

## Business

# Zain, Huawei sign MoU to advance 5G infrastructure

## Al-Roudhan: Zain implements latest tech innovations within 5G network

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with its global partner Huawei to advance its 5G infrastructure for achieving the best user experience and enhancing the network's quality. The announcement comes as part of Zain's efforts to reinforce its leadership as the first operator to commercially launch this revolutionary technology in the Kuwaiti market.



DUBAI: Zain Kuwait Chief Executive Officer Eaman Al-Roudhan and President of Huawei Middle East Carrier Business An Jian sign the memorandum of understanding at GITEX Technology Week 2021, Dubai.

Al-Roudhan added: "This MoU not only focuses on operational and technical advancements, but also extends to making sure we achieve sustainable growth, something that we believe in very strongly. Together we will explore how we can reduce our environmental footprint by implementing energy saving solutions, improving network energy efficiency, building a green 5G network, and supporting green solutions for Telecom operations within the private and public sectors".

Al-Roudhan concluded: "The main aim of this collaboration is to invest our joint efforts and expertise with our technology partners to empower the digital transformation that technologies like 5G enable within Kuwait's business community". Recently, Zain shared its 5G deployment success story during a keynote as part of the 12th edition of the Global Mobile Broadband Forum (MMBF), hosted by global tech leader Huawei in Dubai, featuring the presence of many of the world's biggest names in the global ICT sector.

Zain's strategy is centered around digital transformation leadership and empowering the community to enjoy a smarter portable lifestyle, as well as using advanced technology to enable an easier and more flexible life. The company places itself as an active partner in creating the future of smart life in Kuwait. Today's launch contributes to proving the company's full potential in triggering the digital community, and will enrich its collaborations in Telecom and IT areas with its strategic partners on multiple levels.



### Company expands technology partnerships during GITEX

The MoU was signed during Zain's participation at the Gulf Information Technology Exhibition (GITEX Technology Week 2021) with the presence of Chief Executive Officer of Zain Kuwait Eaman Al-Roudhan and President of Huawei Middle East Carrier Business An Jian. GITEX, hosted in the UAE, is organized by the Dubai World Trade Center, and features the biggest global technology companies, organizations, and enti-

ties from the Telecom and IT industry.

Commenting on the partnership, Zain Kuwait's Chief Executive Officer Eaman Al-Roudhan said: "Today we expand our strategic partnerships in technology to affirm our utmost commitment in offering the most advanced services to our customers. Zain always aspires to offer world-class solutions that live up to our customers' needs, both consumers and businesses".

Al-Roudhan continued: "Through this agreement, we

explore implementing many technological innovations, including those that are related to 5G solutions, to enhance network coverage, capacity, and to improve 5G consumer experience, fixed wireless access (FWA) user experience, and accelerate creating the development of 5G Stand-Alone network (SA). The MoU also explores upgrading our 5G network's infrastructure to better empower the digital transformation plans of many vital sectors and industries that Zain serves in the nation".

## Toyota to invest \$3.4bn into US battery production

TOKYO: The world's biggest carmaker Toyota unveiled plans yesterday to invest \$3.4 billion into automotive batteries in the United States and build a factory in the country for their production. The 10-year investment is part of a project announced last month by the Japanese firm to pour 1.5 trillion yen (\$13.1 billion) into the development and supply of batteries for electric vehicles as it pushes to make its production carbon-neutral.

"Toyota's commitment to electrification is about

achieving long-term sustainability for the environment, American jobs and consumers," said Ted Ogawa, chief executive officer at Toyota Motor North America. The company did not specify further details such as a site and production capacity but said it would establish a new company for the US project.

In June, Toyota said it aimed to make its production carbon-neutral by 2035, replacing the previous target date of 2050. Toyota is a pioneer of hybrid vehicles and autos using hydrogen fuel and is also stepping up its development of battery-powered electric cars.

Last year Japan's former prime minister Yoshihide Suga set a 2050 deadline for the world's third-largest economy to become carbon neutral, significantly firming up the country's climate-change commitments. The nation has struggled to cut carbon emissions after shutting down reactors following the 2011 meltdown at the Fukushima nuclear power plant. —AFP



SHETLAND, UK: A general view of Lerwick in the Shetland Islands, north of Scotland. — AFP

## From oil to renewables, winds of change blow on Scottish islands

LERWICK, UK: In the far north of the United Kingdom, where the wind blows and the sea rages, the islands of Orkney and Shetland have long relied on oil and gas for prosperity. But as supplies dwindle and the fight against climate change becomes more urgent, the islands off the northeast coast of Scotland are increasingly turning to renewables.

Daniel Wise is head of offshore operations at Orbital Marine Power, a start-up that is testing its O2 tidal energy generator off Orkney. The submerged propellers turn with the current, producing enough electricity to power some 2,000 homes.

"Half a billion tons of seawater moves per hour on this site, so it's very good for testing these turbines," Wise told AFP. On Orkney and Shetland, which are nearer to Norway than London, giant standing stones are a visual reminder of the ancient Neolithic past. Now, gleaming white wind turbines are seen as symbols of a brighter, more sustainable future.

"A lot of people describe Orkney as a living laboratory," said Jerry Gibson, operations technician at the European Marine Energy Centre (EMEC), which tests wave and tidal energy converters on Orkney.

"And we have lots of test sites and various different companies that are all working together... in this sort of green economy that we've got going on." EMEC itself produces "green" hydrogen from renewable sources via a tidal turbine and electrolysis using seawater from Eday, one of Orkney's 20 inhabited islands.

The hydrogen is pressurized and transported 16 miles (26 kilometers) south to the port of Kirkwall, where it is transformed into electricity to power the ferries at the quayside.

### Reliability

Given its plentiful natural resources from wind and waves, Orkney-home to some 22,000 people-produces more energy than it uses. "Hydrogen is important because it's another means of storing energy rather than using batteries or going straight to the electricity grid," said Gibson.

EMEC is also testing wave energy generators in the laboratory, which is more complex to model than tidal energy. On the island of Yell, some 100 miles northeast on the former Viking stronghold of Shetland, another company, Nova Innovation, is also betting on the ebb and flow of tides.

"The beauty of tidal energy is that it's totally predictable," said Tom Wills, offshore manager at the company. "So I can tell you tomorrow or 2,000 years from now, how much tide is going to be flowing through that channel out there, our energy resources are not dependent on the weather."

That predictability is crucial for the stability of energy supply as economies try to move away from high-polluting hydrocarbons. Nova has set up a charging point in the village of Cullivoe on Yell for electric vehicles, powered by its underwater turbines.

Fiona Nicholson, who lives nearby, is a regular user. "Where we live, we look out on the sea and we hear it every day and we know the power of it," she said. "So, it's nice to be able to use it to charge the car for all my long commutes." The Sullom Voe oil terminal on the

main island of Shetland is one of the largest in Europe. Locals acknowledge that North Sea drilling and infrastructure have brought benefits.

Revenue from the operations have funded roads, schools and sports centers, as well as supported thousands of jobs for the Shetlands' nearly 23,000 inhabitants. But equally, residents know time is running out and renewables offer a potential solution, even if some projects are contested.

### Worse than oil?

One such project is the giant Viking Wind Farm, a partnership between SSE Renewables and the Shetland authorities. It is scheduled to come on stream in 2023 and will have 103 turbines generating enough low-carbon energy to power nearly 476,000 homes.

The project could save half a million tons of carbon dioxide emissions each year, the company says, and make Shetland a net exporter of electricity. But many locals are critical and have fought a long legal battle against it since planning permission was first approved in 2012. "If they had come originally with a reasonably sized wind farm, I don't think anybody would have objected," said Donnie Morrison, whose hillside home will soon be surrounded by roaring turbines.

"But it's so huge, it's ridiculous," Laurie Goodlad, a tour guide, said the project would see the removal of hundreds of thousands of tons of peatland—a recognized carbon sink.

"They're basically digging up the lungs of the planet," she said. Despite assurances that excavated peat will be reused, and no construction on pristine peat bogs, opponents even say Viking will be more environmentally destructive than the controversial drilling of new oil fields such as Cambo, northwest of Shetland. "I see Cambo as less of a threat than what Viking Energy is," said Goodlad.

"Cambo and Viking Energy, ultimately, are doing the same thing: they're removing fossil fuels from the ground." Residents also fear they will not benefit from electricity exports, despite assurances the community will receive dividends, as it does from oil.

### Transferable skills

At the Shetland Islands Council, energy project manager Joe Najdich acknowledged that the Viking project had divided public opinion. "Obviously, developing an onshore wind farm can be quite disruptive to the island but the benefits seems to outweigh the costs," he said.

Another issue, trade unions say, is a lack of employment prospects, with the thousands of well-paid oil jobs unlikely to be all replaced by renewables. Viking Energy says about 140 people will be needed to work on the project and some 35 permanent jobs will be created, but unions say that is not enough.

EMEC's Gibson is more optimistic, seeing oil and gas industry skills as transferable.

At the same time, not switching to renewables would cause its own problems, said Najdich.

"Oil and gas could last in Shetland until roughly 2050," he said. "If we don't develop it (renewables), we'll rely more on imports." —AFP



## US supply chain woes to stretch into 2022, Biden admin warns

WASHINGTON: The US transportation secretary warned that America's supply chain woes including clogged ports will drag into next year, potentially cramping the upcoming holiday shopping season in the world's largest economy. Pete Buttigieg did the rounds on US political talk shows to stress that President Joe Biden's administration was doing everything it could to alleviate congestion at the country's overloaded ports, railways and roads, and that the government will "re-evaluate all of our options" to relieve the bottlenecks.

But "a lot of the challenges that we have been experiencing this year will continue into next year," the transport chief and former presidential candidate told CNN's "State of the Union" show. Buttigieg added that the supply side crunch was being exacerbated by extraordinary pent-up demand in the United States. "Demand is off the charts, retail sales are through the roof," he said, and the country's transportation and shipping infrastructure has been unable to keep up.

With the Christmas holiday season gearing up as America's coronavirus-battered economy rebounds, US retailers are taking unprecedented steps to try to navigate around myriad supply chain obstacles.

Biden recently announced a commitment by the Port of Los Angeles to begin 24-hour operations in an effort to ease congestion which has seen multiple cargo ships anchored off the coast awaiting opportunities to unload. Analysts have pointed to knock-on effects through the US economy. Allianz chief economic advisor Mohamed El-Erian, speaking to "Fox News Sunday" about the supply chain crunch, called it "the everything shortage."

"Things will get worse before they get better," he said. "So we're going to have more shortages of goods, we're going to have higher prices, inflation will remain in the four-to-five percent level. And it's just going to take time to sort these things out."

Congress meanwhile is grappling with passing two huge portions of Biden's domestic agenda: a \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill to upgrade roads, bridges and ports, and his even bigger Build Back Better social spending program.

"We've got to get this done," Buttigieg said on NBC's "Meet the Press." The infrastructure bill has bipartisan support. But the massive package that expands the social safety net and addresses the climate crisis faces opposition from within the president's own Democratic camp as well as from Republicans, pushing Biden to consider paring it back. —AFP



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