business efficiency via modern infrastructure solutions. The BU portfolio also offers a next-generation multi-cloud strategy to increase agility via the automation of service delivery.

According to recent research by Gartner, the global computing market is projected to be worth more than US\$2 trillion by 2023. Huawei estimates that in the coming five years, AI computing alone will account for more than 80% of computing power used around the world. **■**

"The criminal portion of the Meng case has been dragged out much too long"

The prominent Canadian extradition law expert Gary Botting, based in Vancouver provides exclusive quotes and insights into the case during an interview with Khalid Athar, Chief Editor of Teletimes International



Huawei's CFO Ms. Meng Wanzhou is back in Canadian Courts for the final leg of a 2 plus years extradition case. There are many well-known Canadian Extradition lawyers keen to share their point of view on this case. Gary Norman Arthur Botting is a prominent extradition law expert based in Vancouver.

Gary's Doctor Juris in Law (J.D./LL.B.) at University of Calgary was primarily in Criminal and Constitutional Law: thesis published as Fundamental Freedoms and Jehovah's Witness. His Master's degree in Law (LL.M.) at UBC (1999) was "Competing Imperatives: Individual Rights and International Obligations in Extradition from Canada to the U.S.A."

His Ph.D. in Law at UBC (2004) was "Executive and Judicial Discretion in Extradition between Canada and the United States."

Gary has published 12 books on extradition so far, including 5 editions of Canadian Extradition Law Practice (LexisNexis), three editions of Halsbury's Laws of Canada: Extradition (LexisNexis), and two editions of Extradition between Canada and the United States (New York: Brill).

His post-doctoral work was completed at University of Washington School of Law in Seattle in 2007. He has taught and been a research fellow or visiting scholar at University of Alberta,

University of Calgary, Simon Fraser University, University of Washington, and UBC. Called to the B.C. Bar in 1991, he has been a practicing lawyer ever since.

Teletimes: From a legal perspective, what are your general opinions about Ms. Meng Wanzhou case thus far?

Gary Botting: Generally speaking, the committal portion of the Meng case has been dragged out much too long. However, this strategy conforms to the unexpressed credo and modus operandi of extradition lawyers, used to inconvenience a "legal" process that is widely seen as being unconstitutional: "Delay, delay, delay!" This MO is fine if the individual being sought has endless resources, but of course doesn't work for the average person, because both the person and the lawyer will end up in the poor house, without the resources to defend the actual trial once returned to the requested country. You can be sure that the lawyers in Canada will gear their defense to what their client can afford, leaving nothing in the bank; hence their clients are either lawyerless or at the mercy of public defenders when the need for legal representation is greatest—after the inevitable extradition. "Delay, delay, delay!" can only be justified, therefore, for the very well-heeled, or where it seems likely that the law is in flux and will change for the better.

As I have been saying since it was first presented as a Draft Bill in Parliament, the Canadian Extradition Act passed into law in 1999, is unconstitutional in its present form because it gives altogether too much discretion to the Minister of Justice and the International Assistance Group of the Department of Justice, and because it shackles and gags the committal judges by confining their role to whether the person before them is indeed the accused (a no-brainer) and whether his or her alleged conduct is criminal in Canada. The only other concern of the judge is whether the extradition partner or the Canadian authorities have committed an unconstitutional act so egregious that it directly impacts on the fairness of the committal hearing itself – a very narrow window of opportunity.

Given the clearly limited role of the extradition judge, the International Assistance Group usually books a single day for the entire extradition hearing, so that it presents its case in the morning, and the defence can voice any objections in the afternoon. Judgment is usually reserved, because every decision becomes a precedent for every case that follows, and is subject to appeal. The average criminal lawyer new to extradition will go along with this schedule, which of course will result in committal every time. More seasoned lawyers book at least two days and warn the court that the hearing might take longer for constitutional reasons, usually (at that point) unspecified. I usually book a week to cover all eventualities. Multiply that by the number of co-accused, and you have a ball-park figure of how long the initial hearing will usually take.

Sounds arbitrary? It is, but no more than the law itself, as written: All the cards are in the Justice Department deck, and they deal the person most in jeopardy a deuce. This is the consistent modus operandi of the International Assistance Group. It is designed so that international "comity" (i.e. toadying to other nations) defeats



"If Huawei CFO Meng Wanzhou is discharged by the Canadian Court, the Department of Justice has the right to appeal. If it chooses not to appeal, she has the right to go back to China."

common sense (i.e. compassion and reasonableness).

Having said that, what are my opinions about the Ms. Meng case so far?

a) The provisional warrant should not have been issued in the first place, and certainly should not have been converted to an extradition warrant two months later on the skimpy evidence provided by the U.S. Department of Justice;

b) The Prime Minister and Minister of Justice have been ill-advised from the outset by the peons in the upper echelons of the International Assistance Group, all of whom suffer from tunnel vision in that they obsessively seek to kowtow to the requesting state; the United States (for example) says "Jump!" and, ever so startled, the Canadian Department of Justice replies, "How high?"

c) The Minister of Justice has demonstrated appalling weakness of

that of the Minister.

e) The prescribed role of the judiciary is strictly to determine whether the conduct of Ms. Meng would be criminal in Canada—including whether Canada would have jurisdiction to prosecute her given the existential situation of Canada having acquiesced to some sanctions against Iran (the answer to this seeming conundrum is obvious: Canada would not prosecute—or it would have already!);

f) The two-year timeline, while not sanctioned by the Act, is predictable, given the extradition lawyer's unwritten credo ("Delay, delay, delay!") to defeat the unimaginable harm caused by a lop-sided piece of legislation drafted by the Department of Justice specifically to meet their pragmatic goals without consideration of human or constitutional rights beyond the most discursive and dismissive sense (for example, the main individual rights and protections set out in sections 46 and 47 of the Act are

GB: Any inconsistencies that I have seen involve U.S. policy and jurisdiction. The United States is not an international police force: far from it! It winks at its own executives making deals worth billions of dollars, including Trump and his ilk, yet arrests Ms. Meng as CFO of a Chinese corporation for alleged conduct that is said to have occurred in Hong Kong with a bank registered in the UK? On the basis that the transaction, had it been completed, would have been in U.S. dollars cleared through a New York clearinghouse? Give me a break! (And while you're at it, give Ms. Meng a break too!)

TT: *Now until May will be critical for the case. Compared to the beginning of the case, can recent developments in the arrest process of Ms. Meng give rise to new factors that affect the trial?*

GB: As I have said before, the police and CBSA tapes are reminiscent of the old Keystone Kops silent movies. They all but wet themselves with excitement. It's like a trout fisherman who hooks a turbot and doesn't know how to land it. (Tip: you don't try. You cut it free!)

TT: *Given the different branches that Ms. Meng's lawyers have been fighting for, how solid is the justification of Canadian authorities to arrest Meng?*

GB: This is a bifurcated question, so I'll give a bifurcated answer.

a. There is no doubt that Canadian authorities had the right to arrest Ms. Meng on a provisional warrant, given the provisions of the Act and the Treaty. But obviously, the provisions surrounding provisional warrants must be reexamined, if they can be exercised so sloppily. Once the U.S. DOJ told the Canadian DOJ that a suspected felon was entering Canada, that's all it takes. The U.S. then has two months to perfect its application for extradition, including presenting a record of the case outlining the evidence. In other words, Canada can arbitrarily detain anyone any

treaty partner requests, pending formal allegations; there is absolutely no doubt that Ms. Meng's arrest and detention were arbitrary, even though it accorded with the law. Here, the law is the ass.

b. But so were the authorities in trying to enforce that law. This "big fish" situation probably hadn't arisen before. They were so anxious not to blow it that they blew it! They could have calmly explained to Ms. Meng that there was a provisional warrant for her arrest, and she would have to wait for the appropriate authorities to arrive to execute it. End of story. As it was, there is at least an appearance of abuse of process surrounding her actual arrest and detention—probably not serious enough to justify remedy by discharging her. There are many instances of more egregious detentions that have been ruled constitutional. As for breaching of international law, this issue is not germane to what Canada has done so much as what the United States has done in abusing the extradition treaty system to arrest an individual in order to curb the actions of a successful rival corporation. Canada is complicit in this only because its officials have been too blinded by the brightness of American hegemonic aspirations in North America to appreciate that we are unwitting victims to what is really a dispute between China and the United States.

TT: *The defense and the prosecution just finished the submissions on the first branch of abuse of process. Did you have any particular opinions on what was presented there?*

GB: Bungling incompetence in unusual circumstances is understandable and therefore to a degree excusable (see the allusion to the Keystone Kops above). So this is not likely to rise to the level of an abuse of process worthy of discharge. Nor will Trump's blathering: Trump is, was and always will be an irrelevance.

TT: *It is believed that under the previous administration, the US sought to use*

the extradition proceedings against Ms. Meng for political and economic gain. Do you personally think that argument holds weight based on what you've seen?

GB: Ditto. Trump's blathering, as the judge plainly sees, is not even worthy of a footnote: he is at best an "end" note. However, that is not to say that the United States has not been motivated by political and economic advantage. In fact this, in my view, has been the motivating factor from the outset. The United States simply does not have

jurisdiction to prosecute a corporate executive for a decision made or actions conducted outside its jurisdiction. cannot possibly get a fair trial (or even safe custody) in the United States. Bottom line: her name must be removed from the U.S. indictment, no strings attached. At that point, Canada would immediately discharge her and she could go home to China or stay in Canada, in accordance with her existing travel documents. If she is discharged by the Canadian court, the Department of Justice has the right to appeal. If it chooses not to appeal, she has the right to go back to China. However, as long as the U.S. indictment is still in place, wherever she goes in the world—including Canada—she can be rearrested on a provisional warrant, and the whole process can begin again. So says our flawed law—and most treaties. If she is committed for extradition by the Canadian court (the most likely outcome), her lawyers have 30 days to do two things a) file an

"Meng was arrested on Dec 1, 2018 at the very moment she was on her way to promote Huawei's 5G Technology to Mexico."

"The prescribed role of the Judiciary is strictly to determine whether the conduct of Ms. Meng would be criminal in Canada."

character in not simply ordering the discharge of Ms. Meng, given that it is entirely within his purview to do so under section 23 of the Act;

d) The Prime Minister and Minister of Justice were wrong in their saying that for them to interfere in the process would be a violation of the Rule of Law—since the law allows precisely for that eventuality, and when they uttered those (apparently indelible) words, the case was not before the courts; in any case, the court's role is merely advisory, and the surrender decision is entirely

nullified by section 45 where a treaty is in place;

g) It has been predictable that the committal judge has decided nothing of consequence so far, because that is her job—to do nothing but order committal on the stringent grounds provided by law. Even if she discharges Ms. Meng at this point, the Department of Justice can (and probably will) appeal.

TT: *Have you seen any inconsistencies or inaccuracies in the evidence from the prosecution so far?*

appeal; and b) make submissions to the Minister of Justice as to why she should not be surrendered for extradition. The submissions may include humanitarian grounds (e.g. Asian women are arbitrarily targeted in the U.S. and therefore cannot be kept safe, especially within the prison system), arguments that the charges or the motivation for bringing them are political (the most likely to succeed, in my opinion), or jurisdictional grounds (however, the Minister will usually

say that that was the domain of the extradition judge; committal will automatically imply that jurisdiction is not an issue since it has already been decided that the offence would amount to a crime in Canada – a classic case of Catch-22). The Minister of Justice can either order her surrender or order her discharge. At this point (or at any point along the way so far—it's entirely up to the Minister's discretion under section 23), the Minister's order to discharge her is not appealable. However, his

order to surrender is subject to judicial review, which is heard by the provincial Court of Appeal at the same time as the appeal of committal—probably a year or two down the road. That decision is appealable to the Supreme Court of Canada only where the three justices do not agree. Although the appellant can seek leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada despite unanimity of opinion, leave is rarely if ever given. If leave to appeal is ordered, add another year. **■**

Huawei releases White Paper on Innovation and Intellectual Property 2020

Huawei released a new white paper on innovation and intellectual property, at the Forum on Innovation and IP Prospects in 2021 and Beyond held at the company's Shenzhen headquarters. This paper focuses on Huawei's history in innovation and intellectual property (IP) management prior to 2010 and includes data and milestones related to their investment and R&D that spans back to the 1990s.

Huawei's Chief Legal Officer Song Liuping stated at the forum, "We want to show the history of our innovation over the past 30 years and our long-term commitment to respecting, protecting, and contributing to IP. With this white paper, we want you to better understand how Huawei has become what it is today."

Huawei states in the paper that it has become one of the world's largest patent holders through sustained investment in innovation. By the end of 2020, Huawei held over 100,000 active patents in more than 40,000 patent families worldwide.

Jason Ding, Head of Huawei's Intellectual Property Rights Department, said, "Innovation has been at the core of Huawei's business since the company was founded. Our 2020 white paper lists the number of patent applications Huawei filed, or our R&D and innovation activities, in the late 90s and early 2000s." He also stated, "Huawei's worldwide patent applications were on par with other industry leaders in the early 2000s, and Huawei's success



today is a result of its long-term investment in innovation and R&D."

Huawei filed its first patent application in China back in 1995, and its first patent application in the US in 1999. In 2008, the World Intellectual Property Organization listed Huawei as No. 1 in terms of number of patent applications filed under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) for the first time. In 2019, Huawei ranked No. 2 in Europe and No. 10 in the US in terms of the number of patents granted. Huawei is also the largest patent holder in China.

Ding noted that Huawei estimates it will receive about 1.2 to 1.3 billion US dollars in revenue from patent licensing between 2019 and 2021. He also announced that for every multi-mode 5G smartphone, Huawei will provide a reasonable percentage royalty rate of the handset selling price, and a per unit royalty

cap at US\$2.5.

"Huawei has been the largest technical contributor to 5G standards, and follows fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory (FRAND) principles when it comes to patent licensing," added Ding, "we hope that the royalty rate we announced today will increase 5G adoption by giving 5G implementers a more transparent cost structure that will inform their investment decisions moving forward."

Francis Gurry, former Director General of WIPO, also spoke at the event saying, "In releasing its license fee structure for 5G standard essential patents (SEPs), Huawei is promoting the widespread adoption and use of standards designed to ensure interoperability, reliability and transparent competition, while at the same time providing a fair return for investment in R&D." **■**

"Our strategy will focus on four main pillars, including Core, Digital, Infrastructure and Portfolio"

Sheikh Mohammed Bin Abdulla Al Thani

Deputy Group CEO and CEO of Ooredoo Qatar speaks to Teletimes

Gulraiz Khalid: Please give us the latest overview of the Ooredoo Group and its operations across the region.

Mohammed Al Thani: Ooredoo Group is a leading telecommunications company, headquartered in Doha, with operations in 10 markets in the Middle East, North Africa and Southeast Asia and a customer base of 121 million customers around the world.

Our vision is to enrich peoples' digital lives, a core promise that took on a new level of relevance recently, as communities around the world faced unprecedented challenges with the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent global disruption.

As a leading operator and digital enabler, Ooredoo offers a vast range of world-class mobile, fixed, broadband, business, money and entertainment services. We are a preferred provider of digital services for our customers, offering robust networks upon which people and companies can rely. This was demonstrated as our networks provided a vital lifeline to ensure business continuity and remote productivity during the most difficult times of 2020.

At the regional level, we have a strong presence operating in Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Iraq, Palestine, Algeria and Tunisia, and our companies are making great progress and achievements.

Most recently, Ooredoo Qatar transitioned towards becoming a truly digital player, enabling rapid time-to-market for new services and a seamless customer experience. Ooredoo Kuwait optimised its network and converted 2G and 3G networks to 4G to give more capacity to users and provided the highest 5G internet speeds in Kuwait, while Ooredoo Oman launched 5G services and provided 24/7 digital access and support for customers. Asiacell Iraq began deploying 4G infrastructure across the country in preparation for its launch in 2021 and Ooredoo Palestine continued to enhance and expand its network during the year.

OoredooAlgeria successfully provided customers with innovative solutions and services in a very competitive market, including



the launch of a new digital offer portfolio, while Ooredoo Tunisia solidified its position as the number one telecommunications operator by market share, network speed and customer service, retaining more than 43% of the total Tunisian mobile market.

GK: Would you like to describe the long-term objectives of Ooredoo Group?

MT: Looking back over 2020 and the challenges the world went through, I'm very proud to say that Ooredoo has done extremely well maintaining a stable financial position and demonstrating our ability and commitment to keeping everyone connected.

The lessons of 2020 helped inform our ongoing strategic review, sharpening the importance of focusing on our points of differentiation in an increasingly competitive telecommunications landscape and keeping pace with the progressive generational evolution of our underlying technology.

To continue Ooredoo's positive momentum into 2021 and beyond, our strategy will focus on four main pillars, including Core, Digital, Infrastructure and Portfolio.

Our plan is to invest further in our people, our networks and our services to accelerate the performance of our Core business. This will enable us to lead our markets and maximise returns on our assets.

Which brings me to the second pillar: Digital. We've started our digital transformation journey a few years back, investing in our networks, in technology and in human capital - making it easier for our customers to find, buy and use our products online. We will continue with this exciting journey, building leading digital services and extending the implementation of digitalisation across the Group to be more efficient and agile. We've seen data traffic significantly rising across our footprint in 2020 and more customers are moving towards digital channels, which means Ooredoo is well on track to realise strong success from this strategy in 2021.

As for infrastructure, we are shifting towards a more asset-light financial model that will help us unlock significant capital and enable us to focus on our core mission of delivering outstanding digital services to our customer base.

We are also adopting a proactive portfolio strategy that will drive additional value across our markets. With our advanced and trusted networks in place, the horizon expands considerably, from the Internet of Things (IoT) to finding best-of-breed partners in the delivery of entertainment content. By orienting our work towards a customer base that takes mobile and specifically 5G for granted, we envisage operating with an increasingly diverse portfolio in the period ahead.

Financially, we remain focused on optimising CapEx by leveraging Ooredoo Group's economies of scale. To this end, we have signed a strategic 5G agreement with global leader Ericsson for the supply of 5G equipment and related implementation and integration services.

Internally, we are ensuring our organisational culture is fast-moving, innovative and imaginative enough to stay ahead of the current demand curve. We continue to attract and retain talent from within our markets and we have seen, indeed, many young and emerging leaders step up and deliver during challenging times.

GK: How has the year 2021 been so far? As things start returning back to normal, how do you see this impacting business moving forward?

MT: Responding to these questions on what is loosely the first anniversary of the initial response to the global Coronavirus pandemic calls for sober reflection.

Going back to 2020, I am proud to say Ooredoo Group has reacted swiftly to the challenges presented by the pandemic, promptly implementing measures to support the communities we serve around the world.

This was hardly the result of last-minute planning. We have been investing in our networks, in technology and in human capital for several years, which enabled us to rapidly formulate response plans that helped our customers stay connected and easily adjust to a new way of life.

In the first three months of 2021, our emergency measures had been in place for quite some time across the organisation, meaning that we were well-versed in

managing the risk to employees and customers from our activities in 2020.

At the same time, we'd realised the extent to which workplaces and households had been forced to change, and done our best to facilitate this. Specifically, this has meant securing the network to ensure that working from home and making heavy use of home learning and entertainment could proceed unimpeded.

In terms of a 'new normal', it is unclear to what extent some of these practices will outlive the pandemic as, for instance, some employees may continue with working from home from now on, but either way we are prepared.

GK: How is Ooredoo contributing towards the Digital Economy in the markets where it is operating?

MT: Forward-thinking governments are committed to various forms of modernisation, including the knowledge economy, and we are happy to partner with them towards such goals.

It's a vision well-expressed in such programmes as the Qatar National Vision 2030, which will rely on a sound digital infrastructure to underpin them.

In Qatar, the company's leadership in the business market was supported by the launch of several new products and services, including global connectivity services to support the Qatar Digital Economy by providing direct access to European data centres and IoT connect, and monitoring services to oversee all network connections in real time and track water and energy usage. The company also launched Quad Play, Business EDGE and vehicle tracking services.

Asiacell Iraq is a key enabler of Iraq's digital economy, providing a world-class network and infrastructure to connect local businesses to the global economy.

Concurrently, we are learning what works best in particular national markets and building on this best practice.

While, say, Oman, Indonesia and Palestine are all very different marketplaces, what ties them together is a strong sense of the potential benefits of a digital economy. This

"A major milestone in 2020 was Ooredoo Qatar, working with technology giant Ericsson, successfully testing the 200MHz spectrum and achieving a record system throughput of 4.2Gbps. By the end of 2020, Ooredoo Qatar's 5G coverage extended to 93% of the population."

can start simply, with something like being able to distribute remittances safely and inexpensively through our mobile money services, but over time we would encourage people to dream big – imagine, for instance, if a nation's haulage needs could be met by IoT/AI-based fleet management of a multitude of driverless electric vehicles.

GK: What are your plans with regards to deploying more 5G across your global footprint? And what is the current situation with 5G adoptability in Qatar?

MT: I am delighted to say that we're now providing 5G services in Qatar, Kuwait and Oman. We're also deploying 5G infrastructure in Indonesia and have completed the commercial launch of 5G services by Ooredoo Maldives in December 2020.

In Qatar, the first country in the world to have launched 5G commercially through Ooredoo, we did not let the unprecedented conditions of 2020 steer our digital vision off course; instead, the company remained committed to its digital transformation strategy despite the challenges, further expanding its 5G network and enhancing its product offering.

A major milestone in 2020 was Ooredoo Qatar, working with technology giant Ericsson, successfully testing the 200MHz spectrum and achieving a record system throughput of 4.2Gbps, as part of the development and expansion of the 5G network. The technology, deployed within Ooredoo's network, uses advanced 5G and 4G carrier aggregation functionality, increasing the data rate per user by assigning multiple frequency blocks to the same user.

By the end of 2020, Ooredoo Qatar's 5G coverage extended to 93% of the population. Moving forward, 5G and its myriad use cases will remain a key driver of the company's ongoing success, as it adopts the latest technologies to become a truly digital player.

GK: What will be the key focus of Ooredoo Group moving forward? Which markets do you expect to bring about the highest growth?

MT: We will continue the momentum in the shift to digital channels for service provision, evaluating ways in which we can further enhance options for our customers to engage with us digitally and rolling out new and improved channels where needed.

In 2021 and beyond, our Group strategy will remain focused on digital transformation, making it easier for customers to find, buy and use our products and services online. Customers across our footprint can rely on us to provide them with the most relevant digital services that meet their daily personal and business needs.

In terms of offerings, we are always working on new and enhanced mobile apps that offer great features, which will enable our customers to buy, manage and use our services easily, with just a few clicks. Our entertainment offerings will be further expanded to include world-class premium content streaming and gaming options.

Ooredoo's rich portfolio of mobile apps now includes as well financial services, an area on which we are increasingly focusing, in response to the growing need for such provisions across our footprint.

As for our business customers in particular, the development of Internet of Things apps and solutions will be a priority especially that our groundbreaking 5G networks are being rolled out in new markets. **I**

Intel CEO announces 'IDM 2.0' strategy for manufacturing, innovation and product leadership

Syed Zulfiqar Ali

Intel CEO Pat Gelsinger outlined the company's path forward to manufacture, design and deliver leadership products and create long-term value for stakeholders. During the company's global "Intel Unleashed: Engineering the Future" webcast, Gelsinger shared his vision for "IDM 2.0," a major evolution of Intel's integrated device manufacturing (IDM) model. Gelsinger announced significant manufacturing expansion plans, starting with an estimated \$20 billion investment to build two new factories (or "fabs") in Arizona. He also announced Intel's plans to become a major provider of foundry capacity in the U.S. and Europe to serve customers globally.



"We are setting a course for a new era of innovation and product leadership at Intel," said Gelsinger. "Intel is the only company with the depth and breadth of software, silicon and platforms, packaging, and process with at-scale manufacturing customers can depend on for their next-generation innovations. IDM 2.0 is an elegant strategy that only Intel can deliver – and it's a winning formula. We will use it to design the best products and manufacture them in the best way possible for every category we compete in."

IDM 2.0 represents the combination of three components that will enable the company to drive sustained technology and product leadership:

1. Intel's global, internal factory network for at-scale manufacturing is a key competitive advantage that enables product optimization, improved economics and supply resilience. Today, Gelsinger reaffirmed the company's expectation to continue manufacturing the majority of its products internally. The company's 7nm development is progressing well, driven by increased use of extreme ultraviolet

lithography (EUV) in a rearchitected, simplified process flow. Intel expects to tape in the compute tile for its first 7nm client CPU (code-named "Meteor Lake") in the second quarter of this year. In addition to process innovation, Intel's leadership in packaging technology is an important differentiator that enables the combination of multiple IPs or "tiles" to deliver uniquely tailored products that meet diverse customer requirements in a world of pervasive computing.

2. Expanded use of third-party foundry capacity. Intel expects to build on its existing relationships with third-party foundries, which today manufacture a range of Intel technology – from communications and connectivity to graphics and chipsets. Gelsinger said he expects Intel's engagement with third-party foundries to grow and to include manufacturing for a range of modular tiles on advanced process technologies, including products at the core of Intel's computing offerings for both client and data center segments beginning in 2023. This will provide the increased flexibility and scale needed to optimize Intel's roadmaps for cost, performance, schedule and supply, giving the company a unique competitive advantage.

3. Building a world-class foundry business, Intel Foundry Services. Intel announced plans to become a major provider of U.S.- and Europe-based foundry capacity to serve the incredible global demand for semiconductor manufacturing. To deliver this vision, Intel is establishing a new standalone business unit, Intel Foundry Services (IFS), led by semiconductor industry veteran Dr. Randhir Thakur, who will report directly to Gelsinger. IFS will be differentiated from other foundry offerings with a combination of leading-edge process technology and packaging, committed capacity in the U.S. and Europe, and a world-class IP portfolio for customers, including x86 cores as well as ARM and RISC-V ecosystem IPs. Gelsinger noted that Intel's foundry plans have already received strong enthusiasm and statements of support from across the industry.

To accelerate Intel's IDM 2.0 strategy, Gelsinger announced a significant expansion of Intel's manufacturing capacity, beginning with plans for two new fabs in Arizona, located at the company's Ocotillo campus. These fabs will support the increasing requirements of Intel's current products and customers, as well as provide committed capacity for foundry customers.

Intel plans to engage the technology ecosystem and industry partners to deliver on its IDM 2.0 vision. To that end, Intel and IBM today announced plans for an important research collaboration focused on creating next generation logic and packaging technologies. For more than 50 years, the two companies have shared a deep commitment to scientific research, world-class engineering and a focus on bringing advanced semiconductor technologies to market. These foundational technologies will help unleash the potential of data and advanced computation to create immense economic value. **■**

stc Chairman and CEO praise the launch of Shareek and commend its objective of achieving sustainable development



H.H. Mohammed bin Khaled Al-Abdullah Al-Faisal

His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Khaled Al-Abdullah Al-Faisal, Chairman of the Board of Directors of stc, praised the launch of the Shareek private sector partnership program at the initiative of His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, may God bless him. Al-Faisal praised the program's goals of enhancing the contribution of local companies to the sustainable development of local economy, noting that Shareek will have a great impact on supporting local companies, especially by enabling them to capture local investments of more than SAR 5 trillion by the end of 2030.

cybersecurity, AI-based solutions, the Internet of Things, and G5.

For his part, the CEO of stc Group, Eng. Olayan M. Alwetaid, thanked His Royal Highness the Crown Prince for his initiative of launching the Shareek Program, noting that this program along with other recent initiatives launched by His Highness confirm his belief in the private sector and its pivotal role in the growth of the Saudi economy, "as we felt through our participation in this initiative the importance of aligning roles and responsibilities between the private and public sectors". The CEO noted the important role of the communications and information technology sector in digitization to achieve the Saudi vision and its positive impact on the Saudi economy. He pointed out the role of this sector in keeping pace with the future. This is best evidenced by stcpay's success as the first fintech unicorn in Saudi Arabia and the region. In addition, stc supported entrepreneurship projects through the inspireU incubator, which has produced dozens of projects referred to today as a true success story to be told. The company's strategy has also included a framework in line with the sustainable development areas and goals in accordance with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, especially through the fair practice of business, enhancement of economic impacts, enrichment of life and experiences, expansion of access to technology and communication, promotion of innovative digital opportunities, as well as caring for the environment, empowerment of human resources, especially women, and promotion of gender equality of opportunity. **■**

His Royal Highness affirmed the company's continued endeavors to enhance its leadership in the digitization of various public and private sectors, enhancing Saudi Arabia's position as a regional digital services hub. He noted that stc is committed to harnessing all its human, material, and technological capacities to support the Shareek Program as a partner, to promote cooperation between the private and public sectors and achieve the objectives set by the ambitious Vision of HRH Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

He added that stc's strategy has focused primarily on alignment with the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030, especially in terms of digital transformation and approval of initiatives and projects that have a lasting impact on the economy, society, and the environment. This was reflected in the launch of its DARE strategy for growth in new non-traditional paths, including digital payments, digital media,



Eng. Olayan M. Alwetaid

Ooredoo Group announces USD 750M deal for sale of 4,200+ Telecoms Towers in Indonesia



Aziz Aluthman Fakhroo
MD - Ooredoo Group



Ahmad Al Neama
CEO - Indosat Ooredoo

Ooredoo Group has announced that its Indonesian operating company, PT Indosat Tbk. ("Indosat Ooredoo"), has signed a sale and leaseback agreement with PT EPID Menara AssetCo ("Edge Point Indonesia") for more than 4,200 telecommunications towers.

Indosat Ooredoo has agreed to sell this portfolio of towers in a transaction valued at USD 750 million, including a supplementary offer, making it one of the largest deals of its kind in Asia. The sale will unlock capital to create value for shareholders and continue to build Indosat Ooredoo's strong growth momentum through improvements to network performance and the launch of innovative new digital solutions to enhance the customer experience.

The sale is part of Ooredoo Group's strategy to move to a more efficient and flexible asset light model and unlock the trapped value of its infrastructure portfolio. Prior to this deal, Ooredoo had a global portfolio of approximately 27,000 owned towers,

representing an infrastructure portfolio of significant value for the Group. Monetising these assets to create more value for both shareholders and customers is a key focus of Ooredoo's current strategy.

Aziz Aluthman Fakhroo, Managing Director of Ooredoo Group, said: "Congratulations to Indosat Ooredoo on this sale and leaseback agreement with Edge Point Indonesia, which aligns perfectly with our new strategy and its focus on creating more value for shareholders and customers. This strategy incorporates a shift towards an asset-light model that will help us unlock significant capital and enable us to focus on our core mission of delivering outstanding digital and enterprise services to our customer base. I extend our gratitude to the Government of Indonesia for its progressive policies that leave a positive impact on the industry, its operators and its people."

Edge Point Indonesia was declared the winning bidder of a competitive tender process conducted by Indosat Ooredoo. The

transaction is expected to close in Q2 2021 subject to customary conditions, including shareholder approval by Indosat Ooredoo at an EGM, which is planned to be held on May 6th. Indosat Ooredoo will lease back space on the towers for a period of 10-years to meet its ongoing requirements.

President Director and Chief Executive Officer of Indosat Ooredoo, Ahmad Al Neama, added: "I am delighted that Indosat Ooredoo has agreed this deal, which furthers our strategy to create more value from our infrastructure assets. The deal marks the third and final sale of assets from our high-quality tower portfolio and continues our transition into a leading digital telecoms company. We are confident the leaseback agreement, with its attractive terms, will continue to meet our ongoing tower needs, while the capital that we have unlocked will provide further fuel to power our growth momentum. Indosat Ooredoo and Edge Point Indonesia will work closely together going forward and build a strong and long-lasting strategic partnership." 

Infinet Wireless Tech Day 2021 Insights into the reliability of its solutions

Infinet Wireless, the global leader in fixed wireless broadband connectivity, will host its Tech Day 2021 virtual event, the first online conference for this year exclusively designed for engineers and technical specialists in the field of wireless technology. It will be held at different time zones to cater for growing international customer base: first in English on April 7th at 12:00 pm GMT for our attendees from the APAC region, also on the same day at 15:00 GMT for our EMEA audience. The Russian language version of the conference will be held on April 13th at 11:00 MSK, followed by the event in Spanish on April 14th at 10:00 Colombia time for the Americas region.

The IW Tech Day 2021 virtual event will address the most relevant questions that being asked more and more about the wireless telecommunications industry especially at a time when Infinet Wireless is witnessing the emergence and adoption of many new technologies. Technical specialists want to learn how to deploy and optimize reliable networks, improve the reliability of the connection; how to deal with ever-growing traffic demand without sacrificing the quality, and finally, how to select reliable and scalable solutions vendor who will support its customers in any circumstances.

"Our vast and rich experience in innovative R&D of high-tech solutions allows us to guarantee a state-of-the-art quality and reliability of all the wireless solutions and services we provide to our clients," Andrey Koynov, CTO at Infinet Wireless, comments.

Infinet Wireless Tech Day 2021

The technology leader of the industry reveals the secrets of developing its reliable solutions

Exclusively for engineers in the field of wireless technology

● Online April 7, 2021

12:00 - 13:00 GMT FOR APAC
15:00 - 16:00 GMT FOR EMEA

During these virtual events, Andrey Koynov will be responding to the most important questions from the engineers and technical specialists in the field of wireless technology, as will experts from Infinet Wireless R&D Department, Infinet's customer support team and IW Academy training center engineers. Attendees will also be able to ask their questions via Infinet Wireless online chat throughout the event.

The IW Tech Day agenda includes the following topics:

- What service providers have to do when faced with a limited or even lack

- of spectrum;
- How Infinet Wireless works with its customers and industry experts to drive its R&D strategy and design solutions that will exceed their expectations;
- How to achieve perfect connectivity and mitigate radio interference in the most challenging conditions;
- The rigorous lab and field testing that all Infinet Wireless radio units undergo before being deployed;
- How we are able to guarantee the highest quality of service, from the smallest remote subscriber unit to the high-capacity base station;
- How we support our clients through the life cycle of our radio units. 

TheAngle and ABS extend partnership to serve customers in the MENA region

ABS, a leading satellite operator and TheAngle, a specialized network services integrator, have extended their partnership in the MENA region, serving customers across the ABS' MENA coverage at 75 degrees East.

The expanded and upgraded services focus on the provision of secure and reliable communications services for government, military institutions, and energy companies - oil and gas especially in the GCC countries and Iraq. For such industries, satellite remains strategic and the preferred solution to ensure quality communications, notably from/to remote locations and offshore facilities.

In general demand for satellite services in the MENA market remains robust, driven by increased activities in the traditional verticals

of corporate data services and governmental applications, key applications carried over ABS satellites and TheAngle networks.

Paolo Pusterla, MD of Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) for ABS said, "This renewal and expansion of MENA capacity on ABS-2 confirms the trust that TheAngle has in ABS, as its strong and reliable partner, to support the growth of its business and customer base with the most adapted and bespoke service solutions."

Hassaan Karim, General Manager of TheAngle added, "Our extensive knowledge of the region, coupled with ABS' solid service offerings, enable us to provide attractive and flexible offerings to meet with satisfaction even the most challenging communications requirements of our customers." **T**



Integrasys Developed Restful APIs for all the Product Satellite Portfolio

2020 has been a year of constant changes, customers demand M2M integration for non-human interaction.

Integrasys has listened to the customers and has complied with their demands developing Restful APIs for the complete product-line. From Beam Budget, the Link Budget Calculator, Satmotion No Touch Commissioning, Alusat Predictive Maintenance System, Controlsat Carrier Monitoring, and Vectorsat Interference Detection; as well as Calibration System and RF Switching Matrixes.

Integrasys has developed APIs for all the products offered. The software company, whose main purpose is automating the network design, deployment, monitoring, and maintenance, is now integrating the functionalities provided in easy-to-interact APIs, user-friendly and with the power of making the automation happen, providing the customer with the most effective technologies and incorporating the latest trends. **T**



Emirates Red Crescent fortifies remote learning and other humanitarian initiatives with Yahsat's satellite services



Emirates Red Crescent Authority has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the UAE's primary satellite services operator, Yahsat, at their headquarters in Abu Dhabi. Under the agreement, both organizations will work together to ensure disadvantaged and vulnerable students have access to quality education through the provision of advanced satellite communication solutions. Yahsat's resources will be deployed to support the Authority's remote education programmes and facilitate help for young people, families and schools in countries affected by disasters and crises.

The partnership will bolster the quality of education offered to refugees and displaced persons in their host countries. Yahsat and Emirates Red Crescent will provide students access to a range of advanced educational tools that will empower them to fulfil their considerable potential and lead full, independent lives. The two entities have committed to promoting sustainable development goals and developing the knowledge and skills of learners in underserved communities through the application of artificial intelligence and modern digital technology over satellite in distance education.

The MoU was signed by Dr. Muhammad Ateeq Al Falahi, Secretary General of the

Emirates Red Crescent and Ali Al Hashemi, Chief Executive Officer Designate of Yahsat. Yahsat will leverage its considerable expertise and resources anywhere within its satellite footprint, to address the gaps, wherever terrestrial telecommunication services are not available.

Dr. Muhammad Ateeq Al Falahi stressed that the MoU embodies the vision of H.H. Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Ruler's Representative in the Al Dhafra Region and Chairman of Emirates Red Crescent Authority, in forming meaningful and constructive partnerships between Emirati companies and institutions to strengthen their programmes aimed at resolving humanitarian challenges.

Al Falahi said: "The MoU is part of the Authority's initiatives for the 'Year of the 50th', stemming from the two parties' desire to work together in order to extend the reach of distance education in countries facing major challenges due to the prevailing global health crises. The partnership widens the scope for further collaboration between Emirates Red Crescent and Yahsat, signifying a major step forward in cooperation among UAE institutions to fulfil the nation's aspirations on the humanitarian front - through joint projects and integrated programmes. Additionally, it is a major breakthrough in our efforts to create a responsive e-learning platform and thereby

a modern technical educational system that meets the needs of students in refugee camps and the most vulnerable community groups. A learning system based on information technology and artificial intelligence, driven by satellite communications contributes to the continuation of their education despite the challenges."

Al Falahi welcomed the Authority's partnership with Yahsat, commending the role it plays in promoting human values and charitable initiatives. He added: "With its noble goals and rich potential, this partnership adds a new dimension and qualitative shift in the programmes and initiatives by Emirates Red Crescent to help students resume their education in isolated areas."

Ali Al Hashemi said: "We bridge the connectivity divide in the underserved regions of the world. By connecting isolated communities, Yahsat helps them advance through education, quality healthcare and opportunities for socio-economic development. Our satellite broadband services can be deployed easily, effectively extending the reach of Emirates Red Crescent within our footprint, especially across the Middle East, Africa and Asia. This new partnership is set to redefine the possibilities of satellite connectivity and how help reaches the forgotten corners of the world." **T**

RSCC's Express-103 satellite enters commercial service

RSCC's Express-103 spacecraft was put into operation, joining the orbital constellation of Russian Satellite Communications Company (RSCC) at 96.5 ° E. All in-orbit flight tests of the service systems module and the payload of Express-103 satellite were carried out in full and with positive results.

The new communication satellite is designed to provide digital TV and radio broadcasting, high-speed Internet access and data transmission. It also provides maritime VSAT and in-flight connectivity services in Russia and abroad.

"Express-103 satellite will replace Express-AM33 spacecraft in the 96.5 E slot, providing satellite communications services in the eastern regions of Russia and Southeastern Asia. As a result, the launch of Express-103



Northern Sea Route," says Yuri Prokhorov, RSCC Acting General Director.

Express-103 spacecraft was launched into a geostationary orbit from the Baikonur Cosmodrome on July 31, 2020. The satellite was manufactured by the leading Russian enterprise in the rocket and space industry - JSC ISS Reshetnev Company in collaboration with its European partner, Thales Alenia Space. The Express-103 service life is 15 years.

Today RSCC runs Russia's largest orbital constellation, which consists 12 GEO satellites operating in the C-, Ku-, Ka- and L-bands. The orbital constellation is located on an arc of a geostationary orbit from 14 degrees west to 140 degrees east, enabling RSCC to provide services to clients in 58 countries on all continents. **T**

satellite is seen as a significant potential enhancement in the quality and reliability of the services. Importantly, Express-103 satellite will ensure an almost total coverage of the

Dwi Tunggal Putra and SES Networks bring broadband to over 150 rural villages in Indonesia

A recently signed partnership agreement between Dwi Tunggal Putra (DTP) and SES Networks is enabling residents of 158 villages in remote parts of Indonesia's West Java Province to access crucial online resources such as educational content, as well as unlocking the potential of the region's digital economy.

The Smart Village project, spearheaded by Indonesia's telecommunication and information accessibility agency, Badan Aksesibilitas Telekomunikasi dan Informasi (BAKTI), aims to bridge the digital divide and bring much-needed e-government and other essential services to underserved rural communities of Indonesia. Under the multi-year agreement, DTP will be using high-throughput capacity on the SES-12 satellite to support the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology's Smart Village project and fulfil the government's universal

service obligation (USO). SES Networks is already serving the BAKTI Leased Capacity Project using the SES-12 ground station in Indonesia.

A nation-wide survey conducted by the Indonesian Internet Providers Association (APJII) found that while nationwide internet penetration has increased significantly, unequal access to the internet between urban and rural communities remains an issue, with 4G still not having reached over 12,000 villages across the country.

Indonesia's digital economy is already the largest in Southeast Asia and is expected to almost triple by 2025, according to a report by Google, Temasek and Bain. This is largely attributed to huge improvements in Indonesia's internet infrastructure, growth of its innovative tech companies, and the increasing reliance of individuals on the

internet for socialising and entertainment. Bridging the urban-rural digital divide will help to further accelerate this growth while bringing more equitable economic growth to rural communities across Indonesia.

"Delivering reliable content connectivity services via satellite to remote, underserved communities around the world is at the heart of what we do," said Harsh Verma, Regional Director of Sales for Asia at SES Networks. "In a country as vast as Indonesia and with its 17,000-island archipelago, it is often cost-prohibitive or extremely difficult to connect remote areas via terrestrial infrastructure. Satellites, with their unparalleled reach, offer a cost-effective, secure and fast way to connect these remote communities. We are excited to be working with DTP on this project and hope to further improve the lives of local communities through better connectivity." **T**

Thales and Egypt MCIT to accelerate the development of AI



The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology in Egypt has signed an MoU with Thales, to further develop Artificial Intelligence applications in the country.

The MCIT aims to fortify the AI industry in Egypt and develop local skills, technology, infrastructure and governance mechanisms to ensure its sustainability and competitiveness through its National AI Strategy. Leveraging Thales' vision to develop sovereign capabilities through local innovation, education and industry, common projects will be identified to strengthen Egypt's role as a regional leader and active global player in AI. Both seek to implement applications in fields such as ground transportation, e-government, mobility and smart infrastructure.

In a bid to accelerate innovation, the two entities will explore the capacity to build solutions across these industries, as well as the impact of AI on government, jobs, education, and the digital divide. Joint research will be conducted on AI ethics, explainability, and frugal learning in order to support the

alignment on both countries' stances on AI-related topics. This will be supported by general awareness campaigns and programs to educate the public on the opportunities and risks posed by AI, data privacy and separate myths from fact.

Thales and MCIT will also work closely with start-ups and organize hackathons to advance the professional development of local talents and enhance local capability.

AI is one of the key four technology pillars of Thales. Thales aims to drive and support the development of a certifiable, sustainable, explainable trusted AI. Thales TrUE AI, an approach introduced by the group in 2019, seeks to put the human back in control of high technology. It stands for Transparent AI, where users can see the data used to arrive at a conclusion, Understandable AI, that can explain and justify the results and finally an Ethical AI, that follows objective standards protocols, laws, and human rights.

"The partnership with Thales is in line with

the four pillars of the National AI Strategy, the first of which is capacity building, as we will collaborate in building the AI capabilities for the different segments of society. Additionally, we will also work on two more pillars, AI for Government (AI4G) and AI for Development (AI4D). These are achieved through developing AI-powered applications in different fields, as well as working to establish a common stance for Egypt and France for AI-related topics through conducting joint research on AI ethics," Dr. Amr Talaat, Minister of Communications and Information Technology said.

"This MOU with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology is an important milestone for Thales. The collaboration puts AI at the forefront of our joint projects, with an aim to provide smart and safe solutions and services for the smart cities of the future. The coming stage will focus on innovative solutions in fields such as ground transportation and e-government. Thales is committed to providing the best technologies and procedures in our joint projects." Sherif Barakat CEO of Thales in Egypt. **T**

Ooredoo Group MD recognised as Regional Leader

Ooredoo Group has announced its Managing Director, Mr. Aziz Aluthman Fakhroo, has been recognised as one of the top CEOs in the Middle East region. Respected business journal Forbes Middle East published its list of the Top CEOs in the Middle East on Monday 8 March 2021, with Mr. Aluthman featuring in the top 50.

The rankings recognise the region's most pioneering, successful leaders across a range of industries including telecommunications.

Mr. Aluthman has been Managing Director of Ooredoo Group since November 2020, and a Board member of the Group since 2011. He is currently also a Senior Adviser to the Qatar Minister of Finance, having served as Deputy Undersecretary for Budget, Treasury and Financial Affairs at



the Ministry of Finance from 2014 until 2020, and was the Co-head of Mergers and Acquisitions at Qatar Investment

Authority (QIA) from 2007 until 2014.

He holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from ESLSCA University and has extensive experience in senior roles across various fields.

Mr. Aluthman said: "I am delighted and proud to be recognised amongst my peers in the region by such a respected publication. We have some exceptional talent here in the Middle East, and some formidable business leaders, and to have my achievements and abilities considered worthy of such an accolade is praise indeed. It gives me great pleasure to lead Ooredoo Group under our Chairman, H.E. Sheikh Faisal Bin Thani Al Thani, and I look forward to continuing this leadership as we take our business to the next level in 2021 and beyond." 

Jazz extends nationwide network optimization with Ericsson

Jazz has signed a three-year multivendor network optimization deal with Ericsson for optimization and performance management of its 2G/3G and 4G network nationwide.

With Ericsson's innovative expertise, this partnership will allow Jazz to enhance the overall mobile experience of its customers.

Jazz aims to develop offerings based on value-added services to its growing subscriber base, factoring each consumer's specific requirements and providing solutions tailored to their expectations. This agreement enables Jazz to focus even more on the core business - delivering innovative offerings to their customers.

Khalid Shehzad, Chief Technology Officer at Jazz says: "With the evolution of the competitive landscape in the telecom space, we need to continuously adapt in order to provide better service to our end users. Further developing the AI-based cognitive optimization capabilities in our networks is



an important step in our strategy that will help us better respond to our customer's evolving needs, which remain our top priority."

Ericsson will leverage subscriber crowdsource data analytics, where Artificial Intelligence (AI) provides unique subscriber insights that power App Experience

Optimization for an end-user experience above expectations.

Ericsson will leverage geolocation technology to analyze live end-user experience everywhere with meters' granularity as an enabler for proactive action. As a result of the successful completion of modernization and consolidation, Jazz will deliver an improved network performance in Pakistan. Subscribers will benefit from the advantages of a fully integrated and convergent environment with a higher level of flexibility and shorter time-to-market for new and updated offerings.

Ekow Nelson, Vice President at Ericsson Middle East and Africa says: "This agreement will enable Ericsson to proactively deliver innovative solutions, strengthen our collaboration capabilities and meet the strategic ambitions of Jazz. Now, we are expanding our partnership by using the best Cognitive Technology as the foundation for a joint journey, paving the way to 5G." 

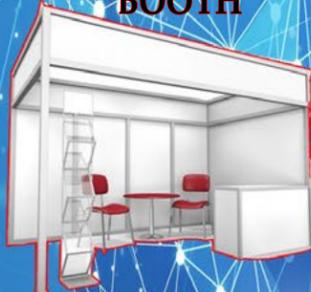


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Huawei increases investment in Carrier Software



To strengthen its leadership in 5G business transformation, Huawei is increasing investment in carrier software as a strategy to support 5G business success.

The announcement comes in response to the rapid development of innovative 5G enterprise market applications such as AR maintenance, remote PLC, intelligent quality inspection, and drone monitoring. 5G will bring huge digitalisation opportunities across a wide range of industries. Huawei has already cooperated with a number of industry verticals and achieved phased success.

Speaking after the TM Forum Hard Talk event last week, Maurice Ma, President of Huawei Software Business Department, said, "Now it is time to plan operation transformation and BSS (Business Support System) upgrades to achieve 5GtoB business success. According to our successful practices, Greenfield BSS transformation becomes a mature and feasible approach. Huawei will increase

investment in carrier software and actively embrace 5G, cloud, and industry digitalization to help customers achieve business success."

New 5G opportunities achieve phased success in strategic cooperation

In 2020, the annual 5G enterprise revenue of Chinese operators reached US\$1 billion. In the 5G consumer domain, Chinese operators have incubated a large number of new 5G services, including AR/VR, 5G messaging, and 5G new calls, for example video ring back tones. Chinese operators have earned more than CNY3 billion (US\$460 million) from the consumer sector as a result.

5G services are developing in multiple dimensions. The requirements of vertical industry services for network slicing, 5G private lines, and new diversified charging dimensions all pose great challenges to traditional BSS systems. The evolution of new generation BSS is, therefore, an important part of the success of 5G commercial operations. Recognising this, Huawei will increase its investment in 5G BSS to maintain its leading position in the 5G field.

BSS Greenfield approach successful for telecom business transformation

In the past, carriers' IT transformation has been characterised by very long transformation periods, high risk, and unclear transformation values and outcomes. Following several years of research and extensive experience in the market, Huawei's BSS Greenfield model has now become established as an effective way for carriers to transform their future business support system. The Greenfield model focuses on high-value services, accelerating the exit and upgrade of legacy services, and simplifying the

journey of transformation.

Huawei has committed to the Greenfield Business Transformation model. The vendor has built a Greenfield platform oriented to new services and is using the MVP (Minimal Viable Product) to attract users to the new platform without inheriting live network features or migrating data.

Huawei has helped more than ten carriers achieve successful large-scale operation transformation projects globally, and has incorporated successful experience from these projects into its product solutions and delivery service methodologies. In the period of accelerating 5G development, the Greenfield model will help more operators support 5GtoB service development and achieve business success.

Huawei will increase investment in the carrier software for 5G services

Cloudification, platformisation, and openness of 5GtoB operation systems are essential capabilities to support future 5G service development. In addition, the Greenfield model has helped multiple projects to succeed in transformation. In the next five years, Huawei will increase its R&D investment in carrier software including 5G-oriented full stack BSS, and to ensure its continued leadership in this domain.

As a leading telecom provider, Huawei software serves 3 billion subscribers worldwide and has ranked number one in software market share in Gartner Operation Technology reports for the last five consecutive years. Huawei ranks first in 3GPP standards regarding 5G monetization and is fully committed to helping operators unlock more business value in the 5G era. **T**

Huawei Thailand receives prestigious Prime Minister Award as Digital International Corporation of the Year



Huawei Technologies (Thailand) Co., Ltd. has been chosen for the Special Prime Minister Award and recognized as "Digital International Corporation of the Year". The award acknowledges Huawei Thailand for its valuable support and outstanding contributions to Thai society since its establishment in the country 21 years ago, as well as its efforts to support digital transformation. Huawei is the only international company to receive this award.

Mr. Abel Deng, CEO of Huawei Technologies (Thailand) Co., Ltd., accepted the award from HE General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand in the presence of Mr. Nuttapon Nimmanphatcharin, President/CEO of Digital Economy Promotion Agency (DEPA), during the award ceremony held at Government House.

The Prime Minister congratulated this year's awardees. He commended the younger generation for being able to apply digital technology creatively and for leveraging innovation to create new businesses to move ahead together. He also added that the government believes the development of 5G and AI systems is important in driving Thailand forward and expressed hope that today's success will inspire university students to make use of digital technology to create business opportunities for the country in the future. In addition, the Prime Minister congratulated Huawei executives and asked them to continue the company's mission to drive Thailand forward.

"The PM's Digital Awards recognize organizations whose products and solutions help drive digital technology and innovation development. The criteria for the PM's Special Award include excellence in development of digital technology that supports enterprises, services and the society; application of digital technology that fosters a better and more secure economy, society, and culture for Thais; investment that creates jobs in Thailand; and social and environmental developments that support local and international economies. Huawei received the highest scores from our distinguished committee," said Mr. Nuttapon Nimmanphatcharin, President of Digital Economy Promotion Agency.

"It is an honor for me to accept the Prime Minister's Award on behalf of Huawei Technologies," said Mr. Abel Deng, CEO of Huawei Thailand, during the ceremony. "At Huawei, we value long-term partnership. We are committed to working closely with customers and partners to help keep Thailand at the forefront of the digital age. With the mission of 'Grow in Thailand, Contribute to Thailand', Huawei reinforces its commitment to helping the country move forward to Thailand 4.0 and become a digital hub in the Asia Pacific region, and to ensuring that no one is left behind. We will bring digital to every person, home and organization, for a fully connected, and intelligent Thailand."

This year's award is another recognition of Huawei's leadership in Thailand's digital scene.

The company's successful initiatives across the country include:

For digital economy:

- Open Lab Bangkok: One-stop support to provide industry solutions for IoT, Big Data, and cloud computing, as well as a verification platform and ICT training services for customers and ICT industry entrepreneurs in Thailand and Southeast Asia.
- 5G EEC Testbed: Established the first 5G Test Bed in a real world-setting in Southeast Asia located in Kasetsart University, Sri Racha campus (Eastern Economic Corridor).
- Thailand 5G Ecosystem Innovation Center: Jointly established by Digital Economy Promotion Agency and the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society, the center serves as a sandbox for SMEs, startups, developers, and educational institutions to develop digital innovations for 5G applications and services, incubate local digital talents and upgrade digital skills.

For social advancement:

- AI-assisted solutions for government hospitals: AI-powered software provided to Ramathibodi and Siriraj Hospitals to help make COVID-19 diagnosis solutions faster and more efficient using 5G technology.
- Huawei Telemedicine Video Conference Solution for the Ministry of Public Health: Real-time and fully-functional teleconference system that can facilitate Thai medical staff and teams to carry out their duties without risk of infection; doctors can conduct remote online consultations; patients can be diagnosed, treated and monitored through their own smart devices.
- Unmanned vehicles using 5G: Contactless delivery of medical goods within the hospital to reduce infection risks of frontline workers.

For human capital development:

- Huawei ASEAN Academy: Partnering with local businesses, and technical and engineering schools to "produce 100,000 digital and tech-related workers within 5 years"
- 5G courses by global experts and chief scientists from Huawei: Topics such as 5G trends, commercial plans, 5G standards, use cases, business model ideas, etc. to promote multi-dimensional thinking **T**

Etisalat partners with Etihad Airways to support SMBs



Fatma Al Mehairi

Etisalat announced that it is Etihad Airways' official telecom partner, providing the best-in-class mobile and digital solutions for the evolving business requirements of the small and medium business (SMB) and startup community, and enabling them through their digital transformation journey.

Esam Mahmoud, Senior Vice President, SMB, Etisalat, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Fatma Al Mehairi, Vice President of UAE Sales at Etihad Airways, in a ceremony attended by senior officials from both companies.

Under the terms of the partnership, both entities will work on providing customised value propositions for Etisalat and Etihad business customers. Etisalat will provide all its business customers and Hello Business Hub start up community with 'value for money' exclusive Etihad travel offers, while Etisalat will provide Etihad business customers access to special mobile and digital offerings.

Esam Mahmoud, Senior Vice President, SMB, Etisalat, said: "The SMB sector plays a key role in the UAE economy in driving innovation, job creation and disruptive business models. Etisalat has been working closely with start-ups and the SMB community to cater to their requirements and help them grow their business by ensuring a successful digital journey.

"This partnership with Etihad is integral to our successful journey for enabling best-in-class solutions and services with industry leaders. We look forward to collaborating with the UAE's national airline to provide a comprehensive array of telecom and digital products and services that bring tremendous value to each other's customers."

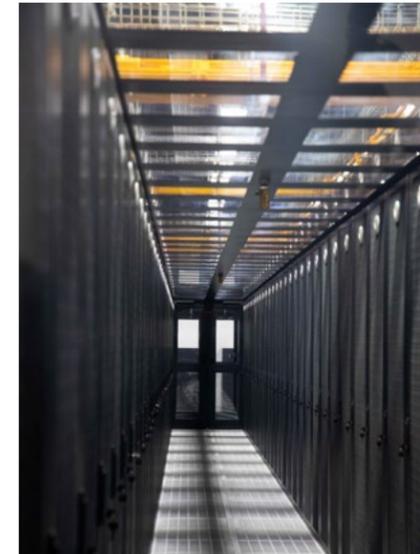
Fatma Al Mehairi, Vice President UAE sales, Etihad Airways, said: "Etihad and Etisalat will cooperate to design special products, offers, and activities that support SMB's to start and grow their business with the latest innovative and convenient solutions. The airline is always exploring new ventures to enhance the customer experience and partnering with a major player in the UAE economy like Etisalat will bring incremental value to both Etihad and Etisalat customers."

Both parties will collaborate to enrich Etisalat's business mobile plans with Etihad's BusinessConnect, a smart loyalty programme for small to medium sized enterprises. Etisalat and Etihad will also look to collaborate on alternative digital channels that mutually enable them to sell their products and services on each other's websites. For instance, Etisalat will have digital presence on Etihad Airways' BusinessConnect website, enabling the airline's customers to purchase telco products from Etisalat, and vice versa. **T**



Esam Mahmoud

Ooredoo Maldives inaugurates tier-3 ready data centre



Ooredoo Maldives has launched the first ever tier-3 ready Data Centre in the Maldives, providing unparalleled connectivity, storage, security and support systems for IT-based services and operations, designed to provide reliability and safety for all types of customer segments. Located in the emerging smart city of Hulhumale', Ooredoo Maldives Data Centre (OMDC) is a world-class-state-of-the-art Data Centre which anticipates to bolster a quick and easy transition to new technologies supporting Maldivian and regional businesses from across government, corporate and the hospitality sector.

Digital revolution across the globe has rapidly transformed the way we live today. The global business community, from SME's to large corporations, have become exceedingly data driven and dependent on digital services, making the IT infrastructure of the institutions vital for operations. Technological advancements such as virtualization and cloud computing in the data hosting market are anticipated to be an indication of the maturity, transformation, and growth of the business. However, to build an on-premise data centre infrastructure companies will have to commit large amounts of investments, coupled with high maintenance costs. Hence global data

centre services as OMDC play a crucial role in powering this growing demand for cloud services across enterprises.

Najib Khan, Managing Director and CEO, Ooredoo Maldives said: "Today marks a historical day for Ooredoo Maldives, as we inaugurate the first ever Data Centre in the Maldives. The global data centre services market is foreseen to attract tremendous growth in the near future. The growing requirement of large computing facilities and surging demand for capacity management are envisaged to bring in a host of opportunities for data center services. We believe that the Maldives can potentially offer a very high availability for all types of Data Centre services, connecting local and regional businesses to uninterrupted connectivity and unlimited possibilities by eliminating geographical challenges, ensuring business continuity and stable growth. With this important step towards a truly Digital Maldives, our aim is to establish Maldives as a technological hub in the region."

The infrastructure of this new state of the art data centre is designed to provide customers the safest possible environment with flood resistance of up to 7 meters along with state-

of-the-art fire detection systems. The facility is housed with critical electrical diesel power generators which can sustain an uninterrupted backup power that can seamlessly operate for 14 days without human intervention.

The centre features modern environmental monitoring and control systems, Water Leakage Detection System and round the clock digital and physical monitoring system that would provide comfort and peace of mind to customers who can be assured that their critical data and infrastructure is monitored and protected 24/7. The high growth rate of data generation, growing internet of things (IoT) connected device's usage, huge growth in automation across different industry verticals and higher demand for data security are some of the trends which are expected to offer unique growth opportunities for the data centre services market. OMDC also consist of a demo room to experience the wide range of products designed by the company for enterprise customers which includes, Centribiz- a simplified managed telephony solution, CloudPBX, PBX Solution, IPTV Solutions, Satellite Phone, VLD FleetOne Solution, 5G AirFibre, Guesthouse Broadband, HCM HR Solution and more, prior to their subscription of the services. **T**

The RIPE NCC report on "state of Internet in the GCC Countries, Yemen and Iraq"

The RIPE NCC previously published a series of Internet country reports on Saudi Arabia, Russia, Germany, Southeast Europe, and Central Asia. The latest report produced by the RIPE NCC in this series examines the Internet landscape in eight countries in the Gulf region, focussing on the Internet landscape in the GCC countries, Yemen and Iraq, as part of an ongoing effort to support Internet development through our service region by making our data and insights available to local technical communities and decision-makers.

The report gives a detailed outlook on the market development, infrastructure, and Internet routing within the region as well as the available Internet address resources in the following countries: Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. The analyses and results are based on data collected by the RIPE NCC measurements tools and a few external data sources.

The report reaches several conclusions on what is needed in the region from a technical and regulatory standpoint in order to facilitate Internet development and future growth. The report is published in English and Arabic.

Growth in Local Internet Registries (LIRs)

The report shows that Iraq, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and even Kuwait have shown significant growth over the past decade in establishing local networks. The report indicates that Iraq overtook the GCC countries with the most Local Internet Registries (LIRs). On the other hand, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and Yemen have experienced far less growth, with some even decreasing their number of LIRs.

The number of private networks (ASNs) in a given country is one indication of market maturity. These networks encourage interconnection, offer security and increase resiliency in the market. As more service providers enter the domestic market, this will drive down costs and increase innovation – all of which support the long-term health of the local Internet ecosystem.

Demand for connectivity and depletion of IPv4

Mobile Internet connectivity has had a faster growth and penetration rate than fixed broadband in the Gulf, given the region's high reliance on mobile access. The region has some of the highest mobile subscriptions per capita in the world in many of the Gulf countries. As more and more organizations scrambled to get access to internet networks, demand for IPv4 in the region increased with Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and other countries acquiring more IPv4 addresses from the secondary market. Saudi Arabia is the most dominant of the Gulf countries in the transfer market followed by the UAE, the report indicates.

Need for IPv6 deployment

Despite IPv4's dwindling availability and its increasing cost on the secondary market, many countries in the Gulf region continue to struggle with IPv6 deployment. Although Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Kuwait have substantially increased their IPv6 holdings in recent years, there are vast differences when it comes to actual deployment rates. The UAE leads the region in IPv6 deployment followed by Saudi Arabia.

Dependency on International Internet exchange points (IXPs)

Recent years have seen an increase in the number of Internet exchange points (IXPs) in the Gulf region with Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates each having at least one operational IXP.

Protecting data and networks

Routing security could be greatly improved in the region by adopting the Resource Public Key Infrastructure (RPKI), a digital certificate that helps network operators make more secure routing decisions. The report calls mobile operators and Internet service providers to certify their Internet number resources and share best current operational practices around routing security in general in order to better safeguard the Internet and reduce the risk of hack. There is a need for open diverse markets that allow for greater connectivity, multiple access points, and increased choice in service providers. **I**

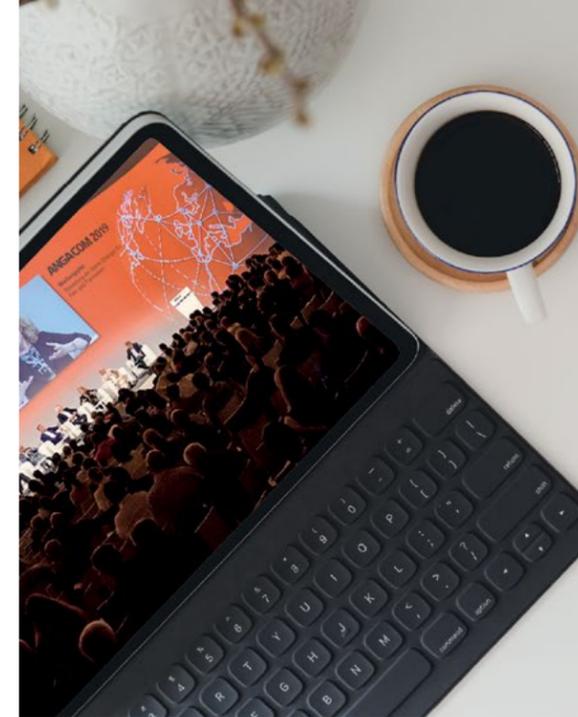
Proven Arabia launches Proven Solution for AI and Robotics Innovation

Proven Arabia's AI and Robotics centered new tech start-up Proven Solution to help automate business operations for customers in the Middle East and around the globe.

With a vision of becoming the leading AI-powered solutions and products pioneer in the Middle East, Proven Solution will provide advanced portfolio housing AI, Robotics, Blockchain, Internet of Things (IoT), Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality (AR/VR) technologies. These innovative products and solutions can be customized to fit business needs, enabling local and regional organizations to take full advantage of emerging applications and solutions.

Proven Arabia's technology solution start-up will cement the success of innovative technologies in the GCC market and help spearhead revolutionary changes in the industry. The brand will also tap into the US and European markets, extending its expertise and solutions internationally. Proven Solution has already formed partnerships with several key industry leaders such as Softbank Robotics Europe, as service providers for their humanoid robots. Proven Solution focuses on creating tailor-made applications for specific industries, which includes AI conversational, retail automation, human resource and e-commerce tools, monitoring and back-end office automation, which are compatible with the latest VR technologies and glasses such as Oculus, Pico and AR Core.

Committed to leading the market, Proven Solution will continue to expand its offerings by providing customers with sophisticated and tailored integrated technology-driven solutions. The company's products will be accessible to a global clientele in several industries such as healthcare, travel and hospitality, education, logistic, retail, banking services, and government and public services. **I**



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PCCW Global upgrades Middle Eastern connectivity via a new network node in Aqaba, Jordan

PCCW Global in collaboration with Naitel a telecom service provider in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, have enhanced Middle Eastern international connectivity and expanded the region's network reach by extending PCCW Global's growing global Tier 1 network coverage via a new IP node in Aqaba, Jordan. This new unique geographic position ensures that the Gulf Corporation Council (GCC) region has access to high-speed connectivity and state of the art network automation via Console Connect, a global platform for Software-Defined Interconnection®.

The new Point of Presence in Aqaba, which is located in a carrier-neutral facility, provides the Middle East with a new level of connectivity using PCCW Global's advanced, resilient and automated Tier 1 network, and caters to the increasing demand of global wholesale and enterprise customers in the region. Aqaba is PCCW Global's latest addition to the carrier's extensive global network of over 120 on-net Points of Presence (PoPs) in 52 countries and 81 cities.

In addition, Console Connect incorporates network automation software that delivers on-demand access to PCCW Global's dependable, high-speed global

private network, enabling users to quickly spin up network connections when required. Users are able to utilize the platform to automatically order global IP transit (AS3491) services and private MPLS links on-demand, bypassing the public Internet and directly connecting to cloud providers, content providers, applications partners and any community on the platform

The multi-award-winning Console Connect platform provides a new level of speed and agility that can be achieved in just a few clicks with a simple, easy-to-use web portal. Console Connect can also be integrated directly into enterprise applications via an API, providing robust and secure enterprise-wide access to partner infrastructure and leading cloud service providers throughout the world including Amazon Web Services, Microsoft Azure, as well as Google, Tencent, Alibaba, IBM and Oracle cloud services.

Mr. Sameh Sobhy, Managing Director, Middle East, Turkey, Africa, PCCW Global, said, "Aqaba is an important strategic location for development. Our goal is to bring the latest, most innovative, fast and robust services to customers in the GCC region. Network automation

makes it possible for users to manage and control their own data resources by accessing a wide variety of cloud services and content on top of our state-of-the-art data network."

Development of the new node in Jordan is strategically aligned with other PCCW Global network expansion and connectivity projects in the EMEA region, including the innovative Pakistan & East Africa Connecting Europe (PEACE) cable project.

The PEACE cable system is a 12,000km-long, 200G and 16T/FP privately owned cable system connecting three of the largest and most populous continents in the world - Asia, Africa and Europe. On schedule to be completed next year, the PEACE subsea cable system will provide the shortest and most direct data route from Asia to Europe, assuring exceptionally low latency, which is vitally important for people and organizations to leverage the innovative use of ICT in the region and around the world.

PEACE connects countries on both sides of the Mediterranean and provides connectivity for the Middle East en route between Europe and Asia.

Moscow launches a tech base with Russian blockchain practices

The new section in English presents 52 Russian practices of technology application in various fields. Practices of the Federal Tax Service of Russia, Sberbank, Norilsk Nickel, the Moscow Government, Rostelecom, Kaspersky Lab, Russian Railways, S7 Airlines, M.Video, Megafon and others are included in the section.

For ease of study, all practices are divided into several categories: FinTech, Public sector, Industry and Energy, Logistics and Transport, Retail, MedTech, E-document flow, EdTech,

HR-Tech, Real estate and other. Most of the cases are presented in the areas of FinTech - 16 and Public sector - 13.

Cards with descriptions of blockchain solutions developed by Moscow developers, and market analytics are also available in the new section. Project will be useful for analysts and smart city experts, as well as developers of blockchain projects to find new scenarios and partnerships. In the future, the blockchain tech base will be regularly updated with new cases.



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